

**MANIFESTATIONS OF GENDERCIDAL TRAUMA IN THE SHORT STORIES
OF KIRKOR CEYHAN**

by

ALAETTİN ÇARIKCI

Submitted to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Sabancı University
Spring 2008

**MANIFESTATIONS OF GENDERCIDAL TRAUMA IN THE SHORT
STORIES OF KIRKOR CEYHAN**

APPROVED BY:

Assistant Professor Hülya Adak
(Dissertation Supervisor)

Prof. Dr. Sibel Irzık

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayşe Kadiođlu

DATE OF APPROVAL: 02 / 07 / 2008

© Alaettin Çarıkçı 2008
All Rights Reserved

Abstract

MANIFESTATIONS OF GENDERCIDAL TRAUMA IN THE SHORT STORIES OF KIRKOR CEYHAN

Alaettin arıkcı, Cultural Studies MA,2008

Advisor: Assistant Prof. Hlyya Adak

Keywords: trauma studies, genocide, Armenian-Turkish literature, psychoanalysis.

Genocide is a term that refers to genderization of terror in war and the gender-selective strategies adopted by the perpetrators to liquidate the victims. The turbulent years of 1915 in the Ottoman Empire also had sex-specific implementations against the Armenians. The genocidal strategies adopted by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians can be characterized by the pre-selection, dislocation, conscription and extermination of Armenian men at first hand and the concomitant isolation, concentration and Islamization of Armenian women.

Therefore, I focused on how literature conveys genocidal trauma and how trauma challenges representation. In doing so, I adopted psychoanalytic concepts such as impossibility of language, loss, mourning and working through to historical analysis in the short stories of Kirkor Ceyhan. Whilst scrutinizing the manifestations of genocidal trauma in Armenian-Turkish literature I analyzed the short stories of Armenian author Kirkor Ceyhan since he has a unique stance in Turkey as an author who has delineated the genocidal trauma pertinent to 1915 in his short stories.

Ceyhan takes a different attitude from his late 19th and early 20th century Armenian-Turkish male counterparts such as Migirdic Margosyan, Agop Arslanyan, Hagop Mintzuri, Hamasdeğ, Zaven Biberyan and Vahan Totovents by delineating the genocidal trauma related to the Catastrophe and breaking the silence in his short stories. Thus, his narrative focuses on conscription, Islamization and circumcision of Armenian men and the sexual exploitation, Islamization and absorption into Muslim households of Armenian women.

ÖZET

Gendercide şiddetin cinsiyetleştirilmesi ve failer tarafından kurbanların yok edilmesi için kullanılan cinsiyet merkezli stratejilere atıfta bulunan bir terimdir. 1915'in çalkantılı yıllarında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun da Ermenilere karşı cinsiyet bazlı uygulamaları olmuştur. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu tarafından Ermenilere karşı uygulanmış cinsiyet bazlı stratejiler ilk önce Ermeni erkeklerinin seçilmeleri, yerlerinden edilmeleri, askere alınmaları ve yok edilmeleri ile bunu takiben Ermeni kadınlarının tecrit edilmeleri, toplanmaları ve Müslümanlaştırılmaları olarak tanımlanabilir.

Bu sebepten, edebiyatın cinsiyet odaklı travmayı nasıl naklettiğine ve travmanın temsile nasıl karşı geldiğine odaklandım. Bunu yaparken, Kirkor Ceyhan'ın kısa hikayelerindeki tarihsel analize dilin kifayesizliği, kayıp, yas tutmak ve yüzleşmek gibi psikanaliz konseptleri uyguladım. Türk Ermeni edebiyatındaki cinsiyet odaklı travma çeşitlemelerini incelerken, Ermeni yazar Kirkor Ceyhan'ın hikayelerini tahlil ettim çünkü hikayelerinde 1915'e dair cinsiyet odaklı travmayı yansımasıyla Ceyhan'ın Türkiye'de benzersiz bir yeri var.

Eserlerinde felakete dair cinsiyet odaklı travmayı yansıması ve kısa hikayelerinde sessizliği kırmasıyla 19.yüzyıl sonu 20.yüzyıl başı Türkiye'li Ermeni erkek meslektaşları Mıgırdıç Margosyan, Agop Arslanyan, Hagop Mintzuri, Hamasdeğ, Zaven Biberyan ve Vahan Totovents'ten değişik bir tutum sergiler Ceyhan. Böylelikle onun anlatısı Ermeni erkeklerinin askere alınmaları, Müslümanlaştırılmaları ve sünnet edilmeleri ile Ermeni kadınlarının cinsel istismarı, Müslümanlaştırılmaları ve Müslüman evlere alınmaları üzerine odaklanmaktadır.

Acknowledgment

This thesis owes its existence to the help, support, and inspiration of many people. It is a pleasure to convey my gratitude to them all in my humble acknowledgment.

In the first place, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Assistant Prof. Hülya Adak for her support and unflinching encouragement during the more than one years of this thesis's work. Her perpetual energy and enthusiasm in research had motivated all her advisees, including me. In addition, she was always accessible and willing to help her students with their research. As a result, research life became smooth and rewarding for me.

I gratefully acknowledge Prof. Sibel Irzık for her advice, supervision and crucial contribution, which made her a backbone of this research and so to this thesis. Her involvement with her originality has triggered and nourished my intellectual maturity that I will benefit from, for a long time to come.

Many thanks go in particular to Associate Prof. Ayşe Kadioğlu. I am much indebted to her valuable advice in theoretical discussion, supervision in contextualization and furthermore, using her precious times to read this thesis and gave critical comments about it. Adak, Irzık and Kadioğlu deserve a special thanks as my thesis committee members and advisors

It is a pleasure to pay tribute to my role model Dr. Talar Chahinian. I would like to thank her for being the first person that cordially believed in me for my further studies in Armenian-Turkish literature. I am proud to record that I had several opportunities to work with an exceptionally brilliant scholar like her. I acknowledge Dr. Chahinian for her advice and her willingness to share her bright thoughts with me, which were very fruitful for shaping up my ideas and research.

It is a pleasure to express my gratitude wholeheartedly to George Shirinian. My heartfelt thanks to Shirinian for the unlimited access and help of him to rich collection of documents, books and articles pertaining to the gender aspect of the Catastrophe.

My deepest gratitude goes to my family for their unflagging love and support throughout my life; this thesis is simply impossible without them. I have no suitable word that can fully describe their everlasting love to me

Finally, I would like to thank everybody who was important to the successful realization of this thesis, as well as expressing my apology that I could not mention personally one by one.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2: Singularity of the Armenian trauma: Definition of the Catastrophe..	8
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework: Trauma Literature	11
Chapter 4: Traumatic Explorations of Armenian men throughout 1915-1916...17	
4 1 Conscription and Islamization.....	20
4 2 Circumcision and Death Marches.....	25
Chapter 5: (En)gendering violence and the experiences of Armenian women.....	36
5 1 Islamization and Absorption into Muslim household.....	38
5 2 Sexual exploitation of Armenian women.....	44
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	51

Bibliography

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Gendercide is a term coined by Mary Anne Warren in 1985 in her book *Gendercide: The Implications of Sex Selection*. It refers to genderization of terror in war and the gender-selective strategies adopted by the perpetrators to liquidate the victims. In 1996 Adam Jones offers a more inclusive gendercide term by countering mostly female experience oriented gendercide term of Warren by stating that “sex selective killings of men as well as women should be analyzed by scholars of armed conflict, and recognized by policy makers in strategies regarding when, how and whose behalf to engage in organized rescue.”¹ Therefore, gendercide is a term that displays gender-selective massacres, questions the layers behind the sex-specific atrocities committed throughout the conflict situations and helps us to understand the dynamics of the mass killings and the exterminations. There exists ample instances in the world history that exemplify the gendercide practices used by the perpetrators against the victimized individuals. For instance, the conflict in the Balkans such as the 1999 war in Kosovo sets good example to the gender selective mass liquidation of the people since “an overriding tactic was evident in Serb military strategy: the gender-selective detention and mass killing of ethnic Albanian men, especially those of “battle age”.² Likewise, similar gendered atrocity which is “a systematic targeting of younger males for dismemberment by machete, mass execution, and torture to death” has been unearthed in East Timor by the help of forensic evidence and personal testimonies.³ Pol Pot’s 1975-79 genocide in Cambodia has decreased the numbers of men in the country whilst increasing the number of widows that make up 60 to 80 per cent of the adult population

¹ Carpenter, R.Charli, Beyond “Gendercide”: Operationalizing Gender in Comparative Genocide Studies in “Gendercide and Genocide”, ed. Adam Jones. Vanderbilt University Press.2004.pp.231

² Jones, Adam. Gendercide and Genocide in “Gendercide and Genocide”, ed. Adam Jones. Vanderbilt University Press.2004.pp.1

³ Ibid.2

in the country.⁴ In addition to these, since 1990 approximately 800 people have ‘disappeared’ in Jammu and Kashmir and most of which have been “men all of ages, including juveniles and the very old, and all professions, including businessmen, lawyers, labourers and many teachers.”⁵ (Quoted by Jones) Those gendecide implementations towards the men acclimate the perpetrators to mass executions while destroying and emasculating manpower of the marginalized groups and thus agonize and victimize women and the children. The turbulent years of 1915-16 in the Ottoman Empire also had sex-specific massacres against the Armenians. Throughout the exterminations of the Armenians in 1915-16 profoundly gendered atrocities targeted Armenian men and women separately. “Emasculation of the Armenian population” is portrayed to be the first step as a harbinger of full-scale aggression towards the Armenians by sociologist Leo Kuper. Armenian men are congregated and intimidated thus their docile nature is finalized by their emasculation. He further elaborates that “Armenian soldiers, mostly combatants were stripped of their arms and transformed into road labourers, and into pack animals, stumbling under the burden of their loads, and driven by the whips and bayonets of the Turks into the mountains of the Caucasus.”⁶ The preselection and enlistment of all able-bodied Armenian men continue with the extermination of them thereby exposing women, children and elderly people as easy preys for harassment, sexual abuse or absorption into Moslem households throughout the deportation. Women and children did not experience straightforward extermination like Armenian men in contrast women could be exempted from being sent to lethal marches once they agreed to Islamization. Thus, the gendecidal strategies adopted by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians can be characterized by the pre-selection, dislocation, conscription and extermination of Armenian men at first hand and the concomitant isolation, concentration and Islamization of Armenian women.

⁴ Kiernan, Ben. *The Cambodian Genocide- 1975-79 in Century of Genocide: Eyewitness Accounts and Critical Views* ed, Totten et al, Routledge.2004.pp.345

⁵ Amnesty International Action File (AI Index ASA 20/013/99), 19 April 1999

⁶ Kuper, Leo. *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century*. London. Penguin.1981.pp.108

That is why the traumatic 1915 -16 Catastrophe of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire is the cornerstone of modern Armenian identity, particularly for the Diaspora.⁷ “It is a defining moment, which on the one hand acts as a fundamental break with the past and the historic homeland, while on the other it serves as a prism through which national identity is seen, politics interpreted, and culture redefined”.⁸Generations of survivors have tried to deal with that trauma to interpret and reinterpret, evaluate and reevaluate the event and the impact. This continuous endeavor has resonated in their culture, especially in the literature of the survivors. The denial policy of the Turkish Republic has resulted in the marginalization and criminalization of research related to the Catastrophe. However, ninety three years after the event, the memory is still a source of pain as well as artistic inspiration. Therefore, I would like to focus on how literature conveys gendercidal trauma and how trauma challenges representation. Whilst scrutinizing the manifestations of gendercidal trauma in Armenian-Turkish literature I will analyze the short stories of Armenian-Turkish author Kirkor Ceyhan since he has a unique stance in Turkey as an author who has delineated the gendercidal trauma pertinent to 1915 in his short stories. Kirkor Ceyhan was born in 29 October in 1926 in Zara, a district in Sivas (Sebastia) in Turkey that was once highly populated with the Armenians prior to the Catastrophe.⁹All those events that he had experienced since his birth such as the deportation of his family to Syrian deserts, the vandalization of non-

⁷ In the Introduction part of his book *Writers of Disaster:Armenian Literature in the Twentieth Century* published in 2002 by Gomidas Institute page 11, Marc Nichanian states that “The history of the Armenians at the beginning of the twentieth century has been sealed by an event that requires no immediate qualification: the total extermination of the Western Armenians, those who lived in the Ottoman Empire. This event bears a name in Armenian, a name among others, a name that did not really prevail in popular consciousness and henceforth in everyday language, a name which is still waiting for its full understanding. This name is *Aghed*, which means Catastrophe, like Shoah in Hebrew. *Aghed* is the proper name of the event.” That is why I will use, the English translation of the word *Aghed*, the Catastrophe to refer to the atrocities committed in 1915 against Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

⁸ Panossian, Razmik. *The Armenians from Kings to Priests to Merchants to Commissars*, Hurst & Co. London. 2006.pp.228

⁹ The book of Kemal Yalçın *You Rejoice My Heart*[*Seninle Güler Yüreğim*] published by Birzamanlar Yayıncılık is one of the sources pertinent to his autobiography since Yalçın had an interview with Kirkor Ceyhan in Bonn Germany in 19 March 1999. Yalçın meets with an Anatolian-Armenian woman Meline during a seminar in Germany and starts to search about the Catastrophe as a result of her wish. Later on, time to time they gather and she shares her family’s suffering during the Catastrophe with him. An American nurse Miss Kraft is known to have saved her family from the expulsion and Yalçın calls Kirkor Ceyhan in 1999 to inquire about this woman that is also mentioned in the stories of Ceyhan. All the information that I have pertinent to Kirkor Ceyhan’s life derives from this interview between Yalçın and him.

moslem properties in 1955 through the 6-7 September Events in Istanbul, Turkey and immigrations affected his psychology tremendously that is why he lived in various places such as Soviet Armenia, France and Germany. Migrations and various traumatic encounters such as being the son of a family that witnessed the Catastrophe have shaped both his identity and narrative. These multifarious experiences have been not only a challenge but also an inspiration for his short stories.

