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SPACE, MEMORY AND IDENTITY: THE MEMORY OF THE ASIA MINOR SPACE IN GREEK NOVELS OF THE 1960S

Introduction

One of the milestones of 20th century Greek national narrative is the Asia Minor Catastrophe, i.e. the defeat of the Greek Army in the Greek-Turkish war (1919-1922) and the resulting wave of refugees of Greeks from Asia Minor (*Rum* in Ottoman terms) to the Greek state. The object of this study is to analyse why and how during the forty-year anniversary of this event certain novels appear to commemorate the Asia Minor space and identity: *Ματωμένα Χώματα* [Bloodied Earth, transl. as *Farewell Anatolia*] by Dido Soteriou (1909-2004); *Στου Χατζηφράγκου* [*Stou Hatzifrangou, In the Hatzifrangou Quarter*] by Kosmas Politis (1888-1974); *Το Αϊβαλί, η πατρίδα μου* [*Aivali, My Homeland*] by Fotis Kondoglou, all published in 1962; and *Λωξάνδρα* [*Loxandra*] by Maria Iordanidou (1897-1989), published in 1963. While literature, the novel and especially the novel with historical subject matter, has traditionally been connected to the discourse of nationalism (Brennan 48-49, 52), these texts challenge official nationalistic discourses by commemorating a pre-modern space, which was destroyed by nationalism, and by exploring refugee identity.

The space commemorated, which defines the *Rum* identity, is irrevocably lost and only exists in memory. Thus the familiar becomes *unheimlich* (Bhabha *Introduction* 4 and *DissemiNation* 299, 315.). This loss can be overcome only temporarily by memory and narrative. Narrative attempts to recuperate the loss, in some cases with the awareness that it constructs a “meta-geographical internalised space” (Seyhan 134).

This study will first focus on the historical, cultural and ideological conditions, which led to the 1962 commemoration of the Asia Minor Catastrophe and its centrality in the discourse of the period. It will then explore how the texts present a multiplicity of identities in the space of the Ottoman Empire,

the texts' stance to nationalism and the textual techniques employed to commemorate the lost space.

Historical Framework.

The demise of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of nation-states in the Balkans led to a redefinition of space and identity: the passage from religious identity (*millets*) to national identity (Mazower *The Balkans* 69, 76; Karakasidou 166-171, 238-243). It also meant that certain populations found themselves in minority positions, within institutional frameworks that defined space and identity in essentialist national terms (cf. Todorova 382, 393-398; Karakasidou 238-243). Most of these minorities belonged to ethnic groups, which were the majority in neighbouring states. These kin-states proclaimed themselves as the protectors of such minorities (European Commission for Democracy through Law 16-17).

Thus, these minorities were caught between the suspicion of the state where they lived and the irredentism of their supposed 'fatherland'. They had to negotiate a different identity *vis-à-vis* the dominant nationalistic discourse. The existence of these minorities and the pretext for tensions offered is an essential part of the negative image of the Balkans (Todorova 88-98, 290-300).

Asia Minor Greeks are a case in point. Their presence gave the irredentist pretext for the Greek mandate in Asia Minor under the Sevres Treaty (1919), which resulted to the defeat of Greece in the subsequent war with Turkey. This led to an obligatory exchange of populations (1923). The burning of the city of Smyrna in September 1922 encapsulates these events in the Greek and Turkish national narratives; in Greek public discourse this is termed the Asia Minor Catastrophe (Clogg 93-103).

The refugee experience and identity of 'unredeemed brethren' within the kin-state challenges essentialist nationalist discourses. The cleavage between the natives and the refugees was deep throughout the inter-war period for economic, ethnic and political reasons (Kontogiorgi 50-51, 54-57; Mavrogordatos 182-184, 196, 202-208, 221-225; Clogg 105-106; Karavas 128-129, 133-134, 148; Mazower, *The Refugees and the Economic Crisis* 123).

