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Tourkokratia: History and the Image of Turks in Greek Literature

Iraklis (Hercules) Millas

In the conversations of my childhood, especially those with my father, communicating opinions about Turks was a painful topic. I was born into a family of Constantinopolitan Greeks, Turkish citizens and members of the Greek community of Istanbul, known in Turkey as Rum. My father used to refer to the abstract category of the 'Turks' in negative terms, frequently claiming that the Turks 'hated us' and 'treated us unfairly'. On such occasions I would remind him of my Turkish classmates and friends, whom he himself liked too and I would argue that we had Turkish neighbours whom we, and indeed our whole family held in good regard. 'You contradict yourself', I used to argue, 'you are guilty of exactly the same things that you condemn in our Turkish neighbours'.

My father was born in 1900. He lived through the Balkan Wars, the Greek-Turkish war of 1919-1922 and the two World Wars, where Greece and Turkey were in different military camps. He was brought up in a period when nationalism was at its peak in both Greece and Turkey and he had been educated to think in nationalistic terms. I only came to understand him better after he passed away and after I completed some studies of my own on Greek-Turkish relations. Now I think that the term 'contradiction' was not significant to explain his attitudes. His identity and his understanding of politics were too complex to be accurately described in simple words; trapped between conflicting nationalist paradigms he reproduced several stereotypical representations of the undifferentiated Turk as the ethnic Other. In real life, however, he was forced to encounter the 'Other' on a frequent basis, and he sincerely liked some of these actual, concrete people who happened to be the Others, the Turks.

Good and bad Others: Conceptualization and images of the Turks in Greek literature

I focus on two aspects of the Greco-Turkish relationship in particular: the Turk as either an abstract or concrete ethnic Other, and connected to that, the notion of *Tourkokratia*, i.e., the period of Ottoman rule in Greek lands. I discuss Greek views and representations of the Turks as these are expressed in novels that refer to the Other in an indirect way, i.e., mostly by composing stories about the 'Turks' and narrating situations about ourselves and Others.

Ethnic stereotypes normally are developed and reproduced in pairs, mutually on both sides of the 'Us vs. Others' conceptual divide, but here I will concentrate primarily on images the Greeks have about the Turks. Occasionally, I will present some cases from the Turkish side, and some Turkish images of Greeks in order to show how widespread some tendencies are.[1] I am particularly concerned with the deconstruction of convictions that are not openly admitted by Greek and Turkish authors, images whichare usually expressed in an implicit and unconscious way in the narratives I examine. The disseminators of the stereotypes, on the conscious level, perceive the images and the stereotypes as 'knowledge' and as 'facts'.[2]

A close examination of Greek novels that refer, in one way or another, to the Turks confirms a recurrent phenomenon: the Turks appear as negative personalities whenever they are portrayed as abstract characters and as potentially positive individuals when they are presented as concrete persons.[3] Abstract

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[1] Some of my findings are presented in detail in my publications mentioned in the bibliography. *Türk Romanı ve 'Öteki* (2000) is based on a study of approximately 500 Greek and Turkish novels; Εικόνες Ελλήνων και Τούρκων (2001) also contains Greek images of the Turks in textbooks and historiography; *Do's & Don'ts* (2002) also deals with mutual images and stereotypes of Greeks and Turks

[2] The demarcation line between 'fact' and 'perception' (or reality-myth, objectivity-subjectivity) is a complex philosophical issue that will not be dealt with here. It suffices to remind one's self that a stereotype is usually preserved unnoticed or is discarded as such if it is recognized.

