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CONCLUSION

In the beginning of this study, we asserted that Turkish utopian literature is little known; that it has not received its due share of attention in Turkish literary history; and that many works in this tradition have languished in obscurity. Furthermore, we stated that the Balkan War of 1912-1913 has been overshadowed in Turkish historiography by the First World War and the War of Independence, and that it has not been sufficiently appreciated despite having been a defeat which had a profound influence on later generations. The present dissertation has aimed at performing a comprehensive examination of the utopian literary corpus – which furnishes invaluable insight into the Ottoman Turkish political, cultural, and literary history in the 19th and 20th centuries – and at bringing these works to light in the process. In addition, it has made the claim that the Balkan War represents a significant rupture in the trajectory of this literature.

At this point, examining the subject from a broader perspective, we can discuss some of the findings of this study, addressing the similarities and differences among these works from different time periods – or, to put it another way, their continuities and discontinuities.

A New Genre in Turkish Literature?

As I hope this study has demonstrated – and despite widespread beliefs to the contrary – there exist a rich collection of works of Turkish literature which contain visions of the future, and which could be termed “utopian”.

In terms of genre, perhaps not all of these could be termed utopias in the full sense of the word; nonetheless, within the framework of the definition of utopia we developed in Chapter 2.1., these works are products of the modernization process, promote the notion of progress, and stipulate that this progress should take place in a rational manner. All of these works produce the “defamiliarization effect” which is required by utopias, either through the use of a past or future timeframe or through the use of an imaginary location. Moreover, they aim at evoking a desire to live in such a society on the part of the reader. At the same time, there are two more prerequisites for a text to be considered a utopia according to this same definition. First, it must contain a viewpoint which is explicitly or implicitly critical of the existing social order; second, it must develop a vision of an ideal society as an alternative to this order. Not all the texts which we have considered meet both of these two requirements in their fullest sense.

Indeed, a characteristic shared by works of this utopian literature is that their authors are fully committed to an existing political project, and have written these works in the service of that project. The time periods which saw the proliferation of

literary utopias in Turkey – i.e., the three waves of utopian literature which I mentioned earlier – corroborate this principle. Utopian authors endeavor to turn their political projects into a hegemonic ideology which has been internalized by society. The common features of these political projects are inevitably reflected in the utopias in question. Consequently, Turkish utopias in the periods under consideration are mostly top-down, homogenizing, totalitarian projects which are imposed upon society. In other words, what these works have in common is that they are “state-centered utopias”.

This may partially explain the fact that the works we have examined in this study are so little known. And indeed, the vast majority of these works are not widely recognized texts with a place in the Turkish literary canon. While novels such as *The New Turan* and *Ankara* are more prominent (due to the fame of their authors), this is not the case with most other utopian texts, which are unlikely to be found in literary anthologies, coursebooks, etc. In fact, it is thanks to the present study that some of these works have come to light, or been analyzed, for the first time.

As we mentioned in the Introduction, this is partly due to the way that the concept of “utopia” is perceived in Turkish culture. However, another reason undoubtedly has to do with the monistic political culture of the society in which these texts are written. There is generally an increase in texts of this kind during periods of crisis regarding the regime or the political and social system/order. At the end of such periods, as stability returns and the existing order is consolidated, it can be assumed that society will not approve of visions which diverge from that order, will not wish to recall them, and thus will not be encouraged to reprint them and perpetuate their existence. One could hardly expect otherwise from a political culture in which authoritarianism and totalitarianism hold sway. For instance, the newly established Turkish republic might use state resources to print the books of Müfide Ferit Tek in great numbers; however, there would have been no chance of reprinting the works of the Islamist Mustafa Nazım Erzurumi, or of Ali Kemal, the opponent of the National Struggle who ended up being lynched.

Balkan War and the Traumatic Transformation of the Visions of the Future

Departing from the concept of “cultural trauma” as defined by Jeffrey C. Alexander as a phenomenon which arises in the group consciousness of societies faced with a painful event, and which produces a fundamental change in their future identities, this dissertation asserts that the trauma of the Balkan War was transformed into a narrative in the course of creating a new identity.

