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# REMEMBERING AND UNDERSTANDING GENOCIDE THROUGH THE ARTS: A CASE STUDY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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The article is dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the heroic novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh.*

One of the most discussed and influential genocides globally is the Armenian Genocide which has been explored in journalistic, academic and artistic ways. Despite war-time censorship, the mass deportations and killings of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire during World War One was covered extensively and graphically by the international press. Such atrocities became a catalyst for the emergence of the important analytic terms of 'crimes against humanity' and 'genocide', along with the extension of the concept of 'war crimes'. These three terms constitute key conceptual aspects in international criminal law, history and the social sciences. In addition to new analytical frameworks seeking to portray the magnitude of mass atrocity crimes, we also have witnessed personal accounts within an Arts and Humanities format. The Arts have often explored the personal costs of war, genocide and their extended aftermath. Franz Werfel's historical novel "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh" was an exemplary example and its international influence was extensive. Forms of coverage and commentary on genocide can include a range of approaches from journalistic accounts, academic historical writings, memoirs, museums, social science theorizing to various aspects of the Arts, such as novels, plays, poetry, film, paintings and music. While detached academic accounts are important to develop our analytical understanding; more engaged personal artistic forms of expression can be profoundly influential in fostering empathy and sympathy towards the victims. The Arts can be powerful forms of personal connection. In the tradition of Franz Werfel's novel, an overview of a variety of works in the Arts about the Armenian Genocide will be discussed. Together, the different approaches of i) journalistic first-impressions, ii) the academic analytical mind and iii) the Arts' passionate heart can help us to more effectively remember, understand, sympathize and educate about genocides. It is useful to employ a variety of ways of reaching potential bystanders to remember, understand and become more engaged to overcome the devastating impact of genocide.

**Keywords:** *The Armenian Genocide, genocide terms, genocide survivor memoirs, Journalistic accounts of genocide, genocige through the arts.*

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## Introduction

The mass deportations and killings of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire during World War One were covered extensively and graphically by the international press. The atrocities were also a catalyst for the emergence of the concepts of 'crimes against humanity' and 'genocide', along with the continued unfolding of the concept of 'war crimes'. Today, these three terms constitute key conceptual and legal terms in international law for the International Criminal Court, the United Nations and member states. Yet, amidst the continued presence of mass atrocities and denial (Lipstadt, 1994; Dadrian, 1999; Sherman & Grobman, 2000; Lipstadt, 2005; Gocek, 2015), both by states and individuals, the challenge exists to confront such denial in a variety of ways. Ways of remembering can include contemporary journalistic accounts, academic historical writings, survivor and witness memoirs, museum exhibits, memorials and the arts. Detached analytical scholarly accounts are key to fostering better understanding on the complex aspects of causality, phases and consequences of genocide. However, detached scholarly analysis may not be enough. More engaged personal artistic perspectives can be profoundly influential in fostering empathy and sympathy with the victims. The academic approach reflects the analytical mind, while the Arts the emotional heart (Whitehorn, 2023). Together the two different approaches can help to overcome the vast challenges of learning and comprehending about the seemingly indescribable (Wiesel, 2006, p. ix; Whitehorn, 2015; Whitehorn, 2018). Perhaps, such insights might help prevent future occurrences of genocide.

This paper will focus on the Armenian Genocide of WW I.[1] It will involve three component sections: Part I: Describing the Indescribable: Journalistic Accounts of 1915; Part II: The Crime with No Name: Finding New Academic and Legal Concepts; and Part III: Viewing the Armenian Genocide Through the Arts: A Case Study. The exploration of genocide will be offered for the following Arts categories: Survivor Memoirs and Historical Novels; Feature Films; Poetry; Paintings/Photography and Music.

## Describing the indescribable: the journalistic accounts of 1915[2]

How does one 'think about the unthinkable?' How does one 'describe the indescribable' (Wiesel, 1984, p. 154; Langer, 1975, p. xii; Lang, 2000, p. 17)? These are among the analytical and moral challenges in trying to understand genocide. As Raphael Lemkin (Power, 2002; Frieze, 2013), the originator of the term 'genocide', had noted: genocide occurred in history before the word was created. The history of humans is marked by episodes of great cruelty and mass killings where groups that were different were targeted for persecution and slaughter (Whitehorn 2018a).

However, no single word or combination of words or phrases could adequately convey the magnitude of suffering and horror of what transpired. Even today, we search for ways to "describe the indescribable" (Kloian, 1985; Whitehorn, 2015; Whitehorn, 2018b).

When trying to understand the events of 1915 onwards, it is useful to ask: What words and phrases were used by the Armenian survivors, domestic and foreign witnesses, and newspaper writers to describe what happened? The challenge was how to describe the indescribable, or what Churchill would later in 1941 call "the crime without a name".

The influential international newspaper *The New York Times* reported extensively on the massacres of the Armenians under the Young Turk dictatorship.[3] A content analysis overview of *The New York Times* for the year 1915 (the peak year of the deportations and killings) reveals that a variety of words and phrases were used to try to convey the depth and magnitude of the horrific scenes, deeds and rapidly deteriorating developments. Reviewing the range of the words employed can assist in conveying the magnitude of the man-made catastrophe that befell the Armenians and other ethnic/religious minorities.

Among the terms and phrases offered in the newspaper articles were the following: "pillage", "great exodus", "great deportation", "completely depopulated", "wholesale deportations", "systematically uprooted", "wholesale uprooting of the native population", "young women and girls appropriated by the Turks, thrown into harems, attacked or else sold to the highest bidder", "children are being kidnapped by the wholesale", "kidnapping of attractive young girls", "rape", "unparalleled savagery", "acts of horror", "murder, rape, and other savageries", "endure terrible tortures", "revolting tortures", "their breasts cut off, their nails pulled out, their feet cut off, or they hammer nails into them just as they do to horses", "burned to death", "helpless women and children were roasted to death", "massacres", "slaughter", "atrocities", "unbelievable atrocities", "systematically murdered men and turned women and children out into the desert, where thousands perished of starvation", "million Armenians killed or in exile", "1,500,000 Armenians starve", "dying in prison camps", "wholesale massacres", "slaughtered wholesale", "fiendish massacres", "massacre was planned", "most thoroughly organized and effective massacres this country has ever known", "extirpating the million and a half Armenians in the Ottoman Empire", "policy of extermination", "plan for extirpating Christianity by killing off Christians of the Armenian race", "plan to exterminate the whole Armenian people", "deliberately exterminated", "virtually the whole nation had been wiped out", "annihilation of a whole people", "organized system of pillage, deportations, wholesale executions, and massacres", "pillage, rape, murder, wholesale expulsion and deportation, and massacre", "systematic, authorized and desperate effort on the part of the rulers of Turkey to wipe out the Armenians", "deliberate murder of a nation", "war of extermination", "race extermination", "intention was to exterminate the Armenian race", "Armenia without Armenians", "extinction menaces Armenia", "death of Armenia", "deportation order and the resulting war of extinction", and "aim at the complete elimination of all non-Moslem races from Asiatic Turkey", and "crimes against civilization and morality".