[3] See Millas (2001) for an analysis of 62 novels of 41 well-known Greek authors, published between 1834 and 1998 are presented and analyzed See also Demirözü (1999) who demonstrates that Greek authors, such as Venezis, Theotokas, Mirivilis, Politis, who have lived in Asia Minor and met Turks in person, have written about modern times and portrayed the Turks in a balanced way, whereas writers who lived in Greek lands and did not meet Turks, such as Ampot, Karagatsis, Petsalis and Prevelakis, have written about historical

personalities are the ones who appear as symbols, as representatives of authority in the Ottoman (and/or Turkish state) apparatus, mostly as historical figures who played a certain role in a framework where Greeks and Turks and their respective nations are in confrontation. These negative personalities are almost always men in their middle age and mostly appear in historical novels or in narrations that examine the past. It is not their names, but their titles, ranks and official positions that are of importance. They could be sultans, officers or dignitaries; in short, persons with authority and power. They might also have nationalist dispositions, and act as agents or instigators of ethnic strife. We learn little about their personal life and feelings, but much about their (negative) behaviour and its effects on the Greek protagonists. They often appear in settings where the ethnic Self and the Other are in controversy, only to act unfavourably, not merely in the political sense, but also in ethical terms. The Turks as abstract personalities are portrayed as cruel, fanatical and perverted, a source of unhappiness and danger for 'the Greek Self', which is here uncritically equated with the collectivity of the Greeks.

However, when Turks appear as concrete personalities they are not portrayed so negatively and they may even have positive attributes. These Turkish characters appear in novels by Greek authors who have lived in Ottoman lands, writing about events which they have personally experienced (and not about past 'historically' transmitted incidents). Their Turkish protagonists tend to be normal and balanced, and plausible (comparatively, at least). They might be men or women of any age (including children and old people), practising less authoritative occupations, mostly of a humble trade. The reader is allowed to have a glimpse of the inner life of these characters, to share their often unique personal stories. We know them by their names because in most cases they are the people next door. They are not introduced in ethnic terms – as 'others' in conflict with 'us' – but rather as average human beings. They may have weaknesses, as all human beings do, but they are not distinguished for their political actions. They appear to meet with 'us', the Greeks, under ordinary circumstances, not in an atmosphere of war and strife, as is almost always the case with the 'abstract and historical' Turks. In short, they look like real persons, not like crude stereotypes, representatives or caricatures of an imaginary ethnic group.

The same tendency – i.e., viewing abstract personalities as negative and concrete ones as positive – is also encountered in Turkish texts vis-à-vis the Greeks. Authors, who in their memoirs portrayed those Greeks whom they actually met almost exclusively in positive terms, wrote negatively about Greeks in their

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times, mostly on *Tourkokratia*, where the Turks appear in general as negative and abstract personalities or symbols of despotism.

novels and short stories. Literary texts and memoirs differed in the following respect: the fictional Other that is normally brought on stage in a 'national' context is almost without exception negatively portrayed, whereas the actual one, the one really remembered, is almost always a balanced personality. We can see this in the work of Ömer Seyfettin, Halide Edip Adıvar and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu – three well-known Turkish 'national' authors, as they are called in Turkey, who published their novels in the years 1910-1960. It is also interesting to note that these writers actually praised all Greeks whom they had met in their lives, but portrayed 'Greeks' in general, men and women, as enemies and inferior persons in their fictional narration. [4]

I have been using so far the terms 'positive' and 'negative' to refer to evaluations used by authors to describe the Other, and there is a danger here of reproducing further generalisations. This is why I want to clarify that the novel-protagonists, in several cases, cannot readily be classified as 'good' or 'bad' – and their portrait cannot be easily described as positive or negative. Sometimes the Other is portrayed with positive characteristics, but actually in a neutral and perplexing manner. These are cases where the Other may be presented close to the ethnic Self, preferring 'us' instead of his own ethnic group, 'confessing' the ill-doings of his or her group, voicing 'our' arguments, in short acting as 'our' agent. This very particular Other is effectively devoid of the ethnic characteristics of the abstract Other; he or she is practically assimilated in 'our' group and is not one of 'them' anymore. The author, in effect, uses protagonists like these to make a case against the Other. In this respect, protagonists of this kind seem to be or to act as positive Others, whilst in truth not being exactly representative of most of the (other) Others. I call characters of this kind 'naively positive', since they carry a certain naivety, but also because they present a simplistic approach on behalf of the author. This is a misleading attempt to appear to be acting against nationalistic stereotyping: a supposedly positive Other is created simply to confirm a demonstrable number of expected, stereotypical attributes.[5]

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[4] See Millas (1996). See also Millas (2000) for an analysis of 350 novels of 118 well-established Turkish writers published between the years 1870 and 1998.