Kirkor Ceyhan also has a unique stance in Turkish-Armenian literature since his narrative has ample instances to portray the different natures of the traumas inflicted on different agencies such as women and men. His uniqueness stems from portraying the manifested traumas pertinent to 1915 in his short stories unlike his Turkish-Armenian counterparts. In her book *And Those who Continued Living in Turkey After 1915: The Metamorphosis of the Post-Genocide Armenian Identity as Reflected in Artistic Literature* Rubina Peroomian elaborates on why she could not rely on Turkish-Armenian literature to explore the responses of Turkish-Armenian authors to the Catastrophe. She historicizes the efforts made by the Istanbul Armenian authors to revive the power of Istanbul Armenian literature after the Catastrophe. She further indicates that;

Constantinople made superhuman attempts to overcome the devastating effects of the destruction of the Armenian people and to find the means, that is, literary directions, to transcend the Catastrophe. The short lived *Bardzravank* literary movement initiated in 1922 by Vahan Tekeyan, Hagop Oshagan, Kostan Zarian, Shahan Berberian and others was an attempt toward that goal. That movement and the literary output it entailed promised a new revival in the history of Western Armenian literature. The path to reach that revival necessitated facing the past, comprehending the Catastrophe, and confronting and responding to it.¹⁰

Peroomian also elucidates that in spite of those efforts initiated by well-known Turkish-Armenian literary figures to break the silence in their literature pertinent to the Catastrophe, the advancement of Mustafa Kemal's troops towards Istanbul discouraged them from practising this revival. She further adds that "The established Armenian

¹⁰ Peroomian, Rubina. *And Those Who Continued Living in Turkey After 1915: The Metamorphosis of the Post-Genocide Armenian Identity As Reflected in Artistic Literature*. Armenian Genocide Museum Institute. 2008. pp.3-4

writers of the pre-1915 era, unable to freely express the suffering of their people, refrained from writing it all, or resorted to occasional outbursts of abstract melancholy”¹¹ Conversely, as an author who is not affiliated with Bardzravank literary movement Kirkor Ceyhan has confronted and responded to the Catastrophe as a Turkish-Armenian author by reflecting the multi-layered traumatic stories related to it. Some of his contemporaries such as Mintzuri and Margosyan have tried to reflect the Catastrophe in their narratives but in a highly limited way and far from being analogous to the way Ceyhan did in his short stories. For instance, in his book *Istanbul Memories* [İstanbul Hatıraları] Mintzuri informs his readers about how he was exempted from being a victim of the Catastrophe. He travelled to Istanbul to get his tonsils taken and missed the ship when he was about to go back to his village Armudan through the Black Sea. Accidentally, the implementations of the Catastrophe commenced to be practiced when he was in Istanbul thus he was saved from the Catastrophe at the expense of not getting in touch with his family again. Mıgirdic Margosyan is another author who has aimed to convey the effect of the Catastrophe on the Armenians through abstract usages and in an indirect way. In his short stories *Giaour Neighbourhood* [Gavur Mahallesi] he depicts the multicultural life in Diyarbakır [Dikranegard]. This multinational ethnic structure of the city can not be witnessed nowadays , therefore; he urges his readers to question themselves about what might have led to the extermination of Armenian culture and heritage in the Eastern part of Turkey. Therefore, Ceyhan can be stated to have a genuine stance in Turkish-Armenian literature as an outspoken author who has broken the silence and faced with the Catastrophe in his short stories. The figurative languages and the metaphors adopted by Ceyhan were acquired with a view to reflecting the impossibility of language to transmit the magnitude of the atrocities committed against the victims in his narrative. There may be some reasons behind his choosing to reflect the atrocities committed in 1915. One of the reasons might derive from his having not experienced the Catastrophe directly as a person who was born in 1926. Peroomian states that those not able to integrate the collective trauma of Armenian nation to their literature were authors of the pre-1915 era. Secondly, since he is a representative of Anatolian-Armenian literature he may not have been influenced by the literary movements that took place between Istanbul-Armenian literary figures either

¹¹ Ibid. 5

to silence or revive the Catastrophe in their literary works. Finally , his having lived in Zara, a small town in Sivas until 1949, might have isolated him to interact with Istanbul-Armenians.

In sum , Kirkor Ceyhan takes a different attitude from his late 19th and early 20th century Armenian-Turkish male counterparts such as Migirdic Margosyan, Agop Arslanyan, Hagop Mintzuri, Hamasdeğ (Hampartzoum Gelenyan), Zaven Biberyan and Vahan Totovents by delineating the gendercidal trauma related to the Catastrophe and breaking the silence in his short stories.¹² He even goes further by elaborating on the gendercidal practices such as circumcision of Armenian men and Islamization of Armenian women and their absorption into Muslim households which are endemic subjects pertinent to the Catastrophe. His positionality to reflect those issues, that are unique to the Armenian case when compared with other ethnic cleansings such as the Holocaust, derives from the singularity of the Armenian experience and the gendercidal strategies adopted throughout 1915-16 in the Ottoman Empire. Hence, I will analyze the short stories of Kirkor Ceyhan with a view to comprehending the layers of gendercidal trauma in his narrative and also to examine the repercussions of this gender based trauma in his narrative structure. Three short story books of Kirkor Ceyhan *Evil fate shoed his horse to chase us* [Atını Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize], *I grew up with wartime songs* [Seferberlik Türküleriyle Büyüdüm] and *Who is ringing the door?* [Kapıyı Kimler Çalıyor?] will be my primary sources to delineate the traumatic explorations pertinent to the experiences of Armenian women and men throughout the Catastrophe. In doing so, I will adopt psychoanalytic concepts such as impossibility of language, loss, working through and mourning to historical analysis as well as sociocultural and political critique in reflecting trauma and its after effects in the short stories of Kirkor Ceyhan.

¹² The books that have been analyzed about the late 19th and early 20 the century Armenian-Turkish male authors have been published by Aras Yayıncılık in Istanbul. Those books are *Giaour Neighborhood* [Gavur Mahallesi] by Migirdich Margosyan, *My Name is Agop I am from Tokat* [Adım Agop Memleketim Tokat] by Agop Arslanyan, *Istanbul Memories* [Istanbul Anıları], *Doors of Godfathers are Closed* [Kapandı Kirve Kapıları] and *Armıdan: The Other Side of Euphrates* [Armıdan Fırat'ın Öteki Yanı] by Hagop Mintzuri, *I left my Pigeon in Kharpert*[Güvercinim Harput'ta Kaldı] by Hamasdeğ (Hampartzoum Gelenyan), *Alone People*[Yalnızlar] by Zaven Biberyan and *The Heirs of the Lost House* [Yitik Evin Varisleri] by Vahan Totovents.

Thus, I will continue with analyzing the singularity of the Armenian experience with practices such as circumcision of men and absorption of Armenian women into Muslim households and the terminology debate over the term ‘Catastrophe’ with a view to comprehending what makes the trauma or the experience of the Armenians different from the other mass killings.

CHAPTER 2: SINGULARITY OF THE ARMENIAN TRAUMA: DEFINITION OF THE CATASTROPHE

A variety of terminologies refer to the atrocities committed against Armenians in 1915 by the Ottoman Empire. In the Turkish historiography “expulsion” or “civil war” are the predominant concepts adopted to refer to the events that took place ninety three years ago. Since the Turkish government denies classifying that event which occurred within the territory of the Ottoman Empire as a genocide, it criminalizes and stigmatizes those that verbalize the “G” word. For instance, publisher Ragıp Zarakolu has been recently sentenced in Istanbul on June 17 2008 for “insulting the State” because he published the book of a London based author George Jerjian titled *The Truth Will Set Us Free/Armenians and Turks Reconciled*. On the other hand, Armenians claim that these deliberately chosen terminologies such as expulsion or civil war trivialize the archetype of the modern genocides and the crime committed by the Young Turk regime. Thus Armenians deliberately employ the term ‘genocide’. However, Marc Nichanian, the former Armenian Studies chair holder at Columbia University, asserts that the name *Aghed* [Catastrophe] in Armenian, like Shoah in Hebrew properly refers to the 1915 calamity.¹³ Nichanian elucidates and historicizes why the term “Catastrophe” should be adopted while referring to the events that occurred in 1915. In “*Between Genocide and Catastrophe*” David Kazanjian and Marc Nichanian exchange e-mails on a regular basis and debate the term “Catastrophe”. Zabel Essayan, an Istanbul-born Armenian woman author, is said to be the first one that used the term Catastrophe in September 1909 after

¹³ Nichanian, Marc. *Writers of Disaster: Armenian Literature in the Twentieth Century*. The Gomidas Institute.2002.pp. 11

her return to Istanbul from three months in Cilicia where she witnessed 1909 pogroms against Armenians.¹⁴ Nichanian emphasizes the singularity of the 1915 experience shared by the Armenians and insists on adopting the term “Catastrophe” while historicizing the event because he believes that only this term corresponds to the trauma of the Armenians in a collective way. For instance, the recognition initiatives led by the Armenians scattered all around the world are framed within the terminology of genocide and perpetual categorization and authentication of this event as archetype of genocides. However, this identification ignores the fact that the term genocide has gained importance after the Holocaust to refer to the Final Solution of the Nazis against the Jews and grown to be strongly associated to the suffering of the Jews. Nichanian states that once the Armenians persist in adopting the term genocide, the unique suffering of the Armenians is fractured; thus arises the need to authenticate and reauthenticate their victimization by emphasizing the word genocide. Identifying and explaining the collective trauma of the Armenians with the help of modern history vocabulary sounds problematic to Nichanian. Catastrophe is said to be the appropriate term to represent the “loss” of the Armenians that include both the historic homeland and the sense of belongingness which delineates the unique victimization of the Armenians. Nichanian points out the perpetual revictimization of the Armenians through a term that does not historically refer to the “loss” and trauma of the Armenians. He further asserts that;

They are repeating every day, everywhere, in all places, the original denial of the Catastrophe. But this is part of the catastrophic structure of the survivor. By using the word “Genocide”, we survivors are only repeating again and again the denial of the loss... We claim all over the world that we have been “genocided” ; we relentlessly need to prove our own death. We are still in the claws of the executioner. We still belong to the logic of the executioner, through and through.¹⁵

Designating, codifying and reframing of the 1915 experience shall be thought to facilitate the recognition of the unique experiences of the Armenians since the “G” word contains broader political and legal connotations but this recontextualization is said to be a contemporary denial of the unique experience of the Armenians. Considering the

¹⁴ Kazanjian, David and Marc Nichanian. *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*. Ed. David. L.Eng and David Kazanjian. University of California Press, 2003. pp.125

¹⁵ *Ibid.*127

fact that the Turkish Republic fails to acknowledge the 1915 events as a genocide, the endless struggle of the Armenians to make their experiences heard is constructed through a term attached to modern history. Kazanjian also states that historicization of the Armenian experience and the adoption of a modern term are incompatible. Considering the invention of the term genocide by Raphael Lemkin after the Holocaust, Kazanjian finds the narrativizations of Armenians to classify 1915 as a genocide as ‘the compulsion to “update” a catastrophic history in “contemporary” terms’.¹⁶ This modernization of a history and Armenian experience are thought to be incompatible and wrong. What is missed thus in the bigger picture of the terminology debate is as Nichanian put it “ [A] death without meaning is the same as a death without mourning”.¹⁷ An article of Garin Hovannisian , published at Los Angeles Times¹⁸, also indicates the lightness and insufficiency of the “G” word to reflect that “*ahavor*”, that “awful” nature of 1915 as it was recalled by Armenian poet Vahan Tekeyan in his poem *Awful Thing Over There*. [Ahavor pan my ayndegh]¹⁹ In his article at Los Angeles Times Hovannisian states that;

It is inadequate to call it genocide. That words is perhaps an efficient but not an effective substitute for the crime of “murder” that was perpetrated and should be recorded, separately, 1,5 million times. (The full list of the names of the victims would fill the pages of four Bibles.) But more than this, what “genocide” cannot convey is the reality that loss of life in historic Armenia was accompanied by the loss of homeland, which had been ours for more than 3.000 years.

Ultimately, the impossibility of the language and the gap that occurs between the survivors and the third agencies are also prevailing phenomena in the debate of the terminology to refer to the 1915 atrocities. Ontological difference between the “genocide” and “Catastrophe” has been avowed by Nichanian in detail and the language of the modern history vocabulary is advised to be ceded to address the unique experiences of the Armenians whilst referring to 1915.

¹⁶ Ibid.127

¹⁷ Ibid.140

¹⁸ Garin Hovannisian, Not Just Genocide. Los Angeles Times.24 April 2008.
<http://articles.latimes.com/2008/apr/24/opinion/oew-hovannisian24>

¹⁹ I thank Prof. Boghos Levon Zekiyan for having familiarized me with the poem of Vahan Tekayan and translating it from Western Armenian to Turkish for me. Tekayan’s poem *Something Awful Over There*[Ahavor pan my ayndegh] was published in 1943 in his book *Hayerkutium* page 155.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: TRAUMA LITERATURE

The proper answer to the question of why literature should be adopted to scrutinize the traumatic awakenings of victims can be associated with the multitude of reflections that can be seen in the literary works of the survivors and the authors who deal with it. “They have more to say because of the power of literature, because literature is primarily, although paradoxically, linked to the work of mourning, and is able to explore the intricacies of mourning in its possibility and, more often, its impossibility”.²⁰ Hence, as a result of the singularity of the Armenian case and the narrative of Kirkor Ceyhan, I will take advantage of ‘mourning’, ‘impossibility of language’, ‘loss’ and ‘working through’ in this paper in order to make an analysis of the manifestations of gendercidal trauma in the narrative of Ceyhan.