There are at least ten examples (five in the decades before 1915 and five in the years after) where the biblical word "holocaust" in the generic sense is used to describe either the mass burning of Armenians alive, massacres of Christians or attempt at annihilation of the Armenian people. The *New York Times'* references in the 1915-1922 era to the Armenians' fate include the phrasing "holocaust", "war's holocaust of horror", "great holocaust" and "final holocaust".

Clearly authors strained for the words that could explain the magnitude of such horrific scenes and deeds. Witnesses were often overwhelmed, particularly at the time of the deadly deeds, but also in the retelling of the painful accounts. For many who witnessed such atrocities, it was a life-altering experience. However, no single word or combination of words or phrases could adequately convey the magnitude of suffering and horror of what transpired. Even today, we search for ways to "describe the indescribable". One of the ways to try to comprehend the magnitude of the mass atrocities is with the introduction of three new important analytical terms employed in the social sciences and international law.

## The crime with no name: finding new academic and legal concepts

While initially formulated at different times historically, the three legal terms -- war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide – are significantly interrelated and overlap. Collectively, they constitute key foundational pillars in international law (Schabas, 2000) relating to mass atrocity crimes. War crimes (Bass, 2000), the first of these concepts to emerge, arose out of the Hague conferences in the late 19C and early 20$^{th}$ centuries. These deliberations sought to regulate the conduct of war in modern times. The concept of crimes against humanity (Jones, 2008) emerged in 1915 during WW I when the Russian, French and British governments, which shared a military alliance, issued a formal international declaration warning the Young Turk government about its mass deportations and massacres of Armenians within the Ottoman Empire. Greatly influenced by the Ottoman Young Turk mass atrocity crimes against the Armenians, the legal scholar Raphael Lemkin initially suggested in the 1930s the twin terms of 'barbarism' and 'vandalism' to address such mass atrocity crimes. In a later synthesis, he proposed the new concept of genocide in his 1944 book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (Lemkin, 2008; Jones, 2017) in which he outlined the Nazi deportations and mass murder of Jews during the Holocaust. War was the common feature in the emergence of all three concepts (Whitehorn, 2018a; Melson, 1992). Together these terms form key components of international law and the International Criminal Court.

These three terms were formulated during the last two centuries. In recent prosecutions at international tribunals and the ICC, the three terms have tended to cluster together. Collectively, they are important tools for punishing those guilty and potentially deterring future 'genocidaires'.

## Phases and stages of genocide

A number of academic authors have suggested several phases or stages of genocide. Lucy Dawidowicz's epic *The War Against the Jews: 1933-1945* (1975) suggested phases of the Holocaust. Raul Hilberg in his pioneering volume *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1985, p. 267) outlined the genocidal process as involving six steps: definition, dismissal and expropriation, concentration, exploitation and starvation, annihilation and confiscation of personal effects. Helen Fein, in her monograph/special issue of *Current Sociology* (1990), later reprinted as *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective* (1993), outlined five stages: definition, stripping, segregation, isolation, and finally, concentration and killing (Whitehorn 2012a). From the 1990s onwards, Gregory Stanton expanded the number of stages, initially to seven (Classification, Symbolization, Dehumanization, Organization, Polarization, Preparation, Extermination) then to eight when he added "Denial" (Stanton, 2009; Whitehorn, 2010). In later years, following discussion with others, including this author, he expanded the number to ten stages by adding "Discrimination" and "Persecution" as outlined on the website *Genocide Watch* (Whitehorn, 2012a; Stanton, 2018).

New analytical terms and causal conceptualizations, however, are not enough to comprehend and deal with mass atrocity crimes. A multi-pronged strategy seems necessary, particularly when confronted by ongoing genocide denial.

## Genocide denial

While denial usually occurs at all stages of genocide (i.e. before, during and after) (Whitehorn, 2012), it is particularly important afterwards in affecting our perceptions of history and remembrance of the victims. As Elie Wiesel and others remind us, it is a form of 'double killing' (Eliach, 1984; Rosenfeld, 1988; Wiesel, 2006, p. xv) in denying that the victims even existed and suffered. In his evolving versions of the number of stages of genocide, Stanton has consistently listed denial as the last stage (Stanton, 2009; Stanton, 2018).

Since 1915, both Ottoman and Turkish governments have engaged in denial of the Armenian Genocide (Dadrian, 1999; Hovannisian, 1999; Alayarian, 2008; Gocek, 2015; Whitehorn, 2015). This occurs despite overwhelming evidence from a multitude of sources about the mass deportations and massacres of Armenians and other Christians by the Young Turk regime. The denial has created a serious gap in modern Turkish history (Akcam, 2012; Gocek, 2015). Denial even attempts to eradicate the very memory about the dead Ottoman Armenians and their culture. Genocide denial is a means for Turkish political leaders and the public to avoid dealing with a dark period of history when ethnic and religious mass murder prevailed. If successful, such denial allows the perpetrators to get away with their crimes (Hilberg, 1992), fosters a sense of impunity, and increases the likelihood of future killings. It certainly makes the healing process for the survivors and their descendants far more difficult.

In recent years, there have been increasing efforts by some Turkish scholars, such as Taner Akcam, and civil society groups to speak frankly about such mass atrocities and reach out positively to the global Armenian community. However, such individual acts are not enough to counter state-sponsored Turkish government denial.

While the post-WW II German government formally recognized the Holocaust, altering domestic German public opinion from its Nazi past required an inter-generational process of re-education. Even so, high profile examples of Holocaust denial persisted (Dawidowicz, 1981; Lipstadt, 1994; Sherman & Grobman, 2000; Lipstadt, 2005) and may have even increased in recent years in the internet era and ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

## Viewing the Armenian Genocide through the arts: a case study

While academic publications, with their analytical models and scientific methods of evidence collection, are central to remembering and confronting genocide denial, another important approach is to reach beyond the detached scholarly format and employ the more personal and engaged literary tradition that can tap the emotions of the heart (Langer, 1975, p. xii). This tradition can evoke empathy, compassion and sympathy and thereby motivate the reader into potential action. Instead of just knowing about a major historic wrong, there can be an impetus to do something about it, albeit often after the deadly fact. Genocide remembrance, post-genocide justice and future prevention can be intertwined in significant ways.

Richard Hovannisian's multi-disciplinary series of edited books with Mazda Publishers on genocide and the historic regions of Armenia are inspirational guides, as one explores several genres of artistic and cultural expression. Analysis will utilize the following Arts categories: Survivor Memoirs and Historical Novels; Feature Films; Poetry; Paintings and Music.