[5] 'Naively positive' Turks are encountered often in Greek literature, where their role is to confirm Greek theses and arguments. A typical example is Selim, who appears in the novelette of Viziinos, Moskof Selim, as a sane and good person, who confesses that the Turks, as a nation, are not liable to posses the lands they own and that they should leave them to Greeks and go back to Central Asia. 'Naively positive' Greeks are encountered often in Turkish literature too; the 'good' Greeks in the novels of Halikarnas Balikçisi and Kemal Tahir are almost all of this category.

Turks as abstractions

The negative-and/or-positive Turk in Greek novels is connected to the world-view of the author and the targeted audience. The 'Us vs. Them' polarity is connected to a particular religious and/or ethnic identity; the stereotypes related to this polarity are also closely connected to a certain national history. Most images of the Other in Greek novels reflect a past of diachronic significance, a past that gives meaning to the present, 'our' Greek present. Most Greeks locate themselves in a time continuum: a national existence of many centuries. Without this imagined continuum, past incidents would become isolated and coincidental happenings. Within this context, the Turks also obtain a time-enduring permanence. The 'timeless' existence of the Other (and the interrelation of the Self with this Other) is secured by the name used to define him or her. Greeks often name various states and groups as 'Turks' – such as the Seljuks, the Ottomans, even the Albanians (*Turkalvanoi*) – whereas these groups, in the past, normally used the word 'Turk' either pejoratively and/or to denote nomads.

All of the above elements are incorporated and frequently expressed in the Greek discourse on *Tourkokratia*. Normally *Tourkokratia* refers to the 'four hundred years of bondage';[6] the expressions 'invasion', 'slavery' and 'Turkish yoke' are also used to refer to the same concept. *Tourkokratia* is always unfavourable: in school books, in historiography, in literature, in the discourse promoted by politicians representing the whole political spectrum (from extreme right to the left).[7] In all cases, *Tourkokratia* is presented as the Dark Age of the Greek nation and everything is assessed as negative in this period: the leading Turkish (Ottoman) dignitaries, the legal system, the economic situation, the daily life of the subjects. The Greeks suffer; they are condemned to 'darkness' and

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[6] It is not very clear how one reaches the number 400. Presumably 1453 (capture of Constantinople by the Ottomans) is subtracted from 1830 (the year the modern Greek state was founded), which gives 377 years. Both dates are symbolic. Turkish-speaking groups arrived and gradually established themselves in 'Greek lands' (that is, Byzantine territory) in the eleventh century (symbolically, from 1071). Thessalonica was 'liberated' from Turkish 'occupation' in 1912, and according to some, Turks still occupy Istanbul. So one could as well talk of 800 years of *Tourkokratia.* In any case these calculations make sense only if one is prepared to see the Ottomans as the Turks, and the Byzantines as the Greeks.

[7] There are some rare exceptions. Some religious persons, mostly very opposed to Western (Catholic and Protestant) influences, seem to perceive a less negative East (in comparison to the West). In the writings of Prof. Kitsikis and Presbyter Metallinos, for example, the Turks appear to be preferable to the non-orthodox Westerners. See Kitsikis (1988: 101-111) and Metallinos (1993: 85-89).

backwardness; they are not respected, the Other humiliates them.

There are some illuminating passages from Greek novels related to these 'terrible years of bondage'. The novelist Ilias Venezis (1904-1973), who was born and lived in Anatolia in the earlier part of the twentieth century and had first-hand experiences with Turks, portrayed the Turkish 'Other' realistically – and quite often, positively-in his novels. In his writing, however, he gives special importance to *Tourkokratia*:

> From old times come the memories, the stories and the tears [...] The [Greek] mothers narrated stories of [...] massacres and hunger to their babies to put them to sleep [...] Everything here exists in order to remind us of the past. We are a nation of memories. This is the source of sorrow and of our pride [...] So we address the other side of the Aegean and we say [to the Turks]: 'If you expect us to forget our history, our martyrs, we cannot do that' (Venezis 1979, 156-7).

