

The Representation of the Psychological Ramifications of the Armenian Genocide: A Voice Crying Out in the Desert?

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Regarding genocide, Irving Louis Horowitz suggested that “first comes the act and then comes the word: first [the crime of] genocide is committed and then the language emerges to describe a phenomenon.”¹ While a “language” emerged to address the phenomenon of genocide in general, the dearth of scientific knowledge regarding the psychological ramifications of the Armenian Genocide on survivors and their progeny is astonishing. Related to the above, nearly a century after the beginning of the Armenian Genocide, Lorne Shirinian noted that “the Armenian Genocide is a large field of study that has been actively researched by historians, political scientists, sociologists, and literary scholars. If there is one area related to the genocide that has been virtually ignored, however, it is survivor memoirs.”²

While the study of the memoirs and oral histories of survivors of the Armenian Genocide has subsequently advanced, the *psychological knowledge* extracted from the above has been slight. Significantly, there is an almost complete absence of “purely” psychological studies that might supplement the historical, political, sociological, and literary analyses of the Armenian Genocide survivors and their descendants. While over 1,300 studies have been published regarding the psychological impact of the Holocaust on survivors, there are *fewer than fifteen* studies regarding the psychological consequences of the Armenian Genocide—and only one study of a truly empirical, quantitative nature.³

This article will provide the first overview of the existing psychological knowledge related to Armenian Genocide survivors and their progeny. The salient

psychological literature directly touching upon the above will be addressed, as well as the more general type related to what is commonly termed “survivorship literature.”⁴ In light of the previously noted paucity of psychological studies of the Armenian Genocide experience, the above will be supplemented via examination of other relevant sources, including written and oral testimonies of survivors, cultural expressions (such as literature and film), and media reports. Following the above, this article will also address *why*—one hundred years after the Armenian Genocide—so little is known concerning its psychological ramifications.⁵

The Context: A Contested Genocide?

Attempts to deny acts of genocide are not uncommon.⁶ Even taking that into account, Turkish efforts to deny the Armenian Genocide stand out in their varied and vociferous nature. It is hard to overstate the psychological impact of denial. Elie Wiesel, arguably the best known figure in the survivorship literature, offered that continued Turkish denial of the Armenian Genocide can be viewed as a double killing of the victims.⁷ Denial of genocide has come to be viewed as an additional stage of the genocide process. Indeed, the phenomenon of genocide denial in the Armenian case has had a critical impact on the subsequent psychological development of its victims and their descendants.

The Armenian Genocide: Early Reactions to Its Psychological Costs

In light of subsequent efforts to deny the Armenian Genocide, it is ironic to note the number and nature of media reports concerning the events in what could be seen as “real time” in terms of the early twentieth century. Detailed newspaper reports regarding the massacres appeared throughout the world, describing Turkish actions against the Armenians as “systematic,” “deliberate,” “authorized,” “organized by the government,” a “campaign of extermination,” and “systematic race extermination.” These reports also address the understandable emotional distress and trauma associated with the events, noting their numbing effects and the muted, anxiety-ridden behavior of survivors, resembling what would later be termed “posttraumatic stress disorder” (PTSD).⁸

Similar real-time reports of the events emerge in diplomatic dispatches from representatives of countries both at war with Turkey and allied with it. These dispatches are complemented by personal communications and memoirs of individuals associated with charitable organizations operating in Turkey.⁹ All of the above describe the utter chaos and emotional maelstrom in which the Turkish Armenian community found itself.

Thursday-Friday 6 Performances 12.00 2.00 3.45 5.30 7.15 9.00	<h1 style="margin: 0;">STRAND</h1> <p style="font-size: small;">It is Suggested that Parents See This Film Before Permitting Children to Do So</p>	Saturday Evening ONLY 3 Performances 7.00 - 8.45 - 10.30
<p style="font-size: x-small;">The most astounding presentation of fact, was produced by G. M. S. Kelly, for the National Motion Picture Company, of the American Ocean, for sale in the near East and</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">is the Elita-Castles, New York, Midway-Station, Philadelphia, Hochstadt Hall, Chicago, and Broadway Hall, Boston.</p>		PRICES All Seats 25c PLUS TAX
<p>hitherto shown to adults only at \$10 per seat</p> <p>Now Released for Public Exhibition at Popular Prices</p> <p>It presents the pictured true story of the sole survivor of half a million Armenian Girls</p> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Aurora Mardiganian, Herself</h2> <p style="font-size: x-small;">She is the Armenian beauty who escaped to America after ten years of unexampled adventures in the hands of Turkish soldiers, drove madly out Turkish harem, although the persecutors have given her every sign of mercy in Oriental countries; that she never as yet could visit her native land, because the American people have never Christian soldiers captured in various scenes. The incident never open has been truly called</p> <h1 style="margin: 0;">"AUCTION OF SOULS"</h1> <p style="font-size: x-small;">From the Book "RAVISHED ARMENIA" on the Martyrdom of Christian Armenia, which is Aurora Mardiganian's own story, substantiated by facts from the official reports of Viscount Bryce, the British Investigator, Henry Morgenthau, the American Ambassador and the American Board of Foreign Missions.</p> <p>The Film That Will Make the Blood of American Women Boil</p>		
 <p style="font-size: x-small;">Christian Women Sold Into Turkish Harems as Low as 85c Each</p>		

Figure 1 Ad for *Auction of Souls* in the *Times-Republican*, Marshalltown, Iowa, July 19, 1919.¹¹

The year 1918 also saw the publication of the first English-language memoir of a survivor of the Armenian Genocide: *Ravished Armenia*.¹⁰ Quite astonishingly, a full-length Hollywood feature film based on the memoir, *Auction of Souls*, was made just one year later, with the author herself—Aurora Mardiganian—in the leading role.

Supplementing the sympathetic, if rather staid, representations of the Turkish actions and their consequences offered by diplomats and others, *Auction of Souls* portrayed the events in such a vivid fashion that both American and British officials demanded that certain scenes be deleted so as to protect the sensitivities of the viewing public. Contemporary reports concerning the movie also addressed the dismal and precarious emotional state of Armenian Genocide survivors in various locales where the film was shown. The film played to full houses throughout North America, South America, and Britain, and it catapulted the Armenian experience to the attention of the wider public. Perhaps owing to improved relations between Turkey and the West, however, by the mid-1920s the film was censored both in the United States and Great Britain.¹²

Similar to *Auction of Souls*, interest in Armenians and the establishment of an independent Armenia also disappeared by the mid-1920s. As a result of the considerable challenges of daily life, relief efforts focused on providing “daily bread

and education the best that Christianity in America has to offer in the way of training, medical care, and spiritual leadership.”¹³ The absence of attention to the obvious psychological ramifications of such events may seem surprising. In fact the initial reactions of helpers were similar to those who assisted survivors of the next twentieth-century genocide: the Holocaust. Armenian survivors would later recall that while in orphanages and schools operated by relief agencies in Turkey, they were often directed not to speak of their traumatic experiences with other children. There are a number of possible explanations for this. First, an elderly survivor noted the following many decades later: “We were scared to talk to anyone. The Turks wouldn’t even let us talk Armenian with one another; so you think we were going to talk about what they [the Turks] did? They would have definitely finished us then!”¹⁴