**Survivor Memoirs and Historical Novels[4].** Seeking to overcome the great trauma experienced, survivor victim memoirs and witness accounts are key primary and highly personal sources of insight on genocide. As such, they can be powerful means to convey the magnitude of the persecution, great suffering, enormous horror and mass death. Instead of the focus being primarily on the overwhelming vast numbers of victims of mass atrocity crimes, memoirs offer a more intimate and perhaps more relatable story from an individual or a personal family perspective. The scale and setting are more intimate and perhaps as a result can be highly moving and persuasive.

The Armenian Genocide and its precursor massacres are defining aspects of the contemporary Armenian heritage and identity. By far the dominant literary mode of expression about the Armenian Genocide are those of survivor memoirs and historical novels, with the latter often greatly influenced by extended family histories. It is the literature of bearing witness and a key goal is to remember the "Mets Yeghern" [Great Crime/Catastrophe]. Lorne Shirinian's *Survivor Memoirs of the Armenian Genocide* (1999) was an early overview summary booklet of some of these works in English.

This paper will also focus on works in English. Pioneering academic volumes by Rubina Peroomian first in her comparative study *Literary Responses to Catastrophe: A Comparison of the Armenian and Jewish Experience* (1993), then in *The Armenian Genocide in Literature: Perceptions of Those Who Lived Through the Years of Calamity* (2012) and *The Armenian Genocide in Literature: The Second Generation Responds* (2015), along with the extended article "Diasporan Armenian Literature Entering the Second Century of Continuing Effects of the Genocide" (2017) on the third generation, provide a comprehensive account of Armenian literary writings on the massacres and 1915 genocide.

The first generation of genocide survivor authors had endured traumatic events and struggled to describe their horrific experiences. Many had little or no previous experience at literary writing, but given the terrible magnitude of what they had endured and witnessed, they felt an historic duty to pen personal accounts of what happened. Their primary audiences were immediate family members and later generations of Armenians. The authors not only sought to tell the family history to the next generation and the outside public, but also to combat ongoing Turkish state denial and injustice. Many of these books were self-published. Sometimes the manuscripts remained in draft form, often untranslated into English, until significantly later. Even now, we do not have a full compendium list of these works in English, let alone in Armenian and other languages. Nevertheless, these early accounts provided an important foundation and inspiration for later generations growing up in the diaspora. They also ensured that the mass deportations and massacres did not become a "forgotten genocide", a significant concern in the 1950s.

Amongst the memoirs printed in English, two of the most famous were penned early on within several years of each other in the United States. Genocide survivor Arshaluys Martikian/Aurora Mardiganian's autobiography *Ravished Armenia* (1918) (Demoyan & Abrahamyan, 2015) was serialized in newspapers, then was turned into a popular book, and shortly thereafter became, what was probably, Hollywood's first genocide film. Sadly, the film only now exists in fragments and in script form (Slide, 1997; Torchin, 2012; Matiossian, 2014; Matiossian & Whitehorn, 2014; Frieze, 2014; Marsoobian, 2017). More recently, Aurora's life has been once more portrayed in a major film *Aurora Sunrise* (2022), which is a combination of historical animation and documentary interviews with her.

Serving as the American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau's witness memoir *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (1918), which drew upon consular reports, provided detailed accounts of the Turkish government's mass deportations and killings of the Armenians. It also noted American efforts to stop the Young Turk perpetrators and provide urgent assistance to the victims. Grigoris Balakian's *Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide* (2009) is an epic 500-page account by a distinguished Armenian clergyman. While it was first published in Armenian in two volumes in 1922 and 1959, regrettably it was not available in English for almost nine decades.

In 1933, the Austrian author Franz Werfel penned the historical novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* which dealt with the siege and heroic resistance by the Armenians of the mountain region of Musa Dagh (Adalian, 2015; Jacobs, 2015). The novel tells the story of one of the few examples of armed resistance by the Armenians to the deportations and killings by the Young Turk regime. The episode is also one of the few historical examples of foreign power humanitarian assistance arriving in timely fashion. French naval ships in the Mediterranean saw the besieged civilians and escorted them to safety in British-controlled Egypt. Penned first in German and translated into English a year later, the volume received substantial coverage, but was also soon banned in Nazi Germany. Despite this, the novel was clandestinely circulated and provided inspiration to Jews seeking to not only survive, but also to resist the horrors of the Holocaust. Regrettably, later attempts to make the book into a Hollywood feature film would face major political pressures and significant obstacles.

The lack of early translation into English was and remains a major challenge, preventing many memoirs from achieving wider readership sooner. Amongst the memoirs available in English (listed by year of publication) are the following: clergyman Abraham H. Hartunian's *Neither To Laugh Nor to Weep: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide* (1968). Other memoirs include Kerop Bedoukian's *The Urchin: An Armenian Escape* (1978) reprinted as *Some of Us Survived* (1979), Alice Muggerditchian Shipley's *We Walked, Then We Ran* (1983), John (Hovhannes) Minassian's *Many Hills to Climb* (1986), Hovhannes Mugrditchian's *To Armenians with Love* (1986), Bertha Nakshian Ketchian's *In the Shadow of the Fortress: The Genocide Remembered* (1988), John Yervant's (Yervant Kouyoumjian) *Needles, Thread and Button* (1988), Ramela Martin's *Out of Darkness* (1989), Ephraim K. Jernazian's *Judgment Unto Truth: Witnessing the Armenian Genocide* (1990), Armen Anush's *Passage Through Hell: A Memoir* (2007), Shahen Derderian's *Death March* (2008), Yervant Odian's *Accursed Years: My Exile and Return From Der Zor, 1914-1919* (2009), Levon Parian's (transl), *Crows of the Desert: Memoirs of Levon Votnakhparian* (2012) and Karnig Panian's *Goodbye, Antoura: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide* (2015).

The next generations' writings were influenced by not only the 1915 genocide, but also their lives and experiences with their dual identities of emigre/immigrant family members in the global Diaspora (Kherdian 2007). Their writings reveal that the wounds of genocide were deep and spanned several generations. The Diaspora writers described their alienation and profound separation from their ancestral homeland and from the many dead and displaced kin. Existential angst was a frequent and important theme.

