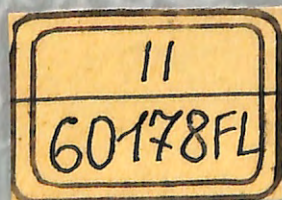


And Those Who Continued Living in Turkey after 1915

The Metamorphosis
of the Post-Genocide
Armenian Identity
as Reflected in
Artistic Literature



Rubina Perroomian

30 APR 2014

**And Those
Who Continued Living
in Turkey after 1915**

**The Metamorphosis
of the Post-Genocide
Armenian Identity
as Reflected in
Artistic Literature**

Rubina Perroomian

Yerevan, 2012

And Those who Continued Living in Turkey after 1915

The Metamorphosis of the Post-Genocide Armenian
Identity
as Reflected in Artistic Literature

by
Rubina Perroomian

© 2008
Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute

2nd printing
Edited, with a foreword by Richard G. Hovannisian

Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute

(Research and Studies in Armenian Genocide Series; 1)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-99941-963-2-6

1. Armenian and Turkish literature – 20-21st centuries-
History and criticism. 2. Armenian Genocide, history and
literature. 3. Gender and genocide. 4. Turkish-Armenian
identity.

Cover photo: Islamized and tattooed Armenian woman

Source: *Orient im Bild*, Summer, 1927,
Potsdam, Germany.

“Collage” Publishing House LLC

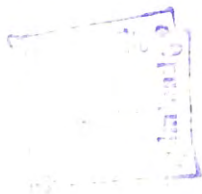
Contents

Acknowledgment.....	v
Foreword by Richard G. Hovannisian.....	vii
Introduction	1
Preamble and Focus	15
1. The Breached Wall of Silence	31
2. The Continued Trauma	55
3. Muslim Armenians, A Paradox?.....	71
4. A Secret Rather Buried	85
5. Historical Memory Suppressed, Expressions Silenced	109
6. Collective Memory Passed On	147
7. Third-Generation Survivors Respond	175
In Conclusion	213
Bibliography	229
Index	239
Summary in Armenian	249

Acknowledgment

First and foremost, many thanks to the Armenian Genocide Museum and Institute and its director, Dr. Hayk Demoyan, for endorsing my manuscript and undertaking its publication. I also thank him for closely following every step of the publication process.

I am indebted to my copy editor, Ms. Diane James, senior editor at UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies, who did more than her calling to make the source citations and cross-references flawless. Her knowledge of the Turkish language was also a great help. Among others who helped remedy my inability to read Turkish by translating passages for me—in fact, Ottoman Turkish is more accessible to me because of its closeness to Farsi and to the Turkic language spoken in Iranian Azerbaijan, than is Modern Turkish—are Dr. Ruben



11-60178FL

Melkonian of Yerevan State University's Department of Turkish Studies and his students, and Dr. Ohannes Avedikian of the Organization of Istanbul Armenians in Los Angeles.

I thank Mr. Kemal Yalçın for his work, *Seninle Güler Yüreğim*, which inspired me to begin my research into the hitherto unknown and unfamiliar (to me) field of the responses of Turkish Armenian remnants, survivors of the Genocide, to the past traumatic experience and the role of historical memory in forging the identity of that segment of the Armenian survivors scattered throughout the world.

In this long, arduous, and challenging endeavor, my son, Dr. Vahé Perroomian, a space physicist by profession and a photojournalist in his leisurely pursuits, followed my writing step by step and made valuable comments and suggestions.

My deep and loving appreciation goes to my husband, Neshan, my strongest supporter in all my academic activities, celebrating my successes and helping me overcome the many obstacles in my way. I thank him for his moral and financial support in making this project a reality.

On the occasion of the second printing of this book, Professor Richard G. Hovannissian, first holder of the AEF Modern Armenian History Chair at UCLA, graciously agreed to write the foreword for which I am immensely thankful.

Foreword

Richard G. Hovannissian

Rubina Perroomian is in the process of creating a broad multivolume panorama of the Armenian Genocide as reflected in a variety of literary genres. Her initial work, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe*, focused on the ways in which Armenian writers down through the ages have responded to calamity and have attempted to find explanations for and to moralize on the tribulations of the nation. This subsequent valuable study explores new horizons in searching for the subdued voice of the small Armenian minority left in Turkey, primarily in Istanbul, following the genocidal years. She turns attention even to the silent or hidden Armenians. It is generally accepted that literary approaches are as effective, if not even more so, as detailed historical research in capturing and personalizing critical moments and extraordinary, perhaps unfathomable, human experiences. This has been demonstrated by the entire range of post-genocide Armenian literature.

Immediately after World War I, in a moment of freedom and

opportunity in Constantinople or Istanbul, surviving Armenian intellectuals began to try to comprehend what had occurred both on a personal and on a collective level. Their writing constituted the first step in an attempt to reconnect the disrupted Armenian cultural continuum. This movement was cut short in 1922, however, when many of the intellectuals, along with the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, were forced to emigrate hurriedly to foreign lands in the face of the impending occupation of the city by the triumphant Turkish Nationalist forces of Mustafa Kemal Pasha.

The Armenian community left behind the forbidding walls of Republican Turkey had only limited contact with the diasporan communities. There was, indeed, even a certain suspicion among the disinherited survivors scattered abroad regarding the Armenians remaining in Istanbul, in part because of their silence, their obligatory self-censorship, and sometimes it seemed their willingness to defend or rationalize the actions and policies of the Turkish authorities. They did, after all, continue to live with Turks on a day-to-day basis and considered this to be natural, in contrast with the dispossessed diasporans who were confronted with an iron curtain that ruled out any possibility of maintaining a physical connection with erstwhile homes, villages, towns, and cities.

The overt discrimination and violence of the 1940s and 1950s prompted much of the established and still-Armenian-speaking community of Istanbul to emigrate, its place being filled with Kurdish-speaking and Turkish-speaking hidden Armenians from the interior provinces who clustered around the Armenian Patriarchate in search of their lost identity and often of material assistance. On my first trip to Turkey in September 1955, shortly

after graduating from the university, I became a personal witness to the devastation wrought by the organized mobs in riots that extended from the Christian neighborhoods of Istanbul to the very tip of the Bosphorus. It seemed reminiscent of the actions of the organized mobs that had fallen upon the Armenian city quarters and villages during the widespread massacres under Sultan Abdul Hamid in 1895-96. The horror of September 1955 compelled many Armenians to abandon their beloved city to begin life anew in distant lands, retaining nonetheless their special familial and emotional connections with Turkey, the Turkish language, and Turkish culture.

Rubina Perroomian carefully traces the impact of all these developments on Armenian literary output, identity, and culture in Turkey. She discovers that in time there was a gradual elevation in the sound level of formerly only whispering voices. For example, previously Armenian newspapers had consistently refrained from publishing editorials reflecting on the great national calamity or expressing any opinions at variance with official state positions. Rather, the press in a defensive, self-protective strategy tried to keep its readership informed by simply translating, without commentary, excerpts from the Turkish media relating to Armenians. This practice began to change at the turn of the twenty-first century. A new generation of more integrated Turkish Armenians became bolder and more outspoken. They were participants in Turkish civic and political movements, interacted with Turkish intellectuals, and sought innovative ways to reach the increasingly assimilated Turkish Armenian youth. Hrant Dink and his bilingual newspaper, *Agos*, best represent this generation.

The Armenian rediscovery of a voice did not, of course, oc-

cur in isolation but rather was an integral part of a much broader phenomenon in Turkey, that of questioning established norms and narratives. The more spirited of the Armenian writers could dare to shed the mantle of oblique universal themes for contents having specific relevance and reference to the traumatic experiences of the Armenian people. Topics that had been taboo for so long cautiously made their entry into the public arena, stimulating a conscious revival of Armenian identity.

Historical memory, too, gradually resurfaced both on the side of the victims and the side of the perpetrators of 1915. This development extended to the secret, hidden Armenians as well as to Islamized and often entirely unaware Armenians who had to overcome the shock of learning of their Armenian bloodline, a stigma against which they had been carefully guarded by the older generation. FethiyeÇetin, with her story of Heranush in *My Grandmother*, perhaps best exemplifies the amazing process of self-discovery by a perplexed but steadily transforming generation.

Despite the widespread attempts at camouflage, there is outside the strictures of official history an enormous reservoir of memory in regions from which the Armenians have been virtually eliminated. On a personal note, for many years I declined to travel to these areas, not wanting to see what I knew would be the case, that is, a vanishing Armenian landscape. Yet when I did begin my journeys in the eastern half of Turkey in the twenty-first century, I was surprised to discover just how much memory had survived and was perpetuated through transmission from generation to generation. The Kurds, who now populate much of that land, were ready to admit with remorse their role in the Armenian massacres, to point out the former fields, shops, and

homes of Armenians, to relate stories about a close relative having been born Armenian. In more than one place I was taken some distance simply to see a very aged Kurdish-looking woman who as a very young Armenian girl in 1915 had been taken in by Kurds and eventually married to a member of the Kurdish family. Nearly a century after the great calamity, persons who had long since converted to Islam and who knew not a word of Armenian were still recognized and identified as Armenian. Under more favorable circumstances, this reservoir of local memory may be tapped far more deeply and productively.

Dr. Perroomian draws these diverse themes of literature and memory together in this volume, which is a second revised printing of *And Those Who Continued to Live in Turkey after 1915*. It is fortuitous that the release of this volume comes shortly after the publication of her third book on the subject, titled *The Armenian Genocide in Literature*. That study explores and assesses Armenian literature produced by the exiled survivors of the genocide, by the bewildered orphan generation, and by the pessimistic self-demeaning, yet romantically nostalgic, writers in acculturating and assimilating Armenian communities, as in the case of the cluster of intellectuals in Paris. Perroomian will next assess the literary manifestations of the second and third generations, who are now writing not only in Armenian but also and even more so in the languages of their countries of birth. Her work is far from being descriptive alone, as it attempts to analyze—to grasp—the depths of emotion, the trauma, and the complex psyche of the survivor and orphan generations. She enters the pages of her writing and often acts as a direct observer, commentator, and critic. With this and its preceding and subsequent companion volumes, Rubina Perroomian will have produced an encompassing and enduring contribution to the field.



Introduction

Two decades and some years ago, when I chose Armenian Genocide literature as my specialized field of research and as the topic of my dissertation, I could never have foreseen how deeply this field of study would engulf my academic endeavors, my community activism, my life. Dealing with the enormity of material and the emotional impact of this field of epic grandeur is a daily struggle. The present book, and the trilogy it is a part of, sum up only a portion of my aspired undertakings in this field. I am still hoping to reach closure, if at all possible, in this bottomless sea of my people's struggle to cope with and eventually transcend the Genocide in their past.

In the first monograph¹ of my projected trilogy, itself a follow-up to *Literary Responses to Catastrophe: A Comparison of the Armenian and the Jewish Experience*,² I focus on the literary responses of generations of Diasporan Armenian survivors to the traumatic past of their parents and grandparents. I trace the transmission, from the first generation to the next and the next, of the lingering pain and the memory of having survived a cataclysm that was later recognized as the first large-scale genocide of the twentieth century.³

In the present volume, the second in the trilogy, I shift my focus to trace the effects of that past traumatic experience on the formation and metamorphosis of the identity of generations of Armenian survivors who continued living in Turkey. I have therefore chosen "The Metamorphosis of the

¹ Forthcoming. (The aforementioned monograph was published before the present 2nd edition and was titled *The Armenian Genocide in Literature, Perceptions of Those who Lived Through the Years of Calamity*.)

² *Literary Responses to Catastrophe* was an expanded version of my dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree at the University of California, Los Angeles, in June of 1989. The book was published in 1993, under the auspices of the Von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies at UCLA, by Scholars Press in Atlanta, Georgia.

³ Despite this scheme for the first monograph, projected in the 2008 edition of the present book, the published monograph, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature*, covers the literary responses of the first generation survivor-writers and the Orphan Generation, as well as an extensive discussion of a number of survivors' memoirs. The literary responses of the second and third generation Diasporan survivor-writers will be discussed in a future volume, thus turning the projected trilogy into a quartet.

Post-Genocide Armenian Identity as Reflected in Artistic Literature" as the subtitle of this monograph to emphasize this shift.

I intend to complete the trilogy with a volume on the study of the reflections of the historical memory of the Armenian Genocide in Soviet Armenian literature, in which the Genocide was a forbidden subject. I will demonstrate that, despite the hostile atmosphere in which not only writing about the past and the Turkish atrocities but also speaking about them was a punishable crime, the memory of the Genocide was transmitted in the stories of grandparents in the confines of their homes. This memory subtly but unmistakably resounded in literary works, which interestingly also incorporated the collective memory of subsequent persecutions during the Soviet era. In this final volume of the trilogy, I will highlight the impositions of Soviet ideology and state policies upon the treatment of Armenian history and the collective memory of the traumatic past. To tie in with the thesis I develop in the present volume, I will draw a comparison between the prevailing atmosphere of fear in then-Soviet Armenia and the state of mind that governs contemporary Turkish society.

The basis of the focus in the present volume—from literary responses to the transgenerational sense of Armenianness—is twofold. First, in my readings of genocide literature and my study of the effects of the Armenian Genocide on generations of survivors, I came to realize that the nation's past traumatic experience had a definite role in the formation of the Armenian sense of ethnicity and identity through time. This realization necessitated an approach with a different angle, with an emphasis on the construct of identity—ethnic identity

in particular—again in artistic literature, as before. This shift, or this modified approach, is reflected in articles that I have published and presentations that I have made in recent years.

The second and more important reason is the fact that I could not rely on Turkish-Armenian literature to explore the Turkish-Armenian literary responses to the Catastrophe. There were none. Surviving Armenian intellectuals gathered in postwar Constantinople made superhuman attempts to overcome the devastating effects of the destruction of the Armenian people and to find the means, that is, literary directions, to transcend the Catastrophe. The short-lived *Bardzravank* literary movement initiated in 1922 by Vahan Tekeyan, Hagop Oshagan, Kostan Zarian, Shahan Berberian, and others was an attempt toward that goal. That movement and the literary output it entailed promised a new revival in the history of Western Armenian literature.⁴ The path to reach that revival necessitated facing the past, comprehending the Catastrophe, confronting and responding to it. Oshagan's *Kayserakan haghtergutium* (Imperial song of triumph) best exemplifies the new direction.⁵

⁴ A periodical of the same name, *Bardzravank*, was published as the organ of this literary movement in 1922. The movement and its periodical met their end under the threat of the Kemalist advances on Constantinople.

⁵ Oshagan, *Kayserakan haghtergutium* (1983). In his preface to this collection of five stories from this period, Oshagan gives his interpretation of the events of 1915 and the role of Kaiser Wilhelm as an indifferent bystander to the events. He discusses the German conspiracy in a later work, *Mnatsordats* (1932–33). For a discussion of these works, see the chapter on Oshagan in Perroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe* (1993), pp. 173–215.

However, the movement and the thriving literary activities in Constantinople were cut short by Mustafa Kemal's threatening advance toward Constantinople. Armenian intellectuals fled the country in fear of renewed persecution. In fact, the turbulent period between September 1922, with the Kemalist army's occupation and burning of Smyrna (Izmir), and October 1923, with the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey, was the only opportunity to escape the country. After the establishment of the Republic and until 1946, no exit visas were issued. "The doors were closed," and those intellectuals who remained in Constantinople/Istanbul were mostly persecuted. As a result of the prevailing atmosphere of fear and political pressure, the cultural life of the minorities was dead. The established Armenian writers of the pre-1915 era, unable to freely express the suffering of their people, refrained from writing at all, or resorted to occasional outbursts of abstract melancholy.

Despite the unfavorable atmosphere, the post-World War II Turkish-Armenian, or rather Istanbul Armenian literature—since after Mustafa Kemal's coming to power in 1923 and the inauguration of the Republican era in Turkey, Constantinople/Istanbul has been and is the only center in Turkey where Armenian literature is produced—has made significant strides in artistic expression. In fact, the Istanbul Armenian literature of the past few decades has made a great leap forward after long years of searching for a new direction to rise above the stagnation caused by the unyielding Turkish political stance against Armenians and especially the Turkish denial of the historical truth of the events before the Republican era. In light of the precariousness of the right and

the ability of minority peoples to practice their religion and establish schools, media outlets, and other cultural institutions,⁶ Turkish-Armenian intellectuals walked a tightrope, always cautious not to cross the line. And so, writers stayed away from the theme of the nation's collective suffering of the past. For decades, Istanbul Armenian literature, and poetry in particular, developed by following the path of modern international literature,⁷ with no limits or constraints in form and content and with humanism and

⁶ Little is left today of the thriving Armenian cultural, religious, and educational life of pre-1915 Constantinople. The periodical press that mirrors the life of the community is comprised of *Zhamanak*, founded in 1908, *Marmara*, founded in 1940, the theatrical journal *Kulis*, founded in 1946, *Lraber*, the newsletter of the Patriarchate, *Sourb Prkich*, the organ of the Sourb Prkich Hospital, and *Agos*, the newest periodical in Armenian and Turkish. They all have continued uninterrupted. In addition, other periodicals such as *Shoghakat*, *Nor San*, and *Handes Mshakuiti* have resumed publication after decades of silence. The Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul oversees the religious and cultural life of the Armenian community as before (since the fifteenth century). There are more than 35 churches in Istanbul, of which only about ten are in operation, compared to 47 functioning churches in 1915. Some of these churches have been turned into mosques. There are also two Protestant and six Catholic Armenian churches functioning. There are 18 Armenian schools, orphanages, and a hospital in operation, and seven Armenian cemeteries, Shishli being the most famous among them.

⁷ Being cut off from the outside world, Armenian intellectuals were introduced to international trends in poetry and literary movements—surrealism in the West and social-realism in the Soviet Union—mainly through modern Turkish literature and Turkish literary journals. Of course, this does not necessarily mean that the Istanbul Armenian literature fell under the influence of contemporary Turkish literature.

abstract contemplations of human traits and attributes as favorite themes. With a unique perception of the world and humankind, Turkish-Armenian writers and poets sang the love, hope, dreams and yearnings, the pain and suffering of mankind, and the struggle for equality and justice.⁸ They successfully overcame their own emotions and replaced the "I" with the "collective I." They replaced personal struggle with the collective one. Zahrad (Zareh Yaldejian)⁹ was one

⁸ Onnik Fchjian's poem, "Vacharorde" (The vendor) best epitomizes this trait in Istanbul Armenian poetry:

I sell oil; I sell honey,
Forgiving spirit,
Sincerity
Loving hearts I sell...
My baskets are filled with
Happiness, brotherhood
And I sell; I sell...
Vendor!
hatred,
lies and deceit I want from you.
Unfortunately, Madame, there are none.
They are all gone.

The poem is quoted in Haddejian, *Hushatetr* – 15 (1999), p. 188. Haddejian cites this poem as the author's important and impressive first step by which he became known in Istanbul literary circles. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations in the present work are my own.

⁹ Born in 1924 in Istanbul, Zahrad is a product of the post-WWII Turkish-Armenian cultural and especially literary revival. His poetry encapsulates the postwar period's invigorated cultural and religious activities, the booming of Armenian schools, churches, print press, art exhibitions, and cultural events in the atmosphere of socioeconomic recovery and relative political respite which ended with the revolution and military coup of May 27, 1960, the

principal figure and a pace-setter in post-World War II Istanbul Armenian poetry, followed by Zareh Khrakhuni (Arto Jumbushian).¹⁰ This strong inclination toward internationalism drove Turkish-Armenian writers to initiate attempts of rapprochement with Turkish writers and poets. They organized literary events dedicated to Turkish literature and invited Turkish intellectuals to participate. The frequency and popularity of these events gave rise to resentment in some. Rober Haddejian quotes Hagop Martayan expressing his concern in this regard in one of the meetings of the organizing committee: "We need to think of our own bread." "Our bread, that is, our culture," Haddejian comments, "is in the lion's mouth. We had to take control of it."¹¹ With all this being said, it would be a fallacy to suggest that post-World War II Istanbul Armenian poetry entirely shunned themes of Armenian national interest and did not reflect the Turkish-Armenian experience. In an analysis of Istanbul Armenian modern poetry, Hilda Kalfayan explains,

Images, often surrealistic, and especially symbols come to the aid of the Istanbul Armenian poet to create multiple meanings that lend themselves to multiple interpretations.... The national remains obscure, barely noticeable; the poetry sounds harmless but reaches the reader's intelligence. It

assassination of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, the demise of his democratic government, the liquidation of the parliament, and the arrest and incarceration of political leaders.

¹⁰ Zareh Khrakhuni was born in Istanbul in 1926. Aside from his poetic creations, he is known as a critic, analyst, and staunch supporter of Istanbul Armenian modern poetry.

¹¹ Haddejian, *Hushatetr* – 15 (1999), p. 201.

reaches through art, through images, never expressed directly.¹²

Indeed, both Zahrad's and Khrakhuni's poetry best elucidate this phenomenon. They sing the pain of human beings in their struggle for justice and to attain and preserve their identity as human beings, but with a nationalistic approach and interpretation, that struggle can epitomize the Armenian Cause.¹³

Unable to pursue the cause of the Armenian nation in dispersion, and sometimes even unaware of that cause,¹⁴ Istanbul Armenian poets of the 1950s espoused the cause of humanity, especially in their own country where injustice prevailed. An important work by a group of Turkish-

¹² Kalfayan, *Bolsahay nor banasteghtsutune* (1998), p. 11.

¹³ Khrakhuni's poem titled "Patmutiun" (History), about the brothers Remus and Romulus and the birth of Rome, begins with the following four lines:

Their totem was wolf
And ours was lamb
Here is the issue
The rest is history.

One cannot help thinking that the poet was alluding to the history of the Turkish-Armenian relationship.

¹⁴ Rober Haddejian (Rober Haddeler) attests that Armenian intellectuals of the 1950s had no contact with Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora outside Turkey and did not know much about the life, the literature, and overall the cause of the Armenians outside Turkey. He also maintains that the Diaspora, in turn, was unaware of Turkish-Armenian literature and believed that it was basically dead. The weekly literary insert first published in *Marmara* in 1955 was to fill that gap and become the pulse of Istanbul Armenian literary life. See Haddejian, *Hushatetr* – 15 (1999), pp. 20-1.

Armenian writers and poets, titled *A Panorama of the Istanbul Armenian Literature of the Republican Era* (1957), encapsulated the spirit and the direction of Istanbul Armenian poetry of the time and attempted to reach Armenians outside Turkey.¹⁵ In the epilogue to this publication, co-editor Vardan Komikian wrote,

As it can be clearly seen, the Istanbul Armenian literary-artistic movement continues its evolution in parallel with Diasporan Armenian and international progress in this domain, within the limits of circumstances and influencing factors. Nevertheless, this movement has been able to free itself from the inferiority complexes imposed by today's egocentric and unyielding critics as well as by the unaware and thus indifferent observers outside Turkey.¹⁶

This was not only a rationalization of the state of Istanbul Armenian art and literature of the time, but even more, it was a manifesto bridging the gap of 35 years since the *Bardzravank* movement, proudly announcing the birth of new literary figures who shared their predecessors' talent and drive.

Later on, as the grip of the military regime tightened, many of these writers and poets, who entertained themes of human justice, brotherhood, and equality among human

¹⁵ Tsovak, Komikian, and Haddejian, *Hamaynapatker hanrapetakan shrjani Istanbulahay grakanutian*.

¹⁶ Cited in Haddejian, *Hushatetr* – 15 (1999), p. 219. For a comprehensive description of this important work and its role and place in Istanbul Armenian literature, see pp. 222–4.

beings, came to be considered socialists (leftists), and were persecuted and imprisoned by the government.¹⁷

The experience of Istanbul Armenians and their perception of the past have only recently burst into the open, principally through a new but cautious trend in the literature produced by Turkish-Armenian literati. Their venture to write their stories about the Armenian past in Turkish, or to translate original Armenian works into Turkish, is particularly notable. In an article on the question of silence in the Turkish Republican past, Fatma Müge Göçek touches upon this new trend in Turkish-Armenian literature and discusses the hesitance of Turkish-Armenian literati to break the silence and write about their traumatic experience. She attributes this hesitance to

self-censorship because of the precariousness of their societal location, leading them to mention, in the narrative that took them 75 years to present to the Turkish-Muslim national audience, the Armenian massacres that formed an indelible component of the memory of their parents and grandparents....¹⁸

Was it self-censorship or plain fear of persecution? In a situation where even speaking the Armenian language in

¹⁷ Persecutions were heightened especially after the military coups of March 12, 1971, and September 12, 1980, when a widespread hunt for socialists (communists) took place. The military would break into the homes of Turkish and Armenian intellectuals and arrest them if books by Nazim Hikmet, Karl Marx, and others were found.

¹⁸ Göçek, "Silences in the Turkish Republican Past" (n.d.). In this article, Göçek provides a contextualization of the Armenian experience in the Turkish narrative and in particular discusses the works of two Turkish-Armenian writers, Hagop Mintzuri and Migirdic Margosyan.

public was considered against the laws of proper public behavior, not tolerated and subject to harassment, how could Armenians speak their mind about such a sensitive subject? Characteristically, Toros Toranian, a Syrian-Armenian writer visiting Istanbul in 1963, attests to his encounter with a group of Armenian intellectuals in the street. In his excitement at having met them, he greeted them in a loud voice and asked about an Armenian writer he very much wanted to meet. Coincidentally, the writer he was seeking was among this group. Very perplexed about this audacious and loud pronouncement of his name in the streets of Istanbul, he muttered words that no one could hear, and a lady in the group, a contributor to the Armenian newspaper *Marmara*, jumped in with a scolding tone: "Sir, if you will speak loud, speak Turkish. If you have to speak Armenian, then speak in a low voice. *Burası Türkiye, anladın mı?*" (This is Turkey, do you understand?)¹⁹

The trend to write about the Armenian past in the Ottoman Empire in Turkish-Armenian literature is still taking its first shaky and cautious steps. Newspaper articles in *Marmara* and *Zhamanak* are trying to shed some light on the present affairs of the Armenian community without much reference to the past. The contribution of *Agos*, a weekly paper in Turkish and Armenian, is tremendous. This paper, which still continues to be published after the assassination of its longtime editor Hrant Dink, reached the Armenians in Turkey, especially those who came to Istanbul from the interior of the country and did not have an Armenian education—Istanbul

¹⁹ Toranian, *Istanbulahayere ke kanchen* (1997), p. 22.

being the only place where the existence of Armenian schools was tolerated. But more importantly, *Agos* aimed to spread accurate information about Armenians and Armenian affairs in the wider Turkish society.²⁰ Aside from the press, a scant number of authors, such as Hagop Mintzuri and Migirdic Margosyan, have also ventured into the realm of memoir-writing. However, the prevailing norm is still to stay within the accepted limits. In fact, when describing in simple images the nostalgic memories of their birthplaces in the interior of Turkey, these writers did not speak of the memory of the massacres and deportations, "the exile," which could not have died in the minds of the elders and would have most probably lived in the stories they told their children.

Not only did the literati refrain from writing about the Armenian suffering, but even ordinary Armenians, themselves survivors of the massacres and deportations, kept silent about their traumatic experiences and did not share them with even their closest Turkish friends. Kemal Yalçın confesses at the end of his book, *Seninle Güler Yüreğim* (You rejoice my heart),²¹ that

²⁰ The birth of *Agos*, or rather the emergence of the need for a bilingual paper, is a phenomenon. Reports have it that Archbishop Mesrob II Mutafyan, Patriarch of Istanbul Armenians, called on a few Turkish-Armenian intellectuals active in the Turkish press and formed a press council to respond to inquiries from the Turkish media, or to provide accurate information about Armenians to Turkish media where news about Armenians was usually distorted and falsified. This endeavor generated the need to publish a Turkish-Armenian paper, and gradually *Agos* was born. Hrant Dink served as editor-in-chief from the outset until his assassination, after which Etyen Mahçupyan succeeded him.

²¹ My reference is to the Armenian translation of this book, *Hogis kezmov ke khayta*, by Archbishop Karekin Bekjian (2003).

it was very difficult to win the trust of his Armenian interviewees to speak freely and without apprehension. There had always been a cautious reservation, a conscious or subconscious drive to hide their past when talking to a Turk.

Given the lack of sufficient Turkish-Armenian literature, I therefore had to rely mostly on recent Turkish literature — those few works that audaciously treat the subject of the Armenian massacres and deportations in Turkey. I read all that was available to me and tried to trace in them the sense of Armenianness and the perception of the past, or the persistence of the memory of the past in generations of Armenian survivors who continued living in Turkey. Of course, because of my lack of knowledge of the Turkish language, I have relied on translations into Armenian, English, or French (in some cases the work was in English original), or on studies and analyses of Turkish literature in those languages.

Will modern-day literary criticism and analyses of Turkish literature be able to bring to light what was not said? Will this unravel the knot of an unsettled account between the personal experience of the Turkish writer and the collective experience that was not only Armenian but also Turkish? I hope that it will. I hope that there will be an increasing number of sources, narratives, and literary analyses available to future scholars interested in this subject. In the meantime, let this volume serve as a beginning, a genuine attempt to loosen the knot of a forbidden past.

Preamble and Focus

Ethnic affinity, with all its related elements and characteristics, is an important component of an Armenian's identity. Sociologists may argue that a person's identity is dynamic; it is a feeling and a perception that can change through time and in different circumstances. However, they too admit that in the construct of a person's identity, ethnicity is rather fixed, or at least, more rigid and less susceptible to change. As a trend in the ongoing globalization of the modern world today, some have argued against ethnicity being a universal phenomenon, even "irrelevant in several situations."¹ Aside from the

¹ Algis Prazauskas, "Ethnic Identity, Historical Memory, and Nationalism in Post-Soviet States," Center for Studies of Social Change Working Paper (March 1995), *Columbia International Affairs Online*, <http://www.ciaonet.org>. Accessed August 30, 2006.

exigencies of the process of globalization and sociologists pushing their argument against ethnic identity in favor of that process, there indeed exist many nation-state situations in which there is not an "other" to compare or to come into conflict with the "I." This is especially true in nation states with a population of homogeneous ethnic origin and religious belief or with the strong domination of a single ethnic and religious majority ruling over a weak and oppressed minority. In the case of the Armenians, especially in the Diasporan communities, the concept of ethnic identity has a strong conceptual construct, even if that ethnic identity has experienced setbacks in the process of sociopolitical change through time, even when generations of Armenians are undergoing assimilation and acculturation. In the relationship of "I" and the "other," in this context, the latter is not always a recognizable persona, like the Turk who committed genocide against the Armenians and caused the survivors to scatter in the world and become the new Diaspora.² That "other" can be

² The concept of Diaspora is not new for Armenians. Diasporan Armenian communities have existed for a very long time. They consisted of Armenians who for one reason or another chose to leave Armenia and settle in a foreign land. However, those Armenians could return to Armenia whenever they wanted or maintain close ties with her. That was when a country named Armenia with her indigenous population of Armenians existed, even if mostly under the yoke of a foreign power. The Armenian Diaspora gained a new meaning after the Armenian population of Western Armenia was exterminated. The survivors were driven out of the country, scattering in the world, some joining the existing small communities, others forming new ones. "Armenia," the Armenian *vilayets*, was obliterated in the Ottoman Empire. Constantinople and Tibilisi, the cultural centers of Western and Eastern Armenians respectively, lost

a combination of all the forces at work to obstruct the Armenian people's right to perpetuate, to become whole, a nation rooted in its historic homeland.

The concept of ethnicity in a person's identity is a complex structure with common history, language, race, religion, traditions, and a territorial belonging among the elements with the most impact at its core. Common history and especially the collective memory of that history, "the dammed up force of our mysterious ancestors within us,"³ is chosen as the building block as well as the vantage point of this study. I do believe that "history is a crucial element in the making of identity," and "people without history... are people who have been prevented from identifying themselves from others."⁴ In the case of the Armenians, an ancient people with a rich history of cultural output, military victories and defeats, prosperities and tribulations, the element of common history in their identity gains added importance. Moreover, I believe that the impact of history or the collective memory of that common history, on the concept of ethnicity and the construct of ethnic identity, is

their function after WWI. The postwar small Republic of Armenia established in the easternmost part of historic Armenia was Sovietized and locked behind the Iron Curtain. As a result of these historical changes, the face of the classic Diaspora changed too. There was no Armenia to maintain the umbilical cord that spiritually nourished the Armenian communities abroad.

³ See Olick and Robbins, "Social Memory Studies" (1998), p. 106. The authors cite T. Schieder (1978) who quotes Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1902) as the first to use the term "collective memory," referring to this force as "piled up layers of accumulated collective memory."

⁴ Friedman, "History and Politics of Identity" (1994), p. 117.

11-60178 FL

deeper and more dramatic when a tragic event is at the center of the accumulated memory.

With this premise, I have embarked on examining the metamorphosis of the post-Genocide Turkish-Armenian identity, and the locus of this investigation is the post-Genocide artistic literature. That literature is a place where the relationships between the self and the social, and the constantly changing factors that influence these relationships, are registered and represented. Literature reveals the synthesis of the relationship or the dialogue of the self with the collective past in the context of the present. It reveals the reality, the subject of my search, through art and through literature in particular, which is the most communicative medium of artistic expression. My investigation encompasses the interplay of historical memory and the changing political and psychological forces instrumental in forging that identity. It exposes the centrality of collective historical memory, in this case, the shared experience of the Genocide and its aftereffects, in all the stages of this metamorphosis.

To make this study more meaningful and to place it in the context of my previous field of research, namely, literary responses to the Genocide, a line of comparison between the dynamics of the Diasporan Armenian identity and the dynamics of the sense of Armenianness in those Genocide survivors who continued to live in Turkey is introduced where needed. In doing so, therefore, I have had to quote or paraphrase passages from my previous works, always trying to keep these references to a minimum. This literary tool, the comparative approach, will help in understanding the

circumstantial differences that give birth to the particular process that the sense of ethnic identity goes through.

In the course of my research, it became clear to me that the sociopolitical elements at work to create the dichotomy of these dynamics—of the Diasporan Armenian identity and of the survivors living in Turkey—are more complex in the case of the latter. These elements depended greatly on the survivors' place in Turkish society. In this regard, at one end of the spectrum I see individuals, mostly young women and children, who were rescued, bought, or kidnapped and forcibly Turkified; they continued their lives submerged in Turkish society, formed families and raised children. Then, there are families or groups of families who converted to Islam wholesale and avoided the deportations and massacres of 1915.⁵ There are also families who clung to their identity as

⁵ Evidence shows that many Armenians applied for conversion to save their own and their families' lives; however, their pleas were not always easily accepted. Archbishop Zaven Der Yeghiayan, Patriarch of Constantinople (1913–1922), for example, notes in his memoirs,

In the province of Kharpert, men were not allowed to convert to Islam, and in the case when a woman applied to convert to Islam, it was required that a Muslim be available to take her as his wife.... Those [Armenians] converting to Islam in the coastal cities of the Black Sea—Trebizond, Samson, and Girason—have immediately been moved to purely Muslim inhabited areas of the interior.

My Patriarchal Memoirs (2002), p. 89. These memoirs were originally published in Armenian, titled *Patriarkakan hushers ev vkayutiunner* (Cairo, 1947).

Henry Morgenthau, United States Ambassador to Turkey (1913–1916), also attests to the fact that “The converts were compelled to

Christian Armenians, most of whom lived scattered in remote villages surrounded by Turkish or Kurdish inhabitants; constant discrimination, prejudice, and frequent persecutions compelled many of these families to leave their homes and migrate to Istanbul or abroad, fulfilling the design of successive Turkish governments to cleanse the Armenian element from the interior. At the other end of the spectrum are the Turkish-Armenians of Istanbul who, for better or for worse, are recognized as a community, a religious minority with schools, churches, cultural institutions, and an ostensible infrastructure. This community, though, is dwindling in numbers. Istanbul Armenians too are leaving the country, many of them leaving behind properties that are non-sellable and non-transferable (for minorities) by law. Of course, one needs to recognize that today's community of Istanbul Armenians comprises of the survivors of the pre-1915 Constantinople Armenians as well as those remnants of the 1915 deportees who, at the end of World War I, somehow reached and took refuge in the Allied-occupied city. Then, there are also the recent migrants, Christian or Islamized Armenians from Turkey's interior, some of whom maintain close ties with the established Armenian infrastructure, while others remain aloof and ostracized.⁶

surrender their children to a so-called 'Muslim Orphanage,' with the agreement that they should be trained as devout followers of the Prophet." *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (1975), originally published in 1919 by Doubleday, Page & Co.

⁶ The number of Armenians in Turkey, or Turkish citizens of Armenian descent, is estimated to be about 50-60,000, the majority living in Istanbul. This number does not include perhaps 10-20,000

The study of literature directly or indirectly dealing with the plight of Istanbul Armenians could have been revealing and enlightening both from the standpoint of the lasting impact of historical memory on their identity, and from that of their life experience as a minority in a totalitarian society. However, artistic literature in response to this ongoing trauma was scant and obscure, if not nonexistent. Indeed, the world knew very little about the predicament of the post-Genocide Istanbul Armenian community and the discrimination and prejudice against it. Reports and supplications sent from the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul during the past decades to international organizations, imploring them to intervene with the Turkish government, provided glimpses into the life of the Istanbul Armenian community.⁷

Armenians who have migrated from Armenia (former Soviet Armenia) in search of work. Mesrob II Mutafyan stated in an interview that there are 70,000 Armenians currently living in Istanbul and in 23 other cities throughout Turkey. He also stated that almost none of the scant Armenian communities outside of Istanbul have a church. It is difficult for the clergy, he noted, to travel to these places to conduct religious services, although, he said, the Turkish gendarmerie has promised them protection. One wonders why the Armenian clergy should need protection to visit their flock. See, the interview by Yonca Poyraz Doğan, *Today's Zaman* (March 17, 2007), posted to the armworkshop listserv (armworkshop@umich.edu) by Khachig Mouradian on September 16, 2007.

⁷ Obstacles against Armenian organizations and institutions continue to this day. The churches, the schools, the orphanages, and the hospital, all in dire need of repair, are left to dilapidate and fall in ruins, because the government, with all manner of excuses and pretexts, refuses to issue permission to do any construction, even with private funding. Armenian parents have to prove that they are Armenian in order to be able to send their children to Armenian

Leafing through the pages of Istanbul Armenian periodicals and volumes of poetry, plays, and short stories, one can only find expressions of nostalgic reminiscence of a birthplace, a town or a village in the erstwhile Western Armenia. Gourgen Terents (Tursarkissian, 1888–1972), an Istanbul Armenian poet born in Hajen, expresses his wish:

Take me one day, like a miracle,
To the sweet days of my slipping childhood
And with screams of joy and happiness
I would try again my crazy childhood games.⁸

Or, in a more abstract image, A. Shavarsh (Aram Pehlivanian, 1917–1979) laments over his life away from his homeland:

Who would know the pain of a tree,
And its immense yearning for its native soil.
It will die far and lonely,
Uprooted and taken afar, away from its native soil.⁹

Gourgen Terents and A. Shavarsh both knew that they were dreaming the impossible. There was no return for Armenians to the sacred soil of their homeland where all was in ruins, where the houses of expelled Armenians were made unrecognizable by Turkish or Kurdish usurpers. Another

schools. These and many other similar cases exemplify the infringements on Armenian minority rights in Turkey.

⁸ Cited in Toranian, *Istanbulahayere ke kanchen* (1997), p. 34.

⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

offspring of Armenian survivors, Arsen Janian¹⁰ of Musaler, subtly reminds us that this is the Armenian land, and historic Armenia belongs to Armenians. In a poem titled "Aghbiur" (Spring), he writes,

Spring, what should I call your waters?
Here, see, I found it.
Spring, I will call them holy *miuron*
Because when I looked,
Spring, in your waters, I saw the honest sweat
Of my forefathers.¹¹

Migirdic Margosyan (b. 1938) paints an idyllic landscape of his hometown and the simple country life in the *Gâvur Mahallesi* (Quarter of the Infidels) in Diyarbakir, but he never touches upon the reasons why the Armenians migrated to Istanbul or abroad and why the traces of Armenian presence, the meager remnants of the large Armenian communities in the interior of Turkey, were being eliminated. Their abandoning homes and belongings has become a vexing memory, and life in Gâvur Mahallesi an old story that grandmothers tell their little ones: "Once there was, once there was not a kingdom...."¹² "Yes," adds Migirdic Margosyan,

¹⁰ Arsen Janian was born in Vakfele, an Armenian-only village in Cilicia, in 1938. He was brought to Istanbul in 1953 and given an Armenian education.

¹¹ For this poem in the Armenian original, see Kalfayan, *Bolsahay nor banasteghtsutiune* (1998), p. 223.

¹² This is how Armenian fairy tales begin. It is equivalent to the English "Once upon a time...."

Once there was a kingdom... the kingdom of Aghajan Dayi (Uncle Aghajan) and his tenants.... In the Khenchebek quarter of Tigranakert's *Gavur Mahalle*, the kingdom of house number 4 on Direshibashe Street.

Of all the kings, queens, brides, and bridegrooms of that kingdom, now no one lives in that house.... Now others, other people live in our yards and in our rooms. Our pomegranate and black mulberry trees have dried up....

[They] are all now only tombs of soil in the Shishli [Istanbul] Armenian cemetery....

We the living remnants are yearning for our house, our pomegranate and mulberry trees and the shadow they used to cast.¹³

With such ambiguous references, one needs to read between the lines of literature scattered in Istanbul Armenian papers and more recent publications in separate volumes¹⁴ to

¹³ Margosyan, *Mer ayd koghmere* (In those places of ours) (2005), p. 138. The author's stories about the Armenian quarter in Tigranakert /Diyarbakir (he refers to the two interchangeably, although they are not the same) collected in this volume were originally published in *Marmara* and first published in book form in 1984. Subsequent editions appeared in 1994, 1995, and 2000. The majority of the stories were rewritten in Turkish by the author and published under the title *Gâvur Mahallesi* in 1992. The book was also published in Kurdish in 1999.

Margosyan has also published stories of the same genre in Turkish: "Söyle Margos Nerelisin" (Tell us Margos, where are you from, 1995), "Biletimiz Istanbula Kesildi" (Our ticket was to Istanbul, 1998), "Çengelliğne" (Safety pin, 1999).

¹⁴ Aras Yayıncılık (Aras Publishing) of Istanbul is doing a tremendous service in this regard, collecting and publishing stories previously published in Turkish-Armenian papers and even translating them into Turkish and making them available to Turkish readers. Also important to mention is Belge Uluslararası Yayıncılık (Belge International Publishing) in Istanbul, founded in 1977 by

be able to envisage the persistence or the disruption of historical memory and the degree of intensity of that memory impressing upon the Turkish-Armenian identity.

With the recent resurgence of the drive for recognition of the Armenian Genocide in world forums and state legislatures, the international media have begun to show interest in the situation of the Armenians in Istanbul. This interest soared after the assassination of Hrant Dink on January 19, 2007, by Turkish ultranationalists.¹⁵ This Turkish-Armenian intellectual activist, writer, journalist, and editor-in-chief of *Agos*, the Istanbul-based Turkish-Armenian newspaper, dared to speak about Turkish-Armenian issues and was known for encouraging Turkified Armenians or

Ragıp Zarakolu and his late wife Ayşe Nur. In spite of continuous threats and persecution against the two founders, the firebombing of their office, the imprisonment of Ayşe Nur, etc., Belge keeps translating into English and publishing books on topics such as the Armenian Genocide for the Turkish public to read. In fact, the first book on this topic published by Belge was Yves Ternon's *History of a Genocide* (1993). The book was banned and confiscated in Turkey.

¹⁵ The term "ultranationalist" in Turkey covers a wide range of possible explanations, from Kemalists who favor Westernization by way of forced reforms, to fascists inclined toward religious fanaticism, depending on the angle and the time frame. The faction that was accused of responsibility for this murder, whether by carrying out the act or supporting it, consisted of those who are Muslims first and then Turks. It should be noted at this juncture that, according to a statement by Fethiye Çetin, attorney for Dink's family, quoted in a special report in the *Istanbul Turkish Daily News* (January 19, 2008) on the occasion of the first anniversary of Hrant Dink's murder, one year after the assassination took place and the trial of the culprits began, there has been no progress in the case, despite the fact that the evidence is clear.

Turks with Armenian ancestry to come forward and identify themselves. In some instances, journalistic investigations of Hrant Dink's abhorrent assassination have dug deep into the roots of Turkish nationalism and anti-Armenian sentiments. They show these sentiments to have penetrated into the various social strata, from the ordinary Turk in the street to the judge and jury in the court.¹⁶ Investigations of this kind and the ensuing reports and analyses also serve as sources for the present study.

The question of Turkish-Armenians and of minorities in Turkey in general has also become the focus of social scientists dealing with multiethnic, multicultural, and multi-communal societies such as those of Turkey (whether or not the government acknowledges this multiplicity). The overall picture painted by these studies indicates that minority rights are not observed in Turkey and, in particular, that the provisions of the Lausanne Treaty (1923) concerning minority rights are not implemented. The government strongly denies

¹⁶ Reports and investigations about the murder of Hrant Dink have also pointed to the involvement of the "deep state" (*derin devlet* in Turkish), another term that calls for an explanation. According to *Wikipedia.org*, "Derin devlet is believed by many to be an influential and informal anti-democratic coalition within the Turkish political system, composed of high-level elements within the Turkish military, security and intelligence services, the judicial branch, and important commanders of organized crime." What is meant is a possible conspiracy of the security forces, the secret police, and extreme right-wing organizations. And indeed, the evidence points to their involvement, but the futile struggle of lawyers for the Dink family has shown that it is impossible to prove this in a Turkish court. It is significant that the assassination of Hrant Dink is listed in *Wikipedia* among the incidents related to *derin devlet*.

the existence of a minority problem in the country. In fact, Baskın Oran, Professor of International Relations at Ankara University, was indicted for including controversial and subversive issues in the human rights report he was assigned to prepare and submit to the Prime Ministry Office.¹⁷ Instead of adopting the report, the government put Oran and the president of the Advisory Council on Human Rights on trial. The public prosecutor asked that they be sentenced to a maximum of five years for "insulting state institutions" and "inciting people to hatred and enmity" through the report. Oran was accused of giving "a new definition and application of minority other than the one accepted by Lausanne" which, according to the public prosecutor, "would lead to chaos. This will also bring about a result which would jeopardize the unitary structure of the state, integrity of the country, and indivisible integrity of the nation."

To be exact, Oran was accused of reporting that the Lausanne Law on minorities was not being implemented and that it should be. He was also accused of using the term "Türkiyeli" (people of/from Turkey, citizen of Turkey, a term that connotes racial belonging) rather than the term "Türk" as a "supra-identity" without racial or religious connotation.¹⁸

¹⁷ Baskın Oran was appointed by the Prime Minister to the Advisory Council on Human Rights (established on April 12, 2001, as a part of Turkey's endeavor of accession to the European Union). The Advisory Council began functioning in various working groups. Oran headed the group for the Report on Minority and Cultural Rights. The document was prepared and submitted to the Advisory Council which approved it on October 1, 2004.

¹⁸ Quotations are taken from a long "Counter Indictment" that Oran read out to refute the accusations in the "Minority Report" trial on

Observably, aside from the problem of minorities, Turkish society itself is far from being uniform and in harmony. "The real civilization gap is between the Turks and *the* Turks," as a character attests in Elif Shafak's latest novel, *The Bastard of Istanbul*.¹⁹ The Dipsomaniac Cartoonist, as Shafak names him, is a free-thinker, sort of an existentialist in Istanbul, who depicts the Turkish reality by exclaiming in despair, "God save me from my own people!" He adds,

We are stuck. We are stuck between the East and the West. Between the past and the future. On the one side, there are the secular modernists, so proud of the regime they have constructed, you cannot breathe a critical word. They've got the army and half of the state on their side. On the other hand there are the conventional traditionalists, so infatuated with the Ottoman past you cannot breathe a critical word. They've got the general public and the remaining half of the state on their side. What is left for us?²⁰

Reports and research articles on Armenians in Turkey indicate that they are walking a fine line between keeping the memory of the Genocide alive and confronting the Turks on the issue. Talking about the Armenian Genocide is more than a taboo; it is simply dangerous, a sure warrant against the

February 15, 2006, in Ankara. He translated the document into English and combined it with an Introduction (explaining the process of preparing the original Report), the Minority Report, and the Indictment, all in all, 92 pages. This document was published under the title "Minority Affair in Turkey" in the *Regent Journal of International Law* 5:4 (2007). The defendants were acquitted and the case was dropped: <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/yazdir/78905/>.

¹⁹ Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2007), p. 81.

²⁰ Ibid.

relative peace in which Turkish-Armenians live. Continuous vandalism and violence against Armenian institutions and properties and threats against the lives of Armenian leaders and activists are constant reminders of the shaky ground on which Armenians live. With a ban on the use of Armenian textbooks to teach history, geography, and other sensitive subjects in Armenian schools, that important element, the transmission of the memory of common history in the Turkish-Armenian ethnic identity, is deliberately silenced and obscured. Added to that is a widespread conscious effort among the older generation of Armenians not to expose the new generation to the painful memories of the past in order not to make them more vulnerable than they already are. This phenomenon entails a reality absolutely different from that of the Diasporan Armenian. In Diasporan communities, the main obstacle against the Armenian struggle to keep the historical memory alive down through the generations and to ensure the perpetuation of the sense of Armenianness is the strong tide of assimilation (the white—bloodless—massacre).

A vivid example of the difference between the two realities presented itself in the 1970s and 80s, when the Armenian armed struggle escalated and Turkish diplomats were being gunned down in order to draw world attention to the Armenian Question. Diasporan Armenians used the opportunity to further their peaceful political campaign for the Armenian cause and mobilized the younger generation, while Turkish-Armenians withdrew into a more cautious, lower-profile *modus vivendi*.