This request may also have been made out of concern that such discussions would adversely affect the children themselves. As is common in such situations, however, many survivors would later recall the discomfort their recollections created among those who did not live through the experience. A quote from a 1921 *New Republic* report on Armenian refugees offers yet another insight into the silence that characterized the Armenian community:

We cry the story of our life-long suffering, of our murdered manhood, our outraged womanhood, our dying babies, our tortured mothers, our crucified leaders. We cry in anguish and pain. We show our wounds. We call for help. The crowd on the shore throw out some handfuls of pennies which fall leaden into the waters. Our cry has not been understood.¹⁵

Clearly, for many, the behavior that was reinforced was silence.¹⁶

That silence may have also suited many of the survivors themselves: actively remembering the events may have been too difficult for most. Many seemed to be in a state of shock or stupor. Apropos of the above, noted Armenian author and historian Aram Andonian observed that in the course of efforts to gather testimonies at the end of the First World War, it was difficult to encourage those who were “able to remember the unspeakable awe and the atrocities of the last five years” to document the events for posterity.¹⁷ Ironically, Andonian himself was overtaken by the silence he sought to break, and his extensive collection of testimonies has remained locked away long after his death—perhaps a symbolic premonition of future patterns of silence in the Armenian survivor community.

The initial trauma and shock was often followed by a sense of shame regarding *how* the individual had survived. Many Armenians could—and did—escape the

fate of their families and friends by taking extreme actions. These actions, however, carried with them potential psychological and social costs. First, both young males and females could escape deprivation and death by renouncing Christianity. This would later spawn an internal Armenian discussion regarding whether one should distinguish between “martyrs” (who may likely have chosen not to compromise their faith) and “survivors” (who might have been suspected of having done so).¹⁸ This debate seems also to have contributed to the muting of memories and the subsequent silence concerning genocide-related events among many survivors.

Interestingly, the discussion regarding how one survived has a corollary in the literature concerning Holocaust survivors, as can be seen in Primo Levi’s *The Drowned and the Saved*: “The worst survived, the selfish, the violent, the insensitive, the collaborators . . . the spies . . . that is, the fittest; all the best died.”¹⁹ Whether the feelings expressed above accurately reflect reality is not important. What is important is the *subjective* psychological dynamic associated with such feelings. Obviously, these feelings cut deeply into the psyche of the survivor, reinforcing a reticence to delve into events related to survival or to engage in discussion of the events.

It is important to note that the Armenian Genocide was an extremely gendered genocide, in which the sex of the victim could play a key factor in survival. Early on in the war, most Armenian men were separated from their families, and many were subsequently slaughtered.²⁰ Rubina Perroomian and others have suggested that Christian Armenian women may have held a special fascination for both Turkish and Kurdish men.²¹

While in events such as occurred during the Holocaust, in Cambodia, and in Rwanda females had no advantage over males, the Armenian experience was different. Armenian females of almost all ages could escape their fate by “agreeing” to marry Muslims. In contemporary reports, memoirs, and other materials, there are widespread references to the experiences of women survivors, such as sexual abuse and prostitution. Recently, preliminary research has addressed Muslim Turks of Armenian origin who remained silent because of their fear of emotional confusion and the discrimination against them.²²

In light of all of the above, in a “pre-psychologized world” silence may have seemed to have distinct advantages. One individual who did not, however, seek to remain silent about the Armenian Genocide was Soghomon Tehlirian, who in 1921 assassinated one of the central figures behind the Turkish massacres of Armenians, former Ottoman Grand Vizier Talât Pasha. Tehlirian made no attempt to escape; rather, he viewed the trial as a means to speak out about the genocide.²³

The rather sensationalized trial highlighted the psychological consequences of the Armenian Genocide—including the possibility that Tehlirian suffered from “psychosomatic epilepsy.”²⁴ In addition doctors related a dream Tehlirian reported in which he saw Talât, to which his mother responded:

You saw Talaat [Talât] and you did not avenge your mother’s, father’s, brothers’, and sisters’ murders? You are no longer my son. . . . I have to do something. I want to be my mother’s son again. She cannot turn me away when I go to be with her in heaven. I want her to clasp me to her bosom like before.²⁵

The jury took approximately one hour to acquit Tehlirian, accepting the temporary insanity plea put forward by the defense. An American correspondent covering the trial noted that while Tehlirian’s technical defense was temporary insanity, the real defense may have been the terrors Talât Pasha and others inflicted on the Armenians.²⁶ Despite popular support for Tehlirian throughout the world, however, there would be no sustained, international interest in the fate of either those Armenians who had perished or those who had survived.

The Rise and Demise of an Armenian “Return to History”:
Its Psychological Consequences

One of the central projects of the new postwar order was to be the “return” of the Armenians to world history via the creation of an independent Armenian state. Had that taken place, it would likely have had significant healing effects on both the national and individual levels—similar to the effect the establishment of the State of Israel had on the post-Holocaust Jewish world. As would later be noted by Viktor Frankl, the ability to find meaning in a traumatic event is critical to recovery.²⁷ Armenian national aspirations would not be realized, however, and Richard G. Hovannisian notes that following the genocide the dispersed Armenian survivors focused attention on creating new diaspora communities while internalizing frustrations and trauma associated with their genocide experience.²⁸

Many years after the genocide, an elderly Armenian would recall that he did not initially feel the emotional ramifications of his experiences: “When I was young, I really did not care; it didn’t seem to bother me. We were hungry and I used to run around, do any job I could, go from place to place to get something to eat for us.”²⁹ Similar sentiments echoed by survivors of other natural and man-made traumas point to the strength of the powers of repression at work as survivors make their way back to the world.³⁰

Along with the objective challenges of community building in the small and economically-struggling Armenian diasporas came the loss of the moral resources that may have been afforded by the church and the intelligentsia, many of whom had been murdered or in the case of the latter, sometimes later repressed in both Turkey and the USSR. Augmenting the above, the greatly reduced, generally impoverished, and emotionally strained Armenian world would be faced with Turkish genocide denial, Soviet diminishment of Armenian society (as part of their policy of discouraging expressions of nationalistic identity), and a general disinterest elsewhere in their fate. Against this background, Armenian communities everywhere would hold subdued, private community events commemorating the genocide.³¹

These characteristically closed community commemorations would serve as precursors to similar events within the Holocaust survivor community.³² As in subsequent survivorship literature, Armenians wrestled not only with the emotional strain related to their genocide period memories but also the uncertainty regarding whether and how to transmit their experiences to their children. Similarly to Holocaust survivors, there would be tremendous variability with regard to the manner in which survivors of the Armenian Genocide would navigate the perilous path between honoring the dead and protecting the living.³³ Finally, and again much like what would occur among Holocaust survivors, by the middle of the 1920s Armenian survivors had entered a “latency period,” during which very little was written by or about the survivors of the Armenian Genocide.³⁴

Unlike the Holocaust experience, however, a quite virulent internal Armenian-community debate (in Armenian) emerged with regard to both the relative value of memoirs versus literature as tools with which to communicate the genocide experience and the very possibility of either of the above adequately conveying the events in question.³⁵ Failing to sense the deep pain and frustration underlying this issue would be difficult. The dynamics of these internal debates in the Armenian literary and intellectual community would be alluded to in later psychological studies as being characteristic of the nonadaptive manner in which many Armenians confronted the genocide experience.