Mourning is known to be the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or loss of some abstraction which has taken place in one’s life such as an ideal or country.²¹ However, primary question in the literature of trauma should ask whether the language adopted in the testimonies of the survivors is able to represent the unrepresentable nature of the catastrophes such as the ethnic cleansings? If not, how can this incommensurability be

²⁰ Nichanian, Marc, *Writers of Disaster: Armenian Literature in the Twentieth Century*, Gomidas Institute. Princeton.2002.Preface vii.

²¹ Freud, Sigmund, *Mourning and Melancholia in On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works*. London, Hogarth Press, pp.243

broken within different genres of literature such as the testimonies is a prevailing question that needs to be challenged and answered. Psychologist Pumla Gobodo Madikizela who has worked in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was established after the apartheid era in South Africa states that;

Language communicates. At the same time it distances us from the traumatic event as it was experienced, limiting our participation in the act of remembering. We can not fully understand what victims went through, in part because the impact of the traumatic event can not be adequately captured in words. So what function does a victim's testimony serve if it only creates a gulf between language and experience?²²

The impossibility of language portrayed by Madikizela results in the (in)transmission of the nature of suffering experienced by victims and failure of capturing that moment fully in speech, thought and memory. What those who have not experienced catastrophic events can grasp is an incomplete comprehension of the pain confronted by the victims, in contrast; a fractured picture of the atrocities committed by the perpetrator. Once the experiences of the survivors are no longer communicable there arises the "loss". "[L]osses are specific and involve particular events, such as the death of loved ones on a personal level, or on a broader scale, the losses brought about by apartheid or by Holocaust in its effects on Jews and other victims of the Nazi genocide including both the lives and the cultures of affected groups".²³ Loss is a historical phenomenon which is more concrete such as 9/11 and its repercussion both on the individuals paralyzed by this attack to twin towers and families that have lost their beloved ones. However, absence is a concept that is intertwined with "loss". For instance, in continuing with the example of 9/11, security and terrorism can be stated as concerns that did not matter heavily inside the USA prior to that event and which then emerged as eminent concepts as a result of the "loss" that took place in the United States of America. The loss observed in the epistemology of the trauma literature not only derives from the impossibility of language but also from the fractured memories of

²² Madikizela, Pumla Gobodo. *A Human Being Died That Night: South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid*. Mariner Books. 2004.pp 86

²³ LaCapra, Dominick, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*: The Johns Hopkins University Press.2001.pp.49.

victimized groups. “What is denied or repressed in a lapse of memory does not disappear, it returns in a transformed, at times disfigured and disguised manner”.²⁴ The victims are not capable of conveying their traumatic experiences in “full” transcendence. This disruption in the wholeness of narrative is shattered and results in the bits and pieces of the stories that are recounted by the victims. In “*Catastrophic Mourning*” Marc Nichanian states that “If wholeness is lacking, the result is disintegration... “It is because their speech, inhabited by the totality of the event, is shattered reduced to pieces, reduced to a fragmentary state, that the survivors are here “the stricken”. They are stricken in language”.²⁵ Dominick La Capra problematizes this distorted memory of the victimized groups by elaborating on the experiences of Dori Laub, an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Yale University, and attempts to respond to the question if this distortion invalidates the nature of the victim’s framework or not. “One issue that is raised in accentuated form by the study of survivor videos is how to present, and more generally, come to terms with affect in those who have been victimized and traumatized by their experiences , a problem that involves the tense relation between procedures of objective reconstruction of the past and empathic response, especially in the case of the victims and survivors”.²⁶ In *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* Dori Laub tells the following story pertinent to the reconstruction of the past by the victims and states that;

A woman in her late sixties was narrating her Auschwitz experience to interviewers from the Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale... “All of a sudden,” she said, “we saw four chimneys going up in flames, exploding. The flames shot into the sky, people were running. It was unbelievable”.²⁷

²⁴ LaCapra, Dominick. *History and Memory after Auschwitz*. Cornell University Press. 1998.pp.10

²⁵ Nichanian, Marc. *Catastrophic Mourning* in “Loss: The Politics of Mourning”. Ed. Kazanjian, David and David. L.Eng. University of California Press.2003.pp. 112

²⁶ LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. The Johns Hopkins University Press.2001.pp.87

²⁷ Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, M.D, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*, New York: Routledge, 1992, pp.59

Approximately one year after this event at Yale University, another conference is organized to investigate Holocaust from a historical perspective. The historians watch the videotaped testimonies of the survivors and a debate ensues regarding the accuracy of this woman's memory since the number of the chimneys were misrepresented and historically, only one chimney was blown up not all four. This instance indicates that those who have undergone a catastrophic trauma can distortedly narrate their experiences. This distortion shall derive from their tendencies of recontextualizing the magnitude of the atrocities they experienced and to transcend the impossibility of language which fails to reflect the wholeness of the cruelty and the horror of the crime they witnessed. Whilst this reframing may increase the incredibility and subjectivity of the testimonies of the survivors, the cathartic function of those reenactments should not be ignored. The traumatic reexperiencing of the event thus *carries with it* what Dori Laub calls that "collapse of witnessing" the impossibility of knowing that first constituted it. "And by carrying that impossibility of knowing out of the empirical event itself, trauma opens up and challenges us to a new kind of listening, the witnessing, precisely, of impossibility".²⁸ Dominick La Capra offers characterization of two kinds of memory pertinent to trauma that are adopted by the victims. "Working through" and "acting out" are two concepts taken from Freud by La Capra and developed in a way that makes them interesting for use in historical studies such as post-Holocaust literature. La Capra further defines that;

Acting out is related to repetition, and even the repetition compulsion- the tendency to repeat something compulsively. This is very clear in the case of people who undergo a trauma. They have a tendency to relive the past, to be haunted by ghosts or even to exist in the present as if one were still fully in the past, with no distance from it.²⁹

²⁸ Caruth, Cathy. *Trauma Explorations in Memory*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. pp 10

²⁹ LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History Writing Trauma*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. pp. 143

In acting out one fails to acquire some critical distance that allows one to engage in life in the present, to assume responsibility without necessarily transcending the past. The traumatized individuals that act out do not dare to go back to their problems, work them over and transform their ossified image related to their trauma. For instance, some survivors have refrained from giving testimonies or talking about their dehumanized experiences throughout the Catastrophe to dissociate themselves from what they suffered. Their approach to their own experiences falls into the category of “acting out” since they establish a different stance by detaching themselves from their experiences. Boyajian and Grigorian state that some survivors of the Catastrophe who have testified testimonies after many years of struggling with acting out have felt relieved. They further add that;

One of the authors saw a man clinically who was seventy-nine years old and had sought out an Armenian-speaking psychiatrist because he had the urgent feeling that he should talk about his life. He had been fourteen years old during the genocide, and all those years he had kept his story to himself. He was having frequent nightmares and wanted to unburden himself. After three hours of relating his experiences in detail, he left the Office, and reported in the following session that for the first time in a year he had been able to sleep through the night without an anxiety attack.³⁰

His reconciliation with his past and coming to terms with his reality have resulted in opening up scars and facilitating recuperation. Writing rehabilitates the survivors and paves the way for recovering since the survivors embody their experience by sharing it with others. This instance above also substantiates the fact that trauma is not only experienced as a repression or defense but also as a temporal delay that carries the victim beyond the shock of the first moment. Elie Wiesel states that “ If the Greeks invented tragedy, the Romans the epistle, and the Renaissance the sonnet, our generation invented a new literature, that of testimony.”³¹ A response to the question of why the testimony has become at once so central and omnipresent in the recent cultural

³⁰ Boyajian, Levon and Haigaz Grigorian. Psychological Sequelae of the Armenian Genocide in “The Armenian Genocide Perspective”, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian. New Brunswick, NJ. Transaction Books. 1986. pp. 180

³¹ Wiesel, Elie. Dimensions of the Holocaust. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1977. pp. 9

accounts of ourselves can also be obtained after having observed the therapeutic nature of it. In reference to the survivors and their acquiescence to transmit their experience to the second and third agencies Dori Laub states that;

[S]urvivors who do not tell their story become victims of a distorted memory, that is, of a forcibly imposed “ external evil” , which causes and endless struggle with and over a delusion. The “not telling” of the story serves a perpetuation of its tyranny. The events become more and more distorted in their silent retentions and pervasively invade and contaminate the survivor’s daily life. The longer the story remains untold, the more distorted it becomes in the survivor’s conception of it, so much so that the survivor doubts the reality of the actual events³²

The more victimized individuals who have undergone a catastrophic event suppress their experiences the more they are traumatized with this situation. Dori Laub also indicates in this passage that unless the victims verbalize and share their suffering, they also start to question the importance and the reality of what they have suffered. At this point sharing the catastrophic experiences with others and establishing a critical stance towards those uneasy memories facilitate the recuperation. “Working through” was the second concept borrowed from Freud by La Capra and developed to utilize in analysis related to historical perspectives in events such as the ethnic cleansings. Personal and collective wounds can not heal without leaving residues in the past and trying to engage with them in a critical way. By leaving those unhealable scars open both psychological and physical victimizations of the individuals continue. Writing rehabilitates the pathos into the collective remembering thereby liberates the encapsulated soul of the victims. La Capra further adds that;

In working through, the person tries to gain critical distance on a problem and to distinguish between past, present and future. To put the term drastically oversimplified terms: for the victim, this means ability to say to oneself “Yes, that happened to me back then. It was distressing, overwhelming, perhaps I can not entirely disengage myself from it, but I am existing here and now, and this is different from back then”... [I]t’s via the working through that one acquires the possibility of being an ethical and political agent. Moreover,

³² Laub, Dori. Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle. In “Trauma Explorations in Memory” ed. Caruth, Cathy. The Johns Hopkins University Press. Pp.72

especially in an ethical sense, working through does not mean avoidance, harmonization, simply forgetting the past or submerging oneself in the present. It means coming to terms with the trauma, including its details, and critically engaging the tendency to act out the past and even to recognize why it may be necessary and even in certain respects desirable or at least compelling³³

Therefore working through can abridge the gap between the victim and his coming to terms with his trauma. It facilitates one's comprehending his situation and seeking reasonable amount of time and rational ways to get over it. Working through also means one's daring to engage with the catastrophic experiences by recognizing the reason of trauma. Trauma literature is a vast field that has been utilized to analyze various ethnic cleansings, historical events or traumatic encounters. Due to the unique nature of each traumatic circumstances such as the Catastrophe every single piece of trauma literature can not and should not be adopted with a view to scrutinizing the manifestations of trauma in those historical settings. Therefore, considering the singularity of the Armenian case and the narrative of Kirkor Ceyhan, I will take advantage of 'impossibility of language', 'loss', 'mourning' and 'working through' in this paper in order to make an analysis of the manifestations of gendercidal trauma in the narrative of Ceyhan.

³³ LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History Writing Trauma*. The Johns Hopkins University Press , 2001. pp. 144

CHAPTER 4: TRAUMATIC EXPLORATION OF ARMENIAN MEN THROUGHOUT THE CATASTROPHE

The answer to the question of in what ways the state orchestrated violence against women and men differs from each other throughout the Catastrophe has many layers in the short stories of Ceyhan. The repercussions of this ‘gendercide’ is delineated through the Islamization, conscription, death marches and circumcision of Armenian men and Islamization, absorption into Moslem households and sexual exploitation of the Armenian women. Initially able-bodied Armenian men are conscripted to the Ottoman army so they are forced to overwork in those labour battalions. Those enforced services continue with Islamization and death marches of the Armenian men in the literary narrative of Ceyhan. Forced circumcision is another gendercide practise that is portrayed in the short story named *Küpçü Hodja* [Küpçü Hoca]. This persistence in circumcising Armenian men not only aims to Islamize those Christian males but also intimidates them. The cultural codes attached to forced circumcision can be related to disempowerment and emasculation of the victims. However, circumcision has different repercussions in different settings. For instance, in a concentration camp in Auschwitz being circumcised was the indicator of being Jewish in contrast throughout the Catastrophe the opposite was the case. Thus we can say that a man’s circumcision status had serious consequences for how he was treated in the society either with violence, torture or death.

Literary works differ from scientific explorations in terms of offering their logic of story to their narratees. Scientific explorations deduce that whenever a and b obtains, c will occur thus they have a logic of scientific causality. On the other hand, our lives can not be premediated therefore the logic of stories in the narratives of author manifests. In Ceyhan's works basic shape of stories do not end 'properly' whereas things are left hanging and different kind of narrators and narrative techniques are adopted by him. For instance, in this chapter I will analyze two works of Ceyhan named *Evil Fate Shoed His Horse to Chase Us*[Atını Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize] and *Who is ringing the door?*[Kapıyı Kimler Çalıyor?] for the sake of delineating the gendercidal trauma in his works. *Evil Fate Shoed His Horse to Chase Us*[Atını Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize] has two narrators which are Ceyhan himself with his first person 'I' narrative that makes him protagonist and Ceyhan's father Simon namely the third person narrative. It is so striking that narrator changes just in one story named *Küpçü Hodja* [Küpçü Hoca] which is about the circumcision ritual of Simon and his friends to be exempted from being deployed to death marches. In *Who is ringing the door?*[Kapıyı Kimler Çalıyor?] Ceyhan's father Simon has first person narration with his 'I' narrative that qualifies him as a protagonist. One of the narrative techniques adopted by Ceyhan is the intertextuality between *Evil Fate Shoed His Horse to Chase Us*[Atını Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize] and *Who is ringing the door?* . [Kapıyı Kimler Çalıyor?] Simon begins to narrate how he and his family were caught by the gendarmes while sheltering their Armenian relatives in their house which resulted in their being sent to death marches in *Who is ringing the door?* [Kapıyı Kimler Çalıyor?] as the protagonist. However, he does not mention about the circumcision ritual in this book and therefore Ceyhan adopts his father as a narrator in another book named *Evil Fate Shoed His Horse to Chase Us* [Atını Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize] to fill in the gaps and vocalize the missing parts of the puzzle. Thus plot of his short stories gets shaped by different narratives based on their personal and collective experiences. Throughout Ceyhan's stories the polyphonic (multi voiced) voice prevails and a large majority of the characters speak and verbalize their concerns. Ceyhan has not clarified his narratee that is why it is not possible to state whether he posits a male reader or a female reader. However, the figurative language and the metaphors he adopts while explaining the brutalities and the atrocities committed against the Armenians signify his having taken into consideration the

Turkish narratee that might be offended or agitated by the language he uses. Therefore, his narrative achieves its effect by taking advantage of figurative language. In addition to these, the self-censorship he practices pertinent to vocalizing the sexual exploitations of the Armenian women also indicate his concerns related to the narratees of his short stories and their ethical stances. I will analyze the gender aspect of the Catastrophe related to Armenian men in the short stories of Ceyhan in this chapter and scrutinize the importance of steps taken to marginalize Armenian men in his narrative.