Refugees emphasised their Greekness, as a claim to the imagined community of Greece and to the material aid provided by the Greek state. However, they still widely employ the term 'homeland' referring to Asia Minor as opposed to their present place of residence (Karakasidou 258-263). This highlights the in-between state of their identity and the role of locality in its formation (cf. Todorova 385). This ambivalent aspect of the term 'homeland' is crucial in the literary texts examined in this essay and highlights their attitude towards the discourse of nationalism.

The Asia Minor Catastrophe constituted a watershed in Greek history and consciousness. Literary representations of life in Asia Minor and of the refugee experience played a crucial role in that. In that framework, the refugee testimonial narratives published in the 1920s as a challenge to the Greek literary establishment were well received: *To nóúμερο 31328* [*Number 31328*] (1924 and revised 1931), by Ilias Venezis (1904-1973); *Ιστορία ενός αιχμαλώτου* [*A Prisoner of War's Story*] (1929), by Stratis Doukas (1895-1983). In the 1930s the discourse of testimony entered the literary mainstream and acquired more nationalistic overtones (Nikolopoulou 72-75, 82). Following that trend, in the 1940s two autobiographical texts refer to Asia Minor, adopting the perspective of a child narrator, which emphasises the text's timeless and mythical dimension and accentuates the element of nostalgia in the face of the Second World War: *Λεωνής* [*Leonis*] (1940) by Yorgos Theotokas (1905-1966) and *Αιολική Γη* [*Eolian Land*] by Venezis (1943). The refugee experience itself has not been as popular a subject matter. An exception is *Οι πρώτες ρίζες* [*First Roots*] (1936) by Tatiana Stavrou (1899-1990) and Venezis' *Γαλήνη* [*Serenity*] (1939). It is noteworthy that the latter, which does not focus on tensions with the locals, was much more well read.

The literary representations of the refugee experience and the use of testimonial discourse triggered the collection of Asia Minor folk songs and refugee testimonies in the 1930s as a medium of narrative recuperation of the lost space and culture (Petropoulou 119). The Centre for Asia Minor Studies (CAMS) evolved out of this project and in the post-war period enjoyed state funding (Kitromilidis).

During the post-war period, refugee identity was mostly identified with the Left in political terms; in cultural terms it was mostly shaped by victimisation (Karakasidou 262). Nevertheless, previous anniversaries of the Asia Minor Catastrophe had not acquired such a public or ideological dimension as the 1962 forty-year anniversary. The following section examines the circumstances that led to this.

The Cultural and Political Background of the 1962 Anniversary of the Asia Minor Catastrophe.

The act of remembering the past always takes place from the perspective of the present (Bertaux-Wiame 258). The forty-year anniversary of the Asia Minor Catastrophe in 1962 had different meaning for different social groups. Refugee organizations traditionally commemorated it as a means of identity-construction (cf. Tonkin 135) and pressure concerning pending issues of refugee settlement. Nevertheless, in 1962 the commemoration became more public through articles in the press, magazine special issues and the publication of the novels, which will be examined here. This section will outline the

framework of the anniversary, examining how the social memory of the events was negotiated by different social and political groups (cf. Collard 75).

In the decade after the end of the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) with the defeat of the Left and persecution of its supporters, the discourse of the Left was banned from the public sphere. Anti-communism, under the guise of nationalism, became state ideology. The nation was identified with the non-Communists (Tsoucalas 329-330). Therefore, culture and literature became the main vehicle that allowed the Left to function in the public sphere (Apostolidou 118).

The 1960s were marked by tensions between a democratic, westernised and consumerist trend and the forces, which feared that political freedom would result in a communist 'danger'. Cultural activity flourished. The Left attempted to shape a narrative of the recent past that would vindicate its political choices. The narrative of the 1940s was dominated by the state-promoted discourses, despite attempts to reclaim national resistance for the Left in the early 1960s. Nevertheless, the narrative of the 1922 Catastrophe was not under such restrictions. State-promoted post-war narratives on the event toned down the role of the Entente powers and interpreted the events as the result of national strife (Koulouri A38). They also silenced the negative reception of refugees by the native Greeks, constructing an epic discourse of victimisation.