Tellingly, the Armenian story reemerged into public consciousness through the 1934 publication in English of *Die vierzig Tage des Musa Dagh* (The Forty Days of Musa Dagh), by Austrian Jewish writer Franz Werfel. Werfel’s work was extremely well received and was eventually translated into thirty-four languages and adapted to the screen for a Hollywood movie, though the movie was never put into production.³⁶ Perhaps it was the popularity of Werfel’s novel and the

controversy surrounding it (including the virulent opposition of the Turkish government to both the book and the making of a film based on it) that helped reawaken the dormant memories of survivors.³⁷ Perhaps it was the time that had passed and the maturing of the young survivors that allowed them to acquire perspective on those memories. Whatever the reason, both Shirinian and Marc Nichanian noted a significant development in Armenian literature as the Second World War approached.³⁸

Reviewing that literature, Shirinian noted that until the outbreak of the Second World War, the story of the Armenian Genocide had in principle been told only by observers, including foreign relief workers, diplomats, lecturers of history, and sympathetic individuals such as Werfel. This literary silence may be seen as yet another expression and the logical corollary of the familial silence previously noted.

An examination of Shirinian's exhaustive work concerning the literature of the largest Armenian diaspora community, that residing in North America, indicates that following the publication of *Ravished Armenia* in 1918, no similar memoir was to be published for over two decades.³⁹ In the preface of the first of those memoirs, published in 1939, the author speaks to the silence that had engulfed the Armenian community: "I do not tell this, the story of my life . . . because it is the most harrowing, but because in the twenty years that have elapsed, no other survivor of that affliction has arisen to perpetuate the personal experiences of one who lived it."⁴⁰ From the above one can discern both a certain reticence to deal with the subject and an expression of survivor guilt that stems not only from having survived but also from thinking that one's story was harrowing enough to warrant being shared with others.

A number of historical novels written by Armenian survivors were published at around the same time, in the early 1940s.⁴¹ These memoirs and fictionalized works typically had two central themes: religion (examining why there was suffering) and life in America (examining the redemption afforded them in a land where they could practice their religion and prosper). The dual themes of suffering and redemption would also pervade the later works of Holocaust survivors (for example, the Holocaust as a necessary part of the creation of an independent Jewish state) and can be viewed as steps toward integrating extreme events by placing them on some type of continuum that allows the individual to accept the past as a necessary path to the present. The above is reminiscent of Erik Erikson's final stage of human development—ego integrity versus despair—in which a healthy outcome is the integration of all that came before into an accepted personal life story.⁴²

The Emergence of the Survivorship Literature: A Once-Again Forgotten Genocide

By the time Armenian Genocide survivors emerged from the latency period, the Armenian Genocide had all but faded from the memory of the wider public.⁴³ Perhaps even more important, it was *precisely* when survivors of the Armenian Genocide began to share their memories with the wider public that a much larger genocide occurred: the Holocaust. Research surrounding the Holocaust experience would be central in the creation of a new type of literature, often referred to as “survivorship literature.”

This historical coincidence would have tremendous impact on the subsequent study and stature of the Armenian Genocide. Now existing in the shadow of a more recent, larger, and better-documented genocide, the Armenian Genocide would often be (not entirely correctly) referred to as the “first genocide of the twentieth century” by those who sought to keep it on the ever more crowded map of twentieth century atrocities.⁴⁴ For better or worse, similar to other genocidal events that would follow, from the 1940s on the Armenian experience would be compared and contrasted, defined and described, explicated and extrapolated upon through the prism of the Holocaust.

It is difficult to overemphasize the impact of the Holocaust on the research, analysis, and cultural expression of the Armenian Genocide. First, owing to the sheer amount of Holocaust-related literature, the Armenian Genocide would receive more research attention in the context of the growing Holocaust literature that began to emerge in the 1960s than it had as a separate phenomenon until then. Furthermore, as will be seen below, it would be almost exclusively Jewish Holocaust scholars who would eventually act to advance both the study and wider societal recognition of the Armenian Genocide.⁴⁵ Finally, Armenian community leaders, scholars, writers, filmmakers, and others would note that they draw inspiration and direction from the work done regarding the Holocaust and its consequences.⁴⁶

The Armenian experience was initially absent from literature addressing the Holocaust and its psychological consequences. Indeed, a perusal of the seminal works addressing the psychological ramifications of the Holocaust by individuals such as Bruno Bettelheim, Shama Davidson, Joel Dimsdale, Victor Frankl, Henry Krystal, Primo Levi, and William Niederland indicate that little, if any, reference is made to the Armenian experience.⁴⁷ Equally troubling, the above would be true with regard to subsequent research regarding survivorship, and an examination of the ever-expanding literature that has come to address survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Vietnam War veterans, and survivors of subsequent events in Biafra, Cambodia, Serbia, and Rwanda reveals at best cursory reference to the Armenian tragedy.⁴⁸

However, with time many Holocaust scholars embraced the Armenian experience and leveraged the interest and activity associated with the study of the Holocaust to advance the study of the Armenian Genocide.⁴⁹ Central to these efforts were two prominent scholars of genocide and survivorship: Israel Charny and Ervin Staub. Staub would become a life-long champion of the Armenian struggle to have the Armenian Genocide and its consequences recognized by both the research and general communities. Charny became the executive director and co-organizer of the first academic conference in which the psychological consequences of the Armenian Genocide served as a focus of academic discussion. Indeed, as would subsequently become known, Charny and his co-organizers fended off vigorous efforts by Turkish, American, and Israeli political figures to remove the session regarding the Armenian Genocide from the conference program.⁵⁰ It was not removed.

The Birth of Literature on Psychological Perspectives of Armenian Genocide Survivors

The first research directly addressing the psychological consequences of the Armenian Genocide was only published in 1982—over six decades after the events.⁵¹ Coincidentally, 1982 saw the publication of three such pieces: two in the proceedings of the first International Conference on Holocaust and Genocide and a third in an academic journal.⁵² As might be expected, all three of the works primarily addressed the impact of the Armenian Genocide on survivors. It is curious to note that most of those involved in these pioneering efforts did not have professional training that prepared them to address the topic.⁵³

An example of the above can be found in the first academic journal publication regarding the psychological impact of the Armenian Genocide, by the husband-and-wife research team of David E. and Lorna Touryan Miller, based on analyses of oral testimonies of elderly Armenian survivors living in the United States.⁵⁴ The authors noted that when they started their oral testimony project in 1978, they did so without really knowing what they wanted out of the project, without the relevant background skills to do the research, and without knowledge of the field and its “rules.” They simply realized that “the survivors were growing old and that it was urgent to preserve their stories before they died.”⁵⁵

Indeed, in 1982 it was estimated that no more than 2,500 potential interviewees were still alive and that very few had ever told their stories.⁵⁶ The silence that engulfed the Armenian Genocide survivor community in its various diasporas would be addressed by nearly every writer on the subject. It was an uneasy silence, reflecting not a working through of the memories but rather an uneasiness or inability to engage with them.