For the last twenty-five years, after the last military coup in Turkey, "Love it or leave it" has been the leading slogan in the

country. Those unhappy with the state of affairs are told to pack their belongings and leave the country. Turkey belongs to the mainstream ideology and religion, and no one else should have a claim on it. These ideologies of secularism, nationalism, and political Islamism are all subject to interpretation for the benefit of the ruling majority.

With the climate prevailing in Turkey, it is difficult to imagine any minority (racial, religious, political, etc.), in this case, an ethnic minority such as Armenians, being able to claim its identity and its right to uphold that identity. What then is the path chosen by Turkish-Armenians, and what compromises does it entail?

This book focuses on the issues surrounding, enveloping, and suppressing Turkish-Armenians or, generally speaking, Turkish citizens of Armenian origin, since the diabolical campaign of the Young Turks (The Committee of Union and Progress, also known as the Ittihadists), the ethnic cleansing whose goal was to forge a Turkey for the Turks only. It is with an understanding of these issues, found in the dark corridors of Turkey's changing sociopolitical climate, that the metamorphosis of the sense of Armenianness (Armenian identity) is discussed.

1

The Breached Wall of Silence

The focus chosen in this volume and the intended comparisons would have been impossible not very long ago. Diasporan Armenian responses to the Genocide are numerous and multifaceted and have drawn the interest of scholars of various disciplines, including this author's own research and study of literary responses to the collective past. In contrast, Turkish-Armenian literature, as discussed earlier, did not echo that cataclysmic rupture in its past. As for Turkish literature – the literary output of Turkish authors – with the exception of a few lines here and there, as in Yashar Kemal and Nazim Hikmet, reference to Armenians, their presence in Turkey or atrocities against them, was nonexistent. Indeed, aside from passing remarks, the subject of Armenians has never been

treated directly until recently.¹ The critic A. Ömer Türkeş views this absence as the outcome of successive Republican governments' pressure on Turkish writers, dispossessing them of the right to write history and leaving out from the official history many sociopolitical issues, among them the Armenian issue.² Erol Köroğlu, on the other hand, relates this absence to the construct of the Turkish national identity, requiring a selective approach to history, taking parts of it that are useful to the goal of constructing the prescribed identity and leaving out those parts that are harmful.³ Türkeş is right. Political pressures have deprived Turkish writers of their right to write history. However, in spite of all this, dissident voices give vent to various aspects of the history of modern Turkey. Significant among them are the publications of the Istanbul-based Turkish Historical Foundation which has detached itself from the official Turkish Historical Association in Ankara. Fatma Müge Göçek in particular discusses a book titled *From Subject to Citizen in 75 Years* (1999) and cites the passage dealing with the deportation of Armenians:

¹ In a review of Kemal Yalçın's *Seninle Güler Yüreğim* (You rejoice my heart), A. Ömer Türkeş notes that among more than 5,000 novels published in Republican Turkey, very few speak of the deportation of Armenians. He lists those few novels and their authors, some two dozen of them, and adds that they all cater to the official Turkish line vis-à-vis the Armenian issue. He then mentions Kemal Tahir, Yaşar Kemal, Doğan Akhanlı, Ayşenur Yazıcı, İrfan Palalı, Arif İrgaç, and Kemal Yalçın as authors who took a different approach. <http://www.pandora.com.tr/turkce/elestiri.asp?yid=251>. Accessed January 31, 2007.

² Ibid.

³ Erol Köroğlu cited in *ibid.*

[F]orced migrations have caused, during the historical period that led to the foundation of the Turkish republic, real transformation in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Those escaping enemy armies, those trying to free themselves from separationists and from feelings of hatred, and those forced to migrate left their belongings and found themselves on the road. Most were murdered on the way or died due to disease, hunger, or adverse weather conditions. Many got separated from their loved ones and lost their relatives. Those making it to the end of their migration formed new lives, new residences, under different conditions with new hopes (61).⁴

As Göçek puts it, the aim is to contextualize for the first time the Armenian experience in Turkish Republican history and especially under the rubric of migrations. I believe that what the author tried to do, without delving too deeply, was to draw a picture of the demographic transformations that were at the root of today's homogeneous Turkish society.

Göçek then quotes Akile Gürsoy, author of the article on migration in *From Subject to Citizen*, who lists the people who migrated, among them Armenians:

Armenians: In the middle of the War [World War I], during the Spring of 1915, the Union and Progress took a decision to force the Armenians to migrate.... Some of the Armenian citizens left Turkey after the foundation of the Republic... (63).⁵

The problem of numbers is solved: two million Armenians in the pre-World War I Ottoman Empire, and 60–70,000 today.

⁴ Cited by Göçek in "Silences in the Turkish Republican Past" (n.d.).

⁵ Ibid.

The rest migrated, a few of whom were killed on the way or died as a result of bad conditions. Göçek acknowledges this inclusion of the Armenian experience as a first against the usual practice of exclusion. In this brief discussion of the Turkish historical narrative, be it official or a little more liberal, I exclude as outstanding exceptions the monumental research and the books and articles published abroad by the exiled historian Taner Akçam.⁶

To return to artistic creation, a passing remark about the Armenian massacres that is repeatedly quoted, for lack of other examples, is taken from Nazim Hikmet's famous poem, "Evening Walk," as proof of the Turkish intelligentsia's treatment of the Armenian issue. He writes:

The grocer Karapet's lights are on.
This Armenian citizen has not forgiven
the slaughter of his father in Kurdish mountains.
But he loves you,
because you also won't forgive
those who blackened the name of the Turkish people.⁷

The Armenian Diaspora, therefore, knew little about the existence, whereabouts, and predicament of Armenian

⁶ *From Empire to Republic* (2004) and *A Shameful Act* (2006) are two of Taner Akçam's great contributions to the historiography of the Armenian Genocide.

⁷ Nazim Hikmet (1902–1963) was a Turkish Marxist writer-poet, a rebellious soul against oppression. He wrote "Evening Walk" in 1950 (translated as "Evening Stroll" in a 1954 publication of his poems). See *Things I Didn't Know I Loved* (1975), p. 60. Like most of Hikmet's writings, this poem is also autobiographical, and he himself is his addressee (the "you" throughout the poem).

survivors in Turkey. Islamized or Christian, they lived in secluded communities in remote areas or were completely absorbed into the Turkish, Kurdish, or Arab communities. Communication with these Armenians was scarce, except for a small number of taped interviews with a few old men and women—reluctantly speaking of their Armenian origin—by Diasporan Armenian tourists visiting the birthplaces of their parents in Eastern Anatolia (or Western Armenia of yesteryear). Aside from this elusive evidence, there was nothing to show how Armenian survivors in Turkey lived, and no research had been done about their experiences. In fact, in a research paper by this author, a comparative study of the responses of women victims of the Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Holocaust, there is an observation on the untold story of Armenian women who were "rescued"—in most cases not out of altruistic motivation, but for egotistic reasons—or abducted and forcibly converted to Islam.⁸ In the absence of written literature, insights were extrapolated from the experience of Diasporan Armenian women survivors in order to shed light upon the obscure image of these women in Turkey as victims of genocide. I saw in my imagination their

⁸ Perroomian, "When Death Is a Blessing" (2003). As mentioned in the paper, the motivation for concentrating on women victims or emphasizing their suffering was that women were more vulnerable and less equipped physically and emotionally to endure the calamity. In many instances, their ordeal was shaped by their gender. They had to face tragic choices, or "choiceless choices" as Lawrence Langer calls them. It was either drown themselves in the Euphrates River, or surrender to a Turk and start a new ordeal, the life of a concubine. The decision to live or die offered no salvation, yet either way required heavy compromise or extraordinary courage.

experience in Muslim households and their lifelong compunction for the compromise they had made. In my readings, I had seen the suffering of women on the road to deportation, which was no less than a prolonged agony. Most of the time, death on that road or in concentration camps was a coveted blessing. The life of women in Turkish harems, I surmised, could not have been less painful than death itself. Their life too was a prolonged agony. Despite this extrapolation, I always hoped that this missing link in the history of the Turkish-Armenian relationship would come to light someday.

A small corner of the reality of women survivors in Turkish homes (harems) was briefly illuminated by Sevda Sevan, a second-generation survivor-writer living in Bulgaria. In her novel, *Rodosto, Rodosto*,⁹ Sevan focused on the aftermath of the 1894-96 massacres, creating her protagonists on the basis of a true story embellished with the stories she heard from Armenian survivors who took refuge in Bulgaria.

Hermine/Filor is one of these survivors whose life as a contracted wife of a Muslim and thus ostracized from society, typifies that of many surviving Armenian girls in the aftermath of the 1894-96 massacres, that is, before the complete expulsion of Armenians from the Ottoman Empire. Hermine/Filor, a beautiful Armenian girl, survives the horror of witnessing the slaughter and beheading of her father and

⁹ Sevan's *Rodosto, Rodosto* was written in Bulgarian and published in 1981. The Armenian translation was published in 1989. A chapter of her novel was also published in *Otaralezu hay groghner* (Armenian writers writing in foreign languages) (Yerevan: Yerevan State University Press, 1989), pp. 404-56.

brothers, the rape of her mother and aunts, and the ferocious mutilation of their bodies right there in front of their house in Van. From her hiding place in a stone furnace, the little girl sees how those beasts cut off the nipples of their victims, pass them onto wooden skewers, and brandish them on a wooden cross. She remains in a state of stupor and lethargy for three days. When she finally crawls out, nearly starving to death, the city is covered with bodies of the dead. She survives the carnage but suffers amnesia of the past as a defense mechanism to protect her from going insane under the pressure of the horrifying images she has witnessed.¹⁰

Hermine/Filor's life is shrouded in deprivation and misery, first in an orphanage in Constantinople, then as a maid to a wealthy Greek family, whence, sexually assaulted and pregnant, she runs away to the only address she knows from her days in the orphanage. A French Madame had visited the girls in the orphanage and invited them to her house, promising "a comfortable life." The Madame now helps her abort the baby and cares for her for a while. But she also has a plan for the girl. And gradually and unknowingly, Hermine/Filor becomes the treasure of that bordello. There, she is able to amass some money and briefly moves to

¹⁰ Sevan, *Rodosto* (1989), pp. 91-3. Hermine is the girl's Armenian name, which she cannot remember, and Filor is the name given to her by the wife of the French consul when two French reporters find her sleeping under a half-burned tree and take her to the French consulate. Filor is of course the Turkish mispronunciation of the French name Fleur, meaning flower. The French lady chooses this name for her because in her eye the little girl is as beautiful as a wildflower. Filor is then entrusted to an Armenian orphanage in Constantinople.

Rodosto, continuing to practice her *métier* in the Armenian community, enjoying the admiration of the men and enduring the contempt of women. She finally ends up in the house of an older bachelor Turkish banker in Constantinople, serving him as his mistress, despised and discarded by her fellow Armenians.¹¹

Who knows how many Armenian Filors disappeared without a trace into Turkish society, with no novelist to tell their story. Filor's story could very well be the story of many surviving Armenian girls after the Genocide. Who knows how many of them perished, lonely and miserable in the cruel grip of street life or Turkish harems, without leaving a trace or a name. Was that "survival"? Wasn't that more painful than expiring on the deportation road? They lived out their lives with a macabre silence shrouding the fate they were condemned to live, their life stories, and their identities.

The situation in Turkey has changed in recent years. The wall of silence is breached. The Turkish intelligentsia, especially those living abroad, are questioning the government-sponsored idea of a religiously and ethnically monolithic Turkey. Scholarly research and fiction are giving voice to Alevis, Jews, Arabs, Armenians, Kurds, Laz, Suryanis (Assyrians), Yezidis, and still others. Moris Farhi's novel, *Young Turk*, is significant in this regard. Üstat Vedat, an

¹¹ Halfway along in the novel, a man shows up at the orphanage and insists that she is his sister and that her name is Hermine. She refuses to go with the stranger, but his words stay with her until much later, when she begins to remember some images from her past, and her Armenian name, Hermine, begins to sound sweet and familiar to her.

admired character in his narrative, advocates that "racial and religious prejudices are not aspects of the Turkish character. They are European diseases." Farhi, a Turkish Jew who lives in the UK, believes that Turkey should have embraced everyone, but "certain conservative elements" added Islam as an essential component of the concept of Turkishness. This "left the non-Muslims as outsiders, as 'non-Turks'." The new ideology "superseded the liberal, all-embracing national identity and came to be known as Kemalism.... And since Atatürk's death it has supported the discrimination against Jews, Armenians and Greeks—all bona fide Turks. (Atatürk must be weeping in his cloud)," says Farhi, lamenting that the great man's ideas have been hijacked.¹²

According to Farhi, today's Turkey is not what Kemal Atatürk had dreamed of building, that is, a Turkish Republic based on a strictly secular nationalism¹³ in which religion and ethnicity have no part to play.¹⁴ This ideology, known as Kemalism, has changed to the extent that it has not only

¹² Farhi, *Young Turk* (2004), pp. 99–100, 117. See also Anthony Wynn's review in "Large Tales, Little People," *Cornucopia* 32 (2005), <http://www.cornucopia.net/aboutyt.html>. Accessed July 30, 2007.

¹³ Turkey officially became secular in 1928 when the clause maintaining Islam as the state religion was removed from the constitution.

¹⁴ There is serious research indicating that Mustafa Kemal's dislike or rather antagonism toward Islam is due to his Jewish origin. In fact, research shows that he had a Jewish or rather *dönme* (convert) origin. Existing biographies relate contradictory stories about Mustafa Kemal's origin, whereas recent research proves that his father was a *dönme*, and he was raised in a community of *dönme*, attending a school run by a *dönme* leader.

acquired a strong religious component, but now considers the religion of Islam as the most important element of Turkish identity. In today's Turkey, secularism has lost the attribute of regarding religion as a marginally important guide in life or mode of life. It is instead equated with Westernization. These concepts are in confusion and only a matter of interpretation, but, more importantly, in practice they are a source of social intolerance. The laws and regulations in effect in Turkey can defend those who humiliate and disgrace women who wear a headscarf,¹⁵ "because the suppression of the rights of religious citizens is carried out by the state and due to 'laws and regulations'."¹⁶ But at the same time, there are numerous incidents of harassing seculars and forcing them to practice religion. In fact, the formulation of some scholars, that "there are two Turkeys, not one," indeed two Turkeys in conflict with each other, is true. Independent Turkish scholars believe that by heaping so much importance on religion in the make-up of Turkish identity and by dividing Turkish citizens into two distinct categories of Muslim and non-Muslim, the

¹⁵ The headscarf and the right to wear it have become symbols of religious freedom in Turkey. There is a massive campaign against the law prohibiting women from wearing a headscarf in public places, and it is anticipated that the law will be abolished.

¹⁶ Mustafa Akyol, "Eastern Kemalists Do Not Understand Turkey, Too" (Eastern here meaning the locals in Turkey), *Turkish Daily News* (December 13, 2007). Akyol was responding to an article by Orhan Kemal Cengiz, "Western Kemalists Do Not Understand Turkey," in the December 8 issue of the paper. The sum of these two articles is a representation of the diversity and many times the contradictions among views and interpretations of the concepts on the basis of which the country is ruled.

government is doing a disservice to the country and contributing to the divisiveness in society and the fanaticism of the Muslim population. Seeing the prejudice and discrimination against minorities that still prevail in Turkey, these independent scholars are trying to urge the government to respect the laws of democracy for Turkey's sake, and treat the Turkish minorities as true and equal citizens of the country.

Hrant Dink's assassination has shaken these scholars' and independent thinkers' belief in how much they can do to change the mentalities in Turkish society and muster support for facing history, dealing with the past, and rewriting the history of the country's pre-Republican era. Significant in this regard is Ahmet Altan's article, "1915-2007," published in the web newspaper *Gazetem.net*. He writes,

Nothing much has changed it seems.

They were murdered in 1915 as well....

They are being murdered in 2007 too....

What was being said about that massacre at the beginning of the last century.

"They killed us, and we killed them back?"

What are we going to say about the murder of Hrant then?

That Hrant killed us, and we killed Hrant back?

Altan continues questioning those in Turkey who "wrote" the history of 1915 and notes that if they were to write the murder of Hrant, "The children of this country would have said fifty years later that 'Hrant had killed us, and we killed Hrant back'." Altan feels himself and thinkers like him to be a part of the nation and not the state, and urges the state to question the Ottoman state that came before it, and to demand

accountability for the destruction of a part of the nation.¹⁷ What Altan and other Turkish intellectuals who share his approach are pursuing is a change in the Turkish historical narrative that will also help reshape historical memory and the Turkish collective identity.

The trial of Hrant Dink's assassin(s) was a further blow to these intellectual's belief in the justice of the Turkish court and the legitimacy of Article 301 of the Republic's Penal Code which can be used to bring charges against any action or behavior that does not correspond to or fall within the parameters of the government's established nationalistic view of Turkish identity. Insulting Turkishness, according to Article 301, was the charge brought against Hrant Dink for speaking up about non-Muslim minorities and their rights in the Republic as well as entertaining the topic of the Armenian Genocide and calling it as such. The first of the lawsuits filed against Hrant Dink was in 2002 after he stated, during a presentation at a conference in Urfa, "I am not a Turk... but from Turkey and an Armenian." Apparently, it was a crime in the democratic Republic of Turkey to claim an identity other than Turk.

Insulting Turkishness was also the charge brought against his son Arat Dink, the executive editor, and Serkis Seropyan, the publisher of *Agos*, for having reprinted an interview that Hrant Dink gave to *Reuters News Service* in 2006, in which he called the events of 1915 Genocide. Of course, after the

¹⁷ Altan's article was translated into English by Fatma Müge Göçek and posted to the armworkshop listserv (armworkshop@umich.edu) on January 24, 2007.

interview, Hrant Dink was charged for insulting Turkishness by the Istanbul Prosecutor's Office. Ironically, this interview was reprinted in other Turkish papers too, but none of their owners or editors was brought to trial.

Given the pressurized political atmosphere prevailing in Turkey today, many Turkish intellectuals choose to live abroad, especially in Europe or America. They have, therefore, access to literature unavailable in Turkey; they come in contact with Armenian survivors in the Diaspora and listen to their stories. Trusting or doubting in what they hear or read, but always stupefied, they set out to discover the lost pages of their own history. Their sociopolitical and historical scholarship as well as their fiction today is challenging the official stand and demanding that the Turkish government break the silence, confront the past, and come to terms with it.¹⁸ Because of this change, a dent, albeit a small one, has been made in the rigid Turkish political stand, allowing memoirs, biographies, and fiction to entertain the topic of the Armenian Genocide and the lives of survivors hitherto assumed to be totally integrated and immersed in Turkish society. The analysis of the responses to the past traumatic experience, as conceptualized in artistic literature, provides me with additional insight into the metamorphosis of the identity of Genocide survivors in Turkey.

¹⁸ In this study, the Turkish official stand narrowly refers to the way the government treats the Armenian issue, that is, silencing any discussion of it and the memory of it as well. It should be mentioned, however, that Turkish liberal intellectuals consider that this kind of treatment by the government applies not only to the Armenian issue but to everything that goes against the national project.

Aside from journalistic articles and reports, my introduction into this field was mainly through Kemal Yalçın's *Seninle Güler Yüreğim* (You rejoice my heart).¹⁹ Distribution of this book, written in Turkish and first published by Doğan in 2000, was blocked in Turkey. Two years later, in the presence of a notary public, the entire production of 3,000 copies was shredded. Meanwhile, Yalçın published the book in Germany in 2001 with his own means. It quickly went out of print and was followed by another self-published edition in 2003. Remarkably, the Turkish publishing house Birzamanlar published a new edition of the book in 2006, making it available to the wider circle of Turkish readers. My source is the Armenian translation of this book.²⁰ In addition, Elif Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul* and the Armenian translation of Fethiye Çetin's *Anneannem* (My maternal grandmother) further illuminated my path.

Yalçın, like the overwhelming majority of Turks in his generation, knew nothing about Armenians and what happened to them in 1915. The official historiography omitted all references to the existence of Armenians and the Armenian

¹⁹ Turkish writer and poet Kemal Yalçın was born in 1952 in the Honaz area of Denizli. He taught literature and philosophy in Turkish schools. In 1982 he moved to Germany, where he lives in Bochum and teaches Turkish language. He has published many poems, short stories, and novels. His two other novels are *Emanet Çeyiz* (Dowry on loan) (Istanbul, 1998), on the Turkish-Greek population exchange in 1920–1924, and *Sarı Gelin Sarı Gyalin* (2006?), on Armenians who were forcibly Turkified. Both are published by Birzamanlar Yayıncılık.

²⁰ Yalçın, *Hogis kezmov ke khayta* (2003). All subsequent references are to this translation.

issue in Turkey. Moreover, during the last few decades, as the Turkish government was forced into reacting against the intensified campaign for international recognition of the Armenian Genocide, a substantial bulk of denial literature was produced based on the idea of Armenian treason during the war. This narrative of Armenian treason and collaboration with the enemy to topple the Ottoman government gradually took root, and was actually mythologized to the extent of finding its way into the domain of popular education. It became the norm of how to perceive Armenians. Taner Akçam attests to the way generations of Turks were indoctrinated against Armenians: "We assigned a very negative role to the Christian minorities in Turkey, to the Armenians. To us, they were collaborators.... Since we saw all Christians in Turkey as allied with the imperialist state, we had a very negative image of them...."²¹ Osman Köker explains, "In Turkey, history has always been taught about one people—the Turks, as if there had never been any other people on the territory. When we speak of Armenians, they are not described as an integral group of society but as a source of problems."²²

²¹ Schilling, "Is It Still Genocide" (n.d.), interview with Akçam.

²² Osman Köker was the director of the exhibition "My Dear Brother" which opened in Istanbul in January 2005. This was an exhibition of 500 postcards sent by Armenians during the prewar period before their annihilation by the Young Turk government. The goal was to show through these postcards the presence of Armenians throughout the Empire and their role in society. See Cheviron, "Turkey Begins Self-Reflection" (n.d.).

That institutionalized perception was one of the reasons why Armenians in Turkey lived in fear, stayed low-key and out of the public eye.

Hulya Adak asserts that,

The national myth—that all Ottoman Armenians were rebels, betrayers, secessionists, and that they were responsible for the massacres that took place in 1915–1916—propagated in the memoirs [of Talat Pasha], the variegated stages of its publication, and the reception of the work, exists to date in the Turkish national imagination.²³

Reading Adak's analytical article, one realizes how strategically the publications of Talat Pasha's memoirs were pumped into the collective memory of the Turkish nation. The first edition, of course, was published in 1921, right after Talat's assassination, so as to ward off any accusations against him. The second and third editions came out in 1945 and 1946, as if to counteract Rafael Lemkin's lobbying for the word "genocide" and references to the events of 1915 in the Ottoman Empire. Adak believes that subsequent editions in 1986 and 1990 were in response to the activities of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA),²⁴ and in order to reinforce the official Republican

²³ Adak, "Identifying the 'Internal Tumors'" (2007), p. 151. Adak explains that the term "internal tumor" was used by Kushchubashi Eshref (Kuşçubaşı Eşref) during World War I in relation to Armenians and to non-Muslims in general, in the sense that the tumor should be "cleaned" for a "national cause."

²⁴ ASALA was a militant Marxist-Leninist organization that operated from 1975 to 1986. It was founded in Beirut, Lebanon, and trained by Palestinian militants. The organization aimed to compel the Turkish government to acknowledge its responsibility for the death of one-

line, which she calls the "Republican defensive narrative."²⁵ Then came two more editions in 2005 and 2006, which, according to Adak, were meant to offset the ninetieth anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and the widespread commemorations and conferences publicizing the subject.²⁶

In this atmosphere of suspicion, prejudice, and sociopolitical pressures, the post-Genocide Armenian identity was forged and developed. Ethnic pride, self-esteem, the will to stand for basic human rights, elements that went to work during the nineteenth-century Armenian renaissance to heighten the spirit of the suppressed Armenian nation, fell victim to Republican Turkey's anti-minority policies.

and-half million Armenians during World War I (which was later recognized by several states as the first genocide of the twentieth century). For ASALA, the means to reach that goal was the assassination of Turkish diplomats in European and Middle Eastern countries. In 1982, the group attacked Ankara International Airport where several civilians were killed or injured. That incident and criticism of ASALA tactics led to the eventual dissolution of the group. See *Wikipedia.org*.

²⁵ Adak, "Identifying the 'Internal Tumors'" (2007), p. 166.

²⁶ It should be added here that the multiple editions of Talat's memoirs, biographies, and eulogies in praise of the man and his legacy, the naming of streets after him and the erecting of monuments in his memory worked toward the realization of the subsequent governments' goal of idealizing the pre-Republican heroes whose legacy, they advocated, gave birth to the Turkish Republic. Talat's assassination in Berlin in 1921 was carried out by an Armenian named Soghomon Tehlirian who had lost all his family during the Genocide. Talat was buried in Berlin's Turkish cemetery, but with the escalation of the revival of his reputation as a national hero, his remains were brought to Istanbul in 1943 and reinterred in Shishli with formal ceremonies.

It was in this atmosphere that Kemal Yalçın set out to search for the traces of two Greek sisters whose uprooted family had entrusted their dowry to his grandfather.²⁷ He heard disjointed stories from old Greek refugees about Armenian women who converted to Islam or married a Turk to stay alive in the Amasya, Taşova, and Erbaa regions.²⁸ But Yalçın's motivation to learn about the Armenian tragedy was his love and admiration for the beautiful and delicate Meliné, an instructor of Armenian origin in the teachers' retraining program offered especially to Turkish teachers in Germany.

Meliné's fragmented statements referring to the events of 1915 had puzzled him: "[It's] an exclusive old Armenian carpet, most likely from Erzerum, Kars, or Van," she had once commented about a carpet she had bought in Cologne. "There are no Armenians left in those regions to weave carpets.... One can see the deep sense of fear that has penetrated the colors and the images" (p. 28). Slowly reciprocating the genuine friendship he offered her and developing a trust in his abilities

²⁷ Kemal Yalçın remembers his grandfather recounting that there were a thousand Greeks living peacefully with a thousand Turks in the town of Honaz, and then one day in September 1920 all the Greek men were gone (exiled? slaughtered?). The remaining women and children were deported afterwards. The Yalçın's Greek neighbors, the Minoğlus, entrusted them with the dowry of their two daughters in the hope of returning one day. The Yalçın family kept the dowry for 70 years. Only in the 1990s, when Kemal was a free citizen living abroad, did his parents ask him to go to Greece, find the Minoğlus, and return the dowry to them. Surprisingly, he was able to find the descendants of the Minoğlu family and return the entrusted dowry. *Emanet Çeyiz* is the narration of the author's amazing quest.

²⁸ Yalçın, *Hogis kezmov ke khayta* (2003), p. 27.

and his sincerity, she gradually motivated him, showed him the way, and urged him to find Turkified Armenian women and ask them to tell their story.²⁹

And the journey began. The first stop was Amasya, but Yalçın was too late. Yes, there had been Armenians in Amasya, even until the 1990s, he was told, but they had left for Istanbul or passed away. He did not give up but continued his inquiry with ordinary townsfolk and government officials in towns and villages. It was during this difficult journey that he learned about the events of 1915, as well as the absolute denial of any Armenian presence in the Ottoman Empire in the past. He learned about the ongoing persecution of Armenian survivors, even those who were Islamized. He also learned that asking about Armenians and searching for Turks with Armenian mothers, unlike his former experience of seeking out Greeks, was not a simple matter: it would immediately generate fear and invite suspicion. Because of this, the townsfolk did not help him in any way, lest they bring unnecessary peril upon themselves. They even pitied him and admonished him to abandon his futile inquiry and go home. All this occurred as Yalçın began to ask the whereabouts of Safieh/Zaruhi,³⁰ a second-generation Armenian survivor who

²⁹ Meliné's mother had lost her first husband to the massacres of 1915 in Sebastia (Sivas) when she was only 18 years old. She lived the miserable life of a widow with two orphaned children until years later she remarried. Meliné was born in Istanbul of her mother's second marriage.

³⁰ Safieh was the Turkish name given to Zaruhi when her family converted to Islam. This was a common practice during and after the Genocide. Armenian boys and girls or young women who were taken in by Turkish, Kurdish, or Arab families during the Genocide

had married a Turk and was living in the village of Yassıçal near Amasya (pp. 53–5). Despite the obstacles, however, Yalçın was able to find her, earn her trust, and prompt her to tell the story of her parents' survival during the massacres and deportations. For the first time in their lives, Safieh's children and grandchildren heard about the horrors in her past, the hidden but not forgotten story of what happened in 1915 and how the Armenian population of Amasya was deported. Safieh's ethnic identity, a nebulous and unwanted detail in the lives of her offspring, was brought into the open. The story of past sufferings and the revelation of her Armenian ancestry, necessary elements to construct an ethnic identity, were now transmitted to them.

Yalçın was the first Turk to seek out these survivors and hear their story, the first Turk to speak to them about their past. But there were very few survivors still alive to tell him their horrifying stories of looting and murder, stories unlike what he had read in his history books (p. 141). He questioned why he had never heard about Armenian churches being destroyed—the Church in Zara and the one in Sivas in 1940 (p. 176), and many, many others before and after them.³¹ Despite

were given a new name to replace their Armenian one. A part of their identity was thus stolen from them at the outset. In the present work, when speaking of these individuals, such as Safieh/Zaruhi, the two names are cited together, first the Muslim and then the Armenian, with a slash in between.

³¹ The Turkish destruction of Armenian churches and monasteries and other cultural monuments throughout Turkey has been the focus of attention of many scholars. Research and publications on this topic, generally labeled Cultural Genocide, indeed show these government-sponsored, deliberate acts to be a definite phase of the

admonishments and warnings about the imminent danger to his life, despite knowing that he was being closely followed by the secret police, Yalçın continued toward Erzerum, Aşkale, Kars, and Ani. He was searching for the traces of erstwhile Armenian life and culture in the Ottoman Empire. He was searching for the sparks of historical memory buried in the ruins of the edifices of Armenian culture and those deep-seated in the minds of the survivors and the generations born to them.

The truth was revealed, bit by bit, through conversations he managed to have with old Armenians. Yalçın searched for an answer, and in the voice of Kirkor Ceyhan, a 73-year-old Armenian living in Bonn with his German wife, he asked himself, "How many churches are left today in Asia Minor? I don't know. If you are killing Armenians and Greeks, why are you destroying their churches?... Aren't these churches the wealth of Asia Minor?" Kirkor then speculated, "Is the government worried about something? By saying 'there are no Armenians in Asia Minor,' is the intention to say 'there never were Armenians in Asia Minor?... Can you erase Armenian history and the crime committed simply by saying there are no Armenians?'" (Yalçın, p. 176). But the negation of any Armenian presence ever in Anatolia was not the simple reason

continuing Armenian Genocide. For the earliest international statement of this problem, presented to the Jury in the Session on the Armenians at the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (Paris, April 13–16, 1984), see Kouyoumjian, "The Destruction of Armenian Historical Monuments" (1985), pp. 173–85. For general information, see www.virtualani.org, the website devoted to historical Armenian architecture.

behind the destruction of Armenian cultural monuments. Successive Turkish governments knew well the value of these edifices in the perpetuation of historical memory among survivors and perpetrators alike. These monuments of the past lived not only in the present and imposed a certain sentiment about the truth denied, but they also lived for the future and could function to the same end in future generations. Destroying cultural monuments meant fragmenting the ethnic grouping around it, eliminating an element of difference, and weakening the foundations of their group identity. They had to be destroyed. In another country, a Bosnian woman survivor looking at a ruined edifice of Bosnia's cultural heritage reflected, "A dead woman is one of us. A destroyed bridge is all of us for ever."³²

The manner in which Yalçın presents the views of his interviewees, adding his own interpretations and analysis to them, is a clear indication of the author's full agreement with them and his siding with their view. In some instances, it is difficult to determine whether the statement or the analysis belongs to the Armenian interviewee or to Yalçın himself. This is particularly true when the subject matter is the government's mistreatment of its Armenian subjects, or the causes of the 1915 events, or when the future of the Turkish-Armenian relationship and their eventual coexistence is discussed.

Despite the government's tight control over the collective memory of its citizens, absolute erasure has not been achieved. Historical memory has been kept alive at least in the old

³² De Condapa, "Destroying Material Culture" (2007).

generation of Turks. They witnessed the massacres, or knew that an ancestor in the family had been an Armenian, bought, kidnapped, entrusted to a Turkish or Kurdish neighbor, or voluntarily converted to Islam to avoid the death march.

Turkish intellectuals have begun to look deeper into the sociopolitical makeup of the country and are examining its multicultural, multiethnic, and multi-communal essence as the true picture of Turkish society today. They are questioning the governments' claims of racial, religious, and cultural homogeneity. They are questioning the foundation of Kemalist Turkey and the Turkish identity. They see that precarious foundation, built on the ruins of massacres, deportation, and ethnic cleansing, as problematic. Their new approach is negating the glorious past and the heroic war of independence described in the history books. The wall of silence is breached. Rigid control over collective memory is relaxed. During the entire Republican era in Turkey, the state played a central role in forming collective memory, the sort that, in the words of James V. Wertsch, is "textually mediated," because it is based, only and strictly based, on textual resources provided by the government.³³

The road is gradually being paved for study and research on minorities in Turkey, starting with the question of the Kurds, now considered a distinct ethnic minority, and especially the past and present Armenian predicament in Turkey. Artistic literature is spearheading the exploration of this new reality. Yalçın's steps taken on this road are a clear

³³ Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering* (2002), p. 5.

indication of the importance of this issue for Armenians and Turks alike.

2

The Continued Trauma

In quite different situations and circumstances, Armenian survivors continued their life, or at least tried to build a life on the ruins of the tormenting and everlasting memory of the past. For Diasporan Armenians, the name of the game was survival in an alien land with no hope of returning to their homes. Theirs was a struggle to cope with the tremendous loss, with a past that did not loosen its grip on their present or their future. Turkish writer Elif Shafak³⁴ observantly grasped that feeling and staged it in a conversation set among

³⁴ Elif Shafak (Şafak), a Turkish novelist, journalist, and academic, was born into a family of Turkish diplomats in Strasbourg, France, in 1971. Her father soon left the family and her mother raised her in Spain, Jordan, and Germany. She studied in Ankara and has taught Ottoman history and culture at Bilgi University in Istanbul and in universities in the U.S.

members of a Diasporan Armenian family in *The Bastard of Istanbul*. In this novel, Armanoush, the young half-Armenian third-generation survivor, is the center of affection and concern for her grandmother, Shushan Tchakhmakhchian, her great uncle, Dikran Stambouljian, and her three aunts, Surpun, Varsenig, and Zarouhi. They are worried about her upbringing in the home of her divorced American mother, Rose, who is now dating a Turkish man, Mustafa Kazanci. Grandma Shushan raises her typically Armenian concern. Against her will, her only son, Barsam, had married an American. And now, after the couple's divorce, what will happen to Armanoush, the only hope of the Tchakhmakhchian family? Her concern reflects her tormented soul and the hope that Armenians will perpetuate in the Diaspora, a hope she has cherished for many long years:

Only an Armenian can understand what it means to be so drastically reduced in numbers. We've shrunk like a pruned tree.... Rose can date and even marry whomever she wants, but her daughter is Armenian and she should be raised as an Armenian.³⁵

Armanoush's Armenian side of the family is afraid of losing not only a granddaughter and a niece, but an Armenian, a member of the race who, as Auntie Varsenig puts it, has been "Assimilated! Massacred! Orphaned! Deported! And then forgotten!"³⁶

The struggle of Diasporan Armenians to survive and uphold their identity as Armenians in less than favorable

³⁵ Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2007), p. 59.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 55.

conditions, their deification of their martyrs and glorification of survivors, had translated in many into a rigid idea of Armenianness which they tried to maintain against all odds as an identity in isolation. That was the means they subconsciously espoused to fight the waves of assimilation, despite internal conflicts and external forces negatively affecting their ongoing efforts. Hacop Karapents' imaginary town of Jefferson, USA,³⁷ represents a microcosm of a heterogeneous formation called the Diaspora where Armenians have gathered from all corners of the world. They are the survivors of the big Catastrophe. Driven out of their birthplaces, they have come here to begin a new life. But they feel like outsiders, alien to the New World, alien to each other. They carry a wound that refuses to heal. "Their life is a puzzle, these former orphans of the Genocide. Their outlook is distorted; their souls are shattered. They live a thousand times a day the death of a martyr."³⁸ They are humbled and feel inferior in this New World. To make up for this inferiority, they work harder and harder. They work for the sake of the success of their children. They build a church and gather around it to safeguard their Armenianness. The Armenian Church is a bastion to sustain their identity and set them apart from the mainstream Christian society. "Despite being in America, they do not live in America. They have built their unique cocoon and taken refuge in it."³⁹ In this unique cocoon, as Theodore Adorno suggests, a person's individuality is

³⁷ Karapents, "Jeferson, AMN" (1975).

³⁸ Ibid., p. 29.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

erased and ceded to the collective, and "as recompense for his jumping into the 'melting pot,' he is promised the grace of being chosen, of belonging. Weak and fearful people feel strong when they hold hands when running."⁴⁰

Analyzing the psychiatric consequences of ethnic cleansing in resettled Bosnian refugees, Steven Weine notes that "Mass destruction of a community which historically took pride in being a good example of co-existence and tolerance of ethnic and religious differences—and multiethnic community—leaves the survivors bereft of a sense of identity and belonging."⁴¹ A more or less parallel situation transpired for the first-generation Armenian survivors both in the Diaspora and in Turkey. Of course, for the sake of argument it should be noted that the precondition Weine presented for the psychiatric consequence of ethnic cleansing, namely, the atmosphere of coexistence and tolerance of ethnic and religious differences prior to the ethnic cleansing, does not hold true in the case of Armenians and Turks. But neither does it, in reality, hold true in the case of Serbs and Bosnians. However, in both cases the oppressed minority believed in that coexistence. This is why the majority of Armenians, from religious and civic leaders to shopkeepers and peasants, did not believe what was happening to them. The Turks could not

⁴⁰ Theodore W. Adorno, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 276, quoted by Bauman in *Liquid Life* (2005), p. 135. Here Bauman explains that Adorno uses the term "melting pot" in its original meaning of a container in which all ingredients mix and dissolve into one another, "lose their individuality and become indistinguishable."

⁴¹ Weine, "Artists Witnessing 'Ethnic Cleansing'" (1996), p. 245.

do this to them. Margaret Ajemian Ahnert relates the story of her mother Ester. Ester's father was imprisoned days before the entire Armenian population of Amasya was deported. But he would not doubt his Turkish friend's assurance. He comforted his family when they visited him in the prison, "Don't worry. They told me that I would be released in the morning. They only want to frighten us by keeping us in the jail overnight." Ester's father was not alone. As the orders to move reached the town, some of the town elders advocated to stay and fight back, while the majority thought, "We must trust our Turkish friends to their word. If they say we will be safe, I believe them." Ester and her family and all the Armenians of Amasya were deported, and Ester never saw her father again.⁴²

The consequence of the destruction of the Armenian communities indeed robbed the survivors of their identity and sense of belonging. The outcome for the Armenian remnants in Turkey was decades of silence and searching for a new meaning of life and new ties with their origin that were safer, less reprehensible, and less offensive to the Turkish psyche. In the case of the survivors in the Diaspora, it was either clinging to a rigid, overdetermined sense of Armenianness, or resorting

⁴² Ahnert, *The Knock at the Door* (2007), pp. 73, 75. Incredulity is also the initial reaction of Vartan Balian, the protagonist of *A Summer Without Dawn*, by Hacikyan and Soucy (2000), p. 54. (The original work, *Un été sans aube*, was published in Montreal in 1991.) See also *infra*, chapter 6, note 4. This author devoted an entire chapter to the sense of incredulity and the inability to face reality because of this sense of incredulity, in Perroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe* (1993).

to silence and searching for a new meaning of life, a new understanding of ethnicity in the New World.

The trauma continued.

*Such and such is looking for his/her mother, father, cousins,
uncles, aunts... last seen in ... concentration camp
in the Syrian desert or....*

Announcements with similar content appeared frequently in the Armenian Diasporan newspapers of the 1920s and 30s. Remnants of the Catastrophe scattered in the four corners of the world were trying to reunite with their family members. How many succeeded? How many had to cope with the great loss, not knowing that their kin was alive, perhaps living as a servant boy or a bride in a Turkish or a Kurdish home, or that perhaps the whole family had escaped death and was living in some remote corner of Turkey?

The stories of families reunited, or a mother, a sibling, or a cousin found are sad but heartwarming.

Vahram Garabent tells Yalçın how his American cousin located him in Istanbul.⁴³ They met each other in the United States and old bonds were renewed. Vahram tells us about the usual practice of Muslims snatching away pretty women and young girls as the caravans of deportees passed by. He also remembers that after the war, the British and the Americans collected the orphans that were left wandering, and those in Merzifon (Marzevan) were housed in Merzifon College. Vahram's cousin had been among those orphans in Merzifon who were later sent to the United States. She grew up there

⁴³ Yalçın, *Hogis kezmov ke khayta* (2003), p. 127.

and married another survivor like herself. Years later, she searched for her kin and found Vahram in Istanbul. This is a story with a happy ending that can also be told about some of the luckier orphans who were somehow discovered and taken to safety.⁴⁴

In fact, similar rescue operations are detailed in the memoirs of Setrak Baghdoyan. After the war, when Mosul was under British occupation, English authorities there were engaged in collecting survivors who had somehow reached that region.⁴⁵ What we know for certain is that they were only a handful compared to the thousands lost.⁴⁶ The number of Armenian refugees who were sheltered by Arab tribes, including children who were adopted and girls who were taken as wives, is unknown. Stories and random reports show that these survivors mostly converted to Islam and adopted Arab identities. Ironically, heads of Arab tribes who sheltered Armenians—who did not kill them but Islamized them—were honored in Yerevan, Armenia, on the occasion of the Ninetieth

⁴⁴ Vahram here is speaking of what he witnessed and does not mention the widespread efforts, during the armistice and after the war, of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople and Armenian volunteer organizations who collected orphans, established and managed orphanages, and even sought out young women in Turkish and Kurdish harems and arranged their safe exit from the country.

⁴⁵ See Baghdoyan's memoir, *Erb drakhte dartsav dzhokhik* (2007), pp. 538–9.

⁴⁶ Western scholarship has produced a multitude of works, based on meticulous research and archival material, describing the process of the Armenian Genocide. For a concise but very informative source, see Walker, "World War I and the Armenian Genocide" (1997).

Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, as altruistic saviors of Genocide survivors.

There is virtually no survivor account or memoir that does not speak of scenes of "slave markets" where Armenian boys and girls and young women were sold, or the heart-rending supplications of mothers begging Kurdish women to take their children so that at least the children could survive. In these moments of absolute despair and agony, the physical survival of the child was of utmost importance, regardless of the circumstances threatening the child's racial and religious identity. Siranush was one of these children, Setrak Baghdoyan remembers. Her mother's plea had been so sincere and emotional that a Kurdish woman took Siranush in her arms and promised to care for her like her own daughter.⁴⁷ How many babies and little children grew up like Siranush in Turkish or mostly Kurdish families, with no recollection of their ancestry? And in the rare cases when the mothers of such children survived, how could they go on living with the pain of having relinquished their children, their flesh and blood, to a Muslim stranger?

The horrors of the massacres continued to live on, their memory unabated, and tormented the souls of the survivors. Vahram Garabent was only ten years old when the massacres began. His father, grandfather, and four uncles were taken away, and were never heard of again. Vahram's mother, grandmother, and his younger brother converted to Islam and remained in Merzifon. That was an option given to the Merzifon Armenians. The rest of Vahram's extended family

⁴⁷ Baghdoyan, *Erb drakhte dartsav dzhoklik* (2007), p. 240.

rejected the offer; they preferred to hold on to their faith and took the road to exile. Obviously, they perished on the deportation road toward the Syrian desert.⁴⁸ Vahram cannot forget the horrors of the day the men of the family were taken away and the forced deportation began. To overcome their reluctance and start them on their way with a minimum of fuss, the government spread the news that they were going to join their husbands, fathers, and brothers. Vahram recalls that, although they were ultimately Islamized and allowed to stay, his twenty-five-year-old mother at first decided to join the deportees in the hope of finding her husband. Luckily, their Turkish neighbors advised her not to believe the rumors and to stay put. Apparently, they knew better what fate awaited the deportees (Yalçın, p. 131).

Vahram's experience through the long years of the First World War and Mustafa Kemal's campaign against the Greeks in 1920 is unbelievably horrifying. In Yalçın's words, "What he recounted sounded like epic legends, whereas what we heard were life stories" (p. 126). Vahram lived the memory of these horrors all his life, and was never able to overcome the impact. "I see the days of the catastrophe in front of my eyes, just like today; the screams, the cries, the whimpering still ring in my ears" (p. 126).

In 1920, on the pretext of driving the Greeks out of Merzifon, Turkish bandits attacked the town and, not finding very many Greeks to loot and kill, turned their swords on the Islamized Armenians of the town. With the aid of some locals, they identified Armenians, ransacked their houses, and

⁴⁸ Yalçın, *Hogis kezmov ke khayta* (2003), p. pp. 127-8.

herded them together with the few Greeks they found into the Armenian church and set them on fire. Vahram remembers that if it hadn't been for Ahmet Efendi, the government physician, they would all have burned alive. Ahmet Efendi arrived on the scene and, seeing the brutality, ordered the bandits to stop, open the doors, and let the victims out. Vahram and his family were saved, but had no home to return to. He had also received a deep wound in his arm which accompanied him for life.

Yalçın met Vahram Garabent and Ohan Özant in the latter's home in Istanbul. Both had reluctantly left their hometowns and migrated to Istanbul many years earlier. Ohan Özant was born in Amasya in 1915. He never saw his father who was drafted into the army and murdered together with other Armenian draftees. The rest of his family was deported. Ohan was almost ten when, after going through tremendous hardship, returned to Amasya with his mother to find that their home and belongings had been confiscated. They were lucky to get temporary shelter in the home of their Turkish neighbor until they could find the means to live on. Other Armenian families, or the remnants of families, also managed to return. But altogether Armenians were not welcomed and were constantly harassed by government officials. With great fear and bewilderment they stood witness to the destruction of Amasya's Armenian church and school building. Armenians began to leave Amasya to escape the repression, and, as the town was gradually emptied of its meager Armenian population, Ohan and his mother moved to Istanbul. Ohan never renounced his religion. He was conscious of his Armenian identity, and although he was

denied the opportunity to learn his mother tongue, he thought of himself as an Armenian, and of Turkey as his homeland. "Turkey belongs to all of us. Don't destroy Turkey," he firmly stated. And by destroying Turkey, Ohan meant discriminating against non-Muslims and disturbing the relative peace in which the survivors of 1915 are able to live today (Yalçın, pp. 125-6).

Sarkis Varpet (Sarkis Usta) was born in 1916 in a village near Aleppo, in a family of exiles from Karaman. He was four years old when his family managed to return to Karaman. He can relate stories about the plight of the Armenians during the massacres and deportations. His curiosity had driven him to ask questions of his parents and others who had gone through that experience (p. 277). Their memories had become his. "These memories, like the filmstrip of a tragic movie, remain indelible in my brain," he sorrowfully confesses (p. 279). Coincidentally, his parents had been at the same camp near Meskene with Aram Antonian,⁴⁹ whom they later met in

⁴⁹ Aram Antonian was the famous Armenian writer who was arrested together with hundreds of Armenian intellectuals on the eve of April 24 (April 11), 1915. He managed to escape and join the deportees in the concentration camp near Meskene. He had feigned a wandering madman in rags in order not to invite the suspicion of the gendarmes. But Sarkis Usta's grandmother recognized him and took him to their tent. Antonian pleaded with them not to reveal his identity and to help him escape. He told them that he had managed to lag behind and separate himself from the caravan of exiled intellectuals where everyone knew him and to join this caravan with the hope of fleeing to freedom. Sarkis' father asked a Tartar driver of a horse-drawn carriage to take this sick and crazy man, who was annoying everyone with his whining and crying all the time, to Aleppo. The coach driver agreed to take him if he would sit in the

Aleppo. He helped them return to Karaman. Sarkis Usta has numerous recollections of the prejudice and discrimination the family suffered back in their hometown, after which came the painful years of his military service. He was drafted in 1941, but because non-Muslims were not allowed to participate in military operations, he was assigned to various labor camps. Non-Muslims, called "*gâvur*-soldiers," worked as common laborers in the most dire living conditions. Even their uniforms were a different color to set them apart from regular soldiers (p. 294). Although Turkey had not declared war and did not formally participate in World War II, the government decided to conscript Armenian, Greek, and Jewish men between the ages of 20 and 40 and send them to the eastern provinces to work under strict surveillance in labor camps. The ulterior motive behind this decision was to neutralize the able-bodied non-Muslim men lest they join the Soviet army in case of the latter's attack.

Turkey had changed regime and government; Republican Turkey had succeeded the Ottoman Empire, but the policies against the non-Muslims continued unchanged. Without bothering to call them *amele taburi* (labor battalions) or to

back on the wooden beam holding the rear wheels together. There was no room inside the carriage. When they reached Aleppo, the crazy man was not there. The driver assumed that he had fallen off and died. But Antonian reached Aleppo and remained there until the end of the war and helped many Armenian families, meanwhile interviewing them and recording their experiences. His eyewitness accounts and memoirs published later are valuable sources for understanding the history of the Armenian Genocide. For further reading on his life and work, see Perroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe*, pp. 151-72.

announce the organization of such brigades as was done during World War I,⁵⁰ the authorities segregated these *gâvur*-soldiers; and although they were not murdered, their life in the camps reminds one of the slavery of the Middle Ages.⁵¹

Much later in life, Sarkis and his mother moved to Istanbul. He married there and raised a family. He is the type of person who, despite all the hardship and suffering in his life, chooses to stay in Turkey which he considers his homeland. His sense of belonging to his homeland and his hope for a better future are strong enough to overpower the hardship he experiences and the animosity and intolerance he endures around him. But Istanbul does not represent the homeland he dreams of. His attachment is to Karaman with its erstwhile thriving Armenian population.