In the framework of the Cold War, communist countries to the north rather than Turkey had become the main national enemy. Moreover, in the wake of the 1960 Zurich Treaty regarding Cyprus, the right-wing government faced criticism for compromising national interests to the Turks. Thus it attempted to silence problems between the two countries, which had culminated in 1955 with the riots against Istanbul Greeks (Clogg 154).

Therefore, the anniversary of the Catastrophe was an awkward case for the government. State institutions such as the University or the Academy of Athens did not commemorate it. Pro-government newspapers do not refer to the anniversary or any relevant commemorative events at all. They only published relevant literary texts in their literary sections (Efstratiadis. Borazanis. Barika-Moskovi. Skiadas). This suggests the role that literature is expected to play in such anniversaries. Oscillating between the autonomy of the literary text and the referentiality of literary discourse, these texts implicitly commemorate the anniversary without upsetting the newspaper's policy. This oscillation is crucial for the function of the novels under consideration in the framework of the anniversary.

The attitude of Ilias Venezis, a writer who treated almost exclusively Asia Minor themes and a chief editor of the CAMS publishing project, is indicative of the controversial character of the commemoration. He preferred not to become an emblematic figure of the anniversary, which would contradict

his role as a member of the Academy of Athens. Thus he carefully chose the media he employed to commemorate the events. In his weekly columns in the Centre's daily *To Vima* he only implicitly refers to the anniversary. However, in the established literary periodical *Nea Estia* he published a one-act play adapted for the radio. (Venezis, *Over the Flames: Forty-year Anniversary of the Asia Minor Catastrophe: 1922-1962: Dramatic Scene: Adapted for the Radio*). It is impossible to verify if this was ever broadcasted by the state-controlled radio.

Newspapers of the Centre such as *To Vima* and *Ta Nea* refer to the events and the anniversary mostly in personal columns (e.g. Fteris' articles). The press of the Left (i.e. the daily *Avgi* and the cultural periodical *Epitheorisi Technis*) extensively refers to the anniversary in different types of discourse, presenting them as an alternative to the official narrative. In the special issue of *Epitheorisi Technis* (September 1962) historiographic (Psiroukis), testimonial and novelistic discourse are presented as equally reliable although different. The use of Marxist historical methods in the interpretation of the event distances the narrative from the discursive framework of nationalism and emphasises the role of imperialistic antagonisms, introducing the Asia Minor war in the narrative of the Greek Left. This presented Greek history as a series of foreign interventions, which aborted the popular will.

The use of literary discourse (Ilias Venezis, *The Number 31328*; Stratis Doukas, *A Prisoner of War's Story*; Stratis Myrivilis, *Η δασκάλα με τα χρυσά μάτια* [*The Schoolmistress with the Golden Eyes*] (1933); Sotiriou, *Farewell Anatolia*, Kondoglou, *Aivali, My Homeland*) implies the idea that literature reflects social reality and is thus a useful tool to popularize historical narrative. This combines social realism, which had shaped the theoretical framework employed by traditional critics of the Left, with the notion of the moral and public role of national literature as a medium for the construction of national consciousness, shaped during the 19th century (Dounia 357-412; Tziovas 6).

In the articles dedicated to the anniversary in *Avgi*, novelistic, testimonial and historiographic discourses coexist and interact. The most characteristic example is the series of articles by Dido Sotiriou ([*The Asia Minor Tempest: Who is the Real Culprit of the Asia Minor Catastrophe*]), where she writes as a foreign affairs reporter of *Avgi*, a novelist and an Anatolian Greek. She thus amalgamates historical analysis, with narratives of her own experiences of life in Asia Minor and testimonies of others, attempting to transfer the authenticity traditionally attributed to testimony to the entire text. Her articles adopt Psiroukis' Marxist interpretation of events. This is appropriate to the function of these articles, which popularise history in a polemical tone with explicit parallelisms to the present, establishing a continuum between the Asia Minor Catastrophe, the Second World War and the current political situ-

ation. Such parallelisms accentuate the political and ideological function of the anniversary for the Left.

