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## THE POETRY BY TURKISH AND ENGLISH WOMEN OF WORLD WAR I ON THE WAY TO LIBERATION AND RIGHT TO VOTE

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### Abstract

This study basically focuses on the women's liberation and World War I Poetry by Turkish and English Women. World War I is an important event in the world history both in terms of violence and destruction, and the rights and privileges women had after the end of it. The war efforts of women found an ample space in poetry made by women. Their worries, anxiety, anguish and suffering as mothers, wives, lovers and fiancés delineate different pictures. Apart from being a mother and wife, women as the life giving part of humankind developed complex attitudes in the face of this destructive war. Some supported war, some completely rejected it. Some wanted to take part in the actual fighting some gave support from home. But one thing was certain at the end of the war that women had found their place out of the house. The poetry by women shows some different character in terms of war imagery and observation of the war. As they were kept away from the actual battle field their imagery is only limited to their imagination and they observe it as a vengeance of nature from men for their wrongdoings to the women. This study reveals the reasons why women were systematically kept away from battlefields and why their war imagery looks naïve compared to that of actual combatants.

**Key Words:** Women's Poetry, Poetry of World War I, Women's Movement, War Imagery, Poetry by Women and Men.

### Özet

Bu çalışma temel olarak kadın hareketlerinin başlaması Birinci Dünya Savaşı Türk ve İngiliz kadın şiirlerini incelemektedir. Dünya tarihi açısından Birinci Dünya Savaşı hem yaşattığı dehşet ve yıkımla hem de savaş sonunda kadınların elde ettikleri haklar ve imtiyazlar bağlamında önemli bir olaydır. Kadınların yazdıkları şiirlerde kadınların savaşa olan katkıları ve çabaları yoğun bir şekilde yansımıştır. Ayrıca endişeleri, sıkıntıları ve acıları anne olarak, eş olarak, sevgili ve nişanlı olarak farklı resimler çizmişlerdir. Bunların dışında insanoğlunun hayat veren cinsiyeti olarak kadınlar karmaşık duygular geliştirmişlerdir. Bazıları savaşı desteklemiş, bazıları karşı çıkmışlardır. Bazıları savaş meydanlarında yer bulmaya çalışmış bazıları evlerinden destek vermişlerdir. Ancak kesin olan birşey vardır ki kadınlar savaşın sonunda artık evlerinin dışında işleri olan bireyler haline dönüşmüşlerdir. Savaş imgeleri ve savaşı algılama bağlamında kadın şiirleri farklılıklar göstermektedir. Savaş meydanlarından uzak tutulmaları sebebiyle, savaş imgeleri erkek şiirine göre zayıf kalmaktadır. Ayrıca kadınlar savaşı kendilerine yapılan haksızlıkların bir rövanş olarak doğanın erkeleri üzerine oynadığı bir rövanş olarak görmektedirler. Bu çalışma son olarak kadınların sistemetik olarak neden savaştan uzak tutulduklarını ve savaş imgelerinin neden daha naif bir çigide olduğuna cevap bulmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kadın Şiiri, Birinci Dünya Savaşı Şiiri, Kadın Hareketleri, Savaş İmgeleri, Kadın ve Erkek Şiiri.

### INTRODUCTION

A four-year long war which shook the European continent and other parts of the World was ignited at Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. At the beginning, people expected the war to end before the Christmas, and soldiers hoped to share their drinks with their families at home. Yet, the developments were to prove otherwise. The World was to encounter the most terrible war hitherto unknown; the most mechanised and brutal with its machine guns, artillery shelling, zeppelin raids and gas attacks.

Such a great power required naturally great numbers of men to fight against the enemy and the war itself provided soldiers with stories to tell. Catherine Reilly remarks:

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The concept of whole armies fighting day after day, month after month for four long years, forced to exist in holes dug in unstable marshy terrain, winning then losing some few yards of ground at the expense of enormous casualties, is clearly tragic absurdity. Naturally enough, the anthologies published in recent years tend to concentrate on the work of the soldier poets who served on the Western Front. (As somebody wryly remarked, it seemed as though every few yards of trench sported its own poet, feverishly putting pen to paper between bombardments.) (1981: xxxiii-v).