From the 1960s onwards, particularly following 1965, the 50$^{th}$ anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, awareness and writing on the subject increased. A growing number of Diaspora writers sought to explore their roots and tell of their fellow Armenians' tragic fate. The Greek-American Elia Kazan's *America America* (1961) was a novel, screenplay, and then acclaimed epic film that describes the terrible plight

of the Christian Armenian and Greek minorities in the Ottoman Empire. Peter Sourian's novel *The Gate* (1965) also focuses on the Armenian Genocide. Michael Arlen's *Passage to Ararat* (1975) addresses Turkish denialism, and bystander indifference, along with the challenges to Diaspora members of assimilation, the quest for identity and an odyssey of ethnic self-discovery. Peter Najarian's *Voyages* (1971) and *Daughters of Memory* (1986) also recount the Armenian story and the quest for identity in the Diaspora. David Kherdian outlines his mother's life in *The Road from Home: The Story of an Armenian Girl* (1979). Carol Edgarian's *Rise the Euphrates* (1994) shows that later generations of American-born Armenians continue to suffer from the lasting effects of genocide. In *Vergeen: A Survivor of the Armenian Genocide* (1996), Mae Derdarian confronts Turkish revisionist denial of the genocide. Dora Sakayan edited and translated her grandfather's journal in *An Armenian Doctor in Turkey: Garadabed Hatcherian: My Smyrna Ordeal of 1922* (1997). Peter Balakian's award-winning and highly influential *Black Dog of Fate* (1997) outlines a complex existential journey that commences in the comfortable suburbs of America, but gradually reveals a past history of increasing layers of violence and suffering of the Ottoman Armenian extended family. It resembles the descent into deeper levels of hell. Nancy Kricorian's *Zabelle* (1999) provides a homage to her grandmother's suffering.

The dawn of the 21st century saw a continuation in literary writings on the Armenian Genocide. The potential list is substantial. Amongst the volumes are the following: Agop Hacikyan's *A Summer without Dawn* (2000) recounts his growing awareness of the magnitude of the genocide. The novel *Lines in the Sand: Love, Tragedy, and the Armenian Genocide* (2001) is by the genocide documentary film-maker Thomas Ohanian. Vickie Smith Foston's *Victoria's Secret: A Conspiracy of Silence* (2001) describes how her Armenian ancestors fled the Hamidian massacres of the 1890s. *Three Apples Fell from Heaven* (2001) is inspired by Micheline Aharonian Marcom's learning of her grandmother's life story. Theodore Kharpertian's *Hagop: An Armenian Genocide Survivor's Journey to Freedom* (2003) is an account of his father's ordeals. Sara Chitjian transcribed, translated and published her father's drafts of his memoirs in *A Hair's Breath From Death: The Memoirs of Hampartzoum Mardiros Chitjian* (2003). Antonia Arslan's *Skylark Farm (*2004) is a historical novel about her family's suffering during the genocide and was later turned into the film "The Lark Farm". Kay Mouradian's *A Gift in the Sunlight: An Armenian Story* (2005) is a novel about her mother's survival amidst the genocide. Henri Verneuil's (Ashod Malikian) *Mayrig* (2006) is a historical novel about an Armenian family's difficult conditions living in forced exile. The book was later turned into a film. Margaret Adjemian Ahmert's *The Knock at the Door* (2007) is the story of the survival of Margaret's mother amidst the mass deportations and massacres. Marcella Polain's *The Edge of the World* (2007) is a "fictionalized autobiography" that describes the fragmentation of an Armenian family by the genocide and forced exile. Mark Mustian's *The Gendarme* (2010) profiles the unusual perspective of an old Turkish soldier's regrets and search for forgiveness.

In the lead up to 2015, the 100th memorial year of the genocide, an increased number of volumes appeared from another generation of Diaspora writers. Chris Bohjalian's *The Sandcastle Girls* (2012) is a romantic novel set amidst the genocide. Dana Walrath's *Like Water on a Stone* (2014), echoing a Greek tragedy's epic poem, tells a harrowing literary tale of two children surviving the ordeals of the genocide. Drawing upon his relatives' earlier attempts, Armen T. Marsoobian penned a family history in *Fragments of a Lost Homeland: Remembering Armenia* (2015). Both Aline Ohanessian's *Orhan's Inheritance* (2015) and Maral Boyadjian's *As the Poppies Bloomed* (2015) are romantic novels set amidst the genocide. Dawn Anahid MacKeen's *The Hundred Year Walk: An Armenian Odyssey* (2016) involved the intertwined autobiographies of a genocide survivor and that of his granddaughter, who retraces his perilous journey a century later. Virginia Gavian Rivers' *Prelude to Genocide: Incident in Erzerum* is a novel based on her family's history during the 1890s Hamidian massacres in the Ottoman Empire.

In recent years, the International Armenian Literary Alliance (IALA) has become a significant forum for writers both in the Diaspora and Armenia. In 2023, Aram Mrjoian edited *We Are All Armenian: Voices from the Diaspora*, a collection of writings by Diaspora authors exploring the inter-related themes of genocide and identity in the Diaspora.

Increasingly, particularly for a younger and more visually-oriented generation, the graphic novel has become an innovative and growing literary genre. The book *Prior to the Auction of Souls* (2008) by artist Tigran is based on Aurora Mardiganian's memoir *Ravished Armenia.*

The different generations of memoirs and historical novels on the Armenian Genocide reveal the ongoing suffering of Armenians throughout the world spanning several generations. The genocide has become a key defining part of the contemporary Armenian identity. As such, Armenian authors, even a century later, feel compelled to write accounts of the Armenian Genocide and, in so doing, ensure that it does not become a "forgotten genocide".

The Armenian Genocide examples of Aurora Mardiganian's autobiography and Franz Werfel's historical novel *Forty Days of Musa Dagh*) had a significant international impact. So too have survivor memoirs and historical novels about the Holocaust. Perhaps the most famous on the Holocaust was penned by a young adolescent girl – Anne Frank. *The Diary of A Young Girl* has been translated into many languages (Dutch 1947; English 1952) and had millions of copies published worldwide. Anne Frank's memoirs were issued in a number of printings and edited versions and were also made into both an acclaimed play (1956) and film (1959). Unlike Aurora Mardiganian, she did not live to see her notebook published. But in both cases, the sufferings and hope of a young girl/youthful woman have profoundly moved generations. The impact of the horrors of genocide in stifling the hopes and aspirations, not to mention life vitality, of youth resonates in a special way, particularly with young readers who often know little about genocide.

A multitude of other survivor memoirs exist, even more perhaps only in draft form and unpublished. Genocide museums and foundations, in efforts to promote education about victims' stories, have often fostered important survivor testimonial archives and series of books. Examples include the Zoryan Institute and the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (AGMI) regarding the Armenian Genocide. Some Holocaust Museums such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum include references to the Armenian Genocide. Steven Spielberg's USC Shoah Foundation organized an extensive digital collection of video testimonies, a powerful medium in this technological era. It includes a number of interviews with Armenian Genocide survivors conducted by Michael Hagopian, founder of the Armenian Film Foundation (Garapedian, 2015). Survivor memoirs constitute key primary sources and personal witness, albeit highly traumatized ones.

Not surprisingly, a number of the historical novels have been made into movies, often with significant commercial and awards success.

**Feature films.** In a cinematic era, the portrayal of history through films is of growing importance. Genocide is a topic that has received increased attention, with several overview books on the subject (Lewis, 1984; Wilson & Crowder-Taraborrelli, 2012; Michalczyk & Helmick, 2013; Friedman & Hewitt, 2016).[5]

A number of feature films have been attempted or made that deal with the Armenian Genocide. Amongst the more notable are: *Ravished Armenia/Auction of Souls* (1919), *America, America* (1963), *Nahapet* (1977), *Forty Days of Musa Dagh* (1982), *Mayrig* (1991), *Ararat* (2002), *Lark Farm* (2004), *The Cut* (2014), *1915* (2015), *The Promise* (2016*), Songs of Solomon* (2020), and *Aurora Sunrise* (2022). Often the films are based on survivor memoirs or historical novels.

