

The Lost Lullaby
and Other Stories About Being an Armenian in Turkey

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Melissa Bilal

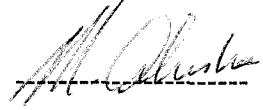
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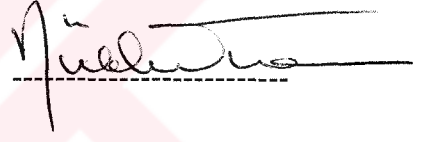
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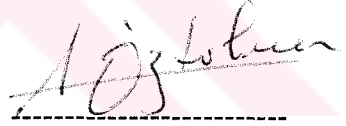
Assist. Prof. Meltem Ahıska (Committee Chairperson)



Prof. Dr. Nükhet Sirman



Assoc. Prof. Arzu Öztürkmen



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Kun uni tsakugıs kun uni,

Yeni kapun dun uni,

Vosgiye çakhçakhner uni...



To my grandmothers Elizar Binatlı & Klemantin Bilal

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ABSTRACT

The Lost Lullaby and Other Stories About Being an Armenian in Turkey

by

Melissa Bilal

This thesis tries to understand the experience of being an Armenian in Turkey today. It focuses on lullabies as a gendered medium of transmitting memories. By analyzing the change in the contexts within which lullabies are transmitted today, it argues that displacement and loss are two interrelated experiences shaping the sense of being an Armenian in Turkey.

By conceptualizing these experiences as tools for understanding the cultural politics in Turkey, the liberal perspective of multiculturalism is criticized in this thesis. It is argued that such a perspective dwells on the idea of dead cultures since it cuts the link between the past and the present with regard to the existence of different cultures in Anatolia and its destruction.

In a context where the Armenian culture is represented as detached from its lived experiences and memory, it becomes impossible to share the grandmothers' stories in the public sphere and the loss itself becomes the experience of Armenianness. Young generation of Armenians in Istanbul today, in their search for the Armenian identity, develop a certain way of belonging to the space and culture that is shaped very much by the experience of loss.

KISA ÖZET

Kayıp Ninni ve Türkiye’de Ermeni Olmakla İlgili Diğer Hikayeler

Melissa Bilal

Bu tez günümüz Türkiye’sinde Ermeni olma deneyimini anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Tezde ninniler, hafızanın aktarımında cinsiyetlendirilmiş bir alan olarak ele alınmaktadır. Ninnilerin bugünkü aktarım bağlamlarındaki değişim incelenerek, yersizleştirme ve kayıp olgularının Türkiye’de Ermeni olma hissini şekillendiren birbiriyle ilişkili iki deneyim olduğu öne sürülmektedir.

Bu iki deneyimin kavramsallaştırılması yoluyla, bu çalışma, Türkiye’deki kültür politikalarını çözümlenmekte ve liberal çokkültürlülük bakış açısını eleştirmektedir. Ölü kültürler fikrine dayanan liberal söylemi mümkün kılan şeyin, farklı kültürlerin Anadolu’daki varlığının yok edildiğinin unutturulması ve geçmişle bugün arasındaki bağın koparılması olduğunu anlatmaya çalışmaktadır.

Ermeni kültürünün yaşanmışlık deneyimlerinden ve hafızasından kopuk bir şekilde temsil edildiği bir bağlamda, kamusal alanda büyükannelerin hikayelerini paylaşmak imkansızlaşmakta ve kayıp, Ermenilik deneyiminin kendisi haline gelmektedir. Ermeni gençlerinin bugün İstanbul’da, yere ve kültüre dair geliştirdikleri aidiyet hissi büyük ölçüde bu kayıp deneyimiyle şekillenmiştir.

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PRELUDE: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE LOST LULLABY

When I was a little child my grandmother used to sing me lullabies. Among all I loved the following one the most:

Ninçir mangig im sirasun,

Sleep my dear child,

Oror yem asum,

I am singing you a lullaby,

Baydzar lusinn e meğm hayum,

Shiny moon is sweetly watching,

Ko ororotsum.¹

Your cradle.

One day, I decided to go on a journey to the land of lullabies. I heard this lullaby of my grandmother from other grandmothers. I met many children who fell into sleep with the same lullaby.

Then I read a book. In the book, I saw other stanzas of this lullaby. They were telling a story that I never heard before. I asked other children if they had ever heard it. They answered “no”. I cannot tell you the story here. Because my grandmother told me that it is “dangerous”. It is better to forget it. But now, I know that I will not forget that story told in the remaining stanzas. As long as the first one reminds it to me, as long as it whispers “don’t forget”.

¹ *Kantsaran Haygagan Yerkeru*, Dıbaran Vosgedar, Cairo, p. 320. (see Appendix)

This thesis follows the traces of the lost lullaby. The path it offers to take is weaved through the stories that also touch upon my experiences as an Armenian woman in Turkey; my bilingual dreams, swinging between two languages, between two worlds; my hard times in calling my “mama” “anne” outside home; my confusion in the Armenian primary school while reading patriotic poems and writing essays on the ‘military successes of the Turkish army’ and speaking from the subject position of: “I am a Turk, I am right, I am hardworking (...) I devote my existence to the Turkish existence. How happy is the one who says ‘I am a Turk’.”² and yet never knowing where to situate myself as the topic ‘The Armenian Issue’ was skipped by the history teachers in our high school, causing an indefinable gap in my narrative of the self... It touches upon my feeling of doubt... doubt about everything I learnt, I heard on TV, I read in the newspapers, a complete doubt, but without a proper content... my uneasiness outside home and the community, looking for excuses why I had a non-Muslim name or why I was from a school with an unpronounceable name... my feeling of displacement that came with the questions “What was an Armenian? Where did I come from? Where did my parents come from? Did I have an identity card, “nüfus cüzdanı”? How come I could speak fluent Turkish? What kind of a religion did I have?” stemming from a rather innocent curiosity combined with ignorance towards my culture and identity... This path of lullabies touches upon my fear stemming from the realization that there was something unspoken that was disturbing people around me when I told them that I was an Armenian... my becoming feminist, understanding the experiences of both being a woman and having a different identity rather than that of the ‘majority’... my being a part of the

² Türküm, doğruyum, çalışkanım. (...) Varlığım Türk varlığına armağan olsun. Ne mutlu Türküm diyene. From *Andımız (Our Oath)* sung every morning by all primary school students in Turkey.

women's movement in Turkey and making politics through my gender, ethnic and oppositional identities.... grasping different layers of my identities and the sources of oppression... and moreover, touching the lives of other women...

Going on a journey to the Armenian lullabies in order to understand the past and the present, not just mine but others, not just to learn but to tell, not just for today but for a better future...

| | |
|---|--|
| Kele lao, kele ertank mır ergir, | Get up my child, let's go to our land, |
| Ertank mır Van, | Let's go to our Van, |
| Ertank mır Muş u Sasun. | Our Muş and Sasun. |
| Kele lao, kele ertank mır ergir. ³ | Get up my child, let's go to our land. |

In the performance *Mıço Yerker* (Songs of Muş) by an Armenian choir, Sayat Nova, in Istanbul in December 1999 the conductor of the choir was telling us about the story of the song that she would have sung soon. The song was a lament sung as a lullaby by an Armenian woman who had migrated from Muş and was telling her child her yearning to see her home again.

The music sounded like wailing; the words were expressing a deep longing. I was puzzled and disturbed ... What kind of a lullaby was that? It carried something stronger than what we used to think as a simple musical form to make children sleep. It was full of sorrow, but also full of hope at the same time. It embraced a piece of

³ This lullaby was created in Talin region in Armenia by migrants from Sasun. *Şirag Yerkeran*, ed. Garabed Hannesyan, Şirag Hradaragadun, Beirut, 1988, p. 145. (see Appendix)

life. Today, I know that it touched me not because I realized something totally new but because it reminded me a feeling that I shared with other people in that concert hall, it was a familiar feeling that the lullabies created in me yet I had never thought about it before.

Through the lullabies women had been expressing their desires and hopes as well as their sorrow and grief, the way they saw and related to life. Lullabies were the secret diaries of women, inscribed on words and melodies, which remained on the margins of the 'speakable'. Therein Armenian women had woven their gendered stories and the history of Armenians in Anatolia filtered through their experiences.

Among Armenians in Istanbul today, singing lullabies is still a living practice for putting children to sleep. Most of the time the grandmothers are the ones who sing lullabies, putting into them their own life stories, their families' or their towns' stories. On the other hand, we as young people tend to forget our grandmothers' lullabies. Today, in our technologized and 'modernized' lives the practice of singing lullabies is becoming marginalized.

Yet while the tradition of singing lullabies and the lullabies of the grandmothers are being forgotten day by day, at the same time, the growing interest in ethnic cultures and ethnic music stemming from the newly emerging liberal discourse towards difference in Turkey as well as the struggles of ethnic groups for recognition, lead to a flourishing of albums on Armenian music in the market, which also includes lullabies. Our relation to lullabies is changing today due to the changes in their

functions, in the mediums of their transmission, in the context within which they are produced.

Although these changes can be analyzed within a framework of transformation of traditional musical forms in a 'modernized' context, I argue that one cannot place the story of lullabies into such a singular, linear history. Since the stories that lullabies tell mostly stand in the rupture point of the history of Armenians in Anatolia, we have to analyze the identity politics that shape the remembering of Armenian lullabies in Turkey.

Lullabies, in contrast to any other traditional musical form are produced in a very specific context and transmitted through a bodily, sensual and intimate relationship. Grandmothers' lullabies with their stories become parts of our bodies through the senses that they transmit. The meaning that is created through this transmission attributes them a truth-value shared by the singer and the listener.

These senses and meanings through which the grandmothers' lullabies and stories are transmitted are repressed in Turkey due to the identity politics very much shaped within the nationalist discourse. The lullabies that are sung by women are marginalized in the discourse that represent the Armenian culture as simply one 'color' in Turkey's cultural mosaic in which different cultures are reified in the form of cuisines, folklore or other 'authentic' cultural products. The displacements that the Armenians experience when their cultural belongings and other elements of identity become de-contextualized and detached from their meanings within these new representations are rarely mentioned.

However, lullabies with the stories they tell, the experienced they express, the senses they transmit contain elements that make them impossible to be contained by any discourse about ‘identity’; always containing excesses and lacks in relation to any definition or representation articulated through language. The senses that they transmit enable us to relate to a loss, which I argue defines the Armenian subjectivity in Turkey.

In this thesis by following the marks that the fragmented memories of our grandmothers’ lullabies leave on our bodies I am trying to grasp our belonging to an identity marked with a loss whose stories are still waiting to be told.



INTRODUCTION: RE-SEARCHING THE ARMENIAN LULLABIES

This thesis is about Armenians in Turkey, an ethnic group who has become a ‘minority’ in their homelands by the establishment of the nation-state, the Republic of Turkey, whose ‘national’ identity is constructed on the basis of rejecting both the historical presence of Armenians in Anatolia and exterminating that presence through violence. By analyzing the contexts within which Armenian lullabies are remembered, this thesis tries to capture the lived experience of Armeniannes today within the changing cultural / identity politics in Turkey.

I specifically focus on the transmission of lullabies sung by Armenian grandmothers as one of the most significant sites where I can trace the senses of displacement and loss defining the Armenian ‘minority’ subjectivity in Turkey. I argue that because these lullabies and stories still remain silenced within the representations of Armenianness in Turkey and because the context where they find meaning changed, the lived experience of Armenianness in Turkey today become invisible in the available representations of ‘Armenianness’.

The experience of displacement and loss define the sense of being an Armenian in Turkey. I believe without focusing on these experiences it is impossible to talk about Armenians or any non-muslim, non-Turkish group in Turkey. Thus, with the help of the accounts of the people that I interviewed during my research, by following the ruptures and gaps in the transmission of memories in lullabies, I trace the marks of the loss and the unrepresented, displaced excesses of Armenian belonging in Turkey. This gives me a

vantage point to criticize the new liberal discourse emerging in Turkey that tries to represent different cultures, especially that of the non-muslims without taking these experiences and senses into consideration.

With respect to theoretical and political concerns I try to distance myself from the scholarly works in Turkey that deploy conventional definitions of 'minority', or theories of ethnicity and nationalism in their analysis of Armenian identity as I believe that they fall short in understanding the experiences of violence, oppression, invisibility, alienation, uneasiness and so on, that the non-dominant groups experience within nation-states. Some of them restrict the issue to a problem of 'rights', formulated by way of stating that there is a nation-state which is supposed to represent all of its citizens and the only problem is that this state does not grant equal rights to its 'minority' citizens (an idea developed mainly within the context of Turkey's application for the EU membership). They often do not question the processes within which the states claim the lands where different ethnic groups have been living as their 'national territory'.

To put it differently, these works either speak from within the dominant nation-state paradigm considering the nation-state as given or they develop macro level approaches reducing the issue to a conflict between states and groups. Most of these scholarly works have developed within the framework of a liberal discourse, which fail to provide satisfactory answers to the conflicts stemming from the above-mentioned experiences.

Similarly, Nükhet Sirman states that "a rights discourse, as is common in most of the studies on citizenship, is not adequate to grasp the real operation of gendered citizenship,

and this especially so in postcolonial conditions. The classical discussions on citizenship starting from Marshall usually provide a classification of the nature of the rights that have been accorded to the individual citizen using a universalistic discourse (e.g. Turner 1990). This universalism is premised on a particular reading of liberal democracies that does not pose the issue of belonging to a polity in terms of identity and the constitution of the subject as citizen, nor of the constitution of the polity itself.”¹

The majority of the academic work in Turkey speaking about ‘minorities’ is often detached from the lived experiences of the people. As they often do not problematize the minority/majority dichotomy, they cannot offer “a multi-axial understanding of power”². Besides, they don’t focus on how groups with different identities experienced the nationalization process of their land and the kind of displacement and loss that this process created in their ways of being in the present.

I argue that the historical experiences of these groups during the Turkification process of Anatolia, which became taboos of the Republic of Turkey, shape the way they live their identities today and the way they relate to state and citizenship. I believe without historicizing these experiences, any ethnographic work about these groups would be inaccurate.

¹ Nükhet Sirman, “The Making of Familial Citizenship in Turkey”, forthcoming, p. 147.

² Avtar Brah, “Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities”, in *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 189.

I argue that displacement and loss are the two significant experiences that shape the way the sense of Armenianness is lived today in relation to memory, history and culture. Therefore, while laying out my theoretical framework, in order to develop a deeper understanding of what is at stake in a 'minority' position, I will start developing my analytical tools from the notions of displacement and loss as defining elements shaping the senses of being an Armenian in Turkey today. In the following lines I will explain what I mean by displacement and loss.

I use displacement or the condition of being displaced not only to refer to the detachment from a physical space. I believe, not only the physical space itself, but also the power relations that shape the past and the present of that space define the condition of being displaced.

Armenians living in Turkey consider Anatolia as their homeland. Even today while the great majority of the Armenian population lives in Istanbul³, far away from their Anatolian hometowns, they still think they have never left this homeland. Yet the massacres, deportations, forced migration and the discrimination they faced during the latter part of the 19th and throughout the 20th century not only violently separated them from their lands and exterminated a whole population but also destroyed their cultural heritage and disrupted their ties with their memories, history and culture. And today

³ Although there are a few Armenian families in Anatolia today, one can speak of an Armenian community only for Istanbul. Today, the estimated number of Armenians in Istanbul is 60.000 and the only Armenian village left in Anatolia is *Vakıfküğ (Vakıfköy)* in Hatay, whose population is nearly 150. For detailed information see Bertrand Buchwalter, "Portrait de la Communauté Arménienne d'Istanbul", *Les Relations Turco-Arméniennes: Quelles Perspectives?*, Institut Français d'Etudes Anatoliennes, ed. George Dumezil, Istanbul, Novembre 2002, pp. 19-45.

their position within the configuration of power relations shaping the identity politics in Turkey makes them feel displaced in their home as expressed in the following words in one of the interviews: “I am in a weird situation here. (...) You are on your land but you are the citizen of Turkey. And moreover, you are a second-class citizen. This leads you to a search and you try to say ‘I am here’. (...) You try to attach yourself to something in order to make yourself visible and that turns out to be ‘I was here’.”⁴

A migration wave from Anatolia to Istanbul continued throughout the 20th century, until only a few families were left behind in each town, and no Armenian schools, churches or other institutions functioned any longer. During the first half of the 20th century, Istanbul became a new home for Armenians from various Anatolian villages. Migrant families of the past few decades, those who were last to leave their homes, did so mostly because they felt insecure in their hometowns, where they were the last Armenian households who were not always welcomed by the new settlers in their villages or towns.

Today Armenians in Istanbul, whether having migrated from Anatolia or living there for centuries, feel displaced in their homes, because of the discontinuities in their history, memory, and cultural belongings. For many decades they could not embrace their cultural heritage due to the restrictions against the reproduction and expression of cultural material about different ethnic groups in Turkey. Since Turkishness, ‘Turkish national culture’ and the official ‘Turkish History’ were constructed and shaped through

⁴ Ben burda çok acaip bir konumdayım. (...) Sen kendi topraklarındasın fakat Türkiye’nin vatandaşısın. Ve Türkiye’nin ikinci sınıf vatandaşısın. Bu seni bir arayışa, “ya ben de varım”a yönlendiriyor. (...) Bunu yapmak için de bir şeylere asılmak istiyorsun, tutunmak istiyorsun. O işte ne oluyor, “ben buradaydım” oluyor.

the social and economic expropriation of the local heritage and wealth, and the denial of the Armenian as well as the other ethnic identities and cultures in the nationalized territory, everything that referred to the presence of Armenians in Anatolia was silenced.

Floya Anthias defines home as: “a shared space where we can ‘feel at home’, not just in the literal sense of place but also in the imagining of a collectivity, whether it be ethnic or national or a community structured by a shared gender or one about our class position.”⁵ Armenians in Turkey feel displaced at their home very much by the exclusion of Armenians from the history, the memory and the culture of Anatolia, the land where they lived for thousands of years with other ethnic groups. Armenians feel obliged to constantly rearticulate their belonging to this land through an emphasis on their history, for all the things reminiscent of their presence in Anatolia do not suffice to make them visible in this home.

Not only the invisibility and exclusion from the representations of culture and history in the land and the restrictions on producing cultural material about Armenians, but also the double standards that they have to experience in terms of citizenship rights robs them of the true comfort of being at home in Turkey.

Throughout the Republican Era, Armenians and other groups faced various forms of discriminations and violence mainly due to their ethnic, religious and cultural identities. In providing examples, one can mention the violations against the individual civil rights

⁵ Floya Anthias, “Beyond Feminism and Multiculturalism: Locating Difference and the Politics of Location”, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 25, No. 3, 2002, p. 277.

such as restrictions in expressing one's identity and opinions about identity politics; freedom of choosing profession –for example the non-muslims cannot become civil servants except in the field of education- or conducting research and publishing about the Armenian history that will question the official history. As for the communal rights, the difficulties in training clergymen, attacks on churches and community schools, the prohibition of the instruction of Armenian history and culture, the confiscation of the communal properties, the production of news and programs in the media which are full of insults, attacks and misrepresentations that contribute to the anti-Armenian prejudices, etc.⁶

For many decades these discriminations remained unspoken in Turkey because in the public sphere Armenianness has been associated with a denied history of violence and presented as an 'issue' of international politics. Today despite attempts to make these discriminations visible, the political organization of the Armenians through their ethnic identities and raising their voices against discrimination are still very difficult.

I would claim that memory has always been the main sphere, determining the political definition of the Armenian identity in Turkey. The way Armenians are perceived in Turkey as well as how they situate themselves vis-à-vis the nationalist politics is defined by past. Past has a meaning for present, both in terms of remembrance and the way Armenianness is defined by the dominant discourse. As long as the generations in

⁶ See Tessa Hoffman, *Armenians In Turkey Today: A Critical Assessment of the Situation of the Armenian Minority in the Turkish Republic*, The EU Office of Armenian Associations of Europe, Brussels, 2002.

Turkey are socialized within a dominant nationalist understanding of the Armenian past in Anatolia, the way they perceive Armenians will be very much shaped through the perspective of the official history defining the Armenian 'issue'.

The Turkish nationalist discourse from its liberal form to extreme nationalism and racism exercise power on Armenians by repressing their narratives of the past. In Turkey although there have been some attempts by oppositional groups, past is still not worked through, the way Adorno explains it. Adorno says that "one wants to break free of the past: rightly, because nothing at all can live in its shadow, and because there will be no end to the terror as long as guilt and violence are repaid with guilt and violence; wrongly, because the past that one would like to evade is still very much alive."⁷ He believes "the past will have been worked through only when the causes of what happened then have been eliminated. Only because the causes continue to exist does the captivating spell of the past remain to this day unbroken."⁸

However so far in Turkey state and nationalist groups have always insisted on denying or producing opposite discourses to what they call the 'so called' Armenian Genocide. Similarly, the contemporary liberal discourse offers to 'leave the past aside and look to the future'. Caner Doğan in his article on debates around Atom Egoyan's film *Ararat*, which was harshly attacked and could not be shown in the cinema halls in Turkey due to the reactions of the nationalists, says that "the way liberal stance defines the problem

⁷ Theodor Adorno, "The Meaning of Working Through the Past", in *Critical Models*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p. 89.

⁸ Adorno, p. 103.

and the solution it offers is far from being peaceful and just” and he adds: “knowledge about the past is reproduced by the institutional discursive practices and finds continuity in shaping our social behavior and relations rather than being produced and manipulated in the autonomous world of consciousness. (...) Unfortunately, since the establishment of the republic, the dominant national historiography in Turkey has been defining Turkish existence and honor on the basis of the denial of the pains of the ‘others’, turning the carriers of these pains into enemies and aliens in their homeland.”⁹

Adorno also speaks about a “hollow space formed in the discourse”¹⁰ in the expression of violence. Similarly, for Armenians in Turkey, leaving the past behind is impossible because the life stories already contains a gap stemming from not being able to spell out the past. The past is alive and has some power over today because it is not mastered yet and as peoples of Turkey we are trying to construct our lives on ruins, not just the subordinate ones but also the ones who consider themselves as ‘majority’.

With the rise of the Kurdish struggle in the last decades and the process of admission to the European Union, Turkey had to change its dominant discourse on identity politics. Within the space opened up by the efforts of oppositional intellectuals and activists as well as that of members of non-muslim and non-Turkish ethnic groups, especially culture and collective memory became important sites of struggle. The way national identity and national culture was constructed through denying or Turkifying different

⁹ Caner Doğan, ‘Ermeni ‘Sorunu’ ve ‘Tarafsızlık’, *Post Express*, no: 34, 20 February-20 March 2004, İstanbul, p.10.

¹⁰ Adorno, p. 90.

ethnic groups in Anatolia and the way national history misrepresented the experiences of these groups started to be criticized.

However, on the other hand, simultaneously, a liberal stance evolved among various media, academic and arts circles that has fashioned a discourse of 'tolerance' towards minorities, regarding non-muslim groups as 'vanishing colors' of Anatolia. From time to time members of the non-muslim groups themselves filled the subject positions opened up by this discourse in order to escape from invisibility in the representations of this geography.

Yet, even this 'mosaics' discourse was criticized by the extreme nationalist groups such as *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Action Party) and the military officials especially at times where an international conflict raised turning these groups into targets of attacks. These people were often called *iç mihrak* (enemy inside) and were expected to repeat their loyalty to the Turkish state, which necessitated being silent about their past and present problems.

I believe at this historical moment in the history of the Republic of Turkey, studying memory is a very important political and theoretical concern. As the issues of identity and culture have become fashionable topics of discussion, it is important to be critical about the hegemonic perspectives developed by old nationalisms in their new liberal outlooks and develop critical perspectives to the issue.

Ethnic groups or cultures, especially the experiences of non-muslim groups started to be spoken about in Turkey in a period when they have been already expelled from the Anatolian geography and their cultural heritage was nearly lost. Yelda's words express this very well: "the ones that are invited to dialogue, the ones that are pretended to be invited to the dialogue are not the ones that we are still living together but the ones whose returning back is never mentioned anymore."¹¹

Robert Spam criticizes this perspective by telling "I am not suggesting that multiculturalism is simply 'fun', a culinary delight where one wanders from falafel one week to sushi next, with some salsa dancing on Friday night and samba Saturday" and he mentions that "any substantive multiculturalism has to recognize the political realities of injustice and inequality and the consequent existential realities of pain, anger and resentment, since the multiple cultures invoked by term 'multiculturalism' have not historically coexisted in relations of equality and mutual respect".¹² In this respect, I believe in order to speak about difference and culture we have to decipher the dynamics of the nation-state formation and the power relations that shape those identities which do not quite fit into the definition of the 'national'.

Because the formation of 'national unity' in Turkey was achieved when Anatolia was a homeland for at least 20 ethnic, religious and cultural groups who were still present on

¹¹ Yelda, "Hele Bir Gitsinler, Dialog Ondan Sonra" in *Hele Bir Gitsinler, Dialog Ondan Sonra*, Belge Yayınları, 2003, p. 30.

¹² Robert Spam, "Multiculturalism and the Neoconservatives" in *Dangerous Liaisons Gender Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives*, Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat, eds. Cultural Politics, University of Minnesota Press, v. 11, 1997, p. 200.

that land during the establishment of the Republic, any discussion around ethnicity, identity or multiculturalism in Turkey should take into consideration the territorial dimension of the national identity and how the project of the national sovereignty over a land gave way to displacement and loss of the history, culture, memories and identities of the people sharing the same land. Thus it should focus on how the envisaged 'national identity' was the product of complex power relations.

I find feminist theoreticians' critical understandings of difference very helpful in approaching the lived experiences of people who occupy subordinate positions within the configuration of power relations in a society. Floya Anthias' formulation of difference then becomes very important for my framework. She reformulates the notion of difference in two ways: "one to think of difference in terms of imaginings around boundaries. The second is to reformulate difference in terms of positionality by referring to 'hierarchical' difference: this specifies the locus of attention away from the general problem of differentiation to one relating to asymmetries."¹³ And as a critical response to the liberals who tend to either overlook or overemphasize the differences, Audre Lorde's words are illuminating: "Certainly there are very real differences among us of race, age, and sex. But it is not those differences that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences and to examine the distortions that result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behavior and expectation."¹⁴

¹³ Anthias, 2002, p. 278.

¹⁴ Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives*, Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat, eds. Cultural Politics, v. 11, 1997, p.375.

Certainly one can discuss the concepts of identity and difference from various theoretical and political positions. However, in this introductory chapter I choose to give a brief explanation of my framework in approaching to the experiences of Armenianness in relation to the dominant identity politics in Turkey. For this purpose I only would like to mention, by borrowing Stuart Hall's words, that "identity is such a concept- operating 'under erasure' in the interval between reversal and emergence; an idea which cannot be thought in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all"¹⁵ and that I focus on "its centrality to the question of agency and politics".¹⁶ Similarly Floya Anthias' "reformulating the basis for treating 'identities' outside the parameters of old ethnicities, by developing the concept of 'translocational' positionality"¹⁷ is a crucial tool for me. She says that the "issues of exclusion, political mobilization on the basis of collective identity, and narrations of belonging and otherness cannot be addressed adequately unless they are located within other constructions of difference and identity, particularly around gender and class."¹⁸ In this respect, gender is one of my main analytical and political tools in my approach to lullabies.

In this thesis, I will be focusing on Armenian lullabies however, my approach to lullaby as a musical form is not simply folkloric. In Armenian sources, lullaby is defined as a

¹⁵ Stuart Hall, "Who Needs 'Identity'?" in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, eds. Stuart Hall, Paul du Gay, Sage Publications: London, 1998, p. 2.

¹⁶ Hall, 1998, p.2.

¹⁷ Floya Anthias, "New hybridities, Old Concepts: The Limits of 'Culture'", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4, July 2001, p. 620.

¹⁸ Anthias, p. 620.

genre of folk song, called as *ororotsayin*, *ororerk*, *oror*, *hayrur*, *ruri*, *lurig*, *cor-cor*, *dandan*, *nenni*, *nanar* among Armenians. It is said that “they often consist of two, three, four or more stanzas with repetitions, which often shift from the given measure providing the song with a variety in musicality. The themes that dominate traditional lullaby songs are praising the child, good wishes, often including motifs that reflect the mother’s personal experiences. By expressing the different aspects and realities of the socio-historical life, social relations, various beliefs and depictions of the people lullabies gain important value for studies of history.”¹⁹

In Turkey, lullaby as a genre of folk music was mainly studied in the field of folklore studies. We come across with sources of lullabies in the local folklore books. Yet, one should also look at the way lullabies were made the essence of ‘national culture’ in a very gendered way; positioning ‘Turkish mothers’ as essential carriers of Turkishness through lullabies. During the early republican period, lullabies were considered as an important genre in the construction of the ‘national culture’. Enver Behnan Şapolyo gives the definition of a lullaby as: “melodic folk poems of single stanza, that mothers sing for putting their children into sleep. Lullabies are created only for little children. Neither their poets are known nor they have a written version. Their poets are Turkish mothers. They pass through ear to ear from mother to daughter, in this way from mouth to mouth it goes on through generations by oral transmission. They have a certain melody. The Turkish mothers living all around the world, raise a newborn child with this

¹⁹ R. Krikoryan, *Ororostayin Yerk*, Haygagan Sovedagan Hanrakidaran, vol. 12, Yerevan, 1986, p.602.

melody, by these stanzas with four lines. (...) Every Turkish child has slept and grew up with this lullaby. (...) the delicacy of the Turkish folk lullabies is rare in other nations.”²⁰

All of the lullabies published in these works are in Turkish and there are no accounts of lullabies in other tongues in Anatolia. Moreover, these lullabies are considered as the registers of the ‘history of Turkish civilization’ and certain methods were advised in collecting lullabies: “These are the methods for collecting lullabies in folklore. If one obeys these while gathering lullabies, it is beneficial. In the future, the moral civilization registers of the people will help writing the history of Turkish civilization.”²¹

In an anthology the author differentiates between mothers’ creations and the creations of male composers and emphasizes that the lullabies are products of women’s literature: “The first poets and composers of the lullabies are mothers. Although there are lullabies that are created by men for warbling the national and heroic sentiments, such as Ziya Gökalp’s and Abdullah Tukay’s imitative lullabies and are adopted by the people, over all our lullabies have been sung by sisters, aunts, grandmothers, nannies and by little girls to their dolls, and it is a product of a mother, in other words, they are part of women’s literature; they are maybe the oldest forms of continuing oral literature and the richest sources of our musical culture.”²²

²⁰ Enver Behnan Şapolyo, *Halk Ninnileri*, Halit Yayınevi, İstanbul, 1937, s. 15.