Coincidentally, what the Western Front means in terms of the World War I poetry, Çanakkale means the same in Turkish. There are very few numbers of poems that deal with other campaigns other than Çanakkale in Turkish literature and the Western Front in English Literature. The literary output during the World War I was strictly dependent on the number and educational level of the soldiers. Catherine Reilly writes in her introduction to *Scars upon My Heart* that there are “no fewer than 2225 British individuals, men and women, servicemen and civilians, who had written verse on the theme of this most terrible war” (1981: xxxiii). The Turkish poetry that narrates the war is limited to the group of artist who were sent to observe the war. One single poem was taken out of the pocket of a dead soldier whose name is Mustafa Boyabat (Ersavaş, 2000: 76). Other Turkish poems were written in post-war years and most of which are by the people who have never experienced the war. Though Çanakkale wars are known as ‘the most intellectual warfare ever’ that Turks fought, the absence of poems written by those educated soldiers who “were the students at lycées and universities rushed to the Çanakkale front leaving their pens and notebooks on the desks” is strange (Çakır, 2003: 14). On the other hand the English soldiers produced immense number of poems. Bergonzi suggests that

[i]n 1914 the English people were at a high pitch of literacy. The young officers had received a classical education and were very well read in English poetry, so that Shakespeare and Milton, Wordsworth and Keats, would be constantly quoted or alluded to when they wrote about the war. English poetry provided a sense of identity and continuity, a means of accommodating to life in a bizarre world as well as a source of consolation. The private soldiers, though formally less educated, were still part of traditional literary culture, and many of them naturally expressed themselves in the idiom of the English Bible and *Pilgrim's Progress* (1996: 3).

As the male population of England was fighting in the battlefields, the female population was already accustomed to their life out of the house. By the proliferation of industrialism, women found the opportunity to work out of their homes. In 1900s, women had already proved themselves to be docile workers by not begrudging their meagre wages (Braybon, 1989: 17). They were mostly working in light and repetitive factory jobs:

The Victorian feminist movement started in the late 1850s and rapidly gained momentum and support. Its campaigns for educational, economic and social rights for women all had some effect. Higher education was slowly opened up to women; . . . professions such as medicine admitted their first female entrants; women sat on school boards and local government bodies (Bradley, 2004: 145).

On the other end of the continent, the women in the Ottoman Empire went through similar experiences and their admittance to a professional school for girls in 1870, and the education of midwifery, was granted to women in 1843. The teaching profession had become the first professional and official work for women in the 19th century in the Ottoman Empire (Afetinan, 1975: 87-89). Turkish women rejected the militant and immodest feminism of the Suffragettes. “They defended the amelioration of Ottoman women in the educational field and equal rights with men, which would raise their social status” (Durakbaşa, 2000: 103-104). The first women’s magazine published by women is *Şükûfezar*, which was first published in 1886 (Durakbaşa, 2000: 104). After the declaration of the Second Constitutional Government, these Turkish women found better opportunities to express themselves. Turkish women began to be active politically and they took active roles in political associations like the

Women's Branch Ottoman Union and Progress Association<sup>1</sup> (1908) and the Association of Pro-progress Ottoman Women (1908)<sup>2</sup>. The Balkan Wars and World War I made women's position and effort for Turkish nationalism more conspicuous (Durakbaşa, 2000: 107).

However, when World War I began, women did not yet have the right to vote and their way was paved by the war. As noted in Gilbert and Gubar, Christabel Pankhurst explains that "[t]his great war . . . is Nature's vengeance -- is God's vengeance upon the people who held women in subjection, and by doing that have destroyed the perfect, human balance" (1988: 258). Gertrude Ford complains about women's powerlessness on the issue of war and voices her anger in her poem "A Fight to a Finish":

'Fight on!' the Armament-kings besought:  
Nobody asked what women thought.

Indeed, nobody asked women what they thought, because they were deprived of the right of voting. Would the world be different, if they had had the right to vote? Joan Montgomery Byles suggests that "the awful feeling of political powerlessness, experienced during the war by a great many women who were formerly indifferent to suffrage and other rights, provided much of the force that eventually secured women's political right" (1995: 56).

"Citizenship and arms", meaning the right to vote, "have been linked in Western thought since Aristotle" Hacker notes (1988: 24); however, the highly mechanised warfare always required more and more men, emptying the factories that would be filled with women's labour force and creating the need for nurses that took women to the battlefields, eventually ushering in their political rights after the war. Turkish women were to gain such rights long after the war. During World War I, the discourse was still in the hands of men.

The women were the marginalised members of the society with almost no right to speak out their thoughts. In many of S. Gertrude Ford poems it is possible to hear her voice stating her dissatisfaction of being a woman in a male dominated society, and in a male made war time. Her protesting voice in "The Soldier's Mother" reflects her feminist side, suggesting that women have not complicity in the making of war:

O yes!  
Men made the war; mere women we,  
Born to accept and acquiesce.

Yet on the other hand, there are women whose discourse is in compliance with the ideology and they, supporting the war effort, enjoy their womanliness. Madeline Ida Bedford seems to be very much satisfied with her new job as a munitions factory worker in her poem titled "Munitions Wages". The persona in the poem may not be happy about the war going on in the continent but the opportunity it offers is satisfactory:

Earning high wages? Yus,  
Five quid a week.  
A woman, too, mind you,  
I calls it dim sweet.