4 1 Conscription and Islamization

There were two gendercidal strategies adopted in terms of the liquidation of the Armenian man. The first one was the ‘conscription-as-gendecide’ that meant the mobilization of “battle-age” Armenian men for service in the Ottoman army followed by overwork and concomitant mass slaughter of the remaining community males. However, since Ceyhan’s short stories are based on his father’s real experiences his narrative and the gender aspect of his stories related to Catastrophe differ from the experiences of Armenian men in general. Ceyhan’s father Simon is conscripted to the Ottoman Army and as a result of agreeing to Islamization and circumcision he is exempted from attending the death marches which most of the time result in the execution of the Armenian men at first hand. In spite of having been exempted from the death marches by denouncing Christianity, his having been caught by the gendarmes while sheltering two of his Armenian relatives who have not been converted to Islam results in his family’s being expelled from Zara and attending the forced death marches. Vahakn N. Dadrian states that “In many instances Armenian soldiers were disposed of in even more summary fashion, for it now became almost the general practise to shoot

them in cold blood... Here and there squads of 50 and 100 men would be taken, bound together in groups of four, and then marched out to a secluded spot a short distance from the village.”³⁴ The execution of able-bodied Armenian men aimed to reduce the Armenian community to a condition of near total helplessness and make Armenian women an easy prey for Islamization, marriage and absorption into Muslim households. Furthermore, this gendercidal strategy meant that without men, women and children would have no means of returning to their villages and towns. Albeit, this was not the case in the unique experience of Simon and his family because they altogether attended the death marches as a family after having been caught while sheltering two Armenian relatives. In *Evil Fate Shoed His Horse to Chase Us* [Atını Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize] Ceyhan vividly elaborates on the traumatic experiences of Armenian men and their conscription to the army which ends with a communal Islamization. In the short story named *Küpçü Hodja* [Küpçü Hoca] he starts narrating the experiences of those Armenian soldiers including his father. During the wartime of the World War I all the able-bodied Armenian males of a village named Zara are conscripted. After a while the *Expulsion Law* [Tehcir Kanunu] is employed by the Ottoman government which means the expulsion of the Ottoman Empire’s Armenian subjects from their homelands to the Syrian deserts. Ceyhan states that “ After a short time, the Ottoman Empire announced the Expulsion Law. What is that? How is it going to be implemented? All the Armenian subject will be taken from their homelands due to security reasons and will be displaced to Syria. This is the story”.³⁵ Ceyhan indicates that a field officer [binbaşı] named Yahya was leading Simon (the protagonist and Ceyhan’s father) and other Armenian from Zara in the army. One day this officer gathers all the Armenian men of his troop and tells them that;

I am completely glad to be with you. However, the news and the announcement we have received today compell that all the Armenian subjects will be expelled without an exception. I see that I have not came across with any illiterate among you... This might the the most difficult idea declaration of my life. I did not sleep throughout the night and thought of this and you at all times. I did not sleep until morning whilst thinking about how I would react if someone else had asked this offer to me. However, the situation is highly serious. Unless you admit my offer, all of you will perish and be exterminated with

³⁴ Dadrian. Vahakn N. The History of Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus. Berghahn Books.2004 pp.225.

³⁵ Ceyhan, Kirkor. Atını Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize. Aras Yayıncılık.2000. pp.25

your household and children. You will attend the migration, and will die barefoot without reaching the second village either from the dysentery or stomachache.³⁶

The speech made by officer Yahya aims to contextualize, legitimize and justify the reasons of the following offer that will be announced by him. What is so striking in his speech is his statement about the education level of the Armenian men. Is it a remorse felt towards the expelled Armenians which were one of the intelligent and educated subjects of the Ottoman Empire or is it a way of flattering those men whose salvation will depend on another catastrophic process that they will go through? The officer pretends as a person that just implements the orders received from the government and what he will offer shall bring them salvation but what he ignores is that this salvation will be at the expense of denouncing Christianity. The officer Yahya continues talking to the Armenian soldiers congregated from the various villages and cities of Sivas and further states that;

If the God permits and I can save you know that I will feel myself so happy. Here is my offer my friends. I will act as if I have received an official request from every one of you from the previous times. I will start procedure today. Therefore I will try to hold you back from the expulsion migration. In your petition you state that “We the sons of this and that will convert from Christianity and our admission into Islam is requested from our Padişah.”³⁷

Does the officer Yahya sympathize with those expelled soldiers or is it a disguised implementation or continuation of the homogenization of Anatolia articulated through an officer of the Empire? However there has been innumerable Turks that have shown altruism to Armenians throughout the Catastrophe that altruism forced them to embrace Islam. “Once the main waves of deportation and massacred had swept over all the Armenian communities, that is, by the end of 1915, many of the stragglers or survivors could be taken in or adopted by quite openly on condition that they convert to and profess Islam”.³⁸ Thus we can claim that one of the motives for the intervention of the

³⁶ Ibid.26

³⁷ Ibid.26

³⁸ Hovannisian, Richard G. Intervention of Shades of Altruism During the Armenian Genocide. In “The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics”, ed. R.G. Hovannisian. New York, 1992, pp. 177

Turks was for the Islamization of the Armenian people. So if we scrutinize the speech of officer Yahya in the light of this perspective his deed shall be perceived as an altruism that had other motives. In Ceyhan's story the Armenians that were addressed by the speech of the officer Yahya can not talk for a while. The impossibility of language prevails here in this part of Ceyhan's narrative since whatever he writes will not be able to convey the anxiety and the trauma of those Armenian men that have just been offered either Islamization or participation to lethal marches. Since this phenomenon is not communicable there arises the loss pertinent to the Armenian men. From now on, loss will mean the denounced religion, abandoned cultural and ethnic practices and also the loss of personal identities. The idea of conversion seems as the only rational option to survive that is why they start thinking about it deeply. The grandmother of Ceyhan who is said to be seventy five at that time hardly agrees to the conversion and deplores by asking "How can I become a Moslem at this age, how can I practice Islam my dears?"³⁹ The mourning of Ceyhan's grandmother based on her innumerable losses exemplifies the reactions of the individuals to their traumatic encounters. Simon and his wife think that rather than witnessing the extermination and perishing of their children and themselves salvation that will come through Islam sounds as the only feasible option. Before the daybreak Simon's mother gathers her son and bride to have their last prayer in Christianity. She elucidates " Then come and we all three cross ourselves willingly, locate ourselves in front of the sun and begin an apologetic prayer to our Lord *Hisus Kristus* [Jesus the Christ]" The grandmother crosses herself so much as if she will never be able to do it again. The way she deplores and moans authenticate the bad predicament of her psychological situation. After a while she starts a conversation between herself and Jesus Christ explaining why she chose to be converted to Islam. She begins her sentence telling that "You see everything is so obvious for you. If I convert for my own benefit make me deprived of your intercession. What can we do? There is alot of children and we need to save them. The Almighty and you, his son, will tolerate this situation. Be sure of this and know that you will be at the climax of our heart forever".⁴⁰ The sentence she uses "You see everything is so obvious for you" adressed to God has been uttered to delineate the weakness of language to vocalize the

³⁹ Ibid.200

⁴⁰ Ibid.201

trauma she had inside. The Almighty who can see, observe and evaluate everything shall exactly commiserate with her loss but the conversation she has with the God also points out another phenomenon which is mourning. She is aware that God can see and judge everything but still she would like to have a conversation with God to attenuate her suffering whilst mourning about her loss. Mourning is known to be a reaction to the loss and in here by deploring and engaging in a conversation with God she definitely mourns and works through with her anxiety therefore liberates her soul. The conversion that was offered to the Armenian soldiers by the officer continues with the name change and adoption of Turkish names to ensure public invisibility. If those expelled Armenians shall live side by side with their Moslem neighbours they have to show them that they are one of them as devout Moslems and Turks. Thus, self assimilation will be one of the steps to go through for exemption from the expulsion. The Turkification of Armenian names are delineated by Ceyhan and the protagonist Simon elucidates that “My mother cried alot and deplored but found her name on her own without an effort. We adopted a name for everyone in the household. For me *Ibrahim*, my wife *Naciye*, my brother-in-law *Necati*, the other *Hesna*, one another *Mustafa*...”⁴¹ This Turkification of their names is also ridiculed among Simon’s villager friends. One of his friends Setrak asks him “So you changed your name into Ibrahim? As of now are we going to call you Ibrahim or together with Simon? I mean Simon Ibrahim?”⁴² This quotation sets good example to authenticate that the villagers are working through with their traumas since they can deride their catastrophic situation. Once a victim admits the situation he is in and makes fun out of it, it means that he manages to establish a critical distance between his situation and himself. This practice also paves the way for recuperation and facilitates victim’s dealing with his problem. The traumatic experiences of Armenian men might resemble the Islamization practises of the Armenian women with a view to surviving in Anatolia throughout the wartime years. However, women have different experiences since they were not only Islamized but also incorporated into Muslim households and married to Moslem men.

⁴¹ Ceyhan, Kirkor. *Atını Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize*. Aras Yayıncılık. 2000. pp.28

⁴² *Ibid.*29

The dilemma of the Armenian men and women differ from each other as well. Islamization process is a commonality that was shared both by men and women however since Armenian women were absorbed into Muslim households and forcefully married to Moslem men they also gave birth to their children. As a result of this enigmatic phenomenon their personal struggles are much more complicated than Armenian men since they are the mothers of the children that carry hyphenated identities. What can those women do when an opportunity to reunite with their Armenian families arises? Will they leave their children behind and commence a new life as a Christian Armenian or should they forget about all the atrocities committed against Armenians and look after their babies while emphasizing their newly adopted Turkish and Moslem identities? There are two tremendous differences in terms of the steps followed by Armenian women and men which are the circumcision and conscription of Armenian men.

4 2 Circumcision and Death Marches

Circumcision is a religious commandment that is practised both by Jews and Moslems. In Judaism the baby boy should be circumcised on the eight day after his birth and in Islam most of the time boys are circumcized before they reach the age of puberty. However , there are rare occasions that circumcision is practised to inflict trauma on the victims or to assimilate them such as the practice of forced circumcision that occurred in Kenya in 2002, 2006 and in the ethnic conflicts that followed the election on 27 December 2007.⁴³ “Enforced sterilization largely comprises castration and other forms of sexual mutilation. Indeed, the practice dates back to ancient times with ancient Persian murals showing ‘triumphant warriors marching along bearing plates piled high

⁴³ <http://www.cirp.org/news/thenation 08-23-02/> Man Forcebly Circumcised as Crowd Watches, The Nation 23 August 2002, <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/jan/09/world/fg-circumcision9> Forced Circumcision Reported in Kenya, LA Times, January 09 2008.

with their enemy's penises' .⁴⁴ One might claim that what is elaborated by Ceyhan is forced circumcision not castration or sterilization but the way this forced circumcision is conducted portrays the nature of it that is akin to castration. In *Küpjü Hodja* [Küpçü Hoca] the Islamization of Armenian men continue with another demand of officer Yahya which is the forced circumcision of Armenian men. I will scrutinize how Ceyhan portrays this phenomenon and how this traumatic event is actualized in his short story. After having been Islamized the Armenian men continue their daily rushes and one day the officer gathers all of them in the village. He tells them that “ Friends, I converted you to Islam but you can not be Moslem that easily. There are certain rules that must be practiced. The first of all is circumcision”⁴⁵ As a reaction to this announcement the Armenian men do not resist since they know that it is not possible to step back after having agreed to the conversion. One can also interpret this as the impossibility of surviving without letting the perpetrator make the victims stripped of their religious and ethnic identities. However, the circumcision of Armenian men are not conducted properly what I mean is in sanitary conditions. Simon states that ;“He (the officer Yahya) entrusted us to an Albanian that has been an assistant of a veterinary in the mule table and has a brisky moustache. ”⁴⁶ Simon further elaborates that on one side there is a mule and on the other side I can see the table on which the veterinary checks the animals. Suddenly, all the Armenian men are ordered to lay on the table for their circumcision. Sarcastically Simon elucidates about the professionalism of this so-called assistant Albanian man and adds that “ The Albanian is a qualified one! He has been a specialist by castrating the horses.”⁴⁷ This sarcastic sentence of Simon derives from the impossibility of language to reflect the trauma that will be inflicted upon the bodies of those Armenian men by this so-called assistant. He refrains from directly elucidating about why this assistant is an unexperienced one about a medical operation in contrast he uses a figurative sence to explain about the weakness of language to reflect the anxiety, horror or pain that would be experienced by those men. The men that work in this area are shocked to see that those mature ‘Moslem’ men have not been circumcized up to this age without any information about their having been Islamized recently.