²¹ Şapolyo, s.50.

Also see: Ninniler, *Türk Folklor ve Etnografya Bibliografyası*, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Milli Folklor Enstitüsü Yayınları: 5, Ankara, 1971, s. 157-160.

²² Amil Çelebioğlu, *Türk Ninni Hazinesi*, Kitabevi Yayınları, 1995, p. 10.

There is a similar trend in the studies of Armenian folklore that consider lullabies as a genre of the ‘national traditional art of music’²³. More often, lullabies are considered as oral sources for the Armenian history in Anatolia kept by women, expressing the “Armenian way of living, with its fragments of life and social-historical problems. (...) The themes of these songs may be the environment where the child lives; the socially, economically and legally oppressed situation of the woman, the mother, as well as the socio-political life and certain aspects of the psychological characteristics of the Armenian people.”²⁴

My approach to lullabies is quite different. Rather than taking them as part of ethnic or national culture, to study lullabies in relation to gendered ways of transmitting both personal and social memories. Lullabies, in this context convey the most intimate transmission of feelings and experiences, as well as pointing to ruptures and discontinuities of the culture and memory. They are therefore, significant sites where one can grasp not only the cultural expressions of a certain community (the form of lullabies as a genre point to conventional ways of transmission) but also, the gendered experiencing of that culture as long as they articulate hopes, desires, fears and pain sung by women.

Moreover, telling the story of the Armenian lullabies is significant for me because it enables me to trace the marks of displacement and loss that shape the Armenian

²³ R. Atayan, *Ororostayin Yerk*, Haygagan Sovedagan Hanrakidaran, vol. 12, Yerevan, 1986, p.602.

²⁴ R. H. Krikoryan, *Hay Joğovirtagan Ororotsayin yev Mangagan Yerker*, Yerevan, 1970, p.12.

belonging to Anatolia. I consider lullabies as mediums through which Armenian women expressed their gendered stories and the history of Armenians in Anatolia filtered through their experiences. In Chapter 2, I try to explain how grandmothers' stories stand both on the margins of the dominant 'Turkish National History' and of the Armenian collective memory in Turkey. I argue that the kind of memory that the grandmothers' lullabies and stories create is bodily, intimate and sensual. In Chapter 3 I try to make a distinction between grandmothers' lullabies and lullabies that are presented as a genre of Armenian music. I discuss how the sensual experiences are marginalized today as lullabies are displaced from the context in which they acquire meaning. I speak about how young Armenians criticize the liberal 'colors' discourse by invoking the specific ways they experience Armenianness; these are mostly invisible in representations of 'the Armenian' in Turkey. In Chapter 4, I argue that the fragments of memories that are transmitted through the lullabies shape the way young Armenians relate to their identities today. The silencing of the stories of the grandmothers in a context which robs them their sensual meanings of time, place and memory, and the means for sharing them with other people creates a feeling of displacement in young Armenians, and the loss becomes the defining sense of Armenianness within this context where the only possible way to represent cultures is to folklorize them and present them as 'dead'.

Therefore, experience becomes another important methodological tool in my analysis, since it enables me to see both how the identities are lived in everyday level with all the senses, emotions, desires and pain and the subjectivities are created through these elements within certain temporal and spatial configuration of the subject. Experience is not an unmediated concept; it is structured and articulated within social and historical

context. Joan W. Scott argues that, “experience is at once always already an interpretation and is in need of interpretation. What counts as experience is neither self-evident nor straightforward; it is always contested, always therefore political.”²⁵

The concept of experience enables me to see the instances where the Armenian identity cannot be constructed as a unified whole. By tracing the gaps in the memories, which hinder the constitution of a unified identity, I can feel the sense of doubt, unease, inbetweenness and invisibility that the gap between the represented and the lived experience creates. Rather than taking the concept and situation of being a minority as something given, by referring to experience, I can question the process in which certain groups are turned into minorities. And I believe what it means to be a minority in Turkey can only be understood by tackling these questions.

The Characters in This Story

I started working with lullabies in March 2001. We were a group of Armenian women aiming to work on the history of Armenian women. In March 2001, for the Women’s Day celebrations within the Armenian community, we decided to collect Armenian lullabies and present them as sources for the history of Armenian women in Anatolia.

In our performance, *Orornerov Artıntsank - Ninnilerle Uyandık (We Woke Up With The Lullabies)*, which aimed at re-reading the history of Armenian women in Anatolia

²⁵ Joan W. Scott, “Experience” in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, eds. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott, London: Routledge, 1992, p. 37.

through the lullabies, we presented photographs of Armenian women from different regions of Anatolia with samples of lullabies accompanied with their stories, which were performed by Armenian women in a live music and dance performance.

For this project, our sources were music albums and printed material that we borrowed from people in the community who had archives of Armenian music. The printed material that I continued collecting later on, were anthologies of Armenian music, published or released in countries such as Turkey, France, Armenia, Lebanon, Egypt and the US, and consisted traditional and composed lullabies from Anatolian geography. Among these are *Şirag* Songbooks, which have been published by Şirag Publication house in Beirut since 1952 and include collections of different genres of Armenian music with the photographs and biographies of prominent Armenian composers and performers; *Kantsaran Haygagan Yerkeru (The Treasure of Armenian Songs)* published in Cairo, Mihran Tumacan's *Hayreni Yerk U Pan (Song and Word)*, published in Yerevan in 1972 (v.1), 1983 (v.2), 1986 (v.3) containing samples of Armenian traditional folk songs of different genres such as wedding songs, lullabies, dance songs, working songs etc. from various regions; Tumacan gathered these from Armenians who immigrated to US in 1920's. Besides, T. Azaryan's *Agn U Agntsik: Azkakragan yev Gensakragan Hişadagaran, (Agn and the People of Agn: A National and Biographical Memory Book)* published in Istanbul in 1943 and *Talini Haygagan Joğovirtagan Yerker yev Nivakner (Armenian Folk Songs and Instruments of Talin)* published in Yerevan in 1984 are also sources for traditional lullabies. Another important source, which is the only book that is devoted to the genre of lullabies and children songs is R. H.

Krikoryan's *Hay Joğovrtagan Ororotsayin yev Mangagan Yerker (Armenian Folk Lullabies and Children Songs)* published in Yerevan in 1970.

In addition to written sources, we also visited six women in March 2001 and listened to their lullabies, which were either their -and their mothers', grandmothers'- creations as well as the composed ones that they had learned at school or in choirs. Shortly after this performance, I started to search for lullabies from women for my thesis. This time not only collecting lullabies but also how people remembered and related to them was the focus of my work. While listening to their lullabies, I also listened to the life stories of women. I visited ten women in Istanbul in summer 2002 and in summer 2003. They were from Darende (Malatya), Arapgir (Malatya), Adıyaman, Merzifon/Gümüşhacıköy (Amasya), Burunkışla (Yozgat), Kayseri, Sasun, Erzurum and Istanbul.

In August 2002 I visited Vakıfköy (Hatay), the only remaining Armenian village in Anatolia today. I sat down and listened to the life stories and lullabies of women in this last Armenian village in Anatolia, who still carry the marks of the memory of resistance days in their village and in their lives. The village itself was a strong reminder of loss. That unique Armenian village on the margin of Anatolia stood as if it was referring to the absence of Armenians from the Anatolian geography.²⁶

²⁶ In August 2001, I visited several villages in Eastern Hemşin. During my visit, I spoke with many women about practices around putting children to sleep and singing lullabies. I could also find the chance to record lullabies in Hemşin Armenian. Yet since I believe that the Hemşin identity and culture should be studied in a different perspective rather than the Armenian identity and culture in Turkey and it requires a specialization on its unique characteristics differing from both the Armenian community as well as the Black Sea culture, I consider them beyond the scope of this work.

I prefer to call the women, whom I talked to and listened lullabies from as “grandmothers” since I started my journey to the lullabies with my own grandmother. Moreover, these women are the last witnesses of the exile of Armenians from Anatolia whose stories are shaping our present. They are the last ones to tell these stories with all their sensuality that grant them meaning.

As for the young generation, I found the opportunity to share ideas and experiences with a group of young Armenians. During spring and summer 2003, I interviewed eight women and four men aged between 22 and 27, who passed their childhood in the 1980s under the shadow of the military coup, in a period when the word ‘Armenian’ was hard to pronounce in Turkey. Besides, they are the first generation who experienced both the 1980s and the shift in the discourse of identity politics in Turkey after 1990s.

These young Armenians are all university students or graduates; except two of them (one of them could not attend to Armenian school because her father was *Süryani*, and the other left after primary school and attended to a French high school) all are graduates of Armenian community schools. Three of them were born in towns in Anatolia, two in Kastamonu and one in Bitlis and they had migrated to Istanbul before the primary school. The others were born in Istanbul, and their parents or grandparents were from Adıyaman, Amasya (Gümüşhacıköy), Ankara, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Elazığ (Harput), Erzurum, Hatay, İstanbul, Kastamonu, Kayseri, Konya (Ereğli), Sivas and Yozgat (Burunkışla). One of them has *Rum* mother and the other *Süryani* father.

These young people consider themselves as Armenian in multiple ways. They are all involved with the Armenian community through either working in its institutions, organizations or participating in their activities outside the community that contribute to the visibility of the Armenian culture as well as the problems of the Armenian community in Istanbul. They all consider themselves “doing something for Armenians” at the same time they are in a dynamic process of defining their own understanding of Armenianness, shaping critical perspectives about the Armenian community. Needless to say, they are not the representatives of a generation but a certain trend.

While trying to understand the Armenian ‘minority’ subjectivity in Turkey today by tracing it in the narratives of the young Armenians by going back to the stories of grandmothers, what seems to miss from this picture is the mothers’ generation. Their experience of the Armenian identity was harder than ours. They witnessed many violent attacks targeting the non-muslims in Turkey. The possibility of the re-occurrence of violence is very much part of the way they imagine their identities. For this reason, their experiences should be considered within a framework, which focuses more on the 1960s’, 1970s’ and 1980s’ political conjuncture in Turkey and the situation of the Armenian community, which I tried to mention briefly in Chapter 1. However, they are always in between the lines of the narratives of the young people, for we are a generation who were raised by them, and were influenced by their dreams, their hopes, their struggles, their conflicts and their fears.

As a last but most important point, I would like to tell that I keep confidential the names of the people that contributed to this work with their life stories and accounts about

being an Armenian in Turkey. However, it is the predicament of doing ethnographic work in Turkey about Armenians that I feel obliged to keep confidential the names of grandmothers, who should be considered as source persons for the lullabies. The lullabies cited in this thesis belong to their creators, the Armenian women and any quotation from them necessitates their own permission.



NATIONALIZATION OF CULTURE: THE CHANGING BOUNDARIES OF VISIBILITY OF ARMENIANS IN TURKEY

“We, Armenian women, have shouldered a heavy weight. Our load is silence. Even we ourselves become alienated from our history, stories, and songs that are considered dangerous. Since our identity is confined into the pages of history books or international law debates, our contemporary problems become invisible. Our neighbors, friends are alien to our language, culture and existence.”¹

In the introduction chapter, I defined displacement as being displaced not only from a homeland but also from one’s language, music, lullabies, stories, memories, one’s culture and history shaped in that specific land. Kurdish writer Muhsin Kızılkaya expresses this feeling by saying that he is exiled from his mother tongue.²

I told that the Armenians in Turkey could not easily embrace their cultural heritage in Anatolia for decades, because the ‘national identity’ in Turkey, ‘Turkish national

¹ Ermeni kadınları olarak ağır bir yük sırtlanmışız. Yükümüz sessizlik. Tehlikeli sayılan tarihimize, hikayelerimize, şarkılarımıza biz bile yabancılaşıyoruz. Kimliğimiz tarih kitaplarına ya da uluslararası hukuk tartışmalarına hapsedildiği için bugün yaşadığımız sorunlar görünmez oluyor. Komşularımız arkadaşlarımız, bizim dilimize, kültürümüze, varlığımıza yabancı. *Bohçaları Açtık*, Kadınlar Birbirlerine Doğru Yürüyor Kampanyası sonuç bildirgesi (from the booklet of the campaign Women are Marching towards Each other), 6-14 July 2002, p.21.

² Muhsin Kızılkaya, “Anadilde Eğitim Görmeden Kürtçe’den Türkçe’ye Çeviri Yapmak”, *Avrupa Birliği Sürecinde Dil Hakları* panel, Bilgi University, 19-20 December 2003.

For many decades since the establishment of the republic, policies towards language have been one of the main tools of governmentality for assimilating people with different ethnic identities into a unified Turkish identity. There have been restrictions on the use of any Anatolian tongue other than Turkish. The following are examples to such restrictions: the ban on the use and broadcasting of Kurdish language, campaigns such as *Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş* (Citizen, Speak Turkish!) that had started in 1927 against non-muslims (although they were given the right to use their languages by the Lausanne Treaty) and punishment of pupils who speak Hemşin Armenian and Kurdish languages at the primary school.

culture' and the official 'Turkish History' were constructed through the repression, denial or the assimilation of the Armenian as well as the other ethnic identities and cultures in Anatolia.

In Turkey since the early republican period the process of Turkification with regard to the cultural heritage of Armenians, *Rums*, Jews, Kurds, *Süryanis*, Arabs, Circassians and other ethnic and religious groups in Anatolia has been going on until today. In this chapter I will first try to outline the history of this Turkification process by mainly referring to the example of policies towards music. Following that, I will try to illustrate the dynamics of the current context within which this Turkification process started to be discussed and criticized in relation to the experiences of non-muslim groups in Turkey. Finally, I will try to situate the transmission of Armenian music in Turkey within the changing context of cultural politics.

The making of Turkish national culture through national music

In Turkey, the passage from a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural empire to a unified nation-state with a singular identity necessitated a homogenous culture. Nationalization of the Anatolian territory was achieved through the construction of a Turkish national culture and rejection of the heritage of other ethnic groups.

Arzu Öztürkmen explains how folklore as an independent discipline and research field entered the Ottoman intellectuals' agenda simultaneously with the concepts of 'language', 'nation', 'homeland', and 'civilization'. She illustrates how the studies and ideas of the late Ottoman intellectuals such as Namık Kemal, Şinasi, Ziya

Gökalp or Selim Sırrı about the subjects and genres of folklore played a significant role in the institutionalized folklore research activities of the Republican period.³ As an outstanding example among these intellectuals, I will mention only Ziya Gökalp, whose work *Principles of Turkism (Türkçülüğün Esasları)* is considered by Martin Stokes as a blueprint for the entire Kemalist revolution.⁴

“In Gökalp’s view, the split between culture and civilization could be illustrated by the existence of two quite distinct kinds of music, one pertaining to the Ottoman élite and the other to the rural *halk*, the folk. The former was the product of Arabo-Persian civilization, based in turn upon the civilization of the Byzantines. The latter was the true culture of the Turks. In other spheres, Turkish culture was to remain much as it was deemed always have been, whilst the civilization only was to effect the change from oriental to occidental. Gökalp believed however that only one music could exist as the true, national music of Turkey, and this was to be achieved through a synthesis of Turkish folk music and the musical techniques of Western civilization.”⁵ In Gökalp’s words: “Today, we are thus confronted with three kinds of music: Eastern, Western and folk. I wonder which of them is our real national music? We have already noted that Eastern music is both sick and non-national, whereas neither folk nor Western music is foreign to us since the first is the music of our culture and the second that of our new civilization. I submit, therefore, that our national music will be born of a marriage between folk and Western music. Our folk music has given us

³ Arzu Öztürkmen, *Türkiye’de Folklor ve Milliyetçilik*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1998, p. 19.

⁴ Martin Stokes, *The Arabesk Debate: Music and Musicians in Modern Turkey*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992, p. 26.

⁵ Stokes (p. 33) quotes from Ziya Gökalp *Türkçülüğün Esasları*, Ankara, Milli İçtimiyat Kitabhanesi, 1923, p. 51.

many melodies. If we collect these and harmonize them in the Western manner, we shall have both a national and a European music. The music committees of the *Türk Ocağı* (Turkish Heart) clubs are among those who will carry out this task. This, is the Turkist program in the field of music; the rest is up to our national musicians.”⁶

Martin Stokes explains how “folk music in Turkey is considered by its proponents and practitioners to play a specific role in creating a culturally unified and cohesive nation-state.”⁷ He says: “‘the folk’ and their music were discovered and redefined at particular junctures in the history of Ottoman and modern Turkey. The features of these rediscoveries and redefinitions had much in common, drawing as they did upon a fund of thought relating to European nationalisms in the nineteenth century, and to more recent movements in the newer nation-states of Eastern Europe and the Middle East.”⁸

In the realization of these ideas, several institutions established by the state played significant roles. Arzu Öztürkmen argues that “during the early nation-building era, mobilizing all of its intellectual and material resources to design modernist reforms and projects, the state formed a series of institutions.”⁹ Similarly Füsun Üstel mentions that during the early republican period through a series of policies, culture became one of the main functions of the state and cultural revolution constituted the

⁶ Ziya Gökalp, “Aesthetic Turkism” in *Principles of Turkism*, translated by Robert Devereux, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968, p. 99.

⁷ Stokes, 1992, p. 20.

⁸ Stokes, 1992, p. 20.

⁹ Arzu Öztürkmen, “The Role of People’s Houses in the Making of National Culture in Turkey”, *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Fall 1994, p. 159.

most radical dimension of the Kemalist ideology. She argues that recognition of the fact that culture develops national consciousness and the feeling of belonging empowered the state's ultimate position in this sphere.¹⁰

According to Necdet Hasgöl, regulations in the field of music in this period included activities aiming at purifying Turkish national music, filtering the influence of centuries old Turkish classical music, which was considered to be a 'remainder from Byzantine times', collecting samples of 'real Turkish music' that could be heard among only Anatolian 'folk' and constructing a 'national music' that would be born out of the fusion of the folk music and the western techniques.¹¹

Within the framework of *Musiki İnkılabı* (Music Revolution), starting with 1925 a series of policies were deployed in order to get rid of the 'old' music. For example education and broadcasting of *alaturka* music in schools and radios was banned between 1934 and 1936. Students were sent abroad in order to create the cadres for developing 'Modern Turkish Music'. Similarly *tarikats* were closed and in 1926 the name of the musical higher education school *Darü'l-elhan* was changed to Municipality Conservatory as a symbol of a westernized polyphonic understanding. Especially during the late 1930s a special emphasis was put on the creation of a national Turkish opera, and a music commission was gathered in Ankara for this purpose.¹²

¹⁰ Füsün Üstel, "1920'li ve 30'lu Yıllarda 'Milli Musiki' ve 'Musiki İnkılabı'", *Defter*, no:22, Metis, İstanbul, Fall 1994, p. 42.

¹¹ Necdet Hasgöl, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Müzik Politikaları", *Folklorla Doğru*, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Folklor Kulübü Yayını, no: 62, İstanbul, 1996, p. 33.

¹² Üstel, 1994, p. 51.

The activity of collecting samples of folk music initiated by the Istanbul Municipality Conservatory in 1926 and by the Ankara Conservatory in the 1930s in collaboration with the radios in order to create the repertoire of the Turkish national music directly affected the cultural heritage of the Armenian as well as the other ethnic groups in Anatolia. As Erol Mutlu states, thus collected folk music samples, shaped by interaction of many ethnic groups, were labeled as ‘Turkish’.¹³

At first, samples of folk music were sent to the conservatory by music teachers in Anatolian schools with the help of the *Milli Eğitim Müdürleri* (National Education Directors) of each city. After they recognized that this method had drawbacks, they started searching, collecting and adopting folk songs at their original place. For this purpose four journeys were organized, the first in 1926, the second in 1927 and the third in 1928. Collected folk songs were written down according to the western twelve-note system, that is why the local characteristics of folk music and the differences, which could not be transformed to the western twelve-note system, disappeared. On the other hand, parallel to the Turkification policy, folk songs, which belonged to various ethnic groups living in Turkey, were either considered as non-existent or published with Turkish lyrics by changing their meanings and adding arbitrary words.¹⁴

Erol Mutlu explains the effects of this process on Kurdish music by arguing that Turkification policies ruined the ethnic and cultural multiplicity of Anatolia,

¹³ Erol Mutlu, “Kürt Müziği Üzerine” in *Kürt Müziği* eds. Kendal Nezan, Mehrdad R. Izady, Ayako Tatsumura, Erol Mutlu, Christian Poche, Dieter Christensen, Archimandrite Komitas, Avesta, 1996, p. 60.

¹⁴ Hasgül, p. 35. (also see Stokes, 1992, 39)

reducing it into a singular structure within the new nation-building project. According to Mutlu this caused serious erosion in Kurdish music and culture. The outcome was a destroyed culture that was detached from its roots and characteristics and a distorted musical structure.¹⁵

In the following years, especially with the efforts of Muzaffer Sarısözen and Nida Tüfekçi an institutionalization process started in Turkish national music. Füsun Üstel mentions various educational institutions and music societies, organizing activities during the Single Party era. She puts emphasis on two institutions that focused on mass training: *Türk Ocakları* (Turkish Hearts) and *Halkevleri* (People's Houses). She says that until 1931, these institutions added much to the popularization of the music, by giving regular concerts and courses even in the remote towns of Anatolia.¹⁶

Halkevleri (People's Houses) whose establishment "to a great extent, based on the failure of *Türk Ocakları* (Turkish Hearts) to support the new regime"¹⁷, "promoted local folklore research as a contribution to the national project, regarding variety and diversity as means of enriching rather than eroding the 'national culture'. Local research consolidated a sense of regionalism or locality not in contrast to nationalism but as an integral component."¹⁸ Similarly Stokes says that "the official institutional agent of provincial reform were *Halkevleri* (People's Houses), which were established in all cities and many large towns in 1932. In an attempt to mobilize

¹⁵ Mutlu, p. 60.

¹⁶ Füsun Üstel, "'Musiki İnkılabı' ve Aydınlar", *Tarih ve Toplum*, no: 113, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1993, p. 38.

¹⁷ Öztürkmen, 1994, p. 162.

¹⁸ Öztürkmen, 1994, p. 173.

local-level reform, the *Halk Odaları* (People's Rooms) were established in many small towns and villages in 1944 and 1945. These had a dual purpose. They provided the means by which the precepts of reform could be mediated to townspeople and villagers. They also provided a centre for regional research activity, providing peripheral data for the ideologues at the centre.¹⁹

Mutlu considers the practice of *Yurttan Sesler* (Tunes from the Homeland), which excluded the original instruments of the music and squeezed the performance into a standard instrumentation heavily based on different types of *bağlama*, as one of the last steps to complete the Turkification process.²⁰

One of the most striking examples of the Turkification of the Armenian folk songs is the *Kamañça* song by the famous 18th century Armenian *aşuğ* (minstrel) Sayat Nova that was turned into a march of *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Action Party), and named *Çırpınırdı Karadeniz Bakıp Türkün Bayrağına* (*Black Sea Used to Wave Looking at Turk's Flag*). These practices still continue today, for example in the case of *Bingöl* by Yavuz Bingöl, who doesn't mention the fact that the melody is a traditional Armenian one, or Seden Gürel who turned the Armenian lament *Adanayi Voğrı* (*Requiem for Adana*), still kept in the memories of Armenians in Istanbul, into a love song.

The very result of the Turkification practices during the institutionalization period of the republic has been the displacement of different ethnic groups from the collective

¹⁹ Stokes, 1992, p. 42.

²⁰ Mutlu, p. 60.

memories of people living in Turkey and the cultural representations of the Anatolian geography. These groups started to be regarded as ‘foreigners’ in their homelands.

This understanding resulted in various otherization practices, manifested in discrimination and violence against non-muslim and non-Turkish groups in every sphere of life. Examples of such discrimination and violence targeting non-muslims massively, are the law passed in 1932 aiming to restrict the freedom of choosing profession, the violent attacks against Jews in Trakya in 1934, *20 Kura İhtiyatlar* (20 Class Reservation Soldiers) the forced military service in 1939 where non-muslims were not given arms but were obliged to work in building activities, *Varlık Vergisi* (Property Tax) in 1942, 6-7 September attacks in 1955 and the deportation of the Rums with Greek passport in 1964.

Aside from these discriminatory experiences, Armenians became targets of violence especially after 1974. As Rıdvan Akar explains, “a surveillance process targeting the Armenian community was initiated due to the acts of ASALA. Although this process has been mitigated from time to time by political clashes in Turkey, which reached the dimensions of a civil war, the discontent of the Armenian community was sustained. (...) It has been revealed that in 1980s, minorities were also included in the potential enemies list of the military regime. In this period there were some attacks targeting the Armenian community in Turkey, due to the Karabağ war. The fascist groups in the country threatened to take their revenge of the Karabağ war on Armenians living in the country.”²¹

²¹ Rıdvan Akar, “Minority Policies in the Republican Era”, *Modernity and Multiculturalism*, Helsinki Citizens Assembly, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001, p. 36.

The changing discourse of cultural politics in the 1990s

When we come to the 1990s, we see that there is a new line of critique that challenges the nation-state project. Representations of a homogeneous national culture, which excluded other ethnic groups living in Anatolia, and violence against non-muslim and non-Turkish groups started to be criticized. The rise of the Kurdish movement in the 1980s with a new emphasis on identity and culture was one of the main factors that accelerated this questioning. By the end of the 1980s, conceptions such as 'Turkish national identity', 'Turkish national culture' began to be problematized in the public sphere.

According to Rıfat Bali, until the 1980s the issues of identity and multiculturalism were not discussed in the public sphere, and that no one was interested in non-muslims except for the popular and radical right wing political thought.²² But recently, non-muslim groups became the target of interests as part of a 'rights' discourse especially in relation to Turkey's application to the European Union (EU) membership. The 'issue of minorities' entered the public agenda especially after the declaration of the Copenhagen criteria, launched after the EU Copenhagen Summit in 22 June 1993, setting certain political criteria as requirements for EU membership. These criteria include "a stable and institutionalized democracy; respect for the rule of law; respect for human rights and abolishment of the death penalty; protection of minorities and prohibition of discriminations against minorities and women."²³

²² Rıfat Bali, "*Resmi İdeoloji ve Gayri Müslim Yurttaşlar*", Birikim, January / February 1998, p. 170.

²³ http://www.belgenet.com/arsiv/ab/kopenhag_kri.html

During this period, publications played a significant role in rendering experiences of non-muslim groups visible in the public sphere. In this respect, Serdar Can's *Nenemin Masalları (The Tales of My Grandmother)* by Umut Publication House in 1991 and Yves Ternon's *Les Arméniens Histoire d'un Genocide (The Armenians: History of a Genocide)* with the name *Ermeni Tabusu (The Armenian Taboo)* by Belge Yayınları in 1993 were quite significant in bringing the Armenian past in Anatolia and in Istanbul into the sphere of public discussion outside the Armenian community.

Aras Publishing House, which was founded in Istanbul in 1993, with its Turkish and Armenian books, became a very important source for the non-Armenians to meet the Armenian literature in Anatolia and Istanbul. The memoirs that Aras published became important references for the visibility of the Armenians in Anatolia.²⁴

In April 1996, the first Turkish-Armenian bilingual weekly newspaper *AGOS* started to be published. The main purpose of *AGOS* was to introduce the Armenian language, history and culture to non-Armenians and to make the public in Turkey sensitive towards the existential problems and injustices that the Armenian community has been facing.²⁵

In the 1990s period, *İnsan Hakları Derneği (İHD) (Human Rights Association)* in Istanbul was among the most active organizations in their attempts to make discriminations against minorities visible. The commission *Azınlık Hakları İzleme*

²⁴ <http://www.arasyayincilik.com/ingilizce/ingilizce.html>

²⁵ <http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/agoshakkinda.htm>

Komisyonu (Commission For Surveying The Minority Rights), which is today *Irkcılık ve Ayrımcılığa Karşı Komisyon (Commission Against Racism And Discrimination)* was founded in January 1994. The commission presents itself in the following way:

Our commission believes that the primary means for defending the rights of different ethnic, cultural, and religious groups living on these lands is struggling against the widespread racist and discriminatory prejudices. As a prerequisite for different groups to live in fraternity it tries to create the conditions and tools for questioning the official history and helping majority face its real history. For this reason, aside from surveying and making visible the infringements against minorities, and perhaps more important than that, it primarily aims to call the majority to take an anti-racist and anti-nationalist stance.²⁶

IHD organized various concerts, meetings and gatherings for the purpose of discussing the minority rights or commemorating the violence inflicted against non-muslim groups in the past. In this respect the opening of the exhibitions *Utandırın Tarih (The History that Shames)* about the 6-7 September events and *Bir El Koyma Öyküsü: Tuzla Ermeni Çocuk Kampı (A Story of Confiscation: Armenian Children's Camp in Tuzla)* in 1996 were significant activities. Photographs of this exhibition

²⁶ Komisyonumuz, bu topraklarda yaşayan farklı etnik, kültürel, dinsel grupların haklarını savunmanın yolunun, öncelikle yaygın ırkçı ve ayrımcı önyargılara karşı mücadele etmekten geçtiğine inanıyor. Farklı grupların dostluk içinde bir arada varolmasının önkoşulu olarak, resmi tarihin sorgulanmasını ve çoğunluğun gerçek tarihiyle yüzleşmesini sağlamaya, bu yüzleşmenin araçlarını yaratmaya çalışıyor. Bu nedenle azınlıklara karşı hak ihlallerini izlemesinin ve teşhir etmesinin yanı sıra, belki de ondan önce çoğunluk kamuoyunu ırkçılık ve milliyetçilik karşıtı bir tutum almaya çağırmayı önüne başlıca hedef olarak koyuyor.

were published in a book in 2000.²⁷ Besides many activities, such as preparing reports about violations of minority rights and press releases concerning this issue, one of the most important activities of the commission was its active struggle against the confiscation of the garden of the Karagözyan Armenian Orphanage by Şişli Municipality in 1997.²⁸

Within this context, in addition to the aforementioned activities of *IHD* and similar oppositional groups, several other parties started getting involved in the discussion about minorities. The mainstream media and liberal intellectuals contributed to the public discussion of the issue. The best example was Ali Kırca's *Siyaset Meydanı* (*Arena of Politics*) *Kaybolan Renkler* (*Vanishing Colours*) TV show. Ali Kırca's words in the beginning of the show is explanatory in showing how the 'minority question' has become a current issue in media:

Dear audience, *Siyaset Meydanı*, which has broken many taboos during its six years' broadcasting adventure, starts a discussion about another taboo issue tonight. In the Turkish TV channels, it is the first time that the subject of 'Minorities' will be discussed with the contribution of minorities themselves. (...) Tonight *Siyaset Meydanı* once again brings a very important and sensitive subject into discussion. (...) Yes, Vanishing Colors: Minorities... (...) The word 'Minority' which resurfaced in

²⁷ *Bir El Koyma Öyküsü: Tuzla Ermeni Çocuk Kampı*, İHD, 2000.