In this overview of the printed press, there is a particular case, which cannot be examined in political terms. The weekly variety magazine *Ταχυδρόμος* [Tahydromos] combined socialite news with literary texts by prominent writers. *Stou Hatzifrangou* was published in instalments in this magazine, illustrated with the fairytale-like sketches of a young painter, Minos Argyrakis. The choice of *Tahydromos* for the publication of the novel already constructs a different framework for the function of the text in the anniversary.

This overview reveals the function of the 1962 anniversary in the Greek political and cultural landscape. It became the *enjeu* of political and social sides for the social memory of the 1922 Catastrophe. The Left, by abandoning the traditional person-based interpretations and nationalistic discourse, produces a new type of narrative on the events. This combines Marxist historiography with the discourse of testimony, which creates a sense of authenticity and intimacy of the experience. These, along with the parallelisms with the contemporary political situation, render the anniversary relevant to the present and especially to the political agenda of the Left. Thus it becomes fertile ground for an ideological reading of the past and the construction of a grand narrative.

The Novels: Commemorating a Lost Space

In this framework, the novels published in 1962 with reference to life in Asia Minor consciously participated in the construction of the social memory of the events. They thus functioned in the tradition of national literature, where the novel, especially that with historical content, was used for national self-knowledge and the establishment of national identity through didacticism (Tziovas 6). Nevertheless, these texts challenge national identity as constructed by official discourse. The emphasis on the *unheimlich* state of the minority/refugee and the nostalgia for the pre-modern space of the Ottoman Empire, where different *millets* coexisted, question the essentialist discourse of nationalism (cf. Bhabha *DissemiNation* 300). Before examining the novels in detail, an outline of their plot and techniques is necessary.

Farewell Anatolia refers to the peaceful life in the Ottoman Empire, the emergence of Turkish nationalism and the Asia Minor War. The first-person narrator was an historical person, according to the authorial introduction. His testimony describes his childhood in the early 1900s in a village around Aidin, his life in Smyrna and concludes with his spectacular escape from Turkey after 1922. The narrator experiences the forced labour camps during the First World War, reserved for the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire, the defeat of the Greek army in 1922, the burning of Smyrna and the Turkish war prisoners' camps.

Aivali, My Homeland is not a novel but a collection of short stories with a common thematics. The writer draws the subject matter from his memories of Aivali, where he lived until 1922, without any direct references to the catastrophe, except in the introduction. This collection will be examined selectively, regarding some common thematics with the other texts.

Stou Hatzifrangou is set at the 1900s and describes everyday life in a working-class neighbourhood of Smyrna. Nevertheless, there are many external prolepses in the narrative, the most extensive being a chapter set in 1962. This creates an awareness of the fate of the world described in the text. It is narrated in the third person, focalised through various characters. The arch-narrator is neither an intratextual nor an omniscient narrator; he has privileged access to the characters' thoughts, but he shares their origin from Smyrna and their memories. This results in a collective authoritative voice, which can be identified to 'memory that narrates' (Mackridge [The Poetics of Time and Space in *Stou Hatzifrangou*] 31*). The structure of the text, organised by thematic and spatial associations (Mackridge [The Poetics] 43*, 45*, 51*-54*) suggests the mediation of memory in shaping the narrative. The novel draws on the realist tradition to construct the element of locality but employs modernist techniques to construct a multi-faceted commemoration of the lost city of Smyrna (Mackridge [The Poetics] 40*). Its emphasis on space rather than time and its self-referentiality regarding the function of memory question many of the assumptions of 'refugee narratives' and their realistic assumptions and nationalistic overtones.

Loxandra is not explicitly associated to the forty-year anniversary of the Asia Minor Catastrophe, since it commemorates life in Istanbul, the *Rum* inhabitants of which were exempted from the exchange of populations (Clogg 101). The narrative spans the last quarter of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the First World War. Most of it is set in Istanbul, with a short part set in Athens. The narration is set at the time of publication, with the awareness that the space commemorated does not exist any more, since the 1955 riots against the *Rums* forced many of them to move to Greece (Clogg 150-151, 153).