⁴⁴ Sivakumaran, Sandesh. Sexual Violence Against Men in Armed Conflict. European Journal of International Law Volume 18 no. 2 2007 pp.265

⁴⁵ Ceyhan, Kirkor. Atımı Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize. Aras Yayıncılık. 2000. pp.29

⁴⁶ Ibid.29

⁴⁷ Ibid.29

Simon states that still they showed solidarity to their fellow Moslem brethren and moreover some of them articulated “ I took you in my arms and made you circumcized I will be your *kirve* (Godfather) ever after.” This quotation shows how those mature Armenian were infantilized and emasculated with the jokes made by the ones that circumcized them. The magnitude of trauma inflicted upon the bodies of those Armenian men circumcized by the assistants of the veterinary is expressed through the words. For instance, Simon explains that dingy scissors that were not able to cut once were used by those assistants that redoubled the pain given to them. His sentence “Even a bull would not be able to stand to this pain” signifies how traumatic this process was for all those men that were forced to be circumcized to be a real Moslem that fulfills all the requirements of Islam. The sentences uttered by Simon also shows the anxiety that was felt about the condition of their sexual organs after these primitive surgeries: “When we moaned and could not stand to the pain he did not pay attention. He just passed to examine the other one as if he was cutting the neck of a cow in the butchery... We accepted his cruelty but also worried about whether the remaining part would function or not.”⁴⁸ This quotation exemplifies the concern of the victims pertinent to their procreating capabilities after this forced circumcision and it is thought to be one of the sexual violences committed against male throughout the armed conflict by Sivakumaran. Procreative capacity is an indispensable indicator of one’s being a ‘real’ man in a society. A man’s having a child marks the crossing of the threshold of the male world and it culminates in when a man has a son. Thus, deprivation of biological reproductive capacity attenuates one’s masculinity and feminizes him. With reference to victims who were exposed to violence aimed at their male reproductive organs Sivakumaran states that “fears of no longer being considered fully a man, or not being able to function as a man, were often mentioned.”⁴⁹ Those victims associate this violence with having been prevented from reproducing new members of their ethnic, religious and racial groups.

⁴⁸ Ibid.30

⁴⁹ Sivakumaran, Sandesh. Sexual Violence Against Men in Armed Conflict. European Journal of International Law Volume 18 no. 2 2007 pp.273

Thus, this violence strips them of their masculinities and lowers the status of those male survivors in their society by ‘reducing’ them to feminized individuals. This disempowerment of Armenian men does not occur at the individual level since men are thought to be the protector of the families. “ Sexual violence against male members of the household and community also suggest disempowerment of the family and community in much the same way as the chastity of the family and community is considered lost when female members are sexually violated.”⁵⁰ The metaphor employed by Ceyhan “as if cutting the neck of a cow in the butchery” indicates the evasive nature of this so-called circumcision process practiced on the bodies of Armenian men. First of all, a physician or a peritomist should conduct the circumcision in sanitary conditions and in this short story it is the opposite case. Circumcision transforms itself into torture and the victims can not resist since it is publicized as a requirement of being a real Moslem by the officer. In *Küpjü Hodja*[Küpçü Hoca] so-called veterinary assistants are delineated as if they fail to comprehend the ethnic background of those circumcised men and are taken a back by their belated circumcision. Time to time the Albanian guy gets angry with those men and asks them if it is acceptable to live uncircumcized in Islam until that age and questions them if there has not been someone in their families that warned them until that time. One might ask If those assistants are really unaware of who those people are or do they pretend as if those victims are their Moslem brethren that did not undergo this mandatory commandment before? Since it is highly unlikely for a Moslem not to undergo circumcision until middle age, it should be obvious for everyone that those men are not Moslem by birth. Thus it is inferred from their acts that they knew whom they were circumcizing. Another instance that signifies the probability of this belief is the way those Armenian men were circumcized. The way they underwent this religious operation highly differs from an ordinary circumcision of a Moslem boy. In many cases a peritomist shows up to the house of the boy that will be circumcized and he undergoes this operation in a sanitary condition without being tormented. What I mean is that the evasive nature of the circumcision in the short story gives the readers the clues about the intention of the assistants that conducted it. Those intentions should be linked to various dynamics considering rarely will violence be committed for any one sole reason.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 268

First of all, the apathetic nature of the assistants that conducted this circumcision derives from their not agreeing to admit the losses of those victimized Armenian men by acting as if they are not aware of what is going on around them. The amnesic blanket of nationalism results in their not admitting the identities of those Armenian men thereby they act as if there have never been non-Moslems in this region thus automatically assume their belated circumcision as a result of other dynamics. They fail to question the identities of those men and deny the existence of Armenians in that region historically. In addition to failing to admit the losses of Armenian men they also emasculate them by making fun out of their belated circumcision. “[S]exual violence against women is about power and dominance regardless of whether it is carried out in time of peace or in time of conflict, and the same is true of sexual violence committed against men.”⁵¹ Traditional roles assigned to men are virility, strength, power and the ability to protect the family. Whilst circumcizing Armenian men in unfamiliar settings without the help of a peritomist one of the aims of those perpetrators might have been to decrease their masculinities and disempower Armenian men. Therefore violence against Armenian men that aims their sexual organs “manifest themselves in the form of emasculation.”⁵² The nature of victimhood is considered to be weak and vulnerable that is why sexual violence that aims their sexual organs is thought to aggrandize this situation while emasculating them by taking their their masculine attitudes such as resisting or responding. The trauma inflicted upon the bodies of the victims may be ignored by the perpetrators because (even if they have been Islamized recently) they are originally Armenian. What follows the forced circumcision also shows the apathetic nature of the assistants to the pain of recently circumcized men. After the circumcision a soldier takes a handful of a bran and salt mixture from a horse bucket and ties this mixture around their sexual organs and lie them down. This aggravates the pain of Armenian men but the men around them turn a blind eye to their suffering since it is one of the commitments of Islam that their fellow Moslem friends need to undergo. The sentences of Simon depicts the grief of those Armenian men circumcized recently;

Our injuries lasted for a long time. How can a circumcision conducted in *agbun* (muck heap) with dirty and dingy scissors heal? ... All of our bodies were covered with pus. The pus was nearly a cesspool. Every

⁵¹ Ibid.267

⁵² Ibid.270

single neighbour that visits us recommends a nostrum of their grandfathers. Some suggest *hava civa* pomade and some others human shit. We could not recover in two or three months. Did you understand the commandment of our religion?⁵³

The sarcastic question of Simon “ Did you understand the commandment of our religion?” portrays the suppression and inability of the victims to verbalize their suffering and injuries after the circumcision. Besides, it points out the limited nature of mourning for them. Armenian men can not react to their losses that represents more than cultural and ethnic issues after this operation in contrast they give in to the demands of the perpetrators. Circumcision and Islamization were embraced for the sake of survival but this question also transmits the paralyzation of the survivors as a result of those implementations be it circumcision or other rituals. Finally, Ceyhan portrays the traumatic circumcision practice of Simon and his villagers as a next step after conversion. The brutality of the assistants and the conditions in which those Armenian men were circumcized might have been chosen deliberately to convey the magnitude of the trauma inflicted upon those Armenian men that had to undergo circumcision to survive throughout the Catastrophe. The oblivious nature of the men that implemented the circumcision indicates the way Armenian men were treated by those that implemented the surgery. The metaphors and the figurative language employed by Ceyhan such as “even a bull would not be able to stand to this”conveys the traumatizing and dehumanizing nature of this practise implemented on the bodies of Armenian men. The traumatic explorations pertinent to Simon and his Armenian friends continue to be narrated in another book of Ceyhan named *Who is ringing the door?* [Kapıyı Kimler Çalıyor?].As I have explained before conscription, Islamization and circumcision would suffice to exempt Simon from the death marches that are thought to end in Syrian desserts but one day his life totally changes. The name of his book *Who is ringing the door?* gives a hint about this action that endangered the life of Simon. One night the door of Simon’s house was knocked in the middle of the night. The ones that were knocking the door of Simon were Anania and Setrak, the relatives of Simon, who had been hiding in the mountains since they did not agree to Islamization.

⁵³ Ceyhan, Kirkor. *Atımı Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize*. Aras Yayıncılık. 2000. pp.30

Simon opens the door and welcomes them to his house but he also acts cautiously. He manages to hide those escapees for a certain amount of time until one day he is caught by the gendarmes. Then, he and his family are obliged to leave Zara and attend the death march publicized as an ‘expulsion’ in a euphemistic way by the government. Simon states that,

Indeed one year after the inauguration of Expulsion Law they softened the tough precautionary measures. They do not execute the captured ones directly, but expull them as a household to Arabia and do away with them. I guess a scarcity of bullet arised in the ongoing war therefore the execution that would be committed by the help of it will be practiced by immigration routes and Der Zor desserts.⁵⁴

This statement of Simon portrays the intention behind the forced death marches that he and his family would attend in next to not time as a penalization of having sheltered Armenians in their houses. The sarcastic nature he adopts, to convey the situation he is in, continues with the sentence he utters “I guess a scarcity of bullet arised in the ongoing war therefore; the execution that would be committed by the help of it will be practiced by immigration routes and Der Zor desserts.” This sentence explains the reason behind the death marches and he feels that he is about to touch to the bottom. Simon and his family spend three days at the police station and later on begin their marches. Two escapees and Simon are tied together to set up their journey to unknown destinations. Simon’s mother holds his sister Maniya, (now Şerife), who can not walk even she is ten years old. Simon’s wife tries to carry her six months old baby in her hands while being escorted by Simon’s brother Garabed (now Hamdi) Simon’s brother in law Hosrof (now Necati) and Simon’s sister in law Arşaluys (now Kamile). Throughout the death marches, Simon also makes up Moslem names for two escapees Anania and Setrak who after that time start to be addressed as Hurşit and Kamil. Anania is the son of Sarkis Agha who was a prosperous Armenian before the Catastrophe that used to own many fields around Zara. His wife Marinos was forced to attend the expulsion when he was on the mountains hiding from the atrocities committed against Armenians. Anania’s son was seized by the son of Hacı Yusuf and Islamized immediately. Whilst explaining about the dehumanization of this expulsion Simon tells

⁵⁴ Ceyhan, Kirkor. Kapıyı Kimler Çalıyor? Belge Yayınları. 1999. pp.15

that “ My mother, my wife, a heap of children, my bed ridden 10 years old sister. What will happen to us? Untill where will we stand this?”⁵⁵ This curiosity of Simon does not last for a long time since his baby boy Vahram can not stand dehydration and harsh conditions of this death march and passes away. The convoy stops for a while to bury Vahram and they bury him in an open air somewhere in the middle of nowhere in the direction of Mecca. Simon explains that I prayed in God with all the Islamic prayers I knew and the gendarmes also attended me. The burial ritual of baby boy Vahram is conducted in compliance with the Islamic rules even though he was an Armenian and a Christian by birth. Throughout this ritual Simon’s wife and mother do not approach them and later on they quietly approach to the grave of Vahram. Simon elucidates that “After we left the grave my mother moved along quietly. She turned her back by paying attention not to show her face. I noticed, she crossed herself and prayed in God.”⁵⁶ Armenians are expected to pretend as devout Moslems even throughout those marches and the way his mother crossed herself silently indicates the fear and the anxiety they felt towards their future. The situation of baby boy Vahram and the burial ritual indicate the impossibility of mourning while being escorted by the gendarmes. They are aware of the fact that they do not have a destination to reach and it is a matter of life and death. However, they can not verbalize their demands to cross themselves and pray in God in Armenian. No one cries, deplores or mourns. Silence prevails among the deportees and the anticipated end of Vahram casts a silence on his family members. Simon, suppressed and intimidated by gendarmes, can not even dare to pray in God as a Christian. When one can not mourn for his loss, his working through might last longer as a result of this belated catharsis. Gendarmes that accompany Simon and his family express their condolences upon the death of baby boy Vahram and tell him that “ That was fated to happen. It was Almighty’s providence.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid.25

⁵⁶ Ibid.26

⁵⁷ Ibid.26

As an Armenian that was forced to attend this death march Simon wanted to ask what kind of fate or providence were that which resulted in the death of a naive baby boy but he could not verbalize it since he was in the hands of the gendarmes. This also proves the impossibility of mourning throughout the marches otherwise his paternal instinct would force him to question the irrationality of this sentence and engage in a conversation with the gendarme. Vahram's death paralyzed every single individual that was walking with Simon and silence prevailed among them. No one dared to talk. After this lingering march their destination is uttered to be Malatya. Prior to reaching there Mania, bed ridden sister of Simon who was 10 years old, perished on the way and again his mother waited for some time after the burial rituals and crossed herself whilst praying in God in Armenian. When they arrived to Malatya dispatching office, Simon found out some notes carved out of walls by expelled Armenians to notify their relatives or families about their situation. Some of those notes carved on the wall in Armenian were like " Migirdich from Kegi date 1915 30 August" or " They call me the son of nutty Hacho from Bayburt, Giroyos".⁵⁸ Those should have been the last outcries of the victims who were forced to walk to unknown destinations if they could survive through this lethal march. Simon's mother can not endure this exhausting and psychologically destructive walk and perishes before they reach Besni, the place they were assigned to by the help of an officer in which they could live freely without being sent to Syrian deserts. After having reached to Besni and settled there Anania manages to find his wife and two sons seized by Hacı Yusuf. Since he does not want to lose his family one more time, he makes decision to leave Turkey and sets up a journey towards a Maronite monastery in Syria in Lattakia. In Ceyhan's narrative the reader integrates himself to the stories since the depiction of the circumstances are vividly elaborated by him. In spite of the fact that, the whole household has attended the death march Ceyhan has devoted most of his book to the speeches, statements and experiences of male characters throughout the death march. For instance, he does not even vocalize the name of his wife or mother in this book. It might derive from his relativizing the reason of death march with his father's permitting two escapees stay in their house. What I mean is that since it was Simon that sheltered those escapees and endangered his family by

⁵⁸ Ibid.73

taking such an action therefore Ceyhan might have wanted to focus on his experiences as a male. Moreover, in a patriarchal society men are supposed to protect the family that is why Ceyhan's narrative focusing on male experiences throughout the death march might have outweighed. The loss for Armenian men meant more than the loss of an ethnic and a religious heritage as a result of the practices such as forced circumcision and death marches. Forced circumcision also indicated the loss of masculinities that those Armenian men possessed. Since this forced circumcision was practiced in a haphazard way, Armenian men had some concerns related to their biological procreativity. This also shows the loss of psychological unity which tormented them after this ritual about the condition of their sexual organs. Emasculation and lowering the statuses of Armenian men increased their losses related to their manhood. As I have elucidated the way the perpetrators behaved those Armenian men such as taking them in their arms and calling themselves their godfathers show the way this emasculation and humiliation were practiced. A variety of losses such as the death of their family members or relatives also transformed those Armenian men into docile individuals. After the death of baby boy Vahram one of the soldiers approaches to Simon and states that it was the fate of the child that is why this loss should not demoralize him. Simon questions the rationale of his statement inside by relativizing the death of a sinless baby boy and the fate but can not dare to verbalize his concern since they are at the hands of the gendarmes walking to an unknown destination in a dehumanized way. Losses of the family members had a huge impact on the survivors but they could not express their grief as a result of being forced to walk while gendarmes were escorting them. Death marches also impeded the mourning of Armenian men considering their being accompanied by the gendarmes and their vulnerabilities to the attacks that could be aimed to their convoy by the folk. For instance, after the death of Vaham and Mania none of the family members can find the courage to wail and deplore since children were in a prolonged agony that was finalized by their deaths. Simon informs the readers that he prayed in God with all the Islamic prayers he learnt after his conversion while burying Vahram. When one imagines the suppression of individuals to pretend as a devout Moslem even after the death of one's baby boy who perished in this lethal death march, the magnitude of the impossibility of mourning can be comprehended.