²⁸ From the report of Human Rights Association, İstanbul branch, Commission against Racism and Discrimination.

Turkey's agenda prior to the Helsinki Summit, is being debated again. It has become a hotter issue with the film *Salkım Hanımın Taneleri*.²⁹

Other than this kind of liberal stance where minority is taken for granted and its authenticity is posited by the 'contribution of the minorities' as a superficial treatment of a historical problem, a more critical and academic language was also developed in approaching minorities within a discussion of multiculturalism as in the example of the meeting *A wider Europe: Modernisation and Pluralism* organized by the Helsinki Citizens Assembly in Istanbul in March 2000. During this meeting "several issues such as nationalism, modernisation, multiculturalism, pluralism were considered. The role of civil society and public spheres in establishing peaceful coexistence among diverse cultural entities has been discussed."³⁰

Needless to say, parallel to the growing visibility of minorities there was a reaction from the radical right, the nationalist movement and the 'deep' state, which sharpened their racist and militarist discourses and responded to these developments with violence. The campaign against Hrant Dink, the editor of *AGOS* who was threatened by the supporters of *MHP* or the demonstrations in front of the Greek Patriarchate where they hanged and burned a puppet of the Patriarch can be counted as the latest examples in this respect.

²⁹ Sevgili seyirciler, 6 yıllık yayıncılık macerasında pek çok tabuyu yıkan Siyaset Meydanı, bu akşam, tabu bir konuyu daha tartışmaya açıyor. Türk televizyonlarında ilk kez 'Azınlıklar' konusu, azınlıklarla tartışmaya açılıyor. (...) Siyaset Meydanı, bu akşam yine çok önemli, çok duyarlı bir konuyu tartışmaya açıyor. (...) Evet Kaybolan Renkler Azınlıklar... (...) Helsinki Zirvesi öncesinde 'Azınlık' sözcüğü yeniden Türkiye'nin gündemine geldi, yeniden konuşulmaya başlandı. Salkım Hanımın Taneleri filmiyle konu iyice güncelleşti. Ali Kırca ile Siyaset Meydanı, *Azınlıklar Kaybolan Renkler*, Sabah Kitapları, 2000, p. 17.

³⁰ *Modernity and Multiculturalism*, Helsinki Citizens Assembly, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001, p. 12- 13

On the other hand liberal discourse has positioned itself about non-muslims in relation to the Kurdish movement, EU membership and the international political conjuncture. It should be noted, however, that the liberal stance is not a unitary position and it ranges from a more critical to a more Kemalist or nationalist one. Similarly, the parties involved in the struggle against discriminations are also plural. There are many intellectuals, organizations, and activities approaching the issue from various angles.

Today when we look back to this history, from the end of the 1990s until today, we can see that a number of Armenian writers, intellectuals or researchers have been invited to a series of panels, lectures, TV programs, and wrote in newspapers and journals expressing their ideas and knowledge about the Armenian culture or being an Armenian in Turkey.

Rather than confining non-muslims' experiences within the framework of debates about minority issues and citizenship rights, or representing them as 'colors of a mosaic', which became rather fashionable with the rise of a liberal multiculturalist discourse, as manifested in the examples of concerts where 'one Armenian, one Greek, one Jew' are invited, there is a trend within certain segments of the oppositional movement in Turkey to develop a language more critical towards nationalism, militarism and racism. The women's movement can be considered as one of the pioneers of this critique. Parallel to the rise of ethnic, feminist, homosexual, alternative globalization and peace movements all over the world as well as in Turkey, women's political agenda started to be shaped with the struggles of people with ethnic, cultural, sexual, regional, religious, class, bodily differences.

This creates awareness against stigmatizing difference, and about being more receptive to interactions among them in a power configuration.

A similar interest can be observed within the intellectual field. According to Rıfat Bali, “until recently there has been no serious study about non-muslim citizens whose numbers have radically diminished and whose position and weight in the public have been weakened in years”. He mentions few exceptions, “which analyzed the official perspective rooted in the Single Party Era which still have repercussions today”. Bali considers Taha Parla’s, Ayhan Aktar’s and Sevan Nişanyan’s works as the initiators of this field.³¹

In the second half of the 1990s a series of studies focusing on Turkification policies towards non-muslims flourished. Rıdvan Akar and Hülya Demir’s *İstanbul’un Son Sürgünleri: 1964’te Rumların Sınırdışı Edilmesi (Istanbul’s last exiles: The deportations of Rums in 1964)* in 1994; Rıfat Bali’s *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri: Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni (1923-1945) (Jews of Turkey in the Republican Years: An Adventure of Turkification)* in 1999; Rıdvan Akar’s *Aşkale Yolcuları: Varlık Vergisi ve Çalışma kampları (The Goners of Aşkale: The Property Tax and Working Camps)* in 1999 and Ayhan Aktar’s *Varlık Vergisi ve “Türkleştirme” Politikaları (The Property Tax and “Turkification” Policies)* in 2000 are examples of such studies analyzing these policies and discriminations against non-muslims.

³¹ Bali, 1998, p. 170.

These works opened up a discussion around different ethnic identities in Turkey and the Turkification goals of the nation-state, which can be summarized by Rıfat Bali's words: "what was understood from Turkification was to attach non-muslims to the modern Republic of Turkey as citizens, which aimed at becoming a nation-state, within the framework of 'one language – one culture – one goal'. The reason, which was not usually pronounced openly, behind such an assimilationist demand of 'one language – one culture – one aim' was the thought that non-muslims were not part of the fundamental component, meaning Muslim-Turk."³²

If we look at the special issue of *Birikim Aylık Sosyalist Kültür Dergisi* (*Birikim Monthly Socialist Culture Journal*) on *Etnik Kimlik ve Azınlıklar* (*Ethnic Identity and Minorities*) in 1995, we can see that the topics discussed in this period are Turkification, Turkish nationalism, the limits of the concept of 'Turk', the images of the 'other', the meaning of the concept of equality and discriminations in various spheres of life. Along with the experiences of the groups that were given minority status by the Lausanne Treaty and the ones who were not, Cypriot identity is also considered as a part of this discussion in the same issue.³³

These activities and studies contributed to the discussion of the issues such as ethnic groups, minorities, identity, cultural difference, nationalism, etc. in Turkey in more broader and critical terms, which have significant political implications. However, as I explained in the introduction, very often the boundaries of this discussion are drawn by a discourse of 'rights'. That is to say, the discussion often sets out the problem as

³² Bali, 1998, p. 171.

³³ *Birikim Aylık Sosyalist Kültür Dergisi, Etnik Kimlik ve Azınlıklar*, no: 71-72, March-April 1995.

the failure of the nation-state to grant equal rights to its citizens and does not question the way it defines different groups. The official discourse can still determine the limits of these studies with its core indubitable principles that are protected by law. One of these issues is called ‘the Armenian Question’.

When we take a look at the books published in Turkey about Armenians outside the Armenian community starting in the 1980s, we see that majority of them are about history and international politics. Examples are Kamuran Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası (The Armenian File)*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, 1985; *The Armenian Issue In Nine Questions and Answers*, Foreign Policy Institute, Ankara, 1982; Prof. Dr. Türkkaya Ataöv, *An Armenian Falsification*, Ankara, 1985; Bilal Şimşir, *The Genesis of the Armenian Question*, Turkish Historical Society, 1980; Salahi Sonyel, *Falsification and Disinformation Negative Factors in Turco-Armenian Relations*, Center for Strategic Research, Ankara, 2000; Dr. Hamza Bektaş, *Ermeni Soykırım İddiaları ve Gerçekler (The Armenian Claims of Genocide and Realities)*, Uludağ Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi, Bursa 2001; Mim Kemal Öke, *Yüzyılın Kan Davası Ermeni Sorunu (The Blood Feud of the Century: The Armenian Question)*, İrfan yayıncılık, 2000.³⁴

Since the 1990s, only a few works could break away from this trend. In this sense Taner Akçam’s works *Türk Ulusal Kimliği ve Ermeni Sorunu (Turkish National Identity and the Armenian Question)*, *Ermeni Tabusu Aralanırken Diyalogdan Başka*

³⁴ One of the most important developments of this period is the establishment of an academic institution under the title, *Armenian Studies Institute in Avrasya Stratejik Araştırma Merkezi (Eurasia Center for Strategic Research)* in 1994. However this institute is far from being critical of the official perspective as we can trace it from the reports of their first Turkey Congress, the titles discussed include topics such as “The Armenian Issue” or “Armenian Terror” and “Armenian Claims”.

Bir Çözüm Var Mı (Is There an Alternative Solution Other than Dialogue when the Taboo of Armenian Issue is being Opened Up?), İnsan Hakları ve Ermeni Sorunu: İttihat ve Terakki'den Kurtuluş Savaşı'na (Human Rights and the Armenian Question: From Union and Progress to the War of Independence) can be considered as unique. Overall, critical academic work about Armenians in Turkey could not go beyond a number of articles published about history in journals such as *Tarih ve Toplum (History and Society)*, *Toplumsal Tarih (Social History)* and *Toplum ve Bilim (Society and Science)*.

That is to say, although within the space opened up by the academic works, publications and activities, construction of the Turkish national identity and national culture through otherizing or Turkifying other ethnic groups in Anatolia started to be criticized, conducting research on Turkey's taboo subjects is still very difficult if not impossible.

Besides, although a critical perspective evolved in Turkey in terms of voicing out the past experiences and their effects in the present, the issue of collective memory became rather a fashionable one. A trend emerged towards collecting oral history accounts in order to just add up one more story to the others. For example, as in Yahya Koçoğlu's *Türkiye'de Gayrimüslim Hayatlar (Non-muslim Lives in Turkey)* a ready, pre-prepared format and narrative became available for presenting the lives of the non-muslims. These works contribute to the confinement of these 'non-muslim lives' to the past. Generally these works are far from analyzing how silencing of the memories operates in Turkey, creating a significant loss in the lives of these people today. They analyze the issues only through the perspective of the majority and

present stories as a part of the national memory without discussing the conflicts between memories. Esra Özyürek's *Hatırladıklarıyla ve Unuttuklarıyla Türkiye'nin Toplumsal Hafızası (Turkey's Collective Memory with the Things it Remembered and the Things it Forgot)* is an example to this perspective. I believe this new trend in the academic field fits very well into the current liberal multiculturalist, 'colors' approach, which I will try to explain by examples from music in the following section. I will focus on music because I believe it is one of the main spheres where the nationalization of culture and the changing discourses and practices of cultural politics are most visible. Besides, a historical account of the production and transmission of Armenian music in relation to the changing cultural politics in Turkey will provide a background to my discussion about the remembrance of the Armenian lullabies in the following chapters.

The transmission of Armenian music of Anatolia in Turkey

“Armenian musical culture wends its way back through the bardic *aşuğ* music of the 17th and 18th centuries to the church choral and chant music of the 5th and 6th centuries, to the clear pagan elements in everything from extant divination songs to wedding ritual music in the folk repertoire –all of these musical strands surviving as distinct, rich traditions in their own right well into the 20th century.”³⁵ “Armenian folk songs (*yerk*) are generally classified into the genres of work songs, including women's work songs and *horovels* (the plowing songs or songs of the field); ceremonial songs (for weddings, funerals, etc.); epic songs; historical songs; dance

³⁵ Cynthia Rogers, from the booklet of the album *Armenia Anthology* by Shoghaken Ensemble, Traditional Crossroads, 2002, 80702-4311-2.

(*bar*) songs; humorous songs; lullabies (*oror*); lyric songs, love songs and songs of emigrants (*bantukhdi*³⁶ *yerker*) such as famous *Grung* (crane) and *Anduni* (homeless) songs.³⁷

The end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century is considered to be a renaissance period for the Armenian culture both in Western and Eastern Armenia. Along with the standardization and modernization of the Armenian language, the establishment of educational institutions and the foundation of several newspapers and journals in the field of art, one of the most important outcomes of this *Zartonk* (*Awakening*) period had been a growing interest in folklore. During this period, especially in Eastern Armenia, -main cultural center was Tbilisi (Tiflis)-, Armenian musicians who were educated in Moscow, started to collect samples of traditional Armenian music from their regions.³⁸ In Istanbul, Armenian musicians who were educated in Western classical music, mostly in Paris, started a monthly journal, *Knar Arevelyan* (1857-1858) where they published Armenian songs in European notation system, which was followed by other publications of similar content.³⁹ In Istanbul Armenian musicians such as Dikran Çukhacıyan (1836-1898), who is considered to

³⁶ Anne Marie Avakian in her book *Armenian Folklore Bibliography* says: "I have not found a suitable equivalent for *bantukht*, which primarily means pilgrim. Among Armenians a youth or a young married man went to Constantinople or some other large city to work a few months or longer to augment the family income. He was not really pilgrim, nor was he a migratory worker, a term commonly used in America. Many *bantukht* songs exist that express the loneliness of the worker in the big city and the longing of the families at home who await his return." Anne M. Avakian, *Armenian Folklore Bibliography*, University of California Press, 1994, p. xiii.

³⁷ Nouné Atanasian, from the booklet of the album *Traditional Songs of Armenia, Vol. 1* by Ensemble Karot, Face Music, 2000.

³⁸ For detailed information about Armenian music in this period see: Markarid Harutyunyan and Anna Barsamyan, *Hay Yerajışdutyun Badmutyun (The History of Armenian Music)*, Nor Tibrots Hiradaragçutyun, Yerevan, 1996.

³⁹ Harutyunyan-Barsamyan, p. 61.

be the creator of the Armenian and Ottoman opera, Edgar Manas (1875-1964), Armenag Şahmuradyan (1878-1939) and Parseğ Ganaçyan (1885-1967) started to compose pieces with themes from Armenian literature such as legends, mythology, poetry, etc. in Western styles rather than being involved in the ‘revival’ of Armenian folklore in terms of returning to its musical ‘roots’.⁴⁰

Armenian musicians were also among the creators of the Ottoman music (classical Turkish music) in Istanbul. Among these were Tatyos Efendi, Asdik Ağa, Sazende Arşak, Udi Hırant, Bimen Şen whose names are still remembered today.⁴¹ Hampartzum Limoncuyan, one of the most important in this group “formed the first scoring system used by Ottoman musicians in training and performing as well which also helped best examples of the nineteenth century repertoire to reach our day.”⁴²

According to Pakrad Estukyan, Istanbul Armenians met the Armenian music of Anatolia in a period when the Armenian bourgeoisie gained a higher status against the *Amira* aristocracy and a nationalization process started among Armenians. The concept of folklore started to be used at the end of the 19th century and there had been a growing interest in ethnomusicology, as a branch of science searching the ties

⁴⁰ The information in this section is mostly based on my interview with Pakrad Estukyan, who shared with me his years’ long experience and knowledge about the Armenian music. Interview with Pakrad Estukyan, 13 August 2004. Also see: Kevork Tavityan, “Cumhuriyet Öncesi ve Sonrasında Türk Vokal Müziğinde Ermeni Besteciler” in *Toplumbilim, Müzik ve Kültürel Kimlik Özel Sayısı*, no: 12, May 2001, pp. 73-99; *Arevelyan Hay Yerajışdner u Nivakadzuner 1768-1930i Şırçanın (Eastern Armenian Musicians and Players in the period 1768-1930)*, Surp Pırğıç, March 2000, no. 605, pp. 25-31; *Anmah Yerkahan Dikran Çuhkacıyan (Immortal Musician Dikran Çuhkacıyan)* Varujan Köseyan, January 2000, no. 603, pp. 43-53.

⁴¹ Tavityan, p. 74.

⁴² Bülent Aksoy, from the booklet of *Mosaic of Ottoman, Armenian Composers*, Sony Music, 2001, p.14.

to their 'roots'⁴³, thereby in folk music from Anatolia.

Gomidas Soğomonyan (1869-1935) was the most prominent figure in the making of the national Armenian music with more than 4000 collections, which he gathered by traveling from village to village. His contemporaries, Magar Yegmalyan (1855-1905) and Kara-Murza (1853-1902) who started before him, were also intensively involved in the collection and arrangement of folk songs. These collections included legends from the pre-Christian Pagan period and folk songs produced in everyday village settings. Along with the samples of traditional music, poems about patriotic feelings, longing for home as well as love constituted the themes of Armenian romances in the 20th century with the modernization process of the Armenian literature.⁴⁴

Under the strict censorship against the use of Armenian language in some Anatolian towns in late 1890s, Armenians started experiencing disruptions in their relations to Armenian culture. And in 1915 when Gomidas was arrested along with 250 Armenian artists and intellectuals, Armenian cultural life in Istanbul and in Anatolia was destroyed without the possibility of returning back to what was before...

The early republican period is very poor in terms of Armenian cultural and musical production. Pakrad Estukyan says that during the first decades of the republic, Armenians suffered from difficulties of expression. In later decades, because of the cold war polarization between USSR and Turkey, a member of NATO, there was no cultural interaction between Armenians in Turkey and Soviet Armenia.

⁴³ Pakrad Estukyan, "İstanbul'da Ermeni Müziği", *İstanbul Dergisi*, no: 45, April 2003, p. 84.

⁴⁴ Estukyan, p. 84.

Consequently, Istanbul started to live within an isolated culture. The dominant elements of this isolated culture have usually been the Istanbul urban culture, *Rum* music and *Sirtaki* dance, Turkish language and classical Turkish music. In terms of Armenian music, few songs, not exceeding ten in number, were taught at Armenian schools and remembered later. Estukyan notes that, before 1940s, these few Armenian songs that people knew included the arrangements of Gomidas and some popular songs from Eastern Armenia, that could be heard in the LPs released in Soviet Armenia.⁴⁵

Armenian music from Anatolia was becoming forgotten in Istanbul because, according to many people of Anatolian origin, adapting to Istanbul culture was more important for the migrants coming from Anatolia. There were many people who had chosen not to speak their *parpar* (local Armenian dialect) in order not to be discriminated against by the Istanbulite Armenians. Estukyan explains the impact of this on the Anatolian Armenian culture:

Among these *parpars*, *kavaraparpar*s and the local melodies, songs would become lost. These would only remain in the mouths of the old people. In special days, they would say '*hade hayrig sa yerki yerke*' (Dad, please sing this song) and *hayrig* would sing that song but it would not be repeated especially by the young generation.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Interview with Pakrad Estukyan, 13 August 2004.

⁴⁶ Bunların arasında tabii ki, *parparlar* da, *kavaraparparlar* da, yöresel ezgilerimiz, türkülerimiz de heba olacaktı. Belki bunlar ancak yaşlıların dilinde kalacaktı. Belki özel günlerde '*hade hayrig sa yerki yerke*' diyeceklerdi o *hayrig* o şarkıyı söyleyecekti ama bilhassa yeni nesil tarafından hiç de tekrarlanmayacaktı: Interview with Pakrad Estukyan, 13 August 2004.

In 1960s, there started a growing interest in the Armenian folklore within the leftist circles in the Armenian community. Armenian youth from universities and high schools became active in community associations such as the graduate associations of Tıbrevank, Getronagan and Bezciyan Schools. In 1969, Haçik Apelyan's journey to Armenia, the tapes and LPs he brought to Istanbul along with the dances that he learned there were very important for the flourishing of the dance and music activities in the community. The repertoire that he brought consisted of Tatul Altunyan's works, which were arrangements of Armenian folk music such as *Hoy Nazan*, *Sevani Tsignorsneri*, *Karavan*, *Yaman Yar*, which are still very popular within the community today.⁴⁷ Estukyan says:

A significant portion of Armenians living in Istanbul then, were not even aware of the existence a country called Armenia... In the 1970s for the first time they heard about its existence. They realized that there were songs other than the 4-5 songs they knew, that there were unique dances, unique dance music and this made them very happy, very excited and joyful. For this reason, folk dance performances in that period attracted people's interest a lot. Moreover, there was an artist coming from Lebanon in the same period, Adis Harmandyan. This man also came with a repertoire that we didn't know; we had never heard the songs he sung before. In the years 1966 and 1967 he also attracted much attention.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Interview with Pakrad Estukyan, Melissa Bilal and Altuğ Yılmaz, February 2002.

⁴⁸ O zaman İstanbul'da yaşayan Ermenilerin ciddi bir kısmı Ermenistan gibi bir ülkenin varlığından bile haberdar değillerdi (...) 1970lerde ilk defa böyle bir olgu olduğunu öğrendiler. Bildikleri o 4-5 tane şarkının dışında da şarkılar olduğunu, özgün danslar olduğunu, özgün dans müzikleri olduğunu öğrendiler ve bu onları çok mutlu etti, çok coşturdu, çok heyecanlandırdı. Onun için o dönemki halk dansları gösterileri çok ilgi gördü. Keza o dönemde Lübnan'dan gelen bir sanatçı vardı Adis Harmandyan diye bu adam da

In that period for the first time Aras Plakçılık, which used to release classical Turkish music LPs, released a Tatul Altunyan LP. Starting with the season 1970-1971 several associations' music and folk dance groups or choirs such as Getronagan Choir, Sayat Nova Choir and Maral Dance Music Ensemble started to perform these works. When we go through the booklets of the performances we can see that many of these performances also include Turkish folk songs and pieces from Pir Sultan Abdal. The atmosphere within which these activities were held was the leftist politics of the period emphasizing *halkların kardeşliği* (fraternity of the people).

In the 1970s Armenian musicians in Istanbul were active not only in cultural associations, dance music ensembles and choirs in the community but outside the community in the field of classical and jazz music as composers, private teachers or musicians in the city orchestra, opera, radio and conservatory as well as in Turkish pop music. Furthermore, during this period, Barteve Garyan, who is still very popular in the Armenian community, started to sing Armenian pop songs and produced albums distributed in the community. With the 12 September military coup, activities of cultural associations, who were the primary agents for the production of Armenian music, were frozen.⁴⁹

After the 1990s, along with the Kurdish, Pontic, *Laz*, *Hemşin*, *Süryani* and *Rum* music that started to gain public audibility in Turkey, Armenian music from Anatolia could find the space for being audible. The first album that included traditional

bizim bilmediğimiz bir repertuarla karşımıza çıktı söylediği şarkıların hiçbirini daha önce duymamıştık 1966-67 gibi senelerde o da çok büyük bir ilgi gördü. Interview with Pakrad Estukyan, 13 August 2004.

⁴⁹ In 1981 only Maral folk dance ensemble could stage a performance in AKM for the benefit of the army.

Armenian songs from Anatolia was *Halklardan Ezgiler: Ermeni Halk Müziği* (*Melodies from People: Armenian Folk Music*) gathered by Muammer Ketenoğlu who had also given a concert in 1994 in an Armenian cultural association in Istanbul. In this album released by Kalan Müzik in 1995 there are arranged songs from Soviet Armenia and traditional songs from Anatolia performed by various musicians in various albums. In Ketenoğlu's words:

I prepared this selection in your hand with the purpose of making it as representative as possible. While aiming to introduce the folk music instruments with examples, I also tried to portray a picture showing the range from the old folk music forms to contemporary interpretations. I hope these songs that will say 'hello' to the Turkish audience for the first time can have a small contribution to springing of a delayed friendship. With my wishes that it encourages new works in this field...⁵⁰

Another group composed of non-Armenians that performed Armenian songs was *BÜFK-BGST (Boğaziçi University Folklore Club and Boğaziçi Performing Arts Ensemble)*. *Kardeş Türküler* (Brother/Sister Songs) project of the group was launched in 1993 in Boğaziçi University. In their concerts or dance-music performances at several occasions including the Armenian cultural association

⁵⁰ Elinizdeki seçkiyi olabildiğince temsil edici bir çalışma olması kaygısıyla hazırladım. Bir yandan küçük örneklerle halk müziği çalgılarını tanıtmayı amaçlarken, diğer yandan eski halk müziği formlarından günümüz yorumlarına uzanan bir portre oluşturmaya çalıştım. Türk dinleyicisine ilk kez 'Merhaba' diyecek olan bu türküler gecikmiş bir dostluğun filizlenmesine küçük de olsa bir katkıda bulunur umarım. Bu alanda yapılacak yeni çalışmalarını özendirme dileğiyle... Muammer Ketenoğlu, *Küçük bir Tarihsel Değınme, Halklardan Ezgiler: Ermeni Halk Müziği*, Kalan Müzik, 1995.

Mikhitaryan, they performed Armenian songs. In their first album *Kardeş Türküler* released in 1997 by Kalan Müzik they explain their project with the following words:

The dramaturgic leitmotiv of the *Kardeş Türküler* project was, considering the theme of ‘fraternity of people’, to put on the agenda and interpret in an artistically and musical way, the cultures of the people and the societies that lived in Anatolia, and for centuries constituted their history together. *Kardeş Türküler* would be taken as a modest step in this direction.⁵¹

In this album, there are four Armenian pieces namely, *Gorani*, *Dile Yaman*, *Sari Gyalin* and *Zepür Gı Tarnam* among various Turkish, *Alevi Semahs*, Kurdish, *Laz*, *Gürcü* songs. In their second album *Doğu* in 1999, there are two Armenian songs, *Haynirina* and *Bingöl* among *Kurmanci*, *Zazaki*, Eastern *Süryani* and Arabic songs. In the third album *Hemavaz* in 2002, there are also two Armenian songs *Cuhktag Mom* and *Voğperk*.

Towards the end of the 1990s, the Armenian community in Turkey also started to focus on Armenian music from Anatolia. Pakrad Estukyan explains the reasons for this delay:

After a certain point there was a need for a more organized power in order to save these Anatolian songs from being forgotten. Of course both the political conditions and mental conditions had to mature. This idea

⁵¹ *Kardeş Türküler*, *Kardeş Türküler*, Kalan Müzik, İstanbul, 1997.

did not come out of us by itself. A professor Prof. Baruyr Muradyan from Armenia came and told us “why are you singing *Hoy Nazanim Yar*, the songs of your ancestors are becoming lost, get involved with them, find them instead of singing these”.⁵²

Knar Armenian Folk Music Ensemble was founded on this principle. One of the members of this group, Sezar Avedikyan explains the process of getting involved in Armenian music in Anatolia with the following words:

In the beginning we were listening to the LPs coming from Armenia and we were playing just like we heard them. In 1996, in our concert in Holland, we met ethnomusicologist Wouter Sweets who was an expert on Caucasian and Anatolian musics. He said that we played with Armenia style, and we need to search for the Anatolian style. Later on, in our concert in Istanbul, a guest from Yerevan, said “there are a lot of groups in Armenia singing these” and he asked “don’t you have melodies belonging to this geography?” We were ashamed. We started searching for the Anatolian musical tradition. We started to collect melodies that were part of the literature and started to interpret and sing songs by talking to people, old people from those localities.⁵³

⁵² Bir noktadan sonra daha organize bir güç gerekiyordu bu Anadolu türkülerinin unutulmaması için. Tabii ki hem politik şartların hem düşüncenin oluşması gerekiyor. Bizim içimizde o düşünce kendiliğinden oluşmadı. Ermenistan’dan bir bilim adamı geldi Prof. Baruyr Muradyan, “siz ne diye *Hoy Nazanim Yar* söylüyorsunuz, atalarınızın türküleri yok oluyor” dedi, “siz onları uğraşın da onları bulun”.

⁵³ Başlangıçta Ermenistan'dan gelen plakları dinliyor, duyduğumuz gibi çalıyorduk. 1996'de, Hollanda'daki konserde Kafkas ve Anadolu uzmanı etnomuzikolog Wouter Sweets'le tanıştık. Ermenistan üslubuyla çaldığımızı, Anadolu üslubunu araştırmamız gerektiğini söyledi. Kısa süre sonra İstanbul'da verdiğimiz konserde, Erivan'dan gelen bir konuk

The archival album *Anadolu Ermeni Halk Müziği (Armenian music of Anatolia)* that was released by Kalan Müzik in 1999 was a turning point in this sense. The booklet of this album is rich with photographs of Armenians from Anatolia and descriptions about traditional Armenian music. The songs in the album are from Van, Sasun, Pudanya (Marmara), Bardizag (Bahçecik in İzmit) Agn (Eğin), Antep, Garin (Erzurum), Gesaria (Kayseri), Dikranagerd (Diyarbakır), Palu (in Elazığ), Vakıfköy (in Hatay) and Sepasdia (Sivas).