Some women display an attitude in compliance with the requirements of the state and some do just the opposite. Yet the most striking aspect is the fact that they do not stray from the religious strain, which states may use as a political implement. From this standpoint, women made their voice be heard only by supporting the war effort merging into the discourse of the ideology. Jane Marcus suggests that "the only images of women allowed by a nation at war" were "the nurse, the mother, the worker" (1989: 140). On the other side of the continent, in the Ottoman Empire, women grasped some rights, yet the number of poems and poets prove the fact that they were much more marginalised than their English counterparts.

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<sup>1</sup>Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti Kadınlar Şubesi

<sup>2</sup>Osmanlı Kadınları Terakkiperver Cemiyeti

The plight of women during war time was worse than that of the men, for, in time of crisis, it is easier to obey what is ordered than to stay silent. Women sent their sons, husbands, lovers, and fathers to the war and their anxiety was more traumatic than that of men. Yet the war gave them opportunity to work outside their homes and to get a better education, which created a split in their soul. On the one hand, they sent their loved ones to the war; on the other, they got the jobs of their men and earned better wages. Therefore, some women supported the war effort as a means to ward their liberation; some rejected it, arguing the fact of the involvement of their sons, lovers, fathers, and husbands.

As women were traditionally kept away from battle, they had no word on the issue, yet some voiced their opinion aloud. Their imagery remained poor because of the lack of experience of the actual battlefields. The jobs women did during the war are reflected in their poetry, and their attitudes towards war that differ from the men's. Nora Bomford, Katherine Tynan, Jessie Pope, Madeline Ida Bedford and May Sinclair are war-supporting women poets in English Literature. Other women poets who lamented over the loved ones and the country were S. Gertrude Ford, Vera Brittain, Teresa Hooley, Winifred Letts, Mary Henderson, May Wedderburn Cannan, and Helen Hamilton. Salime Servet Seyfi, Şükufe Nihal Başar, and Halide Nusret Zorlutuna are the Turkish women poets whose poems are noteworthy enough to invite serious analysis.

### **POETRY BY WOMEN: AN IMAGE QUITE CONTRARY**

When the World War I began, women did not still hold citizenship and though they were partly out of their homes for work; they were mostly working in the fields and raising children. Besides their agricultural labour, women worked in home based manufacturing industries like cotton spinning, carding, knitting and weaving cotton and wool. However their wages were paid to their husbands as they were the 'head' of the family (Braybon, 1989: 15). Though Industrial Revolution partly moved them out of their homes they were paid less than men, and deprived of education for professional jobs, whose wages were fairly higher than that of ordinary jobs that women did, putting forward the idea that women do not need high incomes as they were living together with their family or their husbands (Braybon, 1989: 16). In such circumstances, most of the women were confined to their domestic works and child bearing. Consequently, woman image was still limited to domestic labour; Judith Kazantzis terms it as "atavistic feeling that war is men's concern, birth is women's; and that women quite simply cannot speak on the matter" (Reilly, 1981: xxiii) in her 'Introduction' to *Scars Upon My Heart*. Hence women are expected to produce anti-militarist attitude, and, as Nicola Beauman puts forward "women, mostly left at home away from the mud, their involvement or lack of involvement in the War was the central fact of their lives. It was a theme left untouched by very few writers, although they varied a great deal in what they believed was the proper response to their situation" (134). This was naturally an output imposed by patriarchal discourse, as Sharon Ouditt explains, men wanted women to remain

as 'dutiful daughters', putting pressure on them to adopt reverential role of the Mother in obeisance to the Father - the patriarchal nation state. This performed the function of guaranteeing the deeply conventional position of the organisation. The competition between these discourses, though, could be radically unsettling to the young recruits forced to negotiate between the power granted to them by their class and patriotic endeavour and the subordination that was a product of their gender and voluntary status (1994: 10).

Women's path to the front and their war efforts were to prove a hard one. Women could play their part in war in an acceptable way: "as nurses, offering a voluntary aid to the sick and wounded under the auspices of the Geneva Convention and at a safe distance from the front line" (Ouditt, 1994: 9). On their way to the front line, women had to get over some barriers. Women were required to satisfy a set of regulations, some of which were to sit and pass examinations on home nursing, first aid and hygiene. All these required a tuition which had to be paid by the candidates. As a consequence of such regulations, only wealthy members of the society had the privilege to serve for their country as a woman. Despite all the hindrances, some women found their way to the battlefield, yet they were not at all welcome near the battlefield, as Sharon Ouditt puts it, they were "not invited to join the army and scarcely invited to help it in the field. Many of the more wealthy and leisured women defiantly established their own semi-military

organisations, but even the suffragist doctor Elsie Inglis was initially advised by Royal Army Medical Corps to 'go home and sit still'" (Ouditt, 1994: 8).