What is little known today is that a pioneering Hollywood film from the silent era dealt with the Armenian Genocide. *Ravished Armenia/Auction of Souls* is the biographical account of a young orphan girl, Arshaluys Mardigian (later renamed Aurora Mardiganian), who having witnessed most of her family being killed, managed to flee the massacres and later immigrated as a teenager to the United States (Slide, 1997; Torchin, 2012; Matiossian & Whitehorn, 2014; Frieze, 2014; Demoyan & Abrahamyan, 2015; Marsoobian, 2017). Her biography entitled *Ravished Armenia: The Story of Aurora Mardiganian: The Christian Girl Who Lived through the Great Massacres*, was first serialized in the Hearst newspapers and later published as a book in 1918. The memoir was then turned into a film. The history-based 85 minute movie was a silent film (with sub-titles). It portrayed the mass deportations, rapes and massacres of Armenians. It had Aurora Mardiganian herself as the lead character. Remarkably, the movie also featured in actual person Henry Morgenthau, the former US Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. The film was shot in California in 1918 with a cast of thousands of extras. Initially titled "Ravished Armenia," the movie was renamed "Auction of Souls." It was, in all likelihood, the first major Hollywood picture to portray genocide. In a number of ways, it was a pioneering film. To cast a genocide survivor as the lead actress is rare. As a post-WW I film, it certainly challenged

conventional mores regarding violence, rape, and nudity. It also raised the censorship issue, both morally and politically. Turkish opposition in later years reinforced the latter.

The US film premieres of *Ravished Armenia* took place in Los Angeles and New York in 1919. While film screenings were initially numerous and well-attended, the frequency of airings diminished. Over time, copies of the film were lost, destroyed or deteriorated. No known remaining full copy exists today. The history books on the early silent film era have mostly ignored the movie "Ravished Armenia/Auction of Souls." What had once been an often-seen and much cited movie that helped to raise crucial humanitarian relief funds for the Near East Relief was now mostly ignored either by accident, bias, or malevolent design. The Armenian Genocide Museum Institute in Yerevan, Armenia has an important section of its exhibition devoted to Aurora Mardiganian, her memoirs and the film. For some, Aurora Mardiganian is the 'Anne Frank of the Armenian Genocide.' Regrettably, a great gap in time (almost half a century) occurred before another major film on the Armenian Genocide would appear.

As noted previously, Franz Werfel wrote the novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* which dealt with the siege of the mountain region of Musa Dagh during the Armenian Genocide. Efforts by the major Hollywood studio MGM to make a film version of the novel between the 1930s and 1970s were all unsuccessful. This was largely due to significant foreign pressure and interference by the Turkish government, supported by the US State Department. Decades later, a lower budget version directed by Sarky Mouradian was filmed in 1982, but achieved very little global distribution. A later film *The Promise* also portrayed the events and was more widely distributed and publicized.

The famous Greek-American film director Elia Kazan penned an autobiographical book about the suffering of his extended family and that of fellow Greeks and Armenians under Turkish rule. In 1963, he turned the book into the epic film *America, America*. It is a powerful film portraying the plight of the Christians under the brutal Ottoman regime.

*Nahapet* (1977) [Patriarch] is a Soviet era film based on a novel by Hrachya Kochar and describes how a genocide survivor (Nahapet) attempts to rebuild his life amidst the rugged mountains of Soviet Armenia. One of the recurring scenes involves scores of red apples falling from a tree, rolling into a river and floating en masse downstream. The scene is a painful symbolic reminder of the multitude of Armenian bodies thrown into the Euphrates by the Young Turk regime during the genocide.

*Mayrig* [Mother] is the title of a 1985 semi-autobiographical French-language novel by Henri Verneuil (born Ashod Malakian), a French-Armenian author and filmmaker. The story is about a multi-generational family's efforts to survive post-genocide exile and is a powerful account of the lingering inter-generational effects of genocide, even decades later.

*Ararat* (2002), by acclaimed Armenian-Canadian film-maker Atom Egoyan, is a multi-layered and a complex drama. Egoyan's actual film portrays a fictional director

making an historical drama about the heroic Armenian people's resistance to the Turkish military siege of the city of Van in 1915. A young Armenian boy and his beloved mother endured dreadful conditions during the bombardment and siege. She later dies as a refugee, while the young boy eventually emigrates to the United States, changes his name, and becomes the prominent artist Arshile Gorky. His melancholy twin paintings "The Artist and His Mother" are iconic and play a key role in the film. *Ararat* dwells upon these works of art to convey the anguish and grieving for a deceased mother and a fractured family life. Amongst the re-occurring threads woven into film are the enormous impact of genocide, intergenerational transmission of trauma and the continuing pain of ongoing Turkish denial. The closing hymn "Oor es mayr eem/Mother, where are you?" sung by international soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian is heart-breaking. The movie achieved substantial viewing, but was sometimes criticized for its complex, fragmented perspectives.

The film *Lark Farm/La Masseria delle allodole* (2007) is based on the semi-autobiographical novel by Italian Armenian writer Antonia Arslan about her extended family's painful history. Her account deals with the horrific experiences of the massacres and mass deportations of Armenians and eventual exile overseas for those who survived.

*The Cut* (2014) by Fatim Akin follows the painful odyssey of a young Armenian man who conscripted, along with fellow Armenians, to do forced road labour, barely survives the Turkish cutting of the throats of the unarmed Armenian workers. Now mute from the cut, this lonely survivor endures further hardship and danger and gives up hope that any in his family is still alive. He travels from one place of exile after another, eventually ending up in the United States, where, to his surprise, he reunites with part of his surviving family.

Garin Hovannisian and Alex Mouhibian's film *1915* was released on the 100th memorial year of 2015 and suggests a story about a director and his actress wife's staging a play in Los Angeles about the Armenian Genocide. The historical play draws protest demonstrations outside and mysterious incidents and apparitions inside. The ghosts of the genocide from the past press, powerfully onto the present in this hauntingly powerful film.

Terry George's *The Promise* (2016) tells the story of an American reporter who befriends two young Armenians and the three form a love triangle. With the arrival of WW I, the foreign journalist bears witness to the mass deportations and massacres of Armenians. Amongst the scenes portrayed is the self-defence resistance at Musa Dagh. Unlike the fate of most of their fellow Armenians, many of these inhabitants survive with the help and rescue of nearby French naval ships. This film received wide distribution and has even appeared on Netflix.