In December 1999 Sayat Nova Choir had a concert of folk songs from Muş, which were collected by Armenuhi Kevonyan from migrants of Muş in various countries. This concert was very important because it was widely heard in public. It was publicized in *Yeni Gündem* newspaper and people from outside the community came to see the performance. There were also guest musicians and dancers such as Boğaziçi University Folk Dance Group, Şenol Filiz, Birol Yayla and Nezih Yeşilnil in the performance.

Similarly, in this period the choirs such as Lusavoriç, Vartanants and Getronagan as well as the newly formed music groups such as Akulis, Saylort and Arakast, dance ensembles such as Hay Dans, Yeraz, and Talar included traditional Anatolian songs and dances in their repertoires.

“Ermenistan'da bunları çalan grup çok, sizin bu topraklara özgü ezgileriniz yok mu,” diye sordu. Mağcup olduk. Anadolu geleneğini araştırmaya başladık. Literatüre geçmiş ezgileri toplayıp, o yörelerin insanlarıyla ve yaşlılarla konuşarak yorumlamaya başladık.

Interview with Serhan Yedig, “Vefakar Torunlar” in *Hürriyet / Tatil & Pazar*, 30. 5. 1999, <http://arsiv.hurriyetim.com.tr/tatilpazar/latin/99/05/30/eklhab/16ekl.htm>

Besides these Armenian groups in Turkey, musicians from Armenia also contributed to the public audibility of Armenian music in Turkey. After the independence of Armenia in 1991, various musicians from Armenia started to visit the Armenian community in Turkey and they gave concerts. But the public visibility of the musicians from Armenia such as Civan Gasparyan (or with his world music name Djivan Gasparyan) is primarily due to the world music trend. His albums entered Turkey through the world music distribution channels. It was rather strange to listen to the songs from Anatolia through such a channel, but in a short period of time these musicians started to release their albums in Turkey, as well as produced joint albums with musicians in Turkey. *Fuad* by Civan Gasparyan and Erkan Oğur; *Vuslat* by Suren Asaduryan and Yansımalar are examples released by Kalan Müzik.

Another Armenian musician Arto Tunç Boyacıyan, who was born in Istanbul but lived in the US gave public concerts and released albums in Istanbul. His album *New Apricot* made with the group *Armenian Navy Band* was released by İmaj Production company, and included songs with Turkish lyrics, which become widely listened in Turkey.⁵⁴

One can cite other examples in addition to these above, such as Knar's second album *Anadolu'dan Kafkaslara Ermeni Müziği (Armenian music from Anatolia to Caucasus)* in 2001, Vartanants Choir's *Vartanants Korosu* album and Sayat Nova Choir's *Tatul Altunyan Şarkıları (Tatul Altunyan Songs)* album in 2002, the archival albums released by Kalan Müzik as well as the albums produced abroad and

⁵⁴ During this period another important development was the performance of *Baribedagan Ansambl* (Armenian State Folk Dance Ensemble) in Lütfü Kırdar Hall in Istanbul, which was sponsored by Hürriyet newspaper.

distributed by *Traditional Crossroads* company as contributing to the audibility of Armenian music in Turkey.

However, the context within which Armenian musicians in Turkey can perform Armenian music in the public sphere today is mostly shaped by the ‘colors’ discourse. Except for a few organizations by oppositional groups, so far Armenian music groups such as Knar and Saylor or choirs such as Sayat Nova and Vartanants could only participate in concerts that became fashionable especially in the festivals with the aim of ‘presenting the multiculturalism of Turkey’ and which contained musicians from different ethnic groups.

One of the most visible of this kind of ‘multicultural’ concerts was Sezen Aksu’s *Anadolu Şarkıları (Songs of Anatolia)* project. Various groups accompanied Sezen Aksu to Efes, Aspendos and Istanbul in this concert such as Armenian *Vartanants* choir, Rum *Onorio*, Jewish *Los Paşaros Sefaradis*, Diyarbakır Municipality Children’s Choir with Kurdish songs and Enderun classical music group.⁵⁵

I will be criticizing this perspective that regards the cultures living side by side as the ‘colors’ of the Anatolian mosaic in Chapter 3, but here I want to note that despite the liberal stance that can be observed in the above examples, and which is itself an outcome of ongoing cultural and political struggles, there is still an influential nationalist wing in Turkey supported by the military and police, that cannot tolerate even liberalism. In this respect, one can remember that in December 1998, in a music

⁵⁵ http://www.istanbul.net.tr/istanbul_soylesi.asp?sid=64

festival in the Military Museum Knar's concert was banned by a last minute decision together with the concert of Reşo, a Kurdish group.

Similarly, Etyen Mahçupyan writes about a recent event during the Princess Islands festival where a Kurdish song was met with aggressive protests by nationalist groups. He says, "Now everyone is participatory, everyone believes in multiculturalism... However, these new values only exist in words, not in their hearts. Democratic words don't make one democrat; and Turkey stands quite out of this mentality. Consequently, multiculturalism is something to be annoyed at and undesired." By referring to the nationalists protesting the Kurdish song he says, "For them, the limits of multiculturalism should end whenever they hit Kurdish. (...) In short, these lands have always been multicultural, but we have never been on the side of multiculturalism. The ones with a more authoritarian mentality tend to repress it by monopolizing the public space as it is now and the more patriarchal ones tend to separate sides from each other by emptying the public sphere."⁵⁶

Recently, discussions about the politics of cultural difference and ethnic identities evolved into a different direction in relation to the changes in the Kurdish movement and in the process of EU-Turkey relations. On one hand, academicians, political activists and intellectuals started to develop a critical perspective towards multiculturalism, on the other hand, the state emerged as a party defining its own 'multiculturalism'. The state channel TRT started broadcasting in *Kurmanji* and *Zazaki* (without mentioning that these languages are Kurdish), Bosnian, Circassian

⁵⁶ Etyen Mahçupyan, "Çokkültürlülük bir virüştür!", www.gazetem.net/emahcupyan.asp?yaziid=170.

and Arabic, limited to one-hour news and ‘cultural programs’ per week. This rather ridiculous solution to the demands of broadcasting in the mother tongue came with a more offensive and nationalist tone in its programs.

It seems that Turkey enters a period where the issue of ‘minorities’, which was rather marginalized in the public sphere during the last decade, will become a core subject discussed within a broader perspective (embracing other ethnic groups in Turkey rather than only non-muslims), in relation to the latest report by the EU on Turkey’s progress towards membership.



GRANDMOTHERS' LULLABIES AND THE TRANSMISSION OF STORIES

“It was 1978 when I had to separate from my mother in order to learn my mother tongue. While my mom stayed in Ankara, I was sent to an old persons’ house, where my grandfather, his mother and my grandmother lived together. (...) Everyday the moment I get up I damn the entire world, and the Armenian language. How could it have separated me from my mom! The more I get furious, the more I dedicate myself to my classes! Yet I am still a babe-in-arms, no matter how much I try to hide it, no matter how much I struggle to cope with the situation. During some evenings I feel the longing for those left at home more strongly; as if the smell of my mom and dad floats in the air and sticks to my nose. (...) First it gets into my nose, later into my nostrils, of course burning them. I start crying, and lie down on my bed, yet it is impossible to sleep! No classes left to study either; I have already finished the homework of that day for this step mother tongue ‘that had separated me from my mom’. (...) I go to the bathroom, furiously slamming the doors. My grandfather’s mom Siran Koko cries out from her deep dark room, ‘Son *bali*, you couldn’t sleep?’ ‘No, I am unable to sleep Koko’ reply I while sniffing cantankerously. She usually goes to bed early, trying to sleep while looking at the ceiling. ‘Come’ she says, I climb in her bed. Sneaking my head into her wrinkled breasts I start crying my heart out. (...) Out of the blue I start hearing Siran Koko’s cracked voice. Joined to the permanent grief in her voice (she had a very tough life; as if loosing five of her brothers was not enough, also her daughter was kidnapped by the Kurds, and thereupon she never saw her again) is the helplessness in the face of not being able to soothe a crying six years old kid. *Knatsir Diğaaas, Al uş e uş, Sirds Dkhur e,*

*Vorpevayri yerker gise, im anuşis, Oror or or...*¹ ‘Once more’ I say. Koko sings once more. I don’t get the meaning of the lyrics exactly, yet how could I leave someone who was there for me singing lullabies in the middle of the night. (...) Years passed by. (...) I heard several stories from Siran Koko: her days in Merzifon College, her marriage, her survival, her longing for her daughter. Then I grew up, Siran Koko became my child, she grew so old she couldn’t take a bath herself, we started taking bath together. (...) One September afternoon this happiness ended tragically. Siran Koko, my accomplice at home, covering all my naughtiness, my wrinkled princess; she surrendered her soul to God and left me behind. (...) I wanted to go next to her. They said, ‘don’t go, you will be scared, you can’t sleep’. I said ‘no’ and climbed up on the bed and lay down by her. ‘Koko’ I said, ‘would you like me sing *oror*?’ No reply from her. Nonetheless I started singing the *oror* with a little hope, ‘*Knatsir Dıgaaas, Al uş e uş, Sirds Dkhur e, Vorpevayri yerker gise, im anuşis, Oror or or...*’ Towards the end, I couldn’t stop myself anymore and unleashed all my emotions. My grandmother came. They hardly took me away from the bed. That was the last time I sang the *oror*.²

¹ Sleep my son, it is late, my heart is sad, it sings songs from the land of the orphans, to my sweet, *oror or or*.

² Anadilimi öğrenmek için anamdan kopmam gerektiği 78 yılındayız. Anamlar Ankara’da kalmış, dedem, yayam ve dedemin mamasından oluşan bir yaşlılar evine atılmışım. (...) Her gün kalkıp bir posta dünyaya, ardından Ermenice’ye sövüyorum. Bu nasıl şeyse beni anamdan ayırmış! Sinirlendikçe ders çalışmaya atıyorum kendimi! Ama ne kadar dayanmaya çalışsam da, ne kadar maskelemeye çalışsam da henüz bir ana kuzusuyum. Bazı akşamlar öteki akşamlardan daha keskinleşiyor evdekilerin özlemi. Sanki havada anamın babamın kokusu dolaşıyor da burnuma yapışıyor. (...) Önce burnuma doluyor sonra genzime, yakıyor tabii. Ağlamaya başlıyorum, yatağa yatıyorum ama uyumanın mümkünü yok! Ders mers de yok, bu “beni anamdan ayıran” üvey anadilinin o günkü ödevlerini filan bitirmişim. (...) Tuvalete yollanıyorum, kapıları sinirli sinirli çarparak. Dedemin maması Siran Koko kapkaranlık yatak odasından sesleniyor, “Oğul Baliiii, uyuyamadın mı?” “Yok uyukum kaçtı Koko” diye burnumu çekiyorum huysuz huysuz. O da erkenden yatar, tavana baka baka uyumaya çalışır. “Gel” diyor, yatağına çıkıyorum. Büzüşmüş memelerinin arasına kafamı sokup hüngür hüngür ağlamaya başlıyorum. (...) Neden sonra Siran Koko’nun kırık sesi duyuluyor. Sesindeki daimi yasa (kolay değil beş kardeşini kaybetmiş yetmiyormuş gibi Kürtler kızını kaçırmış, bir daha da hiç göstermemişler) bir de altı yaşındaki bir veledi

The lullaby is a bridge between two women -grandmother and her grandchild, a bridge of tenderness, sensuality, secrecy, and trust. The body of Siran Koko with her lullaby becomes a part of her grandchild who seeks a shelter there in order to cope with her longing. The memory of the lullaby becomes a part of her body and it creates a memory, which is beyond any word. Ayda describes how her “step-mother-tongue” becomes a part of her body through that lullaby, which is a means for her to communicate with her grandmother. Her memory is bodily, sensual and emotional. In every sentence we can trace the memory of the senses -the smell of her mother in the air, the shutting of the doors, the cracked voice of Siran Koko and her wrinkled body- this is how she remembers her childhood days away from her mother. When she has Siran Koko no more with her, she returns her lullaby back as if it is a part of her body, Siran Koko’s and Ayda’s...

In my prelude, I said that in many cultures, through the lullabies women used to express their feelings, experiences, the way they see and relate to life. I considered

susturamamanın çaresizliği karışmış. “Knatsir Dıġaaas, Al uş e uş, Sirds Dkhur e, Vorpevayri yerker gıse, im anuşis, Oror or or...”“Bi daaa” diyorum. Koko bi daaa söylüyor. Sözlerini filan da doğru dürüst anlamıyorum, ama gecenin o saatinde bana oror söyleyecek birini bulmuşum bırakır mıyım hiç. (...) Seneler akıp gidiyor (...) Siran Koko’dan bir sürü hikaye dinlemişim. Merzifon Koleji günleri, evliliği, hayatta kalışı, kızına duyduğu özlem. Ben büyümüşüm Siran Koko benim çocuğum olmuş, çok yaşlanmış kendi başına yıkanamaz olmuş, artık banyoları beraber yapar olmuşuz. (...) Bir ekim öğleden sonrası bu saadete geri dönülmez bir darbe vuruluyor. Siran Koko, evdeki suç ortağım, bütün yaramazlıklarımın kapağı, buruşuk prensesim ruhunu allaha teslim etmiş, beni bırakmış gitmiş. (...) Başucuna gitmek istiyorum, gitme sonra uyuyamazsın korkarsın diyorlar. Korkmam diyorum. (...) Yatağa çıkıp yanına uzanıyorum. Koko diyorum oror söylesem hoşuna gider mi? Hiç ses gelmiyor. Yine de bir umutla oror söylemeye başlıyorum, “Knatsir dıġaaas, al uş e uş.” Sonuna doğru sesimi zaptedemeyip, darmadağın oluyorum. Yayam geliyor, beni yatağın üstünden zor alıyorlar. Ororu en son söyleyişim o oluyor.

This piece is from a letter published in *AGOS* in the same page with the news about our performance. In a way, this letter was addressed to us, the organizers of the performance, making us feel the excitement of having been able to open up a space for the lullabies to be heard. It showed us that we could share the memories of the lullabies with other people. Ayda Erbal, *Siran Koko’nun Kırık Sesi*, *AGOS*, 30 March 2001, p.4.

lullabies as the secret diaries of women, telling ‘forbidden’ stories, which remained on the margins of the ‘speakable’. In the first part of this chapter, I will try to give a framework to my discussion about lullabies as a medium for expressing women’s gendered experiences and in the second part, by turning to the lullabies and stories of the Armenian grandmothers in Istanbul I will try to explain how through the lullabies they tell their life stories, the stories of their family, their town in Anatolia and they keep and transmit the memory of Armenian presence and the violent destruction of that presence in Anatolia. I will try to explain how the transmission mediums and the senses that grant meaning to them shape the memory of the lullabies.

***Oror, ruri, nani, ninni*³: Lullabies as the secret diaries of women**

“The main theme in all of our songs was longing. Very few of our lullabies were real lullabies. Many of them were addressed to the one who is far away. They were created in order to cry out. Our mothers were putting us to sleep singing songs of yearning. We were just excuses for them in order to express their longing, their suffering.”⁴

Throughout Anatolia and in other geographies, women used to put their children to sleep by singing them sweet lullabies through which they expressed their love, praised the beauties of the child or wished them a happy future. These lullabies,

³ In Armenian *oror, ororerk, ororotsayin, hayrür, nanar*; in Kurdish *lurig, luri, ruri*; in Greek *nani, nanurizma*; in Turkish *nenni, ninni*...

⁴ Hagop Mintzuri. “Mer Mayrerı (Our Mothers)”, in *Girung Usdi Gukas (Crane, Where do you come from?)*, İstanbul, 1974, p. 89.

which were produced in women's secret spheres, the private of the private sphere, had become means for women to express themselves, their feelings, the way they see and experience life.

| | |
|---|--|
| Khaçin, lusingan norun, | On the day of the holy cross, on the new moon, |
| Yar yes ku campat gı nayim, | I look forward to your road, |
| Yar yes dığa tun dığa, | My love I'm young and you're young, |
| Mer sirun çağern yen hima. ⁵ | Those are our times for love. |

Through the lullabies, women not only sing about love and joy but also they voice out their untold stories of sorrow. As Lella Gandini points out, in many lullabies “while the melody is sweet or melancholy serves to appease the child, the words are infused with sadness. The rhythm that accompanies the lullaby and serves to rock the child to sleep also soothes the mother. In some cases, the words seem only to help the mother vent her frustrations.”⁶

There are many lullabies that express women's suffering in marriages without love or their complaints of their husbands. They “sound like protests or reflections on the condition of women, protests that can find a voice in lullabies.”⁷ Thus, lullabies create medium for women to sing about everything that could not be expressed in other situations.⁸

⁵ Traditional lullaby from Armidan. Mintzuri, p. 90. (see Appendix)

⁶ Lella Gandini, “Italian Nursery Rhymes” in *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 26, The Johns Hopkins University, 2002, p. 211.

⁷ Gandini, p. 211.

⁸ Krikoryan, p. 30.

Similarly, in many of the traditional Armenian lullabies women complain about their inferior position within the patriarchal social and economic organization of life. The responsibilities of being a young bride in an Anatolian village household are expressed in the lullabies. Women, while putting their babies to sleep, most of the time speak about their “deep weariness at the end of a long day or the fatigue caused by the time needed to rock the baby to sleep”⁹ or their obligations of working in the farm and at the same time taking care of the new born:

Why did you wake up? (...) Will you get up or what... Shall I take you out? You are very little you will become seven moths in *Vartavar*... You cannot sit alone... You tied my hands and feet... I will go crazy... Your mum did not collect even one single mulberry. How and when I will collect the mulberries from five trees, lay them down under the sun and let them dry? (...) What will your grandmother say? She will say that I chatted with this and that and my work is waiting for me...¹⁰

The examples above illustrate how lullabies enable us grasp the gendered organization of life in a specific social context through women’s standpoint. Besides, we learn about the gender identities and their meanings for women through the subjectivities and emotions of those women who are embedded in it. The best example for this can be traced through the differentiated wishes entertained for female and male children. While wishes for girls include nice clothes and marriage with the king as in the following lullaby:

⁹ Gandini, p. 211.

¹⁰ Mintzuri, p. 92.

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Oror oror ayıkh yes, | Oror oror you are awake, |
| Lahur şali layıkh yes, | You deserve a shawl from Lahur, |
| Lahur şalı inç gani, | A shawl from Lahur is not enough, |
| Takavori layıkh yes. ¹¹ | You deserve the king's hand. |

wishes for boys include becoming the head of a village or a brave warrior:

| | |
|---|--|
| Oror gançim imanas, | I shall sing you a lullaby and you listen, |
| Bargis 'vanuş kınanas, | You shall go to bed and sleep sweetly, |
| Knanas u medzanas, | You shall sleep and grow up, |
| Medzanas u medz mi linis, | You shall grow up and become an adult, |
| Poloris u keğ mi linis, | Become a village for all of us, |
| An keğn ur medz çi gena, | In that village where there is no head, |
| An keğin medzı tun linis. ¹² | You shall become the head of that village. |

“The world's earliest archives or
libraries were the memories of women.”¹³

By “teaching young children social customs such as family duties, social position,

¹¹ Traditional lullaby from Agn, arranged by N. Kalanteryan. (see Appendix)

Kantsaran Haygagan Yerkeru, p.688.

¹² Traditional lullaby from Agn. (see Appendix)

T. Azadyan, *Agn U Agntsik: Azkakragan yev Gensakragan Hişadagaran*, Mışaguyt Hıradaragçadun, Istanbul, 1943, p. 30.

¹³ Trinh t. Minh-ha. “Grandma's Story” in *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*, Indiana University Press, 1989, p. 121.

gender roles and relationships, family and ethnic heritage”¹⁴ through the lullabies, women also shape the formation of the collective identity. For that reason, lullabies are considered to be “genres in which social memory is retained and transmitted.”¹⁵

In her album *Ninna Nanna*, which is a collection of lullabies from different parts of the world, Monserrat Figueras greets her audience with the following words: “From the moment a baby is born, lullabies are a mother’s indispensable ally in soothing her child for whom everything in the big, wide world is new and frightening. The baby recognizes in the song her/his mother’s voice, her presence and her expression. The intimacy of the moment creates a space rich in ancestral symbols, in which words and music create a bond of pure emotion and truth. It is in this space that the child experiences her/his first dialogue, her/his first story, her/his first contact with the teachings of tradition, experience and culture, which over time build into an essential part of our collective memory.”¹⁶

In fact, I believe, women’s memories and lullabies keep and transmit the ‘archives’ of the unarchivable elements of a culture, such as secrets, emotions and senses. In the lullabies, Armenian women sing the way they perceive and experience the practices, traditions, customs and beliefs of their community. Thus lullabies retain a memory of the way women perceive their social and cultural environment.

Many Armenian lullabies also contain depictions of a town or village in Anatolia,

¹⁴ Jane Bowers, “Women’s Music and the Life Cycle”, *ILWC Journal*, October 1993, p. 9.

¹⁵ James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory*, Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1992, p.81.

¹⁶ Monserrat Figueras, *Ninna Nanna* (Alia Vox AV 9826, released in 2003).

they praise the beauties of the landscape or the productivity and the richness of the soil with its various fruits and crops. They speak about the peaceful moments of a presence in a specific locality and through the various practices embedded within that soil they express the sentiments of belonging to that geography.

| | |
|--|---|
| Oror oror im hokus hokin, oror | Oror oror my dearest, oror |
| Im nordung ekin, oror | The crop that I newly planted, oror |
| Vor nor e jmnner, oror | That newly grew up, oror |
| Biduğ çe diver, oror | Didn't give any fruits, oror |
| Diver ayva u khndzor, oror | Gave quinces and apples, oror |
| Meg ciğen hazar dereven, oror. ¹⁷ | From one branch and thousand leaves, oror. |

“Patently transmitted from mouth to ear, body to body, hand to hand”¹⁸ women’s lullabies and stories kept and transmitted the memory of the Armenian presence in Anatolia through the women’s eyes. But there came a time when women’s lullabies could not chant the ‘peaceful times’ in Anatolia anymore, they started to cry out the destruction of that presence. They could not soothe but disturb, they could not put babies to sleep but kept them awake. Those were the lullabies painted in the color of pain:

I was not told fairy tales. The fairy tale I was told was a story of exile that had started in the shores of Black Sea, passed in Eğin and ended in

¹⁷ Krikoryan, p. 55.

¹⁸ Minh-ha, p. 121.

an orphanage in Malatya. I am speaking about the road that my mother, grandmother, aunt and uncle passed. They always told this to me. At nights while putting me to sleep, instead of lullabies, my mother, my grandmother used to tell this story.¹⁹

Women's lullabies were the only carriers of that memory of violence and catastrophe. Women sung what they saw, they sung what they felt on their body; they sung nothing but pain:

| | |
|--|--|
| Der zor gertank lalakin, | We go Der Zor by crying, |
| Tsaverun mech gragin, | Through the pain of the fire, |
| Çiga luyusu cacançi, | There is no hope of light, |
| Yavrugs nenni gı gançim. | I say oror to my child. |
| Oror ısim knatsir, | I sing oror and you sleep, |
| Mışıg mışıg knatsir, | You sleep in peace, |
| Campan yergar mi kidnar, | Don't think that the road is long, |
| Vor çıkhosvi sirdit artar. ²⁰ | So that you don't worry your just heart. |

Today when we think about Armenian lullabies we mostly think about laments that speak about pain. Most of the Armenian lullabies in terms of their musical structure and melody, as well as their lyrics are at the same time laments. Those lullabies refer

¹⁹ Bana masal anlatılmadı. Bana anlatılan masal, tehcirde Karadeniz sahilinde başlayan, Eğin'de süren ve Malatya'da bir yetimhanede noktalanmış bir yol hikayesiydi. Annemin, anneannemin, teyzelerimin ve dayımın geçtiği yoldan bahsediyorum. Hep bunu anlattılar bana. Gece uyumam için ninni yerine bunu anlatırdı annem, anneannem.

Sarkis Seropyan in his interview with Celal Başlangıç in *Radikal*, 17 May 2004, p. 7.

²⁰ Traditional lullaby from Sivrihisar. Krikoryan, p. 90. (see Appendix)

to a very specific experience that had shaped the economic, social and cultural composition of the population in the Anatolian geography around the turn of the 20th century, defining the destiny of Armenians in this land with the foundation of the Turkish nation-state. Those lullabies tell about exile, starving, fire and death. They might even be the last words of a mother, whose child is near death. They tell about unimaginable experiences, violence and suffering in detail that no human mind can grasp. If we consider them as registers of the past they have the power of disrupting what is imagined as 'History'. Adorno defines this as the "loss of history."²¹

Lullabies lead us to the "disjunction points" of History as Nietzsche defines it, where one group of people loses the struggle in shaping 'History' and giving meaning to what has happened.²² Women by singing lullabies and telling their experiences under violence resist against the dominant narratives of History, by reminding those disjunction points which enables us to imagine what could have been otherwise.

Nadia Seremetakis in her book *The Last Word* tries to re-read the modernization process in Greece through "standing in the margin and look through it at other margins and the so-called center itself"²³. For Seremetakis, that margin is women's experiences expressed in the Greek laments. As I tried to explain above, in my work I consider that margin as the Armenian grandmothers' memories embedded in their lullabies which will enable us to decipher the history of the Turkification of the

²¹ Adorno, p. 91.

²² Raymond Geuss. "Nietzsche and Genealogy", *European Journal of Philosophy*, 2:3, Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1994, pp. 274-292.

²³ Nadia Seremetakis, *The Last Word: Women, Death and Divination in Inner Mani*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 1.

Anatolian geography.

In the following part I will start giving examples from the narratives of Armenian grandmothers today. Grandmothers' lullabies today with their gendered and ethnicized stories stand not only in a position to disrupt the dominant 'Turkish National History' but also on the margins of the Armenian collective memory in Turkey. Grandmothers feel that they themselves and their lullabies are abandoned today within a 'modernized' context and they express it with the following words: "Now they don't let me sing, they get angry with me. 'What is that' they say, 'old things'. They get angry, they say 'what is that, it is like you lament'." ²⁴

'So that you remember': Grandmothers' lullabies and stories of Anatolia

"This is the first time that I am singing this lullaby. The time has come... It's as if I was waiting for you so long to share it. This is my mother's story. My mother, who was a migrant from Erzurum, who had lost all her family and passed her childhood in an orphanage, was singing this lullaby to me telling: 'my child, this is for you to remember':

Karvann antsgatsav partsadz artsunkov,

Caravan passed with a burden of tears,

Dzunk çokets kednin,

She fell down on her knees,

Minats sev anabadum.

Remained in the dark desert.

²⁴ Şimdi söylemiyorlar ha, kızıyorlar bana, "o neymiş" diyorlar, "eski şeyler", valla kızıyorlar, "o nedir ağıt etmiş gibi" diyorlar.

Du lats mi lini, yes şad em latser.²⁵

Don't cry, I have already cried a lot.”

My account of how lullabies are remembered today is very much related to my position as a researcher as well as an Armenian woman who had been raised with lullabies and a potential mother who will sing them to her children as a link in the transmission. I cannot tell how lullabies are remembered today without telling how I asked them to be remembered, since listening to lullabies meant hearing the most intimate words that women sung to their children, the words that even their children did not hear, the words that they chose to share with me.

My sensual knowledge that lullabies were produced in a very specific context deepened with the experiences I went through during my research. Different than any other genre of folk music, lullabies were usually sung only to put children to sleep. The best indicator of this was the reaction of grandmothers when I asked them to sing me a lullaby, they explained that it was strange that someone asked them to sing a lullaby in a context where there was no baby to put to sleep. They even did not consider lullabies as a form of music, thus they told me that they could not sing since their voice did not allow singing. I found myself telling them that their voice should be very beautiful as they raised their children putting them into sleep without having the chance to refuse them singing lullabies while they were crying. Most of the time

²⁵ This lullaby was sung to me by a woman from Yerevan in August 2001. Later on, I came across with this lullaby with a different melody and a variation in its lyrics in the album *Armenian Lullabies*. According to the information in the album the lullaby is called *Nazeyi Oror* (Lullaby of Naze), its lyrics are from the poem *The Blind Troubadour* by Avedis Aharonian. It is obvious that this lullaby has become widely known and sung by Armenian women. However, she sung it to me with a different melody rather than its composed form and she changed the lyrics as she remembered it. Different from any composed lullaby, this lullaby that she had heard from her mother carries the memories of her childhood with fragments of her mother's life.

as they started singing, it seemed to me that the most beautiful voice in the world was that of a woman singing lullabies.

Many lullabies that I listened to had their own journeys, their own life stories. Each of them now has marks on me with the memories of their singers, the grandmothers. When grandmothers were singing their lullabies to me, they were also telling the stories within which these lullabies were embedded in. These stories included the life stories of the grandmothers woven into the stories of their mothers and families and they touched upon the lives of other Armenians in an Anatolian village or in an old Armenian district of Istanbul.

In *Surp Pirgiç* Armenian Hospital in Yedikule, for example, we had met Armenian women who had been very active in Armenian cultural life and served Armenian community schools for decades as teachers or directors. Their narratives were rich with depictions of the history of the Armenian community in Istanbul. They were comparing the old generations with the new ones in terms of the usage of the Armenian language, church attendance, participation in Armenian cultural activities, or the quality of education in the Armenian schools, etc. They were giving advice to us, the young generation Armenians, besides expressing their appreciations for our 'interest in preserving our culture'.²⁶

Along with the memories of old Istanbul, the grandmothers' generation also have vivid memories of Anatolia, their or their parents' hometowns. Those memories are marked with loss of home and loved ones as well as the Armenian presence in

²⁶ See Appendix for the lullabies recorded in Yedikule.