The commemorative function of the texts is highlighted in the peritexts, which aim to shape the texts' reception (Genette 1987). In the case of *Stou Hatzifrangou*, *Farewell Anatolia* and *Aivali, My Homeland* peritexts explicitly mention the forty-year anniversary. For *Loxandra*, which commemorates life in Istanbul, the anniversary is not as relevant. All peritexts emphasise that the narratives they introduce are alternative to official narratives. In the case of *Farewell Anatolia* this is done by promoting orality over textuality and testimony (which was the novel's basis) over historiographic discourse (Sotiriou *Farewell Anatolia* 7). In the case of *Stou Hatzifrangou* and *Aivali, My Homeland* the peritexts question the identification of Greece with 'homeland' and emphasise the locality of identity, thus playing upon the *unheimlich Rum*

identity (Kontoglou 9, Mackridge *Kosmas Politis and the Literature of Exile* 236; cf. Karakasidou 262).

Stou Hatzifrangou and *Aivali, My Homeland* were illustrated and this peritextual element emphasised the exoticism of the commemorated space. Visually, these illustrations allude to popular, and in the case of *Aivali, My Homeland*, Byzantine drawings (lack of perspective, abundance of decorative elements, naïve characterisation). They thus emphasise the narratives' fairytale element.

The issues already posed in the examination of the peritext will be developed in the next section: the construction of locality, the role of memory, the issue of homeland and identity (Anatolia vs. Greece, *Rum* vs. Greek, empire vs. nation-state).

The Construction of Locality

The construction of the space commemorated is crucial in all the texts. It is characteristic that in *Farewell Anatolia*, *Stou Hatzifrangou* and *Aivali, My Homeland* space is present in the title, indicating that the commemoration of space and of the life there it is their focus.

The textual techniques traditionally employed for the construction of locality are based on use of place names, dialectical elements and the reference to customs and social practices. All these are used in the realistic writing of 'ethographia', a late 19th century school of writing, which was based on the realistic representation of traditional community life (Mackridge *The Textualisation of Place in Greek Fiction* 165; Malamataris 142-145).

The use of place names is crucial for the construction of locality in the narratives. The same geographical location often has two or more place-names of different origin (e.g. a Modern Greek, an ancient Greek and a Turkish one) (Mackridge [*The Poetics*] 33*). The use and re-establishment of ancient Greek place names by institutions such as the church and education is based on the nationalistic discourse on the continuum of Hellenism from ancient times to the present (e.g. *Farewell* 22-24; *Hatzifrangou* 52-57). In this framework the Asia Minor Greek population is regarded in essentialist terms and becomes the basis of territorial claims (cf. Mazower *The Balkans* 76; Todorova 404; Karakasidou 178-189, 207-216).

Farewell Anatolia and *Stou Hatzifrangou* differentiate between this concept of space and the locals' experience of lived space. *Rum* characters are ambivalent about the nationalistic projections of identity on the landscape they experience. This attitude towards the discourse of nationalism constitutes the basis of the *unheimlich* status of the minority towards the kin-state. It also emphasises the vulnerability of these minorities towards the discourse

of nationalism, which offers them a sense of identity. Thus space becomes a palimpsest of projections illustrated through the interaction of place-names.

All the novels employ dialectic elements to construct locality. Their discourse is shaped by the use of vocabulary of Turkish origin or Turkish phrases. These are employed to celebrate the Anatolian identity of the Asia Minor Greeks, adding to the 'otherness' and exoticism of the locality (Bakhtin 44-45). They thus reverse the pejorative image of refugees employed by the native Greeks in the interwar years.

In *Stou Hatzifrangou*, the multiplicity of ethnic groups, languages and cultures that interact in the space of Smyrna shape the novel's discourse, which is dispersed with regionalisms, to the extent that a glossary was necessary. This discourse differentiates Smyrna from mainland Greek culture, thus the *Rum* identity as opposed to the Greek one. These regionalisms, many of which have Italian, Turkish or French origin, create multiple levels of connotation in the text, which question the purist linguistic policy and its concurrent nationalistic ideology and celebrates the polyphonic, dynamic and synchronic aspect of language.