This silence caused discomfort in younger Armenians, who tried to understand, tried to explain—perhaps tried to excuse—the silence of survivors and their progeny. Indicative of the above is a 2010 piece discussing the upcoming centennial commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, in which the author suggests that it is impossible *not* to ponder

the psychological point of how trauma can render anyone (or any group of people) mute for generations. Of course, this is what has happened to Armenians. In the face of fierce denial by Turkish governments of events in the Ottoman Empire, and in the face of moral collusion on the issue by the United States government and other major powers, Armenians, step by step, had lapsed into grievous silence. Is it appropriate, even delicately, to ask why as a people it has taken Armenians so long to tell their story? . . . The prolonged Armenian silence was not a silence of procrastination, indifference or insularity. Rather, it was a silence of paralyzing loss.⁵⁷

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of being able to *compile* oral histories as opposed to being able to *make use* of them. The first can be a dialogue; the latter is ultimately a monologue with archival materials. In this context it is useful to note the words of Holocaust scholar Anton Gill, who noted that he felt very lucky to be “writing at a unique time: at a moment of heightened interest in them [the survivors], and at a moment when one has a last opportunity to illuminate one’s work through personal contact with survivors.”⁵⁸

Indeed, the Millers would note that the dialogue with their interviewees was precisely what led them to change the initial historical focus of their work. Speaking with interviewees, they were struck by the wide variance with regard to how the historical events were understood by—and subsequently influenced—the survivors. Eventually, the oral history project would become a two-decade-long project culminating in a book about Armenian survivors, in which the Millers developed a typology of survivor reactions to their genocide experience.

It is important to recall that those giving oral testimonies were very young during the genocide period; their average age was eleven or twelve in 1915. Their oral histories were marked by a few themes. The first was “feelings of utter aloneness and abandonment that survivors had experienced during childhood [that] marked them for life.”⁵⁹

As can be seen in the following quotations, the separation from parents may have, metaphorically, left the children to move forward in life, while always looking back. One survivor remembered his mother handing him over to Muslim women to save him while he “kept looking back and wondering how I could let go of

their hands and run back. So I kept walking—with my eyes and heart behind me.”⁶⁰ Another noted that when he parted with his mother, “my head and eyes were continually looking back to my mom.”⁶¹ Yet another survivor wondered aloud “what was wrong with him that his mother had kept his brother but had abandoned him. But even as he uttered these words, as if he had spoken heresy, he immediately countered his question with the comment, ‘But what could we do? Everyone had to fend for himself.’”⁶²

The authors regretfully noted that the age of the interviewees precluded the possibility of learning about how the events may have affected older adult survivors, those who may have been responsible for children and perhaps lost spouses and children. Those individuals were no longer alive, and sadly, this information is likely lost to posterity.

A second theme of the testimonies related to the sense of shame, if not humiliation, many survivors felt regarding the events. References to sexual abuse were common, as were hints regarding women who chose to give themselves to Muslim men as a means of surviving. In addition there were references to the decision many young girls and boys took in order to survive: conversion to Islam.

As has been seen in other survivor communities, aging often led to a greater ability to deal with traumatic memories. Indeed, many survivors noted that it took them decades to look back and try to make sense of what had happened to them. The surfacing of these memories led many to report that it was in their later years that the bitterness and anger began to fester.

Typical are the following: “When I was young, I really did not care; it didn’t seem to bother me. We were hungry and I used to run around, do any job I could, go from place to place to get something to eat for us.” Another added: “The older I got, when I started working, and especially when I had my own family, then I really started to think about these things, remembering the past and my hometown.”⁶³

In the spirit of the Eriksonian model of psychosocial development,⁶⁴ Miller and Miller note that “the current preoccupation of many survivors with the past is not in our view a sign of weakness or senility; rather, it is an indication of a healthy attempt to integrate morally unresolved events into an acceptable framework of meaning.”⁶⁵ Their work led them to suggest the following typology to explain how their interviewees ultimately responded to the genocide experience:

- Repression: repression of feelings and active avoidance of occasions that invite recall
- Rationalization: attributing political or religious meaning to their suffering

- Resignation: sensing impotence in the face of the original crime and its continued denial
- Reconciliation: finding solace in children or religion
- Rage: expression of extreme anger, often born of intense frustration
- Revenge: yearning for retaliation

Those familiar with more recent Armenian history may be cognizant of the role that “rage” and “revenge” may have played in the actions of both survivors and their progeny against Turkish targets, from the immediate postgenocide period to recent decades.⁶⁶ Levon Boyajian and Haigaz Grigorian relate how Grigorian performed a psychiatric analysis of a young American of Armenian descent charged with complicity in an attempted terrorist attack against Turkish targets.⁶⁷ They note that it was obvious that the suspect—the only grandson of four Armenian Genocide survivors—had acted out of a desire to avenge both the loss of life and its continued denial. In the words of Jack Danielian, it seems that “denial is indeed the handmaiden of terror” in the case of the Armenian Genocide.⁶⁸

Much of what Miller and Miller reported is corroborated in Anie Kalayjian et al., one of the more methodically rigorous studies done with Armenian survivors. In that study nearly all of the forty rather elderly Armenian survivors interviewed (the mean age was 88.6) noted that they had never related their story. While there was no consensus as to why they had not done so, respondents noted that “denial” was one of the coping methods used to deal with the unspoken traumas, along with activities related to family, work, and religion.⁶⁹

The authors further suggested that the survivors’ silence may actually have heightened the inner turmoil many expressed. Indeed, research among Holocaust survivors indicates a correlation between the ability of survivors to communicate their experiences of traumatic events and their posttraumatic health.⁷⁰ The Kalayjian et al. piece suggests that in order to cope with an affectively intense experience such as genocide in the healthiest possible manner, one would need to modulate affect with cognition by talking about the experiences.

The survivors’ reluctance to confront submerged memories seems to have been augmented by a certain passivity originating in the frustration many felt concerning the possibility of meaningfully conveying their story and trauma in the face of Turkish denial and perceived world disinterest. Indeed, nearly every piece written about the Armenian Genocide and its survivors expresses the long-lasting psychological impact of the denial and denigration of their experience on the survivors and their progeny.

In the same year the Millers first published their work, Alen J. Salerian presented research, at the first Conference on Holocaust and Genocide, based on a variety of sources: interviews with Armenian Genocide survivors and their children, analysis of survivor memoirs, and his experience with one individual who had come to him for treatment.⁷¹ Salerian suggested that many survivors (and progeny) displayed phobias, psychosomatic disorders, and personality changes that could be attributed to the genocide experience. It seems prudent, however, to note that his work is based upon a rather small number of parent-child dyads (ten such dyads), an undisclosed number of memoirs and testimonies, and one therapeutic encounter. Methodological limitations of this type will, unfortunately, haunt most of the studies undertaken to examine the psychological consequences of the Armenian Genocide.

At the previously mentioned conference, Boyajian and Grigorian⁷² presented a multi-faceted picture of pathology among survivors of the Armenian Genocide that greatly resembles the equally diverse Holocaust “survivor syndrome” put forward by Niederland.⁷³ The authors acknowledge that they had “learned much from our colleagues who have studied the Jewish Holocaust” and that “these studies have helped us in our understanding of survivors of the Armenian genocide.”⁷⁴ The Armenian survivors, they note, exhibited a diverse set of phenomena such as anxiety, depression, compulsive thinking, anhedonia, and a fear of loving—all very reminiscent of “typical” psychological reactions of Holocaust survivors.