Anatolia. The lullabies from their hometowns are detached from their lands, from the soil they were produced and nourished, from the environment that had granted them their meanings. As Armenian women migrated to different places, lullabies also traveled with them and in the exile they started to be sung in order to remember what was left behind.

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Oror isem knatsinem, | I shall sing oror and put you to sleep, |
| Sirov sirdov medzatsinem, | I shall bring you up with a heart full of love, |
| Oror im tsakugis oror, | Oror my dear oror, |
| Oror im mançugis oror, | Oror my son oror, |
| Urugvan tem dnem orran, | Towards evening I shall put you in the cradle, |
| Sukis nisdem isem oror, | I shall sit with my grief and sing oror, |
| Der nor varti nıman batsvel, | You are like a newly opened rose, |
| Sukis nisdem isem oror, | I shall sit with my grief and sing oror, |
| El kun çunim hokis mayrig, | I am not sleepy any more my dear mom, |
| Herik açkıs gabes herik. | It's enough that you tie my eyes, it's enough. |

This lullaby by a grandmother who had heard it from her mother in Darende (Malatya) transmits the memories of her mother, her childhood, her hometown and carries fragments of sorrow, which is at some points untranslatable into our lives today. While she was singing lullabies she was also telling me about their village, how their family escaped from death, how her father had to become the priest for their village when there were no Armenian churches in their region anymore, or how she lost her sisters and brothers who were younger than her. And she added: “this

pain made me forget everything”²⁷, explaining that she used to know a lot of songs and lullabies before, but now she doesn’t feel in the mood to sing them.

The grandmothers tell the stories of Anatolia in a context where the contexts within which these stories had been lived are lost today, causing their lullabies and stories to be displaced from the land that lend them their meanings. The Armenian presence in Anatolia, the homeland of Armenians, turned into a ruin today as all of the Armenian houses, churches, schools and other markers of presence are destroyed and the name ‘Armenian’ started to be associated with the word ‘*kalıntı*’ (remainder), ‘*Ermenilerden kalma*’ (remaining from Armenians), ‘*Ermeni kilisesi kalıntıları*’ (the ruins of an Armenian church), something that does not really exist but reminds. While the grandmothers tell their stories of home in Anatolia within a context where they are displaced from those homes and everything that will give meaning to their belonging to Anatolia is destroyed today, their stories become the symptoms of loss in terms of the Armenian presence in Anatolia and the visibility of that presence within the representations of the history of Anatolia:

I got married and went to Gümüşhacıköy from Merzifon. Our house was very large. The weddings of our relatives were celebrated in our house. We had stages (...) Meals and *çörek*s with poppy seeds were prepared for the weddings. When a guest visited our house, a lamb was brought to the house for sure. The lamb was cut and filled with rice, and it was roasted. It smelled delicious. In those times, there were many people coming from

²⁷ Bu acılar bana herşeyi unutturdu.

Istanbul. For example, if a guest from Istanbul visited an Armenian, they would distribute the lamb to others as well. (...) All the Armenians in Amasya knew how to play musical instruments. At vintage, all the Armenians used to come together and call out ‘Hagop take your violin and come by’. It was great fun.²⁸

We used to speak Armenian at home. We never spoke Turkish. In the evenings, we used to visit each other. There was no television those times. We learnt Armenian from each other, we used to go out, we used to speak Armenian. We came here, then we began to speak Turkish.²⁹

Grandmothers tell the stories of this richness, joy and happiness in relation to their absence today. They often start or end these stories by mentioning their loss in order to situate the meaning of their story within a lived experience of displacement and loss: “There were eighty Armenian households in Hacıköy, now there are eight people left. In Merzifon, none.”³⁰

Similarly, a grandmother from Arapgir was telling me that they were the last Armenian household in their town and they kept their mother tongue by hearing them

²⁸ Merzifon’dan Gümüşhacıköy’e gelin gittim. Evimiz çok büyüktü. Salonlarda, hep akrabaların düğünleri bizim evde olurdu. Sahnelerimiz vardı. (...) Düğünlerde yemekler, haşhaşlı çörekler yapılırdı.(...) Eve misafir geldiği zaman muhakkak bir kuzu gelirdi eve. Kuzunun karnı açılırdı pilav doldurulur bütün fırına verilirdi. Buram buram koka koka güzel. O zaman İstanbul’dan çok gelen olurdu. Mesela bir Ermeni’ye İstanbul’dan misafir gelirdi bize de dağıtırdı (...) Amasya’da Ermenilerin hepsi çalgı bilirdi. Hele o üzüm bağı zamanı bütün haylar bir araya gelir, *Hagop çutagıt ar de egu* (Hagop kemanını al da gel) bağırırdı, vur patlasın çal oynasın çok şendi.

²⁹ Evde hep Hayeren konuşurduk. Biz Türkçe hiç konuşmazdık. Akşam oldu mu birbirimizin evine giderdik. O zaman televizyon da yoktu. Birbirimizden öğrendik, gezmeye giderdik Hayeren konuşurduk. Buraya geldik de Türkçe konuşmaya başladık.

³⁰ 80 hane vardı Ermeni, şimdi Hacıköy’de 8 kişi kaldı. Merzifon’da hiç yok.

from their mothers and grandmothers. Her grandmother used to tell stories while braiding her long hair: “She used to tell stories of exile while braiding our hair.”³¹ And she expressed her sorrow that today people do not recognize that pain: “Terrible things happened but now they say that nothing happened.”³² Since she learned and spoke her mother tongue under conditions defined by the absence of Armenian schools and churches to teach Armenian, she eagerly wants to preserve and transmit the Armenian language as a precious belonging. That’s why she sings Armenian lullabies to her neighbor’s son whose mother does not know Armenian.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Oror oror or, | Oror oror or, |
| Oror gısem knanas, | I sing oror, you shall sleep, |
| Yavrum anuř kuni diranas or or, | My child I wish you have a sweet sleep or or, |
| Oror oror oror, | Oror oror oror, |
| Oror oror heř deđi, | Oror oror to a good place, |
| Yavrum orran tiri boř deđi oror or, | My child, I put a cradle in vain, |
| Elayi lernerı partsrerı nayim, | I climb the mountains the high hills and look |
| Antsnođin tarnođin sirdı gı nayim, | I look at the hearts of the passers by, |
| Yavrum lezut panali ılla | My child I wish your tongue was a key |
| Sirdit panayi, | And I could open your heart, |
| Sirdit meçi tsavun es imanayi, | I wish I could feel the pain in your heart, |
| Oror or, | Oror or, |
| Hover dar u per hover, | The winds take and bring, |
| Keři dar ađvorı per, | Take the bad and bring the good, |

³¹ Saçlarımızı örerken aksor (sürgün) hikayeleri anlatırdı.

³² Şad keř paner yeđav ama hima hiç pan mı çe yeđadz.(Çok kötü şeyler oldu ama şimdi sözde hiçbir şey olmamış).

Keşun dern arev çuni,

The lord of the bad does not have sun,

Yavruyes khabar mi per oror or.

Bring news from my child oror or.

This lullaby that she sang to me expresses a mother's yearning for her child. The reason why she chose this lullaby at that moment was that she wanted to communicate her feeling of longing for her son who was living in Germany.

From time to time, grandmothers thought that what they tried to tell me was beyond my experience or imagination. They often stopped and explained things they thought I would not be familiar with. They tried to communicate their stories to me with all the necessary details that would enable me to share the meanings and the senses evoked by the story. I had visited a friend's grandmother who had told me about her life in Amasya. She said that the production of grape molasses was a central practice in their lives and an activity associated with Armenians who had orchards there. She told me about the special kind of soil that was necessary for making grape molasses. That kind of soil, *pekmez toprağı* (molasses soil), was found only in the mountains of their village, for which she had a deep longing. She insisted that I taste her molasses jam, which she was sure that I had never tasted before. She was right, although one side of my family was from Amasya I was not familiar with that taste. It was important for her to make me taste it because only then I could feel the sense that she wanted to transmit to me. Since that taste was an indispensable element of her life story, only then could I understand what she had left behind when she had to move to a small apartment in Yenimahalle where she has to produce molasses from the grapes that she bought from the supermarket, only then could I understand the sense of loss that she felt when she had to watch the destruction of her house in Amasya, and the

feeling of thankfulness she still has as expressed in the following words: “Our Armenians suffered a lot, but thanks for today; I am so glad to hear the sound of the church bell, to go to church or see the students, at least God granted this to us.”³³

“The speech is seen, heard, smelled, tasted, and touched”³⁴: Memory transmitted through the senses

As pointed out by Trinh t. Minh-ha in the above quote and illustrated by the previous story where the taste of the molasses becomes significant for the memories of the grandmother, what is transmitted and the very transmission itself with its materiality merges into one. What is transmitted through the lullabies is not only a song floating in the air, but the words, the sound, the melody, the voice of the grandmother, the texture of the mother tongue, as well as the practices that accompany singing lullabies such as swinging or rocking the child on the legs, and all the emotional attachment that is evoked through the sweet words, looks and smiles, the bodily interaction constitute the memories of lullabies. As Minh-ha says, women and children cry, laugh, or fear but they never think of saying it to each other³⁵ and those senses, those feelings are also transmitted to the next generations.

Nadia Seremetakis explains how “grandma used to mash with her fingers carrot, potato, macaroni, and feel it with her lips and even her tongue and then give it to the

³³ Bizim Ermeniler çok çile çekmişler ama bugüne de çok şükür, ben bir kampananın sesini işitsem, kiliseye gitsem, ya da okul çocuklarını görsem öyle çok seviniyorum ki hiç olmazsa Allah bu muradı vermiş bize.

³⁴ Minh-ha, p. 121.

³⁵ Min-ha, p 121.

child. (...) When the food was hard, such as bread crust, the old women would soften it with their saliva. Also when we ran back home with a wound of some sort, they put saliva on it with their finger to heal it”³⁶, scenes we are very much familiar from our childhood days. Seremetakis tells that this practice “imprints memory on the substance internalized by the child” and she says, “memory is stored in substances that are shared, just as substances are stored in social memory which is sensory.”³⁷ The practice of cooking food with saliva accompanies kisses and sweet words, emotions, which contribute to a memory, which is bodily and sensual. The body of the singer/teller and the body of the listener become their extensions as Ayda explains in her letter. “Grandma gives her parts to see them inscribed on the child over time. This is what she receives back from the child: the memory of herself in parts.”³⁸ A grandmother told me that her grandmother had given the names of her brothers and sisters who had been killed to her children in order to keep their memories alive: “She gave names so that the memory of her family would live. *Khaçer, Bedros, Meryem...*”³⁹ This way, each child with her or his name takes on the story of her mother’s family.

The memory inscribed on bodies is important because they reach beyond any speech. Seremetakis expresses it with these words: “My body involuntarily knew what I

³⁶ Nadia Seremetakis, “The Memory of the Senses, Part II: Still Acts” in *Senses Still*, University of Chicago press, 1996, p. 24.

³⁷ Seremetakis, Part II, p. 28.

³⁸ Seremetakis, Part II, p. 27.

³⁹ İsimler koydu ki kendinin sülalesi yaşasın. *Khaçer, Bedros, Meryem...*

consciously did not.”⁴⁰ The memory that lullabies create leaves marks, sediments on your body. As an example of how bodily memory is an inscribed element of lullabies, I remember one of the grandmothers saying that she has to create a context for singing lullabies before starting to sing. She closed her eyes and started moving her feet like rocking a baby on her feet while singing. This movement of rocking and swinging is an action embedded in the practice of singing lullabies as it can also be understood from the meaning of the word *oror*, the Armenian word for lullaby, which also means ‘to rock’: “Chanted over and over in almost every lullaby, *oror* is the consummate onomatopoeia, its rolling *r* and double phoneme *or-or* mimicking the sound of the thing it represents, the to and fro of the cradle endlessly rocking.”⁴¹

Rocking also defines the main rhythm in a lullaby song. Simon Frith says, “we absorb songs into our own lives and rhythms into our own bodies.”⁴² The rhythm of a lullaby makes the baby sleep and together with the grandmother they move as a single body.

The memory created by lullabies is very much linked to a space. It is autobiographical and historical at the same time. It tells the life story of a woman which is embedded in a specific historical time and space. The desires, dreams, hopes of the grandmother and the way she perceives herself, the way she knows and

⁴⁰ Nadia Seremetakis, “The Memory of the Senses, Part I: Marks of the Transitory” in *Senses Still*, University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 6.

⁴¹ Cynthia Rogers and Heriknaz Harutyunyan from the booklet of the album *Armenian Lullabies* by Hasmik Harutyunyan and the Shoghaken Ensemble.

⁴² Simon Frith, “Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music”, in *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception*, eds. Richard Leppert and Susan McClary, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.139.

relates to life is transmitted through the lullabies. And these senses and feelings are shaped in specific historical and cultural contexts.

I believe, in order to understand Armenian subjectivity in Turkey, it is necessary to focus on these historical and cultural contexts. In this chapter I tried to show how a particular kind of belonging is created and transmitted through the grandmothers' lullabies, which by transmitting stories also transmit senses that make the stories meaningful. These meanings and senses that make one 'Armenian' are indispensable elements of identity. I argue that in order to understand the way Armenianness is experienced in Turkey in relation to changing identity politics, we have to focus on the marginalization or the loss of these senses within the current context.

LULLABIES IN A NEW CONTEXT: THE EXILE OF THE SENSES

Today selected examples of 'ethnic music', including lullabies are circulated and 'consumed' through the new technologies of communication and media and these gradually replace the practice of singing lullabies. But on the other hand, through the spaces opened up within the changing context of cultural politics, these advanced recording technologies also enable the grandmothers' lullabies to survive and be transmitted to new generations. The shift from listening to lullabies from grandmothers within an experiential and sensual context, which I have discussed in the previous chapter, to hearing them as processed through the means of media should be historicized within the framework of cultural politics informed by new modes of nationalism, consumerism and globalization in Turkey. In order to grasp the dynamics of the current cultural politics within which Armenian identity is articulated today, it is necessary to analyze how the way Armenians relate to these new cultural productions differ from the way they related to the grandmothers' lullabies.

In this chapter I will first discuss the difference between the kind of memory that the lullabies on compact disc create from the memory that the grandmothers' lullabies retain. By explaining the new trend towards 'learning' or 'regaining' the Armenian language, history, dance, music, and other elements of culture, which also shows itself in the way lullabies are remembered today, I will try to explain how young Armenians criticize liberal cultural politics by pointing out their lived experiences of being an Armenian in Turkey which do not find space in the public representations of 'the Armenian'.

Track 4: Bar Bar Genem: Lullabies on Compact Disc

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, there has been an increase in the production of Armenian music albums in the world as well as in Turkey in the last decades. A significant number of albums started circulating among Armenians in Istanbul especially after the independence of Armenia and the improvement of relations with the Armenian communities in various countries such as France, Lebanon and the US. People visiting these countries started to bring Armenian music cassettes and CDs with them.

As far as I know it was Aras publication house, which first started to bring them. I guess we started buying duplicated CDs that Aras had brought from the US, from abroad. Then for a while the guys from Getronagan started making copies and we bought them. (...) When I entered Hay Bar, they had albums from everywhere in their archives, they even had brought them from Armenia. Now it is easier to access these materials, you can even download them from the Internet.¹

I listen to Armenian music. I bought CDs and cassettes from ordinary music stores and made copies of friends' CDs. When someone close comes from abroad she / he calls and asks if we want something, if there

¹ İlk herhalde Aras getirmeye başladı benim bildiğim kadarıyla. Aras'ın, Amerika'dan, dışardan getirdiği kopya CDleri, çoğaltılmış CDleri almaya başladık herhalde. Sonra Getronagan'lı çocuklar bir ara çoğalttılar, onları aldık. (...) Hay Bar'a girdiğimde onların arşivinde her yerden vardı, Hayasdan'dan da getirmişlerdi. Artık daha kolay ulaşılabilir de, internette bile indirilebiliyor.

is something we cannot find here we give the name of the album, if she /
he can find she / he brings it.²

With these incoming albums, various Armenian lullabies have started to become part of the musical repertoires of Armenians in Istanbul. These lullabies were mostly composed and arranged. Composed and arranged lullabies stand in a very important place in terms of the musical memories of Armenians in Istanbul today. When I started to collect lullabies I realized that for many decades in Istanbul what had been transmitted to the next generations were only the composed ones. In fact, these kind of lullabies were listened to in the public sphere of the Armenian community long before these albums. These lullabies were taught at school or sung in various Armenian choirs.

A few of these composed lullabies have been among the most popular Armenian musical pieces in Istanbul. *Kun Yeğir Balas* is one of them. In one of the anthologies of Armenian music, it is mentioned that this lullaby is from Vaspuragan (the city of Van and its surrounding region) composed by Parseğ Ganaçyan for his wife and the lyrics are by Kamar Katiba, a folk poet. In this book, this lullaby is written down in the Western notation system.

Kun yeğir balas, açerit khup ara,

Sleep my child, close your eyes,

Naşkhun açerut kun toğ ka vran,

Let the sleep reach your sweet eyes,

Oror im balas, oror u nani,

Oror my child, oror and nani,

² Ermenice müzik dinliyorum. CDleri kasetleri müzik marketlerden aldım, arkadaşlarımdan kopyaladım. Yurt dışından tanıdık geldiği zaman arar sorar istediğiniz bir şey var mı diye, burada bulamadığımız bir şey olursa söyleriz işte şu şu CD, ismi şu. Yani bulabilirse getirir.

Im anuşigis kunı gı dani.³

Sleep takes my little sweet.

We can find this lullaby in many Armenian music albums, most of the time performed with piano or orchestra accompaniment and in bel canto, operatic singing style. Examples are Arpine Pehlivanian's performance in the album *Mélodies Arméniennes* or Hermine Yerissians' in *L'aube Mystérieuse* both released in France, in 1997 and 1998 respectively. These two albums are presented as "Armenian art songs" and "melodies from the 20th century Armenian composers". *Kun Yeğir Balas* stands there along with other 'art songs' by various Armenian composers such as Parseğ Ganacıyan, Krikor Suni and Romanos Melikyan.

Another widely known lullaby among the Armenians today is an arrangement by Hagop Edilyan. Almost all grandmothers knew this lullaby, as my grandmother told me they had learned it in primary school:

Oror im mangig,

Oror my little child,

Knatsir mışig mışig,

Sleep peacefully,

Ağvor cermag lusingan,

The beautiful white moon-light,

Tsatets orranit vıran.⁴

Shone on your cradle.

When we think through the framework that I have articulated in Chapter 2, where I tried to understand the singing of lullabies as a practice embedded in everyday life that gains its meaning from the women's standpoint in a specific social and cultural

³ *Kanstaran Haygagan Yerkeru*, p.21. (see Appendix)

⁴ *Kantsaran Haygagan Yerkeru*, p. 448. (see Appendix)

environment, composing lullabies as an artistic activity becomes a rather different practice.

Armenian intellectuals and artists within the nationalization and modernization process had considered lullabies as a genre of music and a part of 'Armenian cultural heritage'. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, most of these composed lullabies were created in places outside Anatolia, mainly in Eastern Armenia. However they had become largely known by people in Anatolian towns through the musical education in Armenian schools. For example, *Kun Yeğir Balas* was the only lullaby sung to me by the grandmothers in Vakıfköy. This lullaby that was not in their local dialect, which is still in use, was taught at times when there were Armenian schools in that region.

What is crucial for the argument I would like to develop is to note that what is transmitted to the young generations is more often these composed lullabies or the arranged versions of the traditional lullabies and they are remembered more than the grandmothers' lullabies today. For example during our visit to Yedikule, we listened to this lullaby also from an 80 year-old grandmother who said that she had learned it in an Armenian choir. She was singing it in a form which was very close to the ones we hear in the albums I mentioned above. Therefore, in Istanbul today when we think of lullabies what comes first to mind are these composed ones.

One of the main differences between the composed lullabies and the creations of the grandmothers is that the former are not created by women. They do not reflect the women's world, perceptions, desires, hopes, and the way they relate to life, which

also becomes a life guide for their children. They are not mediums for crying out the hardness of life but rather a medium for 'artistic' creation. Thus, they are not created in the margins of a tradition containing criticisms and complaints of it. They are rather celebrations of a 'national cultural heritage'. Besides, they are not produced for a specific function to put children to sleep, that's why the melodies and the rhythms are more complicated making them unsuitable for rocking the child.

Except for those lullabies which have become popular and are sung by women with their own interpretations, these composed lullabies are different from the ones which are improvised by women at the moment that the child is going to sleep, sung each time differently in terms of melody and lyrics and reflecting what is in the mother's mind at that moment. In the composed lullabies the lyrics are written down and the possibility of changing them becomes harder. Furthermore, because the melodies of these lullabies are written down in the Western notation system, they also lose the traditional motifs, the local musical themes due to the impossibility of writing the *komas* (quarter notes) in the European twelve-note system and the range of improvisation becomes narrower.

However, I observed that the grandmothers who remembered these lullabies from their childhood make them their own by improvising on them both in terms of lyrics and melody. They sometimes remember differently or change the lyrics putting in them their own context. In Vakıfköy, I listened to a version of *Kun Yeğir Balas* by an 85 year-old grandmother who was singing it with a different melody and by adding an *oror or oror or or nenni* to the end of each stanza, most probably in order to make it more local and more suitable for making the child sleep with the rocking phrase

‘oror’. Her daughter has also accompanied her while she was singing the lullaby, and when she stopped singing her daughter continued with the remaining stanzas:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Kun yeğir balas açerit khop ara, | Sleep my child, close your eyes, |
| Oror or oror or or nenni, | Oror or oror or or nenni, |
| Oror or oror or or balas, | Oror or oror or or balas, |
| Im anuşigıs kun gı dani. | Sleep takes my little sweet. |
| Surp Asdvadzamar anuşis kun dur, | Holy Mother grant sleep to my sweet, |
| Kun yeğir tun indzi al kun dur, | You become sleep and give me sleep, |
| Oror or oror or or nenni, | Oror or oror or or nenni, |
| Vosge khaç vızit kezi bahaban, | Golden cross on your neck protects you, |
| Narod e gabel Surp derder baban. | The holy priest ties the narod ⁵ . |

Thus, what becomes important is the transmission medium, that is to say, the context these lullabies are transmitted, the person who is transmitting them and the kind of relationship they create. Those lullabies that we learn through education and listen to in different occasions other than in a family setting, such as in a concert or in an album have different meanings for us. The way we practice and remember them is different from the ones we hear from our grandmothers. For example the ones we learn at school are more public, more communal rather than having the autobiographical stories of our family members in them. The ones that are on the albums rather than being processed by women’s life experience, are mediated by technology and shaped by the economic and political dynamics of their production contexts. Most importantly, they are not transmitted through the bodily, intimate and

⁵ *Narod* is a red or white rope tied by the priest on the heads of the bride and the groom during the marriage ceremony.

sensual relationship that I tried to explain in Chapter 2. As Martin Stokes mentions “in our own technologised and industrialised existence, the ritual forms of music have become peripheralised, and the rest, social dances, bar sessions, concert attendance, listening to a new CD at home in the evening or the radio during the day fit into gaps created by work, or at least, the new working day. Music often seems to do little more than fill a silence left by something else”⁶, we listen to these lullabies in the albums in our spare times rather than hearing them when a mother is singing to her child. We don’t live that ritual, bodily moment, but we ‘learn’ them through an intellectual curiosity; and this difference between the bodily, sensual, practical knowledge and what we perceive, learn or know through our minds is a gendered division.

As those lullabies become dominant over the grandmothers’ lullabies, the intimate and sensual memory that is the defining element of a lullaby vanishes and its specific meaning gets transformed. This idea was shared by a young Armenian whom I talked to:

Not only in terms of being in an album, but for example there is no meaning in singing it just as an example of a lullaby, but it is most probably different for example hearing it when she sings it while putting the baby into sleep. You feel the way the one who sings it feels. If it is

⁶ Martin Stokes, “Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity and Music”, in *Ethnicity Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, ed. Martin Stokes, Berg Publishers: Oxford, 1997, p. 2.

only the melody of a lullaby, it may not mean much or if it is not sung by a mother, which is also very important.⁷

Within the last decades, with the rise of the world music trend and with an interest towards 'ethnic music' in Turkey, the traditional lullabies also started to find place in the albums along with the composed and arranged ones. One of the best examples of this trend is the album *Armenian Lullabies* released in 2002, recorded in Armenia by Hasmik Harutyunyan and the Shoghaken Ensemble. In this album there are thirteen traditional lullabies from Black Sea, Muş, Van, Agn (Eğin), Taliş (in Caucasus) and Kessab (in Syria), which are performed with traditional instruments. Advised to be classified under the title 'Armenia' in the world music market shelves, Armenian lullabies in this album are presented to the world music audience with no Armenian transcriptions but only their translations in English. The album is presented with the following words:

Their quiet, haunting interpretations of lullabies from historical villages across the Armenian plateau offer a mesmerizing glimpse at a lost world. (...) Harutyunyan consciously preserves the differences in regional dialect, style and musical modes that make the Armenian lullaby such a rich genre. (...) With its rhythmic, lilting melody and simple, repeated phrases, the lullaby is both a gateway to sleep and a portal to language itself, a threshold between the preverbal void and the parsed, meaningful world. If you listen to the achingly beautiful lullabies on this recording

⁷ Tek albümde değil de mesela onun sadece ninni diye söylenmesinin bir anlamı yok ama bebeği uyuturken dinlemek mesela daha farklı olabilir. Onu söyleyen insan nasıl hissediyorsa sen de öyle hissediyorsun. Sadece melodi olarak söyleniyorsa ninni çok fazla şey ifade etmiyor ya da bir anne söylemiyorsa, mesela o da önemli bir şey.

without understanding the Armenian language, like a swaddled infant you absorb this musical genre in its most elementary form. (...) In Armenia there are hundreds of lullabies in the oral tradition born in countless villages across the Armenian high plateau. Historically these lullabies varied subtly between villages, towns, and regions.⁸

In this text, Armenian lullabies are presented as a part of the ‘authentic’ culture of a ‘lost world’. The audience would relate to the Armenian lullabies in this album within a framework very much shaped in market relations. Simon Frith explains this by speaking about “the way in which ‘minority’ musics are defined” in the music market. He says “‘women’s music’, for example, is interesting not as music which somehow expresses ‘women’, but as music which seeks to define them, just as ‘black’ music works to set up a very particular notion of what ‘blackness’ is.”⁹

In Chapter 1, I said that Armenians in Istanbul themselves also started to produce Armenian folk music albums. I mentioned *Anadolu Ermeni Halk Müziği (Armenian Folk Music of Anatolia)* by Knar Folk Music Ensemble. In this album, there are pieces representing different genres of Armenian music such as love songs, dance songs, wedding songs, etc. In this album, there is also a lullaby from Gesaria (Kayseri) region:

Bar bar genem bar genem,

I do bar-bar,

⁸ Cynthia Rogers and Heriknaz Harutyunyan, from the booklet of the album *Armenian Lullabies* by Hasmik Harutyunyan and the Shoghaken Ensemble.

⁹ Simon Frith, “Towards an aesthetic of popular music”, in *Music and Society: the politics of composition, performance and reception*, eds. Richard Leppert and Susan McClary, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 138.

Gaban gıdrem şar genem,

Es yavruyis arevun,

Çift göçü ğurban genem.¹⁰

I cut the cloth and make a dress,

For the sun of my child,

I sacrifice two sheep.

In this lullaby there are some local words that are unfamiliar to us, to the audience in Istanbul today. For example *şar* or *şor* means dress in Anatolian Armenian and it is still used in Eastern Armenian in the same way, but in Western Armenian it is not used with the same meaning, it rather means diapers. Besides, we come across expressions such as *bar bar genem* only in lullabies or in songs for playing with the child.

This specific lullaby in this album serves to complete the general picture of the Armenian folk music in Anatolia but it is detached from its specific context and is produced and listened to within a new context also by people who are not from Gesaria. The traditional lullabies, which carry the specificity of a region with the local variations in language as the above lullaby illustrates or with certain practices embedded in that geography lose their meanings in terms of denoting a particular experience and a memory related to a specific space. They gain new meanings referring to a notion of general ‘Armeniannes’.

Andreas Huyssen argues that “older sociological approaches to collective memory – approaches such as Maurice Halbwachs’s that posit relatively stable formations of social and group memories- are not adequate to grasp the current dynamics of media

¹⁰ A lullaby from Gesaria sung by Filor Ğazarigyan.

Mihran Tumacan, *Hayreni Yerk U Pan* (Song and Word), v. 2, Yerevan 1983, p.101.

and temporality, memory, lived time and forgetting”¹¹ and “we cannot discuss personal, generational or public memory separate from the enormous influence of the new media as carriers of all forms of memory.”¹² Therefore, for me, it becomes very important to understand the contexts within which these albums of Armenian music are produced and consumed in Turkey in terms of understanding the kind of memory they create.

These Armenian music albums flourished in a period where Armenian culture has been reduced to a ‘folkloric element’ in Turkey. Although the growing interest of non-Armenians in singing Armenian songs encouraged Armenians to ‘present’ their culture outside the community, as I explained in Chapter 1, in the context within which they started to articulate their identity outside the ‘community’ whose political boundaries are strictly drawn, they could hardly find a space for overcoming the existing political boundaries and speaking about past and present experiences. In a context where becoming visible in the public arena as a ‘living entity’ and deconstructing the boundaries of the ‘speakable’ are very difficult, the only possible way to speak about Armenianness seemed to fill the subject position that the liberal ‘multiculturalist’ discourse has opened up to different cultures representing them only within a picture where they stand to illustrate the richness or the ‘colorfulness’ of Turkey’s ‘mosaic’.

That is to say, the revival of ethnic cultures is occurring by fetishizing ‘the cultural heritage of Turkey’. Renato Rosaldo calls this an “imperialist nostalgia”, in other

¹¹ Andreas Huyssen, “Present Pasts: Media, Politics and Amnesia”, *Public Culture*, 12(1), Duke University Press, 2000, p. 28.