The description of social practices is crucial in constructing experienced space in the narratives. This is associated with the circular time of religious celebrations and agricultural activities, which creates a sense of security to the characters and 'subordinates time to space' (Mackridge *The Textualisation of Place* 165). In the case of *Aivali, My Homeland* circular time constructs an a-historic paradise. It is a pre-modern concept of time, contrasted to the linearity of historical time in all the texts. Historical time invades the narratives through nationalism and war, altering the identity-shaping practices and highlighting the irony of such sense of security (*Loxandra* 181-182).

All the novels emphasise the fertility of Asia Minor, as an implicit or explicit comparison with the limited resources and closed horizons of the Greek state (Mackridge *Kosmas Politis* 229). This is associated with the texts' emphasis on food culture as an integral part of *Rum* identity, an aspect celebrated even today (Clogg 103). The implied opposition fertile East - arid West is constructed in almost sexual terms in *Farewell Anatolia* (e.g. 19) in the framework of Orientalist discourse.

Food culture is particularly present in *Loxandra*, since it is connected with female experience. This constructs the text's locality to a great extent. The type of food presented in the narrative is largely Istanbul food, with Turkish names and substances, which sound exotic to the Greek audience. Thus the text celebrates an element of Anatolian culture, constructing a positive Orientalist discourse. It is characteristic that a chain of souvlaki grills in Athens is named 'Loxandra's Souvlaki', claiming the character's cooking skills.

Rums and Others

The identity-shaping space in the narratives is a multiethnic pre-modern space, where different *millets* coexist. All the texts place great emphasis on the interaction of Asia Minor Greeks with Turks and other ethnicities, which was instrumental in shaping the *Rum* identity. *Farewell Anatolia* and *Loxandra* emphasise the peaceful aspects of this coexistence, before the rise of Turkish nationalism. In both novels, divisions are presented as based on class rather than ethnicity (*Farewell* 51, 65, 86, 190, *Loxandra* 80).

In *Farewell Anatolia* peaceful coexistence, so emphatically described, becomes contradictory at closer examination. The Greeks' sense of superiority to the Turks, especially rural populations, which are presented as poor and superstitious, emphasises the stereotype of the 'slow' Turks (31). Superiority is interpreted as the result of Greek culture, financial power (65) and minority position (50). This draws on the late 19th century ideological trend among Ottoman Greeks, who after the *Tanzimat* reforms preferred the Ottoman Empire rather than the small and poor Greek state, thus emphasising their *Rum* identity (Skopetea 27-31).

In *Loxandra* the paradox of coexistence of ethnicities along with the interaction of nationalist discourses is explored at the level of everyday life. The protagonist adopts such discourses in abstract, but she does not project it to the actual Turks she meets. This leads to comic effects, since she naïvely informs them of all the Greek stereotypes about the Turks (*Loxandra* 46, 202-204). On the other hand the riots against the Armenians at the turn of the 20th century are presented as ethnic tensions that resulted from the emergence of rival nationalisms (140-145). To the 1963 Greek readers the description of these episodes must have drawn a parallel to the 1955 riots against the *Rum* community in Istanbul.

Peaceful coexistence was an integral part of the Left's discourse on Asia Minor Catastrophe. This allowed them to place the blame for ethnic tensions in the Ottoman Empire on foreign intervention. In *Farewell Anatolia* and to a certain extent in *Loxandra* interethnic violence is interpreted historically, as a result of the political interventions that led to the emergence of competing nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, unlike nationalist discourses, especially employed by the Right, *Farewell Anatolia* refers to violence committed on both sides (206, 220-225, 261, 287-288, 323). This was a subject, which was and continues to be silenced by official discourses, because it subverts the discourse of victimisation traditionally used concerning the Asia Minor War.