The emergence of such a discourse and attitude towards women carried some ideological planning underneath; "exclusion of most women from armies with greater security for the few who remained, all were choices rooted in patriarchal culture" (Hacker, 1988: 23). For "Military institutions arose from the fraternal interest groups of pre-state societies, and persist in shaping the patriarchal form state societies invariably assume. Indeed, armies owe their very existence to women's structured social subordination" (Hacker, 1988: 11). This deeply rooted patriarchal system was to be shaken by the women's war effort and this had to be stopped. Sharon Ouditt elucidates the issue stating that:

One involved helping to win the war and implied a radical but temporary release from normal activity; another involved seeking equality with men, which meant resisting essentialist definitions of womanhood or women's sphere; another involved the rejection of war as a means of conflict resolution and saw it as a symptom of a degraded social system that relied on the structural subordination of women, the working classes and small nations (1994: 5).

However, the first battle of Ypres (October 1914) proved that these upper-class-first-aides are indispensable. Despite all sorts of obstacles to refrain women from the battle scene, women were enthusiastic enough to play their parts in the battlefields. Consequently, women were not so submissive in their war efforts, and produced poetry narrating their battle cries, feelings and sufferings over their sons, brothers, lovers, husbands and fathers; despite all, as Beauman suggests, "some did talk about mud" (1993: 146). The part which women were expected to play in war time was, at first, to stay at home and to be silent, for the division of labour was traditionally made and women were supposed to give life and men to kill.

In their seared consciousness, mothers feel the responsibility to do something for the country. Some mother poets sacrifice their sons in silent resignation, but believing in the cause, some others do this in jingoistic terms. Blanche Adelaide Brock expresses her sentiments in jingoistic terms in 'British Mothers' thus:

For she was formed of British mould,  
And never would have known content  
Had HER son not his aid have lent  
To save his country's honour, as brave sons of old.

The poem expresses the required gratitude to the older generations who have kept England free and honourable, and, now, it is this mother's only son's duty to maintain this honour. She will know no content until her son has done his bit to save the country. The capitalisation of 'her' reinforces "the poet's jingoistic purpose" (Khan, 1988: 153), and the poet strongly believes that the English cause is just and true. By the capitalisation of 'all', Brock stresses that he is his mother's only son and by 'faith' and 'truth' she does not stray from religious strain:

He was her ALL, and ill to spare  
But for her country's FAITH and TRUTH  
She bravely helped him to prepare  
To face the foe, and bear his share  
Of hardships, and of glory, like true British youth.

Despite the fact that her heart rends, Brock's proto-British mother sends her only son to the battle. She cannot hide the feminine sentimental attachment to her son. Therefore, she believes that those mothers who send their sons deserve 'reverent heads' bending before them.

The men of Britain well may bend  
Their bared and reverent heads this day,  
To Mothers countless who thus send  
Their sons to fight, though their hearts may rend.

### **WOMEN, WAR AND PATRIOTISM**

The chauvinistic strains are apparent in many other women poets' poems. Like their male counterparts, women can also be as warlike as men, and their patriotic fervour is no less than men's. They employ almost the same diction with men in urging the youth into war. Dorothy Grenside declares in 'England's Son' that she will not 'grudge' to sacrifice her son, declaring that her very being is of England and she will give her son to maintain the country's existence.

'I knew that it must come,  
For how should England live without your blood,—  
Her son's—the best? . . . I will not grudge her need  
For I am England's child and freely give

Women send their sons and husbands with such a patriotic fervour that some women poets are quite dissatisfied with their own exclusion from the actual battlefield. Though men's duty as soldiers fighting in the front seems to be a tougher job to do, on the women's front, the situation is observed from a different standpoint. Khan puts forward that in time of trouble it is easier to obey commands than to remain inactive and wait in silent anxiety. This is the women's situation in war-time. Khan further elucidates some notions attributed to men, like "courage", and brings in her own definition on women's part as follows:

Courage is manifest not only in brilliant attack, but also patient waiting and patient endurance. In war-time, women, too, go to battle; they battle with the slow torture of fear and suspense, the long agonies of anticipation; the sleepless nights and fevered imagination; the pitiless hours usurped by visions of battered bleeding bodies (Khan, 1988: 138).

Helena Coleman expresses her disappointment in women's exclusion from those 'great days' of male heroism. Coleman deplors "the hindrance of her sex which bars her from participation in war" (Khan, 1988: 140). In "'Tis Not the Will that's Wanted' Coleman voices her anger thus:

In these great days when the hour has struck  
Calling for every ounce of pluck—  
God help me not to curse my luck  
That I was born a woman.

As Helena Coleman's lines suggest, war is considered to be an ennobling and elevating experience which frees men from monotonous everyday life. Hers is a romanticised picture of soldiers fighting and dying honourably. Such view is conspicuous in Rupert Brooke's 'War Sonnets', where war is glorified.