¹² Huyssen, p. 29.

words “mourning over what one has destroyed.”¹³ As the majority of the non-Muslim population in Turkey has disappeared, people started to search for the stories of different cultural groups. Rosaldo says that, “in any of its versions, imperialist nostalgia uses a pose of ‘innocent yearning’ both to capture people’s imaginations and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination.”¹⁴

These stories are represented as isolated entities being detached from their historical context and relationality. Only their ‘desirable’ elements are represented and what is not desirable, what is considered as ‘dangerous’ within the articulation of memories remains still unrepresented and silenced.

As the senses that attach people to each other’s culture and their very existence in this geography have been disappearing today, the representations of ‘cultures’ as spaceless, ahistorical and dead fill the space opened up by the absence of the imaginary of having lived together either with tensions or in harmony. The objectification of the Armenian culture as a museum piece causes especially the young generation in Turkey (those who are ignorant of the Armenian past in Anatolia or do not know that there are Armenians still living in Turkey) reduce the Armenians themselves into a song they hear for they cannot associate an ‘Armenian’ living in Turkey with anything else. But more often, as a result of the Turkification and otherization processes of the Armenian culture in Turkey, the link between an Armenian living in Turkey and an Armenian song one hears on a CD or while walking down *İstiklal Caddesi* does not go beyond an intellectual knowledge. That is

¹³ Renato Rosaldo, “Imperialist Nostalgia” in *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*, Beacon Press: Boston, 1993, p. 69.

¹⁴ Rosaldo, p. 70.

to say, the senses that an Armenian song invokes in an Armenian are becoming hard to communicate in a context where the meaning of these songs is redefined, even when it is oppositional or critical. These examples I consider as the main elements creating the feeling of displacement in young Armenians in their everyday lives in Istanbul.

‘I will sing lullabies to my children’: Relating to loss through lullabies

Today most of the young generation Armenians say that they never heard a lullaby from their mothers or grandmothers, they say that if they ever heard one, it was from either a CD, or a tape or they happened to learn one in the primary school: “I don’t remember any. I might have heard some, or maybe I have never heard any. I don’t know.”¹⁵ “*Oror...* only that. That’s all... at school (...) I mean there was that famous *oror mangig*, they had only taught that one. (...) How should I say, I don’t know very well either, I mean, that is, we had learned one once upon a time.”¹⁶ Some of them are even confused about lullabies and children play songs: “Probably I had heard one but I don’t remember. But they were normal, that is to say Istanbul lullabies, like any (...) I mean those lullabies while caring for the child, I don’t remember very well now, *oy oy matnotsik* something like that, do they count as lullabies?”¹⁷

¹⁵ Hiç hatırlamıyorum. Duymuş olabilirim belki de gerçekten hiç dinlemedim bilmiyorum.

¹⁶ *Oror...* bir onu o kadar... okulda (...) yani bi *o oror mangig* vardı ya şu meşhur, onu öğretmişlerdi o kadar. (...) nasıl söyleyeyim ben de çok iyi bilmiyorum ki yani bi tane öğrenmiştik işte bir zamanlar.

¹⁷ Duymuşumdur, hatırlamıyorum ama normal hani bir İstanbul ninnileri standart (...) Yani standart o mesela var ya çocuğu severken hani şimdi hatırlamıyorum işte *oy oy matnotsik* bilmem ne falan, onlar ninni olarak mı geçiyor?

But they say that even though they don't remember any lullabies from their childhood, they learn them through the media and they will sing them to their children: "I know Knar's lullaby. There is only one, right? There is no other. I know that one, I listened to it."¹⁸ "Yes I know, most probably from the albums."¹⁹ "I know the lullabies that everyone knows such as *Dandini Dandini Dastana*. In Knar there was a very nice lullaby."²⁰ "I would like to sing them to my children, that is to say, if I learn any, if I find it somewhere I will sing."²¹

It is very important to note that those lullabies in the newly released albums, although detached from their original contexts of production, gain a significant meaning for the Armenians today in the sense of enabling them relate to the loss of their belonging to Anatolia. Certainly, this meaning is quite different from the one for the non-Armenian audience in Turkey for whom Armenian lullabies are just another genre of 'ethnic music'. For the Armenians themselves the Armenian songs in the albums contain a history, which refers to their and their creators' exile from their Anatolian homes.

In this part, I will try to explain how the young Armenians through various materials about Armenian music, culture and especially history in Anatolia search for the traces of the Armenian belonging to this land, from which they have been detached

¹⁸ Knar'ın ninnisini biliyorum. Bir tane var galiba ama değil mi? Başka yok. Onu biliyorum, dinledim.

¹⁹ Biliyorum evet. Albümlerden büyük ihtimalle.

²⁰ Herkesin bildiği ninnileri biliyorum: *Dandini Dandini Dastana*. Bi tane Knar'da çok güzel ninni vardı.

²¹ Bi toplasam, ya da toparlanmış halde bulsam isterim yani ben de öğrensem onu bir yerden bulsam söylerim.

in their everyday lives. Through this process they relate to the loss and criticize the invisibility of the Armenian past in Anatolia and their presence in Turkey today.

In Chapter 1 I explained how ‘minorities’ started to be spoken about within the public realm in the recent years. This process at the same time generated a trend among young generations to take on the minority identity as a part of their subjectivities different from the former generations. The young generation Armenians, who were socialized within such a context, started to re-interpret their experiences of having a ‘different’ identity in relation to the ‘majority’. Now they articulate their identities by the phrase “I am Armenian, I am different from you”²² as a critical stance to nationalist politics. They often mention their experience of having a ‘double consciousness’, knowing both the dominant and the non-dominant, considering their identities “a strategic and positional one”²³ in the sense that it provides them with a critical perspective:

I want to do this work without forgetting that I am an Armenian. I certainly don’t want to change my name. I want people knowing me to know how I am now. Because I am different, I believe in my difference, at least my point of view is different. In sum my point of view is the minority’s view towards the majority. I mean I see both them and myself differently.²⁴

²² Ben Ermeniyim ben senden farklıyım.

²³ Hall, 1998, p. 3.

²⁴ Ben hiçbir zaman Ermeni olduğumu unutmadan bu işi yapmak istiyorum. Adımı kesinlikle değiştirmek istemiyorum. Beni bilen bu şekilde bilsin istiyorum. Çünkü ben farklıyım, ben farklı olduğuma inanıyorum, en azından bakış açımıyla farklıyım. Sonuçta bir azınlığın çoğunluğa bakışı benimki. Yani onları da farklı görüyorum, kendimi de farklı görüyorum.

They find the opportunity to articulate their identities within an oppositional discourse that adopts the principle that the multi-layered differences need recognizing.

Yes, I am Armenian. I attended an Armenian school. I played football in the streets of Kurtuluş as an Armenian. That culture, that structure shaped my recent mentality with the things that I built on it. I appreciate it. I consider it important. Hopefully it is like that.²⁵

They speak within a perspective that is also developed by Patricia Hill Collins in her words: “a subordinate group not only experiences a different reality than a group that rules, but a subordinate group may interpret that reality different than a dominant group”:²⁶

We are in Turkey and we were raised as Armenians and we were raised among Turks in this way. Because of this, since our childhood, our minds matured with the ability of combining both sides. And we grew up as people who feel multiculturalism most in that multiculturalism. Thus, we can have the advantages of this while working in various fields. For example if I am interested in philosophy, as an Armenian who grew up in

²⁵ Evet Ermeniyim. Ermeni okulunda okudum. Ermeni olarak Kurtuluş'ta mahallede top oynadım. O kültür, o yapı benim onun üstüne kurduklarımınla bugünkü mantaliteme getirdi. Onu çok alkışlıyorum, çok önemsiyorum, iyi ki böyle.

²⁶ Patricia Hill Collins, “The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought”, in *Feminism and 'Race'* ed. Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Oxford University Press: NY, 2001, p. 185.

Turkey, I think I would be more successfully engaged with it than a Turk and I could produce more.²⁷

Music becomes the most important means through which young Armenians try to situate their 'difference' and 'recover' their longing for Armenian culture since the sound of traditional Armenian music and the Armenian language, the mother tongue, provides them a medium for expressing the senses that give meaning to their experiences such as being displaced, being subaltern, sharing the sense of loss as well as being in a better position of living 'multiculturalism'.

Armenian music, when I get a chance, whenever I find a CD, I listen to it, regardless of its content, as a consequence of my curiosity as to what it is about. (...) At first I think that I might like it because it is in Armenian, there may also be a deeper reason. Probably at first glance this is not what comes to my mind, at the first moment it is a kind of curiosity as to what they produced, what kind of a music it is, but deep inside is a belief that I will like it or some sort of a hope, I don't know.²⁸

²⁷ Türkiye'deyiz ve bir Ermeni olarak yetiştirildik, ve Türklerin arasında yetiştik bu şekilde, bu yüzden aklımız iki tarafı da birleştirebilecek şekilde olgunlaştı küçüklüğümüzden beri. Ve çokkültürlülüğün içinde de o çokkültürlülüğü en fazla hisseden insanlar olarak şey yaptık, büyüdük, bu yüzden biz bir çok alanda çalışırken bunun artılarını görebiliriz. Mesela ben felsefeyle ilgileniyorsam Türkiye'de büyümüş bir ermeni olarak bir Türk'ün felsefeyle ilgilenmesinden çok daha iyi bir şekilde felsefeyle ilgilenebileceğimi düşünüyorum ve çok daha fazla şey çıkarabileceğimi düşünüyorum.

²⁸ Ermenice müzik, fırsat buldukça, elime CD geçerse diyebilirim ki ne olduğuna bakmadan dinliyorum bu nedir diye merak edip en azından dinliyorum. (...) İlk etapta şey var, Ermenice olduğu için hoşuma gidebileceğini düşünüyorum, öyle derinde öyle bir sebep de olabilir yani. İlk anda aklıma bu gelmiyor muhtemelen, ilk anda merak var ne yapmışlar, bu nasıl bir müzik diye merakla bakıyorum ama derinde onu beğeneceğime olan, beğeneceğime dair bir inanç da var, ya da belki böyle bir umut da var belki bilmiyorum.

They collect the Armenian folk music albums and create personal archives mainly with an idea that the means to reach this kind of cultural material is scarce in Turkey. They follow the new productions, borrow, copy and circulate albums among friends, give each other as presents or play them in gatherings. Meanwhile, they appreciate the rise of the number of such productions within years, enabling them to choose whatever they liked rather than collecting everything:

Especially Armenian music, I used to buy whatever I could find, without being too selective. (...) As I said, then there was not too much selectivity concerning Armenian music, as there is today. In fact it hasn't been that long since Armenian CDs started to be widely circulated. At the beginning it was difficult to find them, there was this idea that one should get whatever she/he finds in order not to miss it. Then when it started to become easier to find I started to buy those that I liked.²⁹

They also started to develop an intellectual curiosity towards the stories, memories and the history of Armenians in Anatolia. As a generation who couldn't learn anything about Armenian history at school since it was not included in the curriculum and was considered as suspect, these young people today enjoy the newly published books, documents, Internet sites or the knowledge of the people in the community in searching for their 'roots' in Anatolia and in Istanbul.

²⁹ Hayeren müzik özellikle, ne bulursam alıyordum. Çok seçici davranmadan. (...) Dediğim gibi hayeren seçiciliği yoktu daha önceden ki o kadar, yani bugünkü kadar... çok da fazla zaman olmadı hayeren CD ilk çoğalmaya başlayalı da, o zamanlar daha böyle şeydi, zor bulunan bir şeydi, kaçırmayalım ne gelirse atlayalım vardı. İşte ondan sonra artık daha kolay olmaya başlayınca neyi beğenirsem onu almaya başladım.

I am interested in Armenian history. But mostly contemporary history, of course I know about a couple of main issues in general terms, but especially contemporary history interests me. I read books on this topic, and conduct interviews since I am a journalist. I am trying to create an archive, consisting of visual or printed materials, pictures. This makes the subject more attractive for me. For the time being rather than trying to carve out something new I try to learn new things, to which I give priority at the moment. In effect for the moment I am training myself on this subject.³⁰

This process of 'learning' along with the new political language of difference grants young Armenians with tools for criticizing hegemonic identity politics in Turkey, which robs them of the means for learning about Armenian history:

Why did I want to learn? To put it in simple terms when someone makes a research on American history, French history, English history even Indian history she/he can easily access the necessary resources. In this case of studying Armenian history, it is like getting the taste of researching a secret thing, particularly when it is your own history. I

³⁰ Ermeni tarihiyle ilgileniyorum. Ama daha çok yakın tarihi diyebiliriz çok genel belli başlı bir kaç bir şey biliyorum elbette ama yakın tarih özellikle ilgimi çekiyor. Bunlar hakkında kitaplar okuyorum röportajlar yapıyorum zaten gazetecilik olduğu için. Elimden geldiği kadarıyla bunları arşive dönüştürmeye çalışıyorum işte görsel olsun yazılı olsun veya belge, resim gibi, bu daha ilgi çekici bir hale getiriyor konuyu benim gözümde. Benim için aslında şu an için bir şeyleri ortaya çıkarmaktan ziyade tabii ki öğrenmem önemli, ön planda tutuyorum sonuçta ben şimdi ben kendimi yetiştiriyorum bu konu hakkında.

know that I have a history, where I come from, who I am. When I look it up in the encyclopedia, I find just conventional stuff.³¹

While trying to ‘regain what has been stolen from them’, while building up a fragmented knowledge about Armenians in Anatolia, they situate themselves within a knowledge of loss by becoming aware of the political contexts that define Armenian identity in Turkey. This in itself brings a criticism to the discourse of difference, which does not represent the ways in which they live their identities but tries to categorize them:

When they say that word to you they dictate that you are different. There were a lot of people approaching me by constantly telling “you are Armenian” “you are Armenian”, look you are with us, look you are like this, we have Laz friends, Kurdish friends. How beautiful we are together like a soup. Well, OK, but you want to be a carrot in that soup, right? But they don’t let you live like a carrot, I mean they accept you but they say that you have to live as a taste of carrot in the soup otherwise you (...) don’t have a meaning by yourself, you have a meaning only if you give the taste of carrot in that soup, they say. They are not even aware that the carrot does not want to be in the soup anymore just because of this reason.³²

³¹Ben niye öğrenmek istedim, ya en basitinden ben Amerikan tarihi, Fransız tarihi, İngiliz tarihini araştırdığımda, Hindistan tarihi bile olsa tık diye bulabilirim herhangi bir yerden. Bu biraz da şey gibi oluyor gizli bir şeyi araştırmanın tadı var hem de kendi tarihin yani. Benim tarihim var ben bilmiyorum, nerden geliyorum, ansiklopediye bakıyorum düz şeyler.

³² Sana o lafı söylerken farklı olduğunu dikte ediyorlar. Ama bunlar.. Sen Ermenisin deyip deyip bana yaklaşan o kadar insan oldu ki bak işte bizim yanımızdasın sen de böylesin bak arkadaşımız var Laz, Kürt. Hep birlikte ne güzel çorba gibiyiz. Ama sen tamam şey, havuç

In her criticism of liberal multiculturalism Anthias explains that this kind of stereotyping fixes cultures in stone and can lead us to over-celebrate cultures as though they exist in little boxes and are to be cherished and fostered, whatever their contents and whatever the social practices /outcomes are ‘claimed’ for them.³³ She argues that liberal multiculturalism often falls into this trap and she says that this perspective can also lead us “to condemning cultures, particularly the cultures of those we see as the ‘other’ as ‘different’, as not like ours, those of the foreigners, the ‘traditional’ groups as we might stereotype them.”³⁴

The most important criticism of liberal multiculturalism is that “the dominant group within the state sets the terms of the agenda for participation by minority ethnic groups and involves a bounded dialogue where the premises themselves may not be open to negotiation”³⁵. And often, we come across with the reflection of this perspective in everyday discourse by the notion of ‘tolerance’ towards ‘minorities’:

For example, now *hoşgörü* (tolerance), it is so disturbing for me, that expression, that word. Well, because, what is *hoşgörü* anyway? You tolerate someone when she/he makes a mistake, like dropping and breaking something valuable. In fact it’s in a way just one letter change in *horgörü* (despise). Tolerate, what would you tolerate? When someone

olmak istiyorsun çorbanın içinde tamam mı? Ama havuçluğunu yaşatmıyorlar yani, yaşatmak istiyorlar ama çorbanın içindeki havuç tadı olarak yaşayacaksın diyorlar yoksa sen (...) tek başına bir anlamın yok, o çorbanın içinde tat veriyorsan anlamın var diyorlar. Farkında bile değiller ve havuç artık çorbanın içinde olmak istemiyor bu yüzden mesela.

³³ Anthias, 2002, p. 276.

³⁴ Anthias, 2002, p. 276.

³⁵ Anthias, 2002, p. 279.

creates a problem, you say it is OK, you tolerate. But we didn't create a problem, so don't tolerate me. You should consider me as normal, neither despise nor tolerate, you should simply see me as normal.³⁶

In order to criticize this perspective towards minorities, young Armenians recount the discriminations they face in their everyday lives, which often become invisible in this picture where there is no space for expressing any conflict. Through various examples they point out to the instances where their difference is not 'celebrated' but become a justification for injustice:

For example, let me tell you an anecdote about what happened to a relative, a close fellow. His name was Mıgırdiç, he passed away. Once, he sends merchandise to Konya. Then, the package returns back, without being opened. They open the box, and check the invoice. The name of the sender is Mıgırdiç; they send it back. Then he asks like "brother, what is the deal?" the guy replies, "brother, the name, are you Armenian?" He replies "yes, I am Armenian". The guy says "We can't buy goods from you". I mean, if nothing else there is such an attitude, this really happened, it is a true story. I mean there is such a difficulty, in terms of doing trade.³⁷

³⁶ Şimdi mesela şey bana hoşgörü hoşgörü o çok bana rahatsız edici geliyor, o laf o kelime. Çünkü hoşgörü nedir, biri bir kusurlu birşey işler, bir şey kırarsın edersin vesaire hoşgörürsün yani onu. O aslında horgörmenin bir nevi harf değişikliği, hoşgörmek. Neyi hoş görürsün? Sen bir problem yaratırsın dersin ki tamam boşver dersin. Biz bir problem yaratmadık ki, beni hoşgörme. Ben zaten, beni normal görmen lazım önüne bir takı getirmeden hor ya hoş takılarını getirmeden görmen lazım.

³⁷ Ben mesela bir akraba, bir tanıdığımızın başından geçen bir olayı anlatayım. İsmi Mıgırdiç, rahmetli oldu. Bunlar Konya'ya bir mal gönderiyorlar. Konya'da mal gidiyor aynen geri geliyor, hiç açılmadan. Kutusu açılıyor, fatura bilgilerine bir bakıyorlar, Mıgırdiç

The inequalities they come across in various spheres of life, referring to the hierarchies and asymmetries of power in the imagining of oneself ‘at home’, or ‘belonging’, as I argued before, is another main element that causes the feeling of displacement for Armenians in Turkey. The first quotation below expresses very well that the feeling of displacement is a defining element of being a ‘minority’ in Turkey. More importantly, it explains how one starts to consider herself or himself as a ‘minority’ only when she or he is made to feel so, by being reminded that he or she ‘does not belong enough’ and how one learns what does it mean to be a ‘minority’:

I had not had any Turkish friends until the year of preparation for the university entrance exam. During that year there was a group of friends, in which I remember people saying something like “you don’t belong here”. Well, that really touched me. It was something like “you can’t enter here”, something like that. It was in the private university preparation course. Those were all high school graduates. That was the incident telling me that I was a minority. It left a permanent trace deep in my mind. I guess it will remain there all my life.³⁸

Our school is so bad on this issue. Every year they organize conferences on the Armenian Genocide. Then this year they conducted a survey in

isim, aynen geri geliyor. “Abi” diyor “ne iş”, “abi isim”, “sen Ermeni misin”, “he Ermeniyim”, “biz mal alamayız senden”. Yani en basitinden böyle bir şey var bu gerçek olmuş bir olay, böyle bir zorluğu var yani ticaret anlamında.

³⁸ Üniversite hazırlık dönemine kadar hiç Türk arkadaşım olmamıştı. Üniversiteye hazırlanırken bir grup arkadaş vardı, orda sen buraya ait değilsin gibi sözler sarf edilmişti. Yani mesela bu bana çok dokunmuştu, sen giremezsin buraya falandı galiba, öyle bir şeydi. Dershanede. Lise mezunu çocuklar bunlar, o mesela bana azınlıksın sen işte dedirten bir olaydı, bu benim aklımda çok yer etmişti, yani hayatım boyunca da eder herhalde.

school, as to what people think about Armenians. I did not see it though...There is an Armenian friend, a second grade student. For instance they were assigned homework on the Armenian Genocide and what not. This happens all the time in the entire school in history classes. However sometimes I think whether this is necessary at all, whether it is legal, as there are Armenian citizens studying there. So it is like that, those teachers who are not positive on this issue are dominant.³⁹

Not only the violence that is expressed in the above quotation, in terms of being obliged to write homework refuting the Armenian Genocide, the overall ignorance towards the presence of Armenians in a classroom and in Turkey or towards Armenian culture and religion deepens the feeling of displacement, causing one think that she or he is non-existent:

A simple example: when he hears your name, he asks tens of times what your name is, what you do. Think about this, I go for internship; the staff at the door also asks me, 'Where are you from? You don't look like someone from there', so he investigates.⁴⁰

³⁹ Bizim okul bu konuda çok kötü. Her sene konferanslar verilir Ermeni Soykırımıyla ilgili. Ondan sonra, bu sene anket yapıldı okulda. Ermeniler hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz diye. Ben görmedim gerçi, işte ... var bizim o da haydır ikinci sınıfta onlara mesela ödev vermişler tarihten Ermeni Soykırımını bilmem ne konulu bütün okulda tarih derslerinde bu var, hatta düşünüyorum bu olması gereken bir şey mi yasal bir şey mi sonuçta orda okuyan hay vatanadaş da var. Öyle işte o konuda ağırlıklar hocalar çok parlak bakmıyorlar.

⁴⁰ En basitinden ismini duyduğunda on kere kimsin, necisin, ya düşün staj yapmaya gidiyorum kapıdaki görevli de soruyor bana "sen nerelisin, hiç benzemiyorsun", araştırıyor yani.

I am obsessed with the term *gavur* (infidel). I mean, even people of high status or I don't know, who hold a quality education in a foreign language, who knows perfect English, French (...) even they say things like "Among *gavurs* this word has this meaning", or they say "in *gavur* language this is what this means, or she/he is *gavur*", and what not. This word *gavur* has now completely entered Turkish vocabulary. If those who are supposed to speak Turkish right, if professors, doctors, educators use *gavur*, like I said before, then I would expect the same from regular people, I would expect even more, and I can't accuse them. Because they don't know the meaning of *gavur*. It should have a classical explanation, I have a cross, I have a religion, and I know what I believe in. Nonetheless *gavur*, *gavur* means one who doesn't believe in any holy book; she/he doesn't know this, it's ridiculous.⁴¹

Besides all these experiences that are hardly represented within the liberal discourse, the most important criticism they raise against current identity politics in Turkey is that the means to reproduce Armenian culture are getting lost today. In contrary to the growing interest towards 'Armenian culture' in the public and the constant reproduction of a discourse around 'Armenian identity', these young Armenians speak about the impossibility of regaining, regenerating what has been lost for

⁴¹ Gavur kelimesine ben takıyorum, yani yine çok iyi titrleri olan kişiler ya da ne bileyim işte yabancı eğitimler almış İngilizcesi, Fransızcası bilmem nesi süper olan insanlar kalkıyorlar (...) gavurlarda bu kelimenin anlamı şudur, ya da şöyle derler, gavurcada şudur, gavurdur bilmem ne. Bu gavur kelimesi neyse tamamen Türkçe sözlüğe girmiş durumda, yani eğer gerçek anlamda Türkçe'yi doğru dürüst konuşması gereken insanlar, işte profesörlük çok önemliyse eğer, profesörler, doktorlar şunlar bunlar öğretmenler eğer gavur kelimesini kullanıyorlarsa, az önce dediğim gibi ben halktan aynısını da beklerim daha fazlasını da beklerim onlara kızamam da. Çünkü gavurun anlamını sen bilmiyorsun, neye konuşuyorsun, klasik bir açıklaması vardır, haçım var işte ne bileyim inancım var neye inandığımı biliyorum. Ama yine de gavur, gavur kitapsız demek bunu bilmiyor, komik.

decades. They criticize the fact that today there is only the 'tradition' to preserve in terms of culture, but the Armenian culture as a possession, as a living thing in Turkey is dying day by day:

Our difference from the former generations is that, now there is nothing produced in terms of Armenianness in Istanbul, I mean there is nothing produced about Armenian culture. What is being produced or what we live through is always about reflections of the past, its repetition, its commemoration, and learning the past. Probably this is our difference; I mean they were part of a life that was active, functional, moving, and alive; we don't have such a life. In the name of Armenianness we are now on a barren land, probably this is our difference, so this is also the reason why we speak Armenian worse than those generations or the reason why we know it less.⁴²

As exemplified in the above quotations, young Armenians today do not find what they experience or feel as being Armenian within the available public representations of 'Armenianness'. The current discourse represents 'Armenianness' as displaced from its social context, from the social relations that define and shape it, from the specific experiences and senses that give meaning to its belonging to a specific geography. Within this context where the only possible way to represent Armenian

⁴² Önceki kuşaklardan herhalde farkımız şey, şu an İstanbul'da Ermeniliğe dair bir şey üretilmiyor yani Ermeni kültürüne dair bir şey üretilmiyor. Üretilen şeyler hep ya da yaşanan şeyler hep geçmişin böyle yansımaları, tekrarlanması, geçmişin anılması, geçmişin öğrenilmesi şeklinde oluyor. Herhalde farkımız bu, yani onlar daha böyle gündelik hayatta işleyen, hareket eden, canlı bir şeyin içindelerdi biz öyle bir şey içinde değiliz, Ermenilik adına çorak bir topraktayız şu an farkımız bu herhalde, dolayısıyla Ermenice'yi o kuşaklardan daha kötü konuşmamızın da sebebi bu ya da daha az biliyor olmamızın da sebebi bu.

culture is to bring it into folkloric elements, the culture itself is becoming lost. In the next chapter I will try to show how the change in the context of the articulation of the memories and stories of being an Armenian and belonging to this geography causes unease in the articulation of identity at present and the displacements of culture from its context and space causes the loss of the senses that define being Armenian, making loss the core element of Armenian identity.



LOSS CONSTITUTING THE ARMENIAN IDENTITY IN TURKEY

In July 2003, I visited a young Armenian woman for an interview. Just after the interview, she picked up the phone and said “wait, I can find you other people to speak to” and called her friend. While we were drinking our coffees, her newly arrived friend told me how hard it was to be an Armenian in Kastamonu, the town where she was born. Her father could not register her with an Armenian name and had to choose a Muslim name instead. When he came back home from the registration office (*nüfus dairesi*), the family members got angry with him. She also added that when she came to Istanbul, once again she felt discriminated against, as she was the only child with a Muslim name in the Armenian primary school. While we were chatting she wanted to have a look at my questions. Then she asked me if I would feel bad if she didn’t answer my questions. I tried to explain that it was just voluntary work and no one was obliged to answer, I also added that I was aware of the difficulties of the issue. But my answer was not enough to relieve her anxiety, she felt bad because of her doubt. I felt miserable. What was I doing? Was it an academic play that we were playing? In fact, the fear was always with us, what was exceptional was speaking rather than remaining silent. Nothing sufficed to make her rest, neither the fact that I shared her fears nor my attempts to show that I agreed with her. While she was questioning her own fears, I was thinking how I pushed her towards this conflict, what kind of violence that was, especially when I myself was not foreign to her fears. Then something that I wouldn’t imagine happened. “But I can sing you a lullaby” she said. As if she owed me something and finally found out how to reciprocate...

*Oror oror im palas, yes yerkem tu kınanas, kusanneri meğetin, kez kun peri im palas*¹... This lullaby she had learnt in primary school healed the wounds inflicted upon us while we were struggling with our fears; and the warmth of this lullaby made us return to our daily lives. But on the way back home I knew that the fatigue that I felt in my body was not a matter of a single day, but a century old.

Her singing the lullaby there, communicated to me the feeling of unease about being in between the desire to express one's own experiences and the fear, doubt or confusion about articulating them. The lullaby once more referred to the 'untellable', to the gap in the story of 'what had happened to us' and in the narrative of 'who we are'. This lullaby recorded towards the end of the cassette was a trace taking me to the sense of unease shaping the subjectivities of young Armenians in Turkey today.

In the previous chapter I tried to explain that the way Armenianness is defined and presented in Turkey displaces Armenians themselves from their culture and memories. The loss they experience in terms of their cultural heritage and their existence in Anatolia does not find a place in the conventional representations of 'the Armenian culture' today and because the limits of these representations are always determined by the lack of the articulation of the past in its relation to the present, the very 'livedness' of Armenianness and Armenian culture as a living entity is becoming lost.

Judith Butler in *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* explains that

¹ Oror oror my child, I sing and you sleep, let the melodies of the minstrels bring you sleep my child.

subjects are formed by an exclusionary matrix, which requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subjects.² She says, “The abject designates here precisely those ‘unlivable’ and ‘unhabitable’ zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the ‘unlivable’ is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject.”³ I argue that the violence with which Anatolia is made Turkish is the ‘constitutive outside’ of the sovereignty of Turkey on Anatolia and the Armenian Genocide is the master signifier of that violence. Thus, the forgetting of the stories of violence that the Armenians experienced during the Turkish nationalization of Anatolia makes it possible to imagine a unified Turkish national identity, a homogeneous Turkish national culture and the Turkish National History.