In a later work Boyajian and Grigorian point out other patterns of behavior that seem to be shared by survivors of both the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust.⁷⁵ Among those patterns are the need to find a spouse rather quickly and (re)create a family framework, the need for relatedness, and the creation of a community in which the genocide-related experiences might be understood, without the need to retell them. Similarly, within both of these communities, friendships among survivors took the form of extended families for the survivors and their progeny. Finally, religious and survivor frameworks served as a means to retain contact with the world lost in the postgenocide period.

One central difference between the two groups is that while both psychological studies and memoirs have indicated that *feelings of guilt are common* among Holocaust survivors, it *does not seem to be a common or central part* of the Armenian survivors’ experience. Indeed, Boyajian and Grigorian note that few respondents expressed feelings of guilt.⁷⁶ Those who did express guilt did so not with regard to the dead but rather with regard to duties to the living (among the first generation, for not having done enough for the Armenian community, or among second generation,

for not having done enough for their survivor parents). These findings are supported by subsequent research on survivors of the Armenian Genocide and their progeny.⁷⁷

After their initial work, which was presented in 1982, Boyajian and Gregorian shifted their focus to the study of *intergenerational* effects of the Armenian Genocide, pondering why “this Armenian genocide impacted so heavily on the identity of Armenians of whatever generation.”⁷⁸ One of the most startling intergenerational effects of the Armenian Genocide was uncovered, quite accidentally, in a study addressing the impact of the deadly 1988 earthquake that struck Armenia. In that study it was noted that earthquake survivors commonly reported nightmares with images related *not to the earthquake* but to the *Armenian Genocide* that their parents or grandparents had experienced.⁷⁹ Others have suggested that the immediate, massive exodus of Armenians from war zones during the conflict with Azerbaijan between 1988 and 1994 can also be partially explained by traumas associated with the genocide.⁸⁰

Indeed, the impact of the genocide seemed present even when it went unspoken. Invoking a term used by Helen Epstein regarding children of Holocaust survivors, Boyajian and Grigorian noted that many of these children reported their homes being pervaded by dark secrets.⁸¹ These secrets contribute to a “conspiracy of silence,” a situation in which members of a family or community all receive the subconscious message that no one is to bring up anything about the trauma suffered by anyone in the family or group. While never discussing it, everyone knows that it should never be talked about.⁸² This thundering silence has been deemed by later researchers to be “the most prevalent effective mechanism for the transmission of trauma.”⁸³

Conveying the above message in a very dramatic, poignant, and revealing manner, Armenian American psychiatrist Jack Danielian wrote:

An 8-year-old boy hears a terrifying wail emanating from a female visitor in another room. . . . The wail is followed by prolonged sobbing, which then is followed by an equally prolonged silence. The woman is a victim-survivor of the Armenian genocide and a participant in the Death March, arriving in this country as only the shell of her former self. . . . Without awareness, the boy is also trapped between hearing and not-hearing, between knowing and not-knowing . . . the 8-year-old does not enter the coffee room to seek explanation or reassurance from his family. And neither the boy nor his parents ever bring up the experience again.⁸⁴

The children and grandchildren of survivors might be considered “witnesses through the imagination.”⁸⁵ Similar to children of Holocaust survivors, children of survivors

of the Armenian Genocide would recall homes in which there was palpable anxiety regarding their health and well-being, homes in which they bore not only the names of grandparents and others who had perished but also the pains and hopes of those who had not. They grew up “with a sense that life was a serious business; that because of the [Armenian Genocide] and the sufferings of their parents, they were required to be serious and, in some sense, almost sad; that they did not have the right to be happy and cheerful.”⁸⁶

Subsequent research supports the pioneering efforts related above; the impact of the genocide often extended to both first- and second-generation progeny of survivors. Anie Kalayjian and Marian Weisberg report that the children and grandchildren of survivors that they studied exhibited anxiety, sadness, and a sense of often being overwhelmed by the events of the Armenian Genocide.⁸⁷ Similar to children of Holocaust survivors, the children of Armenian Genocide survivors they studied related a sense that they were somehow expected to make their parents’ past better. Unlike children of Holocaust survivors, who often reported melancholy with regard to familial history, these respondents expressed both melancholy and hopelessness. These feelings were seen to be related to feelings of Turkish denial and world indifference to their loss and suffering.

Understandably, in recent years there has been a growing focus on how the events of the Armenian Genocide might impact grandchildren of survivors. Danielian and others have suggested that the distance of the younger generation from the events themselves may affect these individuals in a number of ways. First, not surprisingly, there seem to be fewer direct pathological manifestations of the genocide experience.⁸⁸ It has been further suggested that the distance from the immediate trauma may also allow the progeny of the survivors to find their own voice to describe and deal with their historical and cultural legacy.⁸⁹

It has been suggested that among younger Armenians the distance from the events may contribute to the “freeing up” of the anger associated with denial and indifference, with which their people’s experiences are met in various corners. Indeed, the self-directed anger at the humiliations they faced, which has characterized parts of the Armenian community since the genocide period, may be taking its more natural and logical path toward those who refuse to acknowledge the magnitude of the Armenian Genocide experience.⁹⁰

Danielian suggests that the younger, third-generation progeny of Armenian Genocide survivors are often not initially cognizant of the depths of the historical dynamic in which they are participants.⁹¹ Echoing these sentiments, one contemporary American Armenian writer, a grandchild of a survivor, recalls the

following about attending the annual commemoration of the genocide in a hushed Manhattan cathedral: “My first encounter with the Genocide took place a few weeks shy of my twelfth birthday, in April 1985. I did not know it at the time, but it was my initiation into an old and bitter contest.”⁹² One literary critic noted that Armenian authors throughout the Armenian diaspora seemed to be only uncovering their shared past at the close of the millennium.⁹³ Once again, it seems that as the image of the actual traumatic events vanished on the horizon, their academic and cultural expressions grew.

To conclude the discussion on the possible psychological consequences of the Armenian Genocide, two recent representative cultural expressions will be presented. Not surprisingly, many of these cultural projects have a strong autobiographical character to them, based on the personal experiences of the author or filmmaker or those of their families. Thus, it may be correct to view these works as part art and part therapy: part history, part mission.⁹⁴ Two examples follow: one from literature, one from film. The first is from the Armenian American diaspora; the second is from the Armenian Lebanese diaspora.

Peter Balakian is widely seen as the most prominent figure in Armenian American literature. Balakian notes that the Armenian Genocide has “haunted” his imagination since he was a teenager. Regarding an early piece he wrote about his late grandmother, he concedes: “The poem was a surprise. Out of my head came things I didn’t know I remembered.” He adds that his subsequent, most successful work, *Black Dog of Fate*, “allowed me to understand much more deeply the inner fabric of my family’s imaginative psychic life.” He further notes:

I wrote it because I had to tell this story, come hell or high water; I had no expectations of making money. Its success was gratifying, because I feel that the bigger story wasn’t just about me. I think the sense of recovering a lost history had an impact on readers, and I like the idea that a memoir can carry larger dimensions with it.⁹⁵

A second case is the touching and often chilling 2011 film by Suzanne Khardalian, *Grandma’s Tattoos*, which is about the fate of many Armenian women. The film relates to Khardalian’s quest to reexamine her family’s unspoken past. Commenting on tattoos that her silent and distant grandmother would try to cover up, she notes: “As a child I thought these were devilish signs that came from a dark world. They stirred fear in me. What were these tattoos? Who had done them, and why? But the tattoos on grandma’s hands and face were a taboo. They [the family] never spoke about it.”⁹⁶

Khaldalian noted that she had initially contemplated making a film about the rapes of women in Rwanda. It was only after she “stumbled upon . . . photos [of tattooed young Armenian women], the whole thing took on a very different aspect, the story became very very personal, because suddenly I found out my own grandma was a victim . . . and we had no idea about it.”⁹⁷ Through a series of conversations with her mother, sisters, and aunts the family comes to understand not only the hidden story of the filmmaker’s grandmother but also its influence on them and their lives as daughters, wives, and mothers. Khaldalian adds that the journey was significant not only because of the familial emotional “blockage” that was removed but also because she was particularly proud that she had received notes from people throughout the world who were unaware of what the Armenians had endured during the First World War.