### **WOMEN, WAR AND RELIGION**

Anna Bunston de Barry's diction in 'Youth Calls to Youth' cannot rise above being a propagandistic jingoism. Another method that has been used to urge the youth into war was the employment of religious doctrines that advocate the idea that soldiers dying in a holy war will directly go to Heaven, which sounds like Islamic martyrdom. In Katharine Tynan's poem 'The Short Road to Heaven' such religious and chivalric motifs run together:

But the wise lads, the dear lads, the pathway's dewy green,  
For the little Knights of Paradise of eighteen and nineteen;  
They run the road to Heaven, they are singing as they go.

The idea of holy-war extends to a crusade against barbaric forces aligned against Germany under the banner of Christianity killing fellow Christians. The advantage of forming such a discourse was naturally designed to free the English soldiers from the taints of sin of killing fellow Christians, providing



them the consolation of martyrdom (Khan, 1988: 40). The crusading spirit is enlivened in Katharine Tynan's poem 'To the Others':

This was the gleam then that lured from far  
Your son and my son to the Holy War:  
Your son and my son for the accolade  
With the banner of Christ over them, in steel arrayed.

While men joined the army, women were taking the places of husbands, fathers, and brothers as van drivers, window-cleaners, shop assistants, etc. Yet women were given less opportunity for training (Braybon, 1989: 45). Such changes in the labour market naturally found repercussions in poems by women. Jessie Pope's poem 'War Girls' enumerates the new jobs that women do:

There's the girl who clips your ticket for the train,  
And the girl who speeds the lift from floor to floor,  
There's the girl who does a milk-round in the train,  
And a girl who calls for orders at your door.

\* \* \*

There's the motor girl who drives a heavy van,  
There's the butcher girl who brings your joint of meat,  
There's the girl who cries 'All fares, please!' like a man,  
And the girl who whistles taxis up the street.

'War Girls' depicts women as successful as men in every job they lay a finger on. That they clip 'the ticket for the train' seems as natural as using the elevator, and they successfully perform traditional male-attributed jobs like butchering or driving a heavy van, or assume male-attributed manners like whistling taxis up. Similarly, Nina Macdonald's poem 'Sing a Song of War-Time' reflects this social change:

Ev'ry body's doing  
Something for the War,  
Girls are doing things  
They've never done before,  
Go as 'bus conductors  
Drive a car or van,  
All the world is topsy-turvy  
Since the War began.

Women successfully perform their duty in the absence of their men; Pope repeats 'Till the khaki soldier boys come marching back' in 'War Girls'. Before 'khaki boys' come back home, there were many other jobs that had to be accomplished. As Khan suggests, "war was by tradition alien to women; it was not their province. The First World War changed this; it provided women with an opportunity to participate in and observe war on a scale hitherto unknown" (1988: 106). It is during World War I that women proved themselves as able as men, and their efficiency in men's job would provide them equal rights with men in citizenship and other rights like voting. The war temporarily dispossessed their male population which opened up a space for women to move, which granted them access to professions they had never had before, including opening up way to the equal rights and the vote.

### IMAGE AND IMAGERY AS WOMEN SEE

As the women of the war years had been deprived of seeing and experiencing the actual battle scenes, women used their imaginative understanding to reflect the agony, suffering, and the trench conditions that their loved ones were going through. In contrast to the wonderful meadows of England, there was mud and blood in Flanders fields. The unnatural death of soldiers stood against the idyllic beauty of English pastures and meadows. Though women were kept away from the battlefields, they

imagined the anguish their menfolk might be going through. Gabrielle Eliot draws on an image that contrasts the English pasture with the muddy trenches in 'Pierrot Goes to War':

In the sheltered garden, pale beneath the moon,  
(Drenched with swaying fragrance, redolent with June!)  
There, among the shadows, some one lingers yet –  
Pierrot, the lover, parts from Pierrette.

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In the muddy trenches, black and torn and still,  
(How the charge swept over, to break against the hill!)  
Huddled in the shadows, boyish figures lie –  
They whom Death, saluting, called upon to die.

As the beautiful scenery of English pasture draws a contrast with the mud of the trench, the olfactory image of the garden 'drenched with swaying fragrance' also draws a contrast with the trench that is 'black and torn and still'. Muriel Elsie Graham sees this clash as a war of swamps. Graham observes the mud of the battlefields as a monster swallowing 'men's lives'. Graham's poem 'The Battle of the Swamps' reads as follows:

Across the blinded lowlands the beating rain blows chill,  
The trenched earth turns to water, the shell-holes ooze and fill,  
  
A tragic land where little that's sweet or sane survives –  
O hungry swamps of Flanders that swallow up men's lives!