On the other hand, Butler also explains how “the abjected outside is after all, ‘inside’ the subject as its own founding repudiation.”⁴ That is to say, the repressed memory of violence is ‘inside’, in the very formation of the subjectivity of ‘Turkishness’. Because of this, the definition of Armenianness in Turkey is very much defined by the past and the limits of the articulation of the Armenian identity in the public sphere today is still determined by the fear and the obsession of the ‘spectre’⁵ of the Armenian Genocide. Slavoj Žižek defines ‘spectre’ as something primordially

² Judith Butler, “Introduction” in *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”*, New York: Routledge, 1993, p.3.

³ Butler, p.3.

⁴ Butler, p.3.

⁵ Slavoj Žižek, “The Spectre of Ideology” in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Žižek, London: Verso, 1995, p. 21.

repressed, foreclosed from 'reality'. In other words, it is the irrepresentable X on whose repression reality itself is founded. Today, within the representations of Armenianness in the 'colours' discourse, the loss becomes the irrepresentable X. But moreover, the fear of publicly articulating the stories of violence causes an obsession in Turkey in terms of trying to present the 'historical realities' of the 'Armenian issue'. This fear turns the Armenian Genocide into a 'spectre', which shapes the public discourse with regard to Armenian identity.

Today the lost stanzas of the lullaby have totally gone away, leaving a gap in our narratives. But if we recall the story told in the prelude, there is the first stanza that remains. It reminds us that there are things that were repressed and regardless of whether we know or don't know what they actually were, it creates a sense of doubt in relation to everything 'Turkish national'.

Teresa de Lauretis speaks about the 'elsewhere' of a discourse or the 'space-off' of its representations. She defines it as "spaces in the margins of hegemonic discourses, social spaces carved in the interstices of institutions and in the chinks and cracks of the power-knowledge apparatus."⁶ I believe that the sense of doubt in young Armenians that challenges everything that is 'said' or produced as 'knowledge' comes from that 'space-off' of the representations of 'Armenianness' and 'Turkishness' in Turkey. The following quotation expresses very well this sense of doubt coming from the very fact that the gap does not have a proper content. It causes unease yet at the same time grants a maneuvering capacity of going back and

⁶ Teresa de Lauretis, "The Technology of Gender" in *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction*, Indiana University Press, p. 25.

forth between the represented and its excesses:

The only thing I remember is the knowledge that not everything was like what they had told us; I mean things in the book, things taught at school. Yet nothing instead was put in its place. That is to say, I couldn't compare it and say 'whatever you say, this is true', but I approached them with doubt.⁷

Grandmothers' *çart* stories today

When I asked them whether they remember any stories from their families or not young Armenians recalled that they had been told the personalized stories of survival. These stories are either a part of the family history or the story of a relative or someone else from the same town:

Well, now I guess it's our great-grandmother, think of her as my grandfather's mother's mother, who lived during those times. I think she was the one who used to tell it, I guess one of her brothers' youth years coincides with *çart* (massacre) times. They kill one of her brothers and in the fork of the road they say "you go this direction and you that direction". They push the body of the dead brother into a well. Of course they become sad and cry for their brother but they push them with something, I don't know, with the gun in his hands or a stick and they say

⁷ Tek hatırladığım hani o kitaptaki, hani okulda eğitim alırken, her şey onların da dediği gibi değil bilgisi yani, ama bunun yerine bir şey konulmadı. Yani onu kıyaslayıp siz ne dersiniz deyin bu doğru gibi kıyaslayamadım ama şüpheyle baktım.

“no, you will not look behind, you will go” and they make them walk and walk. They make them walk to Aleppo. The family gets separated, the family breaks up. One goes to Egypt, I don’t know how they get news in those days, there are the brothers, they go to Aleppo from one road, sorry they go to Egypt, and the grandmother goes to Aleppo.⁸

These stories are embedded in a particular space and time and they gain their power from this specificity. They are not listened to as general abstract knowledge of history, but they are embodied in the very person whose story is told. Moreover if it is a family member, it is often considered to have a value for one’s own biography:

In the last instance, these are the most important events determining the destiny of my family or the way I am now, or shall I say, my birth. My grandmother’s mother’s fiancé was killed in front of her eyes. If he was not killed then, she would not have married someone else and my mom would not have been born, my grandmother would not have been born.⁹

Knowing the story of survival of a person from one’s own family or anyone else in

⁸ Şey şimdi bizim büyük yaya oluyor sanırım dedenin mamasının maması diye düşün, çok daha o dönemlere denk gelen. O anlatırmış sanırım, zaten kardeşlerinden birisi, sanırım çart zamanına gençliği denk geliyor. Kardeşlerinden birisini öldürüyorlar ve diyorlar ki, siz işte şu yola gidin yol ayrımında, siz şu yola gidin, işte öleni de bir kuyuya atıyorlar, tabii üzüyorlar ağlıyorlar kardeşimiz falan diye, itiyorlar şeyle ne derler ite... kendi ne bileyim silahıyla elindeki bir şeyle sopayla hayır diyorlar bakmayacaksın arkana, gideceksin yürütüyorlar yürütüyorlar. Halep’e yürütüyorlar, ayrılıyor aile, dağılıyor. Biri Mısır’a gidiyor, o zaman nasıl haber alıyorlar bilmiyorum o işte *ağparigler* varmış onlar bir yoldan Halep’e gidiyorlar *yaya* şeye, pardon onlar mısıra gidiyor, *yaya* Halep’e gidiyor.

⁹ Benim ailemin kaderini belirleyen veya benim bu şekilde olmamı, veya doğmamı mı diyeyim sağlayan en önemli olay onlar sonuçta.Yayamın mamasının nişanlısı gözünün önünde öldürülmüş. Eğer zamanında o öldürülmeseydi başka bir adamla evlenmeyecekti, o zaman belki mamam olmayacaktı, yayam olmayacaktı.

the community creates a strong attachment not just to that story but also to all stories of survival:

They all climb up the hill to escape. I know these special stories. Present Muhtar dede... Back then, his mother had to leave him because they could not walk, then someone else found him and brought him back, otherwise he would have been dead.¹⁰

In Chapter 2, I emphasized the importance of the context, within which lullabies are sung, in defining their meanings. The stories of grandmothers told today within new contexts become parts of our everyday lives with different meanings attached to them. As young Armenians explain, they find a space when something incites them to recall the stories, something makes it necessary to recount them. For example they are told in order to compare the hardship of the past days with the ease of life today or in order to warn the young generations about the possible discriminations they can face because of their identities:

We are quite a large family, we are very close to the seven generations of cousins, and we are frequently in touch. For example, there is my aunt's daughter's sister-in-law's mother, I mean her mother-in-law's mother, I mean her mother-in-law, when she was young, at the times of *kesim* (slaughter), she said, something happened. In fact it was the times of poverty and famine. I was shocked when she showed me, how small

¹⁰ Hepsi tepeye çıkıyorlar kaçmak için. İşte o özel hikayeleri biliyorum. Şimdiki muhtar dede... Zamanında maması onu bırakmak zorunda kalmış yürüyemedikleri için, sonra başka biri arkadan bulmuş getirmiş, aslında ölecekmış.

water drop falls on the floor and she immediately tries to suck it. I mean they told about how they lived in extremely poor conditions or just... Oh, I will tell you when they tell about these the most. For example we as cousins spend much, and because our spending does not have a limit, they say “look, you didn’t see those times, you didn’t starve”, they begin saying “if you starved...” In fact, there is something like that, people who experienced the war times can not throw away things, or I don’t know, I eat the half, the rest I save for tomorrow, there is surely always the idea of tomorrow, but we don’t have this, it is just the opposite, they tell about that.¹¹

These stories, which are gateways for the young generations to imagine the lives of their grandparents, create a body of knowledge about being an Armenian in Turkey. They are not very often told to young children in order not to disturb them. But when they are told among family members, they are absorbed by the children whose attention inevitably focuses on the act of story telling while sitting nearby. As I explained in the example of lullabies, this makes the very act of story telling, with its context and senses, part of childhood memories:

I also listened to the stories that she didn’t tell me. I listened from the

¹¹ Biz biraz geniş bir aileyiz de 7 göbek kuzenimizle de çok samimiyizdir, sürekli gider görüşürüz. Mesela şey vardı morakurumun kızımın görümcesinin maması yani işte kaynanasının maması, kaynanası işte küçükken kesim zamanında, şey diyor bir şey mi ne olmuş, 11 ya zaten açlık kıtlık zamanında, ya işte göstermiş de çok şaşırımtım şu kadar mı ne su damlası yere düşüyor onu hemen emmeye çalışıyor. Yani, o kadar sefil falan yaşadıklarını, ya sadece işte... Ha en çok da ne zaman anlatırlar söyleyeyim, mesela biz kuzenlerle biraz bol dağıttığımız için biraz da elimiz şey olmadığı için bak işte görmediniz işte çekmediniz, çekseydiniz hemen başlanır, zaten öyleymiş o savaş dönemlerinde kalan insanlar falan bir şeyi atamama, ya da ne bileyim işte yarısını yiyorum yarısı da yarına kalsın hep yarın düşüncesi mutlaka vardır bizde de yok işte tam ters, anlatırlar yani.

people, the very old people while they were talking to each other. In our home, in the milieu of the houses in which I lived, I always, I mean not many things were told to me, but I got still many things by listening in these milieu. Nothing happened like “come my son, let me tell you history”. (...) While telling their memories to each other (...) They were not directly told to me, but I listened when they were telling to people or when they recalled memories, I listened when they talked about them. Neither I particularly wondered and asked them to tell about it, nor they told me how it was. Nevertheless, I learnt from them.¹²

The way these stories are told communicates also the knowledge that they are ‘untellable’. Thus, memories of the young Armenians about their grandmothers’ stories are always fragmented. Ann Norton says that “memory and history do lack unity for the colonized. The narratives of wholeness and continuity that served so long for European history are a form of innocence that they cannot pretend to. History refuses them refuge in these consolatory fictions. The histories of the colonized are the histories of the subaltern: interrupted, episodic, and partial and incomplete.”¹³ Most of the young people refer to an interruption in the transmission of the familial stories. Their childhood memories of the stories of their grandparents’ generations are always in fragments:

¹² Bana da anlatmadığı hikayeleri de dinlemişliğim de var. Onlar kendi aralarında epeyi büyükler kendi aralarında konuşurken dinlemişliğim var. Bizim ev, benim yaşadığım ev ortamlarında hep ben öyle hani çok fazla bana bir şey anlatılmadı ama ben o ortamda dinleyerek bir sürü şey kapmışımdır yani. Hani gel oğlum sana tarih anlatayım diye olmadı hiç. (...) Anılarını anlatırken, birbirleriyle mesela (...) Direk bana anlatılmadı, alakasız insanlara anlatırken dinledim ya da işte kendi anıları depreşince, onlar konuşunca dinledim. Özellikle ne ben merak edip sordum anlatın neydi diye ne onlar anlattı, ama öğrendim sonuçta onlardan öğrendim.

¹³ Anne Norton, “Ruling Memory” in *Political Theory*, v. 21, no: 3, August 1993, p. 460.

I asked my mom, she doesn't know anything. I mean, my mother was born in Istanbul in Kumkapı anyway, she only knows her childhood and doesn't know anything about her family history. There is something that got stuck in my mind, that is, in my father's grandfathers' times, during the 1915 events, the river always flowed red, something like that. Probably I heard a story like this in my childhood, but nothing else at all. It is not very clear, either. ¹⁴

The main reason why these stories are incomplete and fragmented is the lack of the context, which makes it possible to articulate them in the public sphere with the meanings they have for Armenians. Besides, the lack of continuity turns these 'dangerous' stories into 'non-events'. According to Hayden White, historiography is a process of encoding events into a plot structure, a narrative sequence where they gain a certain meaning within the story line, which gives them causality and a particular explanation.¹⁵ The narratives of young Armenians about the stories of their grandmothers often lack this coherent sequence and causality.

Besides, these stories do not dwell on the proof methods of what is considered as 'truth'. Minh-ha expresses this in the following words: "when history separated itself from story, it started indulging in accumulation of facts. Or it thought it could. It thought it could build up to History because the Past, unrelated to the Present and the

¹⁴ *Mamama* sordum, *mamam* hiçbir şey bilmiyor. Yani *mamam* zaten İstanbul'da Kumkapı'da doğmuş. Kendi çocukluğunu biliyor ve ailesine dair de pek bir şey bilmiyor. Bir şey hep aklımda, işte babamın dedelerinin zamanında, 1915 olayları, orda işte o her zaman nehir kırmızı akıyordu gibi bir şey aklımda. Çocukluğumda muhtemelen bir kere öyle bir hikaye duymuş olabilirim, ama başka şey yok yani. Çok net değil.

¹⁵ Hayden White, "Historical Text as Literary Artifact", *Tropics Of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985, p. 84.

Future, is lying there in its entirety, waiting to be revealed and related. (...) Then since fictional and factual have come to a point where they mutually exclude each other, fiction, not infrequently, means lies, and fact, truth.”¹⁶ When these stories are told in the public sphere, there is always the possibility that they would be regarded as ‘lies’. The ‘truth’ is constructed through mechanisms outside these stories, not in the meaning they bear through the senses they transmit:

It can be fear and something else, I mean if I get blocked, and I may get blocked when he says “show me the sources my brother”, I mean, “not the things that are picked up from here and there, but show me a clear thing”, then I think I prefer to remain silent.¹⁷

However as young Armenians explain very often remaining silent does not suffice. As I explained before, because Armenian identity in Turkey is marked by the debate on the Genocide, even within the liberal discourse, which chooses not to speak about the past, Armenians are not allowed to remain silent, but are incited to a discussion about whether they believe in the Genocide or not:

They were constantly asking if I believed in it, if I thought that there was something like this. Every time I said in a covered way that, I mean “I certainly believe in it”, if I say I don’t believe it, it will be odd. The pain, how can I say, I feel that I live that pain and I always used to say, “yes

¹⁶ Trinh T. Minh-ha. “Grandma’s Story” in *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*, Indiana University Press, 1989, p.119.

¹⁷ Korku olabilir bir de bazen şey hani “bana kaynağını göster kardeşim, hani kulaktan dolma değil de net bir şey göster” dediği zaman tikanırsam, tikanabilirim de o zaman işte susmayı yeğliyorum galiba.

the very majority of us, I mean the poets, the date of death for the majority of them was 1915". I generally say nothing else, I mean, whatever you get from it.¹⁸

Young Armenians say that the inability to express these painful stories with all the senses they evoke in them, the impossibility of communicating the intimate memory they keep, forces them to create new means in order to make them 'tellable':

Probably, I mean, not like "there is a story like this in my family", but I can have an argument like "there are stories like this, all of them cannot be lies", "all of these would not coincide this much."¹⁹

In these new contexts however these stories become displaced from their senses and detached from their meanings, they are either pushed into silence or the listener seeks their truth-value somewhere else:

What if I tell it? Because in the end, my telling won't add to value of these stories. I don't think that they will say 'look, this man lived those things, she is telling them, they have right'. (...) Except for a few people, no one will respect it, no one will be affected by them, they will just

¹⁸ Sürekli soruyorlardı, "sen inanıyor musun, sence böyle bir şey var mıydı". Ben üstü kapalı hep şey diyordum yani, "mutlaka inanıyorum", "inanmıyorum desem tuhaf kaçacak, sonuçta ben o acıyı yani nasıl söyleyeyim o acıyı yaşadığımı hissediyorum ve ben hep şey derdim "evet bizim büyük bir çoğunluğumuz yani şairlerimizin büyük bir çoğunluğunun ölüm tarihi 1915" diyorum başka hiçbir şey söylemiyorum, ne anlarsan yani.

¹⁹ Muhtemelen hani "benim ailemde de böyle bir hikaye vardır" gibi değil de "böyle hikayeler var bunların hepsi de yalan olmaz", "bunların hepsi de bu kadar çakışmaz" gibi bir argümanla belki şey yapabilirim.

listen to it at the moment I tell them.²⁰

Michael-Rolph Trouillot argues that “the production of historical narratives involves the uneven contribution of competing groups and individuals who have uneven access to the means for such production”²¹ and he says, “not only the socio-historical processes themselves are involved with struggles, but the production of knowledge is also an arena of constant struggle.”²² The above examples illustrate how the stories that young Armenians try to tell can only be kept as a part of the familial history but inscribing them into a general history is impossible.

When the meaning of the stories are reduced into a debate of ‘is it a true story or not’, the senses, the meanings, the livedness of these experiences, that I argued to be transmitted through the lullabies, become lost. Besides, for the young Armenians, the inability of telling these stories as the way they make sense to them, makes them feel displaced in a context where it becomes impossible to communicate the senses through which they attribute meaning to their present experiences. That is to say, not only the stories of past, but how one lives the present itself becomes incommunicatable.

Veena Das and Arthur Kleinman explain this violence with the following words,

²⁰ Anlatsam ne olacak çünkü sonuçta hiçbir şekilde benim ona anlatmam onlara bir değer katmayacak, bak bu adam bunları yaşamış anlatıyor bak haklılar demeyeceklerini düşünüyorum. (...) Ben ne kadar da anlatsam, çok nadir kişiler hariç, ben anlattığımda o anda belki beni dinleyecek, o ne etkileyecek onu, ne saygı duyacak.

²¹ Trouillot, Michael-Rolph. “Preface”, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Beacon Press, 1995, p. xix.

²² Trouillot, p. 2.

“continuous creation of new contexts and the sudden removal of the access to established contexts.”²³ The loss of the senses and meanings that the grandmothers’ lullabies and stories transmit symptomatically reveal the condition of being displaced. Very often the context within which these stories are articulated push the teller into a position of unease not only in terms of articulating the past but also in terms of expressing oneself about the way one feels or thinks about certain things at the present:

But there is this, there is a cautious way of speaking, for example I have a friend at university who does not discriminate, probably he did not, but when there was a discussion about that thing, that draft law²⁴ business, something different happened, he was like “they should have done something so they deserved it”. I tried to tell him, but not in the way he approached me, I have to be more, I mean I could not approach him with the reaction he did.²⁵

Thus, young Armenians in their everyday lives in Turkey, face this violence by seeing that their grandparents’ stories of pain are reduced into simple truth-lie games as manifested in the essay contest organized by the Ministry of National Education

²³ Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, “Introduction” in *Violence and Subjectivity* ed. Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, Pamela Reynolds, University of California Press, 2000, p.2.

²⁴ Referring to the vote by the French National Assembly to recognize the Armenian Genocide in January 2001.

²⁵ Ya şu var biraz böyle temkinli konuşma var mesela bir arkadaşım var üniversitede ayrımcılık yapmaz, yapmıyordu belki ama bu şey muhabbeti bu tasarı muhabbeti olduğu zaman farklı bir şey oldu bir şeyler yapmışlar ki hak etmişler ki muhabbeti oldu, ben ona anlatmaya çalıştım ama onun bana yaklaştığı tavırla değil ben daha biraz daha şey olmalıyım, onun bana verdiği tepkiyle ben ona yaklaşıyorum.

for disproving the Armenian Genocide or by facing the anti-Armenian propaganda as manifested in documentaries such as *Sarı Gelin* on TRT, where not only the stories are not respected but also Armenians themselves become targets of nationalist attacks and insults. They believe that if they could communicate the livedness of the pain it wouldn't be so easy for other people to speak about them in a disrespectful manner. But very often they feel that they don't have the appropriate tools to communicate them the way they were lived. In a context where these stories are stigmatized as 'lies', the indirect past tense of storytelling in Turkish, 'muş, muş' in the eyes of the listeners, who do not share the senses and pain transmitted in these stories, makes the truth-value of these stories doubtful. As expressed in the following quotation, young Armenians think that their grandparents would tell the stories better since they lived them on their bodies:

When I tell it to others in public, since this is a 'sensitive' issue, they should know it with all the details so that they can understand what kind of a thing it was, that, it is not so simple as to be dealt with essay contests or documentaries where they interview one or two people. But when I am the one to tell it, they will take it as a simple thing. If my grandfather were to tell it they would see the truth because he felt it on his skin. But because I don't feel it, I won't be able to tell it.²⁶

Given the fact that the meaning of a text is created in relation to the context within

²⁶ Anlattığım zaman bu olay daha hassas bir olay olduğu için bütün ayrıntılarıyla bilsinler ki ne biçim bir şey olduğunu, öyle çıkıp da iki kişiyle konuşularak belgeseller yapılacak, yarışmalar yapıp da bu tarz şeyler yapılacak kadar basit olmadığını görsünler. Ama bunu ben anlattığımda çok basit bir şey olarak görecekler. Dedem anlatsaydı gerçeği göreceklerdi çünkü dedem onu teninde hissetmiş. Ama ben hissetmediğim için dışarı anlatamam.

which it is told, in a context where the senses and the meanings of the stories that young Armenians tell are not shared by the listeners, the stories -the texts- themselves become difficult to communicate. However, these senses that are transmitted through lullabies and stories, and shared through intimacy make one Armenian. For young Armenians therefore, the very same senses produce the knowledge of the loss -how it cannot be filled.

That is to say, the impossibility of publicly articulating the stories that grandmothers tell or of communicating them with the meaning they have, yet at the same time being marked with these senses that define Armenianness cause a sense of loss in young Armenians which hinder a full and coherent imagination of the Armenian identity in Turkey today.

In the following section I will conclude by the argument as to how the current context of cultural politics in Turkey, by repeatedly speaking about an 'Armenian culture' yet never including the senses shaping Armenianness and the lived experiences of Armenians themselves in Turkey, tends to displace Armenian culture and identity from its history, geography and relationality.

The new liberal discourse that regards the still existing ethnic groups -especially non-muslims whose number have been reduced to a few ten-thousands as a result of violence throughout the 20th century- as 'colors' becomes possible despite the memories of the people in Turkey, because the nationalization process of the Anatolian geography while erasing the existence of different cultures and attempting to dissolve the different identities, also erased the senses that people shared out of the

experiences of having lived together for centuries. Today, in the imaginaries of the people living in Turkey there is no space -with its bodily and experiential dimensions- for the Armenians, Greeks, Süryanis or Jews anymore as cultures or people with whom they live together.

That is to say, in the imaginings of the past, present and the future of the Anatolian geography, Armenians are displaced. As opposed to our mothers' or grandmothers' generations, there are millions of people today who are not familiar with the existence of Armenians or Rums even in Istanbul. As these senses have been gradually lost, the 'colors' discourse that dwells on the idea of dead cultures -frozen into stone, rather than living elements shaping this geography- becomes the most appropriate cultural and political perspective that can be deployed to bring them into discourse. Thus, the very invisibility of the fact that these people still live with their conflicts, problems and pain makes the 'colors' discourse possible.

In short, when the wounds of the social relations such as the loss, the pain, the violence are pushed into silence, a totalized, ahistorical, homogeneous and spaceless Armenian culture emerges. Within these representations, the young Armenians' desire to belong to the place they call home and to the Armenian culture, as a living possession becomes an excess.

'... as an Armenian living in Turkey': The desire to belong

Anne Marie Fortier referring to Elysabeth Probyn's definition of belonging, explains that "belongings, here refers to both 'possessions and inclusion'. That is, practices of group identity are about manufacturing cultural and historical belongings that mark

out terrains of commonality, through which the social dynamics and politics of ‘fitting in’ are delineated.”²⁷ She says, “belonging as it operates in Probyn’s work is useful because it displaces identity from its foundational status. She slide(s) from ‘identity’ to ‘belonging’, in part because... the latter term captures more accurately the desire for some sort of attachment, be it to other people, places, or modes of being, and the ways in which individuals and groups are caught within wanting to belong, wanting to become, a process that is fuelled by yearning rather than the positing of identity as a stable state.”²⁸

Today the Armenian belonging to Anatolia as it is told in grandmothers’ stories that I cited in Chapter 2 is a distant dream also for young Armenians themselves. As Armenians had to migrate to Istanbul throughout decades, the local languages, culture and practices become lost in Istanbul. But even though they still strongly emphasize their being *Anadolulu* (from Anatolia), or being from specific cities of Anatolia such as Sasun, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Sivas and Yozgat, because currently Anatolia has no space for the Armenian culture or for an Armenian life with its institutions as it was before, for the young generations these cities where their parents came from can only be returned to in the memories. As the last marks of the Armenians are disappearing from the landscape of Anatolia today and Anatolia is forgetting Armenians day by day, the displacement gains the meaning of not only being displaced from a place but also not being able to imagine oneself as belonging to that place, an idea that I have been trying to explain throughout the thesis:

²⁷ Anne Marie Fortier, *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity*, Oxford: Berg, 2000, p.2.

²⁸ Fortier, p.2.

I went to İstanköy, the village of my grandfather's father in Ankara... Of course, it was like, it was odd to think that he was born in this house, you imagine it, of course you feel strange. You also like it. You see the graves. The relatives', the old relatives' graves. Belonging... Basically, there is such a contradiction when you think of belonging. I mean, I don't feel that my grandfather belonged there, I mean there is such a different thing. I mean, my grandfather had lived here, I mean my grandfather's father... I mean he belonged there? Not myself, but I do not feel that he belongs to there.²⁹

I have a history in Anatolia. I become very nervous when they ask that question 'Where did you come from?', 'Were you born here? Do you belong to here? Were your mother and father from here?'³⁰

Today, as the majority of Armenians live in Istanbul and the only functioning Armenian schools and other institutions are in Istanbul, the city is perceived as home both for those who were born in Istanbul and for those who were not. It is considered to be the last piece of land connected to Anatolia as its extension, retaining its memories, stories, traditions, local dialects, songs and dances.

²⁹ Ben mesela şeye gittim ama, İstanköy'e gittim, dedemin babasının Ankara'daki köyüne gittim. ... Şey tabii, şey geliyor insana hani bakıyorsun bu evde doğdu garip geliyor insana hayal ediyorsun tabii ki garip hissediyorsun. Hoşuna da gidiyor. Mezarları görüyorsun. Akrabaların eski akrabaların...Aidiyet... aslında şöyle bir çelişki aidiyet deyince. Yani dedemi oraya ait hissedemiyorum yani böyle bir değişik şey var. Yani dedem burada yaşamış, yani dedemin babası.. yani onu oraya.. ben değil de onu oraya ait hissedemiyorum.

³⁰ Anadolu'da bir tarihim var. O soru sorulduğu zaman sinir oluyorum, "nerden geldiniz", "burada mı doğdun, buralı mısınız, annen baban buralı mıydı?"

The majority of the young Armenians that I talked to were either born or had spent their childhood in Istanbul. They defined Istanbul as their home because they literally had their homes here. They stressed their attachment mostly by mentioning their habits of living in the city, the way they were used to its manners, and how much they loved the place: “This is my geography, where I am used to, where I love to live, walk around, breathe.”³¹

I think that living in Istanbul is also a determinant factor. Despite all the negative aspects of it I love Istanbul very much. And I don’t think about living elsewhere. Although there are people in my family that went abroad, I don’t think about going abroad, I don’t want it.³²

The place that you were born, you were raised, your culture, your friends, there are all lived experiences, you get used to the atmosphere of this place, in the end they are similar cultures. In any case as an Armenian living in Turkey, in Istanbul, you get used to here.³³

Apart from “the lived experience of locality”³⁴, family, relatives, Armenian friends

³¹ Burası benim coğrafyam, alıştığım, yaşamayı, gezmeyi, nefes almayı sevdiğim coğrafyam.

³² İstanbul’da yaşıyor olmanın da belirleyici bir şey olduğunu düşünüyorum. İstanbul’u bir sürü kötü yönüne rağmen bayağı seviyorum. Başka bir yerde yaşamayı da düşünmüyorum. Ailemden yurt dışına gitmiş olan insanlar olmasına rağmen ben düşünmüyorum, istemiyorum böyle bir şeyi.

³³ Doğup büyüdüğün yer, kültürün arkadaşların, yaşanmışlık var alışmışsın buranın ortamına, ne kadar da işte yani sonuçta işte benzer kültürler zaten ne bileyim Türkiye’de yaşayan bir ermeni olarak İstanbul’da yaşayan bir ermeni olarak buraya alışmışsın.

³⁴ Brah, p. 192

and the community also emerge as very important ties to the place:

As I said, I have my school, I have Armenian friends, I don't know, my church, the church, OK the church is also something. Well, there might be a concert, I don't know, a popular person from among us, his/her conference and what not, as a result because I closely follow these, I feel inside it.³⁵

In addition to these everyday life experiences, the Armenian historical presence in Istanbul also contributes to the feeling of belonging to the city. Armenian institutions such as the Patriarchate, churches, schools, hospitals, cultural associations, choirs, folk dance groups, as well as the Ottoman palaces and various buildings that were constructed by Armenian architects are regarded as the signs of this centuries long Armenian presence in Istanbul.