And indeed, when he writes about 'old' incidents that supposedly took place during the *Tourkokratia*, the Turks are presented as terrible and cruel invaders. Here again the concrete and 'positive' Turks, whom the author met, are in direct contrast with the historical, abstract negative Other.[8] The same author, who clearly believes in the importance of maintaining good relations with the present-day Turks, explicitly states his position vis-à-vis 'forgetting' the past – 'forgetting' is here synonymous with excusing the Turks who had done so many 'terrible things' to the Greeks: 'Hatred is a matter of ethics. Not to forget is a need. If I forget it is as if I betray my country, my parents' (Venezis 1988, 37).

The need to remember and reproduce the 'old sufferings' of the nation caused by the Other are voiced in a novel by Dimitris Vikelas (1835-1908), Loukis Laras (1879), almost a hundred years before Venezis:

> The Turks by massacring, distracting and enslaving the male population, women and children, took care to remind us the unity of our nation, even if we would wish to forget it (p. 18)
> The history of the nation is composed of the history of the persons; and the history of Greek rebirth is not composed only of the achievements of our ancestors on land and at sea, but also of the

[8] Cf. Millas 1998.

> persecutions, the massacres and the humiliations of the unarmed and of the weak [...] (p. 122-123).

There is an additional purpose in reproducing the negative past and the suffering caused by the Turks, as this becomes apparent in the The Sword of Vengeance (1861) by Nikolaos Votiras. It proves to the Westerners that modern Greeks are the descendants of the glorious ancient Hellenes: 'The hero suffered a terrible death bravely, he was impaled and burned alive (by the Turks), and he did not shed a single tear; he proved thus by his bravery that all those who doubt the authenticity of Greek nation, and who do not accept that the modern Greeks are the grandsons of Leonidas, are wrong' (Votiras 1994, 59).

The idea of a 'terrible' and overtly negative *Tourkokratia* provides useful images that sustain the ideology of the Greek nation state, nurturing the values that preserve national identity. A negative past, presented as the outcome of a problematic relationship with Others, is required for a number of related reasons: it justifies the revolt against those Others, that is, the Greek Revolution (or War of Independence) in 1821, the existence of a sovereign Greek state, the personal and communal sacrifices made in the past for the nation. It also explains why Greece is not as advanced as other European states or as successful as its ancestors, the ancient Greeks; in other words, through their problematic relationship with the Greeks in the past, the Turks appear as the scapegoats for what is wrong about the Greeks in the present (Herzfeld 1987).

It would be wrong to interpret this 'negative' image of the Turk as a natural outcome of the period in question, that is the period of the Ottoman rule, even though wars, social unrest, revolts, famine and repression did indeed characterize some periods of this era. The appearance of hostile personalities in such a setting is not surprising. It is not however the recurrence of the negative Other that creates the stereotypes; it is the striking absence of positive Turks. The Turks in the texts which refer to this period are, in their totality, negative. This stereotypy is accomplished also by avoiding references to women, children and the elderly; their absence aids in the legitimisation of hostile actions of the Greeks against 'negative' Turks. The readers would otherwise face a profound difficulty in incorporating all of these kinds of different Turks into one single enemy group that is annihilated.

Demirözü (1999) shows that in the novels of Karagatsis, Prevelakis, and Petsalis – all writers who lived in Greece and had not actually encountered Turks – the Turks of *Tourkokratia* are composed of middle-aged, 'negative' males. Even though Greek women appear in the novels referring to this period (and are most

frequently portrayed as mothers, a positive association), Turkish women are rarely encountered, and when this happens, they are never mothers or average personalities, but stereotypical females of pleasure serving the harem. Children appear rarely too, and when this happens they do not show characteristics of their age but are wicked; they are, for instance, arrogant or aggressive, showing by their actions what the Greeks can expect of them. Old people and babies are not represented as part of the Turkish community of *Tourkokratia*.