Psychological Perspectives of the Armenian Genocide: Looking Back

While the psychological consequences of the Armenian Genocide have drawn increasing attention over the last three decades, there is still scant research regarding psychological perspectives of the event. There are a number of possible factors, aside from the psychological dynamics of survival, that may have hindered the development of these perspectives:

1. **Historical Factors:** The Armenian Genocide occurred in what may be termed a “pre-psychologized” world. A literature search reveals that little “psychological work” was done, in general, related to the First World War and its possible mental health consequences. In the wake of a war that, by conservative estimates, left ten million people dead and an additional twenty million injured, few psychological studies related to the impact of the war. What little work was done dealt entirely with the phenomenon of the shell-shocked soldiers who returned home with symptoms that would later be widely known as PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder). Only years later would historians and mental health professionals look back on the war to assess its impact on the lives of civilian victims and subsequent events such as the Second World War.
2. **Political Factors:** Following the First World War, the vast majority of Armenians found themselves in Soviet Armenia, where efforts were made to discourage any expression of national identity, including—and perhaps particularly—matters related to the genocide. The latter was seen as being a potential threat both to the internal tranquility of the southern Soviet republics and to relations with neighboring Turkey. In Turkey itself it was dangerous and later illegal to delve into matters related to the genocide. To this day there are untold offspring of

- Armenians who not only do not know about the genocide but do not even know that they are of Armenian ancestry.
3. **Material Factors:** The postgenocide Armenian communities were marked by extreme poverty that was aggravated by the large numbers of orphans who had not had the opportunity to gain basic, not to mention professional, education. This was further aggravated by both the significant absence of men in the community and the repeated episodes of emigration of Armenian survivors, which may have impacted the economic, social, and cultural integration of survivors and their offspring.
 4. **Legal Factors:** While the end of the Second World War, and the Holocaust, were marked by intensive efforts to bring parties guilty of war crimes to justice, no such efforts occurred after the First World War and the Armenian Genocide. These legal efforts necessitated the gathering of information from victims, which in turn served as the basis of much of the later work done on Holocaust survivors. A perusal of the research reveals that only four research papers were published between 1945 and 1960 regarding psychological aspects of the Holocaust. The real catalyzer of the Holocaust-related psychological literature was the initiation of the individual-reparations process for victims of the Holocaust on the part of the West German government. To be eligible for reparations, applicants were required to present both medical and mental health assessments of Holocaust-related damage. It would ultimately be the need to provide “proof” of unique damage related to the Holocaust experience that would lead clinicians to develop the “Holocaust Survivor Syndrome.”⁹⁸ As is well known, there has not been a similar process in the case of Turkey and the Armenian Genocide.
 5. **Professional Factors:** It may also not be a coincidence that while the mental health fields (psychiatry, psychology, social work, etc.) are well populated by individuals of Jewish descent, “Armenian American behavioral scientists are few in number.”⁹⁹ This reality clearly may have impacted the extent of research done regarding the Armenian Genocide experience.

Psychological Perspectives of the Armenian Genocide: Looking Forward

Having analyzed the current state of psychological knowledge regarding the consequences of the Armenian Genocide, we will now turn to possible future directions for research in this area. The 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide has the potential to focus both general public and academic attention on the matter. It may be an opportune moment to both re-engage

with matters previously addressed and to address new areas. Some promising new areas are:

1. examining the impact of the centennial commemoration on the identity of Armenians in both Armenia and the various diasporas;
2. promoting research that examines centers of Armenian population other than in the United States and the similarities and differences among them with regard to long-term effects of the genocide;
3. researching the possible psychological consequences of Armenia's independence for the offspring of Armenian Genocide survivors;
4. studying the estimated hundreds of thousands of residents of Turkey who have Armenian ancestry, most of whom are unaware of their Armenian heritage; and
5. comparing the long-term psychological effects of the Armenian Genocide to those of other, later events *other* than the Holocaust, which may contribute knowledge to issues of survivorship in general and the Armenian Genocide in particular.

Epilogue

One of the reasons the psychological consequences of the Armenian Genocide experience have yet to be more fully explicated is that many of those who have researched issues of survivorship have ignored the Armenian experience. I am one of them.

My personal misdeed was one of “commission” and not “omission.” When in 1990 I designed my doctoral thesis on the adult psychological development of Holocaust survivors, I was urged by one of my advisers to locate a possible “contrast” group for the population under study. Despite the fact that I had grown up in the Detroit area with a community of roughly 50,000 Armenians, despite the fact that I lived in walking distance of the golden-domed St. John's Armenian Church, and despite the fact that I went to school with Armenian children, the Armenian experience did not come to mind.

Today I do not know how I (and my advisers) failed to consider the Armenians as a possible contrast group. Frankly, I am discomfited by the thought that, though the child of a Holocaust survivor, until recently I knew so little (and did even less) about the Armenian Genocide and the ongoing denial of the suffering of so many.

My hope is that this work will in some way make amends for the past and contribute to the future of the study of this important matter.

Notes

- 1 Irving Louis Horowitz, *Taking Lives: Genocide and State Power* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1980), 183.
- 2 Lorne Shirinian, "Survivor Memoirs of the Armenian Genocide as Cultural History," in *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 166. See also Shahe S. Kazarian and Rod A. Martin, "Humor Styles, Culture-Related Personality, Well-Being, and Family Adjustment among Armenians in Lebanon," *Humor* 19, no. 4 (2006): 405–423.
- 3 For a review of the Holocaust-related research, see Efrat Barel, Marinus H. Van IJzendoorn, Abraham Sagi-Schwartz, and Marian J. Bakermans-Kranenburg, "Surviving the Holocaust: A Meta-Analysis of the Long-Term Sequelae of a Genocide," *Psychological Bulletin* 136, no. 5 (2010): 677. The only quantitative study to address the Armenian experience is that of Alice Kassabian, "A Three-Generational Study of Armenian Family Structure as It Correlates to Armenian Ethnic Identity within the Context of Traumatic Loss" (DSW thesis, Catholic University of America, 1987).
- 4 The now vast literature dealing with survivors of traumas such as the Armenian Genocide has been referred to by different names, including the literature of "survivorship" and "massive psychic trauma."
- 5 See Yael Danieli, *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma* (New York: Plenum Press, 1998) for a partial overview of works regarding the psychological ramifications of the Armenian Genocide.
- 6 Donald W. Beachler, *The Genocide Debate: Politicians, Academics, and Victims* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
- 7 Gregory Stanton, "The Cost of Denial," *Genocide Watch*, <http://www.genocidewatch.org/aboutus/thecostofdenial.html>.
- 8 Richard Diran Kloian, *The Armenian Genocide: News Accounts from the American Press, 1915-1922* (San Francisco: San Francisco Bay Area Armenian Commemorative Committee, 2011). Katia Peltekian also reviewed the coverage of the British Press in Katia Peltekian, *The Times of Armenian Genocide: Reports in the British Press*, 2 vol. (Beirut: Four Roads, 2013).
- 9 There exist diplomatic records of countries both at war and allied with Turkey, including Henry Morgenthau Sr., *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (New York: Doubleday, 1918); James Guthrie Harbord, *Conditions in the Near East: Report of the American Military Mission to Armenia* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1920); James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden by Viscount Bryce* (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2000) (See special section in this volume about James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee's 'Blue Book': pp. 13-70); various public and private records from Germany are available at *Armenocide*, accessed September 2, 2015, <http://www.armenocide.net/armenocide/armgende.nsf/WebStart-En?OpenFrameset>; and

- Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003).
- 10 Aurora Mardiganian and H. L. Gates, *Ravished Armenia: Or "The Auction of Souls," the Story of Aurora Mardiganian, the Christian Girl, Who Survived the Great Massacre* (New York: International Copyright Bureau, 1918).
 - 11 See <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85049554/1919-07-10/ed-1/seq-9.pdf>.
 - 12 See Simon Payaslian, *United States Policy toward the Armenian Question and the Armenian Genocide* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) for an overview of Turkish diplomatic history of the period. Curiously, all known copies of the movie (quite mysteriously) subsequently disappeared—only to reappear in partial form seven decades later in Argentina. For an overview of the film and its fate, including copies of newspaper clippings about and stills from the movie, see "Auction of Souls' or 'Armenian Truth,'" *Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute*, accessed November 6, 2015, http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/online_exhibition_6.php. See Stefan Ihrig, "Denial of the Armenian Genocide Is Brutalizing the World," *World Post*, June 17, 2015, accessed August 2, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/stefan-ihrig/armenian-genocide-denial_b_7079384.html.
 - 13 See Shaloma Gauthier and Davide Rodogno, "The Near East Relief's Caucasus Branch Operation (1919-1920)," RAC Research Report, 2011, accessed June 6, 2015, www.rockarch.org/publications/resrep/gauthier-rodogno.pdf.
 - 14 Anie S. Kalayjian, Siroon P. Shahinian, Edmund L. Gergerian, and Lisa Saraydarian, "Coping with Ottoman Turkish Genocide: An Exploration of the Experience of Armenian Survivors," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 9, no. 1 (1996): 93.
 - 15 Aghavnie Yeghenian, "An Armenian in America," *New Republic*, June 29, 1921, 142–143.
 - 16 Donald E. Miller and Lorna Touryan Miller, "Memory and Identity across the Generations: A Case Study of Armenian Survivors and Their Progeny," *Qualitative Sociology* 14, no. 1 (1991): 13–38.
 - 17 Hovannisian, *Remembrance and Denial*.
 - 18 Kerop Bedoukian, *The Urchin: An Armenian Escape* (London: Joh Murray, 1978).
 - 19 Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 82.
 - 20 For comparison of the Armenian experience to other genocides, see Rubina Peroomian, *And Those Who Continued Living in Turkey after 1915* (Yerevan, Armenia: Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, 2008); Andrea O'Reilly, "Characteristics of Genocide," in *Encyclopedia of Motherhood*, ed. Andrea O'Reilly (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2010); and Eliz Sanasarian, "Gender Distinction in the Genocidal Process: A Preliminary Study of the Armenian Case," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 4, no. 4 (1989): 449–461.
 - 21 Peroomian, *And Those Who Continued*, 178, 80.
 - 22 See Fethiye Cetin, *My Grandmother: A Memoir* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2008); Jack Danielian, "A Century of Silence," *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 70, no. 3 (2010): 245–264; and Peroomian, *And Those Who Continued*.

- 23 Vartkes Yeghiayan, ed., *The Case of Soghomon Tehlirian*, 2nd ed. (Glendale, CA: Center for Armenian Remembrance, 2006).
- 24 For details regarding this diagnosis and other aspects of the trial, see Cathie Carmichael, *Genocide before the Holocaust* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).
- 25 Sourced from World Heritage Encyclopedia in Project Gutenberg—Self Publishing Press, accessed July 10, 2015, http://gutenberg.us/articles/soghomon_tehlirian.
- 26 See Carmichael, *Genocide before the Holocaust*, 37, referring to “Why Talaat’s Assailant Was Acquitted,” *Current History* 7 (July 1921).
- 27 Victor E. Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985).
- 28 Hovannisian, *Remembrance and Denial*, 15–16.
- 29 Donald E. Miller and Lorna Touryan Miller, *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 156.
- 30 Martin S. Bergmann and Milton E. Jucovy, *Generations of the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982); Robert J. Lifton, *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).
- 31 See Carlos Anataramian, “Armenians in the 1930s Mexico City and April 24th Commemorations,” *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 19, no. 1 (2010): 45–60. Anataramian notes that the ceremonies were small, private affairs that held no interest among the general population.
- 32 This author recalls the Holocaust Day commemorations in his native Detroit, which until the 1970s were relatively small and attended almost exclusively by survivors and their children.
- 33 See John Kotre, *White Gloves: How We Create Ourselves through Memory* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996); and Avi Kay, “Generativity in the Shadow of Genocide: The Holocaust Experience and Generativity,” in *Generativity and Adult Development*, ed. Dan McAdams and Ed de St. Aubin McAdams (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1998) for a discussion of the dynamics of conscious remembering and forgetting in decisions about whether and how to transmit traumatic experiences.
- 34 The “latency period” regarding Holocaust survivors lasted until the beginning of the 1960s, at which time the Eichmann trial took place and individuals interested in receiving reparations from the West German government were required to undergo medical and mental health examinations to determine the degree and nature of their Holocaust-related disability. These examinations served as the initial basis of the literature concerning the psychological impact of the Holocaust on its survivors. From 1945 to 1960 only five studies regarding the psychological adjustment of Holocaust survivors were published worldwide. Further, it is interesting to note that Raul Hilberg’s seminal work on the Holocaust, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, was rejected in the late 1950s by six publishers, who claimed that there was little interest and thus no market for such a work. The work was eventually published, in 1961, thanks to a private donor.