⁵⁰ Armenians were given the right to serve in the army after the Young Turk revolution of 1908. It is documented that 8,000 Armenian soldiers bravely fought shoulder to shoulder with Muslim soldiers during the 1912 Balkan War. As World War I broke out, thousands of Armenian men were drafted into the army and again bravely fought in the Turkish army on several fronts, especially against the Russian army in the east. After a series of unsuccessful campaigns on these fronts, the government turned against the Armenian soldiers, disarmed them, and put them into *amele taburi* to do manual labor until they dropped dead from exhaustion and starvation; or they were taken away and massacred. See Walker, "World War I and the Armenian Genocide" (1997), pp. 245-7.

⁵¹ After World War II, an air of democracy began to blow in Turkey. Minority men were allowed to study in military schools to become reserve officers. Rupen Mashoyan, an Armenian writer-intellectual, describes his experience as a student in the College of Reserve Officers in Ankara in 1949. See *Yev aysbes abretsank* (1998), p. 31.

As Sarkis Usta became an old man, his unquenched nostalgic reminiscences drove him to return to his hometown. There he found nothing but ruins. There was no trace of the church, but his home now stood as the town jailhouse. He asked the stunned prison guard to give him a stone from the building, explaining that a long time ago the building had been his family home. With loving care, he held on to the stone, the only physical reminder of his past, his hometown, his home.

Sarkis has been able to overcome much hardship but he cannot forget, and the images intensify instead of fading through time: "The older I get, the more I search for traces of my childhood" (Yalçın, pp. 312-13). He carries the memory of cataclysmic experiences of his own and those of his parents transmitted to him in their stories and songs. Sarkis believes in the effective powers of songs as genuine sentiments that are generated from the heart of the sufferer in moments of pain and despair. He sings these songs for Yalçın to complete the musical film strip he unwinds for him.⁵²

Yalçın speaks of the experiences of many such families, those who remained faithful to Christianity and kept their racial and religious identity, and for which they suffered.

⁵² These types of songs were collected by Verjiné Svazlian, an Armenian scholar living in Armenia, and published in a booklet titled *The Armenian Genocide in the Memoirs and Turkish-Language Songs of the Eye-Witness Survivors* (1999). Svazlian sought out the survivors of the Armenian Genocide in towns and villages of Soviet Armenia. She also traveled to Istanbul to find the men and women who could tell her about their experience, and recorded their songs and stories.

Kirkor Ceyhan, born in Zara in 1926, was the only Armenian at the school in Sebastia (Sivas) and the target of harassment by his teachers and fellow students for being an Armenian and for his Armenian name. Following the 1934 decree that prohibited Armenians from carrying Armenian surnames,⁵³ his name was changed to Ceyhan. However, he could not hide his Armenian identity and for that he was abused (Yalçın, p. 176). Kirkor talks about other Armenian families who lived as Christians, especially in the Gerger region. These Armenians were entirely acculturated, and religion was the only element marking the difference in their identity. But they too were always the subject of distrust and discrimination.

After short sojourns in Istanbul, Soviet Armenia, Istanbul again, and then Marseilles, France, Kirkor settled in Germany to spend his old age in that free country, to be able to freely say, "I am Armenian" (p. 188). But he has always longed for his birthplace, Zara. "The world is my homeland, but the homeland in me is Zara," he says (p. 186). That is where he belongs; that is where his personality was shaped and his identity was formed as a hyphenated Armenian with a heavy Turkish makeup. Out of one million Armenians in Istanbul, only 60,000 remain today, Kirkor notes. "And each one of these Armenians is the continuation of a survivor, an embodiment of the humongous pains of the past. In spite of all this, we are not fanatic nationalists. We did not raise our children to become fanatic nationalists" (p. 189).

⁵³ The Law on Surnames, No. 2525, was adopted on June 21, 1934, and specifically prohibited surname suffixes denoting a minority ethnic identity.

It is evident that for many hitherto hidden Turkish-Armenians, today the silence about their identity is broken, whether they are part of the Istanbul Armenian community or living in a free country outside Turkey.

At the age of 83, Ohan Özant will not leave Istanbul, his home away from Amasya. But he too has decided to break the silence, leave his fears behind and speak up. He wants to tell the world about the ordeal of his life and his Armenian origin (pp. 125-6).

Those who lived through the horrors of the Genocide and survived, whether they continued their life in the Diaspora or in Turkey, had one thing in common: the memory of that experience was omnipresent in their minds, with daytime flashbacks giving way to nightmares at night. It was impossible to forget. They continued to live the trauma and passed it on to their offspring if circumstances permitted. For these survivors and the generations born to them, speaking up about that traumatic experience, opening their tormented soul to the world and freely expressing their identity worked as a means to alleviate the pain, a means they sought for cathartic effects. But not many were offered or chose that catharsis. The pain grew sharper with time as the imposed silence pressed harder on their soul.

3

Muslim Armenians, A Paradox?

Among Armenian families who converted to Islam, some embraced the new religion wholeheartedly; others feigned adherence to Islam but practiced their Christian faith in secret and held on to their traditions. Regardless of these choices, they were all subjected to discrimination and prejudice.

It should be noted at this juncture that wholesale conversion to Islam has its precedents in the history of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Forced to accept the religion of Islam out of fear during a catastrophic event, or simply to overcome constant persecution, Armenians have seen Islam gradually take root in subsequent generations. Time and environment have forged true believers of Islam out of some of them. The Islamized Hamshen Armenians are an example. They are firm in their Muslim religion but are also

aware that their origin is different from that of their neighbors. They are the descendants of a group of Armenians headed by princes Shabouh and his son Hamam Amatuni, who fled north to the Khachkar Mountains to avoid Arab persecutions in Vasburagan. Isolated and semi-independent along the Black Sea coast and in the Pontic Mountains since the eighth century, they developed their unique culture and vernacular which is a distant dialect of the Armenian language. They practiced Christianity and followed their own diocese, the Diocese of Khachkar. Their name is derived from that of the town Hamamshen ("the town of Hamam") which they originally settled. Hamshen or Hamshin is the distorted form of Hamamshen. The Armenian principedom thrived until the fourteenth century and the beginning of the Ottoman domination. Hamshen was destroyed in 1489 by the Ottoman army, and its last prince, Davit, was exiled. Beginning in the sixteenth century and especially during the eighteenth century, as a result of the Sublime Porte's policy of forcing conversion upon the populations of the vast Ottoman Empire, assaults and persecutions increased. Hamshen Armenians too were forced to convert to Islam. Those who did not, fled to the northern coast of the Black Sea to seek Russian protection in that Christian empire. From there, they spread further into Georgia, Armenia, and Central Asia. Those who fled only as far as the western parts of the Ottoman Empire, to Ordu, Samsun, and Trabzon, became victims of the 1915 Genocide.

There is, however, an interesting recent development in the state of the Hamshenlis (as the Turks call the Hamshen Armenians). After centuries of total adherence to Islam and a remote consciousness of their ancestry, they are becoming

more and more interested in their origin. Whereas they traditionally thought of themselves as just another ethnic group in the multiethnic Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, they are now discovering their origin by stumbling over the Armenian language—spoken by tourists and, more significantly, by members of ASALA¹ in the Turkish courts, and more recently by Armenians in the post-Soviet independent Republic of Armenia as well as Armenians in the Diaspora. For a very long time they lived in isolation in their communities and communicated in Turkish or in their own unique dialect. Now, they are more open to the outside world. They travel. They meet Armenians and see the similarity between their own dialect and the Armenian language spoken elsewhere. They see parallels to their own cultural traits—which they have preserved in spite of Islamization—in Armenian cultural practices elsewhere.²

The recent principles of democratization forced on Turkey by the European Union have also resulted in more lenient government policy toward Turkey's ethnic groups. This phenomenon is also instrumental in exposing the Hamshenlis to the world outside and spurring them to search for their true

¹ See *supra*, chapter 1, note 24.

² The group under discussion and relevant to the subject is the Hamshen Armenians in Turkey today, as distinct from the Hamshen Armenians, Christian or Islamized, who settled in the Russian Empire and suffered a different fate. For example, those in Ajaria (Georgia) were exiled to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan by Stalin in 1944. It was only after Stalin's death that they were allowed to have identification papers and passports, and even though they declared Armenian as their mother tongue, they were registered as Khemshens or Turks.

identity.³ The formation and evolution of that identity will be a metamorphosis from total oblivion and submergence to gradual adoption of the elements of Armenian identity—perhaps all the elements but the religion, because many of them are firm in their Muslim beliefs.

At present, a majority of the Armenian people will offer a rigid characterization of an Armenian that evolves around not only Christianity in terms of religion, but even more “authentically” includes belonging to the Armenian Apostolic Church. This rigid stance which held true in the recent past is somewhat undermined and refuted today. However, Christianity as an important element in the identity of the Armenian nation remains indisputable. Can these Hamshentsis, or other Islamized Armenians be considered as a group/tribe of ethnic Armenians who worship another prophet and follow another Holy Scripture?

In an interview with Ruben Melkonian, Kayel Margaroğlu, a Hamshentsi currently living in Istanbul, explains that the consciousness of their Armenian origin and the practice of Hamsheneren (the Armenian dialect of Hamshen) are stronger and better maintained among the Hopa group—and its older generation—than among the Hamshentsis in the western parts of Turkey. He also attests to the fact that many young and

³ Recently, there has been increased interest in Hamshen Armenians. Scholarly research is being conducted, books published, and conferences organized to address the history and present state of this peculiar ethnic group. The Internet is inundated with entries on the subject. See *Wikipedia.org* and *Armeniapedia.org* in particular. Hovann Simonian's *Hamshin: A Handbook* (2007) is another valuable source on this subject.

educated Hamshentsis are well aware of their origin. They even consider themselves Armenians and are interested in finding out more about this identity.⁴

Characteristically, the Hamshen Armenians escaped the Genocide and before that the Hamidian massacres of 1894–96⁵

⁴ Ruben Melkonian is an Armenian scholar of Turkish studies at the State University of Armenia, Yerevan. For this interview, see Melkonian, “Kan hamshentsiner,” *Hanrapetakan* 7 (2007).

⁵ It all began in 1894 in Sasun, a mountainous region where a large population of Armenians lived in villages. Armenians of Sasun refrained from paying extra taxes to Kurdish aghas, who extracted “tribute in kind” in return for not raiding and ransacking the villages. Despite years of paying these taxes, Armenians had not been spared sporadic attacks by nomadic Kurds of the surrounding areas. In the summer of 1894 a resistance was put up and the tax collectors and Kurdish attackers were driven away. A large Turkish military battalion was sent from nearby Bitlis to help tighten the siege of the Armenian villages. After a month of resistance, running out of food and ammunition, the population and the fighters surrendered to the army and the Kurdish irregulars. In spite of promises made by the army commander not to harm the unarmed population, their surrender was met with brutal looting, rape, torture, and murder. An estimated 5,000 people were killed. The government labeled the incident an “uprising” and used it as a pretext to punish the entire Armenian population by extending the brutality throughout the Ottoman Empire. During two years of widespread massacres, more than 100,000 Armenians were killed, hundreds of towns, villages, and city-quarters were ruined and burned, many Armenians fled the country, and many were forcibly converted to Islam. Many scholars believe that these pogroms marked the beginning of the implementation of a policy of extermination of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire, which culminated in the Genocide of 1915. For a detailed account of the 1894–96 massacres, the role of Armenian revolutionary bands, and the intervention of foreign powers, see Hovannisian, “The Armenian Question in the Ottoman Empire” (1997).

unscathed. But another wave of Islamization occurred during the Hamidian massacres. Indeed, conversion to Islam was offered as an option, and it is estimated that about 40,000 Armenians throughout the Empire accepted conversion to escape death. Where are they now?

Yusef was brought up as a Muslim in a Turkish orphanage after his parents lost their lives in the carnage of his native village during the 1894–96 massacres. He appears in Joseph Hocking's novel, *The Path of Glory* (1917), which is, in fact, the first novel on the Armenian Genocide. In this romance of love, in which, as Hocking claims, the descriptions are true to fact, the author states in passing that many young Armenian boys and girls, survivors of the 1894–96 massacres, were placed in Turkish orphanages to be brought up as Muslims. Yusef is one of them. But his upbringing changes him only on the exterior. He clings to his Armenian identity but keeps it secret, acting as a true Muslim throughout the novel and thus rendering heroic and extraordinarily courageous service to his master, the young Armenian Victor, who was a small boy when his parents died in Britain. A British admiral, a friend of the family, adopted Victor and raised him as a sophisticated British gentleman, giving him the best education, significantly guiding him toward Orientology. With the outbreak of World War I and the news of the persecutions of Armenians, the old and retired admiral reveals to his adopted son his Armenian origin. He has just received a letter of supplication from Victor's aunt in Van to rescue her and her daughter from the burning hell that Turkey has become. With grandiose ambition, Victor decides to go to Turkey and rescue his

Vanetsi aunt and cousin and the whole Armenian race from the evil design of the Turkish government.⁶

⁶ As the first of its kind covering the years of the Armenian massacres and deportations, Hocking's novel could have been invaluable in terms of its realistic depiction of Turkish local culture, politics, and behavior, preparations to enter the war and the subsequent years during the war. The novel lays out the Turkish government officials'—from the Young Turk leaders to local petty officers—intrigues against Armenians, their dealings with foreign diplomats, and the development of events and circumstances culminating in the extermination of the Armenian population. However, the author's extreme political orientation and his political analysis diminish the value of this narrative. Hocking, a British reporter and novelist, leads the reader to believe that the entire plan of the Armenian massacres was designed in Berlin and the Turks were merely the obedient executioners, while German officers and diplomats gave step-by-step orders and oversaw the execution of the plan. His character John Penwithen, a high-ranking British official in Aleppo, expresses the view that "it is one of Germany's plans to drive every Armenian out of Asia Minor, and that by fair means or foul, this must be done" (p. 56). "Germany rules Turkey" is a statement repeated with firm conviction on different occasions throughout the novel. In the meantime, the Russians are presented as the saviors and the only hope of the Armenians. The British are altogether the righteous saviors of the world and the Americans are indifferent and impotent bystanders. The reasons behind the plans to annihilate the Armenian people in the Ottoman Empire are also overly simplified. Hocking puts forward this idea in the voice of an Armenian physician:

Turkey hates the Armenians because we are educated and prosperous, and because we are Christians, and they will be glad of any pretext to turn upon us as they have in the past. Germany means to strengthen her hold on Turkey, and Germany sees that if she is to have the wealth of Turkey, the Armenians must be destroyed. We are the bankers, the merchants, the manufacturers, the trading people of Turkey,

After the Hamidian massacres, due to the policies of the Young Turks and their continuation during the rule of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the Turkish perception of Armenians took a sharp turn for the worse. Ordinary Turks, especially those who helped local officials round up Armenians and put them on the road to deportation, or those who looted their neighbors' houses after they left, hardly accepted the Armenian survivors of the 1915 massacres returning to their homes. They never trusted Turkified Armenians, who converted to Islam in order to avoid deportation, as true Muslims. Among themselves, Islamized but *takun* (hidden) Armenians, who can be categorized today as crypto-Christians in general, called themselves *merinner* (our folks, *bizimkiler* in Turkish), or *dartsats* (turned, meaning converted), and tried to stick together.⁷ These marginalized communities in Turkish society developed a particular *modus vivendi*. In the words of Meliné, "They were like locked boxes; they do not open their inner world in front of a stranger" (Yalçın, p. 317). They also avoided intermarriage with Kurds and Turks (p. 350). The question arises, how can people living in fear, constantly watched over and threatened, function as good citizens of the country they live in? And Turkey is a sad repository of these kinds of people. In an investigative article published by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA), there is information on a small community of hidden Jews in the old city of Şanlıurfa (biblical Ur, about 30 miles north of the Syrian border) in

therefore it is not only Turkey but Germany that means to destroy us. (pp. 79–80)

⁷ Yalçın, *Hogis kezmov ke khayta* (2003), p. 359.

Turkey.⁸ They practice Judaism hidden in their homes and go to mosques to pretend Islam. What good are they to Turkey? Kemal Yalçın, speaking about hidden Armenians in an interview with Ruben Melkonian, had this to say: "Only those who can freely maintain their identity can truly love the state, the country they live in."⁹

Sultan, a third-generation Islamized Armenian, an interviewee of Yalçın, talks about her grandfather who was forced to give his daughter in marriage to a Kurd. He cried and grieved for his daughter, saying, "I sacrificed my daughter by giving her to a Kurd." Fearing for the fate of his 12-year-old daughter, he married her off to a 30-year-old Islamized Armenian. This was Sultan's mother. Hajji Ibrahim tells a similar story about his beautiful sister. Their father hastily married her off to a poor, ugly, and bald orphan boy, one of the *merinner*, because the Kurdish agha had set his eyes on her (Yalçın, p. 350).

Vahram speaks of the grief and indomitable pain of compunction, of eating his heart out for relinquishing his true faith. The truth is that, contrary to their expectations, these people did not find peace after conversion. They were never trusted by Muslims and were called *dönmes*. And although Muslims themselves might neglect their religious rituals and practice, they kept the Islamized Armenians under continuous scrutiny to see that they followed the religion of Islam punctiliously. Muslim or Christian, an Armenian was a *gâvur*,

⁸ Gutman, "The Secret Jews of Remote Turkey" (2003). Based on the findings of American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

⁹ See the daily newspaper *Asbarez* (November 30, 2007), pp. 2, 12.

a *gâvur oğlu gâvur* (son of a *gâvur*),¹⁰ always under suspicion, always harassed and persecuted. Vahram and his wife decided to leave Merzifon and migrate to Istanbul, a less hostile environment (Yalçın, pp. 127–8).

It is believed that many of these hidden or Islamized Armenians, some completely assimilated, live in Malatya and its suburbs. It is also believed that German missionaries and Christian Alevi in the area are actively pursuing the Christianization of Malatya Kurds and the return of Islamized Armenians to their original faith. This activity is causing deep concern among the ultranationalists of Turkey, and the assassination on April 18, 2007, of three employees of Zirve Publishing in Malatya, one German and two Alevi Christian Kurds, is an acute manifestation of that concern.¹¹

In Turkish political circles, hidden Armenians today are more than suspect in their practice of Islam and more than untrustworthy, as the Turkish populace would label them. The

¹⁰ *Gâvur* was a term widely used for non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire and the successor Republic of Turkey. The term meant heathen or atheist and was usually translated as “infidel” (*anîhvat* in Armenian, *kafer* in Farsi). In the more relaxed environment of post-WWII Turkey, the term casually referred to non-Muslims with no connotation of godlessness.

¹¹ See Melkonian, “Kronakan halatsankneri nor alik Turkyayum,” *Hanrapetakan* 5 (2007). Melkonian translates and interprets the meaning of an interview in the Turkish paper *Aksiyon* with Salim Cöhce, chair of the history department at İnönü University in Malatya, which was conducted in the aftermath of the assassinations in that city. In the interview, Cöhce suggests that these assassinations tend to demonstrate that Christians are persecuted in Turkey, and that this provides the pretext for a future Armenian armed rebellion in Turkey which he believes to be imminent.

tendentious Turkish media show them representing a serious threat to Turkish territorial integrity. In an earlier interview in the Turkish paper *Aksiyon* (January 29, 2007), Salim Cöhce openly spoke of this danger. He believes that there are 80–100,000 hidden Armenians throughout Turkey, and that they are deliberately being reminded of their Armenian identity and urged to return to or uphold that identity. According to Cöhce, there is a movement among long-standing or recent Armenian migrants in Istanbul to seek re-registration, that is, to revise their papers that indicate their present residence and obtain registration in the towns and villages of eastern Turkey whence they originated. This movement, Cöhce states, follows a secret plan, sponsored and orchestrated by Diaspora Armenians and encouraged by the U.S. and European governments, to reestablish Armenian communities in eastern Turkey and then later to claim these territories for a Greater Armenia.¹² It should be noted that Hrant Dink, the Turkish-Armenian activist assassinated by a Turkish ultranationalist on January 19, 2007, was involved in seeking out hidden Armenians in Turkey.

No matter how unfounded these assumptions are, their repercussions create public opinion in Turkey and affect the

¹² For the Armenian translation of this interview, see Melkonian, “Hrand Dinki spanutiune,” *Hanrapetakan* 2 (2007). In this interview, given in the immediate aftermath of Hrant Dink’s assassination, Cöhce disseminates suspicion about the danger coming from hidden Armenians in Turkey, and in a way justifies the murder of Hrant Dink. This argument would serve as the basis of his views expressed in the later interview, in the aftermath of the Malatya assassinations.

state of mind of the ordinary Turk and his/her perception of Armenians and the Armenian issue.

Islamized Armenians do not speak their own language. This important element of their ethnic identity was lost due to the government's continued anti-minority policies. The loss of their mother tongue is a common trait in all Armenian survivors, Islamized or Christian, scattered in the interior of Turkey. They are not permitted to learn or speak Armenian. As a teacher of Turkish language in Germany having gone through a teacher training program, Kemal Yalçın is able to see the difference: "In Germany, there is no national education. There is only education. We often stress that in multiethnic, multilingual Germany, to learn one's mother tongue is one of the fundamental principles of human rights" (p. 22). This basic human right is denied to Armenians in the interior of Turkey. Indeed, hearing Armenian spoken in public is a rare occurrence, one that inspired Rupen Mashoyan to write a short story describing a scene of children playing in the street. Armenian words caught his attention, and he stood watching. In their game of hide-and-seek, the Armenian children were using their mother tongue to fool the non-Armenian boy. "And our glorious [an adjective ordinarily used to refer to the Armenian language] was experiencing the satisfaction of being victorious at least in this manner," concludes Mashoyan.¹³

¹³ Mashoyan, "Metsaskanchin haghtanake" (Victory of the glorious), in *Yev aysbes abretsank* (1998), p. 56.

Besides the language, obviously, the religious component is also missing in the Armenian identity of Islamized Armenians. Hajji Ibrahim, for example, describes his identity:

My mother tongue is Kurdish, I feel myself as a Kurd. I am Armenian by origin. My parents are true Armenians. I grew up in a Kurdish village. I don't know a word of Armenian.... And when the Germans ask my identity and my nationality, I answer, I am from Turkey. My mother tongue is Kurdish. My identity is Armenian. My religion is Islam. (Yalçın, p. 347)

One way or another, we are faced with a large number of Armenians who, for different reasons and in different time frames, have converted to Islam. They may or may not be true to their adopted religion, but they are for the most part aware of their Armenian origin. They may answer differently if they are asked about their identity, and their answers, the components of their identity – Turkish, Kurdish, or Arab – and the intensity of these components would dot a spectrum unfamiliar, even paradoxical to our understanding of Armenian identity today. It may not sound logical at first glance, but a line of comparison can be established between these "Armenians" and the Armenians in European or American societies who, with a shadowy consciousness of their origin, have lost their language, are totally submerged in the mainstream culture, and have severed their ties with their ancestral heritage. The only difference, of course, is religion, Islam versus Christianity. The fact is that the Armenian Diasporan communities readily accept them as members of Armenian society although the opposite relationship may not hold true, that is, these so-called marginal Armenians may not

even wish to be considered as part of Armenian society. On the other hand, there exist today, and we are becoming more and more aware of their existence, Islamized Armenians in Turkey—now also abroad, scattered in Germany or other European countries. Is Armenian society at large ready to accept them and take them under its wings?

4

A Secret Rather Buried

As the orders to deport Armenians reached the Turkish government officials of every town and village in the Ottoman Empire, implementation began immediately. That was the last phase in the plan of annihilation, and the methods of carrying it out were mostly left to the whims of the local government officials. In many instances, the Armenian population—mostly women, children and old men, as the able-bodied men had been drafted into the army—was massacred outright, such as in villages around Van and some villages of Erzerum province. In other places, the entire population was expelled, first from Zeitun and then from other Armenian towns and villages in Cilicia,¹ followed by the population of some towns

¹ Christopher J. Walker notes that the deportation of Zeitun Armenians on April 8, 1915, occurred before the government passed

and villages of Erzerum and that of the city of Erzerum itself. During these widespread massacres and deportations, Armenians in some places, as earlier discussed, were given the option to convert to Islam and stay on. Many women too, some forcibly, others voluntarily, were taken into Muslim homes as wives or concubines and saved. Tens of thousands of women, however, did not make the choice to "save their soul" and go on living with the nightmares of the past and the compunction of having betrayed their race and religion. They chose to continue their journey to death. Archbishop Zaven Der Yeghiayan, Patriarch of Constantinople, recorded one of many such documented examples in his memoirs:

A military policeman accompanying a caravan of Armenian deportees from Aleppo to Mosul relates how he had proposed to a pretty girl to marry him and free herself from torture and death. The girl responded to him: "If it is your prophet who ordered you to treat us so inhumanely, I cannot be the wife of a man who worships such a prophet. And if he did not order you to do this and still you are doing it, then I cannot be the wife of such a godless unbeliever, even if I were to die."²

In Agop Hacıyan's novel, *A Summer Without Dawn* (2000), Vartan Balian's beautiful wife, Maro, decided to go with Riza Bey, a high ranking officer and later the mayor of Aintab, who promised to send her to Constantinople to join her relatives.

the law to give the action some kind of authority (the law was approved on May 30, 1915), and before the events of Van which were later labeled an "uprising" and used as a pretext to justify the measures taken against the Armenian population of the Empire. See Walker, "World War I and the Armenian Genocide" (1997), pp. 249-52.

² Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs* (2002), p. 73.

Her mistake was that she knew all along about the not so innocent intentions of her savior, but she went with him anyway, only for the sake of her son Tomas. In this novel, we witness the psychological hardship Maro endured during her four-year forced conjugal life with her "savior." Meanwhile, the novel's protagonist, Vartan Balian, is portrayed in his unspeakable ordeal, his arrest and imprisonment, his escape from a Turkish prison, his torturous four-year trek to eventual freedom, and his miraculous reunion with his family.

Riza Bey was kind enough to save Maro and her son from certain death on the deportation road, but instead of sending them to Constantinople, he took her to his mansion as his fourth wife. "Riza Bey forced me to love him and at moments I thought perhaps I did. I am indebted to him. I owe him Tomas's life and mine too but that isn't it!... I always felt like a prisoner. Then..." (Hacıyan, p. 519). Vartan had become suspicious of her grieving, her aloofness, and her abstinence in their marital relationship. He saw Riza Bey standing between them. Did she love Riza Bey and would she rather spend her life with him? Was that the secret she kept in her heart? She owed it to her husband, who did the impossible, searching all over Anatolia to finally find her, to be frank and truthful and make her painful confession to him. "If only you knew how I suffer! If only you knew how it hurts" (p. 520). And she revealed her secret: she had a child by her Turkish abductor. Her compunction over leaving a child behind was killing the poor, frail woman. Vartan was mistaken. "Her wound was the loss of Nourhan and she did not see how it would ever heal" (p. 505). Would she be able to forget him in her new life with her husband and son? Would she ever confess to her husband that during that "captivity," she had really grown to love the

Turk? It comes across clearly in the novel that after a while her life with Riza Bey ceased to be that of a captive and her abductor. And what about the child she left behind? Would her half-Turkish son, Nourhan, grow up knowing that his mother was Armenian? Would he search for his hyphenated identity?

Armenians who somehow survived the Genocide and continued living in Turkey had to overcome a second traumatic phase in their life subsequent to their unspeakable experience during the massacres and deportations. The process of adjusting to a new life was accompanied by psychological impositions such as those, for example, experienced by young women who were forced to marry the perpetrator and bear his children, a strange coupling of victim and victimizer. Sultan remembers her aunt's words uttered in tears: "In front of my eyes the Kurd killed my husband and forced me to marry him. I married my husband's murderer to save my soul. I can never forgive that man, the father of my two sons." She cried and cried; then she consoled herself by hoping that "God will punish him."³

Setrak Baghdoyan remembers the beautiful girl Sirun (meaning "pretty" in Armenian) who agreed to go with Ibosh Bey, the Turkish commandant of their caravan of deportees, on condition that her baby brother, the six-year-old Vahram, and the remnants of her relatives could go with her too. In Baghdoyan's view, Sirun wasn't the type to convert to Islam. Did she live her life as a concubine or a mistress? Did she bear children?⁴

³ Yalçın (2003), *Hogis kezmov ke khayta*, p. 358.

⁴ Baghdoyan, *Erb drakhte dartsav dzhokhik* (2007), p. 247.

Baghdoyan describes the enormous, insurmountable grief of another Armenian woman in Tel-Afar. He met her as he and a few Armenian survivors were passing through on their way to Mosul after the war. Apparently, many deportees in the caravans of death toward Mosul or Der-El-Zor had been able to lag behind, slip away, and escape to Tel-Afar. The Turks there had taken them in as servants and Turkified them. Now, five years later, they could not, they did not dare to leave everything behind, return to their people, return to Christianity, and fly to freedom. A young woman from Kharbert was one of those converted Armenians who lived in Tel-Afar. On the pretext of selling bread, she came to see this group of Armenian survivors passing through town. She tearfully answered the pleas of the women in the group to leave her Turkish husband and go with them. She had three sons that she loved more than her own life. How could she leave them and go?⁵

This Kharbertsi woman's story, akin to that of Maro, is the story of many Armenian girls in Muslim houses. Some escaped, leaving behind an orphaned child, the fruit of a forced conjugal life. Levent Kazancı in Elif Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul* is a typical personification of all the Nourhans and all the children of Armenian women who escaped. His mother, Shermin, or the Armenian Shushan, had left him behind and run away with her elder brother, himself a survivor of the Genocide, who had returned all the way from the United States to retrieve his little sister. Levent grew up full of psychotic hang-ups. A kind, honest, and dependable man to his friends, he was the cruelest father to his children.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 540-2.

According to his stepmother, “the reason why he was so strict with his children was because he had suffered as a child, having been abandoned by his own mother” (Shafak, p. 309). Shushan kept that secret for life. The children she bore to an Armenian husband in her new life in the U.S. knew nothing about that page of their mother’s ordeal. They thought her suffering had come to an end once she had reached the freedom of the New World. The secret she had buried deep in her heart was the key to her behavior and explained her concern about Armanoush’s upbringing under the influence of her Turkish stepfather.

Historical novels, fiction, and memoirs detailing the experience of women who fled to freedom or stayed with the children they conceived from their abductors are not abundant. Fethiye Çetin’s *Anneannem*,⁶ the story of her Armenian grandmother, is one of the very few that speaks of such an experience.⁷ Indeed, Seher/Heranoush had the opportunity to join the remnants of her family in the U.S., but she did not. She chose to stay and faithfully “serve” her Turkish husband and children. The unusual turn of events in her case was that, after she was discovered but refused to leave, her brother maintained contact with her and her Turkish family. He even invited her to visit the family in the

⁶ Çetin’s story, *Anneannem* (My maternal grandmother), originally published in Turkish in 2004, was translated into Armenian as *Mets mayrs* by Ruben Melkonian in 2006. All references are to the Armenian translation of this work.

⁷ A lawyer by training, Fethiye Çetin is the former spokeswoman for the Minorities Commission of the Istanbul Bar Association and, incidentally, the lawyer representing Hrant Dink’s family in the trial of Dink’s assassin(s).

U.S. But she had no proper papers, so she sent her son Mahmud. However, characteristically, as a young Turkish citizen with a nationalistic upbringing, Mahmud could not face the truth about the Armenian past that was revealed to him when he joined his Armenian relatives in the U.S. He could not accept the stories of the past that were, whether he liked it or not, his own past. He quarreled with his relatives and severed his and his mother’s relations with them. He tried and somehow succeeded in erasing these memories, as did many of the generation born to Armenian survivors. An acquaintance in the county registrar’s office physically erased from his papers the mention of his mother being a convert. It would take the third generation, as we will see later, more distanced from the dreadful past and in a somewhat freer atmosphere, to face the past and deal with it.

Thousands of others, too, stayed where they were for the sake of their children and suffered in silence, never daring to disclose their past. From a distance of ninety years, we look back and try to fathom the motivation in this conscious decision, not only by young women with a child or children, but also by boys who had the chance to escape but did not. In the case of the women, was it only their motherly love and dedication? Was it fear of yet another uncertain fate awaiting these boys, girls, and women too in such a venture? Was it shame, the shame of having been subjected to rape and sexual violence—and this concerned girls and boys alike—that would burst into the open once they joined the free world and would accompany them for life?

Ester Minerajian Ahronian Ajemian was not afraid of her secret being known. She was one of the few who kept talking about the horrors she had lived, once she was safe in the

United States where she married and had children. In fact, the stories she told her daughter, Margaret Ajemian Ahnert, were wrought into a chronicle of the horrors of the Armenian Genocide, titled *The Knock at the Door: A Journey Through the Darkness of the Armenian Genocide* (2007). Emaciated, sick, and almost perishing on the death march, 13-year-old Ester was rescued and cared for by a Turkified Armenian woman and given to an elderly childless Turkish couple. In that Turkish house her name was changed to Gezeer Kateejeh, and she was treated as a daughter but also raped by her "father." She ran away to an orphanage where, every week, Turks and Kurds in the surrounding area would come to get a helper, a child, or a wife. A young Turkish man picked her and took her home as a wife. But that was another nightmare. He beat her and cursed her religion, *dinini siktir* (p. 154), when he found out that she was not a virgin, and the beating continued. She was a sex slave in his house, but fortunately she did not bear children. She had stopped menstruating since she experienced the shock of the horrors of the death march. Despite the brutalities committed against her, she confesses, she grew to love that crude and cruel man (p. 144). Is there a psychological explanation for this type of relationship? Maltreated, battered, and sexually abused, she dragged herself through life in that house for three years until she found an opportunity to escape to her birthplace, where she was sheltered by an Armenian family and finally taken to the United States.

These victims of the Armenian Genocide had been subjected to dehumanization. We are aware of that clever strategy of the Young Turks to strip their victims of all human attributes in order to make it easier for the perpetrator to eliminate them, and to make way for the trivialization of the

atrocities and the denial of the magnitude of the crime later on. Dehumanization was the most fearful experience for these survivors, boys and girls, whether they were sexually assaulted, bought for a few coins, enslaved, or thrown into harems as concubines. Dehumanization was the most fearful and challenging state of mind that these survivors had to overcome in order to be able to return to human society and survive as human beings.

Dehumanization was inflicted in a variety of ways and means. In a previous work I have discussed the horrible conditions that drove the deportees to extreme cases of inhuman behavior, such as men voluntarily offering their daughters to a Turkish commander in return for scant favors; or an old woman yelling, shouting, and fighting to her death with another fellow deportee because he had bribed the caretakers to remove the rotting body of his daughter. The old woman did not have money to pay them to take away his dead grandson to make room for her ailing last grandson to lie down in that skimpy makeshift tent.⁸ "Not limited to murder, Turkish atrocities also extracted the last traces of humanity."⁹

Aram Antonian describes instances of cannibalism among the remnants of Armenian deportees in the desert. They were cooking and eating the flesh of those who died of disease and starvation. A famine-stricken young girl lies on the desert sand under the scorching sun. She is breathing her last breath as her mother helplessly watches over her. She smells flesh

⁸ See the subchapters titled "What Price Survival," pp. 162-9, and "Class Differences: A New Motif," pp. 169-72, in Perroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe* (1993).

⁹ I made this statement in *ibid.*, p. 156, as I began to detail the episode that followed.

cooking and in her feeble voice asks her mother to go get some for her. Her mother goes and returns empty-handed. "They didn't give you any?" the girl asks. "When I die, mother, you eat my flesh alone. Don't share it with anyone."¹⁰

Ester, in *The Knock at the Door*, remembers seeing women "tearing pieces of flesh from the bodies left by the road," and her little step-brother Arsen pleading in terror, "Please, please, promise me you will not let anyone eat my body except you."¹¹ And then, after Arsen's disappearance along the crowded deportation route, she remembers thinking the horrible thought, "Is Arsen dead? Is someone eating his flesh?"¹² It is hard to believe that these creatures ever possessed human attributes and led a normal life before. The Turkish methods of extermination had dehumanized them by turning them into animals who would do anything to survive. They were the products of Turkish atrocities squeezing the last traces of humanity out of their victims and letting them die like animals. Now imagine if the mother in this incident had somehow survived by perhaps eating the flesh of her own daughter as others were doing. Could she live with this kind of memory without going insane? Could she ever be able to hide that secret, integrate into normal society and live a normal life?

And those who were raped or sexually abused, how would they cope with that secret in their life? It is common knowledge that Armenian women and even young girls were raped during the Genocide. One does not need hard evidence

¹⁰ Discussed in *ibid.*, p. 156.

¹¹ Ahnert, *The Knock at the Door* (2007), pp. 91-2.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 94.

to prove it. Reports, testimonies, memoirs, fiction, and oral history give ample evidence of the very frequent occurrence of sexual violence as a tool of Genocide that worked by not only killing but belittling, trivializing, dehumanizing female victims.¹³ So far, in our investigation in the literature of the Armenian Genocide, our focus, emphasis, and attention have been on the rape of women by gendarmes or attacking Turkish and Kurdish bandits as cases of sexual violence. There are recorded incidents in which the perpetrators cut women's breasts or nipples and left them to bleed to death. We have seen eyewitness accounts describing the Turkish mob forcing young women to dance naked in a circle and then burning them alive by splashing kerosene on them and setting them on

¹³ Henry Morgenthau cites one of many examples: "When the victims had traveled a few hours from their starting place, the Kurds would sweep down from their mountain homes. Rushing up to the young girls, they would lift their veils and carry the pretty ones off to the hills." In the same passage, he also makes a note in regard to the caravans of deportees passing through a Muslim village: "Here the Turkish roughs would fall upon the women, leaving them sometimes dead from their experience or sometimes ravingly insane." See *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, p. 316. Morgenthau attests to the widespread practice of rape without using the word: "Behind was left a small army of girls who had been sold as slaves—frequently for a medjidie, or about eighty cents—and who, after serving the brutal purposes of their purchasers, were forced to lead lives of prostitution," p. 317.

William King records the massacres of Armenians during World War I in an especially interesting book, *Complete History of the World War*, (1922), pp. 168-9. As early as February 1915, massacres were occurring in the Ardahan and Alashkert regions. Turkish soldiers and local Kurds were killing Armenian villagers in retaliation for their defeat on the Russian front. King also mentions Armenian women being carried away to the mountains.

fire. Death was the immediate consequence of this kind of sexual violence. The victims took with them to their graves—or a mass grave, or nothing, no final resting place at all—the humiliation, the dehumanization, the memory of it all. But what about those who survived?

The response to this trauma was not always silence. Sometimes, the victim of such an extreme brutalization revealed extraordinary reactions, reactions that exposed the total collapse of moral order and normal human behavior. Describing the responses of the survivors of the 1894–96 massacres, for example, Suren Partevian relates an amazing but heartbreaking story about a girl named Saiko. After a two-month forced conjugal life with her Kurdish abductor, Saiko ran away but had nowhere to go. Her family had been slaughtered and their house ransacked. She wandered in the streets, pregnant and desperate, and when the child was born, in a moment of rancorous rage, she killed the baby to efface the traces of her own impurity and the memory of the unclean life she had been forced to live.¹⁴ In another episode, Suren Partevian describes the virginal Sarah killing her Kurdish assaulter in his sleep by pulling out his dagger and thrusting it into his heart, even though she had surrendered herself in return for a piece of bread. After feeding her younger brother and sister and having some herself, she gathered her strength and returned to her senses. In this painful moment of realization, she came to see the enormity of the sacrifice she had made and the sin she had committed.¹⁵ Killing the

¹⁴ This episode, titled “Saiko,” is discussed in Perroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe* (1993), p. 130.

¹⁵ This episode, titled “Hatsin uzhe” (The power of bread), is discussed in *ibid.*, p. 131.

perpetrator was her way of beginning with a clean slate, with the subject of her shame and disgrace effaced. It was possible to obliterate the physical evidence of such an unbearable trauma, but the memory of it would linger and affect the life, the outlook, the personality, the identity of the victim.

In these extreme situations, continuing a normal life was not feasible. It was more likely that many like Hermine/Filor of Seveda Sevan’s *Rodosto*, *Rodosto* would end up in a brothel or live as the *gâvur* mistress of a rich Turkish or Kurdish man at best.

We can cite many more examples, analyze various cases, discuss the reactions of sexually assaulted women to that crushing experience during the massacres, and address the consequential effects on their sense of self-identity in their subsequent life. That is a road more traveled in the study and analysis of Genocide victims and survivors in Armenian literature. However, there has been little or nothing about sexual violence against male victims, not only in the case of the Armenian Genocide but elsewhere in the world where such atrocities against an ethnic group have occurred. Sandesh Sivakumaran, who has done extensive research in this field, believes that “this is due to a combination of shame, confusion, guilt, fear, and stigma.”¹⁶ According to Sivakumaran, the most thorough investigation in this area was conducted in the armed conflict in former Yugoslavia, and it was during and after that conflict that world attention was drawn to that specific, horrid tool of genocide. Sivakumaran further explains that men hardly speak about their having been victimized. That would diminish their masculinity, and

¹⁶ Sivakumaran, “Sexual Violence Against Men” (2007), p. 255.

therefore also affect their identity. Reported, documented, or otherwise, we are aware of the fact that male victims were sexually abused by Turkish executioners. This was a common practice in Turkish prisons, and was carried out in addition to beatings, bastinado, horseshoeing,¹⁷ and other types of torture. The guards and the perverted interrogator took pride of having invented new kinds of sexual torture to bring the victim to his knees and confess to things he never did or avow things he never believed. Henry Morgenthau remembers a Turkish official boasting about the methods of torture inflicted on Armenian male victims:

[A]ll these details were matters of nightly discussion at the headquarters of the Union and Progress Committee. Each new method of inflicting pain was hailed as a splendid discovery, and the regular attendants were constantly ransacking their brains in the effort to devise some new torment. (p. 307)

Morgenthau describes the methods of torture on many occasions. His descriptions of these unconceivable and uni-

¹⁷ Morgenthau notes that "All through this country Cevdet [the Vali of Van] was generally known as the 'horseshoer of Bashkale' for this connoisseur in torture had invented what was perhaps the masterpiece of all—that of nailing horseshoes to the feet of his Armenian victims." *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, p. 307.

On a personal note, Sarkis Perroomian, the paternal uncle of this author's husband, was horseshoed in Van when he was twelve years old. He lived the rest of his life in the United States, never able to forget the day when the Turkish gendarmes were torturing his father and uncle, Boghos and Bedross Perroomians, to force them to reveal the location of hidden weapons. Failing to get them to talk, the gendarmes nailed horseshoes to the feet of young Sarkis, inflicting wounds that never healed and once in a while opened up to let out blood and pus.

imaginable horrors do not, however, include the torture of male sexual organs. He stops short of this in his descriptions, leaving the almost certain implication that men too were sexually tortured. He writes: "I have by no means told the most terrible details, for a complete narration of the sadistic orgies of which these Armenian men and women were the victims can never be printed in an American publication" (p. 321). Morgenthau was too considerate of the American public, whose imagination and moral principles could not digest the scenes of Turkish sexual tortures of men (imagine the American society of 1919, not that of the present unbridled television era). Morgenthau avoided putting unsuitable material into writing, but Edgar Hilsenrath, eighty years later, does not have that constraint. On the contrary, he describes it in graphic detail.

And thus, one of the most poignant and horribly unbelievable scenes of sexual torture is pictured in *The Story of the Last Thought*.¹⁸ It is astounding to see how Edgar Hilsenrath, the author of this novel, was able to unearth so much information about life in Turkish prisons and the torture techniques employed there, unsurpassed in the world. It is important to note here that I do not hold this or any work of fiction—but this one in particular because of its abstract conceptualization—as a mirror of reality; however, I strongly believe in the truth that a work of fiction reveals. This approach should not be seen as paradoxical or self-contradictory, for it is dictated by the nature of fiction, by the

¹⁸ Hilsenrath, *The Story of the Last Thought* (1991). For a detailed analysis of this work, see Perroomian, "The Truth of the Armenian Genocide in Edgar Hilsenrath's Fiction" (2003).

token of truth—the interpretation of reality—the author plants in his/her novel.

The Turkish *mudur* (*müdür*, sub-district governor) is trying to extract a confession from Vartan Khatisian about an Armenian “world conspiracy.” He forces him to sign a written confession so that he can send it to the Young Turk government in Constantinople and make a name for himself. Ordinary methods of torture have not worked on Vartan who refuses to sign any confession. The new method he devises is disgustingly ingenious. An Armenian cement worker is brought in, “a cement expert” who, under the *mudur*’s command and with three *saptiehs* (*zaptiye*, gendarme) watching him, mixes cement, water, and sand to make a paste. Meanwhile, as Vartan screams in pain and embarrassment, other *saptiehs* “stuff wool up his anus.... The *saptiehs* also stick wool into his penis—they have no tweezers and have to use matches sharpened with a knife” (p. 119). Then they smear the wool with the concrete paste and hang Vartan before the barred window for the concrete to dry and for passers-by to see. The little Armenian man is standing there, trembling in fear. This is worse than being hung on the gallows which happens to be an ordinary, everyday scene in the town square during that period of time. Now Vartan screams harder; with his orifices full, he cannot relieve himself. He will explode. The *mudur* reminds him that he has a very short time left to decide to sign the paper; if he does not and the concrete dries firm and hard, then that is the end of it. Depicting this utterly unimaginable atmosphere of terror, Hilsenrath remarks, “The man who set out to learn about fear never came to Anatolia” (p. 118). Indeed, as Hilsenrath attests, “there has been torture in Turkish prisons as far back as memory goes” (p. 374). And

now, with the opportunity arising to excel over past practices in this prison cell, the Turk displays his supremacy in the most abhorrent sexual performance on a prisoner ever recorded in any book on torture techniques in that little house of *hukumet* (*hükümet*, courthouse) in the city of Bakir, “a few days journey in the donkey cart from Erzerum” (p. 162).

Vartan was meant to survive this ordeal, and so did boys and girls who were sexually assaulted. What was their experience like, and what does sexual violence entail? According to a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on this issue, it means

“any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality,” thus including “both physical and psychological attacks directed at a person’s sexual characteristics, such as forcing a person to strip naked in public, mutilating a person’s genitals, or slicing off women’s breasts” as well as “situations in which two victims are forced to perform sexual acts on one another or to harm one another in a sexual manner.”¹⁹

William King reported such an assault against Armenian male victims early in February 1915 in the town of Ardanutem at the beginning of the massacres. Here, “50 Armenians were taken from the local jail, stripped naked and compelled to leap to death into the frightful abyss of Jenemdere, also called ‘The Devil’s Gap’.”²⁰

¹⁹ Final report submitted to the UN Commission on Human Rights by Ms. Gay J. McDougal, Special Rapporteur, on “Contemporary Forms of Slavery: Systematic Rape, Sexual Slavery and Slavery-like Practices during Armed Conflict,” E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/13, paras 21–22, cited in Sivakumaran, “Sexual Violence Against Men” (2007), p. 261.

²⁰ King, *Complete History* (1922), p. 168.

We also remember that Gabriel Bagradian, the protagonist of Franz Werfel's *Forty Days of Musa Dagh* and the commander of the Armenian defenses during the 1915 Genocide, was stripped naked and beaten in front of his family and other Armenian notables. That was the mildest punishment the Turkish mudur could think of, because he had strict orders to have Bagradian deported unharmed, so that the district authority in Antakya could "take a squint at him." The Turkish mudur was well aware of the effects of assaulting a man's masculine pride and the profound humiliation that would ensue. Indeed, shame was the only sensation left in Gabriel's mind. This high-ranking officer of the Turkish army was helpless in front of that Turk and his pack of saptiehs.²¹

Torture involving sexual organs against men has not found explicit depiction in Armenian literature due to the sensitivity of the subject and the difficulty of confessing and disclosing it and because of self-imposed moral standards to be respected and followed when producing dissent literature. Subtle passing remarks, though, give evidence to its occurrence. For example, describing his experience of four years in a Turkish prison (1915-19), Teodik speaks of a special lexicon, the "prison vocabulary" of euphemisms that were used to soften the harsh conditions: *müsafir* (guest, traveler) was used for a new prisoner; *yüklü* (loaded, burdened) or *tebdili hava* (change of air, change of scene) referred to a prisoner condemned to serve many years; and *hatsagorts* (bread-baker in Armenian) most curiously implied the homosexual acts carried out on prisoners.²²

²¹ Werfel, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* (1934), pp. 273-5.

²² Teodik, *Azge che merat* (1985), p. 14.

It is not difficult to imagine the effects of these acts of violence on the psyche and thus the identity of the survivors of such a horribly traumatic experience, with a life-long memory of the event. A psychoanalyst would certainly carry out a detailed investigation to delve into the reasons why the perpetrators resorted to this utterly inhumane practice of "torturing" their victims. And he/she would perhaps list the motives beginning with the simplest one, something that is closer to the attributes of a normal human being. That is the enforcement of power and domination over the victim. With such a motive, the perpetrator who rapes a woman not only proves his superiority over his victim, but also proves the men, helplessly watching the rape, to be inferior creatures incapable of defending their women. Consequently, dehumanization works both on the sexually violated women and on the helpless male bystanders. Christoph Scheissl defines this act as "symbolically castrat[ing] the defeated men."²³ Castration, not only symbolic but also physical, was not a rare occurrence during the Armenian Genocide. The Turkish assailant, in his rage on discovering that the girl he had snatched up to rape was in fact a boy dressed in female attire (to avoid being killed outright, as happened to men and older boys), would cut off the boy's genitals. In *The Knock at the Door*, Ester/Gezeer Kateejeh relates overhearing a Turkish officer, a guest at the home of her Turkish adopted parents, boasting about kidnapping two sisters:

²³ Scheissl, "An Element of Genocide" (2002), p. 199, cited by Goldenberg in "Sexual Violence and the Holocaust" (2007). I thank Myrna Goldenberg for her paper which drew my attention to Scheissl's article.