This study offered an analysis of the conceptual elements of this trauma narrative specific to the Balkan War, by focusing on the examples of the narrativization of this trauma in literature. As a matter of fact, in the aftermath of the Balkan defeat, the mission imparted to literature was to narrativize this trauma, to describe a new national identity, to evoke a desire of attaining a new national ideal, and to depict the shining future which people will experience if it is adopted. Hence many of the utopian works of the post-Balkan War period revolved around themes that we summarized

under the tags: *Imperial Blindness*; *Shock and Shame*; *Hope for a Savior or Leader*; *Awakening*; *Never Forget*; *Hatred*; *Rancor and Revenge*; *Envyng the Enemy*; *Need for a National Ideal*.

In the literary narrativization of the Balkan War trauma, the humiliation of the enemy before the War was a most important narrative element. It became evident that Muslim Turkish intellectuals' habit of looking down upon the enemy prior to the Balkan War – a tendency we have termed “*imperial blindness*” – magnified the shock produced by Turkey's later defeat. In the first stage, this defeat manifested itself as a great psychological collapse, sorrow, hopelessness, *shock and shame*. Furthermore, an expectation of a Mahdi-like figure; the search and *hope for a savior*, leader, or guide came to the fore. Another means of saving the country from destruction is the call to awaken. The theme of *awakening* can be encountered in numerous texts, in many different senses: an awakening from a lethargic state, from laziness, and from ignorance; or an awakening to a national identity. Another important component in the cultural trauma narrative and in the creation of a new identity is the call *never to forget* the catastrophe in question. Thus, the events which have been experienced will function as a “foundational catastrophe,” will prevent a recurrence of the same situation, and will keep alive the feelings of *hatred* which are necessary to take *revenge*. Indeed, hatred is one of the concepts to which people most often have recourse in these circumstances, and whose effects are most permanent.

The trauma experienced by the Ottomans paved the way for the birth of a Turkish “literature of hatred,” so to speak, with the feeling of hatred being used as one of the most vital elements in this new identity. Accordingly, a desire for revenge is also put forth as a national goal; the possibility of future revenge is one of the ways of enduring the shame experienced by the nation. The most striking element in this new discourse is the phenomenon of *envyng and “emulating” the enemy* by whom one has been defeated, whom one hates, and against whom one harbors a desire for revenge. While this might seem like a contradictory state of affairs, actually it is quite consistent. According to nationalist authors of this period, Turkey's enemies had already created their own identity, one equivalent to the new national identity which Turkey sought to create; as this had caused them to be successful in the Balkan War, it would be prudent to take them as a model. Another key point in the success of enemies was their possession of a “*national goal*”; only by possessing such a goal can a new identity be successful. This goal is crucial in placing elements like awakening, remembrance, hatred, and revenge within a specific system. In the literature of this period, we encounter a good deal of discussion about what this national goal would be; thus, the need for literary texts containing a vision of the future arises precisely at this stage.

We can better delineate the peculiar characteristics of these post-Balkan War visions of the future by comparing and contrasting them with the ones produced before the Balkan War and with those written in the Republican period.

Works Written Before and after the Balkan War: Continuities

In the pre-Balkan War works we observed that all of the authors in question devised their visions of the future as tools to reflect their political projects, viewing them as a means of creating material manifestations of their ideological positions. Similarly, we saw that (some exceptions aside) their fundamental goal was the survival and future prosperity of the Ottoman Empire, and that an inclusive, optimistic, more gentle tone – devoid of violence or hatred – therefore prevailed in these works.

One point which these works have in common with the post-Balkan War works is that they are all focused on the Ottoman State; none of them contain a vision which encompasses the whole world, or all of humanity. Besides, all of these texts have two fixed goals for the future: to become wealthy, and to become powerful. The limits of wealth and power are also set with reference to the West. In this sense, it is impossible not to concur with Uğur Tanyeli's conclusion that what is envisioned as Turkey's future is present-day reality in the West.