This extreme negative image of *Tourkokratia* also comes across in Greek historiography. For Paparrigopoulos, the most prestigious Greek historian of the nineteenth century, *Tourkokratia* was a 'disastrous period for Hellenism': the Greek population declined dramatically and Christians were forcibly Islamicized (Paparrigopoulos, 495). According to Vakalopoulos (1973), a well-known liberal historian of the twentieth century, during *Tourkokratia*:

> oppression, terror, enlisting in the army and various extra taxes [...] were enforced. What irritates the Turks is the fact that the Christians are always on the side of their enemies, helping their enemies, always ready to revolt. That is why the Turks are especially against the Greeks. The Greeks are terrified that they will be slaughtered in their churches [...] The whole of Macedonia suffers. Whole areas are deserted and lie fallow. Many inhabitants choose to become Muslims to avoid these misfortunes. This is repeated every time the horizon darkens (p. 86).

The reader understands, and also feels as he reads this text in the present tense, that the horizon gets darker every time the Turks appear. Marxist historians portray a completely negative *Tourkokratia* too. In 1957 Kordatos, another historian, writes in his conclusion: 'When the Turks conquered Asia Minor and the Balkans they neither brought with them a high technology nor did they develop the means of production. On the contrary, they were an underdeveloped people in all aspects of social and political life [...] So, the non-Muslim peasant had not a single happy day. His life was a misery' (p. 149). Svoronos (1957), a modern Marxist historian, maintains a similar position: '[The Greek] peasant could not enjoy a single day. His life was a misery. Especially when he did not own his own land he was twice a slave. Slave of the Turkish invader and slave of the landowner' (p. 149).

It is very hard to find any positive, even neutral, attributes of *Tourkokratia* in these texts. Apart from the context, the language used to describe the period is

dramatic and emotively rhetorical. In this respect, historiography and literary approaches seem to merge and supplement each other; the demarcation line between writing history and novels becomes blurred. Passion, sentimental involvement, identification with the past generations of 'Greeks' and negative feelings against the 'Turks' (who are presented as the source of all mishaps) are common in both types of texts.

Concrete experiences with Turks

As with the Turks as novel protagonists, so too the notion of *Tourkokratia* in Greek novels tends to be strongly negative in the abstract and less so when referring to actual experience. Even though *Tourkokratia*, the Turkish/Ottoman rule, is generally referred to in negative terms in Greek novels, the actual experience of living in an Ottoman-dominated world is sometimes discussed in milder or positive terms. The interplay of an imaginary versus a real Other is encountered anew in the case of *Tourkokratia*. Some novels that appeared only a few years after Greeks had fought to free themselves from 'Turkish bondage' present Greek heroes returning to Ottoman lands to find happiness and wealth, as in the following examples.

Alexandros Soutsos (1803-1863) in his novel *The Exile* (1834), which was published only five years after what had become known as the 'liberation' of the Greeks from *Tourkokratia*, narrates how his protagonist ends up in Istanbul, where he had lived 'his childhood free of troubles' (p. 110), and how he buys the house of his father anew, having decided to live there thereafter (Soutsos 1999, p. 209). Pitzipios (1802-1869) in *The Orphan of Chios* (1839) narrates the life of the Greeks of Smyrna and Istanbul. Turks do not appear in these cities, especially Turks who cause problems to the Greeks. Some Turks, when they do appear – for example Aine, a Turkish girl (253) – are introduced in order to help the Greeks. In *The Ape Ksuth* (1848) Turks do not influence the life of the Greeks in Smyrna.

The author Grigorios Paleologos (1794-1844) settled in Istanbul right after the liberation of Greece and published his novels there. In The Painter (1842) he narrates how his hero, Filaretos, who moves to Istanbul and chooses to live there permanently 'will always earn enough money to live in comfort with his beloved Hariklia' (p. 296). He also praises the Ottoman government because it can control gambling, and he adds that in the Ottoman State there is more freedom than in many states in Europe (p. 226). This discourse of a real 'Turkish rule' which secures a normal and even a happy life to the Greeks neither seems to cause any reactions on the part of the Greek readers, nor does it suggest a contradiction to

them, which needs to be explained. The two faces of *Tourkokratia* are allowed to co-exist side by side.