After I raped the one, I reached for the other and realized I had a boy instead. So I cut off his genitals with my sword. "There, now you are a girl, how do you like it?" Then my men and I propped the boy up against a wall so he could watch us take turns sodomizing the girl. (Ahnert, p. 114)

After all this, killing these inferior creatures was an easy task that would produce no guilt at all for the executioner, the proud champion of the exclusive crime he committed. The same motive of enforcing power and domination and exerting humiliation, dehumanization, and demasculinization (or feminization) works in the case of sexual violence against male victims. But one wonders if enforcement of domination was the only motive behind the sexual tortures in the Turkish prisons. One does not need to be a psychoanalyst to see that the aim was a perverted sexual satisfaction for the perpetrator taken out on a defenseless victim who could not show any resistance, thereby guaranteeing smooth sailing for the darkest instincts and beastly desires of human nature. The same argument is also valid for the rape of Armenian women. Holocaust scholars suggest the theory of power and domination and establishing themselves as the Master Race to explain the German Gestapo's and soldiers' rape of Jewish women. It is a fact that most of the Jewish women were murdered after being raped so that the policy of the annihilation of the inferior race would be fulfilled. There was also the *Rassenshände*, promulgated in 1935, prohibiting sex between members of the Aryan race and Jews to prevent the contamination of the pure race and the pure Aryan blood.²⁴ In the case of Armenian women, I would say, the motive was a

²⁴ Ibid.

long craving for a forbidden fruit. Armenian women were always coveted but unreachable for Turkish and Kurdish men. And now these men were given the freedom to commit any atrocity they desired, anything that the sick mind of a man turned animal could conjure up. Raping Armenian girls and women was for them a pleasure to enjoy.

There is also the theory of improving the race as a motive for abducting Armenian women and producing children with them. Henry Morgenthau supports this thesis: "These Armenian girls represent a high type of womanhood and the young Turks, in their crude, intuitive way, recognized that the mingling of their blood with the Turkish population would exert a eugenic influence upon the whole."²⁵

Obviously, during the Genocide of 1915, racial purity was not on the agenda of the Turkish executioners, or it may be that the contrary was true. Osman Köker asserts that giving Armenian women and children to Muslims was not an offshoot of the events of 1915, but rather a state policy ordered from above. Köker reveals documents proving his point.²⁶

²⁵ *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (1975), p. 291.

²⁶ Köker, "Ermeni Kadın ve Çocuklarının" (2007). In this article, Köker discusses the Islamization of Armenians throughout Ottoman history and focuses on this practice during 1915, describing the organized effort and effective methods used on young women, widows and women whose husbands were serving in the army, and orphaned young children. He brings in coded (*şifre*) telegrams in whole as documents (*belge*) containing detailed orders sent by Talat or by those reporting to him about the fulfillment of his orders. The seven telegrams are dated from 1 July (Temmuz) 1915 to 30 April (Nisan) 1916.

These documents demonstrate that the process of Islamization and absorption of the Armenian survivors of massacre and deportation occurred in two ways. The first was through the

Curiously, however, purity of the race became a concern of Turkish families in postwar Turkey. Many families did not want to take a bride from a family or marry off a girl into a family with Armenian ancestry. Fethiye Çetin attests to that in the story of her Armenian grandmother. Could this be the influence of Nazi ideology turned into Nuremberg law in 1934?

For the first time in history, rape and sexual violence were treated as crimes against humanity at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). This is a stark departure from the past, when rape and sexual violence were treated as the reward of the aggressor in war or other armed conflicts. As a result, the International Criminal Court has developed a definite position that defines this type of crimes as:

an act of a sexual nature against one or more persons or [that] caused such person or persons to engage in an act of sexual nature by force, or by threat of force or coercion, such as that caused by fear of violence, duress, detention, psychological oppression or abuse of power, against such person or persons or another person, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment or such person's or persons' incapacity to give genuine consent.²⁷

government orders and logistics indicated in these orders. The second way occurred spontaneously as Turks, Kurds, and Arabs preyed upon the caravans of deportees, snatched up children and pretty girls, took women into their harems, or bought them, or even rescued them for altruistic reasons. Survivor stories also tell us how Armenian women pleaded with Turkish, Kurdish, and Arab villagers to take their children so that at least they would survive.

²⁷ Elements of Crimes, Art. 7(1)(g)-6, element 1., cited by Sivakumaran, "Sexual Violence Against Men" (2007), p. 262. Sivakumaran notes that the International Criminal Court goes by the

Note that the subject is not specified as male or female, but as a person. Thus, the definition encompasses both genders. With this near complete definition of the crime and a with law in place, it will be possible to gather all the evidence of such violence against Armenian victims during the Genocide and present a case to the International Criminal Court. This would parallel a successful effort that is collecting data and demanding compensation on the life insurance policies purchased by Armenians before the Genocide.

To become a victim of an abhorrent crime such as sexual violence results in a lifelong psychological trauma that does not subside. To confess to it and become a statistic in a document is even more painful. In hundreds of interviews of survivors of the Armenian Genocide conducted in the Diaspora, only a handful of them (all women, of course) have found the courage to confess to that dark page in their life story. The confession was made in an emotional torrent and the secret, hitherto well kept from the closest kith and kin, entrusted to the interviewer, or rather to the machine recording their life story.

With survivors of this terrible crime who continued to live in Turkey, silence was chosen as the safest solution and the most plausible defense system. There is no doubt that horrible memories suppressed their normal life. They did not forget the ordeal and often continued to live in the same environment that constantly reminded them of the past. To challenge that, they subconsciously fought to change the circumstances and their own mindset in order to be able to cope with these

Rome Statute (1999) in defining the meaning of sexual violence. See also Lee, *The International Criminal Court* (2001).

memories. Their stories remained locked away from the outside world. They buried their humiliating, dehumanizing secret in silence and at least pretended to live a normal life like a normal person.

5

Historical Memory Suppressed, Expressions Silenced

The first-generation survivor-writers in the Diaspora responded to their collective traumatic past mainly by trying to conceptualize and textualize the Catastrophe.¹ Their artistic rendering of the experience brings to light the colossal crime that was committed against the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the indelible effects of that crime on the psyche of the survivors of that crime. In parallel with the literature, the *belles-lettres* that these writers produced was the proliferation of eyewitness accounts and memoirs permeated with blood, tears, destruction, hatred, and revenge. Diasporan Armenian newspapers and periodicals of the 1920s and the 1930s were filled with that type of literature. The survivor-authors of this

¹ For a detailed discussion of the responses of the first-generation survivors and the themes around which they articulated the textualization of their responses, see Perroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe* (1993).

emotional outpouring spoke freely about their ordeal and shared their memories with their fellow Armenians. They gave interviews and participated in oral history projects, hoping the world would lend a sympathetic ear to their pain and to the predicament of the nation.

In contrast to the eagerness of some survivors to share the memory of their ordeal, there were many who chose not to speak at all. The reasons for this forced or self-imposed silence varied from one subject to another, but were always regulated by a complex psychological disposition and were revealed by multifaceted modes of behavior. The reason could have been an inexplicable sense of reproach for having survived while other members of the family met a torturous death. It could have been an inner compulsion to leave everything behind and adapt to the new environment: to be integrated into the mainstream like everyone else. There might have been, perhaps, the fear that if they told their stories, they would be set apart from mainstream society – which was especially true in the European and North American communities where prejudice and discrimination against the newcomers was the prevailing reality. It could have been a subconscious effort to spare their children in order to protect them against the paralyzing memory with which they had to live. In many cases, paradoxically, even if they tried to tell their story and set their soul free, they were silenced by their children who were tired of hearing old stories, tired of their parents' impenetrable gloomy mood, their sighs and tears. Or, it could have been an amalgamation of all these factors. A masterful psychoanalytical survey on a vast field could lead to the understanding of the inner world of the survivor in different

settings. Besides and beyond all this, the burden of the daily struggle for survival in a new, unfamiliar world forced the survivors to suppress, in many cases without success and only in appearance, the memory of their traumatic past.

David Kherdian's father never shared with him the painful memory of his past; never told him the story of his suffering. It was only after his father's death that Kherdian began to read about the history of the Armenian massacres. In that history he found the explanation of his father's strange disposition, especially when he returned home from the coffee houses in Racine:

Years later, reading the solemn and bittersweet stories of our Armenian writer in California, who visited as a paperboy coffeehouses in Fresno, I came to understand that in these cafes were contained the suffering and shattered hopes of my orphaned people.²

The Armenian survivors living in Turkey also kept silent, but for entirely different reasons and motivations. This impermeable wall of silence persisted longer and locked up stories that had no chance to reach receptive ears and fill a small gap in the history of multiethnic Turkish society believed to be uniform and uninterrupted. It is only recently that we have become at least somewhat aware of the lifelong trauma engulfing Armenian survivors in Turkey. We are being

² Kherdian, "My Father," in *Homage to Adana* (1970), n.p. The reference to "our Armenian writer in California" is to William Saroyan.

allowed into their world to see how the past shaped their identity and that of the generations born to them.

These survivors kept silent about their ancestry, about their traumatic past, about their deep resentment of present conditions and the difficulty of adjusting to them. Their silence was a psychological imposition from within, out of the fear and shame of disclosing their inner world, and from without, dictated by an unfriendly and sometimes hostile environment. In fact, the silence coming from within, a sort of self-censorship, bolstered the Turkish government's official stand to continue its unbridled suppression of the history and the societal memory of the Armenian Genocide. Earlier in this book the trend of the "collective I" was discussed. It was shown how Istanbul Armenian writers and poets resonated the pain and suffering of all human beings, portrayed humanity caught in the cruel grip of injustice, and sang the history of other nations, but how, from the nationalistic vantage point, these poems could be interpreted as allusions to the plight of the Armenian nation. Khrakhuni's poem titled "History," about the foundation of Rome and the twin brothers breast-fed by a she-wolf, is one example. In this poem, the allegory of wolf and lamb presented a subtle allusion to the history of the Turkish-Armenian relationship. Another example is a poem by Varteres Karagözian³ titled

³ Varteres Karagözian was born in the Armenian village of Zara in Sebastia (Sivas) in 1938. He belonged to the Armenian remnants dispersed in the interior of Turkey who were discovered and brought to Istanbul during the 1950s campaign to save the Armenian survivors and provide them with an Armenian education. This was an initiative of the patriarchate of Istanbul undertaken during the

"Mets mayrige" (The grandmother), published in the early 1960s, in which the plight of four generations is depicted, yet direct expression is avoided:

She was a girl, still a blossom
they took her father away
she sat and wept with her mother

she became a bride, a young bride
they took her husband away
she sat and wept with her son

she was the guardian of her orphan son
they took her son too
she sat and wept with her daughter-in-law

now there is no fear
no massacres, and no war
but they took her grandson too
What was that — she sat and wept.⁴

Typical of Turkish-Armenian poetry of the 1950s and 1960s, this poem portrays a dramatic scene using simple imagery and spare wording. This portrayal corroborates oral interviews of Armenian survivors who maintain that each and every generation born before and after 1915 has had its share of calamities and has suffered persecution. A milder wave of such persecutions occurred in 1949. The government launched a series of interrogations targeting Istanbul Armenian int-

democratic rule of Adnan Menderes and his relatively lenient policy toward minorities.

⁴ For this poem in the Armenian original, see Kalfayan, *Bolsahay nor banasteghtsutiune* (1998), p. 217.

ellectuals, apparently only to intimidate them and caution them not to exceed the limits of what could be written. Rupen Mashoyan attests that some of these intellectuals were summoned to the Turkish Secret Service offices in Istanbul and questioned about a piece of their writing which had already been translated into Turkish and was lying there on the desk of the interrogating officer, awaiting the accused.⁵ Haygazun Galustian was one of those intellectuals; the composition in question was his poem, "Irigune" (The evening):

Now
a woman
is waiting for her jobless husband
now
the flames of ripped-up papers
will turn the leaves of cabbage
she collected from the sidewalks in the outdoor market
into a meal
and the bread-cutting knife on the table
waits for bread, bread, bread.⁷

This scene could have been occurring anywhere in Istanbul, and the woman could have been Turkish or from any other ethnic group. Galustian defended himself by saying that the poem was a picture of a real-life situation. Later, he confessed to his friends that the woman collecting wilted cabbage leaves from the street was his own mother. Even if the

⁵ Mashoyan, *Yev aysbes abretsank* (1998), p. 96.

⁶ Haygazun Galustian was born in 1920 in Istanbul. He repatriated to Armenia in 1965 and died there in 1985.

⁷ For this poem in the Armenian original, see Mashoyan, p. 95.

scene showed the plight of an Armenian family, however, it was an echo of the economic situation in Turkey in general. Haygazun Galustian was braver in another poem from the series "Khaghaghutian" (Peace), in which, once again, in simple imagery he demonstrates the calamity that befell the nation before he was born:

My mother had two brothers
she had father
she had mother
they had sisters and brothers
they were all married
they all had children

From them neither this nor that remained
they all — they all
died before I was born

My father like my mother
what he had, father, mother, brother
cousins — a whole clan
died before I was born
when I opened my eyes, my mother was left alone
your father was drafted in the army they said⁸

Notice the calculated word choice. They all "died," not were murdered or death-marched.

Hagop Mintzuri, the renowned Turkish-Armenian writer, struck a different note in his work. Mintzuri was one of the very few who defied the silence prevailing in Turkish-Armenian literature about the suffering of the nation and the trauma of the recent past, nonetheless in a cautious and covert

⁸ Kalfayan, *Bolsahay nor banasteghtsutiune* (1998), pp. 77–8.

manner. In his series of short stories, he depicted Armenian village life in pre-1915 Turkey, as if to eternalize a reality that no longer existed and to preserve its memory for posterity. And perhaps he had an ulterior motive or a subconscious intent: to stimulate the question, where are they now? It should be noted, though, that these stories were written in Armenian for Armenian consumption, and the message in them was conveniently and obliquely concealed in descriptive details.

Born in 1886 in Armdan, a village near Agn facing the Dersim (Mintzuri) Mountains, Hagop Mintzuri brings to life the prewar Armenian presence in Turkey from Agn to Istanbul, a presence that Turkey has ignored and denied. Armenians from all walks of life are portrayed: wealthy and influential aghas in their plush houses, with a sophisticated lifestyle, enjoying close ties with the Sultan's palace; peasants and artisans in their everyday toil, their modest lives, their pain and their joy. Mintzuri describes in detail the streets, the churches, the schools, from the darkest corners of poor city outskirts to the stylish quarters of the capital city. He cites names and characters, intellectuals, teachers, leaders of the community with whom he interacted and of whom he kept a lasting memory. They obviously all went through the hell of 1915 never to return, and today they live only in the vivid landscape Mintzuri painted. These characters, portrayed in such detail in their everyday life, are undeniable evidence of the law-abiding, peaceful people and their apprehensive and cautious behavior, the *modus vivendi* they had developed

through centuries of "peaceful coexistence"⁹ with Turkish and Kurdish oppressors. They had learned how not to incite the government's anger and their neighbors' animosity. Hagop Mintzuri's subtle references to the state of the Armenian-Turkish relationship speak of the unstable and explosive nature of that relationship. It was friendly and amicable only as long as Armenians did not cross the line and pass their "limits."

The images Mintzuri portrays remain imprinted in the reader's mind; as Toros Toranian typically puts it, "[his] words were whispered, but they sank deep into one's heart."¹⁰ Mintzuri's whispering words, his literature, have just recently been translated into Turkish, and now speak to the heart of the Turkish reader too. Could they help open a door?

Painted on the colorful canvas of everyday life in his native village is also the story of Mintzuri's own family, his grandfather, mother, wife and children. He was told by an

⁹ The reason for putting this phrase in quotation marks is that the peacefulness of this coexistence was a one-way street. It was peaceful as long as the Armenians remained obedient and did not protest against the oppressive and discriminatory measures of the government or the local Kurdish chieftains against them. Armenians were even called *milleti sadık* (the faithful millet). The situation changed beginning with the second half of the nineteenth century – the Armenian cultural and political renaissance – when enlightened Armenian leadership began to ask for reforms and demand justice and equal rights. After a perennial postponement of the promised reforms, the Sublime Porte's response came as punishment for those who began this movement but also for all those who would have benefited from the reforms. The Armenian massacres of 1894–96 marked the culmination of these punishments.

¹⁰ Toranian, *Istanbulahayere ke kanchen* (1997), p. 36.

eyewitness how they were driven out of their house and forced to walk the death march in the spring of 1915 while Mintzuri himself was in Constantinople on a short visit to take care of a medical problem. That short visit saved his life and lasted a lifetime. He never got the chance to return to his home.

"Driven out of their house" is how he describes the beginning of the disastrous trek of his family and the entire population of Armdan. Was it not a death march or an intentionally planned deportation? Obviously, those are not the words he uses:

My grandpa Melkon was 88, my mother Nanik, 55, my children, Nourhan 6, Maranik 4, Anahit, 2 years old, and Khacho, 9 months, my wife Voghedan was 29. How did they walk? My grandpa couldn't walk the distance to Dzvadzegh village.¹¹

Mintzuri's style was typical of Turkish-Armenian writings, replete with simple but profound images. In the words of Rupen Mashoyan, one of his admirers, he reconciled art and reality in such a natural way that you didn't realize he was writing literature or talking about it.¹² He encouraged the

¹¹ Hagop Mintzuri, *Giughe k'apri im mejs* (2005), p. 57. This book was first published in 1998. It is a collection of short stories previously published in four separate volumes, the first of which appeared in 1958. But even before that, Mintzuri was widely published in the Istanbul, Soviet-Armenian, and Diasporan Armenian papers, and the Armenian reader was introduced to scenes of Armenian life in Istanbul and to pre-1915 Armenian village life that Mintzuri so caringly painted.

¹² See Mashoyan, *Yev aysbes abretsank* (1998), p. 85.

young Istanbul Armenian literary movement and approved of the innovations introduced in poetry writing, in terms of both content and spirit. However, he did not attempt to follow the innovative styles and remained the true and sincere storyteller and painter of Armenian village life. Rober Haddejian describes the man as a humble, unpretentious, very amiable human being who, despite his fame and the respect he enjoyed among Istanbul Armenian literary circles, lived in abject poverty on the meager salary of a menial job entrusted to him in an Armenian establishment.¹³

Arpiar Der Markaryan was a name I came across as I was searching for Armenian survivor-writers to take me into their world of complex sentiments and unravel the conflicting urges: the impulse to talk about their past traumatic experience, to put the memory of that experience into writing in order to somehow reach catharsis and alleviate the burden of memory; the urge or the coercion to keep silent, to suppress the memory in order not to bring more peril down on their heads, and, more importantly, not to hurt anyone else as they had been hurt beyond measure. Arpiar Der Markaryan typified that classic image of the first-generation survivor-writers in Turkey.¹⁴

¹³ Haddejian, *Hushatetr* – 15 (1999), pp. 181–2.

¹⁴ See Arpiar Der Markaryan, *Ardzagank yev Antsorde* (2006). This publication contains two works that were previously published separately, *Ardzagank* (Echo, 1946) and *Antsorde* (The passerby, 1962), and other stories and sketches. The publisher provides in this volume a comprehensive section of notes explaining the terms used, giving additional information about the places and people mentioned in Der Markaryan's writings. The book also houses Der

He was born in 1889 in Khultig (now Aredağ),¹⁵ a village fifteen kilometers southwest of Bitlis. He was a student in an American boarding school when the entire village and his extended family of 57 were murdered during the Hamidian massacres of 1894–96. The sight of the ransacked village, the dead bodies scattered around, the body of his priest father who had been tortured, and those of his relatives and friends, knocked him unconscious.¹⁶ The shock caused a mental breakdown from which he recovered only because a Canadian missionary woman took charge of him and nursed him back to health. After graduating from the Kharbert American *Yeprat* (Euphrates) College, he went to Istanbul, and he was actually serving in the military, participating in the First World War, when orders came to send him away, that is, to kill him, as was done to all the Armenian conscripts in the Turkish army. His Turkish comrades helped him escape.

Markaryan's obituaries published in various papers of the time and pieces written in memoriam by close friends and relatives.

¹⁵ The law passed in 1949 gave the government the right to change village names that were not in Turkish.

¹⁶ The village of Khultig was revived only to be completely destroyed and the Armenian population massacred in 1915, under the vengeful eyes of Cevdet, by his *kesab taburi* (butcher battalions). Cevdet did in Bitlis what he had not been able to do in Van. Der Markaryan speaks of Khultig's revival and of his short visit to the village in *Ardzagank yev Antsorde*, p. 122, in a story about a woman in the village called Shushan). He alludes to the massacres of 1915 at the end of the story as years after his visit a ferocious mob attacked Shushan, she threw herself from a cliff "to save the honor of her race and her gender; she volunteered martyrdom" (p. 125).

He never spoke about the ordeals he went through to anyone but his wife, and the stories he wrote, the profiles he painted of his students, colleagues, and friends, did not reflect the pain he carried all throughout his life. I page through the collection of his writings that were published posthumously in 2006, only insinuations. In his nostalgic reminiscences of his native village, he speaks of the church where, as a little boy, he believed many saints had taken up residence. "The saints are dead now," he writes, implying the fact that the village was depopulated, massacred, and the saints abandoned and left to die.¹⁷

In his sketchy autobiography, he virtually skips over the years of the Genocide and starts from after the armistice.¹⁸ He avoids writing about these years. When sketching the lives of those he knew and loved, he pauses before the catastrophic years and bridges the future with one word: "The Catastrophe.... In 1919 we found each other never to part again."¹⁹ In another instance, describing his relatively carefree life as a student, he compares it to his present life—he dates it June 1937—and labels it "a posthumous life, without a smile, without dreams, a life suppressed by the shadow of death.... We carry the scars of old wounds on our face, and a new wound is cut in our hearts, a deadly wound that can't be

¹⁷ Der Markaryan, "Mankutians orer" (The days of my childhood), in *Ardzagank yev Antsorde* (2006), p. 42.

¹⁸ Idem, from the title story "Antsorde," in *ibid.*, p. 200.

¹⁹ Idem, from the sketch titled "Dokt. [Dr.] Baghdasar Manuelian," in *ibid.*, p. 177. Der Markaryan uses the Armenian word *Arhavirk* with capital A to define the events of 1915.

cured.”²⁰ In one of his sketches, he portrays one of his students who comes from a poor family and significantly calls him *anapati tsnund*,²¹ meaning born in the desert, that is, a child born to a refugee mother who had survived the hardship of the deportation route and reached Aleppo or another destination in the Syrian desert. This is as daring as Der Markaryan could be when writing in Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s. More significant, however, is the endnote provided by the publishers to explain the term in the 2006 edition of his work. The explanation is as follows:

Reference is to Armenian children born in the Syrian deserts in 1916–18, whose parents were a part of the hundreds of thousands of Armenians who were deported in accordance with a special law of the Ottoman government (*Tehcir Kanunu*). They [the parents of these children] were those few lucky ones who did not die of diseases or hunger, or were not massacred on the route to exile [*aksor*]; they reached the desert and survived in the harshest conditions.²²

The Armenian word used for deportation is exile, a term that is common in Armenian literature and oral testimonies but is by no means strong enough to denote the hardship of the deportation routes. Moreover, the process was canonized with reference to the law promulgated by the government. Thus, it was not a genocidal effort by the government, just the implementation of the law. In fact, the term *Tehcir Kanunu* is used in Turkish official historiography to justify the events of

²⁰ Idem, from a sketch titled “Enkerners” (My friends), in *ibid.*, p. 19.

²¹ Idem, from a sketch titled “Nazarete” (Nazareth), in *ibid.*, p. 151.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 294.

1915, and sounds more like relocation or transport. The publisher perhaps unknowingly perpetuates the cover-up.

Arpiar Der Markaryan died in 1970 in Istanbul, an unknown survivor of the Armenian Genocide, a martyr who lived a prolonged agony spanning the years since the massacres in his native village and the murder of his father. An obituary in the Istanbul newspaper *Marmara* announced the passing of “a modest but hardworking” literary man and expressed concern that his loss would bring about a new emptiness in an already sparse intellectual community.²³

Migirdic Margosyan belongs to the younger generation who did not live the horrors of 1915, but his recent important and courageous venture in telling the story of the Armenian past to the Turkish public is a pace-setter. *Gâvur Mahallesi* (The Infidels’ Quarter; 2006), the new Turkish version of his Armenian short stories, includes a series of stories published over several decades in *Marmara*, which were then collected and published under the title *Mer ayd koghmere* (In those places of ours).²⁴ Margosyan’s stories depict the everyday life and struggle of Armenians in post-World War II Diyarbakir (a Turkish city in the vicinity of Tigranakert), segregated in their quarter, that of the infidels. These modest and hardworking people knew how to get along with their Jewish, Assyrian, Kurdish, and Turkish neighbors with whom they shared the city’s convenient setting, its natural beauty, and its modest economy. The *modus operandi* was to always stay low-key and

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

²⁴ Margosyan, *Mer ayd koghmere* (2005), previously published in 1984, 1994, and 2000.

not irritate the Muslims, who despised the non-Muslims and looked on them as the enemies of their homeland.

The pattern Mintzuri tried to describe is repeated here with more intense colors. The paradigm has remained unchanged from a pre-Genocide setting to even the very recent past. Here in the Diyarbakir of the 1980s, even the dead are deprived of a cross on their grave, lest it set them apart from others and underline their Christianity. Margosyan's mother now lies in her grave in the Armenian cemetery in Shishli, Istanbul. There Armenians are permitted to erect a cross and to have Armenian inscriptions on the graves tombstones of their dead. If she were to see this, Margosyan ponders, she wouldn't believe it. "This is a dream," she would say in her heavy Tigranakerttsi dialect, "this is not true.... This can't happen. Your mother dies, and a cross is erected on her grave and her name is written on it in Armenian. Can this be happening? It can't...."²⁵ The thoughts that Margosyan expressed in the name of his dead mother were the most explicit terms in which the author responded to the utter repression exerted in the interior of Turkey where the last of the small Armenian communities dragged out their existence.

The inhabitants of *Gâvur Mahallesi* also knew how to keep a safe distance from their Muslim neighbors, never entering into intermarriage with them:

Giving a girl in marriage or taking one from the Kurds or Muslim Turks? No! No! To pose such a question was already a big sin. To think of such a thing or imagining it was impossible and unforgivable.... A Christian family on one

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 150-1.

side and a Muslim one on the other and then a holy matrimony.... No! The world had to turn in the opposite direction.²⁶

The Armenian inhabitants of *Gâvur Mahallesi* had their own subtle way of continuing to practice their religion and traditions, and a peculiar, almost unintelligible Armenian vernacular, the Tigranakerttsi dialect. Every Sunday they gathered in their only working church which "during the war [World War II] was used as an army barracks, and worship had just recently resumed there. The walls were not yet saturated with the scent of incense."²⁷ They gathered to pray to their God, to listen to their only priest's half-Armenian, half-Turkish sermon, and to be thankful for this humble, centuries-old church that was now returned to them. The Tigranakerttsi Armenians knew well that they were the remnants of a great catastrophe that had uprooted them from their towns and villages and thrown them into this city the Turks called Diyarbakir, a city that reminded them of the Armenian Tigranakert by the Tigris River. Significantly, they referred to themselves as Tigranakerttsis and not Diarbakirtsis. The proof of their ancient roots was in front of their eyes. Indeed, the remnants of the wall of the great citadel can still be seen from the newer city of Diyarbakir. Who wouldn't know that Tigranakert was built centuries before the Turks appeared on the Armenian highlands? Who wouldn't

²⁶ Margosyan, *Tigrisi aperen* (1999), p. 64. This volume is another collection of Margosyan's short stories about Armenian life in Tigranakert.

²⁷ Margosyan, *Mer ayd koghmere*, p. 12.

know that these Armenian ruins stood as the edifice of the glories of the days of yore?

The inhabitants of *Gâvur Mahallesi* had learned how to cherish their ancestral land, symbolized by their village, without much ado, without raising suspicions among the authorities. Migirdic Margosyan's father followed that path too; in this case, the symbol was a modest village by the Tigris River called Hretan. Young Migirdic learned to sing the praise of Hretan and lament the scattering of the sons and daughters of Hretan. He learned to yearn for the Hretan he had never seen, and that now only Kurds inhabited.²⁸ The attachment of these people to their birthplace is a strong indication of their devotion to their ethnic identity, and this is paralleled in the Diasporan Armenians' feelings about their birthplaces in Western Armenia. Even the second- or third-generation Armenians born in the Diaspora identify with the birthplace of their forefathers as a token of the sense of belonging they have toward those places rather than their actual birthplace. Indeed, they are Vanetsis, Tigranakertsis, Mshetsis, and Kharbertsis even though they have not seen those places, but curiously, sometimes the Armenian dialect of those places is the only Armenian language they have inherited and speak.

Margosyan and all the inhabitants of *Gâvur Mahallesi* knew well that they were the continuation of the "rejects of the sword," a humiliating, demeaning term that the Turks invented to call those Armenians who somehow managed to stay alive. "Rejects of the sword" is a term used to this day, a loaded phrase that carries the history of a nation, the state of

²⁸ Margosyan, *Tigrisi aperen*, p. 21.

mind and psychological disposition of the survivors of a great catastrophe, and the manner in which these remnants are perceived by perpetrators of that catastrophe. A "reject of the sword," as Mehmed Uzun, the Kurdish poet and novelist so understandingly and eloquently put it, is

the being who was able to escape in some way or another from the slashing sword which crashed down without respite, day and night, during the months and years, summer and winter, in rain and mud, snow and storm, heat and fire. He is the being with the scorched heart and soul who has lost everything, his place and his fatherland, his wealth, his father and his mother, his brothers and his nearest and dearest, his heritage, his kin and his friends, who was thrown into a corner because he was most certainly believed to be dead, but who survived, although wounded. He is a diminished being whom no one understands, who cannot even rub his wounds with oil and can only cry to calm the sorrows in his battered soul when he loses consciousness.

Yes, a "reject of the sword" is the being who henceforth no longer even knows why he is living, whose face is turned towards the dead and the past and not towards the future, who can tell no one what he has lived through, who doesn't even know how it could be told and who because of that feels an immense shame, who feels guilty vis-à-vis the dead for still being alive!... who constantly hears the sound of clanging swords... from the tips of which... fall drops of blood.... He is a soul who lives in a tunnel of fear in which the sound of the swords reigns, a soul whose place of residence is melancholy.²⁹

²⁹ Uzun, "The Pomegranate Flowers" (2003), p. 44. Also available at <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-132762841.html>.

Mehmed Uzun first heard the term “reject of the sword” used in reference to the Armenian neighbor of his uncle in the Infidels’ Quarter in Diyarbakir where he stayed as a young student. Curiously, Mehmed’s uncle had chosen to take up residence in the Infidels’ Quarter, away from the hubbub of the city. In his essay, “The Pomegranate Flowers,” Uzun describes the neighbor as a calm, peaceful, hardworking cobbler who would turn inside out, sing sad songs, and pour out his grief, crying, sobbing, and gazing at the waters of the Tigris River. This happened every time the cobbler’s family picnicked under the pomegranate trees on the banks of the river, and they always took along Mehmed, a good friend of their son, Mgo (Migirdic). Vardan, the famous cobbler of Diyarbakir, lost his self-imposed reserve when the bottle of *raki*³⁰ had been drained and the alcohol had loosened his nerves; when control of a forcefully assumed prescribed behavior was no longer possible. It was this influence that allowed him to return to his past and relive the trauma over and over again. He sang songs and uttered words that had no meaning for the new generation, especially the non-Armenians of Turkey.

Years went by and Mehmed forgot about Vardan and Mgo, the unintelligible sad songs, and the pomegranate trees with “blood red flowers,” until his arrest in Istanbul as a socialist and his coincidental imprisonment in Diyarbakir. This was right after the 1971 military coup in Turkey. After his release from prison, he stayed on a few days in Diyarbakir to live the nostalgia of his childhood. Neither Mgo nor his family

³⁰ An aniseed-flavored liquor very popular in Turkey.

were there. A Kurdish family from a nearby village now occupied the house. The Armenian Quarter of the Infidels had been emptied of the infidels.

There was no longer any room for them in this Diyarbakir from now on famous for its military prisons, its dark jails, its gallows, its caravanserais and its Turkish baths, its taverns and its brothels, in this city, citadel of sorrow and nostalgia.³¹

Vardan and his family had migrated to a place unknown, leaving behind their house and the vestiges of their memories. Years later, Mehmed Uzun emigrated too. Turkey had no room for people with his mindset and ideas. He was in the minority in Turkey. He was in the minority abroad and he continued to belong to those ethnic and political groups that were always on the margins. His identity as a Turk with a Kurdish origin acquired new elements with a strange, previously unknown yearning for his Kurdish tradition and language—which he never had the opportunity to learn in school.

Now he knew well the pain of being rejected by the mainstream and living on the margins. He knew the emptiness of the phrase, “I am proud to be a Turk,” a phrase he had repeated in chorus every morning at school. He had come to learn about it as a young intellectual when he was still living in Turkey. He had come to realize how and why the Turkish government denied the existence of the Kurds as an ethnic minority in Turkey. Throughout the turbulent period of Sultan Abdul Hamid II’s rule and the Armenian persecutions and

³¹ Uzun, “The Pomegranate Flowers,” p. 53.

massacres, the Kurdish people were called "Mountain Turks." The enlightened Kurdish intellectuals could not live with that aberration.

Significantly, in the past decade, as the Kurdish Question has intensified, so has the government's denial of the existence of the Kurds, and of any unresolved issues pertaining to Kurds in Turkey. They are now called Southeasterners (*Güneydoğulu*) and the Kurdish issue is addressed as the Southeast issue.

One day, in that "northern country" Mehmed Uzun had migrated to, he heard about an Armenian film, *The Color of the Pomegranate*. His nostalgic recollections of the pomegranate trees of his childhood compelled him to see the movie. Watching it, he learned "the story of the swords and the blood that they spilled, unfortunately of the same color as the flowers of the pomegranate tree."³² The film, by the famous Armenian cinematographer, Sergey Parajanov, was about the life of Sayat Nova, and the songs Mehmed heard in the film, he now remembered, were the ones that Vardan had sung, weeping, in those pomegranate gardens by the Tigris River in Diyarbakir.

Vardan never spoke about the past, Mehmed Uzun recalls. Neither did other Armenian inhabitants of the Quarter of the Infidels. Mehmed Uzun's description of life in that secluded quarter of Diyarbakir repeats and reinforces Migirdic Margosyan's meticulous recording of his childhood memories of that little ghetto, that small island surrounded by Islam.³³

³² Ibid., p. 44.

³³ Margosyan, *Mer ayd koghmere* (2005).

Margosyan sketched the aftereffects of the traumatic past without direct reference to the source of the trauma. His multitudes of characters knew how to keep silent about the past. They were agents of the present, always in a struggle to maintain the status quo as much as possible, in fear of a repetition of what they had been able to leave behind, at least physically. They were cautious not to emphasize their racial and religious differences, their identity, because the Turkey in which they lived did not offer the setting for that identity, because, as Fatma Müge Göçek has indicated, "the history of minorities in Turkey has been discussed until recently within a nationalistic paradigm."³⁴

The silence, chosen as a defensive tool by Armenian survivors in Turkey in order to avoid dire consequences, undoubtedly caused psychological suffering that intensified over time and often times erupted in a compulsive urge to drop the lifelong burden, to attain tranquility of soul and conscience.

Seher/Heranoush chose not to speak, not to disclose her identity. How did she deal with the secret of her life? How did her secret affect her behavior? What compelled her to share that secret with a chosen one in her family? Fethiye Çetin narrates the story of her grandmother and the story of the Armenian massacres that her grandmother confided in her.

Heranoush vividly recalled the massacre by the river, women drowning themselves so as not to fall into Turkish hands, children dying of starvation, and mothers giving up their children to "benevolent" Turks to save them from certain

³⁴ Göçek, "Silences in the Turkish Republican Past" (n.d.).

death. "Heranoush spen[t] most of her 95-year-long life in the town of Maden, where this incident took place in 1915, watching that river flow day and night."³⁵ It was not possible to forget those scenes; it was not possible to forget who she was, where she had come from, the traditions, the religion, the language: the identity. And Seher did not forget. She kept the memory deep in her heart, as she kept her identity secret for decades.

Both grandfathers of Heranoush Gadarian, and her uncles, along with all the men in the village, were taken away, never to return (her father and two of her uncles were in the United States at the time). The next day her young aunt was kidnapped because she refused to cut her hair and cover her face with soot as her sisters did. Heranoush's mother, Iskouhi, took her three children, Heranoush and her two younger brothers, to the neighboring village to hide them, but soon the gendarmes attacked that village too. They rounded up the entire population and drove them out to Balu (Palu). It was in Balu that nine-year-old Heranoush first came face to face with

³⁵ Altınay, "In Search of Silenced Grandparents" (2006), p. 119. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the conference on "The Ottoman Armenians during the Era of Ottoman Decline" (Bilgi University, Istanbul, May 25-27, 2005).

According to Fethiye Çetin (*Mets mayrs*, 2006), Heranoush was born in a village called Habab (Havav in Armenian) in the region of Maden (the present Balu [Palu] district) in the eastern province of Elazığ. During Heranoush's childhood, Havav housed 207 families, two churches, and a monastery. At the beginning of her narrative, Çetin provides a detailed account of the Gadarian and Arzoumanian families, the family trees of Heranoush's parents on both sides, their background and ancestry (pp. 9-14).

death. She heard the agonizing screams of men being slaughtered outside the church where the women and children were crammed. She would never forget their last frightful cries.

Grandmother Seher's stories made an initial shocking effect and took time to sink into Fethiye's mind. She pondered over each story, and through them she began to know her grandmother as she had not known her before. She began to interpret her words of admonishment. When she said, "Children, don't be afraid of the dead, they cannot harm you. Evil comes from the living," was she thinking of what she had gone through? (Çetin, p. 63). That was Grandmother Seher's favorite and oft-repeated advice. Now, Fethiye knew what she meant by it.

Heranoush continued her harrowing life story for days, whenever she was alone with her favorite granddaughter. And "the long and deathly journey began" (p. 52). People were dying left and right, children were exhausted, mothers could no longer carry them. Heranoush saw with her own eyes how her paternal grandmother threw her two granddaughters, Heranoush's cousins, into the river and then jumped in herself. The raging waves washed the three loved ones away. Fethiye asserts that this horrifying incident was the one memory her grandmother could not deal with. After she began telling her story, she repeated this same episode several times on various occasions as she shared her secret life with Fethiye, and each time a long silence followed (p. 61). She obviously needed to speak the words to exorcize the deep-seated evil and free her soul. Heranoush was telling a story that had been silenced and buried alive in her mind for almost

sixty years. Now that she was pouring it out, she needed the words to carry the burden. She was aware of the inadequacy of language and was trying to compensate for it by repeating the episode to emphasize its impact.

Heranoush remembered her maternal grandmother trying to convince Iskouhi to give her children, Heranoush's younger brothers, to the Turks who wanted to take them. She knew well that they were all going to die and she hoped the children would survive, albeit in Turkish homes. Iskouhi wouldn't let the children go, but in the end the Turks snatched them and took them away.

Ironically, at the end of that long journey of suffering and death, Iskouhi was the only survivor of their large family, Heranoush learned later. She was one of the lucky few who managed to reach America where she joined her husband. But she, too, like others who shared her fate, was faced with a painful psychological dilemma. She had to cope with the memory of her dreadful experience and of her children lost to Muslims, knowing that they would grow up with no memory of their origin, family, and heritage.

It was common practice during the deportations to separate small children from their mothers and put them in a Turkish orphanage, bring them up as Turks, sell them, or just give them away to Turks, Kurds, or Arabs. Many survivors mention this painful reality in their memoirs. According to Archbishop Zaven Der Yeghiayan, Patriarch of Constantinople,

The little girl from Zileh told us that when the deportees from Marzevan [Merzifon], Amassia and Tokat arrived at Sari Kishla—halfway between Sebastia and Gesaria—the

caravan was stopped in front of the government building, all boys and girls were taken from their mothers and led into rooms; the caravan was forced to continue on its way. Announcements were made in the surrounding villages for everyone to come and choose from these children.³⁶

An unknown factor worth investigating is the circumstances surrounding Armenian orphans in Turkish orphanages. What is known is that very young children with no recollection of their origin were brought up as true Muslims. This campaign was led and overseen by Talat himself, and coded telegrams he sent to each and every district throughout the Empire relayed his instructions on how to treat these children. Of course, the priority was to send them to Turkish orphanages (*bizim yetimhaneler*—our orphanages, as opposed to the orphanages run by missionaries) to ensure their Muslim upbringing. But these orphanages did not have sufficient capacity and instructions were to place them in well-to-do families away from places where Armenians still lived, and if such families were not found, then to give the children to Turkish and Kurdish peasants and pay them 30 kurush from the refugee funds to compensate their expenses.³⁷ Thousands of these children were absorbed into these families, leaving no trace of awareness of their origin. But how were those who were brought up in groups in orphanages where Turkish upbringing was emphasized integrated into mainstream society? What is evident is that the government kept track of all these orphans, and that the practice of

³⁶ Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs* (2002), p. 88.

³⁷ See Köker, "Ermeni Kadın ve Çocuklarının" (2007).

following them and keeping a record of their identity and whereabouts continued in Republican Turkey. Ruben Melkonian draws a parallel between the treatment and upbringing of these boys and the *yeniçeri* (janissary) practice in the Ottoman Empire, calling the former "Twentieth-Century Janissaries."³⁸ The practice of collecting Armenian orphans and bringing them up as devout Muslims is indeed a reminder of the *yeniçeri*, especially if further investigation into this issue should bring to light the subsequent use of these orphans by the government. Melkonian points to two examples to drive home his point in this comparison. One is "the brigade of the sturdy" (*gürbüzler ordusu*) comprised of well-built and devoted Turkish youths who were actually Armenian orphans collected and educated at Kiazim Kara Bekir's initiative.³⁹ The

³⁸ Melkonian, "20-rd dari yenicherinere," *Hanrapetakan* 9 (2007). The *yeniçeri* ("new soldier") or janissary corps originated in 1365 during the reign of Murad I. They were the Sultan's special army comprised of slaves and prisoners of war in the beginning, and later, of non-Muslim (*dhimmi*) youth. As non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire, *dhimmi* were granted protection by law in exchange for their subservience—meaning that their rights were not equal to those of Muslim citizens—and their loyalty to the state. *Dhimmi* children from Greek, Armenian, Albanian, Bulgarian, and other Christian subordinate peoples of the Ottoman Empire were collected by the government as a blood tax (*devşirme*) levied on non-Muslims of the Empire. These young boys were brought up as devout Muslims and the chosen ones were entrusted with important positions in the military and government. Gradually, the *yeniçeri* grew into a strong, corrupt, and formidable organization capable of overthrowing every Sultan who tried to put an end to their existence. They were eventually abolished by Sultan Mahmud II in 1826.

³⁹ Musa Kâzım Karabekir was a strong supporter of Mustafa Kemal who became a deputy to the Grand National Assembly and

second example is the case of Sabiha Gökçen (1913–2001), one of Mustafa Kemal's eight adopted daughters. She had been brought up in a Muslim orphanage when at the age of twelve she met Kemal Atatürk. In his household she was educated to become the first female military pilot, gaining many accolades and fame. Her origins had been forgotten or fervently concealed when investigative reports revealed her Armenian identity.⁴⁰ She was the role model and the pride of many Turkish women, and altering that reality was a crime. Ironically, she took part in quelling the Kurdish uprising at Dersim in 1938 and bombarded the city where many Armenians (Kurdish-Armenian) lived.⁴¹

As noted earlier, an extensive campaign was launched after World War I to collect Armenian orphans from Muslim homes, or those still wandering in the desert. Archbishop

commander of the army at the Eastern front. The attack his army launched on Armenia in October 1920 eventually caused the demise of the newly established free republic in the easternmost territories of historic Armenia.

⁴⁰ The article about Sabiha Gökçen by Hrant Dink, editor-in-chief of *Agos* (February 6, 2004), claiming that she was actually an Armenian orphan by the name of Hatun Sebiliciyan, started a controversy and brought strong criticism and antagonism toward the author. In an article in the *Turkish Daily News* (August 4, 2007), titled "Sabiha Gökçen, World's First Woman Combat Pilot," co-authors Gül Demir and Niki Gamm reported on the reactions to Dink's claim:

Other newspapers took up the subject and created a storm as the pros and cons of the argument were debated. Some people have even gone so far as to suggest Dink's printing the claim of her being Armenian was one of the main causes of his assassination on January 19.

⁴¹ Melkonian, "20-rd dari yenicherinere," *Hanrapetakan* 9 (2007).

Zaven Der Yeghiayan wrote that 4,000 to 5,000 orphans were liberated from Turkish households, mostly in Constantinople, and added, "Nevertheless, the same could not be done in the countryside, where it became possible to liberate very few of the hundreds of thousands of orphans. The reason for this was that, even after Turkey's defeat, the Allied armies did not penetrate the interior regions of the country."⁴²

The Turkish corporal from Çermik who "rescued" Heranoush was childless, and so he took her home, changed her name to Seher to erase all trace of Armenianness, and treated her like a daughter. It was of course common to change the names of Armenian children as they were taken in by Muslim families. This was done as a consciously calculated and necessary step, with no instructions from above. The common Turk, Kurd, or Arab knew well that an Armenian name was the only evidence left of these children's Armenian identity and should be erased, forgotten.

In Heranoush's case, the lady of the house never accepted her as a daughter but rather treated her like a servant. Then, as Seher grew older, jealousy replaced her contempt, lest her husband change his mind and take Seher as a second wife. Fortunately for Heranoush, that never happened, and their

⁴² Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs* (2002), p. 185. The gathering of orphans was also accomplished by personal initiatives and organizations. Especially effective and fruitful was the campaign of the Armenian volunteer army headed by Andranik, the famous *fedayec*. Archbishop Der Yeghiayan also noted an incident when the British intercepted the Turkish government's transfer of "Turkish orphans" to Constantinople from the interior. The orphans were examined and the Armenians, who made up the majority, were taken to the Armenian orphanage (p. 186).

relationship remained that of a father and daughter. In fact, it is symptomatic how Heranoush remembered Husein, her substitute father figure, as a kind man. It is obvious that this little orphan girl tried to cope, to adapt to the new situation and create as normal an environment as possible for herself in order to survive. Husein, a low-ranking police officer, had been a regular participant in the Armenian carnage. Heranoush herself related that Husein took part in the beheading of Armenian men and throwing their bodies into a deep well somewhere between Çermik and Çüngüş (in the province of Diyarbakir), but she hastened to add that he did not obey orders to throw the women and children into the well—for which he was punished. Her subconscious effort to purge Husein of his past guilt and remember him as a kind man was challenged by her granddaughter Fethiye: "Grandma, why didn't Husein's kind heart ache when he was beheading the Armenian men?" She pressed the question, and Seher's response, after thinking a while, was a mysterious one: "I don't know why" (Çetin, p. 64).

After Husein died, his wife married Seher off at the age of thirteen and sent her off. Seher tried to adapt herself to her new situation, live by her nature as a loving, caring, and kind person, give birth to children, and nurture the "other" in her bosom. She did not reveal her secret to her children, but they knew that they were different, not true Turks. They heard about this embarrassing truth from other children in the neighborhood, as they were cursed and called names every time they got into a fight with them out in the street. The first time it happened was a total shock. How could their playmates call them "brats of a renegade"? They learned that

no matter how hard they tried, they were discriminated against at school and in society. A fatal word in their mother's papers (she had no passport and no ID) set them apart and marginalized them. She was a *mühtedi*, someone who had adopted Islam later in life (Çetin, pp. 72-3).

A parallel to this kind of discrimination is revealed in Yakup's story. Yakup, an Islamized Armenian interviewed by Kemal Yalçın, did not see himself as Armenian. He had completely adopted the Turkish identity, language, religion and all, but he was denied employment because a security background check revealed that his parents were Armenians who had converted to Islam.⁴³ Yakup's father protested against this injustice: "We are not Armenians. Who is accusing us?" Yakup and his father knocked on every door, but his past and true identity, which he had tried so hard to abandon and forget, popped up and closed the doors in their face.⁴⁴ The job Yakup was applying for was a "sensitive" one, a secretarial position in the Adıyaman courthouse. Ironically, discrimination was not limited to Muslim-Armenians, as Meliné's husband, Keğam (Gegham), was denied the post of principal of the Armenian high school (Sourb Khach

⁴³ There have been many occasions in Turkey when an applicant was denied a governmental job or other position because of his/her ancestry, i.e. having a converted Christian in the family tree. It is believed that the government keeps records of all the Armenians who converted to Islam in order to avoid deportation in 1915 or to escape discrimination against non-Muslims thereafter. Recent investigations show that most descendants of these Islamized Armenians have changed their registration papers in order to erase evidence of the family's conversion.

⁴⁴ Yalçın, *Hogis kezmov ke khayta* (2003), p. 353.

Dprevank) in Scutari. The Ministry of Education had problems with his having been a communist in the past and now freely proclaiming his Armenian identity (Yalçın, p. 213).

Yalçın's instructor and soulmate, Meliné, had also experienced discrimination. She had graduated from a university in Istanbul with flying colors, but she was denied a position as assistant professor in the school of social sciences because she was Armenian. When she subsequently applied for a position as a high school teacher, she did not voluntarily reveal her identity, and remarkably, this time she was not asked about it. Meliné was hired; however, concealing her identity in order to get ahead in her own country opened a wound in her soul that kept getting deeper as she entered Istanbul society. "I did not proclaim my identity in Istanbul, but they poked their finger in my eye and said, 'You're an Armenian,' and threw me out" (Yalçın, pp. 207-8).

Obstacles hindering the Armenian minority and anyone with a trace of Armenian blood to get ahead in Turkish society have led many to take counteractive measures. These measures entailed keeping their identity secret as much as possible, or surreptitiously erasing its mention and or otherwise physically getting rid of the evidence. Seher's children tried hard to keep the secret and fought against the sense of shame and fear their Armenian roots caused them. A family friend who worked in the registrar's office was able to help them bury the past by erasing the word *mühtedi* from Seher's registration papers. The evidence in the official annals was erased, but the memory of the past lingered on in the neighborhood, in society. When Seher's children got older, marriage became a problem. The suitor's family rejected them

in order “not to dirty, not to corrupt the race” (Çetin, p. 76). But a bigger problem was the fact that, in the words of Methiye, an acquaintance whose mother was Armenian too, “In our region, there is hardly a family whose roots aren’t from that ‘corrupt race.’ There is no one whose race has remained unspoiled” (Çetin, p. 77). Seher’s children, typical of the generation born to Armenian girls in Turkish or Kurdish homes, tried not to share their past or the history of their ancestry—about which they themselves did not care to find out more—with their offspring.