Silence prevails among the survivors and their mourning is inhibited since the gendarmes that escort them are nearby. The way Simon's mother approached to the tomb of Vahram and prayed in God in Armenian and crossed herself quietly exemplifies the limited nature of mourning in this catastrophic setting. In addition to those elements, Ceyhan does not explicitly state why Armenian men could not have mourning but one of the conversations between Anania and Simon informs the readers about how Armenian men perceived mourning a threat against their masculinities, therefore; it was mostly the Armenian women that mourned in a limited way throughout the Catastrophe. Simon asks to Anania "Do you know why most of the time it is the women that endure more?" Anania replies "It is because women live by weeping"⁵⁹ Wailing and deploring open the scars of the Armenian women survivors and this paves the way for recuperation. Thus, they work through with their pain since they admit what torments them inside. The conversation between Anania and Simon also portrays the effect of this mourning on Armenian women by stating that it is mostly women that endure more than men. Gendercide, a word that is a combination of gender and cide refers to the gender aspect of the ethnic cleansings, exterminations...etc. In the short stories of Kirkor Ceyhan there are many instances pertinent to the gendercide practises implemented throughout the Catastrophe. The experiences of men differ from women in terms of the way men were liquidated or Islamized. In *Küpjü Hodja* [Küpçü Hoca] the able bodied Armenian men of the village are congregated and then conscripted to the Ottoman army. They are required to over work there and this dehumanization continues with other demands of the officer Yahya which are Islamization and circumcision. Islamization process and their adopting new names for themselves portray the trauma that they had to undergo for survival.

⁵⁹ Ibid.101

CHAPTER 5: (EN)GENDERING VIOLENCE AND THE EXPERIENCES OF ARMENIAN WOMEN

“Genocide has affected women differently from men in at least three ways: women have seldom participated directly in genocide, though this has begun to change in twentieth century (eg. Nazi Germany and Cambodia) ; women have been victimized in ways different from men to a large extent (rape and enslavement), and the consequences of genocide (incorporation into perpetrator’s society; or ostracism of victims of rape as in Bangladesh) have often been different as well”.⁶⁰ Armenian men in general are known to have a quicker death either by conscription to the army which results in working in labour battalions and extermination or facing segregation from the rest and shot immediately.⁶¹ However, Ceyhan’s narrative differs from the general sequence of Armenian men’s experiences it was mostly the women and the children that had to endure dehydration, death marches, abduction, pillage, mutilation, disembowelment, impalement and rape. “The Special Organization (Teshkilat-ı Mahsusa) used as agents of death and destruction hardened criminals who were released from prison for the purpose, predatory tribes that were incited to wait in ambush for the deportee caravans as they passed through narrow gorges and defiles or approached river crossings, and

⁶⁰ Smith, Roger. W, *Women and Genocide: Notes on an Unwritten History*. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 8, no: 3, Winter 1994,pp.316

⁶¹ Miller, Donald. E and Lorna Touryan Miller. *Women and Children of the Armenian Genocide*. In Richard G.Hovannisian, ed, *The Armenian Genocide History, Politics, Ethics*. New York: St Martin’s Press, 1992,pp.153

Muslim refugees (muhajirs) from the Balkans , who were encouraged to wreak vengeance on the Armenian Christians and occupy the towns and villages that they were forced to abandon”.⁶²The reason for exterminating men first derives from the cultural codes attached to them. In the patriarchal Armenian society men were thought to be able to lead the family, resist attacks and protect the household. “Gender-specific practises of the Catastrophe marked every stage of the 1915 since men were seen as “the chief promoters of the Armenian national and ethnic identity.”⁶³ The ‘loss’ of men meant the loss of the Armenian nation. Similar cultural codes that elevated men implied the inferiority and passivity of women without the existence of their husbands, fathers and brothers. “By immediately eliminating males, two aims were achieved: (1) stopping territorial and national patrilineage in the reproduction of Armenians, and (2) removing women and children from their native patriarchal protection and placing them under Turkish guardianship”.⁶⁴ In addition to the books whose narrative structure I have analyzed in the first chapter I will analyze the narrative of Ceyhan’s *I grew up with wartime songs* [Seferberlik Türküleriyle Büyüdüm] to reflect the gendercidal trauma of the Armenian women. In this book Ceyhan is the protagonist using the first person ‘I’ narrative. In many ways, therefore, this chapter is an attempt to assess and categorize the divergent experiences of the Armenian women.

⁶² Hovannisian, Richard. G. *Intervention and Shades of Altruism During the Armenian Genocide in The Armenian Genocide, History, Politics, Ethics*. St Martin’s Press. NY 1992. Pp.1

⁶³ Sanasarian, Eliz. *Gender Distinction in the Genocidal Process: A Preliminary Study of the Armenian Case*. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 4, no.4 (1989):pp.452

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*452

5 1 Islamization and Absorption into Muslim households

After the Ottoman Empire passed the Expulsion Law [*Tehcir Kanunu*] the Ottoman Armenians regardless of their age, sex and location were forced to go through the lethal marches which aimed to purify the Ottoman Empire by eliminating the non-Moslem Armenian subjects. A large majority of the Armenians were decimated and stricken on those death marches, whose ultimate destination was supposed to be the Syrian Deir El Zor deserts. However, some of those exiled Armenians managed to survive by agreeing to the “bless of Islam” with conversion. The testimonies of the survivors also unearth that there was an ironic assumption among some Turks who believed “If you are a Muslim, you will go to heaven, but if you convert to Islam from Christianity, then you will go to a heaven ten times greater” or “In the Muslim faith whoever frees a person and converts him, will receive a great rewards in heaven. If you change your religion, whatever sins you have committed will be forgiven...”⁶⁵ Conversion was one of the tools adopted by some Armenians throughout the Catastrophe for survival in this chaotic atmosphere. “[B]etween 5 to 10 percent of the Ottoman Armenians were converted and absorbed in Muslim households in the course of 1915”.⁶⁶

Kirkor Ceyhan who “worked through” and opened up his scars by writing short stories pertinent to the Armenians offers a variety of sentences that portray the mass conversions of the Armenians in Anatolia. In *Who is ringing the door?* [Kapıyı Kimler Çalıyor] the experiences of Ceyhan’s father Simon is elaborated in a fictive way.

⁶⁵ Those are the testimonies given by Vartouhi Boghosian and Haroutiun Kevorkian for a study based on data derived from 527 oral history interviews with Armenian survivors as a part of a course in Armenian Oral History at the University of California, Los Angeles offered by Richard G.Hovannisian.

⁶⁶ Sarafian, Ara. *The Absorption of the Armenian Women and Children into Muslim Households as a Structural Component of the Armenian Genocide*. In *The God’s Name: Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Omer Bartov and Phyllis Mack. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books. 2001.pp.211

Throughout the death marches Simon and his friends discuss the situation of some Armenian women in their town Zara. One of the sentences that depict the situation of the Armenian women in those Turkified villages and cities sets good example to the gender aspect of Islamization. Simon further adds;

Do you see this silly from Darende, you can not know what he has done in that path. This road is the dispatching road of the Expulsion. Put aside the gold and silver that he seized from the poor villagers, he crowded his village with all Armenian girls and brides. When he sees a bride who has not grown old or a girl that can be a nice woman, he starts to ride them on a pillion directly to Darende village while the girls are screaming... He has established a harem at home and three of them are Armenians. He has even been thoughtful for his uncle's children in the issue of the Armenian girls and brides. My brother, they have such a belief that both the one that converts the Armenian into Islam and the one who underwent this conversion directly goes to heaven.⁶⁷ (The English version of all texts cited from Kirkor Ceyhan is here in my translation)

This quotation of how the opportunist villagers aimed to maximize their religiosity profit by justifying their acts within haphazardly commented clauses of Islam exemplifies “terrifying, unsayable and unimaginable banality of evil”.⁶⁸ It also indicates the thesis of Israel W. Charny that ‘all “normal” people are capable of being genociders, accomplices, or bystanders’.⁶⁹ Armenian women whose husbands, fathers or brothers have been conscripted to the Ottoman Army or forced to attend death marches have been exposed to the opportunist wishes of the villagers. Simon’s sentence also portrays how those Armenian women were absorbed into Muslim households and became either third or fourth wives of the men in those towns. The vulnerability of Armenian women increased day by day since the state of exception created under the Expulsion Law allowed those who intervened to ‘protect’ those stricken Armenian women by sexually exploiting them in a *de facto* way.

⁶⁷ Ceyhan, Kirkor. Kapıyı Kimler Çalıyor. Belge Yayınları.1999.pp.59

⁶⁸ Arendt, Hannah. Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil. London. Penguin Books.1992.pp.252

⁶⁹ Charny, Israel W. How Can We Commit the Unthinkable? Genocide: The Human Cancer. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982,pp.10

In addition to classifying the Islamization process of the survivor Armenians as an altruism, Armenians are vilified as having stabbed the nation in the back by collaborating with the Russians in the Eastern part of Turkey. This ‘obscenity of understanding’ trivializes and justifies the brutalities committed in 1915 by the Ottoman Empire. Claudia Card adopts the terminology of Orlando Patterson “socially dead” to define the situation of the survivors in a post-conflict area. She states that;

Specific to genocide is the harm inflicted on its victims’ social vitality. It is not just that one’s group membership is the occasion for harms that are definable independently of one’s identity as a member of the group. When a group with its own cultural identity is destroyed, its survivors lose their cultural heritage and may even lose their intergenerational connections. To use Orlando Patterson’s terminology, in that event, they may become “socially dead” and their descendants “nationally alienated”, no longer able to pass along and build upon the traditions, cultural developments (including languages), and projects of earlier generations.⁷⁰

This phenomenon validated itself in the case of the Catastrophe with the ‘socially dead’ Armenian women who continued to live as devout Moslems so as to survive in Anatolia. Recent popularity of the autobiographical-memoir genre in Turkey, that broke the silence for the first time in a country that denies the atrocities committed in 1915, challenges the amnesic blanket of Turkish nationalism and informs readers about the Islamized Armenian women stripped of their ethnic and religious identities. *Anneannem* by Fethiye Cetin sets a good example to one of those memoirs that delineate the psychology of those ‘socially dead’ Islamized Armenian women. Long passages in the short stories of Kirkor Ceyhan inform readers about the Armenian women and the processes that they have gone through to survive after the Catastrophe. In the book *I grew up with wartime songs* [Seferberlik Türküleriyle Büyüdüm] Kirkor Ceyhan elaborates on his childhood spent in Zara. He has a favourite teacher at school named Kaşif Bey and he enjoys visiting his house and chanting new songs with him. He really feels proud of being pampered by his teacher and shares his enthusiasm with his mother when he comes back home. Later on he is informed by his mother that mother in law of Kaşif Bey is also one of those Armenian women absorbed into a Muslim household and

⁷⁰ Card, Claudia. Genocide and Social Death. *Hypatia* 18, no.1 Winter.2003, 63-79

thereby Islamized. There is a long excerpt that explains in detail about this converted Armenian woman of Ceyhan's village. His mother tells him that;

The mother in law of *Kaşif Bey*, this upstanding beautiful woman is an Armenian girl. Throughout the pillage of the wartime *Hafiz Hakki* from the Rushans family seized this girl and got married to her by Islamizing. She was a girl of a good family. They are called Hotozotyans and addressed as the *Başiböyükler*...[T]he real name of the girl was Vartanush. She was called Ağvor Vartanush because of her beauty. Which Vartanush? Ağvor Vartanush, namely the beautiful Vartanush. She started to be called *Hesna Hanım* when this devil *hodja* of the Rushans Islamized her...⁷¹

This conversation implied that the villagers are aware of those Islamized Armenian women but do not vocalize it in public settings. The adjective adopted by Kirkor's mother, while referring to *Hodja* that Islamized Vartanush, 'devil' discloses her disapproval of this practice. Loss for Armenian women includes foremost the loss of an Armenian identity in addition to the beloved ones and exterminated cultural heritage. They are forced to adopt new identities and reconceptualize themselves. Moreover, with those new Islamized and Turkified identities, they claim new belongingness in this post-conflict settings. The therapeutic nature of the working through shall sooth and facilitate their integration to those newly adopted identities. However, it is not easy to fathom the motivation of their conscious act about conversion after 93 years and classify it either as a working through or acting out. They may have acted out or worked through as a result of the conditions in which they used to live. If they have been absorbed into Muslim households, married to Moslem men and given birth to children they may have worked through by detaching themselves from the Catastrophe and continued living as Moslem women by establishing their families. As elucidated before, working through does not transcend the past but enables the victim to acquire critical distances to engage in life in the present and to assume responsibility. Similarly Dominick La Capra asserts that;