The happy life of Greeks in Turkish lands, i.e. in Anatolia and in Istanbul, are narrated in later novels too, for example in the novels of Venezis, Mirivilis, Politis, Sotiriou, Iordanidou, all of them authors who lived in Asia Minor and met the 'Other'. In all of these cases 'Turkish rule' is concrete and real; it is experienced by the authors, and the protagonists of their novels, directly and personally. However, this kind of agreeable Turkish government is not called *Tourkokratia*; this name is reserved only for a negatively-experienced rule. It is as if the rule that is not overtly negative cannot be called *Tourkokratia*.

The novels of the above-mentioned authors were written mostly in the decades of 1920 to 1950, and the Turks appear in them against a turbulent background; the Balkan Wars (1912) and the Greek-Turkish war of 1919 to 1922 are mostly the settings where the Greeks meet the Other, although the 'memory' of *Tourkokratia* is not the main subject of these narratives.[9] The generalized Turk is often presented as a nationalist fighting against 'ourselves' (the Greeks), but often, next to this Turk, some additional 'positive' Others make their presence felt. Most importantly, there are also some Greeks who appear to act like the 'negative' Turks; here, the demarcation line is not founded on an ethnic basis and all kinds of personalities appear on both sides.

The Turks in these novels behave unfavourably, but only because of war. A Turk's cruelty, for example, does not originate from a national characteristic or from the Turk's nature: the suffering caused by both sides is the result of the circumstances of war. The intended message is that 'war is the guilty party', as Dido Sotiriou (1911-2004) points out at the end of her book *Matomena Homata* (1962; 'Earth in blood', known as in English as *Farewell to Anatolia*). In these novels we meet, maybe for the first time in Greek literature, the 'average Turk', the ordinary citizen, who is not the conqueror, a person in the service of the 'state'. The average Turk, like the average Greek, struggles for his or her own survival and for his or her immediate family. There are even cases where the rich Greeks in Anatolia (during *Tourkokratia*) exploit the poor Turks economically. Turkish women are portrayed as working hard, side by side with their husbands; there are no harems.[10]

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[9] The expression 'ethnic memory' (in Greek *ethniki mnimi*) is of course misleading. People do not merely remember a certain past, they are taught to remember the past. The term 'memory' of the nation infers an imaginary national continuum.

[10] See also Demirozu 1999: 284-287.

These writers who present a balanced approach vis-à-vis the Turkish rule may still present the abstract, historical *Tourkokratia* as negative when they refer to 'the old times'. The work of Venezis is a typical example of this approach; he often relates to his personal experience with the Turks, drawing a portrait of the Other as an ordinary, and even positive, fellow human, who is in some cases superior to the Greek, more just and honest.[11] However, when Venezis returns to narrating the history of old generations in *Tourkokratia*, the Other is demonised and stereotyped (Millas 1998; 2001: 354-359). In fact, a negative personal memory of *Tourkokratia* does exist in the minds of these authors; and when a Turkish rule that has been experienced in actuality appears to be satisfactory, or at least not very negative, it is simply not referred to as *Tourkokratia*.

Surprisingly enough, the abstract, negatively portrayed *Tourkokratia* on the one hand, and the concrete and positively-represented (or balanced) Ottoman rule on the other, simultaneously coexist in the narration of many authors. An extreme example of this simultaneity is found in a primary school textbook used in the 1980s, which shows that the phenomenon of the dual evaluation of Ottoman rule is not limited to literature, but that it has a social and a national basis. The textbook starts with the suffering that the Turks have imposed upon 'us' (the Greeks): 'The Turks, because they were wild and uncivilised, spread disaster on their way and they did not render any rights to the enslaved nation [of the Greeks]'. Then, the misery of the people who are referred to as Greeks is further emphasised: they were forced by threats on their lives to convert to Islam, Turks grabbed children away from their families and enlisted them in the Turkish (Ottoman) army, and there was no justice for the Greeks, who were not allowed to study, or even to speak their own language, and they suffered many ills.