The consolation comes from the fact that their deaths are not in vain; they die for the mother country, England. The significance of poet's talking about mud is not an arbitrary one; first they are deprived of active service for the country and they feel degraded and, second, the deaths of the sons in Flanders fields are somehow a price for the beautiful fields of England, which were made eternally English at their cost. In other words, the English fields have been bought by their blood (Beauman, 1993: 132). The penultimate stanza of 'The Battle of the Swamps' portrays a 'sheltered homeland' by the deaths of soldiers who are 'worlds away':

Yet in the sheltered homeland that lies such worlds away,  
What shrinking hearts are braving that suffocating clay!  
And when on roof and window the rain beats, then – O then,  
O deathless swamps of Flanders, our hearts are with our men.

By the death of men the English pasture has been saved from a foreign invasion and the land is forever England. Natural cycles that turn men into clay, also give life to flowers in the spring time. Yet the women feel the spring together with the condition that war imposes on them. The image of reviving nature is interpreted in connection to the war and death. Sara Teasdale's poem 'Spring in War-Time' questions the awakening nature of spring:

The grass is waking in the ground,  
Soon it will rise and blow in waves –  
How can it have the heart to sway  
Over the graves  
New graves?

Under the boughs where lovers walked  
The apple-blooms will shed their breath –  
But what of the lovers now  
Parted by death,  
Grey Death?



As it is depicted in Isaac Rosenberg's poem 'Break of Day in the Trenches'<sup>3</sup>, Katharine Tynan thinks that flowers derive their colour from the blood of dead soldiers. Both rose and corn imagery refer to certain aspects of the soldiers: redness of rose reminds one of blood; the yellow corn reminds us of the dead soldier's hair. Her grief is in the 'weeping rains'. Tynan's poem 'A Girl's Song' reads thus:

Some brown French girl the rose will wear  
That springs above his comely head;  
Will twine it in her russet hair,  
Nor wonder why it is so red.

His blood is in the rose's veins,  
His hair is in the yellow corn.  
My grief is in the weeping rains  
And in the keening wind forlorn.

The persona in Joan Thompson's poem 'Time Was' grieves over the lost lover. The grieved girl looks for a means to console her grief over the lover; and she expects to find the soft touch of lips on rose buds. The poem is rich in imagery; auditory, visual and tactile. In a fine auditory image suggesting the girl's sad mood, the girl misses hearing his voice and hopes to hear it near a murmuring brook or in a blowing wind, but all of which carries only 'the sigh' of her dead lover. The visual image of the smiling face of the lover is 'in the sun'. His lips' touch is compared to the touch of a rose and is a typical example of tactile image. Thompson's poem 'Time Was' depicts the search of the girl as follows:

I know where I can find him, I shall look  
In every whispering glade, and laughing brook,  
In every passing wind I'll hear his sigh . . .  
And in the sun I'll see his smile again,  
And on the roses blowing in the South  
I'll feel once more the soft touch of his mouth.

The destruction of war is depicted, in many cases, in terms of storm imagery. "Borrowing a metaphor from Nature" Aimee Byng Scott "sets the battle within the context of a storm. The aftermath of battle is visualized by her" (Khan, 1988: 23). Scott's poem begins with visual images of 'mist', 'poppies' and 'green grass' over which a 'lark' sings at a distance. Yet this beautiful scenery is destroyed by the war. Scott's 'July 1st, 1916' depicts the scenery thus:

A soft grey mist,  
Poppies flamed brilliant where the woodlands bend  
Or straggling in amongst the ripening corn,  
Green grass dew kist;  
While distantly a lark's pure notes ascend,  
Greeting the morn.

A shuddering night;  
Flames, not of poppies, cleave the quivering air,  
The corn is razed, the twisted trees are dead;  
War in his might  
Has passed; Nature lies prostrate there  
Stunned by his tread.

The violent storm of the war uprooted millions of young soldiers from their homes and put them into graves untimely. Their sacrifice was naturally different from the one that is held in Church rituals. The wine and bread are not symbolic, but real in the battlefields. Margaret Sackville begins her poem

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<sup>3</sup> Poppies whose roots are in man's veins  
Drop, and are ever dropping;  
But mine in my ear is safe,  
Just a little white with the dust.

depicting a flower adorned church altar and refers to the wine and bread ritual. 'Wine' is soldiers' blood, 'bread' is the very body of the soldiers; 'press' is the war itself and wine-press signifies the human sacrifice at war. As a woman, she is well aware of the fact that their tears neither stop the war nor clean the blood of soldiers. Sackville's poem 'Sacrament' depicts the scenery in visual imagery thus:

This wine of awful sacrifice outpoured;  
This bread of life – of human lives. The Press  
Is overflowing, the Wine-Press of the Lord! . . .  
Yet doth he tread the foaming grapes no less.