Seher’s grandchildren knew nothing about that dark history and were brought up as true Turks. Fethiye found out much later, after she was let into her grandmother’s inner world, that her mother and aunts knew something about their mother’s experience, although not as detailed as her grandmother had told her (p. 72). Seher herself cautiously lived like a true Turk—the *namaz* (prayers), the fasting, the traditions. Then where did her Armenianness show forth? Aside from making *choreg* (a special cookie that Armenians make during Easter) in a special ritual once a year with a few women like herself (Islamized Armenian survivors), where did that Armenianness reveal itself?

Many a time Seher had mentioned to Fethiye that she and her uncle Mahmud took after her side of the family (p. 33), but Fethiye had never thought to ask her where her family was, who they were. Patience and feigning acceptance have their limits. Heranoush had to set her conscience free. And at the age of 70, believing she had reached the end of her road in this life, she decided to speak, to reveal an identity that refused to remain suppressed and concealed, albeit an identity that had

acquired new ethnic characteristics from decades of intimate coexistence with the “other.” Thus her metamorphosis, from the time of the forced adoption of an alien identity to the great revelation, was marked by hidden yearnings, suffering from persistent nightmarish memories of the Genocide, a subconscious decision to cling to them all her life, and a naturally occurring acculturation that brought with it elements of ethnicity from the “other” side.

After her grandmother was gone, Fethiye asked herself, “This woman with such strong willpower to protect her children and fight every obstacle in their way, how could she be so helpless where it concerned her true identity?” (Çetin, p. 71). As to Fethiye herself, the hidden identity, the suddenly revealed secret at first causing a paralyzing shock, a sense of shame, and a yearning for truth (p. 59), gradually implanted in her the will and the determination to seek out her grandmother’s relatives, her cousins in the United States. In doing so, she was searching for her own roots and the hitherto hidden components of her own identity. And then writing the book as a testimony to a painful experience impossible to forget, a personal story that was also the story of thousands in Turkey, and finally, a catharsis for the writer herself, exorcising the nightmarish images, the soul-consuming sorrow, anger, and frustration that was her grandmother’s and became hers to bear. Tuba Akyol’s observation in her review of Çetin’s and Shafak’s books certainly testifies to the power of stories. She writes, “stories can do what large numbers or

convoluted concepts cannot do.... Concepts are cold, stories can touch you inside."⁴⁵

Fethiye Çetin is the exemplary case in Turkish society today. For many the secret is out. Curiously, in late September of 2007, the Turkish weekly *Yeni Aktüel* published a dossier on Muslim Armenians and those who have Armenian traces in their ancestry. Filiz Özdem's article described how she overcame her initial shock and psychological tumult after she found out that her mother was Armenian.⁴⁶ Now she is at ease with her origins. In another article, Irfan Palalı reluctantly spoke of his discovery of his mother's Armenian identity, expressing concern that the Armenian Diaspora would utilize these confessions to prove its point about the Armenian Genocide.⁴⁷ Ahmet Önal is an Alevi Kurd with an Armenian mother. Like many Alevi Kurds, he knows about his mother's Armenian identity and relates his love and respect for books to her teachings.⁴⁸

Turkish society is now being exposed to these confessions and is gradually absorbing them. That obscure sense of

⁴⁵ Quoted in Altınay, "In Search of Silenced Grandparents," p. 127. Tuba Akyol is a columnist; her review, titled "Özür Dilerim" (I apologize), was published in *Milliyet Pazar* (March 19, 2005).

⁴⁶ Filiz Özdem, "Geçmişle yüzleşmesi gereken toplumun kendisi," in *Yeni Aktüel*, www.yeniaktuel.com.tr/tur104,116@2100html. Accessed October 2, 2007.

⁴⁷ Irfan Palalı, "Akrabalarım babamın mezarını parchaladı!" in *Yeni Aktüel*, www.yeniaktuel.com.tr/tur105,116@2100html. Accessed October 2, 2007.

⁴⁸ Ahmet Önal, "Bizimkiler bizi duvar diplerine bıraktılar!" in *Yeni Aktüel*, www.yeniaktuel.com.tr/tur106,116@2100html. Accessed October 2, 2007.

belonging to another, that memory of a common history, silenced and suppressed for almost a century, is now being unearthed. The Turk is searching for his/her true identity, not the prescribed identity, and Turkishness, a concept misused by the authorities to accuse and condemn their own citizens, and misinterpreted by nationalist factions, for their own purposes, is taking on a new meaning for many. The era of suppressed silence is coming to an end.

6

Collective Memory Passed On

Genocide survivors in Turkey, whether they converted to Islam or held on to their faith, did keep silent about their past. But even under this imposed silence, the memory was transmitted to the next generation. Arpiar Der Markaryan's experience could have been recorded as a valuable eyewitness account of the Armenian massacres of 1894–96 and those of 1915. But he refrained from putting that experience down in writing. Of course, even his brief allusions to those events were daring deeds in the repressive Turkish climate. It is significant that decades after his death, in a volume containing his complete works, along with obituaries and remembrances by friends and loved ones, his daughter, Anelka Karmirian, admits how for a long time—until she was an adolescent—she was kept in the dark about her father's past:

I was always kept away from mournful events and sadness, not to disturb my so happy and cheerful inner world. When later on in life, I had close friends who talked about their many relatives and big family, I asked my mother why we don't have a relative from my father's side. She made a long pause and answered, "Your dad was an orphan."¹

That confession made her life miserable and drove her to dig deeper. But again, not enough was confided in her. She confesses that sometimes she was afraid to learn more:

Festive days were always emotional for me. I waited with fear for the moment when... My father's robust voice filled the air with "Kanché krounk, kanché."² These were moments of nightmare for me. My father was in pain. That was not a song, but a prayer, a reunion with his lost loved ones. I would wish the song to end. Then, his voice would begin to tremble. He would swallow his tears silently. A suffering that seemed to never end.³

Anelka's testimony about her father's outbursts during happy family get-togethers is not an uncommon phenomenon. Earlier we discussed a similar experience retold by Mehmed

¹ Anelka Karmirian, "Hayrs [My father], Arpiar Markaryan," Montreal, 2005, in Der Markaryan, *Ardzagank yev Antsorde* (2006), p. 229.

² This is a popular song about migrants calling the crane to bring news of their loved ones far away. The first stanza goes like this:

*Kanché, krounk, kanché, kani garoun é,
Gharibneru sirte gound-gound aroun é....
Akh im sirts aroun é.*

A rough translation would be, "Sing o crane, sing insofar as it's Spring / Blood is the hearts of migrants.... Ah, blood is my heart." Here, blood signifies sorrow.

³ Karmirian, "Hayrs, Arpiar Markaryan," p. 232.

Uzun about Vardan, the famous cobbler of Diyarbakir, who would sing sad songs and weep whenever the family got together for a picnic under the pomegranate trees on the banks of the Tigris River. In these moments of high spirits, with alcohol-generated mental and emotional exhilaration tilting them into the world of the unconscious, they lose control and subdued memories of the past rise to the surface to perturb their souls. These survivors of the Catastrophe are neither here in the present, nor are they back in the past in the setting of a similar gathering of a much larger family with grandparents, parents, siblings, aunts, and uncles. They live in a painful and bewildering confusion of time and place. It is significant that many Holocaust survivors who kept silent about their past all their lives finally broke down and then talked about it endlessly in family gatherings. Savyon Liebrecht presents the character of Mendel in "Hayuta's Engagement Party" (1998). Mendel was eighty-two when this "secret door to the memories of the war—what had been shrouded in blissful oblivion for decades—suddenly burst open forcefully. It all started on the eve of Rosh Hashanah" (pp. 84–5). That was six years earlier, and ever since then his family is always apprehensive on these happy occasions lest he start up again. Just like Anelka, Hayuta, too, fearfully awaits these moments and prays that they are over soon. And just like Anelka, who would wish to forget the trauma of the past and assume the innocent identity of a Turkish citizen with a Christian Armenian background (an identity that is sometimes not so innocent), Hayuta, too, strives to leave the past of her forebears behind and become a typical Israeli citizen.

Meliné, Kemal Yalçın's inspiration and the daughter of a survivor, knew nothing about the history of her own family. Her parents sometimes spoke of Sebastia or Kangale, but said nothing about their being uprooted from these places or the fate of the family members on both sides who did not survive the catastrophe. Meliné did not learn about the events of 1915, nor did she learn Armenian history in the Armenian school she attended in Istanbul. What came to her naturally was to hide her Armenian identity in order to get ahead in Istanbul society. But the very fact of being forced to conceal her identity to avoid discrimination opened up an array of questions in her mind. The outcome was an urge to search for her roots. Who was she, and what was hidden in the past that was creating these obstacles on her way to climb the ladder in Turkish society which she had so wholeheartedly adopted? (Yalçın, p. 208). It was after she and her husband Gegham came to the painful realization that they feel alien and are considered alien in their own homeland that the couple decided to move to Germany: "Let's go to another country and be considered aliens there" (p. 214).

Agop Hacıkyan knew very little about the Armenian past when he was growing up in Istanbul. His parents, both survivors of the Genocide, did not talk about their painful experience of the past. But the conspicuous silence and the occasional references to *sevkıyat* (*aksor* in Armenian, meaning exile), or *seferberlik* (*zorasharzh* in Armenian, meaning campaign, mobilization), were factors that spurred Agop's curiosity to uncover the hidden story of his family and his people. Decades later, in the free atmosphere of Canada, Hacıkyan wrote a series of novels, beginning with *Tomas*

(1970) and culminating in his most recent novel, *A Summer Without Dawn*. The latter, as was discussed earlier, tells the life story of Vartan Balian, a fictional character who represents the educated, well-off, law-abiding Armenian citizens of the Ottoman Empire in the service of their country. In the wake of the massacres and deportations, Vartan is arrested and imprisoned. A ludicrous trial is staged, but the only accusation raised against him is his being Armenian. Hacıkyan encapsulates the Turkish objective behind the persecutions and massacres of 1915 in an inscription scratched on the wall of Vartan's prison cell: "The just are condemned because of their race, their language and their faith, and here they await their death."⁴

With this novel, Hacıkyan, the second-generation carrier of historical memory and the Armenian identity, strives in his

⁴ Hacıkyan, *A Summer Without Dawn* (2000), p. 142. The novel evolves around a series of psychological reactions, from disbelief in the government's actions against an entire ethnic group, to shock and disillusionment, which in turn generate a strong determination to survive. "We are really worrying about nothing. This deportation order is just a way to intimidate us. They want to scare us so they can levy another tax on Christians" (p. 54). Such is Vartan's initial reaction to the news of the deportations. As the plot develops, Hacıkyan capitalizes on all the themes that make up the texture of the first generation's conceptualization of the Armenian Genocide: Turkish barbarism contrasted with their goodwill, with examples of altruism to the extent of endangering their own lives to save an Armenian friend; a soliloquy with God, the realization of His abandonment of the nation, then doubting His existence; analysis of the Turkish political situation and the irreparable damage the government policy of extermination has brought about; the alternative of resistance against the harsh measures; and the deplorable outcome.

turn to pass the memories on. This effort is symbolically staged in the final scene. As Vartan and his son, Tomas, retrieved from an Armenian orphanage in Geneva,⁵ pose for a photograph, Vartan remarks, "They're standing behind us!" And to his astonished son who looks around and sees no one, he explains, "Our forefathers, my father, his father. You're the end result of dozens of generations who have created the culture which is your legacy. You must learn about it and enrich it so that it will never die. That way your ancestors can live on" (pp. 537-8).

As waves of persecution, escalating from time to time, hit each and every Armenian generation in Turkey, every occurrence ensured the continuum of historical memory through effortlessly accumulating new layers. In Yalçın's *You Rejoice My Heart*, Varpet Sarkis had lived the memory of the forced deportation. As a young man, he had experienced World War II as a *gâvur*-soldier. Then, on the night of September 6, 1955, he stood guard, ready to defend his home and his elderly mother from the attacks of the Turkish mob in Istanbul. "Come out mother. Thank God, we outlasted this catastrophe too," he called to her after he had managed to convince the mob that they had the wrong address, that this was a Turkish household. His mother's response speaks of the

⁵ Tomas was brought to this establishment by a Swiss-German missionary who had found him wandering in Baghdad. Associating the orphan's name with that of Vartan Balian who signed articles in an Armenian newspaper in Paris, the director of the orphanage sent a letter to the newspaper. The letter was relayed to the Committee for Aid to Constantinople and the Near East, which in turn notified Vartan of the discovery of his son.

impact of accumulated dreadful experiences to which a new one was now added. "You are terrified my son. May God punish them! How many threats have we put up with? How many times have we endured in patience? Stone would crack. Iron would melt.... We are tougher than stone and iron" (Yalçın, p. 305). Patience and endurance were the only weapons that Armenians possessed to fight the unending Turkish atrocities.

Hajji Ibrahim, the son of an Islamized couple, recounts his experience as a discriminated and marginalized "Muslim." Yalçın sought out this Kurdish-Armenian in Cologne, Germany. His search for hidden Armenians in the interior of Turkey, in Adıyaman and Tunceli, where he had heard they were many, bore no result. He was more successful outside Turkey, in Germany, and to some extent in Istanbul.

When Ibrahim was growing up, his parents tried hard not to expose their inner world, their past, and their true belief. They raised him as a Muslim, and thus he knew nothing about his origins. He even hated the *gâvurs* who, in the stories of the Kurdish elders in the village, committed such evil deeds against Turks and Kurds. The painful discovery of the truth about his parents and their past opened a new world for Ibrahim. At the age of nine or ten, once again in a childish street fight with the neighborhood children, he was called names and cursed as a *gâvur*. His father had to admit to him that they really were *gâvurs*; they were of Armenian origin. After Ibrahim had come face to face with the truth, his father began to trust him and talk to him about the past (p. 322). Under the impact of the tales of horror he heard from his father, and the collapse of the comfortable illusion in which he

had lived, Ibrahim grew up a timid man, always afraid to stand up for his rights. Now in Germany, he told Yalçın his father's story, a gruesome story that he had adopted as his own.

Ibrahim's father, Shimaver (Shmavon), was a small boy when the 1915 massacres began. In his family of six siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, he was the only one who survived the unspeakable ordeal. Finally, a Kurdish family took him in, but unable to cope with that intolerable hardship, he ran away and took refuge with an Armenian family. Shmavon was a grown-up, self-made man when he married an Armenian girl who was also a survivor of the Genocide. At the beginning of World War II, he was drafted into the army. But the Christian soldiers received discriminatory treatment in the army. Shmavon's interpretation was that the government did not trust the Christians, believing that in case of war with a Christian nation, they would betray Turkey and join the enemy. Shmavon, together with other Armenians, was put to work in labor camps which were then called *işocağı* (workplace) (p. 327). The World War I idea of the *amele taburı* was being repeated a quarter of a century later, except this time, the fate of these soldier-laborers was not death, just torture and hardship. Sarkis' experience in the Turkish army was similar to that of Ibrahim's father's story.

Subjected to constant harassment, Shmavon and his family converted to Islam and he was renamed Ali, but that did not spare them from the wealth tax (*varlık vergisi*) levied on non-Muslims in 1942. Ibrahim was born to them in 1943. Fear and apprehension were constant in the Kurdish village of Tukaris

(east of Adıyaman near Kahta), a feeling that became ingrained in the young boy's personality. Later in life he found out that his father was secretly praying to the God of the Christians. He would faithfully read his *namaz* in Arabic (which he did not understand), five times a day; then at night he would lock himself in a room and pray. When his children questioned this strange behavior, he would only smile and say, "you don't understand" (Yalçın, p. 322). Once Hajji Ibrahim was old enough to share his father's secret, his curiosity drove him to find other families like theirs and listen to the stories of old Armenians who had experienced the horrors of 1915 (p. 330). His Armenian identity rose from the ashes of the Armenian holocaust.

An attack on Ali/Shmavon's shop that left it in ruins and killed the source of the family's livelihood, as well as the escalating prejudice around them, forced the family to leave the village and move to Kahta where a sizable group of *merinner* or hidden Armenians lived. Now a migrant worker in Germany, Ibrahim still had to keep his identity secret. The *dartsatses* in Turkey, for the sake of their own peace, begged their relatives abroad to keep quiet. "It is so difficult to live a two-faced life, to be one thing deep in your soul and pretend to be something else" (p. 347). It took Ibrahim a long time to be able to talk about his Armenian origin. That part of his identity was deeply hidden and covered with a shroud of fear and timidity, even in a European society outside Turkey. "There were times when I wanted to tear my throat out and shout, 'I am Armenian,' but I kept quiet. In a country like Germany I locked my identity within me" (p. 369).

Hajji Ibrahim wishes that “everyone can declare his identity freely, without fear” (p. 354). In fact, it was a Kurdish cleric, Mullah Chelebi (Çelebi), who encouraged him to reveal his true identity now in Germany. However, Mullah Chelebi has a different conception of Hajji Ibrahim’s identity. For him, Ibrahim is a Kurd whose religion is Islam and whose origin is Armenian, and that is nothing to hide. How many Kurds or Turks of Armenian origin are aware of their roots and are willing to acknowledge that? More importantly, how many are those in whose identity the Armenian element overwhelms to the extent of pushing them to come forward and identify themselves as Armenians, that is, Muslim Armenians?

Aside from these Islamized families, as Kirkor Ceyhan attested and as was discussed earlier, there were also Armenian families who lived as Christians, especially in the Gerger region. These Armenians were entirely acculturated and religion was the only element marking the difference in their identity. Obviously, in their case too the memory of their past lingered and was passed on.

The transference of historical memory occurred in most Islamized or Christian Armenians, especially in those who were not completely absorbed by the politically prescribed Turkish identity. But those who were, the ones presumed to be the majority, have been able to successfully bury the past and live like many Turks do, aloof and ignorant of that past. The Armenian ancestors of these people were either very young, without recollection of the events of 1915 and their origin, or they kept the memory secret and refrained from passing on the memory or its pain. The family history of people with that kind of a buried past begins with the Republican era.

Elif Shafak’s novel, *The Bastard of Istanbul*, details this ignorance as opposed to the persistence of historical memory in Armenians in the Diaspora. She juxtaposes the story of two families, one Muslim Turkish in Istanbul, and the other Armenian survivors of the Genocide in San Francisco. Symbolically, she considers the story to be a struggle between amnesia and memory: the Turkish amnesia of the past imposed and reinforced by the prevailing educational policies in Turkey, and the insistence in the Diaspora on remembering and passing the memory on from generation to generation. In other words, the ignorance of the average Turk concerning his/her past—or the selective knowledge of it—versus the Diaspora Armenians’ conscious adoption of the collective memory of their ancestors.⁶ What is taking place here in this juxtaposition is a testimony from the two opposite poles, namely, remembering and forgetting. Speaking about the right to remember, Tzvetan Todorov asserts that if events experienced by an individual or a group are of extraordinary or tragic nature, “ce droit devient un devoir: celui de souvenir, celui de témoigner.”⁷ The Armenian Diaspora is exercising that right and performing a duty toward its past. The opposite

⁶ In an interview with Khachig Mouradian (“A Storyteller’s Quest,” 2006), Elif Shafak explains, “Basically, the novel testifies to the struggle of amnesia and memory. It deals with painful pasts both at the individual and collective level.”

⁷ “This right becomes a duty: that of remembering and that of bearing witness.” Todorov, *Les abus de la mémoire* (1995), p. 16. It should be noted here that Todorov does not endorse adherence to the past and remembering the past, unless it is for the sake of the present and the future, that is, the lessons to be learned from the past injustice and the use they can be put to.

situation prevails in Turkey, a country that boasts of its democratic regime but practices totalitarianism when it comes to its own history. Turkish governments know well that reconstructing the past, that is, the act of reminiscing—where it diverges from the official version of history—is itself a challenge to totalitarian power.⁸

Shafak's novel, a best-seller in Turkey, is a daring exploitation of the Turkish-Armenian relationship and a realistic exposition of the rigid Turkish stance vis-à-vis the country's past history. Her candid criticism of this stance and her audacity to speak about the Armenian question, even using the word "genocide" to characterize the events of 1915, created havoc among right-wing nationalists in Turkey. Curiously, however, the word "genocide" is uttered in the novel by an Armenian character and thus does not necessarily express the author's view. In any event, for this remark by a fictitious character in the novel, Shafak was accused of "denigrating Turkishness" in accordance with Article 301. Charges were brought against her and she faced three years in prison. She was acquitted, but the trial itself was a showdown of ultranationalist sentiments in Turkey versus intellectuals who test the limits.

In Shafak's novel, Armanoush personifies the continuum of historical memory in the Diaspora. The Armenian side of her family wants to make sure that, as the Tchakhmakchian heiress, she will carry on the burden of the Armenian identity, heritage, history, and culture. While her father Barsam Tchakhmakchian appears to be unconcerned that his ex-wife

Rose is dating a Turk, and asserts that "Armanoush will be just fine" (p. 54), her Auntie Surpun, the feminist university professor, is angry, and does not understand why Barsam does not see the gravity of the situation, the importance of the perpetuation of the race:

If you have no appreciation of history and ancestry, no memory and responsibility, and if you live solely in the present, you certainly can claim that. But the past lives within the present, and our ancestors breathe through our children and you know that.... As long as Rose has your daughter, you have every right to intervene in her life. Especially when she starts dating a Turk!" (p. 55)

The concern is clear and typical of Diasporan Armenians. The issue is the perpetuation of the race and the upholding of Armenian identity. It is the pursuit of the uninterrupted continuum of historical memory, the memory of the wound inflicted by the Turk, upon which the identity of third-generation Armenians raised in the Diaspora would be built. Auntie Varsenig targets the source of the evil, the identity of the "enemy" who is threatening the integrity of Armanoush's Armenianness. "How can you give your flesh-and-blood daughter to those who are responsible for our being so few and in so much pain today?" (p. 55).

Shafak's staging of this heated conversation, which spreads over several pages in the novel, demonstrates her understanding of the issues pertaining to Armenian survival and perpetuation. The idea echoes in Auntie Varsenig's "more structural, if not primordial, concern: a fear of survival." She "simply did not want [Armanoush] to shine too bright, to stand out from the flock" (p. 96). She advises Armanoush to

stay low-key and never display her talents openly. Varsenig's reason for this strange guidance is that during the Genocide, it was the Armenian leadership, the intellectuals, "the brains" who were liquidated first, followed by the eradication of the rest of the Armenian population. Putting this idea into the head of one of her characters, Shafak suggests that Armenians in the Diaspora never feel secure and become fearful and concerned if someone "swerve[s] too far away from the ordinary" (p. 96). There is, of course, some truth in this perception. Yes, the Young Turk government targeted the leaders and intellectuals and dealt with the beheaded nation afterwards.⁹ In the novel, Armanoush's great-grandfather was

⁹ The Young Turk-planned annihilation of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire was carried out in different stages. The conscription of able-bodied Armenian men, 20–45 years old (later extended to 18–60) into the Ottoman army in August of 1914, putting them in labor battalions and then slaughtering them, was followed by the notorious process of disarming the Armenian population, accompanied by plunder and murder. Then it was the turn of the Armenian leadership to be liquidated. During two nights, April 23 and 24 (10 and 11, old calendar) in 1915, Armenian intellectuals and civic and religious leaders in Constantinople and almost every city, town, and village throughout the Empire were arrested and exiled toward the southeast and murdered on the way. The last stage was the deportation and massacre of the helpless masses, mostly consisting of women, children, and elderly men.

Significantly, in an article on the Serbian massacres in Bosnia titled "Human, All Too Human," Adam Lebor draws a parallel between the Ottoman Turks' strategy of eliminating the Armenian leaders and intellectuals first, before murdering the rest of the population, and the Serbs repeating the same strategy toward the Bosnian Muslims in the 1990s. Parenthetically, Lebor also mentions the "criminals released from prison, during the Armenian genocide in 1915... granted a free hand to murder and rape." He then asserts

among those intellectuals who were rounded up and either executed outright or exiled to the interior, to be eliminated on the road. Armanoush knows the details and, later in the novel, on a surprise journey to Istanbul where she visits the family of her Turkish stepfather, she makes a point of telling them the story.

My grandmother's mother was a widow now. Finding it difficult to stay in Istanbul with the children, she sought refuge in her father's house, which was in Sivas. But as soon as they arrived, the deportations began. The entire family was ordered to leave their house and belongings and march with thousands of others to an unknown destination. (p. 162)

She continues her story, recounting the details she has learned from the Armenian side of her family. She is telling this story for the first time to her stepfather's family, and guardedly watching their reactions. Her emotional account signifies the wound that still hurts and the closure or healing she seeks in this faraway city of her grandmother's past.

Armanoush's aunts, the generation born to survivors of the Diaspora, did directly pass on the memory of their mother's ordeal. They were the active transmitters, but their example is atypical. The generation born in the Diaspora, especially in European countries and in the U.S., for the most part had a different outlook, different from the generation that preceded it, and different from its counterpart born in and still

that "Many of the Serb paramilitaries who committed the worst atrocities in Bosnia were also criminals, released by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to do the regime's dirtiest work." See *The Nation* (March 19, 2007), accessed at <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20070319/lebor>.

living in Turkey. Nostalgic reminiscences had lost meaning for them, pathetic patriotism was not acceptable. How was the memory of their ancestors' ordeal passed on to them? Did they read literary or historical works on the Genocide? Did they lend a receptive ear to their parents' stories? Or did they resent their parents' peculiarity, turn a deaf ear, and silence their urge to ease the burden of memory by speaking out and telling their painful stories?

From my observations, I can say that the second-generation survivors to a large extent served as silent transmitters, in some cases passively, in other cases reluctantly serving as a bridge between their parents and the next generation. The Armenian communities of the Middle East, where the fires of Armenianness were kept burning and instilled into the souls of the young, were notable exceptions. The burden of survival consumed them too, as they fought to get ahead and prove themselves against the "failure" of their parents and against the prevailing prejudice. The question arises: what was the nature of the Armenianness they adhered to? In an atmosphere of prejudice and discrimination, facing the daily struggle to survive and succeed in the world, how much of the ethnic affinity was allowed to go to work in the making of their identity? Literary works of the period reveal that even if the second generation was shut out, or shut itself out, of its parents' traumatic past, the psychological effects of that past imprinted on their parents were absorbed through the father's bitter silence, or the mother's sighs and unhappy disposition. It is certainly true that no matter how deeply the survivors kept the secret of their past, no matter how hard they tried to create a healthy and happy environment, free of

the scars of the past, for their children to grow up in, they did not succeed.

After the parents' death, the son or daughter discovered, through fragmented memorabilia left behind, or through renewed interest and the usual reverence that creeps into one's heart toward a dead parent, the full scope of the source of their unexplained pain and dark disposition, the tremendous burden of memory that had weighed so heavily upon the parent. Virginia Haroutunian resented her mother's strange behavior and strove all her life to adjust to it, only to learn in the end that it was the Genocide and its aftereffects that had caused her mother's peculiar, unfathomable behavior, ruining both their lives. Her memoir, *Orphan in the Sands* (1995), is the story of that complex symbiotic relationship conditioned by the transmission of their ethnic identity with the historical memory at its core.

David Kherdian speaks of the same experience in "For My Father" and in another poem titled "My Father" in a collection of poems titled *Homage to Adana* (1970). These and many other poems by Kherdian echo the ineffaceable, tormenting memory of the Genocide that was unconsciously transmitted to him through his father.

The burden of tragic memories was indirectly yet effectively transmitted, for it fit perfectly into the family atmosphere and the parent-child relationship experienced by the generation born in the Diaspora to the survivors of the Genocide. The first generation had difficulty accepting the new kind of Armenianness the second generation adopted. These survivors of the Genocide resented the loss of the Armenian language in their progeny and their criticism of

their parents' complex attachment to the Old World. Hacob Karapents speaks of this generation gap in "Jefferson, USA" (1975).

Margaret Ajemian Ahnert was an active transmitter of her mother's memory. Ester entrusted her with all the abhorrent secrets of her life. She wanted her daughter to know and to teach her own children too. "When I die, the truth will die with me. You must know, and your children must know what I lived through."¹⁰ Indeed, Margaret carried that memory which shaped her outlook toward the Turks and Turkey. She had no control over it, wondering "What was wrong with me?... Had Mother tainted my life with the bits and pieces of her stories?"¹¹ Indeed, Ester's life story was told not only to her grandchildren but also to the world. Her memory was kept alive and materially preserved as well, through an inscription on the wall at Ellis Island. And there the three generations gathered, touching the letters of her name, feeling the spirit of a woman who had struggled and survived the most tragic, the most horrifying human experience.

The Turkish government tried to extinguish my mother from the face of the earth, but she prevailed, her name etched into this wall next to her beloved Albert [husband] for ever. Sara [great-granddaughter] hugged me; I felt her tears on my skin. Lynn [granddaughter] circled her arms around us both. We stood this way for a long while. I could feel Ester. "It's okay, Mother, you are safe, you are in America and we are here with you."¹²

¹⁰ Ahnert, *The Knock at the Door* (2007), p. 10.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 184.

¹² Ibid., p. 204.

Transmitted images of the Old World, from nostalgic reminiscences to horrifying stories of rape and murder, subconsciously influenced the makeup of the Diasporan Armenian identity. The memory was transmitted. Alicia Giragossian, whose father was a survivor, writes,

...Being an Armenian
is having an obsession
for the world to know
how hard it is to survive
with the memories
of our lost ones
still fresh and vivid
in the folds of our minds.¹³

An Armenian born in the Diaspora is a survivor of that great Catastrophe, irrespective of any family connection to those who perished.

"I am, whether I like it or not, a descendent of a massacred people," writes Gérard Chaliand. He is grappling with the memory of his loss, not the memory he lived, but the one he inherited and tried to forget. His childhood recollections were shaped by his grandmother's harrowing tales: "The old women in black of my childhood reminisced: these unburied dead were their dead for ever."¹⁴ The echo of their stories left

¹³ An excerpt from the poem "To Be an Armenian," in Moussa, *Stormy Seas We Brave* (1998), p. 15.

¹⁴ Gérard Chaliand, "Memory of My Memory," *Armenian Review* 4:1 (Spring 1978), pp. 1, 5. This passage is translated differently in *Memory of My Memory* (2006), p. 14:

an indelible mark in his young mind; he kept hearing their gloomy whispers as he played with his toy soldiers on the floor of the living room. At the age of sixteen, when a person's identity begins to reveal and impose itself, he was ready to leave behind "the tracks of the tribe" and "the ring of women spilling their sorrow," and start a new chapter.¹⁵ Now, it was hatred he felt toward "the cult of past martyrs, a masochistic burden borne by defeated people." The separation lasted for a quarter of a century during which he tried to live "with the adventures of all human beings." He discarded the ethnic identity that was tied to tragic memories of the past and tried to assume an identity that fit with his new world vision, free of the pain of "being the heir of a genocide... stuck in the throat as an aching shard."¹⁶ After the death of his parents, as in the case of many second-generation survivors in the Diaspora, he returned to his roots, "to bow to this past history I had rejected and neglected for so long." It was no use running away; he began to come to the realization that "It is just, finally, to accept the primal wound and to acknowledge its grief...."¹⁷ Mourning begins as the final chapter in dealing with a great loss and freeing oneself from the shackles of an unresolved state of mind.

The old black-clad women of my childhood reminisced: those dead victims with no graves were theirs, their very own, for ever and ever.

I do remember.

¹⁵ Chaliand, *Memory of My Memory* (2006), p. 9.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 65.

The memory of the father had come back to accompany the son. An orphan at fifteen, Chaliand's loving Hajentsi father had walked all the way to Constantinople to find freedom. He eventually ended up in France and married another survivor of the Genocide, but hid the blood of his past and never uttered a bitter word.

In a conscious move to shape his own identity based on selective memory, Chaliand was able to wipe away the weight of that "masochistic burden" his folks had carried and to assimilate the pride of those, his maternal uncle among them, who defended Hajen until the last bullet and who never surrendered to the Turkish army besieging the town. He adopted the vigilance of the *fedayees* and the psyche of a combatant to fight the new fight for the perpetuation of Armenians and Armenianness in the Diaspora.

Chaliand's imaginative journey to the past was a necessary undertaking to find his identity, to come to terms with the burden of memory that was his father's and that had now become his. With a similar drive, but more than that, in order to celebrate his roots, William Saroyan physically journeyed to his father's birthplace, Bitlis. Saroyan's visit to Arpiar Der Markaryan, his father's compatriot in Istanbul, is both symbolic and evocative. Ara Karmirian, Der Markaryan's son-in-law, remembers the evening they met, and his disappointment at the sight of his father-in-law showing less and less enthusiasm as the evening dragged on. With a vodka bottle lying empty on the table, it was as if Arpiar too was being emptied of his life and the last dregs of happiness he should have felt in the presence of his important guest. Thinking back years later, perhaps after his father-in-law's

death, Ara Karmirian came to explain his strange behavior this way: "While Saroyan was infatuated with the relationship he had established with the soil his father had lived on, Arpiar Hayrik (Father Arpiar) was reminiscing and commemorating his large family martyred on that same soil."¹⁸ Saroyan's father had decided to leave that land and seek his fortune in a safer place, whereas Arpiar's father, a priest, had stayed with his flock.

In contrast to Chaliand's early feelings, Diana Der Hovanessian, another second-generation survivor of the Genocide, adopted the feeling of the daughter of a massacred people. It does not matter for her whether or not one has lost family members in the death marches. "We are children of Der Zor," she writes:

Even though your mother was a baby
in Worcester, and safe
and your father a young soldier
in Murad's mountains
and you a generation from being born,
.....
even without a single
relative who lived to march,
lived past the march.
We are children of Der Zor.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ara Karmirian, "My Dear and Esteemed Father-in-Law, Arpiar Der Markaryan," in Der Markaryan, *Ardzagank yev Antsorde* (2006), p. 237.

¹⁹ Der Hovanessian, "Why Sand Scorches Armenians," part 2 of "Triptych," in *About Time* (1987), p. 14.

Who is she? To what place is her sense of belonging? She is profoundly conscious of this element in her identity and the influence of the present environment, no matter how much of the past is present:

I found the bloodied arm on the ground
before me. "You didn't need it" said the voice.
I saw a sea of dismembered limbs tossed,
strewn on the horizon and beyond.
"You didn't really need these bones."
They covered land that stretched, pressed past.
"You didn't need these provinces, did you?"
What would you do with all these stones?"
A mountain of broken bodies rose.
"You didn't need Mt. Ararat, did you?"
I tried to speak. No tongue. My breath froze.
"You didn't need that language, did you?"
I woke, washed, and looked in the glass.
Only another American there dressed in fine clothes.²⁰

This is Diana Der Hovanessian's poetic rendering of the makeup of a second-generation Armenian's identity in the Diaspora. Whereas the first generation either assimilated and completely embraced the host countries' mainstream identity, or lived in a cocoon of unadulterated Armenian identity, the sense of dual identity began to creep in with the second-generation Diasporan Armenians, becoming the source of an insurmountable psychological conflict. Noubar Akishian developed an array of Diasporan Armenian characters caught in the turmoil of dual identity and intermarriage leading to assimilation. In his first short story, "The Broken Home," the second-generation survivors of the Genocide leave their

²⁰ Der Hovanessian, "In My Dream," *Selected Poems* (1994), p. 43.

birthplace in the Middle East in search of a better life in the U.S., with tragic results. Even the physical comfort and the moral and sexual liberties of the New World cannot heal their inherited wound. "If you want to know the truth," says Gevork, the protagonist, "we are exiles, expelled from earth and heaven, expelled even from life. There is something alien in our existence, something temporary. We wander from one country to another, but we cannot put down roots that are strong, deep, and permanent...."²¹

The pain and frustration resulting from the struggle to adjust to one's dual identity and the search for an ideal image of the Diasporan Armenian echo in almost the entire literary output of Haco Karapents. His characters are ordinary Armenians in the New World struggling to sustain moral integrity and psychological stability. In one of his stories, "From Any Place to Here," Karapents describes his protagonist: "An Armenian like any other Armenian. He was young and old like any other Armenian, because he had suffered.... He lived his life passively, without will or effort, like the survivor of a catastrophe."²²

Peter Najarian's *Voyages* (1971) is the site of the painful conflict and the attempted reconciliation between the past and the present. There is hardly any reference to the Genocide, but "the Armenian Genocide as a collective symbol permeates the

²¹ Akishian, "Bazhanvats tune," p. 46 in *Marde hoghin vra* (1987), a collection of eight short stories and a novel.

²² Karapents, "Voreve teghits minchev aystegh," pp. 152-3 in his collection of stories titled *Antsanot hoginer* (1970).

entire novel."²³ It is the ever-present past constantly pressuring the present, defeating the efforts of the characters to rise above their unhappiness, to find their identity and to adjust to their adopted country. The novel clearly shows the doom of the second generation. The protagonist Aram Tomasian's search for meaning and value leads him toward loneliness and alienation from society. By contrast, there is the zeal of the first-generation survivors of the Armenian Genocide to transmit the memory, as part of the Armenian heritage, to their children and their children's children. Vahan Vahanian, a character in Najarian's novel, asks his nephew Aram to translate his memoirs into English so that his grandchildren can read and learn about the Armenian past.

Najarian's *Daughters of Memory* (1986) is another search for identity and a quest to revive and perpetuate the memory of the Genocide. The conversations and reminiscences among a group of old Armenian women who experienced the Genocide in their youth, provide the background and trace the history of the Armenian Genocide.

Vahé Oshagan, a Diasporan Armenian second-generation survivor-writer, deals with the effects of the Genocide by portraying the assimilated, alienated generation in the U.S. against a backdrop of national traditions, with the roots of the nation calling back the lost generation. He demands action by shocking the indifferent masses, for example, by staging shockingly scandalous and unconventional scenes or by all-

²³ For an analysis of Peter Najarian's *Voyages* and *Daughters of Memory*, see Shirinian, *Armenian-North American Literature* (1990), pp. 123-60. The citation is from p. 141.

uding to generally unacceptable political violence. "Odzum" (Consecration, 1988) and "Telefone" (The telephone, 1988) are two short stories in which Oshagan shows how a shocking event in the life of the Armenian community can stir the ashes of oblivion and indifference in assimilated Armenian-Americans and bring the long forgotten sense of Armenianness to the surface of their consciousness. The shock in "Odzum" is engendered by an act of sacrilege deliberately staged in an Armenian church by three youths who belong to an extremist terrorist group. In "Telefone," the news of the suicide mission of an Armenian youth group against the Turkish embassy in Lisbon brings about that turning point in consciousness. Oshagan's literature delineates a constant effort to move from the predicament of a victim's psychology, prevalent in first- and even second-generation survivors, toward existence as a complete and free human being. He tries to reach a new synthesis, a new image of the Diasporan Armenian with a new identity, cognizant of the past, dedicated to the present, and able to reinterpret the concept of Armenianness for the future.²⁵ Can this mindset prevail in the third generation? Is it possible to let go of the torturing memory and its impact on one's identity? If the third-generation Diaspora Armenians have been able to forge an identity that had a strong emphasis of ethnic elements and at the same time was reconciled and at ease with the mainstream

²⁴ Oshagan, *Takartin shurj, artsak grutiunner* (1988).

²⁵ For a brief thematic analysis of works by this and the following cited authors, see Perroomian, "The Transformation of Armenianness" (1992-93), pp. 119-45.

identity, would this sense of Armenianness be compatible with a parallel sense of belonging in Turkish-Armenian youth of the third generation?

7

Third-Generation Survivors Respond

The perception of ethnic identity in the three generations of survivors both in Turkey and in the Diaspora went through changes, incorporating foreign elements and discarding the existing ones, under the exigencies of the time and circumstances of the locale. In some cases these changes occurred by way of a smooth and gradual transition. In others, a shocking discovery disrupted the natural metamorphosis and marked a turning point.

Hajji Ibrahim was a member of the second generation born to Islamized survivors who continued living in Turkey. His father just like Yakup's father,¹ was a true Muslim, absolutely denying or at least pretending to deny any trace of Armenianness in his identity. Hajji Ibrahim confided to Kemal

¹ Yakup's story was discussed in Chapter 5 (pp. 140-41) of this book.

Yalçın that the discovery of his Armenian origin was painful but not shocking. He had very quickly adopted that element in his identity and gradually got used to admitting and proclaiming his Armenian origin. Nonetheless, he raised his children as Kurds in name, language, and religion. His daughter considered herself a true Kurd until the day when an Armenian girl in her class in Germany called her a "dirty Kurd." Infuriated, she came home feeling worse and worse, and when she learned that the family's origin was not Kurdish but Armenian, she began to cry. The girl was psychologically shattered. The process of her discovery of this new element in her identity and her return to Armenianness involved turbulence and distress. She had to understand her grandparents' conversion to Islam and their adoption of the Kurdish identity, in view of what she learned about all the atrocities the Turks and Kurds had committed against Armenians. Then she began to hate the Kurds and the Turks and nurture a desire for revenge against them. Her parents had to pacify her and get her to overcome that feeling too.

Hajji Ibrahim admits today that the older generation has learned many things from the new, that is, thinking and questioning things that never occurred to the parents. This new generation of *dartsats* Armenians living abroad is becoming accustomed to and learning to live in peace with their ethnic identity, which is a strange mix of the origin, the race, the adopted ethnicity, the religion, the language, and the influencing elements of the new environment outside Turkey.

Hajji Ibrahim's daughter's encounter with a Diasporan Armenian is one of many examples of such encounters showing the manner in which third-generation Diaspora

Armenians perceive Turks and Kurds. Is it hate? Is it vengeance? Is it the burden of the transmitted historical memory bursting into the open when such an encounter with the "enemy" occurs? For Diasporan Armenians growing up in today's world, the Turk and the Kurd are not obscure unidentifiable entities characterized solely in history books. They come to know them in person, speak to them, exchange ideas, and in some cases even find commonalities that overwhelm their differences. In any event, the memory of the Genocide, as the most important event in the recent history of the Armenian people, is a prism through which the encounter is perceived. The future of the Armenian identity is viewed through this same prism.

Indeed, this unresolved injustice, this indomitable pain and mourning over the colossal loss, continued in the Diaspora with different degrees of intensity and served as the common thread stringing together Diasporan literature. Interest in the traumatic past of the Armenian nation intensified or was revived in the third generation. A definite contributing factor to this phenomenon was the trend of searching for one's roots, which was especially popular in the U.S. It was acceptable to search for your ancestors, to have your roots in another part of the world, to have inherited a completely different culture and still be a good citizen, a member of the mainstream of the country of your citizenship.

Another factor was the politicization of the Diasporan Armenian youth and their sensitization to the demands of the nation, as an offshoot of the widespread commemorative events of the fiftieth anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in 1965. This fiftieth anniversary, indeed, marked a beginning

for the new Diasporan reality with its heightened political activism and stronger commitment to the cause and to national ideology. An injustice had been done to the Armenian people, and that injustice had to be redressed. The formulation, "to forgive and forget," was no longer acceptable to many. It is not conceivable, nor is it befitting human nature to forgive a calamity of that magnitude, especially in the case of the Armenian Genocide, when the criminal continues to deny any wrongdoing.

To forgive and forget is a concept that is also totally irrelevant in post-Holocaust Jewish reality. It is, in fact, significant that the first goal underlined by Israel Charny in his foreword to a work on *Teaching Holocaust Literature* is "confronting the extent of the injustices and murderous actions of the Nazis."² In the same vein, Dith Pran, who compiled a book of essays on children's experiences in the Cambodian genocide, writes,

It is important for me that the new generation of Cambodians and Cambodian-Americans become active and tell the world what happened to them and their families under the Khmer Rouge. I want them never to forget the faces of their relatives and friends who were killed during that time. The dead are crying out for justice. Their voices must be heard. It is the responsibility of the survivors to speak out for those who are unable to speak.³

And Savuth Penn, a survivor of the Cambodian massacres, writes, "Even after seventeen years, I am not so sure I can say

² Charny (2001), p. vii.

³ Pran, *Children of Cambodia's Killing Fields* (1997), p. x.

the word *forgive*, but I surely will never forget what the Khmer Rouge did to my family and their own Khmer people."⁴

The trend of searching for one's roots and a keen interest in the one event in history that was the source of all evil brought into focus the unwritten memories or the unpublished memoirs of parents and grandparents, survivors of the Genocide. A plethora of memoirs was published in Armenian and other Diasporan languages. Kerop Bedoukian's memoir, *Some of Us Survived* (1979), Alice Muggerditchian Shipley's *We Walked, Then Ran* (1983), John Minassian's *Many Hills Yet to Climb* (1986), Bertha (Berjuhi) Nakshian Ketchian's *In the Shadow of the Fortress* (1988), and Hovhannes Mugrditchian's *To Armenians with Love* (1996) are examples of this type of literature, each with a mission and a motivation. Minassian felt an obligation to leave his memories for the next generation. He could not forget the words someone had said to him in a Turkish prison: "We may not survive, but your generation has a call and a duty."⁵ Ketchian wrote that "We—the survivors—are living eyewitnesses of the Genocide of Armenians by the Turks. What was documented in writing and pictures at the time is now being denied."⁶ Therefore, she had a mission. She was determined to fight against denial, to join the struggle for world recognition of the Armenian Genocide, believing that "recognition of the crime does not bring the victims back, but it eases somewhat the pain of the

⁴ Ibid., p. 49.

⁵ Minassian, *Many Hills Yet to Climb* (1986), pp. 3–4.

⁶ Ketchian, *In the Shadow of the Fortress* (1988), p. ix.

living."⁷ Hovhannes Mugrditchian's son and publisher knew that his father's memoirs had to be translated into English: "For our children and grandchildren, we knew we had to have an English-language version."⁸

The memory of the Genocide reverberated in Diaspora Armenian literature as a source of identity, a leitmotiv, or a hidden theme. Successive generations of Diasporan writers tried to confront the Catastrophe (*Aghet*), comprehend it, and deal with it.⁹ These responses—narrative prose or poetry, eyewitness accounts, memoirs, or texts only remotely echoing the theme of the Genocide—cover a very broad spectrum and are immensely variegated. In general terms, they are crafted at a distance of time and space without direct experience of the Genocide, with the impetus of a transmitted pain or a suddenly discovered past, bearing the influence of different cultural, religious, environmental, and sociopolitical factors, and within different levels of skill and understanding of the poetics of genocide. These literary works are created with a variety of thrust and motivation.

By creating these works, the authors may seek catharsis in order to relieve the transgenerational pain. Leonardo Alishan, a third-generation Iranian-Armenian-American writer, was

⁷ Ibid., p. x.

⁸ Mugrditchian, *To Armenians with Love* (1996), citation from the preface by Paul Martin, pp. xvii-xviii.

⁹ See Perroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe* (1993), in which the literary responses to historical catastrophes culminating in the Genocide of 1915 are analyzed. See also idem, "New Directions in Literary Responses" (2003), in which the responses of second- and third-generation writers are examined.

never able to transcend, or rather never tried to transcend the pain of the tragedy that was his grandmother's, the tragedy that became his fate at the age of nine. His strongest literary creations are about his "Granny" and "bearing witness to her agony." He shares her agony; he is part of it: "I try to be a spectator of that tragedy which culminated in a London hospital room in 1978 where Granny saw Turkish horsemen around her bed before she died. But, alas, I am not the spectator. I am a character caught in that play which never, never, never reaches its equilibrium."¹⁰

The author may strive to establish further factual evidence in order to combat denial. Mae M. Derdarian speaks with the voice of her grandmother, adding her own imagination and artistic skill to create a work of art, *Vergeen: A Survivor of the Armenian Genocide* (1996). Her motivation is not only to tell the story of her grandmother, but also, as she notes in her acknowledgment, "to immerse the reader in her story and to refute historical revisionists who deny and distort the facts of the Armenian holocaust."¹¹

These works may be the result of a sudden discovery of the past and an identity that was denied to the third generation. Peter Balakian's *Black Dog of Fate* (1998) is a perfect example of a journey into the past after the sudden discovery of a family secret tied to the Old World. The author is motivated to also record the history of the Armenian Genocide. The result is a well-written mélange of memoir and documentation. It is, as the author himself puts it, a

¹⁰ Alishan, "An Exercise on a Genre" (1992), p. 352.

¹¹ Derdarian, *Vergeen* (1996).

"polyphonic, multilayered memoir" in which "personal discovery and history merge."¹² In this autobiography, the Armenian component is gradually extracted from a nebulous memory hole to become an important dimension in the Diasporan Armenians' self-identity.

Vickie Smith Foston's amazing journey into the past is written in a similar vein. She sets out to unveil a well-kept family secret that involved the suicide half a century earlier of her grandmother Victoria (also her namesake). In the course of her cumbersome research, Foston comes across the astonishing truth about her roots, heritage, and background. She finds out that her ancestors were pure-blooded Armenians from Mush who escaped the Turkish persecutions and massacres of 1894-96. Not exactly a Genocide survivor's account, *Victoria's Secret: A Conspiracy of Silence* (2001) is the story of an immigrant family in which the conflict between forgetting the past and assimilating into the mainstream on the one hand, and adhering to ethnic identity and traditions on the other hand, creates quarrels that gradually deepen the schism within the family. And although assimilation is the name of the game, national pride and ethnic consciousness nonetheless find expression in deeds and behaviors, in a family project, a collective work of art, a beaded tableau of Mother Armenia lamenting over the ruins of the homeland, or in a charcoal landscape of Armenia with Mount Ararat in prominence.

¹² Balakian quoted in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 12, 1998, p. B7).