Paradoxically, in the same school textbook, an additional chapter, entitled 'The way enslaved Hellenism was organised', makes mention of the privileges of the Greeks in Ottoman times. It is clearly stated that the Greeks had religious privileges, that the Church had all the rights it enjoyed in the Byzantine period, and that the Patriarch had jurisdiction over the internal affairs of the Greek population. Turks, it is also mentioned, did not even have the right to arrest a priest without the consent of the Patriarch, and the Greeks had some political privileges too. They were allowed to run their own affairs (e.g., collecting taxes) and organise their schools and the teaching curriculum; indeed, it is stated, the Greeks had many very good schools. As in the novels examined above, these two mutually exclusive representations of the Ottoman rule co-exist within the same textbooks

[11] His short story 'Lios' is a typical example of this approach (see Venezis 1967). For an analysis of this short story, see also Millas 1998 and 2001: 354-357.

without any further explanation (Diamantopoulou & Kyriazopoulou 1984).

Tourkokratia and the resurrection of the state

In addition to the themes discussed in the previous sections, there is a particular historical and cultural theme, very popular in Greek society, which adds meaningfulness to the 'story of the nation', and consequently to the story of *Tourkokratia*. This is the story of Christ, a very legitimate narrative that presents a series of well known divine and human interventions which, in turn, as in the story of the 'nation', influence people's ideas about their present and future lives, not only in this world, but also in the next one. The story of Christ is associated with metaphysical concerns and a search for immortality; the story of *Tourkokratia* is often narrated and perceived in terms of the metaphorical framework of the story of Christ. Thus, national and religious identities are united in the same story motif.

Life is twofold, it is argued: darkness before Christ and hope after Him. The same seems to apply to the story of the Greek nation: Greeks are presented as living in total darkness in *Tourkokratia* from before the Liberation War of 1821, until the day they established a nation state. In both cases the happy incident is called in Greek 'Resurrection' (*Anastasi*),[12] and there is a similar cyclical story plot: first a fulfilled life in Heaven (as in glorious Ancient Greece), followed by the sin and the punishment. (Byzantines, as well as the Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, frequently presented Ottoman domination as a divinely-ordained punishment for the sins of the community).[13] Then we have the suffering (of Christ and of the Greeks) and afterwards the sacrifice (of Christ and of the Greek heroes). This is followed by the Resurrection, of God and of the nation (*ethnos*). Naturally, life after death is secured, both for the Christians as well as for the Greeks (through the 'eternal' nature of the nation).[14]

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[12] *Anastasi*, meaning 'coming to life anew', resurrection, is used both for Christ and for the nation, the Liberation War of 1821 and the establishing of the national state. The phrase '*anastasi* of the nation' is commonly used in Greek discourse.

[13] See for example *Patriki Didaskalia* of 1798, which originated from the Orthodox Church.

[14] According to Hugh Seton-Watson 'nationalism has become an ersatz religion. The nation, as understood by the nationalists, is a substitute of god; nationalism of this sort might

The grand narrative of the Greeks is not a new story. It is based on an older religious motif that is easily understood by the greater community, the idea that eternal life is secured for all those who have suffered and persevered (following the example of Christ's sacrifice). The martyrs and the heroes of the nation have suffered for the sake of the continuing existence of the nation, and are thus, like saints, respected on similar grounds. The heroes of the war of 1821 against the Turks are frequently referred to as *ethnomartyres*, 'martyrs of the nation'. They have chosen willingly to die for a belief, as did the early Christians Saints, which is why the Church of Greece has officially proclaimed some heroes of the Liberation War as martyrs. The myth of the nation cannot adequately fulfil its 'meaning' without a negative *Tourkokratia*; why should one rejoice in the formation of the Greek nation-state if life before the state was pleasant? How else could one justify the sacrifices made for the nation? Is it possible to have resurrection without suffering, reward for the many without the sacrifice of the few? The rhetoric of nationalism draws extensively upon the story of Christ and his suffering.