These stricken lands! The green time of the year  
Has found them wasted by a purple flood,  
Sodden and wasted everywhere, everywhere;–  
Not our tears may cleanse them from that blood.

The violence of war is reflected through blood imagery, in most cases, with rain that cleanses it. Death and blood are closely connected with the horror of war; the persona of the poem is on a picnic and wind begins to blow from the direction where Flanders is. The persona imagines that it might be raining in Flanders, which turns the bloody soil into mire of blood running to the sea. Rose Macaulay envisions a sea of blood and reflects the plight of the men lying in their own blood in 'Picnic' thus:

And far and far are Flanders mud,  
And the pain of Picardy;

And the blood that runs there runs beyond  
The wide waste sea.

However, the persona, Rose Macaulay, does not want any more wind from Flanders, as if the wind were to bring the pain and sorrow of those who fight there and as if the rain were to pour this pain and sorrow upon them.

Women had very limited amount of first hand battlefield experiences as nurses; therefore, their imagery is not powerful as men's. However, Mary Borden's poem 'The Song of the Mud', which describes a debris of soldiers sucked up by mud, is rich in olfactory, tactile, auditory and visual imagery: Mud is 'the vast liquid grave' of men; it drowns and sucks the dead soldiers under, reminding the reader of the slimy sense of touch of mud. 'Heaving mud' suggests the swelling and rotting dead bodies that 'reek'. All of this happens in silence in contrast to the deafening noise of war.

This is the hymn of mud – the obscene, the filthy, the putrid,  
The vast liquid grave of our armies.  
It has drowned our men.  
Its monstrous distended belly reeks with the undigested dead.  
Our fine men, our brave, strong, young men;  
. . .  
Slowly, inch by inch, they have gone down into it,  
Into its darkness, its thickness, its silence.  
Slowly irresistably, it drew them down, sucked them down,  
And they were drowned in thick, bitter, heaving mud.

On the other hand, a description of similar human debris by Sassoon is moving and touching: In 'Counter Attack', Sassoon depicts the scenery:

The place was rotten with dead; green clumsy legs  
High-booted, sprawled and grovelled along the saps;  
And trunks, face downward, in the sucking mud,  
Wallowed like trodden sand-bags, loosely filled;  
And naked sodden buttocks, mats of hair,  
Bulged, clotted heads slept in the plastering slime.

Joan Montgomery Byles suggests that the vocabulary employed by the male poets are concrete and women's are abstract despite fact that some of these poems were written by the nurses who were actually in the battlefields and dressed the wounds of the soldiers (1995: 59).

Unlike her English counterparts, the Turkish poet Halide Nusret Zorlutuna does not experience the destruction of the war at home. Yet she is deeply moved by the invasion of Istanbul in 1918. She feels quite uneasy about the present condition in the dear city of her own. Therefore, she cannot even feel the joy of coming spring as Sara Teasdale poet of 'Spring in War-Time' does. Zorlutuna describes her own feelings, stating that "Istanbul is beautiful for all the time! It was more beautiful even during the invasion ... in 1918. I used to feel sorry for the soil trampled under the feet of the enemy, and want to kneel down and kiss it, and beg pardon from the land. I used to feel as if the invasion were my own fault" (Gürel, 1988: 34). Zorlutuna does not want 'spring' to come, for her dear city has been invaded. She addresses spring in 'Go, Spring':

Go spring, go spring, smile at a distance!  
Leave of your colour in the sea, as a present;  
Wander in the horizons, glide up in the sky,  
Don't snuggle up to my heart, thinking it is a "goblet!",  
What you observe is candle . . . not goblet!<sup>4</sup>

Candle and goblet imagery reflect the mood of the poet. People drink when they are happy, but the poet is so sad and blue that her heart burns like a candle, which suggests her grief. Another woman poet of the time is Şükufe Nihal Başar who writes poems narrating the war years. Başar's poem 'Poisonous Fog' depicts the situation of the country in fog imagery thus:

Now treacherous, rapacious layer of fog moves above,  
That drowns the souls . . .<sup>5</sup>

Each moment it approaches and gets lower;  
The innocent country suffocates of its poisonous air!..<sup>6</sup>

In another poem, Şükufe Nihal Başar draws attention to the number of the martyrs and expects a help and reward for the sake of the soldiers who died for the freedom of the country. 'The Last Prayer' carries the note '[i]n the Great War nights' which openly suggests World War I. Şükufe Nihal Başar seems very desperate about the situation of the country; she prays in 'The Last Prayer' thus:

In sorrow we cried at your sanctuary;  
We sacrificed millions of brave men,  
For your highness . . . Sent them in hope;  
Send a celestial light upon the tombstones of the martyrs!..<sup>7</sup>

Like their English counterparts, Turkish poets Zorlutuna and Nihal Başar reflected their mood through nature and religious imagery. Zorlutuna could not enjoy the beauty of spring, and fog seems suffocating to Nihal Başar. The situation of the country is so desperate that praying turns to be the last