- 35 For a detailed analysis of the debates, see Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies*, vol. 1 (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2011).
- 36 Fabled directors such as Irving Thalberg and Elia Kazan (as well as Sylvester Stallone) sought to bring the film to the screen but were stymied by political forces. The documentary *Epic Denied: Depriving the Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, which examines the fate of the various aborted Hollywood productions, was released in 2016.
- 37 The work was originally published in Germany in 1933, the year in which Hitler—who infamously said, “Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”—came to power. The work was published in English in 1934 and subsequently distributed worldwide. See Franz Werfel, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* (London: G. Dunlop, 1934). The Turkish government has repeatedly (and successfully) acted to stop the production of a film based on Werfel’s novel. According to reports there is currently yet another attempt underway to produce such a film. Based on the website Internet Movie DataBase, this would be the fourth such attempt.
- 38 Lorne Shirinian, *Armenian-North American Literature: A Critical Introduction: Genocide, Diaspora, and Symbols*, vol. 11 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990); Lorne Shirinian, “Survivor Memoirs of the Armenian Genocide as Cultural History,” in Hovannisian, *Remembrance and Denial*; Marc Nichanian, *Writers of Disaster*, vol. 1, *The National Revolution* (London: Gomidas Institute, 2002).
- 39 Shirinian, *Armenian-North American Literature*.
- 40 Elizabeth Caraman, *Daughter of the Euphrates* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939), xii.
- 41 Caraman, *Daughter of Euphrates*; Bedros Margosian, *Of Desert Bondage* (Boston: The Van Press, 1940); Mary Sarafian Banker, *Armenian Romance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1941).
- 42 Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton, 1950).
- 43 Hovannisian, *Remembrance and Denial*.
- 44 The first genocide of the twentieth century occurred in “German South-West Africa” (today Namibia) between the years 1904 and 1908. If the Armenian Genocide is seen by some as a “general rehearsal” for the Holocaust, the actions of the Germans against the Herero people in present-day Namibia, in which 80 percent of the Herero died, can be seen as a general rehearsal for Turkish actions against the Armenians less than a decade later. The Germans systematically sought to eliminate the Herero via a variety of actions, including driving the population into the desert to die of starvation and thirst and creating slave labor in concentration camps. A smaller group, the Nama, also lost half of their population in those actions.
- 45 See, for example, Israel W. Charny and Shama Davidson, eds., *The Book of the International Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide* (Tel Aviv: Institute of the International Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide, 1983). Also, 126 Holocaust scholars signed a petition, which was published in the *New York Times* on March 7, 2000, calling for the recognition of the Armenian

- Genocide: “126 Holocaust Scholars Affirm the Incontestable Fact of the Armenian Genocide and Urge Western Democracies to Officially Recognize It,” *ANI*, accessed July 18, 2015, http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.21/current_category.3/affirmation_detail.html.
- 46 See, for example, Rubina Perroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe: A Comparison of the Armenian and Jewish Experience*, vol. 8 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993); Mingji Liu, “Keystone of Extermination: The Role of the Educated Elite in the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide,” *ANU* 10 (2014): 121; Florence Mazian, *Why Genocide?: The Armenian and Jewish Experiences in Perspective* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990). Also, see the interview with Armenian filmmaker Suzanne Khardalian in which she suggests that for Armenians, the place of mass killing of Armenians in Markada, Syria, is “our Auschwitz”: Bedros Afeyan, “Grandma’s Tattoos: A Film by Suzanne Khardalian,” *Armenian News Network*, accessed on August 10, 2015, <http://groong.usc.edu/tcc/tcc-20110922.html>.
- 47 Henry Krystal and John H. Krystal, “Integration and Self-Healing: Affect, Trauma, Alexithymia,” in *Massive Psychic Trauma*, ed. Henry Krystal (Des Moines, IA: International Universities Press, 1968); Shamai Davidson, *Holding On to Humanity—The Message of Holocaust Survivors: The Shamai Davidson Papers* (New York: New York University Press, 1992); Joel E. Dimsdale, ed., *Survivors, Victims, and Perpetrators* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1980); Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning*; Bruno Bettelheim, *Surviving, and Other Essays* (New York: Knopf, 1979).
- 48 See, for example, Alex Alvarez, *Governments, Citizens, and Genocide: A Comparative and Interdisciplinary Approach* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), in which there were eighty references to the Holocaust, fifty-six regarding Bosnia, fifty-one regarding Rwanda, twenty-two regarding Cambodia, and five regarding Armenians. This pattern is repeated in a wide variety of works, such as Terrence Des Pres, *The Survivor: An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); Lifton, *Death in Life*; Vickie Mays, Merry Bullock, Mark R. Rosenzweig, and Michael Wessells, “Ethnic Conflict: Global Challenges and Psychological Perspectives,” *American Psychologist* 53, no. 7 (1998): 737; Donald G. Dutton, *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres, and Extreme Violence: Why “Normal” People Come to Commit Atrocities* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007); James Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Stanley Krippner and Teresa M. McIntyre, *The Psychological Impact of War Trauma on Civilians: An International Perspective* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003), 22; Alexander Laban Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?: Cambodia in the Shadow of Genocide*, vol. 11 (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004). For exceptions to the above, see two publications from recent years: Donald W. Beachler, “Genocide Provocation? The Case of the Ottoman Armenians and the Rwandan Tutsis,” in *The Genocide Debate*, 117–145, and Deborah Mayeresen, *On the Path to Genocide* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016).

- 49 Des Pres has called the Armenian's situation one of "permanent loss and the pain of memory mocked by denial." Terrence Des Pres, "Introduction," in *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1986), 17.
- 50 Former Israeli President Shimon Peres was a consistent opponent of efforts to advance the study and recognition of the Armenian Genocide. For more information regarding these efforts, see Roger Smith, "Denials of the Armenian Genocide," in *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, ed. Israel Charny (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999), 161–166; and Israel Charny, "Holocaust Scholar Israel Charny Responds to Simon Peres' Statement in the Turkish Press," *Armenian, Assyrian, and Hellenic Genocide News*, accessed July 7, 2015, <http://www.atour.com/~aahgn/news/20010413f.html>.
- 51 Donald E. Miller and Lorna Touryan Miller, "Armenian Survivors: A Typological Analysis of Victim Response," *Oral History Review* 10, no. 1 (1982): 47–72; Alen J. Salerian, "A Psychological Report: Armenian Genocide Survivors—67 Years Later" (paper presented at the International Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide, Tel Aviv, Israel, June 20–24, 1982).
- 52 Salerian, "A Psychological Report: Armenian Genocide Survivors—67 Years Later." Perhaps not coincidentally, five years after the Tel Aviv conference, the Armenian Behavioral Science Association (ABSA) was formed.
- 53 The two presentations at the 1982 Tel Aviv Conference on Holocaust and Genocide were by (1) Levon Z. Boyajian and Haigaz M. Grigorian and (2) Salerian. While Grigorian's expertise is in social psychiatry, Boyajian is a historian and Salerian a neuropsychologist. The other work published in 1982 was by the husband-and-wife team of Donald Miller and Lorna Touryan Miller. The former is a professor of religion and the latter a religious leader in the Armenian community in California.
- 54 Miller and Miller, "Armenian Survivors: A Typological Analysis of Victim Response."
- 55 Miller and Miller, *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide*, 3. Perhaps unbeknownst to them, a similar project was undertaken elsewhere in the United States in 1968. For details of those efforts, see *USC Shoah Foundation*, <https://sfi.usc.edu/collections/armenian>.
- 56 See *USC Shoah Foundation*, <https://sfi.usc.edu/collections/armenian#sthash.FAXi15uB.dpuf> for details of those efforts. For the sake of comparison, it has been estimated that there exist roughly 120,000 testimonies of Holocaust survivors, including 36,000 that were taken immediately after the Second World War; 50,000 video interviews via efforts of the Spielberg Foundation; and an additional 34,000 in Yale's Fortunoff collection. For further details, see Dan Diner and David Ruderman, eds., *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts / Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook 6: Schwerpunkt, special issue, Early Modern Culture and Haskalah* (2007).
- 57 Danielian, "A Century of Silence," 249.
- 58 Anton Gill, *The Journey Back from Hell: Conversations with Concentration Camp Survivors: An Oral History* (New York: Avon Books, 1990), 6.

- 59 Miller and Miller, *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide*, 107.
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