Micheline Aharonian Marcom knew very little about her family and the history of her people. She says this was one of the reasons she began to write what would be her first novel, *Three Apples Fell from Heaven* (2001). She set out to discover the past that was denied to her, to find the missing link in her identity. "I had an incredible need to know my family history, to figure out my place."¹³ She wanted to fill in the world behind the phrases she had heard here and there about her grandmother, that brave woman who had walked the death march and saved her sister and three younger brothers and raised them in Beirut. She wanted to know about Kharbert and Mezre which her grandmother had called home. Micheline's mother was raised in Beirut on stories of the Genocide, but to escape from her family's gloomy past she married an American and moved to the U.S. She habitually refrained from speaking of the past—a typical second-generation reaction. On occasion, however, a few sentences would slip out of her mouth: "The Turks pulled out their fingernails, beat the soles of their feet.... Pregnant girls had their babies torn from their bellies. Nané [Micheline's grandmother] saw them march to their death."

In a skillful blend of the facts of the Armenian Genocide, the traumatic experience of the survivor generation, and the fun and attractions and the multiple opportunities that American culture can offer a third-generation Armenian teenager, Carol Edgar's *Rise the Euphrates* (1994) clearly

¹³ This citation and the following are from Marcom's remarks in the UC Berkeley *Armenian Alumni Newsletter* on the occasion of the publication of her book.

shows that no matter how deeply assimilated into the mainstream culture and lifestyle, no matter how aloof from its Armenian past, the American-born generation still carries traces of the wounds of the Genocide.

For all intents and purposes, these responses encompass the echoes of the nation's collective psyche shaped by the violence, the pain of dispersion, the effects of self-accusation, the search for identity or the struggle to cope with a dual identity, the effects of the past and present roles of the perpetrators and world bystanders.

In the sphere of popular culture, the Armenian-American heavy metal band, System of a Down, best reveals the perception of the Genocide by third-generation survivors. Serj Tankian, a member of the band, speaks of his grandfather's experience during the massacres and deportations and how that experience was passed on to him as a child listening to his grandfather's terrifying stories. "When I heard these stories," he asserts, "my heart opened up and I felt like crying. It's mind blowing that man could do that to man in the 20th century." System of a Down immortalized the transmitted memory in their songs "P.L.U.C.K." and "Holy Mountains." Tankian considers these songs to be a homage to the Genocide and its victims. "It's part of our lives. It's a part of who we are."¹⁴ With these thoughts, Tankian reveals how the historical memory of the Genocide has become a component of the third generation's identity.

¹⁴ Quoted by Line Abrahamian in "Talking with Turks and Armenians about the Genocide," *Reader's Digest Canada* (October 2006). <http://www.readersdigest.ca/mag/2006/10/genocide.php>. Accessed September 17, 2007.

While third-generation Diasporan Armenians searched for a solution to the unresolved injustice against the nation and grappled with the elements of ethnic identity to define their own, Turkish-Armenians continued to live the experience of their parents and grandparents in the same atmosphere of prejudice and discrimination.

The number of works coming out of Turkey dealing with the Turkish-Armenian experience, compared with the Diasporan Armenian responses, is small. Yalçın's *You Rejoice My Heart* remains the principal source for comparison. "Dear Meliné, not only you, but I want to know myself too" (p. 27). By embarking on that difficult journey toward the past, Yalçın wanted to know who he was. He needed to rediscover and reevaluate his own identity, and this is a truth that only a few have acknowledged. Moreover, Yalçın has not only given artistic expression to hitherto dormant historical memory in Turkey, but he has also done a tremendous service toward healing the psychological wound in generations of Turkish-Armenians, be they Christians or Muslims, whether they speak Armenian or Turkish. Yalçın is convinced that "our behavior, our ways of thinking, the memories deep in our consciousness constructing our identity, our prejudices, our taboos, if expressed in all frankness, will appease our souls and will help us to reconcile with ourselves" (p. 389). It works both ways. The testimonies of Yalçın's interviewees are further proof to that reality.

Ohan Özant's grandchildren were born in Istanbul and raised in the absolutely Armenian and Christian atmosphere of their home. They even attended Armenian school. But they are always under repression.

Turkey is our homeland. We were born and raised in Istanbul. Why are they disturbing us? We don't meddle in their faith, their religion. But when they stress their *Shari'a* [or *Şeriat*, Islamic law] and proclaim that Turkey is constituted of Muslims only; then we defend our religion more fervently and wear the cross around our neck. (Yalçın, pp. 118–19)

In the case of Ohan Özent's grandchildren, apparently, the government's challenge has proven counterproductive, generating not intimidation and obedience but the contrary, a more profound feeling of ethnic identity.

This deep emotion vis-à-vis Turkey as the Armenian homeland is a common thread connecting Yalçın's interviewees. It is the sense of belonging that Turkish-Armenians can have for no place other than Turkey. Aram, an Armenian character in Elif Shafak's novel, *The Bastard of Istanbul*, best reveals this sentiment:

This city is my city. I was born and raised in Istanbul. My family's history in this city goes back at least five hundred years.... We have first managed and then badly failed to live together.¹⁵ We cannot fail again.

An anonymous article in Turkish circulated on the Internet, then translated into English and published in the *Armenian Weekly*, best portrays this feeling. The author of "To

¹⁵ This is, of course, Shafak's view of centuries of Turkish-Armenian coexistence, expressed by an Armenian character in the novel. This, however, is not the complete story of the circumstances of this coexistence (see *supra*, chapter 5, note 9, for further explanation). Citation from p. 254.

Be an Armenian in Turkey" enumerates the prejudices, the discrimination, the fearfulness, caution and timidity that overshadow an Armenian's everyday life in Turkey. And yet, to be an Armenian in Turkey is "to proudly sing the Independence March every morning and shout 'Happy to be a Turk' in a Turkey where you don't have a say...." Nevertheless, "When you are told to 'leave if you don't like it,' it is to say, 'And yet, this is my country as well'."¹⁶

Such a deep attachment to one's country of origin, if not homeland, in spite of the ongoing prejudice in society, is inexplicable. Hrant Dink lost his life believing in his innocence and confident that he would never "denigrate Turkishness," neither by his words nor by his deeds. He could not envision himself and his family living in another country besides Turkey, as he eloquently put it in his last article, published in *Agos* on January 10, 2007:

If we were forced to leave one day, however... We were going to set out just as in 1915... Like our ancestors... Without knowing where we were going... Walking the roads they walked through... Feeling the ordeal, experiencing the pain.... With such a reproach we were going to leave our homeland. And we would go where our feet took us, but not our hearts.¹⁷

¹⁶ For the English translation of this article, see the *Armenian Weekly* (June 16, 2007).

¹⁷ Hrant Dink's article, originally published in Turkish, was translated into English and titled "The Pigeon-like Unease of My Inner Spirit" by Fatma Müge Göçek and posted on the Internet on January 20, 2007, the day after his assassination.

Sultan was raised as a Muslim in Adıyaman, but even for her Turkish neighbor and playmate she was a *gâvur*. Sultan remembers playing ants with the Muslim girl next door. The girl said, "Let's kill the red ones and leave the black ones, because the red ants are *gâvurs* and the black ones are Turks." This was the first time Sultan had heard the word *gâvur*, so she asked what it meant, and the girl replied, "Aren't you *gâvur*?" She was offended, assuming that *gâvur* was a bad word, and ran crying to her mother, who then had to confess to her seven-year-old daughter that, yes, they were *gâvurs*, of Armenian origin, but they had to pretend to be Muslims for fear of persecution (Yalçın, p. 360). From then on, Sultan tried to reconcile with that unknown element in her identity, an element that was gradually crystallizing with the nightmarish stories her grandfather told her about his ordeal in 1915. He had been ten at the time (pp. 356-7).

Historical memory had been transmitted to become a part of Sultan's identity: "We did not see that horrible catastrophe," she told Yalçın during her interview in Germany, "but that great suffering remained as a memory.... The memory saddens me a lot. Although we did not see those days of terror, we did not live the death marches, they left their indelible marks on us" (p. 367). In the beginning, after Sultan found out about her Armenian roots, she wished she could get rid of the memories and her otherness and become one with her Turkish classmates, who always looked at her with suspicion. She thought that only then would she find comfort and peace. "Not five but even fifteen times a day we say our *namaz* [prayers], we are labeled *dartsats*, we are called *gâvur*," she complained (p. 365). Every morning at school,

together with her classmates, she repeated in a loud voice, "I am a Turk. I am honest. I am industrious," but her vow was mixed with a sense of guilt and shame because she knew she was Armenian (p. 362). But she grew out of that insecurity and leaned more and more toward her origin, her roots, and it became difficult to pretend; she was ashamed of pretending to be a Muslim and following Muslim religious rituals and customs. When she complained to her father, he comforted her by saying, "It is all right. The Lord Jesus, our prophet, sees our plight, knows our suffering" (p. 361). Now in Germany, she defined herself and her husband: "We speak Kurdish at home. That is our mother tongue. We are Armenians, but we don't know Armenian" (p. 363). Sultan belongs to the group of hidden Armenians who have cast off the cover of Muslim rituals and returned to their ancestral faith.

Yalçın met Zakarya in Istanbul, where he lived. He is a third-generation survivor, an educated man able to analyze his own identity. He is an Armenian whose past was wrought by brutalities. His outlook, shaping his individuality and his identity, are imbued with a longing for freedom, brotherhood, and equality among the people of the world and between Armenians and Turks in particular. Zakarya was born in 1953, in the village of Ekrek in Kayseri. He remembers how hard it was for Armenians who lived in the interior of Turkey. His childhood memories are shrouded by that hardship. Turkish children hit him because he was Armenian and threw rocks at his family's house at night. Zakarya's birthplace, the erstwhile Armenian village of 750 families, had been "cleansed" in 1915 and repopulated with Turkish refugees from Greece in 1924. The two churches were destroyed and the few remaining

families were subjected to constant harassment until they too left the village (p. 229).

Zakarya is a leftist by political orientation, but he blames himself for having joined the Turkish left and forgetting his Armenian values and heritage. Government intolerance and persecution had driven him toward the communist ideology and his equally persecuted Turkish brothers. When he was growing up, searching for his Armenian identity and learning about his heritage was taboo, a forbidden domain. Then, when he was old enough to make choices, he neglected his Armenianness and gravitated toward internationalism (p. 240).

Zakarya has a surprise in store for the reader. Halfway through his story, with the heavy emphasis he puts on his Armenianness, he reveals his wife's identity. She is a Turk. They were comrades in a leftist party where nationality did not matter. In fact, if one of them made compromises regarding national identity and heritage, it was the wife, who wholeheartedly adopted Armenian traditions and raised two Armenian sons. Nonetheless, the Armenian Church refrained from baptizing their sons, and so the family they formed with this odd union was not, unsurprisingly, accepted by either side (p. 258).

Zakarya admits that he and his generation are "unable to forget the sufferings of the past, the deportations of 1915, the wealth tax (*varlık vergisi*) of 1942, the 1955 pogroms against non-Muslims, and the 1960s escalation of the Turkification campaign" (p. 241). His life experience tells him that "violence and fear hinder clear thinking; prohibitions and taboos make you blind and weaken your [historical] memory" (p. 240).

Discrimination continues to this day. Armenians in Asia Minor, in the interior of Turkey, are not allowed to have Armenian schools, speak their language, or practice their religion; their churches are ruined; they are harassed and persecuted to the point of being compelled to leave their homes and migrate out of the country or go to Istanbul, where the government has a direct hand in their life and fate. Interestingly, in order to rescue the last Armenians scattered in Asia Minor, Istanbul Armenians make a yearly campaign of recruiting young children and bringing them to Istanbul for an Armenian education. This is the only way to safeguard these children's Armenianness. But here too the government creates all kinds of obstacles to prohibit their entrance into Armenian schools. A recent initiative has also been launched to encourage those with an Armenian line in their ancestry to come forward and search for their Armenian relatives in Turkey and abroad. The initiative, called "Looking For My Relative," is actually an offshoot of similar steps taken by Hrant Dink from the first issues of *Agos* until his assassination.¹⁸ The initiative continues. As a consequence, hundreds of Turkish men and women have found the courage to come forward, tell the story of their Armenian mother, father, or grandparent, and ask for help to find their Armenian relatives.

However, things are indeed difficult in Istanbul too, as the government does not allow new construction, or even repairs

¹⁸ The "Looking For My Relative" project began with a trial period in Galata, Istanbul, in 2006, and continues to expand its reach. See <http://www.akrabamiariyorum.com>.

to old buildings falling apart. Yalçın too attests to that (pp. 223–6). Information on Istanbul Armenians and the state of Armenian church and school properties is more or less out in the open today, and the outside world is aware of their difficulties.¹⁹ It is important to note that Yalçın, a Turkish individual, acknowledges the wrongdoing and condemns it.

Indeed, successive governments' intolerant policies toward religious and ethnic minorities in Turkey were echoed in the 1934 decree to Turkify non-Turkish surnames, a powerful strategy of Turkifying and homogenizing the diverse society. With this decree, even their name was denied to Armenians who could claim Armenianness by a name that related to their

¹⁹ The General Directorate for Foundations regulates all non-Muslim religious properties and activities. In 1936, the government required that all religious foundations declare their assets. Then in 1974, as political tension over Cyprus was rising, the government banned these foundations from buying property and confiscated what they had acquired after 1936. The law was amended in 2002, but the government still holds the right to take possession of properties in places where the non-Muslim population has dropped significantly. For this and other restrictions on religious minorities and violations of religious freedom, see USDOS BDHRL, "Turkey" (2007).

For a detailed account of the state of non-Muslim community foundations in Turkey and government policies jeopardizing their existence or the return of property to their owners, see Talin Suciyan, "Treatment of Foundations in Turkey Threatens the Survival of Non-Muslim Communities," *Armenian Reporter* (December 1, 2007, p. A3). See also Etyen Mahçupyan, "Discrimination Against Foundations Becomes Law," *Today's Zaman* (December 7, 2007). Mahçupyan writes about Foundations Law No. 5555 which was adopted by the Turkish parliament on November 9, 2006, but vetoed by then-president Ahmet Necdet Sezer, or, as the article puts it, returned to parliament for further review.

ancestors. This was followed by the 1942 wealth tax levied on non-Muslim citizens including Islamized Armenians—a pretext to force all Armenians and Christians out of business by extreme, disproportionate, and discriminatory taxation and strip them of their belongings. Those who could not pay the heavy taxes—and many, especially those in the interior could not—were exiled to the Aşkale labor camps. As Sarkis Varpet puts it, Armenians "did not go through a second deportation/exile during World War II. There were not enough Armenians or Greeks left to deport. However, all Christians suffered the wealth tax. This time, the destination of exile was Aşkale" (Yalçın, p. 295).

Baba Yusuf, an Aşkale Turk, related to Yalçın how the Armenian exiles suffered and perished in the labor camps, and how unfair was their treatment. He always wished for the opportunity to tell what he had witnessed so that the world would know, so that Turkish citizens, unaware of the tragedy at Aşkale, would know (p. 102). He had always been afraid, but now, at the end of his journey on this earth, he was ready to speak up and no longer afraid. Yalçın was hearing about this human tragedy for the first time. But he was to hear stories of Aşkale from others too. Vahram Garabent, for example, was serving in the reserve army when the wealth tax was announced, and it was only through the intervention of a Turkish friend that he escaped the Aşkale labor camps (p. 140).

One expects to find the echo of this disastrous event in Armenian literature, this onerous taxation that not only materially but also spiritually ruined a generation of Armenians, affecting their social status, individuality, and identity. Significantly, Andan Özer is the only Armenian poet

I know who alludes to this devastating event in two of his poems, "Gar ou chgar" (There was, and was not) and "Veratarts Ashkaleen" (Return from Aşkale), written in 1949–50.

Then came the 1955 pogroms, the looting and killing of non-Muslims, raping of young girls, burning of houses, and destruction of properties and businesses. It started with the false news report that the Greeks had bombed the house where Atatürk was born in Salonika (Thessaloniki). The Muslims of Turkey were incited to pour into the streets and take vengeance upon the Greeks, and that was translated into attacks against non-Muslims and was turned against Armenians in particular. Kirkor Ceyhan of Zara was in Istanbul at that time and recalls the horrors of those two days. The mob was provoked to harm the Greeks, loot and burn their shops and houses, kidnap their women, and kill the men. But Kirkor attests that they treated the Armenians with the same brutality (Yalçın, p. 180). He believes that the Cyprus issue and the animosity of the Turkish government toward the Greeks were the source of the evil that instigated the pogroms which then spilled over onto the Armenian community.

Rober Haddejian, on the other hand, reminisces about the shock and disappointment of Armenian intellectuals who had just begun to explore the possibilities of freedom of expression in certain domains and themes in literature. Actually, a new literary movement was underway, and Istanbul Armenian writers and poets were busily engaged in publishing periodicals which housed this new expression. Along with houses, shops, and stores, publishing businesses were also looted and destroyed, one of which was Sargis Terzian's

"Varol" printing shop where *San*, the organ of the Mkhitarian Sanuts Miutian (Society of Mkhitarian Alumni), was published. Haddejian remembers the visit that he and Zareh Khrakhuni made to this shop the day after the pogroms, and describes the deplorable scene of the broken plates and meticulously composed metal letters of the next issue scattered on the floor, the printing press wrecked. But more painful than that and together with that wreckage, was the shattering of their hopes and dreams for a better future in Turkey.²⁰

Later, to avoid political consequences, the street leaders of the campaign were arrested and tried. They were released after minimal penalties. Significantly, Oktay Ergin, a principal actor in the pogroms, was later promoted to the governorship of Nevşehir. The main organizers of these pogroms, however, were Prime Minister Adnan Menderes and his government. After the fall of his government in 1960, he and his cohorts were put on trial and convicted. Alfred de Zayas, the author of an important research article titled "The Istanbul Pogrom of 6–7 September 1955 in the Light of International Law," expresses sorrow that there is still no official government or police report on the events; the trial, major conviction and death sentence given to Menderes were unrelated to these pogroms and the tremendous destruction and death they caused, but were based on other offenses including "abuse of discretionary funds." De Zayas also regrets the fact that the new generation in Turkey knows very little about the 1955 pogroms and that subsequent governments have honored the

²⁰ Haddejian, *Hushatetr* – 15 (1999), pp. 160–1.

memory of Menderes and named schools and institutions after him.²¹

The next step in the absolute Turkification of the Republic and the government's trampling on the rights of ethnic minorities was the 1960s campaign against the use of any language but Turkish.²²

Yalçın's unbiased recording of these instances of discrimination and persecution was certainly an eye-opener for many Turks, of course, at least for those who read *Seninle Güler Yüreğim* and believed in its sincerity. In his review of the book, A. Ömer Türkeş states that upon reading it one feels angry and upset by the fact that the pains of 1915 were not remedied during the Republican era but accentuated in the 1942 varlık vergisi, the 1955 pogroms, and the 1960s "Speak Turkish" campaign. The only time that Armenians were treated equally, Türkeş adds, was in the torture chambers after the September 12, 1980, coup in Turkey.²³

The persecutions persisted, but so did the memory of Turkish atrocities, even if the story was reversed. A character in Orhan Pamuk's novel *Snow* (2004) speaks of an Orthodox church in Kars partially turned into a museum,²⁴ noting that

²¹ De Zayas, "Istanbul Pogrom" (2007).

²² This campaign had its roots in the 1928 slogan, "Vatandaş, Türkçe Konuş!" (Fellow citizen, speak Turkish!). Significantly, beginning in 1965 the State Institute of Statistics omitted the question from the census concerning a person's mother tongue.

²³ A. Ömer Türkeş, review of Yalçın's *Seninle Güler Yüreğim*, <http://www.pandora.com.tr/turkce/elestiri.asp?yid=251>. Accessed January 31, 2007.

²⁴ The orthodox church that Pamuk describes indeed served as a museum until 1985, after which it was converted into a mosque,

"A section of the same museum commemorated the Armenian Massacre (naturally, she said, some tourists came expecting remnants of Turks' massacres of the Armenians, and it was always a jolt to discover that in this museum the story was the other way around)" (p. 32).²⁵ Turkish historical memory was not effaced as much as the Turkish governments would wish.

Stories about the treatment of Armenians circulated in now entirely Kurdish villages. Zakarya too remembers stories from his natal village of Ekrek, stories of Armenians being slaughtered and thrown in the river. And then he recalls the villagers' silence about their Armenian roots: "My grandfather was Armenian. Our grandparents were Armenians but they converted to Islam.... My grandmother was Armenian. They took her from a family on their road to exile.... Make these Turks speak, and they can tell you many things" (Yalçın, p. 360). Such recollections have found their way into artistic literature. In *Snow*, a novel cast in an entirely contemporary setting, Orhan Pamuk refers over and over again to the overwhelming presence of Armenians in Kars one hundred years ago. "There had been a large Armenian community; it no longer existed," Ka, Pamuk's protagonist and poet-friend

without major changes. Since 2006, an extensive renovation has been underway, which involves removing all the wall frescos to be replaced by Islamic motifs, and destroying anything that recalls the building's Christian origin. The work is being done with the support of the Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü (Directorate of Charitable Foundations).

²⁵ A similar case is the museum of Van, a section of which is dedicated to the atrocities of Armenians against Muslims in 1915. And that is the only mention of Armenians in the museum's representation of the long history of Van.

recalls, "but its thousand-year-old churches still stood in all their splendor" (Pamuk, p. 20). Pamuk would interject at every opportunity as he describes each corner of the city: "the three-story Armenian building that now housed the city council" (p. 163); "the one-story Armenian house, its windows boarded up" (p. 163); "one of those Armenian houses no one's lived in for eighty years" (p. 54), "the main iron door [of the religious high school; dormitory], where the fine Armenian craftsmanship is visible to this day" (p. 169); "a hundred-odd years ago, when this fine long Armenian building housed an Armenian hospital" (p. 180), now the police headquarters with a few prison cells in the basement. He does not forget to mention Armenians among the multiethnic population of Kars, "gone now," those "who had made this city a modest center of civilization" (p. 132). He even recalls that the "poor romantic Armenian girls who could afford only the cheapest tickets had once watched theater troupes, acrobats, and chamber groups from Moscow," when describing the dilapidated and poorly maintained theater house in Kars. Then there is the description of a meeting, the assembly of the representatives of opposition organizations, to formulate a joint declaration to be sent to a German newspaper from the people of Kars who are repressed by their own government. Here, among the snippets of reactions, Pamuk records, "A defeatist in the crowd slyly asked, 'And whatever happened to the millions of Armenians who once lived all across Anatolia, including Kars?'.... But feeling pity for this man, the informer-secretary did not write down his name" (p. 278).

The skeleton in the closet threatens to show its deadly visage in an unexpected moment, disturbing tranquility,

evoking compunction. I would like to think that it is a wound in the soul of every Turk who has not severed ties with the past, whose memory of the past hovers over his fears and hopes of the present. In his moving speech during the award ceremony for the 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature, Pamuk accepted the honor reflecting upon his understanding of the act of writing and pondering over the role of a writer and the literature he/she produces. He also said,

For me, to be a writer is to acknowledge the secret wounds that we carry inside us, the wounds so secret that we ourselves are barely aware of them, and to patiently explore them, know them, illuminate them, to own these pains and wounds, and to make them a conscious part of our spirits and our writing.²⁶

I would like to believe that among other pains and fears and secret wounds of the society that Pamuk so adroitly depicts and feels sympathetic about, there is also the wound of the unhealed and unacknowledged past, the haunting pain of the wound inflicted on one-and-a-half million citizens of the Ottoman Empire.

By bringing out the memory of the Armenian presence in Kars and their contribution to the unique culture that made Kars stand out in the Ottoman Empire, Pamuk also aims to show the importance of a multifaceted society, a society composed of people with different ethnicities and religions, different points of views and ways of life, a society composed

²⁶ This quotation is extracted from the text of Orhan Pamuk's Nobel Lecture, "My Father's Suitcase," delivered on December 6, 2006. <http://nobelprize.org>. Accessed on December 13, 2006.

of people who could live and create together. This is what the successive governments of Turkey have tried to kill in Turkey. Pamuk is for the "two souls of Turkey," as he stated in an interview that originally appeared in *New Perspectives Quarterly* (NPQ) in 2005:

[T]here have been so many authoritarian politicians over the years trying to impose one soul on Turkey, one way of life or mode of being. Some wanted to impose Western secularism by military means; some wanted Turkey to be eternally traditional and Islamic. This approach destroyed democracy in Turkey.... These souls are continuously in dialogue with each other, sparring with each other and changing each other.²⁷

Pamuk's concern in his novel *Snow* is to defend both the Islamists and the westernized in Kars. He tries to understand both of their points of view. He believes, especially, that the Islamists' anger and resentment toward the westernized citizens of Turkey, or "liberal secularists," come from their fear and insecurity.

Elif Shafak too does not hesitate to write about the Armenian experience in Turkey. Challenging the claims of the Turkish government on the homogeneity of Turkish society, she brings in a multitude of voices that speak about the futile efforts of successive governments, including the massacres and deportations, and their failure to create that homogeneous society and erase the collective memory. In her novel, *The*

²⁷ This quotation is taken from the excerpts of the 2005 interview reprinted under the title, "The Two Souls of Turkey," NPQ 24:3 (Summer 2007), p. 11.

Bastard of Istanbul (2007),²⁸ Dikran Stambouljian, an Armenian survivor living in the United States, is concerned about his grandniece's identity. She is being raised by her American mother who, after divorcing her Armenian husband, is now married to a Turk. Stambouljian angrily proclaims,

What will that innocent lamb tell her friend when she grows up? My father is Barsam Tchakhmakhchian, my great-uncle is Dikran Stambouljian, his father is Varvant Istanbulian, my name is Armanoush Tchakhmakhchian, all my family tree has been Something Somethingian, and I am the grandchild of genocide survivors who lost all their relatives at the hands of Turkish butchers in 1915, but I myself have been brainwashed to deny the genocide because I was raised by some Turk named Mustafa! What kind of a joke is that?... Ah, *marnim khalasim!* (p. 53-4)

Armanoush is, however, conscious of the Armenian past. She has heard the survivor stories from the Armenian side of her family and participated in Armenian events and activities geared toward reinforcing the continuum of the memory of the past and instilling the Armenian spirit in the young generation. Furthermore, she belongs to an online community of mostly Diasporan Armenians, Café Constantinopolis, and its intellectual section, the Anoush Tree, with five Armenian and two Greek members. The topics of their discussion revolve around "their common history and culture—'common' often times meaning 'common enemy': the Turks." Here Shafak hastens to add that this kind of tie, with a common enemy at the core of the relationship, is transient and shaky (p. 113). She goes so far as to put forward the idea that

²⁸ The Turkish translation was published as *Baba ve Piç* (Istanbul: Metis, 2006)

this common enemy is the pillar of Armenians' solidarity, reinforced by their fight to have the Turks recognize the Genocide. Ironically, in the voice of Baron Baghdassarian, a respected member of Anoush Tree, Shafak suggests,

[S]ome among the Armenians in the diaspora would never want the Turks to recognize the genocide.²⁹ If they do so, they'll pull the rug out from under our feet and take the strongest bond that unites us. Just like the Turks have been in the habit of denying their wrongdoing, the Armenians have been in the habit of savoring the cocoon of victimhood. Apparently, there are some old habits that need to be changed on both sides. (p. 263)

Armanoush is hooked into this cyberspace and constantly enriched by the knowledge exchanged there. With this knowledge, and with the urge to confront a Turk,

A few times she had tried to converse with [her stepfather Mustafa] about 1915 and what the Turks had done to the Armenians. "I don't know much about those things," Mustafa had replied, shutting her out with a genteel but

²⁹ I should note here, parenthetically, that after a close reading of Shafak's novel, it struck me why she was accused of insulting Turkishness and tried under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. The prosecutors must have latched on to the use of the "G word" (regardless of the fact, or perhaps even unaware of the fact that it was uttered by a Diasporan Armenian character and not by the author/narrator). The book, in my opinion, is a balanced comparison of the Armenian and Turkish points of view. It does not reinforce the Armenian cause more than it reiterates the Turkish side of the story. It does not emphasize the persistence of the Turks in their indifference toward the past and unwillingness to face it, more than it underlines, on many occasions, the Armenians living in the past and denying themselves the opportunities of the future.

equally stiff manner. "It's all history. You should talk with historians." (p. 104)

Mustafa's treatment of this topic represents that of the majority of the present generation in Turkey. But he is also one of the more considerate ones. When Armanoush travels to Turkey, she meets other Turks who absolutely deny and insist on the reverse story. This more stereotypical answer comes from "the Nonnationalist Scenarist of Ultrnationalist Movies" in the atmosphere of Café Kundera, a bar in Istanbul frequented by her step-cousin Asya and a group of Turkish modernists, existentialists, and free-thinkers.

But you have to understand it was a time of war. People died on both sides. Do you have any idea how many Turks have died in the hands of Armenian rebels? Did you ever think about the other side of the story? I'll bet you didn't! How about the suffering of the Turkish families? It is all tragic but we need to understand that 1915 was not 2005. Times were different back then. It was not even a Turkish state back then, it was the Ottoman Empire, for God's sake. The premodern era and its premodern tragedies. (p. 209)

The Nonnationalist Scenarist speaks his thoughts authoritatively, as someone who has done extensive research on the subject and knows the answers. Armanoush is almost defeated, even accused of having been brainwashed and manipulated. The Nonnationalist Scenarist's conclusion is piercing: "The claims of the Armenians are based on exaggeration and distortion.... You keep hearing a certain story over and over again, and the next thing you know you have internalized the narrative" (pp. 210-11). Armanoush knows that if Baron Baghdassarian were here, he would

disagree, but "she believed increasing the tension did not help the recognition of the genocide" (p. 212). Fortunately for Armanoush, however, the subject is changed and a personal attack is launched against Asya, the bastard of Istanbul. Shafak stages an altercation in Asya's defense. But this intellectual bar is "no place for a drunken brawl," and soon Café Kundera returns to its usual atmosphere of a comfortable, dreary corner for these intellectuals.

Elif Shafak has a big surprise in store for the reader: the revelation at the end of the novel that Mustafa Kazancı's grandmother was an Armenian orphan girl, Shushan who became Shermin. And then another shock: the same Shushan was Armanoush's grandmother too. Shafak's novel is full of these twists and chains of conflict disentangled at the end. Armanoush has grown up in a paradoxical situation, "constantly fluctuating between a proud but traumatized Armenian family and a hysterically anti-Armenian mom," and because of these contradictory influences in her upbringing, she decides to take "a voyage into the past" to find her identity and define her sense of Armenianness (p. 119). She secretly plans her trip to Istanbul and her stay in Mustafa's parental home.

The Armenian-Turkish cultural, religious, and historical juxtapositions, and especially the comparison of the Armenian and the Turkish historical memory, land on a tangible ground when Armanoush arrives at the Kazancı home in Istanbul and befriends Mustafa's niece/daughter Asya, the bastard of Istanbul. What Shermin Kazancı's husband and son had tried to forget, the secret of their Armenian past that they had tried to bury, Shushan's granddaughter now brings back and serves

to the astounded and disbelieving Kazancı family. Armanoush tells them the unheard-of story of the Armenian victims of Turkish atrocities. Their first reaction is disbelief: who could commit these atrocities and why? Then, complete detachment from the perpetrators of such crimes, though they were Turks like themselves. With a clever twist, Shafak thrusts the role of a Turkish history teacher onto one of the Kazancı women. Asya's Auntie Cevriye had learned during her twenty years of teaching Turkish national history to draw

an impermeable boundary between the past and the present, distinguishing the Ottoman Empire from the modern Turkish Republic... [S]he had actually heard the whole story as grim news from a distant country. The new state in Turkey had been established in 1923 and that was as far as the genesis of this regime could extend. Whatever might or might not have happened preceding this commencement date was the issue of another era—and another people. (p. 164)

Thus, Armanoush waits in vain for closure, an apology, or at least an admission of guilt. But as Shafak explains, "they had seen no connection between themselves and the perpetrators of the crimes. She, as an Armenian, embodied the spirits of her people generations and generations earlier, whereas the average Turk had no such notion of continuity with his or her ancestors" (p. 164). Indeed, the average Turk, who is fed a strictly nationalist history, may not even know about the existence of Armenians as the indigenous people of today's Turkey. What he/she has learned in school is the migration of Turks from Central Asia to Anatolia and the conquest of the Byzantine Empire, then the glories of the

Ottoman Turks, their culture and civilization, and then the downfall of the Empire and the birth of the Republic. The average Turk has learned to be proud of his/her heritage, the censored and mythified past, and to never ask questions. The Kazancı family is no exception.

Armanoush's plan is working. She is finding her roots in the now Turkish city of Istanbul. In one of her postings to Café Constantinopolis, she writes, "I have never felt more Armenian in my life. You see, for me to fully experience my Armenianness, I had to come to Turkey and meet the Turks" (p. 182). She is an Armenian in Turkey in good relations with Turks, or at least the family with whom she is staying. But Baron Baghdassarian's response is shocking: "You are their friend only insofar as you deny your own identity. That's how it has been with the Turks all through history" (p. 184). Once again Shafak grasps the truth of the centuries-long history of the Turkish-Armenian relationship, or at least the Armenian understanding of that relationship.

Leafing through the pages of pre-nineteenth century Ottoman history, one finds Armenians portrayed as the obedient *fallah*, second-class citizens of the Empire with limited rights, always oppressed by their Kurdish lords and Turkish officials. They were the taxpayers who did not ask about the legality of the extracted levies. They were the *milleti sadık*. They were the friends (or servants) as long as they did not look deep into their identity. This was before the impact of the wave of Renaissance ideas that awakened the sense of self-esteem and an understanding of their identity as human beings and as Armenians. Ottoman Turkey was ready to punish all its Armenian citizens, from the simple peasant to

the most westernized and educated intellectual, in order to stifle the voice that sounded different within the "monolithic" society the Sultan liked to rule.

The Young Turks took a harsher stand in their policy of Turkification of the Empire which was achieved by the extermination of the entire Armenian population, in order to stifle that voice forever. The next step was to deny the crime. The crime committed against Armenians became the precursor, if not the model, upon which the word genocide was fashioned, and the ongoing denial has been described as the final phase of the crime of genocide. Elie Wiesel, the Jewish Holocaust survivor-writer, was correct to equate this final phase, the denial of the crime, to "double killing." It is undeniable that the Turkish-Armenian relationship has a heavy bearing on both the Turkish and the Armenian identity. As Taner Akçam, the Turkish historian and the courageous author of *A Shameful Act* (2006), puts it, Turkish identity is built on the denial of the Armenian Genocide. Or, as Sabrina Tavernise and Sebnem Arsu explain, "That identity [of a Turk] was built on a painful foundation. Beyond the Armenian genocide, in which 1.5 million Armenians in eastern Turkey were killed, there were mass deportations of Greeks and executions of Islamic leaders and Kurdish nationalists."³⁰

As to the Armenian identity, Baron Baghdassarian, the member of the Anoush Tree whom Armanoush most esteems,

³⁰ Sabrina Tavernise and Sebnem Arsu, "Inside the Turkish Psyche: Traumatic Issues Trouble a Nation's Sense of Identity," *New York Times* (October 12, 2007), accessed at www.nytimes.com/2007/10/12/world/europe/12genocide.html.

lays out the terms of that relationship and its psychological effects on Armenians:

All we Armenians ask for is the recognition of our loss and pain, which is the most fundamental requirement for genuine human relationships to flourish. This is what we say to the Turks: Look, we are mourning, we have been mourning for almost a century now, because we lost our loved ones, we were driven out of our homes, banished from our land; we were treated like animals and butchered like sheep. We have been denied even a decent death. Even the pain inflicted on our grandparents is not as agonizing as the systematic denial that followed. (Shafak, p. 184)

Kemal Yalçın believes that frank and unmediated expressions of grievances, prejudices, and taboos from both sides can appease the soul and help us "reconcile with ourselves" (p. 389). Very few in Turkey believe in this therapeutic experience, or actually, they do not feel the need. It is difficult to deconstruct old convictions and start anew without a build-up of anger and frustration. Anger and frustration is the phase that many Turks are experiencing now. As to the Armenian survivors in the Diaspora, and the generations born to them, they have had the opportunity to experience that soul-appeasing process. And what of those Armenians, Islamized or Christian, who continued living in Turkey after 1915? By speaking with them and recording their testimonies, Yalçın helped them to relieve their pain and anxiety. He helped the words find their ultimate denotation to express the experience. Fethiye Çetin, the author of her Armenian grandmother's story, *Anneannem*, recalls in one of her interviews a visit she made to an old acquaintance whose mother, she learned, was also an Armenian Genocide

survivor. After the old man had revealed to Çetin that he was of Armenian descent, and after talking about his experience with his Armenian mother, he confessed with a sigh of relief, "tonight, I will be able to have a good sleep."³¹ The soul-appeasing process had just begun in the life of this old man.

In his analysis of Charlotte Delbo's Auschwitz memoir, Lawrence Langer refers to "the abyss separating the words from the events they seek to animate." He infers that the writer strives to narrow that abyss, whereas in oral testimonies the witnesses "plunge deeper into it even as they venture to escape."³² Sultan, the middle-aged Armenian woman-worker interviewed in Germany by Kemal Yalçın, exclaims, "I want peace. I don't want to be denigrated as *dönme* or *gâvur*. I don't want to pretend Islam when I don't believe in it. I don't want to hide my Armenian identity, neither in Germany nor in Adıyaman. I want to be accepted as I am" (Yalçın, p. 368).

Whereas Kemal Yalçın is a catalyst for the surfacing of painful memories, Fethiye Çetin is a player caught in that shock and confusion called an obscured identity discovered. Seher/Heranoush, in telling her story to her granddaughter, transmitted the burden of memory to an innocent descendant. With that memory, a confusing, shocking, and obscure identity was passed on which challenged the recipient to confront and deal with it. In sharp contrast, Vickie Smith Foston's discovery of her roots in Mush in Western Armenia, and of her Armenian ancestors who came to the U.S. in flight

³¹ Quoted by Altınay, "In Search of Silenced Grandparents" (2006), p. 129.

³² Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies* (1991), p. 42.

from the Turkish persecutions and massacres of 1894–96, was shocking, but the truth she discovered did not threaten or challenge her identity. She could comfortably add a hyphen and live with an Armenian-American identity. In fact, her journey into the past served as the raw material from which she created her masterpiece, *Victoria's Secret*. In Çetin's case, however, the discovery was painful. She struggled to digest her grandmother's memories that were now hers.

I could hardly restrain myself from running out in the streets and crying out loud. If it weren't my own grandmother telling me all this, I would not believe it. What I heard was contrary to what I knew. My knowledge of things was being turned upside down. Confronted with the things I heard, my values were being crushed into pieces. My brain was hurting, bursting with the horrifying chaos within. I was scared. All the things accumulated within me seemed to want to wash everything and everyone away.... The exhilarating poems about the "glorious past" that I had recited with such excitement, were being crushed against the eyes of terrified children, the heads of children drowned in water, the river flowing blood for days. (Çetin, pp. 62–3)

These images were enough to leave Çetin astounded for years, until the birth of her masterpiece memoir-novel and a transformed self-perception as not totally Armenian, or Kurd, or Turk, or American, but as a *melez* (hybrid). But Fethiye has courage. She knows that "admitting Armenian ancestry means losing your social status," as she acknowledged in a television interview.³³ Not many can find the courage to come forward and own the secret identity they have tried to bury for

³³ "Turkey's Hidden Armenians," broadcast on *France 24 Reports* (April 27, 2007).

decades, or to one they have just discovered. Nonetheless, among those who surmise that they might have an Armenian grandparent, there is a new trend to search for their true ethnic identity. There is also a reawakening among hidden Armenians, whereby those who know and acknowledge their Armenian ancestry, are now coming forth and claiming their identity.

Çetin has declared her book to be a challenge to the Muslim identity of the Turkish nation. She and thousands of others like her with Armenian ancestry need to rehash the elements and make-up of their identity and reformulate it through personal choices and calculations. Will today's Turkish societal and political atmosphere allow that to happen? Hrant Dink was assassinated for his campaign encouraging Turks to discover their Armenian ancestry. He believed that while there are about 70,000 Turkish citizens who identify themselves as Armenians, there are more than a million others with Armenian roots, an Armenian grandparent or great-grandparent. This was a challenge to the supposedly homogenous make-up of Turkish society that could not be tolerated. If numbers count in voicing the multiplicity of ethnic identities and cultural diversities in Turkey, if, as Fatma Müge Göçek puts it, "the challenge Turkish-Armenians could provide the Turkish nation-state has decreased because of the small number of Armenians residing in Turkey,"³⁴ the revived and growing interest in discovering and returning to one's roots may drastically change the current picture of homogeneity.

³⁴ Göçek, "Silences in the Turkish Republican Past" (n.d.).



In Conclusion

The politics of identity and the politics of memory have worked together in shaping the Diasporan Armenian post-Genocide ethnic identity, based on collective memory with the Genocide as a pivotal historical event at its core. Changes that have occurred in these politics have impacted the perception of the past and were themselves influenced by the exigencies of the present through time. Consequently, Armenian identity has developed as a dynamic construct nurtured by historical narratives with cultural, political, and ideological factors purposefully emphasized to sustain the collective memory. Diasporan institutions have played a major role in producing and promoting these narratives, always for the sake of preserving an Armenianness that could overcome foreign cultural influences and the threatening tides of assimilation. These narratives were also designed to cultivate a common

albeit tragic history, and a national sense of belonging to a homeland, albeit lost and imaginary. National aspiration coupled with a sense of belonging and a wealth of historical knowledge offered to the Diasporan generations have therefore been the cement holding the members of the Armenian communities in the Diaspora together and shaping their identity.

The ethnic identity of Armenians in Turkey, on the other hand, has been shaped by the discrimination and prejudice that has kept Christian and Islamized Armenians alike separated from mainstream Turkish society. Had Islamized families been accepted wholeheartedly within the Turkish or the Kurdish societies, they would have easily assimilated, with no distinguishing trait to set them apart. They would have become one with the "other," whose names and surnames, language, religion, customs, and mores they had already adopted. With the inhibition against transmitting the memories of their past imposed upon the elders, historical memory was also cut off with no role in the making of the survivor generation's identity. The existence of such Turks—formerly Armenians—in great numbers is a very strong possibility that should not be ruled out. But Turkish hostility against even Islamized Armenians never stopped and was unleashed on every occasion, spreading waves of terror and persecution. Armenians were *gâvurs* and the generations born to them *gâvur oğlu gâvur*. Worse than that, Armenians who lived in Turkey were considered "sword leftovers" (Çetin, p.

92).¹ That expression is a testimony to the common people's wish that no Armenian should have been left alive. And these *gâvurs* are now determined to claim their true identity. How many *gâvurs*, Muslim or Christian, how many hidden Armenians are there in Turkey, and how big a threat are they to the Turkish claim of a Turkey that is homogeneous in terms of ethnicity and religion? It is very difficult to speculate. Different studies give different figures, from a few hundred thousand to a few million. For the fragmented Armenian nation, these numbers could prove to be crucial. But notwithstanding the number of these Armenians, if they are experiencing an ethnic revival and searching for their roots, their venture needs serious support.

The Turkish government's anti-Armenian stance shows no inclination to change. On the contrary, this stance is buttressed by elaborate educational and cultural policies.² The discrimination continues. In fact, for instance, "belonging to the Turkish race" is still a requirement for admission to

¹ The equivalent phrase used in the translation of Mehmed Uzun's "Pomegranate Flowers" is "rejects of the sword." In Armenian literature, the phrase is always *surits pakhats* (escapee of the sword).

² Threats against Armenians and non-Muslim minorities are on the rise. Armenian schools, churches, and businesses are constantly receiving threats, and complaints to the police and requests for protection have borne no results. When the Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul sent a letter to the Governor of Istanbul asking for protection, the response was that the governorship could not afford the cost of such protection. For a detailed account of violations of minority rights in Turkey and the governmental policies supporting this discriminatory and repressive conduct, see Minority Rights Group International, *A Quest for Equality* (2007).

military academies and employment in the public sector.³ With a deep consciousness of the importance of history in the construct of Turkish identity, the "Coordination Board Fighting Against So-called Genocide Claims," a section of Turkey's national Ministry of Education, stresses the importance of voicing in all spheres of education and "in the organization of educational, cultural and social activities," the fact that

Turks respected and showed tolerance to religions and cultures of the minorities.... In the history of Turks, in their state tradition and culture, there has been no racism or hatred causing genocide and assimilation like it was in the western world.... It is necessary for the colleagues to show reactions with the scientists and media that do not act on an unbiased basis vis-à-vis genocide claims.

The document quoted above goes on to state that "Armenia has destroyed Turkish cultural products; Turkish population was exiled from Armenia and annihilated."⁴ The Armenian news agency *Noyan Tapan* reported on November 16, 2007, that the Chukurova Center of Culture and Art staged a play called "Yell: The Tale of the So-called Armenian Genocide," in a prison in Adana. According to this report, the Center's representative announced the intention to repeat the performance in a number of villages in Turkey.

³ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴ This confidential official circular, signed by Provincial Educational Director Ömer Güney and dated March 7, 2007, was posted to the armworkshop listserv (armworkshop@umich.edu) on April 25, 2007.

There was a time when Armenian issues were not treated in any Turkish textbook or cultural setting whatsoever, and most of the time the Turkish people had no idea what the Armenians were talking about. Their identity was built upon the history they had learned in school: the history of modern Turkey with nationalism as the main ingredient, including the sanctification of the war of independence and the creation of the Republic (the *raison d'être* of the Turkish people), and a prescribed amnesia concerning the criminal past of the late Ottoman leaders, who became the founders of modern Turkey, and the bloodshed upon which the Republic was built. The Turkish identity, as discussed before, was prescribed by the state, and the basis of that identity was the "textually mediated" collective memory.

After decades of ignorance about the Armenian Question, Turkish society suddenly came face to face with the Armenian armed struggle in the 1970s, as Turkish diplomats were gunned down and Turkish institutions worldwide were attacked in order to draw international attention to the unresolved injustice against the Armenians.⁵ The Turkish government was compelled to provide an explanation to its citizens and "educate" them about the Armenian issue, and more importantly, to rebut reports in foreign media that sided with the Armenian cause and demanded that the Turkish government recognize the Genocide. A proliferation of denial

⁵ The Armenian armed struggle of this period was carried out by three guerrilla organizations: ASALA (1973-1985), Justice Commandos Against Armenian Genocide (1975-1983), and the Armenian Revolutionary Army (1983). For more information on these organizations, see Wikipedia.org.

materials ensued, crude and unprofessional in the beginning, followed by well-written and professionally presented books and articles, mostly by non-Turkish hired historians. During the 1980s, while the information gap about the Armenian Genocide was narrowing, between Turkish society on the one side and on the other the Diasporan Armenians along with the rest of the world, that dichotomy was being transferred onto a more dangerous plain.

James Wertsch discusses a similar process in the history of the Soviet Union, the selective approach that emphasized some events and left out others, and the channeling of that history into education in order to inculcate a uniform collective memory and thus a uniform Soviet identity. Wertsch follows that process up to the collapse of the Soviet Union: "[T]he transformation involved was particularly wrenching because it began with a context of tight state control over collective remembering and moved to one that sometimes seems to be characterized primarily by chaos."⁶ By introducing a new variation into its historical narrative, Turkey was negotiating memory. But what would happen if the government were to completely lose its legitimacy? It is not unlikely that the libertarian Turkish intellectuals who are currently challenging the official line in Turkish history and demanding reconciliation with the past, would save Turkish society from experiencing such chaos. The transition to a democratic society and government would be bumpy but not chaotic.

⁶ Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering* (2002), p. 173.

The process of negotiating memory continues. Today the Turkish citizenry is being introduced to "Armenian claims," Armenians as traitors who conspired with the enemy to topple the Empire, Armenians who covet Turkish land. And this is not only in the history books. Every time the government's policies are criticized from within, every time the government feels threatened or whenever the country is on the verge of a political upheaval, the minorities are the ones who carry the guilt and suffer punishment: "Armenians have begun to organize." "Gâvurs are going to open their churches again." "Armenians are going to demand the return of their ancestors' properties."⁷ These political games played on the Turkish population have always worked to wind them up against Armenians. The recent trend among Islamized Armenians to officially renounce their faith and return to Christianity⁸ is being exaggerated and pointed up as a treacherous movement, and that becomes further fuel for ultranationalists' warnings about the danger facing the Turkish people. This phenomenon is especially linked to the secularization and westernization of the country under the pressure of the European Union, which the ultranationalists vehemently oppose.

⁷ This is a strategy that is often discussed in political analyses. In Yalçın's *You Rejoice My Heart*, it is Hajji Ibrahim who describes the situation. See p. 340.

⁸ Researching Turkish sources, Ruben Melkonian quotes Erhan Bashruit and Hakan Giuven to list examples of Muslims of Armenian origin who have returned to Christianity and assumed Armenian names and surnames. See Melkonian, "'Tsptial' hayeri kronadartsutiune," *Hanrapetakan* 3 (2007), and "'Tsptial' hayeri het kapvats," *Hanrapetakan* 4 (2007).

In any event, the Turkish people are taught to deny any wrongdoing in the past and to absolutely deny the Armenian Genocide. Their national, or rather nationalist, identity is constructed around the denial of the Armenian Genocide, and this state-sponsored denial is pushing Turkish society further and further along a road with no return. The most severe punishment is reserved for those who question this denial. But this policy affecting the construct of Turkish identity, the resolve of successive governments to suppress the memory of any wrongdoing before the Republican era and to build historical memory based on the heroic war of independence, deserves a closer scrutiny.

The history of the Armenian Genocide documents the participation of the populace, Turks as well as Kurds, in the carnage. It also speaks of the *chete*, criminals released from prison to carry out the extermination of the Armenian deportees. If historical memory were alive in the Turks and Kurds today, if the memory of all the atrocities committed were transmitted, the new generation could ask questions. The proud Turk, of the generation born to the heroes of the war of independence, would see himself/herself as the grandchild of a criminal, a murderer, a rapist, a looter. In that case, perhaps absolute denial of any wrongdoing would be more beneficial.