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<sup>4</sup>Git bahar, git bahar, uzaklarda gül!  
Denize renginden bırak hediye;  
Ufuklarda gezin, semaya süzül,  
Kalbime sokulma "peymane!" Diye.  
Gördüklerin kandil . . . peymane değil! (Akyüz, 1986: 904)

<sup>5</sup>Dolaşiyor, başımızda, şimdi hâin, müfteris,  
Ruhu bozan zehirli bir yığın sis... (Nihal, 1927: 41)

<sup>6</sup>Her saniye biraz daha yaklaşır, alçalır;  
Zehir dolu havasından masum belde bunahr!.. (Nihal, 1927:41)

<sup>7</sup>Gamlı gamlı dergâhında ağladık;  
Milyonlarca kahramanı, arşına  
Kurban ettik. . . Ümid ile yolladık  
Bir nur indir şehitlerin taşına!.. (Nihal, 1927:35)

resort for the poet. Their distance from battlefields does not stop them from thinking over the situation of the country; yet this fact deprives them of narrating or depicting the plight of battlefields through the eyes of the Turkish women.

Another Turkish woman poet, Salime Servet Seyfi uses lion imagery for the soldiers who fought and died in the battles to *save* the country. Saving the country suggests defensive warfare against invading armies; and the deaths of millions of men pose a great sorrow to women. Salime Servet Seyfi puts stress on the fact that women are important element in wars and women encourage their menfolk into the war in order to save the country. In her poem 'In Order to Save You' Salime Servet addresses the country thus:

Those raged lions who had fallen in such bloody fights,  
Those noises of thousands of artillery how frightening and deep,  
Those worthy women who urge their brave men,  
All the distress and sorrow with unswerving faith are  
Yours, glorious country, in order to save you.<sup>8</sup>

Salime Servet's poem proves the fact that women's war effort in time of crisis is crucial and women have the power to change the opinion of their menfolk. In addition, Salime Servet's poem, written in 1917, was published in *War Magazine* (no.19), and is important in terms of its publication in such a magazine, which, at that time, was considered to be none of women's concern.

### CONCLUSION

Women suffered from the violence of war as much as men did, yet their images of war remained 'abstract' compared to men's. This is a natural consequence of women's restriction from the battlefields. The reflection of their sorrow mostly appears in the images of nature, which is true for both English and Turkish women poets; and religious imagery is equally powerful and a source of consolation both in English and Turkish poetry by women.

Religion and religious imagery is one of the most used issues in the war poetry. Yet a difference reveals itself in terms of punishment; male poets never think that war is a punishment by God for their growing irreligiousness. A woman poet observes the war as a punishment for straying from God's path. Commenting on Helen Hamilton's poem 'The Bleating Shepherd of Souls', Khan explains the issue stating: "the vision of war as a divine punishment for a variety of sins enjoyed the blessings of the clergy. The 'bleating shepherd', one of several odious war-time personages portrayed by Hamilton, is shown haranguing his congregation" (1988: 41):

'Yes, my brethren,  
I must say it.  
This agony, so unremitting,  
Those battle-fields ensanguined,  
All the host of ghastly horrors,  
You've drawn them on yourselves.

The amount of poems written by the combatant Turkish soldiers are very low compared to the English ones. Considering the literacy level among combatant Turkish soldiers to be 11% (Kafadar and Esenkaya, 2004: 168), the under-educated soldiers could not be expected to write poems and those who could write could not get them published somehow. Therefore Turkish poetry does not have poems depicting different attitudes of actual combatant soldiers. Şükufe Nihal Başar admits this fact as a great loss and points out this fact as a ground for not having been able to build up a national literature. Her criticism, quoted by Argunşah, protests: "We do not have any warrior writer/poet who rushed into the fire or was wounded with two bullets! Let's all bury our faces into our hands" (2002: 102), as a consequence of which we do not know what actual soldiers felt at the devastation of war and carnage of their comrades.

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<sup>8</sup>Bu kadar kanlı döğüşlerde düşen, şîr-i jiyân,  
Bu kadar bin topun âvâzesi dehhâş u derin,  
Bu kadar mertlere ders vermeye lâîk nisvân,  
Bu kadar kahr ü metâib ile îmân-i yakîn,  
Senin, ey şanlı aziz yurt, seni kurtarmak için! (Karakoyunlu, 1987: 41)

In the light of Başar's comment on the lack of the war poems by combatant soldiers the amount of poems written by Turkish women poets are quite reasonable. However, women's war effort was to be rewarded many years later by the right to vote. The English women got it in 1928, but in Turkey it was a liberation act on behalf of women designed by Mustafa Kemal, and he granted the Turkish women the right to vote in 1934.

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