Although nationalist discourses are subverted in the text, the narrative never questions the concept of the Greek state as the homeland of the Asia Minor Greeks. Although it describes their *unheimlich* identity, it does not emphasise

its paradox (24-25, 216-217, 275). In that respect it differentiates itself from *Aivali*, *My Homeland*, *Loxandra* and *Stou Hatzifrangou*, which explicitly distinguish between the *Rum* identity and the one projected on the Asia Minor Greeks by nationalistic discourse.

Unlike the previous novels, *Stou Hatzifrangou* subverts the discourse of the peaceful coexistence and tension between ethnicities is highlighted. As in *Loxandra*, spatial segregation of ethnicities is emphasised. Both texts adopt the Greek characters' perspective describing Turkish neighbourhoods in exotic terms, with an abundance of foreign words and emphasis on a sense of mystery.

The characters in *Stou Hatzifrangou* are not exclusively Greek or Turkish. Smyrna is presented as a multi-ethnic space. The identities and group affiliations of most characters would not fit in the pigeonholes of nationalist discourse. They are *unheimlich*, in-between (33). Some of the novel's characters are Turkish refugees from the Balkans. Thus the narrative relativises the Greek refugee experience, emphasising that, as in similar cases, it resulted from the emergence of competing nationalisms in the Balkans. In that way the text subverts the discourse of victimisation that characterised the official anniversary discourses.

The text questions the essentialist identity discourses and emphasises the local aspect of identity, which makes Greeks and Turks of Smyrna compatriots:

Homeland is not an idea hanging in thin air, it is not the past glories and tombs and ruined marbles. Homeland is the ground, the land, the fields and the seas and the mountains. Homeland is the people of today, and the love for the homeland is to wish their happiness. (148).

Farewell Anatolia and *Stou Hatzifrangou* focus on the particularities of *Rum* identity and culture through an implicit comparison to the Greek identity. In *Loxandra* the protagonist's stay in Athens allows the text to explicitly juxtapose the two and construct an Occidentalist view of Greece. This subverts the protagonist's idealised image of Athens, constructed by nationalistic discourse and shared by most *Rums* in the novels considered.

Loxandra's discourse, dispersed with the Istanbul Greek dialect and words of Turkish origin, creates comic effects when she moves to Athens. This constructs her *unheimlich* identity, which can be implicitly paralleled to the refugee experience. Nevertheless, mainland Greeks are not presented as a unified group either. Emphasising regional diversity, the novel subverts the essentialist discourses of nationalism. It celebrates the richness of idioms and constructs the *Rum* identity as one of the multiple aspects of Greek identity. It does not distance itself as much from the Greek identity as *Stou Hatzifrangou*

does, but it questions the essentialism of discourses on Greek identity that *Farewell Anatolia* employs to some extent.

The Novels' Role in the Anniversary

Having examined the techniques that construct the element of locality and identity in the texts, the issue of their function in the framework of the anniversary arises. Each text functions from a different perspective. Considering their techniques and ideological framework, their ideological role can be outlined.

Farewell Anatolia succeeded in adapting the discourse of testimony, with its conventional assumptions of referentiality, authenticity and popular character in the political and cultural discursive framework of the 1960s (Nikolopoulou 82-87). The coexistence of the testimonial and historiographic discourse and the narrator's representative status (Kotzias 152-153, Raftopoulos 229), drawing on socialist realism, renewed the realist narrative tradition of the Left. Moreover, the Marxist historical interpretation of the Asia Minor War in the novel associated it with the narrative of the Greek Left. The novel subverted the nationalist narrative, by emphasising the peaceful coexistence of the people in the Ottoman Empire. It constructed a grand narrative, which emphasised divisions of class rather than ethnicity. This was successful because previous ones (blaming one or the other side of the interwar political system) were irrelevant in the post-civil war framework.

Even if this grand narrative existed in historiographies, (e.g. Psyroukis), *Farewell Anatolia* popularised it by combining it with testimonial discourse. The text's popularising function led to the adoption of realist techniques and the distinction of the *Rum* identity only to the extent that it questioned nationalist discourses, but not the belonging of the refugees in Greek national identity. Thus, *Farewell Anatolia* functions as *engagé* literature.