Based in part on a family story by Sylvia Kavoukjian, *Songs of Solomon* (2020) intertwines the tragic life of priest and distinguished musicologist/composer Komitas amidst the suffering of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

The Zoryan Institute's co-sponsored *Aurora Sunrise* (2022) is an animated documentary film which combines portions of a recorded interview with Aurora Mardiganian, along with some excerpt scenes from her 1919 autobiographical silent film *Auction of Souls*. The 2022 film tells the biographical story of the young female genocide survivor who eventually journeys to the United States and stars in a film about her perilous life. The movie received positive international reviews and has increased public awareness of Aurora's tragic life. The use of animation was an effective technique for reaching a younger generation and a wider audience.

The gap in films over several decades from the early 1920s to the early 1960s contributed to fostering a sense of the 'forgotten genocide'. Recent feature films continue to be an effective means to convey to the public the deep and enduring impact of the Armenian Genocide. For the most part, the focus is on the victims and their enormous suffering, both during the mass deportations and killings and even the decades after. The films portray different aspects and phases of the genocidal process. For example, the largest number understandably focus on the mass deportations and massacres (*Ravished Armenia*, *Lark Farm*, *The Cut*, *The Promise*), but there is also coverage of Armenian resistance (*The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*), post-genocidal trauma and exile (*Nahapet*, *Mayrig*), and the challenge of remembering amidst genocide denial (*Ararat 1915*).

Apart from the early Hollywood film *Ravished Armenia*, which opened to great initial public coverage in the United States and Great Britain, few films on the Armenian Genocide have garnered extensive global distribution and none has won a major Academy Award. The Holocaust, by contrast, has received far greater film coverage and recognition factors in it being more widely known.

**Poetry.** While generally a less popular genre, poetry has had a long oral and written tradition of recounting the history and suffering of a people, particularly amidst brutal authoritarian regimes (Balakian, 1999; 2015). Despite Adorno's admonition of "No poetry after Auschwitz" (Steiner, 1984), both survivors and bystanders/outsiders have penned verses. Carolyn Forche's volume *Against Forgetting: Twentieth Century Poetry of Witness* (1993) provides a comprehensive collection of leading poets' accounts of the "indescribable".

Poetry has had a long and powerful tradition in Armenian culture. With the persecutions and massacres of Armenians in the 19$^{th}$ and early 20$^{th}$ centuries, it is not surprising to find themes about the deaths, mourning the loss, and anger at the perpetrators' impunity.

The Ottoman Young Turk regime's mass arrest on April 24, 1915 of over 250 Armenian religious, political and community leaders and intellectuals (including poets) was a key opening phase of the Armenian Genocide. Amongst those poets arrested on that date and later killed were Siamanto (Atom Yarjanian), Daniel Varoujan and Rouben Sevak. Their deaths and the abrupt cessation of their writings constitute cultural genocide. Despite their deaths, echoes of their voices, through their writings, can still be heard. For example, Siamanto had penned a collection of poems (most

notably "The Dance") that depicted the earlier 1909 Adana Massacre and were published in *Bloody News from My Friend*.

Surviving poets like Vahan Tekeyan, who had been living in Egypt in 1915, or others like Yeghishe Charents, who lived in the Armenian region of the Russian Empire and would later die in the Stalinist purges in the Soviet Union, wrote about genocide. Tekeyan's collection of poems can be found in *Sacred Wrath*.

One of the major international audience challenges of the poetry by Armenians on the genocide is that most of the survivors wrote in Armenian and not in English. Thus, there was often a considerable delay, if at all, of translation and publication in English. As a result, many of the writers from the first generation of the genocide were not as well-known outside of the Armenian community and even in parts of the assimilated Diaspora. This global challenge continues even to this day since a significant number of poets, both in Armenia and the Diaspora, continue to write in Armenian.

As time passed, however, second and third generations of poets, including those in the Diaspora who were fluent in English, came onto the scene. These included Diana Der Hovanessian, Peter Balakian, David Kherdian, Nancy Kricorian, Lorne Shirinian, Arpine Konyalian Grenier, Keith Garebian, Alan Whitehorn and others. Many of their poems appeared either in edited anthologies or on the Armenian Poetry Project website (armenianpoetry.blogspot.ca) founded and co-ordinated by poet Lola Koundakjian.

Sometimes academic analysis and poetry can be combined, as in the case of Lorne Shirinian's and Alan Whitehorn's *The Armenian Genocide: Resisting the Inertia of Indifference* (2001) which used both formats to educate, publicize and inspire Canadian Members of Parliament while they debated and voted in favour of recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Drawing upon the long scholarly analytical tradition of outlining phases of genocide (Hilberg, 1985; Fein, 1990; 1993; Stanton, 2009; Whitehorn, 2010; Stanton, 2018), the Haiku-like poem "The Verbs of Genocide" (Whitehorn, 2012a; Whitehorn, 2015) sought to capture the essence of the malevolent and deadly process:

> *The Verbs of Genocide*
> Categorized
> Stereotyped
> Stigmatized
> Marginalized
> Disenfranchised.
> Deprived
> Victimized
> Robbed
> Ghettoized
> Deported.
> Stripped
> Raped

Tortured
Murdered.
Mutilated
Dismembered
Discarded
Denied.
Forgotten?

With the 100th memorial year of the Armenian Genocide in 2015, younger poets in Armenia and the Diaspora continued to pen accounts of the inter-generational effects of genocide. The extended family memories and the memorial services served as catalysts for additional poems about the genocidal suffering, sorrow and anger. All were given even greater impetus by ongoing official Turkish state denial. The perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide had sought to kill the leading Armenian intellectuals and to eradicate the culture of their Armenian victims, but ironically the genocidal deeds, in the long run, actually acted as a catalyst for a phoenix-like rebirth of the Armenian poetic tradition. Despite so much death, both life and literature continue to flourish. Armenian writers continue to remember and give hope to their compatriots who face a variety of existential threats today.

**Art.** Before the widespread use of photographs, films and videos, the dominant forms of visual presentation of catastrophic events were the paintings and sketches of artists. The Armenian massacres of the 1890s and 1909 and the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923 became the focus of powerful works of art. By far the most comprehensive volume on this topic is the bilingual (English and Armenian) book by Shahen Khachaturian *The Color of Pain: The Reflections of the Armenian Genocide in Armenian Painting* (2010). A number of the paintings are located in either the National Gallery of Armenia or the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan where a large selection of Jean Jansem's (aka Hovhannes Smerdjian) "massacres" collection is on display. Other paintings can be found listed in the Legacy Project website about art and cataclysmic events.