In terms of how this power manifested itself materially, there are some striking common features in these works. For instance, a Bosphorus Bridge (or bridges) can be encountered with startling frequency. In fact, this is a part of a more comprehensive dream: that of a widespread, smoothly operating transportation network employing advanced technology. The authors' greatest dream is to have a simple, comfortable, and fast system of intracity and intercity transportation, with different vehicles and different pathways. Airplanes are the epitome of this system, and we see them used in many texts as a means of everyday transportation. Another common characteristic of these texts is a concern with population growth. While an excessively large population seems like a problem today, for the authors' era it was something to be desired; authors of different ideologies were united in wishing for a large, healthy population. In similar fashion, the phenomena of over-development and industrialization were universally desired. Moreover, an effective communications system is another aspiration for this ideal future.

And, in nearly every work, education is put forth as the key element in arriving at this ideal future which the authors desire. Other requirements, such as hard work, national unity, etc., are often mentioned; however, these works make clear just what a pressing issue the country's lack of education was for intellectuals of the period.

Works Written before and after the Balkan War: Discontinuities

On the other hand, works written after the Balkan War have fundamental differences from those written before; these largely have to do with the consequences of the Balkan Catastrophe and the trauma narrative it engendered. Arguably, the biggest difference is the abandonment of the ideal of Ottomanism in its erstwhile form. After the war, people no longer defended the claim that individuals of all languages, religions, and ethnicities could be held together through one Ottoman identity. The fundamental wish was now to achieve a more homogeneous population. Thus, in these works, Islamic or Turkic unity begins to take ideological precedence over Ottomanism.

The concepts and themes such as shame, awakening, hatred etc. that are detailed in Chapter 3.2, and referred to throughout this study, also shed light on this difference. The ideal society envisioned in post-Balkan War texts is a far more militarized society; in contrast to the earlier era, the primary goal is not modernization, but survival. Leading intellectuals should hold up a national ideal to society and should rouse all its people; the events they have experienced should not be forgotten, hatred should be kept alive, and – in the end – society should take revenge on its enemies. This state of affairs led to a radical change in the tone and atmosphere of these works. Extreme tendencies such as xenophobia, hatred, racism, irredentism, and revanchism, which were previously unheard of, became the chief trends to be projected onto the future.

In this period, there also began to be a change in Turkey's perception of the West. Before the war, the West had been a model of development and progress. It still remained the basic reference-point for modernization; however, as it was thought that the West had pursued a two-faced policy during the Balkan Defeat, it also became a focal point for people's animosity. Thus, through this pathological attitude, the West came to be both envied and hated. Indeed, in most of these works, the Turkey of the future has become as powerful and wealthy as the West is in its own day, while the West is depicted as poor, weak, and fallen into great need. Thus, the existing hierarchy of East and West is reversed in visions of the future found in works of this period. The means by which this is accomplished turns up in many works as the theme of "the East uniting under the leadership of the Turks." This unity can be ethnic or religious in nature. In either case, the peoples of the East are saved from colonization and backwardness; the great development which they achieve under the leadership of the Turks brings about a state which is much stronger and wealthier than Europe. Visions of the future flourished precisely in proportion to the scale of the trauma suffered due to the Balkan Defeat, and the likelihood of the country's annihilation.

We could mention an interesting reason why post-Balkan War visions of the future display these sorts of characteristics. One significant fact that this study reveals is that nearly all the authors who wrote these works after the war (as we have stated in the relevant chapters) had some connection to the Balkans, either being of Balkan roots, or having been born themselves in Balkan countries, or having grown up and/or worked there. This state of affairs meant that the woes experienced by the nation simultaneously became personal sufferings; it also set the harsh, bitter tone of these authors' narratives. Erik Jan Zürcher has shown that during the First World War – and especially during the period of the National Struggle and the establishment of the Republic – intellectuals, officers, and politicians who had experienced the Balkan tragedy as a personal misfortune would play a decisive role in setting national policies.⁵¹⁷ Now we see a similar picture in the field of literature. Thus, these authors –

⁵¹⁷ A striking similarity can be seen in the domain of political leadership. In his article "The Young Turks – Children of the borderlands?" Erik Jan Zürcher shows that almost all the Young Turk politicians, officers and administrators were from the Balkan provinces, and hence, after the Balkan War, they lost their ancestral homes. (Eric Jan Zürcher, "The Young Turks – Children of the

these producers of culture – served as a bridge between the Balkan War period and the Republic, and the transmission of this trauma became a cornerstone of Turkey’s new collective identity.