Moreover, the Turkish people are led to believe that the Diaspora Armenian identity is constructed on hostility toward the Turks. In fact, Elif Shafak in *The Bastard of Istanbul* builds the identity of a group of Diasporan Armenians and Greeks who meet every night in cyberspace and discuss issues pertaining to their common history and culture, "'common' oftentimes meaning 'common enemy': the Turks." And she

adds, "Nothing brought people together more swiftly and strongly—though transiently and shakily—than a shared enemy" (p. 113). It is significant how she pairs the word "common" with the word "enemy." The underlying meaning here repeats the Turkish idea of hostility toward the Turks as the basis of Diasporan Armenian identity. As to the transience of that bond when built upon the concept of a common enemy, I would argue that it is the memory of the cataclysmic past, the unsettled pain and the unhealed wound that binds Diasporan Armenians together and shapes their identity, and not the enmity against the Turk.

Since recognition of the Armenian Genocide was proposed to the United States Congress in 2007 in the form of House Resolution 106 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 106, the Turkish media have been inundated with articles emanating hatred and animosity, but among them one also finds cautious deliberation and a willingness to understand the Armenian issue and find a way out of the prescribed and petrified language of state denialism. In one of the more analytical articles, Doğu Ergil tries to understand the motivation behind the Diaspora Armenians' push for this recognition. This recognition, or "validation," he believes, "further reinforces their collective identity shaped by victimhood born out of a 'chosen trauma' [reference to the events of 1915]."⁹ He goes on to delineate the process of the transmission of the memory of that trauma from the original survivors of the trauma to the generations born to them, especially in circumstances generated by the inability to overcome the effects of the past

⁹ Ergil, "The Armenian Psyche" (2007).

trauma and the perpetrators' denial of their wrongdoing. Ergil notes that Armenians in the Diaspora have not been able to reach that peace of mind (reconciliation with the past), and concludes that "there is plenty to be done by the Turks to put the minds and souls of the Armenians to rest by re-evaluating their common past."¹⁰

In the present state of affairs and with the mentality prevailing both in Turkey and in the Diaspora, breaking through the rigid wall and reaching a mutual understanding of history is nigh impossible. However, despite this polarization of the Turkish and Armenian perceptions of one another, it would be too simplistic to inscribe the phenomenon in black and white. The mindset and outlook of the Armenian and the Turkish societies at large, inside Turkey, outside Turkey, in Armenia, and in the Diaspora, are never monolithic. It is possible to capitalize on the differences in approaches for the sake of rapprochement and eventual mutual understanding which will drastically change the perception of one's ethnic identity.

The change in Turkey should come from within Turkish society, as the current opposing movements of Islamists, moderates, modernists, and others, as well as the revived Kurdish Question, are suggestive of that possibility and as the Turks themselves feel the need to dig into their past, beyond the era of the Republican Turkey. In an interview with Khatchig Mouradian, Elif Shafak stresses the importance of this change from within and suggests how that can happen:

¹⁰ Ibid.

[T]here were hundreds and thousands of Armenian girls orphaned after 1915. Many of them stayed in Turkey, where they were converted to Islam and Turkified. Many people have Armenian grandmothers but they have no idea; it is important to bring out those stories both out of respect for those women and also because they can blur the nationalist boundaries and bridge the gap. Nationalist Turks who are angry at "outsider" scholars might listen when they hear the same story from their own grandmothers, from the "inside."¹¹

As these stories surface, will other Turks, those with Armenian ancestry and those belonging to the "pure race," have the courage to come out and express regret for the past as Fethiye Çetin did in *My Maternal Grandmother*? "As I was putting flowers on the grave [of my great-grandparents], I asked forgiveness from them and from my grandmother on behalf of myself and all those who caused this unimaginable suffering" (p. 125). As Kemal Yalçın did in *You Rejoice My Heart*?

I bow to the memory of the massacres – the greatest pain of our century, the disgrace on the forehead of humanity – those Armenians and Assyrians who lost their lives during the deportations by pre-planned killings and slaughter. I accept your pain as mine. As a Turkish writer, I beg forgiveness from you and from mankind. (p. 15)

In an interesting and intriguing article titled "Genocide and Social Death,"¹² Claudia Card develops the theory of

¹¹ *Armenian Weekly*, <http://www.armenianweekly.com> (September 23, 2006).

¹² Card, "Genocide and Social Death" (2003). I thank Dr. Sima Aprahamian for drawing my attention to this article.

social death as the product of genocide—especially when the victims are subjected to torture, long exposure, deprivation, humiliation and degradation, tantamount to stripping them of their social vitality before death. According to Card, genocidal killings also kill the social vitality of the group, that is, its contemporary and transgenerational relationships which are important elements in forging the identity that gives meaning to life. The effects are thus transgenerational and the principal loss of social vitality is a loss of identity and thus a loss of the meaning of life. “When a group with its own cultural identity is destroyed, its survivors lose their cultural heritage and may even lose their intergenerational connections.” The survivors are socially dead, unable to create and build upon their traditions and continue their pre-genocide cultural development. This theory of social death certainly applies to the victims of the Armenian Genocide who lost not only their lives, but also their social vitality. According to this theory, the survivors are socially dead and their descendents “naturally alienated.” Here Card uses Orlando Patterson’s terminology to define the inability of the survivors’ offspring to pass along and build upon the traditions, the language and the community activities that bolstered the group identity before the genocide. This disruption has certainly affected, in different ways, both the Armenian survivors who took refuge outside Turkey and spread to the four corners of the world and those who remained in Turkey. It was an enormous task for the first-generation survivors in the Diasporan environment to overcome the social, cultural, and linguistic barriers, to persevere in the daily struggle for survival and not to give birth to a naturally alienated generation. Here the victim

was surely the concept of Armenianness, the self-perception of Armenian identity. On the other hand, for those who stayed in Turkey, social death applied to hidden Armenians and not to the Islamized Armenians, as the latter were totally submerged in the dominant culture and religion and assimilated into society. The generations born to the latter could pass as true Turks if the boat were not rocked, if the government did not remind them of their *mühtedi* ancestors.

The rebirth of a nation-state called Armenia, and its journey departing from the Soviet identity—which rejected the role of ethnicity and the sense of belonging to a national homeland in its makeup—toward a revival of nationalism is a new reality. In this journey, one can witness the hitherto suppressed historical memory bursting into the open and finding its way into literary creations. There is, indeed, a renewed interest in the stories of grand- and great-grandparents about the Old Country; there is a consciousness about the existence of a Diaspora and its continuing struggle with the past, its pursuit of world recognition of that past. The popular tendency to derogate the issue of the Armenian Genocide in comparison with the Soviet persecutions—even with contemporary instances of the clear violation of human rights—is waning, giving way to the importance of the struggle for international recognition of the Genocide. On the other hand, there is also an increasing sense of belonging and pride among Diaspora Armenians vis-à-vis the new state of Armenia, a feeling that can reverse the sense of “victimhood” and bring Diasporan Armenians, physically and psychologically far distant from Turkey and the Turks, into psychological and even geographical proximity with the

traditional "other" and the "enemy." In this hypothetical but plausible state of affairs, it is feasible to think that Armenians around the world will no longer remain prisoners of the past, chained to their victimhood, and will be able to put that past, as Tzvetan Todorov suggests, in the service of the present. And then, together with Todorov, we can avow, "*la mémoire—et l'oubli—doivent se mettre au service de la justice.*"¹³

The new nation-state called the Republic of Armenia can become the homeland of all Armenians, just as Israel has succeeded in doing for the Jews. We remember the Ethiopian Jews rescued by the Israeli government and brought to Israel. No doubt there was resentment among the Israeli people over absorbing these dark-complexioned Jews who more closely resembled Ethiopians than the typical Jew in Israeli society.¹⁴ However, copious efforts are being made to educate and acculturate them and to assimilate them into the mainstream. Will the new state of Armenia undertake a similar role? Will she become the protector of even those Armenians in Turkey

¹³ "Memory—and forgetting—should be put in the service of justice." See Todorov, *Les abus de la mémoire* (1995), p. 61.

¹⁴ For centuries the Jews of Ethiopia fought against government-imposed repression to maintain their semi-autonomy and their freedom to practice their culture, traditions, and religion. They struggled to maintain their identity in spite of the anti-Semitic sentiments of the Ethiopian population. After the establishment of the state of Israel, the issue of Ethiopian Jews systematically arose but was set aside due to Israel's deteriorating political relations with Ethiopia. Beginning in 1984 and culminating in a major operation carried out in 1991, almost all the Ethiopian Jews were brought to Israel.

who hide their identity out of fear of persecution, or even those in Turkey who have renounced their Christian faith? A new reality is in the making. Armenians can become a nation whose members are geographically cut off from one another, a nation with religious, cultural, and linguistic disparities. Will this new reality have a bearing upon the identity of this fragmented nation?

The third volume in this trilogy will address this question.

Bibliography*

- Adak, Hulya. "Identifying the 'Internal Tumors' of World War I: Tâlât Paşanın Hateraları [Talat Pasha's Memoirs], or the Travels of a Unionist Apologia into 'History'." In *Räume des Selbst: Selbstzeugnisforschung transkulturell*, ed. Andreas Bähr, pp. 151–69. Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2007.
- Ahnert, Margaret Ajemian. *The Knock at the Door: A Journey Through the Darkness of the Armenian Genocide*. New York: Beaufort Books, 2007.
- Akçam, Taner. *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide*. London: Zed Books, 2004.
- . *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*. Trans. Paul Bessemer. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006.

* For easier reading, I have avoided using diacritics for Armenian names in the main text. Diacritics are, however, used in the Bibliography in accordance with American Library Association–Library of Congress Romanization tables (Eastern Armenian Pronunciation).

- Akishian, Noubar. *Mardē hoghin vra* (The man on the soil). Yerevan: Sovetakan Grogh Press, 1987.
- Alishan, Leonardo. "An Exercise on a Genre for Genocide and Exorcism." In *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, pp. 340–54. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.
- Altınay, Ayşe Gül. "In Search of Silenced Grandparents: Ottoman Armenian Survivors and Their (Muslim) Grandchildren." In *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern, die Türkei und Europa: The Armenian Genocide, Turkey and Europe*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser and Elmar Plozza, pp. 117–32. Zurich: Chronos Verlag, 2006.
- Baghdoyan, Setrak. *Erb drakhtē dardzav dzhokhk'... Arhavirk'i eot'ē tariner, 1915-1922* (When paradise became hell... Seven years of calamity, 1915–1922). Ed. Marc Nichanian. Los Angeles: Abril Publishing, 2007.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Life*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2005.
- Card, Claudia. "Genocide and Social Death." *Hypatia* 18:1 (Winter 2003): 63–79.
- Çetin, Fethiye. *Mets mayrs* (My grandmother). Trans. of *Anneannem* (Istanbul: Metis, 2004) by Ruben Melkonian. Yerevan: Paruyr Sevak Press, 2006.
- Chaliand, Gérard. *Memory of My Memory*. Trans. Tito Cohen and Juliet Kepl. London: Gomidas Institute Books, 2006.
- Charny, Israel W. Foreword to *Teaching Holocaust Literature*, ed. Samuel Totten. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001.
- Cheviron, Nicolas. "Turkey Begins Self-Reflection Over Armenia." Agence France Presse. Armeniapedia.org, n.d.
- Condapa, Pamela de. "Destroying Material Culture, Destroying Identity?" Paper presented at the seventh biennial meeting of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, Sarajevo, July 9–13, 2007.
- Dadrian, Vahakn N. *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*. Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995.
- Der Hovanessian, Diana. *About Time*. New York: Ashod Press, 1987.

- . *Selected Poems*. Riverdale-on-Hudson, NY: Sheep Meadow Press, 1994.
- Der Markaryan, Arpiar. *Ardzagank' yev Ants'ordē, patmavatsk' yev husher* (Echo and The passer-by: Stories and memoirs). Istanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2006.
- Der Yeghiayan, Zaven (Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, 1913–1922). *My Patriarchal Memoirs*. Trans. Ared Misirliyan. Barrington, RI: Mayreni Publishing, 2002.
- Edgarian, Carol. *Rise the Euphrates*. New York: Random House, 1994.
- Ergil, Doğu. "The Armenian Psyche: Transgenerational Transmission." *Today's Zaman*. October 28, 2007.
- Farhi, Moris. *Young Turk: A Novel*. London: Saqi Books, 2004.
- Friedman, Jonathan. "History and the Politics of Identity." In *Cultural Identity and Global Process*, pp. 117–46. London: Sage Publications, 1994.
- Göçek, Fatma Müge. "Silences in the Turkish Republican Past: An Analysis of Contemporary Turkish-Armenian Literature." Unpublished paper.
- Goldenberg, Myrna. "Sexual Violence and the Holocaust: An Interim Analysis." Paper presented at the Conference of the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS), Sarajevo, 2007.
- Gutman, Matthew. "The Secret Jews of Remote Turkey." *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, March 4, 2003.
- Hacikyan, Agop J., and Jean-Yves Soucy. *A Summer Without Dawn*. Trans. Christina Le Vernoy and Joyce Bailey. London: Saqi Books, 2000.
- Haddejian, Rober. *Hushatetr – 15, Grakan havak'uyt' Suatiyei mer partēzin mej* (Diary #15: Literary gatherings in our garden in Suadiye). Istanbul: Dizgi ve baskı, 1999.
- Harutiunian, Avag, ed. *Aylakhos ev ayladavan hayer* (Armenians with a different religion and language). Yerevan: "Hayrenik" Akumb Publication Series 6, 2007.
- Hikmet, Nazim. *Things I Didn't Know I Loved: Selected Poems of Nâzım Hikmet*. Trans. Randy Blasing and Mutlu Konuk. New York: Persea Books, 1975.

- Hilsenrath, Edgar. *The Story of the Last Thought*. Trans. of *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* (Munich: Piper, 1989) by Hugh Young. London: Scribners, 1990.
- Hocking, Joseph. *The Path of Glory*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917.
- Hovannisian, Richard G. "Intervention and Shades of Altruism during the Armenian Genocide." In *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics*, pp. 173–207. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.
- . "The Armenian Question in the Ottoman Empire." In *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 2, pp. 203–38. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.
- . "Bitter-Sweet Memories: The Last Generation of Ottoman Armenians." In *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide*, pp. 113–24. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003.
- Jacobson, Maria. *Diaries of a Danish Missionary: Harpoot, 1907–1917*. Trans. Kristen Vind. Ed. Ara Sarafian. Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute Books, 2001.
- Kalfayan, Hilda. *Polsahay nor banasteghtsut'ivnē* (The Istanbul Armenian new poetry). Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia Press, 1998.
- Karapents, Hacop. *Antsanot' hoginer* (Unfamiliar souls). Beirut: Atlas Press, 1970.
- . "Jeferson, AMN" (Jefferson USA). In *Nor ashkharhi hin sermnats'annerē*. Beirut: Atlas Press, 1975.
- Ketchian, Bertha Nakshian. *In the Shadow of the Fortress: The Genocide Remembered*. Cambridge, MA: Zorian Institute, 1988.
- Kherdian, David. *Homage to Adana*. Fresno, CA: Giligia Press, 1970.
- King, William C. *Complete History of the World War: Visualizing the Great Conflict in All Theatres of Action, 1914–1918*. Massachusetts: The History Association, 1922.
- Köker, Osman. "Ermeni Kadın ve Çocuklarının Müslümanlara Verilmesi Bir İstisna Değil, Devlet Politikasıydı" (Giving Armenian women and children to Muslims is not an

- exception, but government policy). Unpublished work, 2007.
- Kouyoumjian, Dickran. "The Destruction of Armenian Historical Monuments as a Continuation of the Turkish Policy of Genocide." In *A Crime of Silence: The Armenian Genocide*, ed. Gérard Libaridian for the Permanent People's Tribunal, pp. 173–85. London: Zed Books, 1985.
- Lambert, Rose. *Hadjin and the Armenian Massacres*. New York: Revell, 1911.
- Langer, Lawrence L. *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.
- Lee, Roy S., ed. *The International Criminal Court: Elements of Crime and Rules of Procedure and Evidence*. Ardsley, NY: Transnational Publishers, 2001.
- Liebrecht, Savyon. "Hayuta's Engagement Party." In *Apples from the Desert*. Trans. Marganit Weinberger-Rotman. New York: Feminist Press, 1998.
- Margosyan, Migirdic. *Tigrisi ap'erēn* (From the banks of the Tigris). Istanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 1999.
- . *Mer ayd koghimerē* (In those places of ours). 5th ed. Istanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2005.
- Mashoyan, Rupen. *Ev ayspēs aprets'ank'* (And this is how we lived). 1st ed. Istanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, February 1998.
- Melkonian, Ruben, trans. "Hrand Dink'i spanut'yunē 'tsptyal hayeri' hamar haytnut'yun ēr" (The assassination of Hrant Dink was a revelation for "hidden Armenians"). Interview with Salim Cönce. *Hanrapetakan*, no. 2 [= 44] (2007): 8–12.
- Melkonian, Ruben. "'Tsptyal' hayeri kronadardzut'yunē" (The reconversion of hidden Armenians). *Hanrapetakan*, no. 3 [= 45] (2007): 5–10.
- . "'Tsptyal' hayeri het kapvats nor iroghut'yunner" (New realities in relation to hidden Armenians). *Hanrapetakan*, no. 4 [= 46] (2007): 1–5.
- . "Kronakan halatsank'neri nor alik' T'urk'yayum (Malat'iaiyi spandi shurj)" (A new wave of religious persecutions [on the murders in Malatya]). *Hanrapetakan*, no. 5 [= 47] (2007): 11–16.

- . “Hay erekhaneri islamats’umě hayots’ Ts’eghaspanut’yan Tarinerin” (The Islamization of Armenian children during the years of the Armenian Genocide). *Hanrapetakan*, no. 6 [= 48] (2007): 4–8.
- . “Kan hamshents’iner, hatkapes eridasardneri mej, voronk’ irents’ bats’ahayt hay en hamarum” (There are Hamshentsis, especially among the young, who openly consider themselves Armenians). Interview with Kayel Margaroglu. *Hanrapetakan*, no. 7 [= 49] (2007): 43–8.
- . “Arabats’ats hayer T’urk’iayum” (Arabized Armenians in Turkey). *Hanrapetakan*, no. 8 [= 50] (2007): 5–9.
- . “20-rd dari enich’erinerē, Kheghvats chakatagir” (Twentieth-century Janissaries: Tampered fate). *Hanrapetakan*, no. 9 [= 51] (2007): 5–10.
- Miller, Donald E., and Lorna Touryan Miller. “Women and Children of the Armenian Genocide.” In *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, pp. 152–72. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992.
- . *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Minassian, John. *Many Hills Yet to Climb: Memoir of an Armenian Deportee*. Santa Barbara, CA: Jim Cook, 1986.
- Minority Rights Group International. *A Quest for Equality: Minorities in Turkey*. MRGI, 2007.
- Mintzuri, Hagop. *Givghē k’apri im mējs* (The village lives in my heart). 2nd ed. Istanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2005.
- Moravian, Suzanne Elizabeth. “Bearing Witness: The Missionary Archives as Evidence of the Armenian Genocide.” In *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, pp. 103–28. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992.
- Morgenthau, Henry. *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*. Memorial Edition. Plandome, NY: New Age Publishers, 1975.
- Mouradian, Khachig. “A Storyteller’s Quest: A Great Turkish Author.” *Asbarēz*, Special Commemorative Issue, April 22, 2006, p. 10.

- Moussa, Helene, comp. *Stormy Seas We Brave: Creative Expressions by Uprooted People*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998.
- Mugrditchian, Hovhannes. *To Armenians with Love: The Memoirs of a Patriot*. Hobe Sound, FL: Paul Mart, 1996.
- Naim Bey. *The Memoirs of Naim Bey*. Comp. Aram Antonian. 2nd printing. Newtown Square, PA: Armenian Historical Research Association, 1965.
- Najarian, Peter. *Daughters of Memory*. Berkeley, CA: City Miner Books, 1986.
- Olick, Jeffrey K., and Joyce Robbins. “Social Memory Studies: From ‘Collective Memory’ to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105–40.
- Oshagan, Hagop. *Mnats’ordats’* (Remnants), 2 vols. in 3. Cairo: Tparan Husaber, 1932–33.
- . *Kayserakan hagh’ergut’ivn* (Imperial song of triumph). Antelias, Lebanon: Librairie du Catholicosarménien, 1983.
- Oshagan, Vahé. *T’akart’in shurj, ardzak grut’ivnner* (Around the snare: Prose writings). New York: Voskedar Press, 1988.
- Pamuk, Orhan. *Snow*. Trans. Maureen Freely. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004.
- Parmelee, Ruth A. *Pioneer in the Euphrates Valley*. Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute Books, 2002.
- Perroomian, Rubina. “The Transformation of Armenianness in the Formation of Armenian-American Identity.” *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 6 (1992–93): 119–45.
- . *Literary Responses to Catastrophe: A Comparison of the Armenian and the Jewish Experience*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993.
- . “New Directions in Literary Responses to the Armenian Genocide.” In *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, pp. 157–80. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003.

- . "The Truth of the Armenian Genocide in Edgar Hilsenrath's Fiction." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8:2 (2003): 281–92.
- . "When Death Is a Blessing and Life a Prolonged Agony: Women Victims of Genocide." In *Genocide Perspectives II: Essays on Holocaust and Genocide*, ed. Colin Martin Tatz, Sandra Tatz, and Peter Arnold, pp. 315–32. Sydney: Brandl & Schlesinger with the Australian Institute for Holocaust & Genocide Studies, 2003.
- Pran, Dith, comp. *Children of Cambodia's Killing Fields*. Ed. Kim DePaul. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.
- Scheissl, Christoph. "An Element of Genocide: Rape, Total War, and International Law in the Twentieth Century." *Journal of Genocide Research* 4:2 (2002): 197–210.
- Schilling, Peter. "Is It Still Genocide If Your Allies Did It?" Interview with Taner Akçam. *Minnesota Law and Politics*. <http://www.lawandpolitics.com/minnesota/Is-It-Still-Genocide-if-Your-Allies-Did-It/cef7381e-fe46-102a-aeb9-000e0c6dcf76.html>. Accessed March 6, 2008.
- Sevan, Sevd. *Rodosto, Rodosto*. Trans. M. Terzian. Yerevan: Sovetakan Grogh, 1989.
- Shafak, Elif. *The Bastard of Istanbul*. New York: Viking, 2007.
- Shirinian, Lorne. *Armenian–North American Literature, a Critical Introduction: Genocide, Diaspora, and Symbols*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990.
- . "Survivor Memoirs of the Armenian Genocide as Cultural History." In *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, pp. 165–74. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1998.
- . *Writing Memory: The Search for Home in Armenian Diaspora Literature as Cultural Practice*. Kingston, Ontario: Blue Heron Press, 2000.
- . *Memory's Orphans*. Kingston, Ontario: Blue Heron Press, 2002.
- Sicher, Efraim, ed. *Breaking Crystal: Writing and Memory after Auschwitz*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998.

- Simonian, Hovann, ed. *The Hemshin: History, Society and Identity in the Highlands of Northeast Turkey*. London: Routledge, 2007.
- Sivakumaran, Sandesh. "Sexual Violence Against Men in Armed Conflict." *European Journal of International Law* 18:2 (2007): 253–76.
- Staub, Ervin. "Healing and Reconciliation." In *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, pp. 263–74. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003.
- Svazlian, Verjiné. *The Armenian Genocide in the Memoirs and Turkish-Language Songs of the Eye-Witness Survivors*. Trans. Tigran Tsullikian. Yerevan: "Gitut'iun" Publishing, 1999.
- . *Hayots' Ts'eghaspanut'yun, Akanates verapoghneri vkayut'yunner* (The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of eye-witness survivors). Yerevan: "Gitut'iun" Publishing, 2000.
- Teodik. *Azgē ch'ē meḡats ev anhnar ē vor meḡni, Banti ev ak'sori tariner* (The nation has not died and it is impossible that she die: Days of prison and exile). Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia Press, 1985.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *Les abus de la mémoire*. Paris: Arléa, 1995.
- Toranian, Toros. *Istanbulahayerē kē kanch'en* (The Istanbul Armenians are calling). Istanbul: Aras Yayincılık, 1997.
- Tsovak, V. S., Vardan Komikian, and Rober Haddejian, eds. *Hamaynapatker hanrapetakan shirjani Istanbulahay grakanut'ean* (A panorama of the Istanbul Armenian literature of the Republican era). Istanbul: Aramian "Sanouts" Miutun, 1957.
- United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (USDOS BDHRL). "Turkey." In *2007 Report on International Religious Freedom*. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90204.htm>.
- Uzun, Mehmed. "The Pomegranate Flowers." Trans. Suzanne Baudin. *International Journal of Kurdish Studies* 17 (January 2003): 35–64.

- Walker, Christopher, J. "World War One and the Armenian Genocide." In *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, vol. 2, pp. 239-73. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.
- Weine, Steven M. "Artists Witnessing 'Ethnic Cleansing'." In *Genocide, War, and Human Survival*, ed. Charles B. Strozier and Michael Flynn, pp. 243-55. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996.
- Werfel, Franz. *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*. Trans. Geoffrey Dunlop. 3rd printing. New York: Viking Press, 1934.
- Wertsch, James V. *Voices of Collective Remembering*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Yalçın, Kemal. *Hogis k'ezmov kē khayta* (You rejoice my heart) Trans. of *Seninle Güler Yüreğim*, 2nd ed. (Cologne: Yazarın kendi yayını, 2001), by Archbishop Karekin Bekjian, Primate of Armenians in Germany. Yerevan: Zangak 97 Press, 2003.
- Zayas, Alfred de. "The Istanbul Pogroms of 6-7 September 1955 in the Light of International Law." *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 2:2 (August 2007): 137-54.

Index

- Abdul, Hamid II, Sultan, 129, 207, *see also* Hamidian massacres of 1894-96
- Adak, Hulia, 46-47
- Adana, 163, 216
- Adıyaman, 140, 153, 155, 188, 209
- Adorno, Theodore, 57
- Advisory Council on Human Rights (Turkey), 27
- Agn, 116
- Agos, 12, 25, 42, 187, 191
- Aharonian Marcom, Micheline, 183; grandmother Nané, 183
- Ahmet Efendi, 64
- Ahnert Ajemian, Margaret, 59, 92, 164
- Aintab, 86
- Ajemian Minerajian Ahronian, Ester (*in The Knock at the Door*), 59, 91-92, 94, 164, Ester/Gezeer Kateejeh, 92, 104; granddaughter Lynn, 164; great-granddaughter, Sara, 164; husband, Albert, 164; stepbrother Arsen, 94
- Akçam, Taner, 34, 45, 207
- Akishian, Noubar, 169
- Aksiyon, 81
- Akyol, Tuba, 143
- Aleppo, 65-66, 86, 122

- Alishan, Leonardo, 180-181
 Altan, Ahmet, 41-42
 Amasya, 48-50, 59, 64, 70, 134
 Amatuni Hamam, prince, 72
 Ani, 51
 Ankara, 27, 32; University of, 27
 Antakya, 102
 Antonian, Aram, 65, 93
 Ararat, Mt., 169, 182
 Ardanutem, 101
 Armdan, 116, 118
 Armenian Apostolic Church, 57, 74, 190
 Armenian massacres of 1894-96, *see* Hamidian massacres of 1894-96
 Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, 21, *see also* Der Yeghiayan, Zaven, Archbishop
 Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), 46, 73
Armenian Weekly, 186
 Arsu, Sebnem, 207
 Article 301 of the Republic's Penal Code, (denigrating Turkishness), 42, 158, 187
 Aşkale, 51, 193-194
 Atatürk, Mustafa, Kemal, 4, 5, 39, 63, 78, 137, 194; Kemalism, 39; Kemalist army, 4; Kemalist, 53
 Auschwitz, 209
 Baba Yusuf of Aşkale, 193
 Baghdoyan, Setrak 61-62, 88-89; in *Erb drakhte dartsav dzhokhk*: Siranush, 62; Sirun, 88; Vahram, 88; Ibosh Bey, 88
 Bakir, 101
 Balakian, Peter, 181
 Balu (Palu), 132
Bardzravank, 4, 10
 Bedoukian, Kerop, 179
 Beirut, 183
 Berberian, Shahan, 4
 Birzamanlar, Publishing, 44
 Bitlis, 120, 167
 Black Sea coast, 72
 Bonn, 51
 Bulgaria, 36
 California, USA, 111
 Cambodian genocide, massacres, 178
 Card, Claudia, 223-224
 Çermik, 138-139
 Çetin, Fethiye, 44, 90, 106, 131-133, 139-144, 208-211, 223
 Chalian, Gerard, 165-168
 Charney, Israel, 178

- Chukurova Center of Culture and Art, 216
 Cilicia, 85
 Cöhce, Salim, 81
 Cologne, 48, 153
 Committee of Union and Progress, *see* Young Turks
 Communist, *also* leftist, 10, 141; ideology, 190
 Constantinople, 3-5, 20, 37-38, 86-87, 100, 118, 134, 138, 154, 167
 Coordination Board
 Fighting against so-called Genocide Claims, 216
 Çüngüş, 139
 Cyprus issue, 194
 Davit, the last prince of Hamamshen, 72
 Delbo, Charlotte, 209
 Derdarian, Mae M., 181
 Derin devlet ("deep state"), 26n
 Der Hovanessian, Diana, 168-169
 Der Markaryan, Arpiar, 119, 122-123, 147, 167-168
 Der Yeghiayan, Zaven, Archbishop, 86, 134, 138
 Der-El-Zor (Der Zor), 89, 168-169
 Dersim (Mintzuri) Mountains, 116; Kurdish uprising (1938), 137
 Devil's Gap, 102
 Diaspora, 16, 34, 43, 56, 59, 70, 73, 107, 109, 144, 157-159, 161, 163, 165, 177, 201-202, 222, 224-225; Armenians, communities, newspapers, 16, 29, 31, 35, 55-60, 81, 83, 109, 126, 157, 159-160, 165, 169-173, 176-177, 180, 184-185, 201, 213-214, 218, 220-222, 224-225; identity, 18-19, 56, 126, 165-167, 169, 171, 175, 182, 207, 213-214, 220-221, 224-225; survivors, 2, 61, 109-110, 161, 163, 166, 208, 220; women survivors, 35
 Dink Arat, 42
 Dink, Hrant, 12, 25-26, 41-43, 81, 187, 191, 211
 Diocese of Khachkar, 72
 Diyarbakir, 23, 123-125, 128-130, 139, 149
 Dzvadzegh village, 118
 Doğan Publishing, 44
 Edgarian, Carol, 183
 Ekrek, 189, 197
 Ellis Island, 164
 Erbaa, 48

- Ergil, Doğu, 222
 Ergin, Oktay, 195
 Erzerum, 48, 51, 85-86, 101
 Ethiopian Jews and Israel, 226
 Euphrates College, *see*,
 Kharbert American
 Yeprat (Euphrates)
 College
 European Union, 73, 219
 Farhi, Moris, 38-39
 Fresno, USA, 111
 Galustian, Haygazun, 114-115
Gâvur Mahallesi, (Quarter of the Infidels) 23-24, 123-126, 128-130
Gazetem.net, 41
 Gerger, 69, 156
 Germany, 44, 48, 69, 82, 84, 150, 153-156, 176, 188-189, 209
 Gesaria, *see* Kayseri
 Gestapo, German 104
 Giragossian, Alicia, 165
 Göçek, Fatma Müge, 10, 32-34, 131, 211
 Gökçen, Sabiha, 137
 Greater Armenia, 81
 Gürbüzler ordusu (the bregade of the sturdy), 136
 Gürsoy, Akile, 33
 Hacikyan, Agop, 86, 150-151, 187
 Haddejian, Rober, 8, 119, 194-195
 Hajen (Hadjin), 22, 167;
 Hajentsi, 167
 Hamamshen, *also*
 Hamshen, 72
 Hamidian massacres of
 1894-96, 36, 75-76, 96,
 120, 147, 182, 210
 Hamshen Armenians, *also*
 Hamshentsies and
 Hamshenlis, 71-75;
 Hopa group, 74;
 Hamsheneren (the
 Armenian dialect
 spoken by Hamshen
 Armenians), 74
 Haroutunian, Virginia 163
 Heranoush, Gadarian,
 Seher, Seher/Heranoush
 (in *Anneannem*), 90, 131-134, 138-139, 141-142, 209; son, Mahmud, 91, 142; adopted father, Husein, 139; mother, Iskouhi, 132, 134;
 Gadarian family, 132;
 Methiye, an
 acquaintance, whose
 mother too was
 Armenian, 142
 Hidden Jews, 78
 Hikmet, Nazim, 31, 34
 Hilsenrath, Edgar, 99-101
 Hocking, Joseph, 76

- Holocaust, Jewish,
 survivors, 35, 104, 149,
 178, 207
 House Resolution 106 and
 Senate Concurrent
 Resolution 2007, 221
 Hretan, 126
 International Criminal
 Court, 106-107
 International Criminal
 Tribunal for the Former
 Yugoslavia (ICTY), 106
 Istanbul (Constantinople
 officially changed to
 Istanbul in 1930), 4-12,
 20-25, 28, 32, 43, 49, 60-61, 64, 67, 69-70, 74, 80-81, 112-114, 116, 119-120, 123-124, 128, 141, 150, 152, 157, 161, 185-186, 189, 191, 194-195, 203-204, 206
 Janian, Arsen, 23
 Janissaries, 136
 Jewish Telegraphic Agency
 (JTA), 78
 Kahta, 155
 Kalfayan, Hilda, 8
 Kangale, 150
 Kara Bekir, Kiazim, 136
 Karagözian, Varteres, 112
 Karaman, 65-67
 Karapents, Hakob, 57, 164, 170
 Karmirian, Anelka, 147-149
 Karmirian, Ara, 167-168
 Kars, 48, 51, 196-200
 Kayseri (Gesaria), 134, 189
 Kemal, Yashar, 31
 Ketchian Nakshian, Bertha
 (Berjuhi), 179
 Khachkar Mountains, 72
 Kharbert, 89, 120, 183;
 American Yeprat
 (Euphrates) College, 120
 Khenchebek quarter of
 Tikranakert's *Gâvur*
 Mahalle, 24
 Kherdian, David, 111, 163
 Khmer Rouge, Khmer
 people, 178-179
 Khrakhuni, Zareh (Arto
 Jumbushian), 7- 8, 112,
 195
 Khultig (now Aredağ), 120
 King, William, 101
 Köker, Osman, 45, 105
 Komikian, Vardan, 9
 Koroğlu, Erol, 32
 Kurdish Question, Issue,
 130, 222
 Langer, Lawrence, 209
 Lausanne, Treaty, Law
 (1923), 26-27
 Law on Surnames (1934),
 69, 192
 Lemkin, Rafael, 46
 Liebrecht, Savyon, 149
 Lisbon, Turkish Embassy,
 suicide mission on, 172

- "Looking For My Relative", 191
 Maden, 132
 Malatya, 80
 Margaroğlu, Kayel, 74
 Margosyan, Migirdic, 12, 23, 123-124, 126, 130-131
Marmara, 11-12, 23, 123-124, 126, 130-131
 Marseilles, 69
 Martayan, Hagop, 8
 Mashoyan, Rupen, 82, 114, 118
 Meliné, instructor of teachers' retraining program in Germany, 48, 78, 140-141, 150, 185; husband, Keğam (Gegham), 140, 150
 Melkonian, Ruben, 74, 79, 136
 Menderes, Adnan, 195-196
 Merzifon (Marzevan), 60, 62-63, 80, 134. College, 60
 Meskene, 65
 Mezre, 183
 Military coup in Turkey, March 12, 1971, 128
 Military coup in Turkey, September 12, 1980, 196
 Minassian, John, 179
 Mintzuri, Hagop, 12, 115-118, 124
 Mkhitarian Sanuts Miutiun (Society of Mkhitarian Alumni), 195
 Morgenthau, Henry, 98-99, 105,
 Mosul, 61, 86, 89
 Mouradian, Khatchig, 222
 Muğrditchian, Hovhannes, 179-180
 Mullah Chelebi (Mulla Çelebi), 156
 Musaler (Musadagh), 23, 102
 Mush, 182, 207
 Mustafa Kemal, *see* Atatürk, Mustafa Kemal
 Najarian, Peter, 171
 Nazi ideology, *see* Nuremberg Law
 Nevşehir, 195
New Perspectives Quarterly (NPQ), 200
Noyan Tapan, 216
 Nuremberg Law, 106
 Önal, Ahmet, 144
 Oran, Baskın, 27
 Ordu, 72
 Oshagan, Hagop, 4
 Oshagan, Vahé, 171-172
 Özdem, Filiz, 144
 Özer, Andan, 193
 Palalı, Irfan, 144
 Pamuk, Orhan, 196-200
 Partevian, Suren, 96
 Parajanov, Sergei, 130

- Patterson, Orlando, 224
 Penn, Savuth, 178
 Pogroms of 6-7 September 1955, 152, 190, 194-196
 Pontic Mountains, 72
 Pran, Dith, 178
 Quarter of the Infidels, *see* *Gâvur Mahallesi*
 Racine, USA, 111
Rassenshande, 104
 "Rejects of the sword," *also* "sword leftovers," 126-128, 214
Reuters News Service, 42
 Rodosto, 38
 Rome, 112
 Salonika (Thessaloniki), 194
 Samsun, 72
San, 195
 Şanlıurfa (biblical Ur), 78
 Sarikishla, 134
 Saroyan, William, 167-168
 Sayat Nova, 130
 Scheissl, Christoph, 103
 Sebastia, *see* Sivaz
 Seher, *see* Heranoush
 Seropyan, Serkis, 42
 Sevan, Sevda, 36, 97
 Shabouh, prince, 72
 Shafak, Elif, 28, 44, 55, 89, 143, 157-160, 186, 200-206, 220, 222
 Shavarsh, A. (Aram Pehlivanian), 22
 Shipley Muggerditchian, Alice, 179
 Shishli, Istanbul, 24, 124
 Sivakumaran, Sandesh, 97-98
 Sivas, *also* Sebastia, 50, 69, 134, 150, 161
 Smith Foston, Vickie, 182, 209
 Smyrna (Izmir), burning of, 4
 Sourb Khach Dprevank of Scutari, 140-141
 Soviet; Armenia, 3, 69; Armenian literature, 2; ideology, 3; identity, 218, 225; army, 66; Post-Soviet Republic, 73, 225-226
 "Speak Turkish" Turkification campaign of 1960s, 190, 196
 Sublime Porte, 72
 Surname Law, *see* Law of Surnames
 "Sword leftovers," *see* "Rejects of the sword"
 Syrian desert, 60, 63, 122
 System of a Down, 184
 Talat, Pasha, 46, 135
 Tankian, Serj, 184
 Taşova, 48
 Tavernise, Sabrina, 207
 Tekeyan, Vahan, 4
 Tel-Afar, 89

- Teodik, 102
 Terents (Tursarkissian),
 Gourgen, 22
 Terzian, Sargis, 194
The Color of the Pomegranate,
 130
 Tigranakert, 24, 123, 125;
 Tigranagerttsi, 125, 127;
 dialect, 124-125
 Tigris, River, 125-126, 128,
 130, 149
 Todorov, Tzvetan, 157, 226
 Tokat, 134
 Toranian, Toros, 11, 117
 Trabzon, 72
 Tukaris, 154
 Turcili, 153
 Türkeş, Ömer A., 32, 196
 Turkish Historical
 Association, 32
 Turkish Historical
 Foundation, 32
 Union and Progress
 (Committee), *see* Young
 Turks
 UN Special Rapporteur of
 the Commission on
 Human rights, 101
 Urfa, 42
 Uzun, Mehmed, 127-130,
 148-149; in "The
 Pomegranate Flowers":
 Mgo (Migirdic), 128;
 Vardan, 128-130, 149
 Van, 37, 48, 76, 85
 Vasburagan, 72
varlık vergisi (wealth tax),
 1942, 154, 190, 193 196
 "Varol" printing shop, 195
 Wealth tax, *see* *varlık vergisi*
 Weine, Steven M., 58
 Werfel, Franz, 102
 Wertsch, James V., 53, 218
 Wiesel, Elie, 207
 Worcester, USA, 168
 Yalçın, Kemal, 13, 44, 48-53,
 60, 63-64, 68, 79, 82, 140-
 141, 150, 152-154, 175-
 176, 185-186, 188-189,
 192-193, 196, 208-209,
 223
 Yalçın Interviewees:
 Safieh/Zaruhi, 49-50;
 Kirkor Ceyhan, 51, 69,
 156, 194; Ohan Özant,
 64-65, 70, 185-186; Hajji
 Ibrahim, 79, 83, 153-156,
 175-176; Sultan, 79, 88,
 188-189, 209; Vahram
 Garabent, 60-64, 79-80,
 193; Sarkis Varpet, 65-
 68, 152, 154, 193;
 Shimaver
 (Shmavon)/ Ali, 154-155;
 Zakaria, 189-190, 197;
 Yakup, 140, 175
 Yassaçal, 50
Yeni Aktüel, 144
yeniçeri, *see* janissary

- Yeprat* College, *see*
 Kharbert Euphrates
 College
 Yerevan, 61
 Young Turks (The
 Committee of Union and
 Progress, also known as
 the Ittihadists),
 government, 30, 33, 78,
 92, 98, 207
 Zahrad (Zareh Yaldejian),
 7-8
 Zara, 50, 69, 194
 Zarian, Kostan, 4
 Zayas, Alfred de, 195
 Zeitun, 85
Zhamanak, 12
 Zileh, 134
 Zirve Publishing, 80

Գրքի հայերեն ամփոփում

**Իսկ նրանք
որոնք 1915-ից յետոյ
շարունակեցին ապրել Թուրքիայում**

**Յետ-Եղեռնեան
հայ ազգային
ինքնութեան հոլովոյթը՝
գեղարուեստական գրականութեան
ընդմիջից**

Համառոտ Ամփոփում

Գիրքը մաս է կազմում եռահատոր մի ծրագրի, որ նպատակադրել էմ ամբողջացնել՝ եթե ներեն ժամանակը եւ կարողութիւններս: Այս աշխատութիւնը, իրականութեան մէջ երկրորդն է շարքի, որի առաջինը, դեռ պատրաստութեան փուլում, պիտի պարփակի սփիւռքահայ երկրորդ եւ երրորդ սերունդների անդրադարձը Ադէտին, թէ ինչպէս է ծնողների, մեծիայրերի եւ մեծմայրերի աղիտալի անցեալի յիշողութիւնը փոխանցուել նրանց եւ ազդել նրանց աշխարհայեացքի, կեանքի ընկալման եւ վերջապէս, նրանց ինքնութեան վրայ: Եւ այդ բոլորը, ի հարկէ, սփիւռքահայ գրականութեան մէջ գտած

արտացոլումների ընդմիջից:՝ Այդ հատորը բնական շարունակութիւնը պիտի լինի 1993-ին հրատարակուած *The Literary Responses to Catastrophe: A Comparison of the Armenian and the Jewish Experience* հատորի:

Ընթերցողին եմ յանձնում ներկայ հատորը, յուսալով, որ շուտով պիտի կարողանամ աւարտել առաջինը եւ ձեռնարկել վերջինին, որ դարձեալ կիսաւարտ է եւ որ պեղում է խորհրդահայ գրականութիւնը՝ վեր հանելու համար Ադէտի պատմական յիշողութեան արձագանքները՝ թէկուզ արգիլուած, թէկուզ տիրող խիստ գրաքննութեան մթնոլորտում: Այս հատորում պիտի փորձեմ ցոյց տալ պատմական յիշողութեան փոխանցումը սերնդից սերունդ եւ խորհրդային շրջանի յետագայ հալածանքների յիշատակների կուտակումը հենց նոյն Մեծ Եղեռնի յիշողութեան վրայ եւ նոյն պարունակում բացատրուած:

* * *

Հանրապետական Թուրքիայի ամբողջ պատմութեան ընթացքում, ազգային փոքրամասնութիւնների իրաւունքների բռնադատման ու խտրականութեան մթնոլորտում, հայ ժողովրդի անցեալի կրած հաւաքական տառապանքը թաղուած մնաց լռութեան մէջ: Յաջորդական իշխանու-

* 2008-ին, պատրաստութեան փուլում գտնուող այդ հատորը ամբողջացաւ եւ հրատարակուեց 2012-ի մարտին, ներկայի վերահրատարակութիւնից առաջ: Հատորի ծաւալը ընդունելի սահմաններում պահելու համար, յարմար նկատուեց ներկայացնել վերապրող առաջին սերնդի եւ նրան յաջորդող՝ «անապատի սերնդի» գրական ազդումները Ադէտին, ներառնելով նաեւ մի շարք յուշագրութիւններ. այսպիսով եւ հետագային թողնելով երկրորդ եւ երրորդ սերնդի գրականութեան մէջ Ադէտի ազդումների ուսումնասիրութիւնը:

թիւները արգիլեցին հայոց պատմութեան, աշխարհագրութեան եւ նման զգայուն նիւթերի դասաւանդումը Պոլսի հայոց դպրոցներում, այդպիսով՝ արգիլելով նաեւ պատմական յիշողութեան բնական փոխանցումը սերնդից սերունդ: Աւելին, թուրք իշխանութիւնների կողմից Հայոց Յեղասպանութեան իրողութեան յամառ եւ յարաճուն ուրացման եւ թուրք մօտիկ անցեալի նկատմամբ ցուցաբերուած խտրական մօտեցման հետեւանքով, Թուրքիայում մոռացութեան տրուեց Հայկական Հարցը: Հայի դէմ կատարուած անարդարութեան, նոյնիսկ նրա գոյութեան մասին յիշատակումներ չեղան ո՛չ թուրք պատմութեան դասագրքերում եւ ոչ էլ հանրապետական շրջանի գեղարուեստական գրականութեան մէջ:

Քաղաքական եւ ընկերային ճնշուածութեան այս պայմաններում, Յեղասպանութիւնը վերապրած ու Թուրքիայում իր կեանքը շարունակող հայ մարդը ինչպէ՞ս է ընկալել եւ ընկալում իր ազգային ինքնութիւնը, ինչպէ՞ս է կարողացել, եթէ կարողացել է, պահել եւ դրսեւորել այդ ինքնութիւնը:

Բայց ի՞նչ է ազգային ինքնութիւն հասկացողութիւնը եւ ինչպէ՞ս բնութագրել ընդհանուր եզրով արտայայտուած Յեղասպանութիւնը վերապրած ու Թուրքիայում իր կեանքը շարունակող հայ մարդուն:

Ազգային ինքնութեան յղացքը բարդ կառոյց է, որի մէջ աւելի շեշտակի ներգործութիւն ունեն անհատի ցեղը, լեզուն, պատմութիւնը, մշակոյթը, աւանդոյթները եւ հողային պատկանելիութիւնը: Պատմութիւնը եւ մանաւանդ՝ այդ պատմութեան հաւաքական յիշողութիւնը մեկնակէտն է այս ուսումնասիրութեան, նախ՝ որովհետեւ պատմութիւնը յոյժ կարեւոր է ազգը բնորոշելու եւ

ուրիշներից զատորոշելու համար եւ յետոյ, որովհետեւ հաւատում եմ, թէ պատմութեան, կամ նրա հաւաքական յիշողութեան ազդեցութիւնը կամ դերը ազգային ինքնութեան կառոյցի մէջ աւելի մեծ է երբ հաւաքական յիշողութեան կենտրոնում մի աղիտալի դէպք է նստած, այս պարագայում՝ Հայոց Յեղասպանութիւնը:

Իսկ, բնութագրելու համար Յեղասպանութիւնից որեւէ ձեւով փրկուած այն հայերի՞ն, որոնք մի որեւէ պատճառով, կամովին կամ պարտադրանքի տակ, մնացին Թուրքիայում: Եթէ նրանց ազգային ինքնութեան գիտակցութիւնը եւ այդ գիտակցութիւնը ձեւաւորող քաղաքական ու ընկերային տարրերը որպէս օրինաչափ ընդունենք, ապա՝ պիտի հաշուի առնենք թէ այդ մարդիկ թուրք հասարակութեան լայն համայնացոյցի մէջ ինչ տեղ են զբաղեցնում: Ահա՛ այդ լայն պատկերի մէկ ծայրում եւ տեսնում եմ այն անհատներին, մեծ մասամբ կանայք եւ երեխաներ, որոնց մի թուրք, քուրդ կամ արաբ «փրկել» է՝ գնել, կամ առեւանգել, եւ բոլոր պարագաներում ուժով կրօնափոխել: Սրանք շարունակել են ապրել մահմեդական հասարակութեան մէջ, ամուսնացել են ու երեխաներ մեծացրել: Ապա՝ գոյութիւն ունեն ընտանիքներ, կամ ընտանիքների խմբեր, որոնք Մահմեդականութիւն են ընդունել եւ խուսափել են ջարդից ու տեղահանութիւնից: Սրանցից ոմանք ներծծուել ու կորել են իսլամ հասարակութեան մէջ, ոմանք՝ առերեւոյթ պահել են Մահմեդականութիւնը եւ գաղտնի դաւանել են Զրիստոնէութեանը («ծպտեալ հայեր»), իսկ ոմանք էլ պատշաճ առիթը օգտագործելով վերադարձել են իրենց նախնիների կրօնին: Ապա՝ այն ընտանիքները, որոնք Թուրքիոյ խուլ անկիւններում շարունակել են կառչած մնալ քրիստոնէա-

կան իրենց կրօնին, բայց ժամանակի ընթացքում, խտրականության ու հալածանքներին չդիմանալով լքել են ծննդավայրը եւ Պոլիս կամ արտասահման գաղթել՝ դրանով օժանդակելով թուրք իշխանութիւնների հետապնդած նպատակին, որ է՝ երկրի ներսերը հայկական տարրից մաքրել: Համայնացոյցի միւս ծայրում պոլսահայերն են, տակաւ նուազող գաղութ, որ քիչ թէ շատ որպէս կրօնական փոքրամասնութիւն է ճանաչոււմ: Ի հարկէ, պոլսահայութիւնն էլ միատարր համայնք չի: Տարբեր են նրա տեղային պատկանելիութիւնը եւ կապուածութիւնը համայնքի կառոյցների հետ:

Այս ուսումնասիրութեանս պեղման միջոցն ու վայրը գեղարուեստական գրականութիւնն է: Հաւատում եմ, որ գեղարուեստական գրականութեան մէջ է արտացոլում անհատի եւ իր միջավայրի փոխ-յարաբերութիւնն ու փոխ-ներգործութիւնը. այնտեղ է երեւում նրա վերաբերմունքը հաւաքական անցեալի նկատմամբ՝ ներկայի պարունակում: Այսուամենայնիւ, պոլսահայ գրականութիւնը այդ վայրը չի եղել: Չարգացման իր ուրոյն եւ իւրայատուկ ճամբան կտրելով, համամարդկային առումով բարձունքների հասնելով հանդերձ, պոլսահայ գրականութիւնը միայն վերջին տարիներում է շօշափում ցաւոտ անցեալի թեման: Դրանից առաջ, կցկտուր յիշողութիւններ, ծննդավայրի ու անցեալի կարօտ, անուղղակի յղումներ անցեալին՝ «Մարմարա», «Ժամանակ» եւ մի քանի անցողակի պարբերականներում լոյս տեսած: Ինչպէս Ֆաթմա Միւզէ Գեօշէքն է գրում, եօթանասունհինգ տարի տեւեց մինչեւ պոլսահայ գրողը համարձակութիւն գտաւ Իսլամ հասարակութեանը պատմելու ջարդերի ու տեղահանութեան մասին, որոնք այնքան կարեւոր մասն

էին կազմում նրա ու նրա նախորդների անհատական եւ հաւաքական յիշողութեանը:

Իրօք, դեռ մօտիկ անցեալում ներկայ ուսումնասիրութեանը ձեռնարկելու հնարաւորութիւն չկար: Գրականութիւնը լուռ էր, իսկ Թուրքիոյ խուլ անկիւններում ապրող հայ կոչուած տատիկների ու պապիկների պատմութիւնը մեզ հազիւ էր հասանելի: Վերջին տարիներում իրավիճակը փոխուած է Թուրքիայում: Պատռուած է լռութեան վարագոյրը եւ մանաւանդ՝ դրսում ապրող թուրք մտաւորականները փորձում են հաշուի նստել անցեալի հետ ու յայտնաբերել իրենց հայրենիքի պատմութեան մութ կամ բոլորովին ջնջուած էջերը: Նրանց ընկերային, քաղաքական ու պատմական ուսումնասիրութիւնները, անցեալը պատկերող նրանց գեղարուեստական ստեղծագործութիւնները հակադրում են երկրի պատմութեան նկատմամբ թուրք պաշտօնական կեցուածքին ու աստիճանաբար դրա մէջ փոփոխութիւն պարտադրում: Ստեղծուած մթնոլորտում, իշխանութիւնները պարտադրուած են որոշ չափով հանդուրժել Թուրքիոյ անցեալ դարի պատմութեան կապուող ու հայկական ջարդերին յղուող յուշերի եւ ինքնակենսագրական գործերի ու վեպերի հրապարակումը: Դրանք ի միջ այլոց խօսում են Ցեղասպանութիւնը վերապրած հայերի մասին, որոնք համարում էին միանգամայն ձուլուած ու ներծծուած իսլամ հասարակութեան մէջ:

Վերջերս, թուրք ազգային ծայրայեղականների կողմից «Ակօս»ի խմբագիր՝ Հրանտ Դինքի սպանութիւնը յեղաշրջում է առաջացրել թուրք հասարակութեան, բայց մանաւանդ աւելի ազատախոհ տարրերի մտայնութեան մէջ, եւ աշխարհի ուշադրութիւնը հրաւիրուել է հայ-

թրքական յարաբերութիւնների կամ ընդհանուր կերպով՝ Թուրքիայի ազգային ու կրօնական փոքրամասնութիւնների իրավիճակի վրայ: Չէ՞ որ Յրանտ Դինքը սպանուեց որովհետեւ յայտարարում էր թէ ինքը թուրք չէ, այլ՝ հայ է՝ Թուրքիայից, այսինքն՝ հարցադրութեան էր ենթարկում իշխանութիւնների պարտադրած «թրքութեան» կամ «թուրք ինքնութեան» բնութագրումը: Չէ՞ որ Դինքը որոնում էր կրօնափոխ հայերին, քաջալերում էր հայի արին կրող, հայ նախնի ունեցող թուրքերին վերանայել իրենց ինքնութիւնը եւ անվախօրէն յայտարարում էր, թէ ինչ որ պատահեց 1915-ին՝ ցեղասպանութիւն էր:

Այս պարունակում, Զեմալ Եալչընի աշխատանքը յայտնաբերելու հայ վերապրողներին ու նրանց պատմութիւնը թուրքին պատմելու, մանաւանդ՝ նրա *Seninle Güler Yüreğim* («Յոգիս քեզմով կը խայտայ») գործը մեծ մարտահրաւեր է Թուրքիայի կարծեցեալ միատարր ու միաձոյլ հասարակութեան դէմ նետուած:

Եալչընն էլ իր սերնդակիցների պէս -- հակառակ իր նախորդներին, որոնք բացարձակապէս ոչինչ չգիտէին -- շատ քիչ բան գիտեր հայերի մասին: Ինչպէս Թանըր Աքչամը կամ Օսման Զոքերն են խոստովանում, նրանց սովորեցրել էին, թէ հայերը դաւաճաններ են եղել, որ Թուրքիայի թշնամիների հետ միացած՝ երկրի իշխանութիւնը տապալել են փորձել, այդու եւ հեռացուել են երկրից: Եալչընը նախապէս միայն կցկտուր բաներ էր լսել Ամասիայի, Թաշովայի ու Էրպաայի շրջանների հայերի մասին, հայ աղջիկներ՝ թուրքերի հետ ամուսնացած ու իսլամ դարձած: Յետոյ Գերմանիայում թուրք ուսուցիչների վերապատրաստման դասընթացներին հետեւելիս, իր

ուսուցչից, հայազգի Մելինէից խորհրդաւոր բաներ էր լսել, օրինակ՝ մի գորգի մասին, «Յին հայկական գորգ մըն է ... Էրզրում-Ղարս-Վանի շրջանը հիւսուած պէտք է ըլլայ: Ասոնց յաջորդները չկան այլեւս: Ասոնք հիւսելու Յայ չմնաց այլեւս...»: Մելինէն նրա մէջ աստիճանաբար ներարկել էր այն մղումը, որ ի վերջոյ նրա բացառիկ աշխատութեան ծնունդ պիտի տար:

Իր պրպտումների ու փնտռտուքի դժուարին ճանապարհին, Եալչընը ծանօթացաւ 1915-ի դէպքերին եւ դրանց բացարձակ ուրացմանը: Ականատես եղաւ շարունակուող խտրականութեանն ու հալածանքին, որոնք կատարուում էին իսլամացած հայերի դէմ անգամ: Նա եղաւ առաջին թուրքը, որ հետաքրքրութիւն ցուցաբերեց եւ այսքան մանրամասնութեամբ գրի առաւ նրանց արգիլուած ու մոռացութեան դատապարտուած պատմութիւնը: Նրա աչքերի առջեւ իրականութիւնը քողագերծուում էր քայլ առ քայլ: Ու իր գտած հայ վերապրողի՝ Գրիգոր Ջէյհանի հետ ինքն էլ էր մտորում. «Փոքր Ասիոյ մէջ քանի՞ եկեղեցի մնաց: Չեմ գիտեր: Եթէ Յայը, Յոյնը կը սպաննես, իրենց եկեղեցիները ինչո՞ւ կը քանդես: ...» «Փոքր Ասիոյ մէջ Յայ չկայ» ըսելով «Փոքր Ասիոյ մէջ արդէն Յայ չկար» ըսել կ'ուզէ արդեօ՞ք: Արեւը կրնա՞ս ցեխով պատել: Յայ չկայ ըսելով կրնա՞ս Յայ պատմութիւնը, գործուած յանցանքը մէջտեղէն վերցնել»: Բայց թուրք իշխանութիւնները գիտէին մշակութային կոթողների ուժը, դրանք արմատաւորում էին մի ամբողջ ժողովրդի ինքնութիւնը եւ ապահովում այդ ինքնութեան փոխանցումը ապագային: Դրանք պէտք է վերացուէին: Բոսնիայի ջարդերից փրկուած մի կին իր ազգի մշակութային մէկ կոթողի աւերակների վրայ կանգնած ասել էր, «մի մեռած կին, մէկն

է մեզանից. մի քանդուած կամուրջ մենք ենք բոլորս՝ յաւիտեան»:

Բոսնիացի գաղթականների հոգեբանական իրավիճակը վերլուծելով, Սթիվըն Ուէյնը համոզուած է, որ համայնքի կործանումը, մանաւանդ՝ երբ երկու իրար հետ համերաշխ ապրած եւ այդ համերաշխութեամբը հպարտացած ժողովուրդների մէջ ծագած թշնամութեան հետեւանքով է դա տեղի ունենում, վերապրողներին դատապարտում է անորոշ ու անհեռանկար իրավիճակի: Նրանցից իւրում է յստակ ինքնութեան ու պատկանելիութեան զգացումը: Այս իրողութեան զուգահեռը առկայ է հայ վերապրողների մէջ, ի հարկէ, այն տարբերութեամբ, որ համերաշխ համակեցութեան հասկացողութիւնը հայերթուրք յարաբերութիւններում պայմանաւորուել է հայի հնազանդութեամբ, համբերատարութեամբ եւ հաւատարմութեամբ (*milleti sadık*): Հաւասարակշռութիւնը խախտուելուն պէս՝ պատժուել է հայը... Բայց նաեւ պիտի յիշել, որ քրիստոնէայ Սերբերի եւ իսլամ բոսնիացիների պարագային եւս այդպիսի բացարձակօրէն խաղաղ համակեցութիւն չի եղել:

Հայ համայնքների կործանումը Օսմանեան Թուրքիայում, այնտեղ մնացած հայ վերապրող խլեակներին զրկեց ազգային ինքնութեան եւ հայրենիքի պատկանելիութեան զգացումից: Նրանց մատնեց լռութեան եւ մի տառապագին փնտռտուքի՝ կեանքի նոր իմաստ գտնելու, գտնելու մի մարդկային ինքնութիւն, որ թուրքին հանդուրժելի լինի ու նրա ազգային (ազգայնամուլ) գիտակցութիւնը չվիրաւորի:

Տառապանքը շարունակւում է...

«Այսինչը փնտռում է իր մօրը, հօրը, քրոջը, հօրեղբորը ... վերջին անգամ տեսնուած Սիրիայի անապատներում ... աքսորի ճամբին ...»:

Նման ծանուցումներ որքա՞ն յաճախակի էին անցեալ դարի 20-ական եւ 30-ական թուականների հայ մամուլում: Զանի՞սը յաջողեցին գտնել իրենց հարազատներին: Զանի՞սը ապրեցին ցաւը՝ անդարձ կորստի, երբեք չիմացան, թէ գուցէ իրենց փնտռածը թուրքի տան մէջ իր գոյութիւնը քարշ տուող մի որբ է կամ հարս է նրա հարեմում ու նրանից սերած երեխան է մեծացնում, կամ գուցէ կրօնափոխ եղած, մի տեղ պահուող տած ապրում է իր նմանների հետ: Վահրամ Գարաբենթը Եալչընին պատմում է, թէ ինչպէս որբ մնացած իր զարմիկին փրկել էին ամերիկացի աւետարանիչները ու Ամերիկա տարել: Տարիներ յետոյ, այդ զարմիկը փնտռել ու գտել էր Վահրամին ու նրանք հանդիպել էին Ամերիկայում:

Հայ որբերի փրկագործումը համատարած երեւոյթ չէր, միայն մի բուն՝ համեմատութեամբ այն բոլորին, որ կորան, իսլամ տներում առնուեցին, բռնի կրօնափոխ եղան, կամ այնքան փոքրիկ էին, որ չյիշեցին իրենց հայ լինելը: Թուրք իշխանութիւնը նպատակադրուած իր ծրագրով հսկողութեան տակ առաւ հայ որբերի եւ երիտասարդ կանանց թրջացումը: Օսման Զօքերի մէկ յօդուածը «Հայ կանանց եւ երեխաներին մուսուլմաններին յանձնելը բացառութիւն չի, դա կառավարութեան քաղաքականութիւնն է» (*“Ermeni Kadın ve Çocuklarının Müsülmanlara Verilmesi Bir Istisna Değil, Devlet Politikasıydı”*), որին կցուած է նաեւ համապատասխան փաստաթղթեր եւ կենտրոնից յղուած հեռագրեր, խօսում է այդ իրողութեան մասին: Ի հարկէ,

պիտի ասել, որ հայ կամ ընդհանրապես քրիստոնեայ երեխաներին թրջացնելու քաղաքականությունը դեռ գալիս է ենիչերիների օրերից, որ շեշտուած կիրառութեամբ կրկնուեց 1894-96-ի ջարդերին: 1917-ին հրատարակուած Ջոզեֆ Յաքիսգի *The Path of Glory* (Փառքի ճամբան), ինչպես նաեւ Սեւդա Սեւանի «Ռոդոստօ, Ռոդոստօ» վեպերը վիպականացումն են այդ իրողութեան:

Եալչընը գրում է ջարդից ազատուած եւ իրենց ծննդավայրը վերադարձած հայերի մասին -- ինչպես օրինակ՝ Ամասիացի Օհան Էօզանթն ու մայրը, Գարամանցի Սարգիս վարպետն ու ընտանիքը -- եւ տեղացիների հալածանքը, թշնամութիւնն ու խտրականութիւնը նրանց դէմ, որ ի վերջոյ պարտադրել էր նրանց ու նրանց պէս հարիւրաւորներին լքել ծննդավայրը: Այդ բոլորով հանդերձ, Օհանը Թուրքիան իր հայրենիքն էր համարում, «Մարդկանց միջեւ խտրութիւն մի՛ դնէք... Մարդիկը ըստ իրենց կրօնքներուն մի՛ բաժնէք: Թուրքիան բոլորիս է: Թուրքիան մի՛ ոչնչացնէք»: Թուրքիան իր հայրենիքն է, բայց ինքը հայ է, հայ էլ կը մեռնի, «Որմէ՞ պիտի քաշուիմ այլեւս: Լռեցինք, լռեցինք, ի՞նչ եղաւ մինչեւ այսօր»:

Օհանի զգացումները շատերն են կիսում: Թուրքիայում ծնուած ու մեծացած հայի համար Թուրքիայից դուրս հայրենիք չկայ: Այս իմաստով, որքան յատկանշական է Յրանտ Դինքի վերջին խմբագրականը «Ակօս»ի Յունուար 10, 2007-ի համարում տպագրուած, որ խօսում է այն մասին թէ հայը չի լքի Թուրքիան եւ եթէ պարտադրուի լքել, 1915-ի իր նախնիների պէս տառապանքով պիտի քայլի: Պիտի զգայ նոյն ցաւն ու մղձաւանքը: Պիտի քայլի ուր իր ոտքերն են տանում՝ ո՛չ իր սիրտը:

Յետ-Եղեռնեան երկրորդ սերնդին պատկանող Գրիգոր Ջիհանեանը Չարա էր ծնուել: Ինքը միակ հայն էր դպրոցում եւ իր հայ անուան ու իր հայ լինելու պատճառով՝ ծաղրի, ծեծի ու հալածանքի առարկայ էր ուսուցիչների եւ աշակերտների համար: Ու երբ 1934-ին Թուրքիայում հայերին արգիլուեց հայկական ազգանուն կրել, Ջիհանեանը՝ Ջեյհանի փոխուեց: Գրիգորին վիճակուել էր իր կեանքի վերջին տարիներին Գերմանիա հաստատուել: Նա հպարտ էր, որ կարող է այլեւս ազատութեամբ յայտարարել աշխարհին, թէ ինքը հայ է: Նրա ազգային ինքնութիւնը տարօրինակ խառնուրդ էր՝ մի տեսակ հայկականութիւն, թուրք միջավայրի ու մշակոյթի գերակշռող ազդեցութեան տակ: Գրիգորի այս իւրայատուկ սերունդը իր ստացած հայկականութիւնը փոխանցել էր յաջորդին՝ գիտակցելով, որ «իւրաքանչիւր Հայ մահէն ազատած մէկու մը շարունակութիւնն է: Անցեալի մեծ ցաւերու մարմնացած ձեւն է»:

Իսկ Մահմեդականութիւն ընդունած հայերը: Վերջին տարիներին, հետաքրքրութեամբ է խօսւում Համշէնցիների մասին, այդ մահմեդական հայերը, որոնք այսօր ցրուած են արեւմտեան Թուրքիայից մինչեւ Կրասնոդար եւ դեռ անելի արեւելք: Նրանցից ոմանք տեղեակ են իրենց հայ արմատների մասին եւ նոյնիսկ պատրաստ՝ այդ արմատներին վերադառնալու: Արդեօք, հայ ժողովուրդը պատրա՞ստ է նրանց իր գիրկը ընդունելու, թէ՞ հայի ազգային ինքնութեան մէջ այնքան զօրեղ է Զրիստոնէութիւնը իբրեւ ազդակ, որ նման հարցադրում անգամ անընդունելի է: Այնուամենայնիւ, համշէնցիների կրօնափոխութիւնը դարերի հարց է: Իսկ Եղեռնի սարսափի տակ կրօնափոխ հայերը, որոնց դէմ չդադարեց հալածանքը:

Թուրքը երբեք չվստահեց ու կասկածանքով նայեց կրօնափոխ հայերի անկեղծութեանը, նրանց պահած ծովին, ու կատարած *նամազին*:

Ի հարկէ, շատ են նաեւ առերեւոյթ կրօնափոխ «թաքուն» կամ «ծպտեալ» հայերը, որոնք իրենք իրենց մէջ իրարու «մերիններ» կամ «դարձած» են անուանում եւ փորձում են պահել իրենց սեղմ շրջանակը: Խուսափում են թուրքի կամ քուրդի հետ ամուսնութիւն կնքելուց: Երրորդ սերնդին պատկանող Սուլթանը պատմում է Եալչընին, թէ ինչպէս իր մեծհայրը պարտադրուել էր իր մի աղջկան քուրդի տալու ու միշտ լացով էր յիշում, թէ աղջկան զոհ էր տուել: Նոյն պարտադրանքի տակ չմնալու համար, միւս աղջկան՝ Սուլթանի մօրը, տասներկու տարեկանում ամուսնացրել էր երեսուն տարեկան մահմեդական հայի հետ: Հաճը Իպրահիմն էլ յիշում է, թէ ինչպէս իր գեղեցիկ քրոջը քուրդ Աղային չտալու համար, հայրը նրան «մերիններէն ճաղատ, տգեղ, աղքատ ու որբ հովուի մը հետ կարգեց»: Վահրամը Եալչընին պատմում է իրեն տանջող զոյգումի ու խղճի խայթի մասին, թէ ինչպէս սեփական կաշին ազատելու համար Իսլամ կրօնն էր ընդունել: Բայց կրօնափոխ կամ քրիստոնեայ, թուրքի համար հայը «գեաւուր» մնաց կամ «գեաւուրօղլու»: Վահրամն էլ Մերգիֆոնի միւս հայերի պէս համեմատական ազատութիւնը Պոլսում գտաւ, ու Մերգիֆոնն էլ միւս հայաքնակ վայրերի պէս դատարկուեց հայերից:

Կրօնափոխ կամ քրիստոնեայ, Յեղասպանութիւնից ազատուած ու երկրի ներսում ցրուած հայերը կորցրել են իրենց մայրենի լեզուն: Ազգային ինքնութեան այդ կարեւոր տարրը խլուած է նրանցից, իսկ «բազմազգ ու բազմամշակոյթ Գերմանիոյ մէջ, մայրենի լեզուն ու անոր

կրթութիւնը մարդկային իրաւունքներու հիմնական սկզբունքներէն մէկն է», դիտել է տալիս Եալչընը՝ համեմատութեան դնելով Թուրքիայում կիրառուած հակափոքրամասնութիւն քաղաքականութիւնը: Սա արտացոլքն է նրա յեղաշրջուած տրամադատութեան ու դիմակայումը Թուրքիոյ կրթական քաղաքականութեան:

Այսօր այլեւս դժուար է թուրքի կին դարձած հայ կանայք գտնել ու նրանց պատմութիւնը լսել: Բայց միթէ՞ պարզ չի թէ ինչպիսի հոգեկան տուայտանք են ապրել այդ խեղճ էակները երբ պարտադրուել են հայասպանի կին դառնալ ու նրանից զաւակ ունենալ: Սուլթանը պատմում է, թէ ինչպէս հօրաքոյրը յաճախ լաց էր լինում, «Գիտեմ որ այս մարդը ամուսնուս սպաննեց: Իմ աչքերով տեսայ: Չիս ալ պիտի սպաններ: Վախէս ամուսինս սպանողին կինը եղայ ... Երկու տղաներուս հայրը եղած այս մարդուն երբեք պիտի չներեմ»:

Այսուամենայն կանանց տխուր կեանքի պատմութիւնը եթէ չի փաստագրուել, սակայն վիպական կերպարների մէջ է կեանք առել, ինչպէս Մարոն Յակոբ Խաչիկեանի *A Summer without Dawn* վեպում: Խաչիկեանը նկարագրում է Մարոյի պարտադրեալ ամուսնական կեանքը իր «ազատարար» Ռիզա Բէյի հետ եւ թէ ինչպէս ծնում է Նուրիանը, որին Մարոն լքում է ու դեպի ազատութիւն փախչում: Մարոյին յաջողւում է միանալ իր ամուսնուն՝ Վարդան Պալեանին ու նրանք գտնում են իրենց կորցրած որդուն՝ Թոմասին: Բայց թուրքի կին դարձած Մարոն եւ նրա ճակատագիրը բաժանող շատ կանայք ինչպէ՞ս պիտի կարողանան Սուրբ պսակով կնքուած իրենց ամուսնական կեանքին վերադառնալ ու ամուսնու հետ անկողին կիսել: Ինչպէ՞ս պիտի կարողանան մոռանալ Նուրիաններին, որ

իրենց միսն են ու արիւնը. իսկ այդ կես-հայ Նուրհանները, որ պիտի մեծանան անիծելով մօրը, որ որք թողեց իրենց ու փախաւ: Արդեօք իրենց կոտորակուած ինքնութիւնը նրանք ինչպէ՞ս պիտի գտնեն:

Լեւենթ Զազանչին մի Նուրհանի կերպար է Էլիֆ Շաֆաքի *The Bastard of Istanbul* վեպում: Նրա մայրը՝ Շերմին դարձած որք Շուշանն էլ թողել էր նրան ու իրեն գտած եղբօր հետ Ամերիկա փախել: Լեւենթը մեծացել էր բարոյոյթներ կուտակելով, ու այդ բարոյոյթները իր երեխաների վրայ էր պարպում: Որքան էլ բարի, վստահելի ու բարեհամբոյր էր դրսում, տան մէջ ուղղակի գազանաբարոյ, տանջում էր իր զաւակներին: «Երեխաների հետ նրա այսքան խստութեան պատճառը այն է, որ ինքը երեխայ ժամանակ շատ է տառապել, երբ իր իսկական մայրը լքել է նրան», մի օր խոստովանել էր նրա թուրք խորթ մայրը:

Իրողութիւն է նաեւ այն պարագան որ մեծ է թիւը կանանց, որոնք չուզեցին բաժանուել թուրքից ու քուրդից ծնած իրենց երեխաներից: Մնացին ու շատ անգամ իրենց ամօթը, իրենց տառապանքը՝ որպէս գաղտնիք գերեզման տարան, վախեցան խօսել՝ իրենց ու իրենց զաւակներին չվտանգելու համար: Գաղտնիքը պահուեց շատ անգամ ամօթից: Լկուած ու բռնաբարուած, սեռային անմարդկային չարչարանքների ենթարկուած զոհը ինչպէ՞ս բացայայտեր այդ ստորացուցիչ գաղտնիքը եւ ամբողջ կեանքում ապրեր այդ ամօթը ճակատին: Գազանային բռնաբարումով ու զոհին սեռային չարչարանքի ենթարկելով, ոճրագործը ո՛չ միայն իր կենդանական բաւարարութիւնն էր ստանում, ո՛չ միայն փաստում էր իր գերակայութիւնն ու զոհի կամ սեռային արարքը անկար

դիտողի ստորակայութիւնը, այլ նաեւ՝ նրանց անմարդկայել վիճակին մատնելով, ինքն իր համար դիւրացնում էր միւս քայլը՝ սպանել այդ մարդկային յատկանիշներից պարպուած, տխեղծ արարածին:

Հայոց Յեղասպանութեան պատմութեան, գրականութեան եւ յուշագրութեան մէջ շատ են վկայութիւնները կանանց եւ աղջիկների դէմ կատարուած այստեսակ ոճիրների մասին... Իսկ տղամարդի՞կ: Գրականութիւնը լռում կամ հպանցիկ ակնարկով է անցնում դրանց վրայից: Սանդէշ Սիվաքումարան, որ նախկին Հարաւսլաւիայի առճակատումների ընթացքում տղամարդկանց վրայ կատարուած սեռային չարչարանքներն է ուսումնասիրել, հաստատում է, թէ սեռային այդ քստմնելի արարքներին ենթարկուած տղամարդը իր տղամարդկութիւնը, իր արժանապատիւ ինքնութիւնը պահելու սիրոյն, չէր կարող խոստովանել: Հենրի Մորգենթաուն նկարագրելով թուրք ոճրագործների ի գործ դրած չարչարանքի միջոցները, մանաւանդ՝ տղամարդկանց վրայ եւ մանաւանդ բանտերում, խոստովանում է թէ ինքը չի կարող ամեն ինչ գրել քանի որ դրանք յարմար չեն ամերիկեան մամուլում տպագրուելու համար: Դա իննսուն տարի առաջուայ բարոյական օրինաչափութիւնն էր, որ սակայն ջնջուել է Էդգար Հիլզենրաթի մօտ եւ «Վերջին մտքի հեքեաթը» վեպում իր ամենացնցիչ արտայայտութիւնն է գտել հերոսի սեռային օրգանների վրայ կատարուած բանտային քստմնելի չարչարանքների տեսարաններում:

Այն ինչ որ նկարագրուած կամ ակնարկուած է Հայոց Յեղասպանութեան գրականութեան մէջ, լիովին համապատասխանում է միջազգային շրջանակներում ընդունուած յատուկ զեկոյց-բնութագրումին: Դա խօսում է ժողովուրդ-

ների միջեւ գինեալ բախումի պայմաններում կանանց կամ տղամարդկանց վրայ կատարուած ստրկացման, բռնաբարման եւ սեռային ստրկացման մասին եւ միջազգային օրէնքով եւ Միջազգային Դատարանի առջեւ դատապարտելի եւ պատժելի է համարում դրանք:

Այսպիսի ստորացուցիչ ու զազրելի չարչարանքների ենթարկուած հայ անհատը նախընտրեց լռել եւ այդ անպատմելի փորձառութեան թողած անդամնալի ազդեցութիւնը լռելեան կրել իր անհատականութեան, արժանապատուութեան եւ ուրեմն՝ ինքնութեան վրայ: Լռեց նաեւ գրականութիւնը այս մասին: Իսկ պոլսահայ գրականութիւնը, որ համամարդկային մակարդակի վրայ իր ստեղծագործութեան ու վերելքի ուրոյն ճամբան էր կտրել, ընդհանրապէս հեռու մնաց Մեծ Աղէտի թեմայից: Այնուամենայնիւ, երբ այսօր կարդում ենք օրինակ՝ Խրախունու «Պատմութիւն» կամ Վարդերես Գարագեօգեանի «Մեծ մայրիկը» բանաստեղծութիւնները, այդ պարզ տողերում վեհերոտ ստուերի պէս ներկայ է արձագանքը ազգային գիտակցութեան ու շարունակուող տառապանքի: Յակոբ Մսձուրին իր ծննդավայր՝ Երբեմնի հայաշատ Արմտանն է յիշում, ուր այլեւս հայ չի մնացել... Կարծես ուզում է ընթերցողին մղել հարցնելու, – ապա ի՞նչ եղան այդ հայերը: Մկրտիչ Մարկոսեանը Դիարբեքի Չեաւուրների Թաղ կոչուած մի անկիւնում ծուարած հայերի ամենօրեայ կեանքի մասին է պատմում, ու այդ պատումի մէջ նկարում է զրկանք, կարօտ ու պատմական յիշողութեան թոյլ ու զգոյշ արձագանք: Աւելի բացայայտ է 1920-ին ծնուած Հայկազուն Գալուստեանի կարճ, պարզ ու անպաճոյճ գծագրումը իր կորած գերդաստանի պատմութեան՝ նրա «Խաղաղութիւն» շարքից: Բոլոր յիշածս

ստեղծագործութիւններից, որպէս օրինակ մեջբերեմ միայն այս մէկը.

Մայրս երկու եղբայր ուներ
հայր ուներ
մայր ուներ
անոնք քոյրեր եւ եղբայրներ ունէին
բոլորն ալ ամուսնացած
բոլորն ալ զաւակներ ունէին

Անոնցմէ ոչ սա մնաց ոչ ան
ամենքն ալ-ամենքն ալ
ես չծնած մեռան

Հայրս ալ մօրս նմանեցաւ
ինչ որ ուներ՝ հայր մայր եղբայր
զարմիկներ զարմուհիներ-գերդաստան մը ամբողջ
ես չծնած մեռան
երբ աչքերս բացի՝ մայրս մենակ մնացած էր
հայրդ զինուոր գնաց ըսին

Նկատելի է գիտակցաբար կատարուած բառի ընտրութիւնը՝ «մեռան» եւ ոչ «մեռցուեցան» կամ «կոտորուեցան»...

Պահպանուած լռութիւնը ծանր է եղել. դրա ազդեցութիւնը՝ հոգեբանօրէն խորտակիչ, մի երեւոյթ, որ որոշների մէջ յորձանք է տուել՝ քանդելու լռութեան պատը ու դուրս ժայթքելու երբ վերացել է տրամաբանութեան ու զգուշաւորութեան արգելքը: Պոլսահայ գրող ու մանկավարժ Արփիար Տէր Մարգարեանի մօտ, ինչպէս նրա դուստրն է

վկայում, դա պատահում էր տոներին, երբ ոգելից խմիչքը թուլացնում էր կապանքները, ու նա երգում էր: Նրա արցունքախառն, տխուր ու դողդոջուն երգերը կարծես նրա կորցրած մեռելների յիշատակի ոգեկոչումը լինեին: Քիւրդ գրող Մեհմեդ Ուզունը նոյն յիշողութիւնն է պահել Դիարբեքիրի վարպետ հնակարկատ Վարդանից, երբ մանուկ օրերին նրա ընտանիքի հետ Տիգրիսի ափերին զբօսանքի էին ելնում ու արիւնագոյն ծաղիկներով նռան ծառի տակ փռուած սփրոցին դրուած ռաքքին շշի տակին էր հասնում:

Իսլամ կրօնն ու Սեհեր անունը ընդունած, Ֆեթիհէ Չեթինի մեծմայր՝ Յերանուշ (Յրանուշ) Կատարեանը 60 տարի իր ինքնութեան գաղտնիքը պահեց, ապրեց նոյն գիւղաքաղաքում՝ Մադենում, եւ ինչպէս Այշէ Գիւլ Ալթինայն է նշում, ամէն օր տեսաւ նոյն գետը, որ այնքան հայի դիակ էր խլել: Սեհերի զաւակներն էլ գիտէին, թէ իրենց մաքուր ցեղից չեն եւ գեաւուրի խառնուրդ ունեն: Դպրոցում եւ հասարակութեան մէջ նրանք խտրականութեան էին ենթարկւում, որովհետեւ իրենց մօր «գրանցման փաստաթղթում գրուած է եղել մուիթեդի (*mühtedi*)», այսինքն՝ մահմեդականութիւնը յետոյ ընդունած կրօնափոխ:

Ու Սեհերի զաւակները ամօթն ու վախը պահել էին եւ համակերպուել: Սեհերի թոռները արդէն ոչինչ չգիտէին: Սեհերը ինչպէ՞ս էր կարողացել իր բարի ու չարքաշ կնոջ երեւոյթի տակ այդքան տառապարքն ու յիշողութեան մէջ կուտակուած ու տակաւ չշիջող սարսափելի տեսարանների յաճախանքը թաքցնել: Ի՞նչը պատճառ դարձաւ, որ նա վերջապէս խօսէր, իր չմարող ցաւն ու կարօտը, իր սարսափելի յիշատակները իր թոռնուհուն՝ Ֆեթիհէին պահ տալ: Ո՛չ թուրք ազգայնամոլ մթնոլորտը եւ ոչ էլ Իսլամ

կրօնի, թուրք մշակոյթի, ապրելակերպի ու սովորութիւնների երկարամեայ ազդեցութիւնը չէին կարողացել Յերանուշ/Սեհերի եւ իր նմանների մէջ ամբողջովին ջնջել ազգային ինքնութիւնը, որ այնուամենայնիւ, աստիճանաբար նոր տարրեր էր ընդունել, զիջումներ էր կատարել ու մի նոր տեսակի հայկականութեան էր յանգել: Այդ հայկականութիւնը պիտի կայծկւտար Ֆեթիհէ Չեթինի մէջ ու մղէր նրան իր ինքնութեան մէջ այդ տարօրինակ տարրը փնտռելու, Ամերիկայում գտնելու իր տատի ընտանիքի մնացորդացին:

Որպէս բանուոր Գերմանիա եկած Հաճը Իպրահիմն էլ հիմա այնքան խիստ էր ցանկանում իր ինքնութիւնը յայտնել բոլորին ու «կոկորդս պատռելու աստիճան ”ես Հայ եմ” պոռալ»։ Բայց Թուրքիա մնացած ընտանիքները իրեն եւ իր նմաններին յանձնարարել էին՝ «ամուր բռնեցէ՛ք ձեր բերանները: Այստեղ մեզ փորձանքի մի՛ մատնեք»: Սուլթանն էլ, դարձեալ մի բանուոր Գերմանիայում, հոգու խաղաղութեան էր ձգտում, «ես այլեւս անդորրութիւն կ’ուզեմ, ”դարձած”, ”կեաւուր” պիտակներով նախատուիլ, այլեւս չհաւատալով հանդերձ իսլամ ձեւացնել չեմ ուզեր... Ո՛չ Գերմանիոյ, ո՛չ ալ Ատրեամանի մէջ կ’ուզեմ թաքցնել հայութիւնս»:

Թուրքիայում ապրող հայը ապրել ու ապրում է խտրականութեան ու հալածանքի պայմաններում, առանց բարելաման հեռանկարի: Իրար յաջորդող իշխանութիւնների քաղաքականութիւնը ընդդէմ երկրի փոքրամասնութիւնների շարունակուել եւ շեշտուած դրսեւորումներ է գտել 1934-ի ոչ-թրքական ազգանունների արգիլման, 1942-ի ոչ-մահմեդականների վրայ դրուած հարստութեան տուրքի -- որ ներառեց իսլամ հայերին եւս -- 1955-ի յոյների

ու հայերի կողոպուտի ու սպանութիւնների եւ 1960-ականներին միայն թրքերէն – ո՛չ այլ լեզու խօսելու պարտադրանքը: Հալածանքը շարունակուեց, բայց Մեծ եղեռնին գործուած ոճրի յիշատակը նոյնիսկ թուրքի ուղեղում ջնջելու համար շրջուած պատմութեան նպատակադրուած քարոզչութիւն էր պետք: Օրհան Փամուքի *Snow* վեպի հերոսներից մէկը նկարագրում է թանգարանի վերածուած ուղղափառ մի եկեղեցի Կարսում, որի մի մասը հայկական ջարդերին է նուիրուած: «Քնականաբար, արտասահմանից զբօսաշրջիկներ գալիս են եւ ակնկալում են տեսնել թուրքերի ջարդը հայերին. եւ միշտ էլ ցնցում են տեսնելով որ այս թանգարանում պատմութիւնը հակառակն է»: Չարմանալի չէ: Միթէ մինչեւ վերջերս, եւ հիմա վերանորոգման պատրուակով ժամանակաւորապէս փակուած Վան քաղաքի թանգարանի մի մասը չէ՞ր յատկացուած ներկայացնելու «Մահմեդականների ցեղասպանութիւնը հայերի կողմից 1915-ին», եւ դա միակ բաժինն էր ուր յիշատակում էր հայի ներկայութիւնը Վանում:

Պատմական յիշողութիւնը Թուրքիայում, այնպէս որ իշխանութիւնները կը ցանկանային չի ջնջուել ու փոխանցուում է սերնդից սերունդ: Եթէ այդպէս չլինէր, ինչո՞ւ պիտի *Snow*-ի մէջ անգամներ ու անգամներ յիշուէր Կարսում կամ ընդհանրապէս Անատոլիայում ապրած հայերի գերակշռող ներկայութեան մասին, ներկայութիւն՝ որի յիշատակները հարիւր տարեկան են ու չեն մեռնում: Ու յանկարծ, անսպասելի վայրում մէկը հարցադրում է կատարում այդ մասին: Կարսի կեղեքուած ժողովուրդը հաւաքուել է իր իշխանութեան դէմ գերմանական մի թերթի մէջ բողոքի նամակ հրատարակելու նպատակով, երբ՝. «մէկը կերկե-

րող ձայնով կանչեց բազմութեան միջից, “իսկ ի՞նչ եղան միլիոնից աւելի հայերը, որ մի ժամանակ ապրում էին ամբողջ Անատոլիայում, Կարսը ներառեալ” ... բայց լրտես-քարտուղարը խղճաց մարդուկին եւ անունը չարձանագրեց»:

Էլիֆ Շաֆաքը նոյնպէս հարցադրումի է ենթարկում թուրք իշխանութեան Թուրքիայի հասարակութիւնը միատեսակ եւ միատարր ցոյց տալու անհիմն ջանքը: Նրա վեպի տարազան ձայները խօսում են ճշմարտութեան մասին, ցոյց են տալիս իրարայաջորդ իշխանութիւնների անյաջող փորձը՝ պատմութեան հաւաքական յիշողութիւնը ջնջելու: *The Bastard of Istanbul* վեպում Շաֆաքը չի խուսափում նոյնիսկ «ցեղասպանութիւն» բառը գործածելուց: Ցեղասպանութիւնը վերապրած Տիգրան Ստամբուլեանը իր քրոջ թոռան ազգային ինքնութեան մասին մտահոգ է: Հայ հօրից ու ամերիկացի մօրից սերած այս աղջիկը պիտի մեծանայ մօր երկրորդ ամուսնու՝ թուրք Մուստաֆայի դաստիարակութեամբ՝ թէկուզ Ամերիկայում: Նա երբ մեծանայ ի՞նչ պիտի ասի իր ընկերներին. «Անունս Արմանուշ Չախմախչեան է. իմ ընտանիքի ծառի վրայ բոլորն էլ Այսինչ Այնինչեան են եղել, եւ ես թոռնուհին եմ ցեղասպանութիւնից ազատուածների, որոնք իրենց բոլոր ազգականներին կորցրին թուրք մսագործների [մարդասպանների] ձեռքով 1915-ին. բայց ես, իմ ուղեղը լուացել են ցեղասպանութիւնը ուրանալու համար, որովհետեւ ինձ մեծացրել է ինչ որ թուրք՝ անունը Մուստաֆա... Ի՞նչ կատակ է սա ... Ախ, *մառնիմ խալասիմ*»:

Տարիներ յետոյ, հօր ընտանիքից լսած ու Ամերիկայում Հայկական Հարցի մասին տեղեկացուած Արմանուշը «մի քանի անգամ փորձել էր խորթ հօր հետ խօսել 1915-ի

մասին եւ թէ թուրքերը ինչ էին արել հայերին. "այդ բաների մասին շատ բան չգիտեմ," պատասխանել էր Մուստաֆան, մեղմ բայց վճռական՝ հարցը փակելով: "Դա պատմութիւն է, պատմաբանների հետ պիտի խօսես": Ահա մարմնացումը թուրք աւելի զարգացած խաւի մեծամասնութեան ցուցաբերած կեցուածքի. բայց ո՛վ հեզնանք՝ արտայայտուած մէկի կողմից, որ վէպի վերջում բացայայտուում է, թէ նրա մեծմայրը հենց նոյն որբ աղջիկն էր՝ Շերմին դարձած Շուշանը, որ մեծմայրն էր նաեւ Արմա-նուշի: Շաֆաքի վէպը լեցուն է յանկարծակի բացայայտ-ուող աներեւակայելի հանգոյցներով:

Փոքր թիւ է կազմում թուրքիայում արտադրուած թրքահայութեան կենսափորձից խօսող գրականութիւնը. այդ քչերից է Զեմալ Եալչընի «Յոգիս քեզմով կը խայտայ» գործը: Դէպի անցեալը կատարած իր այս դժուարին ճամբորդութիւնով Եալչընը ցանկանում էր ճանաչել ինքն իրեն, վերագտնել ու վերարժեւորել իր ինքնութիւնը. «Սիրելի Մելինէս, միայն քեզ չէ, կ'ուզեմ նաեւ ինքզինքս ալ ճանչնալ», ասել էր: Այս ճշմարտութիւնը քչերն են փնտռել: Եալչընը իր գործով ո՛չ միայն գեղարուեստական ձեւաւորում է տուել մինչ այդմ լռեցուած պատմական յիշողութեանը, այլ նաեւ մեծապէս նպաստել է սպեղանի դնելու թրքահայ իսլամ թէ քրիստոնեայ սերունդների հոգում միացող վերքի վրայ: Նրանց հետ խօսելով, համբերութեամբ եւ քաջալերանքով նրանց լսելով, օգնել է գտնել բառերը մերժուած սուգը իրացնելու, արգիլուած ցաւը արտայայտելու, ցաւը ամոքելու: Այշէ Գիւլ Ալթինային տուած հարցազրոյցի ընթացքում, Ֆեթիհէ Չեթինը պատմել է մի ծեր մարդու հետ իր տեսակցութեան մասին: Մարդը խոստովանել է, որ իր մայրն էլ հայ է եղել, խօսել է

իր կրած տառապանքների մասին ու սփոփանքի հոգոց հանել. «այս գիշեր կը կարողանամ հանգիստ քուն քնել»:

Մինչ Եալչընը միջնորդում է որպէսզի ցաւոտ յուշերը մակերես ելնեն, Չեթինը դերակատար է նորագիւտ ինքնութեան ստեղծած անորոշութեան փոթորկի մէջ: Սեհեր/Յերանուշը տանջող յուշերի բեռը իր մէկ անմեղ ժառանգին փոխանցելով պարտադրում է նրան հաշուի նստել անցեալի հետ ու ըմբռնել, բիրեղացնել իր յանկարծակի անորոշութեան մատնուած ինքնութիւնը: Բացայայտուածը այնքան անսպասելի էր, սարսափելի ու ցաւոտ, որ Ֆեթիհէն զարմանահար վիճակի մատնուեց տարիներ: Դա տղաբերքի ցաւն էր՝ մինչեւ *Anneanem* (Մեծմայրս) գործի ծնունդը, դա յեղաշրջուած ինքնութեան եւ ինքնա-գիտակցութեան բիրեղացման շրջանն էր՝ ոչ հայ, ոչ քուրդ կամ թուրք, բայց *melez* :

* * *

Եթէ Սփիւռքում, հաւաքական անցեալի յիշողութիւնը պատմական եւ ստեղծագործական գրականութեամբ վառ պահելով, նպատակադրուած ճիգ է ի գործ դրուել հայի ազգային ինքնութիւնը պահպանելու եւ ամրակայելու (Զեյմզ Ուերչի բացատրութեամբ՝ տեկստուալ միջնորդութեամբ), Ֆեղասպանութիւնից ազատուած եւ թուրքիայում իր կեանքը շարունակած հայի ազգային ինքնութիւնը ձեւաւորուել է խտրականութեան, հալածանքի եւ իշխանութիւնների հակափոքրամասնութիւն վարչագծի ստեղծած մթնոլորտում: Իսլամացած կամ քրիստոնեայ, հայը քիչ պարագաներում է յաջողութեամբ, այսինքն առանց հետք թողնելու ներծնել թուրք հասարակութեան մէջ: Եթէ այդպէս չլինէր, մանաւանդ իսլամացած հայերը այսօր ամբողջովին կորցրած կլինէին իրենց ազգային

յատկանշները՝ երբ արդեն զիջել էին իրենց անունները, լեզուն, կրօնը: Եղեռնի արգիլուած յիշատակները եթէ փոխանցուէին էլ մեծ ազդեցութիւն չէին թողնի «հայ» երիտասարդի վրայ եթէ նա ապրելիս լինէր ազատ ու տնտեսապէս վերելք ապրող Թուրքիայում: Բայց թուրքի թշնամական վերաբերմունքը դրսեւորուել է ամէն առիթով ու նոր սարսափի ու հալածանքի ալիք տարածել: Հայը *gâvur* էր ու նրանից սերածը՝ *gâvur oğlu gâvur*. Եւ դեռ անելի կոպիտ ասուած «սրից փախած»: Թուրք իշխանութեան հակահայ քաղաքականութիւնը փոփոխութեան նշաններ ցոյց չի տալիս: Հակառակը՝ գնալով անելի բացայայտ է դառնում թուրք ազգայնական շարժումը վտանգաւոր ազգայնամոլութեան տանող *derin devlet*-ի տարբեր միջոցներով Հայկական Հարցի վերընծիւղումը խեղդելու նպատակադրուած գործունեութիւնը:

Թուրք ազգային ինքնութիւնը Հայոց Յեղասպանութեան եւ Հայկական Հարցի ուրացման վրայ է հիմնուած: Իսկ սփիւռքահայի՞ ազգային ինքնութիւնը: Այդ բարդ կառոյցը թուրք պարզունակ մեկնաբանութեամբ հիմնուած է ընդհանրական թշնամու գաղափարի վրայ, որ թարգմանուում է ատելութիւն դէպի թուրքը, ինչ տեսակ էլ որ լինի նա: Այսպիսի բեւեռացման մթնոլորտում, մերձեցումը անհնարին է: Բայց գիտենք, որ այդ բեւեռացումը արհեստական բնոյթ է կրում եւ ճշմարտութեան չի համապատասխանում: Դարձեալ, յոյսը մնում է դնել թուրք ողջամիտ տարրի աստիճանաբար մեծացող ազդեցութեան վրայ: Փոփոխութիւնը ներսից պիտի պարտադրուի, թուրք հասարակութեան ընդմիջից:

* * *

Հայ մարդու ազգային ինքնութեան ձեւաւորման մէջ մի նոր ազդակ է Հայաստանի անկախ պետականութեան վերածնունդը, եւ այդ իրողութեան մէջ բացայայտ աճ է ապրում մինչ այժմ ճնշուած ու զսպուած պատմական յիշողութիւնը եւ դրսեւորում, արձագանք գտնում գրականութեան մէջ: Յատուկ հետաքրքրութիւն կայ հանդէպ Արեւմտեան Հայաստանից գաղթած տատերի ու պապերի կեանքի պատմութեան շուրջ: Հայաստանում ապրող հայը այլեւս գիտակից է Սփիւռքի գոյութեանը ու անցեալի հետ հաշուի նստելու, իր ազգային ինքնութիւնն ու պատկանելիութիւնը արժեւորելու նրա տարած շարունակական պայքարին: Նորանկախ Հայաստանը կարող է համայն հայութեան հայրենիքը դառնալ, պաշտպանն ու ապաւենը՝ նոյնիսկ այն հայերի, որոնք հալածանքի վախից իրենց ազգութիւնը թաքուն են պահում, նոյնիսկ նրանց, որոնք իսլամ կրօնին են դաւանում: Ձեւաւորուող այս նոր իրականութիւնը կարող է իր կնիքը դնել աշխարհացրիւ հայի ինքնագիտակցութեան եւ ազգային ինքնութեան վրայ: Հարցումներ, որոնց պատասխանը դեռ չի երեւում:

Ռուբինա Փիրումեան
Փետրուար, 2008,
Մայիս, 2012,
Լոս Անջելես

10020

ՀՀ Ազգային գրադարան



NL0542647

Price: 10000 AMD



2 001541 230015

812154123

ArtBridge, Tel: 58128



Who Continued Living in Turkey after 1915 The Metamorphosis of the Post-Genocide Armenian Identity as Reflected in Artistic Literature

Rubina Perroomian

Issued under the auspices of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute

In the atmosphere of the precariousness of minority rights in Turkey and government's persistence in denying the existence of the Armenian issue as well as its continuing policy of pressure and selective approach to history, a prescribed national identity covering all ethnic groups in Republican Turkey was enforced and the Armenian collective suffering of the past was buried in silence.

With the recent political developments in the world, the wall of silence is breached. The events of 1915 and the plight of the Armenian survivors in Turkey, be they Christian, Islamized, or hidden, are espoused and fictionalized in literature produced in Turkey. Artistic expressions echo the continuing trauma in the life of these "rejects of the sword," a Turkish moniker for Armenians, having "undeservedly" escaped from death. The stories that Turkish writers unearth and the daring memoirs of Turkish citizens with an Armenian in their ancestry, as well as obscured references to these same stories and events in Turkish-Armenian literature, have unveiled the full picture of survival, with an everlasting memory of the lost ones, but also of forced conversions, of nurturing the "enemy" in the bosom, and of the dehumanization and sexual torture of men and women. A multifaceted image, an identity, of what is broadly generalized as Turkish-Armenian, thus emerges, a phenomenon that contradicts the long-researched and explored concept of the Diasporan-Armenian post-Genocide ethnic identity. Nevertheless, the sociopolitical and religious impositions and the hegemony of Muslim identity have not been fully challenged yet. Outside pressures may influence the metamorphosis of Turkish state of mind, but the change should come from within the Turkish society. The change may be underway.