Among the more famous or powerful paintings on the Armenian Genocide and its precursor massacres are the works of Hovhannes Aivazovsky's "Night: Tragedy at the Sea of Marmara"; Vartges Sureniants' "Massacre of Virgins", "Sanctity: Trampled On"; Hmayak Ardzatbanian's "Turkish Atrocity"; Arshile Gorky's (Vostanik Adoyan) "The Artist and His Mother"; Jansem's (Hovhannes Semerdjian) "Blue Massacre" and "Decapitated 'Flowers'"; Grigor Khandjian's "Unsilenceable Belfry"; Hagop Hagopian's "The Gaolbird". Particularly iconic is Gorky's "The Artist and His Mother" which has been used in a number of Armenian Genocide books and was a central focus in Atom Egoyan's Armenian Genocide film *Ararat*. Variations of Nora Patrich's paintings entitled "Why?" have appeared on the covers of two books: *The Armenian Genocide: Resisting the Inertia of Indifference* (2001) and *Just Poems: Reflections on the Armenian Genocide* (2009). In both, Patrich shows a mournful

mother cradling a dead infant amidst a backdrop of a mass of piled up bodies. The dominant colors of the painting are red for blood and black reflecting bleak, agonizing memories. This is a powerful piece of art that in a single painting vividly conveys the essence of genocide. Since the fateful year of 1915 is a defining event for the Armenian people, artistic images of genocide continue to be painted one generation after another.

An extremely popular and effective format is poster art which was employed both to publicize the Armenian deportations and mass killings in 1915 and also to raise urgently crucial funds for humanitarian aid organizations such as the Near East Relief. The public education and fund-raising were particularly widespread and important in the United States. An extensive and visually-impressive collection of art poster reproductions can be found in Dicron Kassouny's *100 Years Strong: The Armenian Genocide in Posters 1915-2015* (2016).

Taking photographs of the Armenian Genocide was banned by the Ottoman Young Turk dictatorship. Nevertheless, brave individuals, most notably Armin T. Wegner, a German military medic, did so (see *Armin T. Wegner and the Armenians in Anatolia, 1915: Images and Testimonies*). After the war, Wegner lectured about the deportations and massacres of Armenians and sometimes incorporated into his presentations a number of photos by other Germans. Pictures were also taken by foreign missionaries, medical and aid workers such as the Near East Relief staff and volunteers, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the war. They represented a second wave of photos taken of genocide survivors, refugees and orphans (Barton 1930). Photos, taken before 1915 and after, have also shown the magnitude of the destruction of Armenian cultural and religious sites. In recent years, there has been increasing use of satellite images/photos of the ongoing destruction by the Azerbaijani state of Armenian historical cultural sites in both Nakhichevan and Nagorno-Karabakh. Lori Khatchadourian and her colleagues co-founded the Caucasus Heritage Watch (CHW) in 2020 to monitor and deter such deliberate damage and cultural heritage destruction, a label that Raphael Lemkin originally termed "vandalism". The photos of the obliteration of centuries-old religious and cultural sites are profoundly troubling.

The legal pioneer Lemkin had asserted that cultural genocide is a loss not only for the victim nation, but also for the entire world, in that each nation contributes to our global diversity and well-being. The Armenian Genocide Museum Institute has posted online photographs from a number of its collections (including the Near East Relief, Armin T. Wegner, Leslie Davis, Maria Jakobsen).

Amongst the most powerful images often shown and printed are photographs of a column of deportees leaving town under armed escort, a mother carrying her child along with a few belongings on the deportation route, an emaciated dead mother and two lifeless children laying abandoned on a street, Armenian civilians placed in railway freight cars and being shipped to concentration camps and ultimate death in the desert, a starved Armenian woman and son, an American nurse tending to a skeletal Armenian child in a hospital bed, and thousands of orphan children in massed formation in an

open field in a refugee camp. Together these photos serve as moving portraits of the countless civilian victims of genocide.

As a result, in the modern age of photography, paintings may play a less dominant role than in earlier eras. Nevertheless, paintings remain a powerful personal form of artistic expression and can affect viewers in quite different ways than scholarly works (Toll, 1978; Langer, 1995; Niewyk & Nocosia, 2000, pp. 331-332). The AGMI contains an art collection that is impactful.

**Music.** Music inspired by the Armenian Genocide exists in a number of forms and waves. The first wave is that composed and performed by the first generation of survivors. Verjine Svazlian, in her monumental 848 page volume *The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors* (2011) includes "historical song-testimonies" from that era. For many survivors, the songs were personal and emotional ways of coping with their suffering and grief. Svazlian spent more than a half century collecting, transcribing and translating the "song testimonies" and collated them around several phases/themes of genocide: songs of the imprisoned; songs of deportation and massacre; songs of child-deprived mothers, orphans, and orphanages; and songs of the occupied homeland and of the rightful claim.

The renowned priest and composer Komitas (Soghomon Soghomonian) only barely physically survived the genocide, but, like so many others, struggled enormously trying to deal with the trauma. His composition "Andouni" (Song of the Homeless) was performed by soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian as a tribute to the genocide victims in her documentary film "A Long Journey Home".

In 1975, the illustrious Armenian-French singer Charles Aznavour (Chahnour Aznavourian) co-wrote with George Garvarentz and performed the somber song in French "Ils sont tombes" [They have fallen] (Der-Sarkissian 2007). Its lyrics capture the essence of genocide. Amongst the more memorable lines: "They fell without knowing why/Men, women, and children whose only wish was to live./…./They were mutilated, massacred, while their eyes were full of fear./…./They fell silently,/By thousands, and the millions, while the world remained silent./In the desert, their bodies looked like miniscule red flowers,/Covered by a sandstorm, which also concealed their existence./…/Only to die anywhere, without leaving any trace/Ignored, forgotten as they were going into eternal sleep./…./I, myself, am of this race which now sleeps without a resting place/Who chose to die rather than relinquish the faith,/…/Death struck them, regardless of their age,/Their only crime being childen of Armenia."

In the 1990s contemporary rock and video era, Armenian-Americans Serj Tankian and other members of the heavy metal rock band "System of a Down" recorded the discordant song "P.L.U.C.K." an acronym for "Politically Lying Unholy Cowardly Killers". The lyrics of the song include the lines: "Elimination/….Die!/Why?/…./We've taken all your shit, now it's time for restitution./ Recognition, Restoration, Reparation/…./The plan was mastered and called Genocide……/Took all the children and then we died,…./The few that remained were never found,…./All in a system of Down". In 2006, the BBC co-produced the

documentary feature *Screamers*, directed by Carla Garapedian, about the band members, their genocide education activism cause, and performance tour. Armenian music expresses the experience of the genocide in a variety of ways.

## Conclusion

'How do you describe the indescribable?' was a challenge for those witnessing the Armenian Genocide and other genocides. Survivors, nearby witnesses, clergy, reporters and others sought to describe the horrific and almost unimaginable events and developments. Many detailed accounts appeared in the *New York Times* in 1915. More detached analytical efforts later by legal scholars and academics created new concepts to try to comprehend the incomprehensible. Consequently, we saw the emergence and growth of key terms such as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Different analytical stages of genocide were also increasingly outlined. Political historians also offered mounting archival evidence to confront problematic ongoing genocide denial. All of these documentary approaches sought to describe, analyze and explain.