The novel's reception was very positive. Indicatively, a travelogue on contemporary Asia Minor published some months after the novel adopts the latter's title (Ikonomidis). *Farewell Anatolia* was already read as a reliable reconstruction of life in Asia Minor. The novel was also chosen by the Communist Party of Greece to be translated in Russian, Bulgarian and Italian (Goulandris 264, 266, 340). The case of *Farewell Anatolia* illustrates the role literary discourse was expected to play in the period. The commemoration of the Asia Minor space and identity through its adoption by a political group becomes a political *enjeu*.

In *Aivali My Homeland* the writer subverts the discourse of nationalism and celebrates his Anatolian identity by adopting a literary idiom drawing on the Byzantine tradition. He highlights aspects of the *Rum* experience which official discourse denies, such as the sense of mainland Greece as a place

away from home. The construction of the opposition East-West subverts the dominant discourse, which identifies the West with modernity, rationalism, progress in positive terms. Even if the rejection of historicity and the fatalistic interpretation of the Catastrophe as a whim of the will of fortune withdraws the texts from the framework of political antagonisms, the text is polemical towards modernism, which is associated with nationalism.

Stou Hatzifrangou consciously participates in the anniversary. However, its narrative emphasises space and everyday life rather than historical narrative. Unlike *Farewell Anatolia*, this novel does not attempt to construct a grand narrative of the past. It explicitly attacks the discourses of nationalism and irredentism through the celebration of the *Rum* identity, the universalisation of the refugee experience and emphasis on the multiethnic character of Smyrna (Cf. Bhabha *DissemiNation* 311). The text's complex techniques, the multilayered construction of space and the identities which inhabited it, led to the critical acclaim from all ideological sides and aesthetic schools (Kotzias *Stou Hatzifrangou* 4; Spiliadi 474-476; Koumantareas 20), although it is not as well read as *Farewell Anatolia*. The subversive character of its thematics and techniques could be the explanation.

Iordanidou wrote her first book, *Loxandra*, at sixty two, after a visit to Istanbul (Iordanidou [*In Fortune's Circles*] 200-207). The impossibility to return triggered the textual reconstruction of the identity-constructing space (Seyhan 70, 76, 134). It could be inferred that the anniversary of the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the emergence of the texts and discourses examined here encouraged her attempt.

The novel does not explore the issue of memory and narrative as a fictional construction. It adopts the realistic conventions of biography, focusing mainly through the protagonist's perspective. The success of *Loxandra*, although it does not construct a grand narrative as *Farewell Anatolia* does, can be explained by its realistic techniques, the unconventional female perspective, its humour, and the celebration of a positive Orientalism. Although *Loxandra* is not immediately relevant for the anniversary, it commemorates a similar space with the same techniques and more or less with a similar ideological perspective. Its examination here highlights the fact that the novels previously considered renewed the interest in Asia Minor thematics. *Loxandra* encouraged the celebration of Anatolian identity and showed the way for its function in the Greek framework in the period after the forty-year anniversary.

Conclusions

The forty-year anniversary was a turning point regarding the social memory of the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the refugee identity. Based on the cultural and political circumstances of the period the Left constructed a grand narrative that questioned nationalistic discourses and emphasised the peaceful coexistence of *millets* in the pre-modern space of the Empire. The novels examined here interacted with this narrative from different perspectives. In all the texts however Asia Minor identity is celebrated and life in Asia Minor is presented as a positive alternative to the Greek state and its defects. These texts contributed to a great extent to the contemporary positive image of Asia Minor Greeks. It is noteworthy however that the differentiation between *Rums* and Greeks, which is so emphatically presented in *Stou Hatzifrangou* and *Aivali, My Homeland*, never became part of this image. On the other hand, the more conventional grand narrative of *Farewell Anatolia*, which was in line with the Left, has been predominant from the 1960s to the present day.

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