⁷¹ Ceyhan, Kirkor. *Seferberlik Türküleriyle Büyüdüm*. Aras Yayıncılık.1998,pp.56

[O]ne may never entirely transcend an attachment to a lost other, or even some kind of melancholic identification with a lost other. But one may generate countervailing forces so that the person can reengage an interest in life. One sign of this in the process of mourning is the ability to find a new partner, to marry, to have children, and not to be so enmeshed in grieving that the present does not seem to exist for you, and there is no future. In certain forms of contemporary theorizing, whereby working through is simply seen in a kind of extreme Pollyanna redemptive mode, mourning itself may always seem fatalistically to come back to an endless melancholy.⁷²

In “*Remnants of Auschwitz*” Giorgio Agamben talks about a phrase that was circulating among the Jews to refer to the ‘the living dead’ or ‘the emaciated Jews’ namely *Muselmann*. One of the paraphrases by which Primo Levi designates the *Muselmann* is ‘he who has seen the Gorgon’.⁷³ In Greek mythology Gorgon was a vicious female monster with sharp fangs and hair of livings, venomous snakes. However, Levi’s metaphor refers to those that have touched the bottom and have faced with the most cruel form of dehumanization. There exists no phrase to be able to reflect the situation of those Armenians that are in threshold between the humanity and the inhumanity. However the situation of the Armenian women resembles to those *Muselmanner* in terms of touching the bottom. The existentialist concerns surrounding them about whether to perish on the death marches or establish a new Islamized and Turkified identity was a major challenge for most. They would either admit their losses by mourning and engaging in a critical way with their fragmented losses or act out by sweeping their experiences under the carpet. However, Armenian men were exterminated at first hand therefore their suffering and existentialist concerns were minimum when compared with women. One can argue the dehumanization effect of circumcision on the Armenian men thus the applicability of the term *Muselmanner* to them as well. In contrast, circumcision has been included as a gendercide in my paper since it was elaborated by Ceyhan and circumcision was not applied to whole Armenian men to liberate them from the burden of the exterminations. Ara Sarafian enlists four categories to delineate the absorption of Armenian women into Muslim households. “ These were: (1) “voluntary” conversion of individuals in the initial stages of the 1915

⁷² LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History Writing Trauma*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. pp. 151

⁷³ Agamben, Giorgio. *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, Zone Books. NY. 1999. pp.53

persecutions; (2)selection of individual Armenians by individual Muslim hosts for absorption into Muslim households; (3) distribution of Armenians to Muslim families by government agencies; (4) the use of Ottoman government sponsored orphanages as a direct means of assimilating Armenian children”.⁷⁴ The second clause of that category stated by Ara Sarafian constitutes the reason of many conversions that occurred throughout the Catastrophe. Since the men were liquidated in the initial extermination campaigns, a large majority of orphans and widows were exposed to the ‘altruism’ of the Turks and were Islamized. The intervention of some righteous Turks that sheltered the Armenians and fed them for years can not be ignored whilst elaborating about the survivors but there was also a tendency to Islamize those orphans and widows rather than tolerating their religious and ethnic affiliations.

In *Evil Fate Shoed His Horse to Chase Us* [Atını Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize] there is a short story describing an Armenian girl Aznif, who has lost her family, and a boy named Mehmet. The mother of Mehmet persuades her son to marry Aznif (later Suzan) and Mehmet agrees to this marriage. Precisely, the girl needs to undergo a spiritual odyssey to Islam and Mehmet justifies her conversion in a conversation he has with his mother. He says ; “[Y]ou know very well what it means to Islamize a Christian Armenian, mother. All the sins of this Christian are forgiven and the Muslim who initiated this earns good deeds... Our *hodjas* claim that this is better than one year of worship to God.”⁷⁵ This instance also indicates that mixed-marriages turned out to be both a salvation and a sacrifice for the Armenian women since they continued to live but at the expense of being stripped of their ethnic and religious affiliations.

⁷⁴ Sarafian, Ara. The Absorption of the Armenian Women and Children into Muslim Households as a Structural Component of the Armenian Genocide. In *In the God’s Name: Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Omer Bartov and Phyllis Mack. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books. 2001.pp.210

⁷⁵ Ceyhan, Kirkor. *Atını Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize*. Aras Yayıncılık.1998.pp.132

5 2 Sexual Exploitation of the Armenian Women

Trauma literature expresses the impossibility of language in other words; our failing to grasp the horror and the pain of the trauma inflicted on the victims be it sexual abuse or dehumanization. Primo Levi states that “then for the first time we became aware that our language lacks words to express this offence, the demolition of a man”.⁷⁶ This ineluctable difficulty of naming encapsulates the victims throughout their life and they either engage in a critical way and “work through” by sharing those unrepresentable experiences with others, or “act out” and prefer to remain silent by repressing the catastrophic events they faced. “[W]omen do not participate directly in genocide; they are not killed, but victimized in other ways, such as rape; and the consequences of genocide are different for the women rather than being put to death, they are enslaved”.⁷⁷ A Swiss pharmacist located in the city of Urfa expresses that “the large, Armenian Gregorian church an edifice of Armenian sanctity, had been reduced to a bordello. “Military officers, gendarmes, police officers, and plain city Turks would come there and choose girls for sexual indulgences”.⁷⁸ (Quoted by Vahak N. Dadrian 2003) Throughout the Armenian Catastrophe, some Armenian women are known to have been abused or exploited as sexual slaves by the military officers. “[S]ingling out of women for assault and sexual abuse is the ultimatum in dishonoring and reasserting control over the community”.⁷⁹ However, there exists a silence in the short stories of Kirkor Ceyhan in issues related to the sexual exploitation of the Armenian women.

⁷⁶ Levi, Primo. *Survival in Auschwitz*. Touchstone Books. 1996. pp.27

⁷⁷ Smith, Roger. W, *Women and Genocide: Notes on an Unwritten History*. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 8, no: 3, Winter 1994, pp.317

⁷⁸ Bruno, Eckart, *Meine Erlebnisse in Urfa (My Experiences in Urfa)*. Potsdam-Berlin: Tempel-Verlag, 1922. pp.18-19

⁷⁹ Sanasarian, Eliz. *Gender Distinction in the Genocidal Process: A Preliminary Study of the Armenian Case*. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 4, no.4 (1989):pp.453

There are just a few instances that exemplify the commodification of Armenian women and their being exploited by others throughout the Catastrophe. In *Evil Fate Shoed His Horse to Chase Us* [Atını Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize] the author narrates the story of an Armenian man that challenged the suppression of Armenian women and commuted to Zara, a district in Sivas where Kirkor Ceyhan was born, to collect those abused Armenian women. The son of Enova, Murat Apoyan states that ; “I will take away all those Armenian women that are without husbands and were seized by Islamization to Istanbul.” One of the villagers says;

Even if we said we are living in peace here and do not do Murat and do not make a trouble... He was 20 years old and a bit mad... In fact, he really took away 15 to 20 Armenian women, that were absorbed into a Muslim harem, to Istanbul... All those women were taken from the well off families... He found the closest relatives and, if alive, husbands of the women and settled them to Istanbul.⁸⁰

The reactions of the villagers exemplify the intimidation of Armenian people after the Catastrophe. They can not condescend to verbalize the injustices that have been practiced on the Armenian women and try to calm down Murat not to take away those abducted or forcefully absorbed Armenian girls. This docile nature of the villagers also indicates their not being able to mourn to their losses. Their security concerns might have deterred them from verbalizing the injustices committed against the Armenian women. Therefore they disassociate themselves from their losses and block the way to mourning. One of the villagers try to calm down Murat by telling him “We are living in peace here and do not make a trouble”. Even though this peaceful environment meant the suppression of the Armenian locals and self silencing of their histories related to the Catastrophe, they can not dare to vocalize the rights of those abducted Armenian women. Therefore, their mourning can not be explicitly practiced since Catastrophe has silenced and neutralized their beliefs and demands. Another fact that signifies the expropriation of Armenian women is narrated in *I grew up with wartime songs* [Seferberlik Türküleriyle Büyüdüm]. A local *hodja* (an Islamic figure) absorbs an Armenian girl named Vartanush and becomes her husband. One of the villagers asks sarcastically to another villager “Tell me, how did they give this beautiful girl to that

⁸⁰ Ceyhan, Kirkor. *Atını Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize*. Aras Yayıncılık.1998.pp.37

hodja that hobbles, is the same age with her father and whose height is not long enough to reach the breasts of this girl?” And the villager replies “ Wartime years were so difficult! Lets call it a matter of life and death for your understanding.”⁸¹ This connotes the impossibility of questioning the rationale behind the marriages conducted between highly old men and young Armenian women. A matter of life and death implies the horrific nature of the Catastrophe and implicates the seizure of Armenian women by local folks that took advantage of the Catastrophe’s chaotic environment.

In *Evil Fate Shoed His Horse to Chase Us* [Atını Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize] there is one short story named *In the hands of Sivas* [Sivas’ın Ellerinde]. Ceyhan explains about post-Catastrophe setting in Sivas and how those stricken people needed help and food to survive. Garabed Agha is the person that gives hand to a large majority of those survivors either by feeding them or finding them job opportunities. His hospitality is so great that at all times they have a guest who joins them either for lunch, dinner or breakfast. One day, a man called Battal drops by to the house of Garabed Agha. He talks in Armenian with him and shows off to prove that he has an Armenian origin. He also states that Garabed Agha is his uncle and he himself suffers alot by suppressing his Armenian identity under the name of Battal. Garabed Agha is taken a back to hear the statements made by him and states that he does not have a sister nor a cousin. This man pushes the boundaries of Garabed Agha and opens the Pandora’s box by stating that he would like to change his name either to Barkev or Baruyr to live as a real Armenian. Garabed Agha can not comprehend the aim of this guy whose claimed Armenian identity sounds so unreal. Later on, one of the Armenian neighbours of Garabed Agha hears that he has a cousin and they would like to take advantage of this prosperous family by marrying Battal to their daughter. Ceyhan states that;

Later on we heard. They (Garabed Agha and his wife) could not handle with the girl and they arrived at a conclusion. Battal was not fool enough to change his name to Barkev. They married. Their child was born before nine months. I guess the efforts of two parts as if they have fallen in the fire derived from this enthusiasm. Battal who prayed and talked in Armenian that night and called Garabed Agha *Keri* did not greet him anymore. He denominated one of his sons Talat and the other Enver. If his wife or mother-in-law just call them Enver or Talat,

⁸¹ Ceyhan, Kirkor. *Seferberlik Türküleriyle Büyüdüm*. Aras Yayıncılık.1998.pp.57

he used to intimidate them yelling “Why do not you also call Pasha...
?”⁸²

At first glance this marriage might seem like an ordinary one but when we scrutinize the power of literature and the message conveyed by Ceyhan through this quotation, it is more than a marriage. As I have explained before the way Battal approached to Garabed Agha to take advantage of his power was tricky since he introduced himself as an Armenian and also his relative. He portrayed himself as a marginalized person that wanted to live as a devout Armenian however, he aimed to incorporate one of those Armenian women to his house and sexually exploit them. First of all, we need to question the names given to their children, Talat and Enver.⁸³ Considering the roles that were assigned to those Pashas throughout the Catastrophe that gave the orders for the extermination of Armenians, one’s calling his sons Talat and Enver especially when he is married to an Armenian girl has many layers. His impregnating an Armenian girl and calling her offsprings Talat and Enver has sadistic sexual connotations that aims to establish power and dominance over her body. Women are considered to represent chastity of the communities so by seizing this Armenian girl he not only implicitly elucidates the failure of her community’s men in their duty to protect their women but also the captivity of an Armenian girl who will produce children that will be against her ethnic, racial and religious group members since they are not children anymore but embodiment of ‘Talat’ and ‘Enver’. Whilst calling his children Talat and Enver, Battal not only humiliates her wife but also conveys a message to her ethnic, racial and religious group members that new Talats and Envers will continue to be born from the

⁸² Ceyhan, Kirkor. *Atını Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize*. Aras Yayıncılık.2000.pp.61

⁸³ In her article *Identifying Internal Tumors of World War I: Talat Paşa'nın Hatıraları [Talat Paşa's Memoirs], or the Travels of a Unionist Apologia into "History"* published in *Selbstzeugnisforschung transkulturell*. Andreas Baehr, Peter Burschel, Gabriele Jancke, eds. Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, in 2007 Hülya Adak analyzes the role of Talat Pasha throughout the Catastrophe and states that “Talat Paşa, as Minister of the Interior during World War I, was one of the leaders responsible for the deportation of the Armenians from Asia Minor to Syria and Mesopotamia. *Talat Paşa'nın Hatıraları* written in exile in Berlin roughly during the years 1919-1920 was published posthumously in Turkey in 1921. The autobiographical text served as apologia during World War I, as Talat Paşa and Unionist leaders were being tried for war crimes by the War Courts in Istanbul.” Talat Pasha, whose psychology might have been devastated by the weight of his remorse, has ended up writing an autobiography classified as an ‘apologia’ by Adak.

bodies of Armenian women. It also signifies that after the Catastrophe Armenian women will not only lose their ethnic and religious bonds but also their dignity and humanity as a result of this sexual exploitation that lowers their statuses. In addition to these, the names given to those children aim to eternalize and keep the memories of those Ittihadists fresh in the minds of the survivors. Therefore, the names commemorate the success of those perpetrators in the bodies of Armenian women and mourn for the loss of the Ittihadists! Moreover, Kirkor Ceyhan does not mention any Armenian women who committed suicide in this turmoil. Eyewitness accounts and the testimonies of the survivors authenticate the mass suicides of the Armenian women. Most of those suicides are thought to be out of fear of being abducted or raped. In their book *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide* Donald E. Miller and Lorna Touryan Miller state that;

The method of suicide in most instances was drowning in the Euphrates River. In fact, this practise was common enough that several survivors told us the words of a song which was sung in the orphanages that included the phrase, Virgin girls holding each others' hands, threw themselves into the River Euphrates.⁸⁴

In Nazi Germany, sexual abuse or forms of degradation such as rape were not considered a crime. On the other hand, the crime was *rassenschande*, not rape. Ironically, any sexual involvement with a Jew was *rassenschande*, or "race mixing".⁸⁵ Second Paragraph of the 1935 Nuremberg Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor reads, "Extramarital intercourse between Jews and subjects of the state of German or related blood is forbidden".⁸⁶ Perpetrator was not punished for violating woman's basic human rights but penalized on the grounds of contaminating the 'superior' Aryan race with a Jewish blood. The only reported rape case occurred in a Croatian concentration camp in 1941 and 1942 which resulted in sentencing the rapist, a

⁸⁴ Miller, Donald E. and Lorna Touryan Miller. *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide*. University of California Press, 1999. pp.103

⁸⁵ Goldenberg, Myrna, "Sex, Rape, and Survival: Jewish Women and the Holocaust," Seventh Biennial Meeting, International Association of Genocide Scholars. Sarajevo, July 2007.