However, to simply know information rationally does not necessarily overcome indifference and the inertia of a multitude of bystanders. The Arts, by mobilizing the emotions of the heart through empathy, sympathy, compassion and even outrage at injustice can complement and augment other means of communication and thereby assist in fostering greater insight and engagement. Different genres of the Arts provide varied and multidimensional perspectives on the exceedingly complex topic of genocide. The emotional bonds fostered by cultural responses, when combined with contemporaneous journalistic reporting and the analytical insights of academic accounts, help to more effectively and vividly 'describe the indescribable'. In doing so, the Arts help us to remember. This has been the case for both the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust and other genocides.

The autobiographies of Aurora Mardiganian and Anne Frank resonate profoundly and in enduring ways. The vast numbers of dead and millions displaced are exceedingly difficult for us to comprehend, but the personal story of young teenage girls and the enormous suffering they endured seem to be more within our grasp. We can relate to their youthful hopes and fears. We can remember their lives and that of their families at a more personal level. In so doing, we can resist genocide denial. This is a task that unfortunately is still necessary.

## 2024 Postscript

Sadly, events over the past few years in Nagorno-Karabakh offer a tragic new case study. In the genocidal crimes by Azerbaijan harming an entire historic Armenian community, we witness yet more ethnically-targeted violence, another forced exodus and a dispossessed diaspora. As a political scientist and international relations expert, I have participated in recent South Caucasus workshops and written several journalistic

and academic articles about these troubling developments. But in the end, these outlets seemed insufficient to convey the emotional magnitude of the crimes against humanity. Accordingly, I turned to the Arts and penned a number of poems for Armenian newspapers, as the catastrophic events unfolded. Over time, the poems became the basis for the bilingual book *Karabakh Diary: Poems from the Diaspora//Gharabaghyan Oragir: banasteghcutyunner Spyurqic* (2022). It was an attempt to "describe the indescribable" and to remember and understand yet another genocide of the Armenians.

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## Notes

1. While Armenian victims are the primary focus on this case study of the Ottoman Empire's genocides during WW I, it should be noted that other ethnic/religious minority groups such as the Greeks and Assyrians were also targeted for persecution and mass killings (Shirinian, 2012; Shirinian, 2017).

2. This *New York Times* content analysis section is an abridged excerpt from my "Introduction" in Ara Ketibian, ed., *The Armenian Genocide: Prelude and Aftermath (1890-1922) As Reported in the US Press, The New York Times* (Yerevan: Mekhitarist Publication 2018) and my related shorter entry "Describing the Indescribable" in Alan Whitehorn, ed., *The Armenian Genocide: The Essential Reference Guide* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO 2015).

3. Richard Kloian's *The Armenian Genocide: News Accounts from the American Press (1915-1922)* (Richmond: Heritage Publishing 1985, also published in earlier

editions) was a pioneering volume collating the *NYT* daily newspaper accounts into a readily accessible book.

4. I am grateful to Rubina Peroomian for her pioneering books on the Armenian Genocide and Literature (1991; 2012; 2015; 2017) and her entry on "Literature" in Alan Whitehorn, ed., *The Armenian Genocide: The Essential Reference Guide* (2015). The literary format of theatrical plays is not addressed in my paper, but examples from several genocides can be found (Skloot 2008).

5. Wilson and Crowder-Taraborelli (2012) list three pages (pp. 237-239) of genocide films, while Michalczyk and Helmick (2013) list four pages (pp. 279-283) of such movies.

**Conflict of Interests**
The author declares no ethical issues or conflict of interests in this research.

**Ethical standards**
The author affirms this research does not involve human subjects.

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## ՀԱՅՈՑ ՑԵՂԱՍՊԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԸՆԿԱԼՈՒՄՆ ՈՒ ՀԻՇԱՏԱԿՈՒՄԸ ԱՐՎԵՍՏԻ ՄԻՋՈՑՈՎ

**Ալան Ուայթհորն**

Հոդվածը նվիրված է Ֆրանց Վերֆելի «Մուսա լեռան քառասուն օրը» վեպի 90-ամյակին:

Հայոց Ցեղասպանությունը աշխարհում ամենաքննարկված ու արծարծված ցեղասպանություններից է: Այն տարաբնույթ ակադեմիական, լրագրողական, և գեղարվեստական քննարկումների առարկա է դարձել, և չնայած պատերազմական տարիներին գործող խիստ գրաքննությանը, Առաջին աշխարհամարտի տարիներին Օսմանյան Կայսրության տարածքում հայերի զանգվածային տեղահանություններն ու կոտորածները, այդուհանդերձ մեծապես լուսաբանվել են միջազգային մամուլում: Նշյալ վայրագություններն էին, որ հիմք դարձան մի շարք տերմինների, այդ թվում՝ մարդկության դեմ հանցագործություն և ցեղասպանություն հասկացությունների ի հայտ գալուն: Ավելին՝ պատերազմական հանցագործություններ հասկացությունը ավելի լայն ընդգրկում ստացավ, և հետագայում այդ տերմիններն սկսեցին լայնորեն կիրառվել միջազգա-

յին քրեական իրավունքի, պատմության և հասարակական գիտությունների բնագավառներում:

Ի լրումն վերլուծական աշխատությունների, որոնք փորձում են առավել իրատեսորեն ներկայացնել այս հանցագործությունների իրական ու ճշմարիտ պատկերը, մենք նաև ականատես ենք լինում այս ոճրագործության անդրադարձներին արվեստի և գրականության մեջ, որն էլ օգնում է ավելի լավ ճանաչելու մարդկության դեմ ուղղված այդ ցավալի ողբերգությունը: Ֆրանց Վերֆելի «Մուսա լեռան քառասուն օրը» պատմավեպն ասվածի լավագույն օրինակն է, իսկ դրա ազդեցությունը միջազգային հանրության վրա՝ անգնահատելի:

Տարբեր մոտեցումների համադրումը՝ լրագրողի առաջին տպավորությունը, ակադեմիական վերլուծական միտքը և ստեղծագործողի ոգին օգնում են ավելի լավ հասկանալ, զգալ, ողբերգությունը վերապրած զոհերին կարեկից լինել ու երբեք մոռացության չմատնել ցեղասպանության մասին տեղեկությունը: Պետք է կարողանանք Հայոց ցեղասպանության մասին իրազեկել նաև այլոց, նրանց գիտակցությանը հասցնենք կատարված ոճրագործության ահավորությունը, որպեսզի նրանք էլ հիշեն, հասկանան ու օգնեն մեզ հաղթահարել ցեղասպանության կործանարար հետևանքները:

**Բանալի բառեր՝** *Հայոց ցեղասպանություն, ցեղասպանության տերմիններ, ցեղասպանությունը վերապրածների հիշողություններ, ցեղասպանության մասին լրագրողական պատմություններ, ցեղասպանության արտացոլումը արվեստում:*