

a sick mind, whereas they are the cry of the nation with an unparalleled trauma in its past, a call for ultimate redress and healing.

Vahé Oshagan's *Ahazang* (Alarm),¹⁴ a collection of poetry in free verse, is a case in point. Indeed, the opening poem that gives its title to the collection is a tragedy and a mockery of life, a torrent of unchecked observations on life, love, humankind, and awkward situations, all from the point of view of "I," the narrator who considers himself unworthy of living, an exile wherever he goes, a person who is alone even when surrounded by friends and loved ones, who hears the alarm when no one else does. Or he is the one sounding the alarm? Perhaps the alarm is for all humankind, hiding behind dreams and illusions in order not to see the truth, yet the truth is unattainable, therefore we live in the absurd, as Oshagan tends to demonstrate. The entire collection has no page numbers and almost no punctuation and thus the idea of continuity is violated—perhaps as a gesture to modernism, or in symbolic representation of the rupture of Armenian continuity, of Armenian life after the Genocide. Or perhaps the author meant to suggest that the reader can start reading wherever he/she wishes, that each page can stand alone as an independent expression.

Vahé Oshagan, whose work will also be discussed throughout this study, was born in Filipe (Plovdiv), Bulgaria, in 1922. He was renowned as a writer, poet, and literary critic. His father, Hagop (Hakob) Oshagan, already an established writer before 1915, barely avoided arrest and fled to Bulgaria,

¹⁴ Vahé Oshagan, *Ahazang* [Alarm] (Philadelphia, PA: Vosketar, 1980).