⁸⁶ Nuremberg Law for the Protection of German Blood or German Honor, <http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/documents/gerblood.htm>

German guard, to six months in prison for “desecration of race”.⁸⁷ In the Catastrophe, there was not a racist ideology adopted by the Ottoman Empire such as the one in Nazi Germany. As a result, marriage with a Christian Armenian did not matter to most of the Turks as long as they were Islamized. However, conversion to Islam did not mean full admission to Turkish society, as a result of the institutionalization of the discrimination. In *Who is ringing the door?* [Kapıyı Kimler Çalıyor?] Kirkor’s father Simon who has been Islamized and named as Ibrahim tells that;

When they [public officers] take our documents and read *Muhtedi Ibrahim, Muhtedi Kamil- Hursit* [Proselyte Ibrahim, Proselyte Kamil Hursit] they become as if they have been demonized. Their treatment changes suddenly. We have become so sensitive that we understand many things from the face and gestures of the person that is in front of us. They did not just write *Muhtedi* they also wrote the son of Abdullah.⁸⁸

Muhtedi means proselyte in Turkish and writing this word to the ID cards of the Armenians further stigmatizes them in the society. Moreover, in Fethiye Çetin’s memoir *Anneannem* [My grandmother] about the life of her Islamized grandmother, her friend Hasan informs Cetin about a term adopted to refer to proselyte Armenians as ‘*kılıç artığı*’ or ‘*sword leftovers*’.⁸⁹ Those who managed to survive the Catastrophe were seen as left overs from sword in other words, from the massacres of the Young Turks. In conclusion, a large majority of the literature related to ethnic cleansings and Catastrophes are mainly about male experiences. Since the victimization of the Armenian women has been different in terms of the vulnerabilities they were exposed to such as sexual abuse and absorption into Muslim households, their marginalization has a unique character. Their Catastrophe memory also differs from that of the Armenian men in terms of the government sanctioned violence against women since men were liquidated as a result of the initial extermination campaigns. Some of Armenian women managed to survive as a result of ‘altruism’ that was shown throughout the expulsion

⁸⁷ Lengel- Krizman, Narcisa. A Contribution to the Study of Terror in the So- Called Independent State of Croatia: Concentration Camps for Women in 1941-1942. *Yad Vashem Studies* 20, 1990:15

⁸⁸ Ceyhan, Kirkor. *Kapıyı Kimler Çalıyor*. Aras Yayıncılık.1998.pp.34

⁸⁹ Çetin, Fethiye. *Anneannem*. Metis Yayınları.2004.pp.79

era and were forcefully Islamized to be able to survive in this post-conflict setting in Anatolia. Islamization was the initial step for admission into a Muslim household, and after this spiritual journey, Armenian women could continue their life with their newly adopted identities. Sexual abuse and other forms of gender based violence are known to have occurred throughout the Catastrophe. Armenian women were seized arbitrarily and appropriated by Muslim men. However, there exists a silence in the books of Kirkor Ceyhan pertinent to this gender based violence of the Armenian women.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

First of all, I shall commence by explaining the most attractive aspect of Ceyhan's work for me which led me to analyze his short stories and scrutinize manifestations of trauma pertinent to the Catastrophe. Ceyhan is an Armenian-Turkish author whose life span has been shaped by various sojourns and traumatic encounters such as the displacement from his village Zara and consecutive longing for the homeland. The countries that he had to adopt as new motherlands could never bring him the taste of Zara that is why at all times he uttered "The world is my homeland, but the homeland in me is Zara". He reflected the multi layered life in his tiny town of Sivas, Zara in his works. In addition to those , he broke the literary silence in a country where late 19th and early 20 th century Armenian-Turkish male authors, intimidated by the Catastrophe and post-Catastrophe implementations, practiced self censorship and refrained from directly elaborating on 1915. His uniqueness not only derives from his having taken a different attitude from his counterparts but also linked to the gender aspect of the Catastrophe in his short stories. Ceyhan preferred to delineate various gendercidal strategies in his short stories and aimed to convey what trauma means for different agencies. When compared with other massacres or ethnic cleansings the Catastrophe has a different stance in terms of the historical and structural reasons attached to it that is why it also had some implementations unique to it. For instance, circumcision practice and absorption of Armenian women into Muslim households exemplify those endemic strategies. I benefited from four psychoanalytic concepts with a view to decoding the

narrative of Ceyhan in his short stories and those were ‘the impossibility of language’, ‘loss’, ‘mourning’ and ‘working through’. The figurative languages and the metaphors adopted by Ceyhan were acquired with a view to reflecting the impossibility of language to transmit the magnitude of the atrocities committed against the victims in his narrative. Mourning which is considered to be the reaction to the losses was practiced on a limited amount of time by Ceyhan’s characters as a result of the post-conflict setting in Anatolia. People were not able to mourn for their losses but Ceyhan gave us hints such as the way her grandmother crossed herself at the tomb of baby boy Vahram to be forgiven by the Almighty. In spite of the fact that Ceyhan had a traumatic childhood as a result of having been the child of a family that attended the lethal marches he never lost his hope against life. In his short stories, he always tried to convey how he established a critical stance between his pain and his character. Having written three books to portray the historical and the sociological perspective of the Catastrophe also authenticates his having worked through with his past. Since Ceyhan wrote in Zara Turkish and used a variety of colloquial sentence structures time to time I had difficulty to find the English translation of those usages. Later on, I was struck by the words of Madikizela that I recalled, who worked at the South African Truth and Reconciliation Committee, “Language communicates. At the same time it distances us from the traumatic event as it was experienced, limiting our participation in the act of remembering.” The same phenomenon is valid for all types of traumatic encounters between the victims and the third agencies. In spite of the fact that, the readers aim to engage with the textual trauma the language limits the full comprehension of it and therefore impossibility of language prevails.

In Chapter 4, I scrutinized the gender-selective use of terror throughout the Catastrophe against Armenian men. Their experiences differ from women in Ceyhan’s short stories since we witness preselection of men, their enlistment to the army, forced circumcision and Islamization. However, the motivations behind these gendered terror signifies the aim of the perpetrators. By enlisting and circumcizing men, they not only leave women vulnerable to kidnap or forcefull marriage but also emasculate and lower the statuses of Armenian men. Thus, loss for Armenian men means more than a common ethnic or religious back ground and brings the anxieties related to procreativities and masculinities.

In Chapter 5, what makes the experiences of Armenian women in this genocidal campaign unique was my starting point. The short stories of Ceyhan illuminate the readers about the processes that those Armenian women had to undergo such as Islamization, absorption into Muslim households and sexual exploitation. Even though the experiences of Armenian men and women resemble each other, women had to deal with an existentialist question which was the situation of the babies they bore to the men that abducted them. It is not easy to fathom their motivations in this post-conflict setting in Anatolia related to their children and the idea of reuniting with scattered relatives therefore ambiguity prevails in the psychological sequela of those Armenian women. Even though Ceyhan broke the silence by reflecting the multi layered traumas of the Catastrophe, there were some issues that he refrained from mentioning such as the sexual exploitation, suicide and harassment of Armenian women. He may not have found it proper to elucidate about this part of the genocidal trauma or narrating those kind of agonies might be much more complicated in a country where they occurred. Finally, in spite of some limitations such as the Zaza dialect he adopted in his books or the scarcity of resources about him and his works , Kirkor Ceyhan represents a unique stance in Armenian-Turkish with his narrative that has ample instances related to the gendered trait of the Catastrophe.

Bibliography

Adak, Hülya. Identifying Internal Tumors of World War I: Talat Paşa'nın Hatıraları [Talat Paşa's Memoirs], or the Travels of a Unionist Apologia into "History" published In *Selbstzeugnisforschung transkulturell*. Andreas Baehr, Peter Burschel, Gabriele Jancke, eds. Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, in 2007

Agamben, Giorgio. *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, Zone Books. NY.1999.

Amnesty International Action File (AI Index ASA 20/013/99), 19 April 1999

Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. London. Penguin Books.1992

Boyajian, Levon and Haigaz Grigorian. *Psychological Sequelae of the Armenian Genocide in "The Armenian Genocide Perspective"*, ed.Richard G.Hovannisian. New Brunswick, NJ. Transaction Books.1986

Bruno, Eckart, *Meine Erlebnisse in Urfa [My Experiences in Urfa]*.Potsdam-Berlin: Tempel-Verlag, 1922

Card, Claudia. *Genocide and Social Death*. *Hypatia* 18, no.1 Winter.2003, 63-79

Carpenter, R.Charli, *Beyond "Gendercide": Operationalizing Gender in Comparative Genocide Studies in "Gendercide and Genocide"*, ed. Adam Jones. Vanderbilt University Press.2004

Caruth, Cathy. *Trauma Explorations in Memory*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995

Ceyhan, Kirkor. *Atımı Nalladı Felek Düştü Peşimize [Evil Fate Shoed His Horse to Chase Us]*.Aras Yayıncılık. Istanbul.2000

_____. *Seferberlik Türküleriyle Büyüdüm [I Grew Up With Wartime Songs]*. Aras Yayıncılık. Istanbul.1998

_____. Kapıyı Kimler Çalıyor? [Who is ringing the door?].Belge Yayınları. İstanbul. 1999

Charny, Israel W. How Can We Commit the Unthinkable? Genocide: The Human Cancer. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982

Çetin, Fethiye. Anneannem. [My Grandmother] Metis Yayınları.2004.pp.79

Dadrian. Vahakn N. The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus. Berghahn Books.2004

Felman, Shoshana and Dori Laub, M.D, Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in "Literature, Psychoanalysis and History".New York: Routledge, 1992.

Freud, Sigmund, Mourning and Melancholia in On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works. London, Hogarth Press, pp.243

Goldenberg, Myrna, "Sex, Rape, and Survival: Jewish Women and the Holocaust," Seventh Biennial Meeting, International Association of Genocide Scholars. Sarajevo, July 2007

Hovannisian, Garin. Not Just Genocide. Los Angeles Times. 24 April 2008. <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/apr/24/opinion/oew-hovannisian24>

Hovannisian, Richard. G. Intervention and Shades of Altruism During the Armenian Genocide in "The Armenian Genocide, History, Politics", Ethics. St Martin's Press. NY 1992.

Jones, Adam. Gendercide and Genocide in "Gendercide and Genocide", ed. Adam Jones. Vanderbilt University Press.2004.

Kazanjian, David and Marc Nichanian. Loss: The Politics of Mourning. Ed. David. L.Eng and David Kazanjian. University of California Press, 2003.

Kiernan, Ben. The Cambodian Genocide- 1975-79 in Century of Genocide: Eyewitness Accounts and Critical Views ed, Totten et al, Routledge.2004.

Kuper, Leo. Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century. London. Penguin.1981

La Capra, Dominick, Writing History, Writing Trauma: The Johns Hopkins University Press.2001.

_____. History and Memory after Auschwitz. Cornell University Press. 1998.

Laub, Dori. Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle. In "Trauma Explorations in Memory" ed. Caruth, Cathy. The Johns Hopkins University Press

Levi, Primo. Survival in Auschwitz. Touchstone Books.1996

Madikizela, Pumla Gobodo. A Human Being Died That Night: South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid. Mariner Books. 2004.

Miller, Donald. E and Lorna Touryan Miller. Women and Children of the Armenian Genocide. In "The Armenian Genocide History, Politics, Ethics" Richard G.Hovannisian, ed. New York: St Martin's Press, 1992.

Nichanian, Marc. Writers of Disaster: Armenian Literature in the Twentieth Century. The Gomidas Institute.2002

Nuremberg Law for the Protection of German Blood or German Honor,
<http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/documents/gerblood.htm>

Panossian, Razmik. The Armenians from Kings to Priests to Merchants to Commissars, Hurst & Co. London. 2006.

Peroomian, Rubina. And Those Who Continued Living in Turkey After 1915: The Metamorphosis of the Post-Genocide Armenian Identity As Reflected in Artistic Literature. Armenian Genocide Museum Institute.2008.

Sanasarian, Eliz. Gender Distinction in the Genocidal Process: A Preliminary Study of the Armenian Case. Holocaust and Genocide Studies 4, no.4 (1989)

Sarafian, Ara. The Absorption of the Armenian Women and Children into Muslim Households as a Structural Component of the Armenian Genocide. In "In the God's Name: Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century", edited by Omer Bartov and Phyllis Mack. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books. 2001.

Sivakumaran, Sandesh. Sexual Violence Against Men in Armed Conflict. European Journal of International Law Volume:18 no. 2.2007

Smith, Roger. W, Women and Genocide: Notes on an Unwritten History. Holocaust and Genocide Studies 8, no: 3, Winter 1994,pp.316

Wiesel, Elie. *Dimensions of the Holocaust*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1977.