Post-Balkan War Works and Republican Works: Discontinuities

Nevertheless, there are no direct references to the Balkan War in the utopian works of the Republican period which we have briefly mentioned in Chapter 5.11. One could list numerous reasons for this, such as the wish to forget the Balkan Defeat during the Republican period; the wish to build a new national identity on victory and pride, not trauma; the desire to make a clean break with the CUP cadres; a tendency to completely demonize the pre-Republican, Ottoman past; and the fact that the Islamist emphasis so often found in post-Balkan War visions of the future would have been unwelcome during the Republican period. Indeed, one can see specific categorical differences in utopian works of the 1930s, when the country was moving towards the goal of hegemonizing the single-party regime. For instance, a broader ideological scope is noticeable in works written prior to the Republican period, while the options in works of the Republican period itself are more limited. There is no work which proposes an alternative order to replace Kemalism. The differences among these works only arise through their emphasis on different tendencies within Kemalist ideology, such as nationalism, villagism, and Westernism. Kemalist utopias⁵¹⁸ no longer make survival their goal; rather, they adopt aims such as national unity, development, and progress. Moreover, tendencies which did not exist in earlier works – contempt for the Ottoman past, an inimical attitude towards Islam, and the cult of Atatürk – are widespread in Kemalist utopias. Unlike visions of the future written immediately after the Balkan War – which fantasize about a great empire spanning the entire East – Kemalist utopias contain more modest visions of the future which are rooted in their present spot. None of them dream of expanding the country’s existing borders.

Post-Balkan War Works and Republican Works: Continuities

Despite all these discontinuities, when one considers their basic underlying tendencies, one can also see a definite continuity in several specific areas between Kemalist utopias and earlier ones. The Republic’s legacy of the trauma caused by the Balkan Defeat can be seen in tendencies like a desire for wealth and power; a hesitant, love-hate relationship with the West; a longing for a homogeneous population; an enmity towards democracy and sympathy for a Jacobin, authoritarian regime; an outlook focused on the state rather than the individual; the vision of an organicist

borderlands?” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 9/1-2 (2003): 275-286.) and in another article, he states that a significant portion of the core leadership of the Turkish Republic in its first 20 years came from the Balkans. (Erik Jan Zürcher, “How Europeans adopted Anatolia and discovered Turkey,” *European Review* 13/3 (2005): 379-394.)

⁵¹⁸ Engin Kılıç, “Kemalist Perspectives in the Early Republican Literary Utopias,” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no: 36 (Spring 2007): 69.

society; and a preference for centralism. In this sense, the continuity between administrative cadres before and after the establishment of the Republic also meant a continuity in ideological, cultural, and cognitive processes. The trauma narrative of the Balkan War played a key role in this process; the woes, fears, and longings which are the main elements of this narrative – as is reflected in visions of the future from this period – left deep marks on the policies which shaped the young Republic.

Final Word

This study has aimed at bringing to light and defining a field which currently does not exist in Turkish cultural and literary history. The goals of this thesis have included a description of Ottoman Turkish utopian literature, its history, characteristics, stages, and breakpoints; its transformation over time; its relationship with political movements; and findings and analysis regarding works in this genre. Its attempt to shine light on the existence of this field, and the relevant works of literature – and to link these to the literary, cultural, and intellectual history of Ottoman and Republican Turkey – can be regarded as a gain for scholarship. It is hoped that this study will play a pioneering role for further work in this field.