Greek metaphors that describe national sacrifices borrow themes from religious imagery. Heroes die 'on the altar of the home country' (sto vomo tis patrithas), and historical developments are often presented as predestined.[15] Those who do not agree with the general ideology of the state are treated as traitors, who like Judas have betrayed their benefactor. Furthermore, the Greek War of Independence is officially presented as having started on 25 March, which according to the Orthodox calendar is the Annunciation Day (Heralding of Christ). This date is nowadays a national holiday celebrated with devotion, despite available historical evidence demonstrating that nothing of particular importance happened on 25 March 1821. But this very date stands for the beginning of a process of suffering that brought about the end of *Tourkokratia*, the resurrection of the nation, the end of suffering and the start of eternal life for the Greek state and its heroes.

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be called *ethnolatry*' (Seton-Watson 1977: 465).

[15] The poetic verse 'it was the will of God that Constantinople should fall into the hands of Turks' (*Itan thelima Theou i poli na tourkepsi*) is well known among Greeks.

Conclusion

> There is no simple gap between experience and stereotypy. Stereotypy is a device for looking at things comfortably; since, however, it feeds on deep-lying unconscious sources, the distortions which occur are not to be corrected merely by taking a real look. Rather, experience itself is predetermined by stereotypy [...] (Adorno 1982: 309).

In my youth, myself an ethnic minority member in a wider Turkish community, trying to come to terms with my immediate environment with respect to the nature of the Turks, I came face to face with contradicting messages: the real Turks I met were ordinary people with their merits and vices, much unlike the stereotypical caricatures of the generalized, singular Turk promoted in the depictions of my elders. This discrepancy, and the constant questioning on my part of the stereotypes that underpin it, triggered a lengthy research and a life-long curiosity.

Were the real people I met simply anomalies in the timeless, imagined community of generalizable ethnic Others? Are we expected to abandon our world-view, and the paradigms or beliefs that sustain it, when confronted with some exceptions or contradictions? How do people deal with real-life experiences that do not conform to nationalist ideologies? Adorno believes that 'one cannot "correct" stereotypy by experience; one has to reconstitute the capacity for having experiences in order to prevent the growth of ideas which are malignant in the most literal, clinical sense' (1982: 309). The authors examined here have skilfully avoided reconstituting their understanding of their own experiences. They resisted contradiction by compartmentalising their perceptions of the Turks in parallel, but not overlapping, domains of experience.

At the level of national experience they reproduced the story of the Greek state, the negative stereotypes of the (abstract) 'Other', and an unfavourable portrait of '*Tourkokratia*' (the Turkish rule). At the level of personal experiences they were forc-ed to recognize (or remember) a less dangerous kind of Turk, who could be like the Self: a man, a woman, a child, an elderly person. Whilst writing their novels they kept these two levels of experience separate from each other, and their world did not topple over in the face of contradiction; it was readapted or diverted around the obstacles posed by the interpretation of the Other. The friendly Turks of their memories were transformed into some 'naively positive' characters, agents or admirers of the Self, who occasionally verified the eternal truths of the nation's timeless reality.

In this respect, not only the abstract, but also the 'concrete' Turks of the

Greek novelists work as metaphors that sustain and nourish a national identity, as this was understood during a particular historical period and within a given ethnic community. Authors with a well-constructed and circumscribed national identity imagine and ardently maintain a belief in a certain type of Other that adds meaning to their consciousness. When they decide to reproduce the world in 'a realistic' manner they do not prioritize their personal experience (the particulars), but choose to represent reality in abstract and essentialist terms, which suits their ideology better.[16] And when they are forced to account for the particular – in our case, the 'concrete' Other who is similar to the Self – they conflate particularity with essentialism. The friendly Turks of real life are good, or good enough, to the degree that they are represented as naively endorsing an ideal Greek national existence.

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[16] The belief that literary texts present the 'essence' (the universals) beyond the 'facts' (the singulars) is at least as old as Aristotle. In his Poetics he wrote: '[...] it will be seen that the poet's function is to describe, not the things that happened, but a kind of thing that might happen, i.e., what is possible as being probable or necessary. The distinction between historian and poet is not in the one writing prose and the other verse [...]; it consists really in this, that the one describes the thing that has been, and the other a kind of thing that might be. Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars' (Aristotle 1954: 234/1451). Hence, authors of novels in their depiction of the Other seem to voice the 'universals', as these are conceived by them, irrespectively of 'singulars'.

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