Yet, as a result of the identity politics in Turkey, the Armenian culture as a living possession has been confined to the private sphere of the Armenian community in Istanbul. Rather than creating the means for public production and practice of Armenian as well as other cultures in Turkey, hegemonic identity politics tried for decades to sterilize the public sphere from non-Turkish elements. And today, different cultures are reduced to 'special events', 'festivals', or 'ceremonies'. Similarly, for young Armenians living in Turkey who gradually loose the means to reproduce Armenian culture as a living entity, traditions, ceremonies and festivities

³⁵ İşte dediğim gibi okulum var, hay arkadaşlarım var, ne bileyim, işte kilisem, kilise ya tamam kilise de bir şey sonuçta, işte ne bileyim bir konser oluyor, ne bileyim ünlü bir kişi bizden biri, onun konferansı falan, sonuçta bunları yakından takip ettiğim için, içinde bulunduğumu hissediyorum.

become the only spaces to practice the Armenian culture and to look for the Armenian identity:

In fact I love that thing, I mean it is like that in the traditions, now for example the church, in fact it is the thing that touches everybody the most, our weddings are so nice, I don't know, that organization, the atmosphere of the church, that melody, the ceremony and so on are so beautiful that you are seduced by them. I don't know, there is Christmas, there is Easter, the festivity of Saint Mary, there is a beautiful ceremony for everything.³⁶

So far, I tried to explain that Armenians feel displaced in their home both because of the lack of the context that would allow them to share their senses of being from and displaced from Anatolia and the loss of the means to reproduce Armenian and other cultures in Istanbul today. Besides, today the more 'Armenian culture' is represented and 'spoken about' in the public sphere within the limits of hegemonic identity politics, the more it becomes non-existent. But on the other hand, for the young Armenians to whom I spoke -who criticize the current situation as explained in previous chapter- both their belonging to Anatolia and their desire to live Armenian culture as a possession are significant elements shaping their subjectivities:

Coming from a particular culture, maybe knowing a particular language,

³⁶ Aslında şeyi seviyorum yani geleneklerde de bu böyle, şimdi mesela kilise, aslında herkesi etkileyen şey budur, bizim bir düğünümüz belki çok hoş bir işte ne bileyim, o organizasyon, o kilisenin havası, o melodi, seremoni falan bunlar öyle güzel ki insanı zaten ister istemez büyülüyor. Ne bileyim işte Dzinunt var Zadig var Asdvadzadzin şu bu, her şeyin aslında bir güzel töreni var.

speaking and understanding it, and besides being in the community because of my job and even more being in a place where cultural activities take place, also taking part in these activities; maybe I would feel it less if I were not under these circumstances, but now I feel my Armenianness more.³⁷

I feel Armenian, I feel as an Armenian living in Turkey. I define myself as an Armenian, I feel my Armenian identity, I possess it, this identity is also stuck to my tongue, I mean unfortunately, I see myself as a minority.³⁸

I define myself as Armenian. (...) I don't know, I mean it is the milieu where I feel comfortable. Something like that. It is normal to feel comfortable, because how many years, twelve or thirteen, how many years? I studied in this school for eleven years, eleven years I was always with Armenian friends in an Armenian school.³⁹

I define Armenianness as a culture. ... Well in terms of its characteristic,

³⁷ Belli bir kültürden geliyor olmak, belki belli bir dili biliyor olmak, onu konuşabiliyor, anlayabiliyor olmak, ve ayrıca işim dolayısıyla cemaatin aslında içinde olmam ve hatta kültürel faaliyet gösteren bir yerde olmam, benim de o faaliyetin içinde olmam, kendimi belki bu şartlarda olmasam daha az hissedebilirdim ama şu an daha fazla hissediyorum Ermeniliğimi.

³⁸ Ben kendimi ermeni olarak hissediyorum, Türkiye'de yaşayan bir Ermeni olarak hissediyorum. Ermeni olarak nitelendiriyorum, Ermeni kimliğimi hissediyorum, taşıyorum, dilime de bu kimlik yapışmış durumda, yani azınlık olarak kendimi görüyorum maalesef.

³⁹ Ben kendimi ermeni olarak nitelendiriyorum, (..) ne bileyim hani kendini rahat hissettiğim ortam. Öyle bir şey. Rahat hissetmem de doğal çünkü ben kaç? 12, 13 sene, kaç sene? 11 sene okudum okulda 11 sene hep ermeni okulunda ermeni arkadaşlarımla beraberdim.

it is a very productive society, and I don't know, myself coming from a place that highly values art and artists... Probably someone else like a German would also tell the same for him/herself. But there is more art and craft here... I mean for me this is the most distinctive feature of being Armenian, they produced their chief masters, they are productive.⁴⁰

As the above examples illustrate, for young Armenians, the longing or the desire to belong is a part of their experience of being an Armenian in Turkey. I believe this is the “experiential sense” of being a ‘minority’ in Turkey, in Paul Gilroy’s words: “black identity is not simply a social and political category to be used or abandoned according to the extent to which the rhetoric that supports and legitimizes it is persuasive or institutionally powerful. Whatever the radical constructionists may say, it is lived as a coherent (if not always stable) experiential sense of self. Though it is often felt to be natural and spontaneous, it remains the outcome of practical activity: language, gesture, bodily signification, desires.”⁴¹

When you are displaced from your land and from your culture, what you live is a feeling of longing for your culture. This longing comes from having a significant loss shaping your subjectivity, the subjectivity of belonging to a memory and culture, which are themselves displaced. I think the words below of a young man, whose mother is a *Rum* from Istanbul, explains this very well:

⁴⁰ Ermeniliği kültür olarak tanımlarım. (...) Şey, özellik olarak bunlar belki çok üretken sayılabilecek bir toplum ya da ne bileyim sanatçı ya da sanata verilen önemin fazla olduğu bir yerden gelmiş olmak. (...) herhalde başka, alman da herhalde, kendisi için aynı şeyi söyleyecektir ama, biraz daha sanata ya da zanaata ... ön plana çıkan özelliği bu benim için hani Ermeni, en büyük ustalarını çıkarmış, üretken.

⁴¹ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, London: Verso, 1999, p.102.

My mom used to sing lullabies in Greek (*Rumca*). Now, we make fun of her, her style of raising us, we make fun of her a lot now while comparing that with the conditions of 2003, I mean the lullaby she used to sing, the story she used to tell (...) She used to tell a story, a horrifying one, I mean if you tell it today, we used to tell her “why are you telling that story to a five year old child?” The sandwiches she used to prepare for school, the other things and all that stuff are all the subjects of the current humor, but the lullaby, there was a lullaby that my mom used to sing in Greek. (...) In fact, I was not raised with lullabies. But my mom knows Greek lullabies, and my mom still calculates in Greek.⁴²

The loss however is not something static, it is a constitutive element in the ‘minority’ experience in Turkey, contributing to its reproduction. The loss is felt only when there are people to follow it, to try to recover it. The feeling of loss is communicated among the people who share it. And this shapes the sense of being a ‘minority’ in Turkey:

If it affects the person who walks through İstiklal street, if it affects me a little more, or sirtaki or Zorba or another thing, I mean or while buying a book, reading it as Kazanca-kis, if you feel more like that man is from us,

⁴² Mamam Rumca ninni okuyordu. Hatta şimdi dalga geçeriz onunla, mamamın bizi yetiştirme tarzıyla şimdi 2003 yılı şartlarına bakarak çok dalga geçeriz, hani o okuduğu ninni, anlattığı hikaye (...) Hikaye anlatırdı bir tane, yok işte, korkunç bir hikaye tamam mı, yani şimdi anlatsan, 5 yaşında çocuğa ne anlatıyorsun o hikayeyi diye sürekli annemle şey yapardık. Bize okulda hazırladığı sandviçler şunlar bunlar falan sürekli bugünkü mizah konusudur ama ninni mamamın okuduğu bir Rumca ninni vardı (...) Ben pek ninniyle büyümedim (...) Ama mamam mesela Rumca ninni bilir, mamam hesabı da hala Rumca yapar.

I mean to appropriate those cultures more. ⁴³

The Armenians in Turkey today follow the traces of the loss, with the hope that they could partly recover it, but with the knowledge that it cannot be totally recovered. They search for the lost lullaby, in a sound, in a melody, in the names in the generics of a film, when they come across an Armenian name, when they hear an Armenian melody, see Armenian scripts on a stone, or when they hear “two people speaking Armenian while we are walking on the street.”⁴⁴

⁴³ İstiklal Caddesi'nde yürüyen insanı etkiliyorsa beni biraz daha fazla etkiliyorsa ya da bir sirtaki bir Zorba bir bilmem ne, hani ya da bir kitabı alırken Kazanca-kis diye okuduğumda biraz daha bizden hissediyorsan o adamı, hani o kültürleri biraz daha sahiplenme.

⁴⁴ Sokakta yürüdüğümüzde iki kişi konuştuğunda hoşumuza gidiyor ...

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I attempted to develop the tools for understanding what it means to be an Armenian in Turkey today. I suggested looking at a very specific experience, the practice of singing lullabies by Armenian grandmothers. I tried to formulate my approach to lullabies as a gendered medium of transmission of belonging -to a land, to a tongue, to a culture or to a story-, which contained excesses and lacks in relation to what is considered to be the Armenian identity. By focusing on the act of singing lullabies in its specific contexts, which grant them their meanings, I argued that in order to decipher the dynamics of the current identity politics we have to understand the transformation of the very senses that are transmitted through the lullabies.

By analyzing the change in the contexts within which lullabies are transmitted today, I argued that displacement and loss are two interrelated experiences shaping the sense of being an Armenian in Turkey. By deploying these experiences as analytical tools in understanding the cultural politics in Turkey, I argued that without focusing on these experiences it is impossible to talk about Armenians or any other minority group in Turkey.

I tried to explain that displacement means being displaced from not only the land, Anatolia, but also culture, history and memory due to the Turkification process as well as decades' long restrictions on the articulation of different cultures and identities in Turkey. I argued that the outcome of this process has been the invisibility of Armenians from the representations of the history and culture of the Anatolian geography and this

creates a feeling of displacement among young Armenians in Istanbul, in the place they call home.

I explained that when we define displacement in this way, we can see that it is a constitutive element of the liberal discourse on cultural politics, which detaches cultures from people and the very senses that make them living possessions. Thus, I criticized the liberal perspective by showing that it represents cultures as colors of a mosaic, without referring to the experiences of the people trying to preserve those cultures.

I tried to decipher the current identity politics not only by showing that there is still a strong nationalist right wing in Turkey that cannot stand for even a liberal stance, but also showing that the liberal discourse that dwells on the idea of dead cultures becomes possible only by the repression of the articulation of the experiences that these cultures have been going through throughout the nationalization process of the Anatolian geography. The current hegemonic identity / cultural politics in Turkey, from its extreme right to its liberal version is the historical continuation of the nationalist politics which tries to erase the past, forget the pains and makes it impossible to speak about how they relate to the present.

In a context where the Armenian culture is represented as detached from its lived experiences and memory, it becomes impossible to share the grandmothers' stories in the public sphere and the loss itself becomes the experience of Armenianness. Young generation of Armenians in Istanbul today, in their search for the Armenian identity, develop a certain way of belonging to the space and culture that is shaped very much by

this experience of loss.

Today in Turkey, the definition of 'minority' became a highly debated issue, making it impossible to speak about different identities within the limits of the old receipts of the nation-state. Yet on the other hand, the nationalists once more are trying to reduce the issue to a problem of 'national unity' and the 'indivisibility of the state'. At this point my thesis proposes to focus on the meaning of the past for the present as a constitutive element of the definitions of different identities in Turkey. As various agents such as state, political parties, intellectuals and the representatives of ethnic and religious groups are getting engaged in the discussion about 'who is a minority', I believe rather than confining the issue into fixed definitions of 'minority' or 'minority rights', one should look at the historical experiences of displacement and loss as well as the present asymmetrical power relations between different groups in Turkey.

As the Armenian lullabies, once telling the stories of belonging to a land and a culture, today can only tell the very desire to belong to that land and that culture, we have to start speaking about the irretrievable but constitutive loss shaping our presence in Turkey today. We can only trace the marks of this loss by hearing the voices of the people. And I believe in order to develop senses to understand each others' experiences, we need to start looking at the gaps in the stories, we need to hear not only what people can tell us but also what they cannot, we need to pay attention to the parts missing, for it is not only their loss, but also our loss, a part of livedness missing from our own lives.

And I tried to tell what it means to be an Armenian in Turkey through the story of a lost lullaby...

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APPENDIX

SAMPLES OF LULLABIES

All rights reserved. The lullabies recorded by me belong to their creators. Because their names are not cited here, any quotation necessitates my prior permission.

Քուն ունի ձագուկս քուն ունի,
Ենիգաքուն տուն ունի,
Ոսկիէ ջախջախներ ունի:

My child needs sleep,
She has a house in Yenikapu,
It has golden doorknockers.

Kun uni tzakugıs kun uni,
Yenikapun dun uni,
Vosgiye çakhçakhner uni.

Նազերով նազերով,
Վարպետ կ'երթայ վազելով,
Սակառը լեցուն թուզերով:

Coyly coyly,
Master goes running,
His basket full of figs.

Nazeroz nazeroz,
Varbed gerta vazelov,
Sagari letsun tuzeroz.

*My grandmother's lullabies from Istanbul
Recorded by Melissa Bilal in Kadıköy in March 2001*

Քնացիր տղաս,
Ալ ուշ է ուշ,
Սիրտս տխուր է,
Որբեվայրի երգեր կ'ըսէ,
Իմ անուշիս, օրօր օր օր...

Sleep my son, it's late,
My heart is sad,
It sings songs of the land of orphans,
To my sweet, oror or or...

Knatsir diğas,
Al uş e uş,
Sirds dkhur e,
Vorpevayri yerker gise,
İm anuşis, oror or or...

*Siran Koko's lullaby from Amasya
Sung by Ayda Erbal in New York in March 2001*

oror

Andante

Անճիր մանկիկ իմ սիրասունս,
 Օրոր եմ ասունս,
 Պայծառ լուսինն է մեղմ հայունս,
 Զո օրորոցունս:

My dear my up'le
 I am sing you lull, for o-ro-ro-geun!

Անճիր մանկիկ իմ սիրասունս,
 Օրոր եմ ասունս,
 Պայծառ լուսինն է մեղմ հայունս,
 Զո օրորոցունս:

Ninçir mangig im sirasun,
 Oror yem asum,
 Baydzar lusinn e meğm hayum,
 Ko ororotsum.

Sleep my dear child,
 I am singing you a lullaby,
 Shiny moon is sweetly watching,
 Your cradle.

*Sung by Armenian grandmothers in Istanbul
 also in Yerkan, Istanbul, 1985, p. 166.*

Օրօր աղուոր մանջօ օրօր,
Զեգ մեծցլեմ օրէ օր:
Յօրդ նման մարդ եղիր,
Տունդ քեզմով տունդ քեզմով,
Տեսնես օր:

Oror ağvor mançıs oror,
Kez medztsinem ore or,
Horit nıman mart yeğir,
Dunit kezmov dunit kezmov
Desnes or.

Oror my lovely son oror,
I shall bring you up day by day.
I wish you become a man like your father,
I wish you see your home with your presence.

*Recorded by Melissa Bilal and Belinda Mumcu
in Yedikule Surp Pirgiç Armenian Hospital in March 2001*

Յայտէ գնա ամպիտան պուծուկ,
Ես աղջիկս քեզի չեմ ի տար,
Որու տամ որու չի տամ,
Պէլլերպէյին տղուն տամ:

Hayde kına ambidan bucuk,
Yes ağçigıs kezi çem i dar,
Voru dam voru çidam,
Beylerbeyin diğun dam.

Go away shameless insect,
I don't give my daughter to you,
To whom shall I give to whom shall I not give,
I shall give her to Beylerbeyi's son.

*Sung by a grandmother from Istanbul
Recorded by Melissa Bilal and Belinda Mumcu
in Yedikule Surp Pirgiç Armenian Hospital in 2001*

Օրօր օրօր օր,
Օրօր կ'ըսես քնանաս,
Եւրում անուշ քունի տիրանաս օր օր,
Օրօր օրօր օրօր օր,
Օրօր օրօր հեշտ տեղը,
Եւրում օրրան դրի պօշ տեղը,
Օրօր օր.

Էլայի լեռները բարձրերը նայիս,
Անցնողին դարձնողին սիրտը կը նայիս,
Եւրում լեզուդ բանալի ըլլայ,
Սիրտդ բանայի,
Սիրտիդ մէջի ցաւուն էս իմանայի,
Օրօր օր.

Հովեր տար ու բեր հովեր,
Գէշը տար աղուորը բեր,
Գէշուն տերն արեւ չունի,
Եւրույէս խապար մի բեր,
Օրօր օր.

Oror oror or,
Oror gisem knanas,
Yavrum anuş kuni diranas or or,
Oror oror oror or,
Oror oror heşd deđi,
Yavrum orran tiri boş deđi,
Oror or.

Elayi lernerı partzrerı nayim,
Antsnođin tarnođin sirdı gı nayim
Yavrum lezut panali illa,
Sirdit panayi,
Sirdit meçi tsavun es imanayi,
Oror or.

Hover dar u per hover,
Keşı dar ağvori per,
Keşun dern arev çuni ,
Yavruyes khabar mi per,
Oror or.

Oror oror or,
I sing oror and you shall sleep,
My child I wish you have a sweet sleep or or,
Oror oror oror or,
Oror oror to a good place,
My child, I put a cradle in vain,
I climb the mountains, the high hills and look,
I look at the hearts of the passers by,
My child, I wish your tongue was a key and I could open your heart,
I wish I could feel the pain in your heart, oror or,
The winds take and bring,
Take the bad and bring the good,
The lord of the bad does not have sun,
Bring news from my child, oror or.

Էջա վարի պախաջան,
Տերեւներն են կանչըցեր,
Եւրում լալէն լալէն,
Աչվներս է խոնջեցեր,
Եւրում ալ չեմ էջնար,
Ան պախաջային մօտը,
Ընկաւ կորսուեցաւ,
Ճէֆային մատնի սանկը,
Օրօր օր.
Օրօր էնիմ օր էնիմ,
Ղոչերը դուրպան էնիմ,
Եւրում միսն ուտի չորպան խմի,
Բոստն ալ եւրուլիս քիւրք շնիմ,
Օրօր օր.

Eça vari bakhçan,
Derevnern e gançitser,
Yavrum lalen lalen,
Açviners e khonçetser,
Yavrum al çem ençnar,
An bakhçayin modi,
Ingav gorsivetsav,
Cefayin madni sangı,
Oror or.
Oror enim or enim,
Ğoçeri ğurban enim,
Yavrum misn udi çorban khimi,
Posdn al yavruyis kürk şınım,
Oror or.

I went down that garden,
The leaves have become green,
My child, my eyes have become tired by crying,
My child, I never go down near to that garden again,
The sorrow felt down and got lost, oror or,
I rock you,
I sacrifice sheep,
My child shall eat its meat and drink its milk,
I will make a fur for my child from its skin.

*Lullaby of a grandmother from Arapgir (Malatya) in two parts
Recorded by Melissa Bilal and Belinda Mumcu in Yeşilköy in March 2001*

Օր օր օրօր էլիմ քնանաս,
Անուշ քունի տիրանաս,
Դուն ա պզտիկ էս պիտի մեծնաս,
Օր օր, օրօր յաւրոս օրօր:

Or or oror enim kınanas,
Anuş kuni diranas,
Tun a bızdig es bidi medznas,
Or or, oror yavrus oror.

Or or I rock you and you sleep,
I wish you have sweet sleep,
You are small and will grow up
Or or, oror to my child.

Sung by a grandmother from Arapgir (Malatya)

Recorded by Melissa Bilal and Belinda Mumcu in Yeşilköy in March 2001

Օրօր օրօր իմ բալաս,
Ես երգեմ դու քնանաս,
Գուսանների մեղեդին,
Քեզ քուն բերի իմ բալաս:
Երազներիդ մէջ տեսնես,
Դու Մասիսի սարն ելլես,
Բայց երբ գարթնես երազեդ,
Արարատը սրտիդ մօտ գտնես:

Oror oror im palas,
Yes yerkem tu kınanas,
Kusanneri meğetin,
Kez kun peri im palas.
Yeraznerit meç desnes,
Tu masisi sarn yelles,
Payts yerp zartnes yerazet,
Araradı sirdit mod kıldnes.

Oror oror my child, I sing and you sleep,
Let the melodies of the minstrels bring you sleep, my child,
In your dreams you shall see yourself climbing up the Masis hill,
But when you wake up you shall find Ararad near to your heart.

Sung by a young Armenian woman from Kastamonu

Recorded by Melissa Bilal in Bakırköy in July 2003

Օրօր ըստմ քնացնեմ,
Սիրով սիրտով մեծացնեմ,
Օրօր իմ ձագուկս օրօր,
Օրօր իմ մանջուկս օրօր:
Ուրուկուլան դեմ դնեմ օրրան,
Սուգիս սստեմ ըստմ օրօր,
Դեռ նոր վարդի նման բացուել,
Սուգիս սստեմ ըստմ օրօր.
Էլ քուն չունիմ հոգիս մայրիկ,
Չերիք աչքս կապես հերիք:

*Oror isem knatsinem,
Sirov sirdov medzatsinem,
Oror im tsakugis oror,
Oror im mançugis oror.
Urukvan tem dnem orran,
Sukis nisdem isem oror,
Der nor varti nıman batsvel,
Sukis nisdem isem oror.
El kun çunim hokis mayrig,
Herik açkas gabes herik.*

I shall sing oror and put you to sleep,
I shall bring you up with a heart full of love,
Oror my dear oror, oror my son oror,
Towards evening I shall put you in the cradle,
I shall sit with my grief and sing oror,
You are like a newly opened rose,
I shall sit with my grief and sing oror.
I am not sleepy any more my dear mom,
It's enough that you tie my eye, it's enough.

*Sung by a grandmother from Darende (Malatya)
Recorded by Melissa Bilal in Kınalıada in September 2003*

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Գր-տը բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի,
 բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, լա-ն,
 բու-րի, լա-ն, հա-րա-ճը լա-վին պի օ-րո-րը, բու-րի, լա-ն,
 բու-րի, լա-ն, Ի-ն ռ-ի օշ-խար Էի ճից Ի-դա, բու-րի, լա-ն,
 բու-րի, լա-ն, հա-րա-ճը լա-վին պի օ-րո-րը, բու-րի, լա-ն,
 բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի բո-ր - խո,
 բու-րի, բու-րի բու-րի բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի կե-նիմ կրրգա-նո-ցին,
 բու-րի, լա-ն, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի կե-նիմ ըմ ըա-լի-կին,
 բու-րի, լա-ն, բու-րի կե-նիմ, դու բու-րե-նաւ, դու բո-ր-դից իս,
 պա-րով մեց-նաւ: Ախ, բու-րի բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի, բու-րի

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Րուրի թուրի, թուրի թուրի, թուրի լաօ</i> | <i>Ruri ruri, ruri ruri, ruri lao</i> |
| <i>Րուրի կ'ենեմ դու թուրենաս թուրի լաօ</i> | <i>Ruri genem tu rurenas ruri lao</i> |
| <i>Դու պզտիկիս բարով մեծնաս թուրի լաօ</i> | <i>Tu bizdigis parov medznas</i> |
| <i>Րուրի թուրի, թուրի թուրի, թուրի լաօ</i> | <i>Ruri ruri ruri ruri ruri lao</i> |
| <i>Ախ հարաֆը քամին քի օրօրես թուրի լաօ</i> | <i>Akh harafi kamin ki orores ruri lao</i> |
| <i>Ան որ դուն գաս քեզի պահաս թուրի լաօ</i> | <i>An vor tun kas kedzi bahas</i> |
| <i>Րուրի թուրի, թուրի թուրի, թուրի լաօ</i> | <i>Ruri ruri ruri ruri ruri lao</i> |
| <i>Րուրի կ'ենեմ դու մեծանաս, թուրի լաօ</i> | <i>Ruri genem tu medzanas ruri lao.</i> |

Ruri ruri ruri ruri ruri lao
 I rock you and you rock ruri lao
 You are small you shall grow up well
 Ruri ruri ruri ruri ruri ruri lao
 The east wind shall swing you ruri lao
 Wherever you come, it shall protect you ruri lao
 Ruri ruri ruri ruri ruri lao
 I rock you and you grow up ruri lao.

*Sung by a woman from Anjar (Lebanon) whose parents are from Sasun
 Recorded by Melissa Bilal in Kurtuluş in August 2002
 Scores from "Talini Haygagan Joğovrtagan Yerker yev Nivakner, Yerevan, 1984,
 p. 78.*

Խաչին լուսնկան սօրուն
Եար ես քու ճամբադ կը նայիմ
Եար ես տղայ դուն տղայ
Մեր սիրուն չաղերն են հիմայ:

*Khaçin, lusingan norun,
Yar yes ku campat gi nayim,
Yar yes diğa tun diğa,
Mer sirun çağern yen hima.*

On the day of the holy cross, on the new moon,
I look forward to your road,
My love I'm young and you're young,
Those are our times for love.

***Traditional lullaby from Armıdan,
Gırunğ Usdi Gukas, p. 90.***

Օրօր օրօր, իմ հոգուն հոգին, օրօր
Իմ նորստունս էգին, օրօր
Որ նոր է ժմներ, օրօր
Պտուղ չէ տուեր, օրօր
Տուեր այվա ու խնժոր, օրօր
Մեկ ճղէն հազար տերեւէն, օրօր:

*Oror oror im hokus hokin oror,
Im nordung ekin, oror
Vor nor e jmner, oror
Biduğ çe diver, oror
Diver ayva u khndzor, oror
Meg ciğen hazar dereven oror.*

Oror oror my dearest oror,
The crop that I newly planted,
That newly grew, oror
Didn't give any fruits, oror
Gave quinces and apples, oror
From its one branch and thousand leaves, oror.

***Traditional lullaby from Agn,
Hay Joğovirtagan Ororotsayin yev Mangagan Yerker, p. 55.***

Քելէ լաօ քելէ էրթանք մըր էրկիր,
էրթանք մըր Վան,
էրթանք մըր Մուշ ու Սասուն,
Քելէ լաօ քելէ էրթանք մըր էրկիր,
էրթանք ըն ձոր,
Քաղիկք մատղաշ խավրծիլ,
Քաղիկք քաղիկք
Էնիկք մըզի դիդ ու ճար:
Քելէ լաօ քելէ էրթանք մըր էրկիր
Յոն արոսներ
Կտուց-կտցի կը երգին,
Ծիծեռնակներ թելիկ-թելիկ
Կը ծափին,
Քարեր առանց մըզի
Արցունք կը թափին:
Քելէ լաօ քելէ էրթանք մըր էրկիր:

Kele Lao, kele ertank mir ergir,
Ertank mir Van,
Ertank mir Muş u Sasun,
Kele Lao, kele ertank mir ergir,
Ertank in tsor,
Kağink madğaş khavirdzil,
Kağink kağink
Enink mizi tiğ u car.
Kele lao kele ertank mir ergir,
Hon arosner
Gıduts-gıdtsi gı yerkin
Dzidzernagner tevig-tevig
Gı dzapın
Karer arants mizi
Artsunk gı tapın
Kele lao kele ertank mir ergir.

Get up my child, let's go to our land,
Let's go to our Van, our Muş and Sasun,
Let's go that valley, collect fresh sapling
Collect and make us cure and remedy,
Get up my child, let's go to our land.
There the birds sing
The swallows flap wings
The stones cry in our absence.
Get up my child, let's go to our land.

*Sung by Lusine Şahrikyan in Sayat Nova's Mşo Yerker concert in December 1999
also by Tatyana Bostan in Knar's album Anadolu'dan Kafkaslara Ermeni Müziği*

source: Şirag, p. 145.

ՊԱՐ-ՊԱՐ ԿԵՆԵՄ

ՖԻԼՈՐ ՂԱԶԱՐԻԿՅԱՆ

♩ = 66

65

Պար-պար կ'ենեմ, պար կ'ենեմ, կապան կտրոթեմ շար կ'ենեմ, էս յա-վը -

- թու-խս ա-րի - վուց շիֆթ ղո-ջը ղուրբան կ'ենեմ, պար պար, պար

Պար-պար կ'ենեմ, պար կ'ենեմ,
 Կապան կտրեմ շար կ'ենեմ.
 Էս եավրուխս արելուն՝
 Չիֆթ ղոջը ղուրբան կ'ենեմ,
 Պար, պար, պար:

Bar bar genem bar genem,
 Gaban gidrem şar genem,
 Es yavruyis arevun,
 Çift khoçi ğurban genem,
 Bar, bar, bar.

I do bar-bar,
 I cut the cloth and make a dress,
 For the sun of my child
 I sacrifice two sheep
 Bar, bar, bar.

*Sung by Tatyana Bostan in Knar's album Anadolu Ermeni Halk Müziği
 Filor Ğazarigyan, collected by Mihran Tumacan, in Hayreni Yerk U Pan, p. 101.*

Օրօր, օրօր, օրօր, օրօր, օրօր, օր.

Օրօր կանչեմ իմանաս,

Պառկիս անուշ քնանաս,

Քնանաս ու մեծանաս,

Մեծանաս ու մեծ դառնաս:

Օրօր, օրօր, օրօր, օրօր, օրօր, օրօր, օր:

Oror, oror, oror, oror, oror, or

Oror gançem imanas,

Bargis anuş knanas,

Knanas u medzanas,

Medzanas u medz tarnas.

Oror, oror, oror, oror, oror, or.

Օրօր, օրօր, օրօր, օրօր, օրօր, օր:

Օրօր, օրօր, այրիս ես,

Լահուր շալի լայրիս ես,

Լահուր շալն ի՞նչ կ'անի,

Թագաւորի լայրիս ես:

Օրօր, օրօր, օրօր, օրօր, օրօր, օրօր, օր:

Oror, oror, oror, oror, oror, or

Oror, oror, ayikh yes,

Lahur şali layikh yes,

Lahur şali inç gani,

Takavori layikh yes.

Oror, oror, oror, oror, oror, oror, or.

Oror oror oror oror oror or

I shall sing oror and you shall hear,

You shall go to bed and sleep,

You shall sleep and grow up,

Grow shall up and become an adult,

Oror oror oror oror oror oror or.

Oror oror oror oror oror oror or

Oror oror you are awake,

You deserve a shawl from Lahur,

A shawl from Lahur is not enough,

You deserve the king's hand.

Oror oror oror oror oror oror or.

Traditional lullaby from Agn composed by N. Kalanteryan

Kanstaran Haygagan Yerkeru, p. 688.

Օրոր կանչիմ իմանաս
Պարկիս ւանուշ քնանաս
Քնանաս ու մեծանաս
Մեծանաս ու մեծ մի լինիս
Բոլորիս ու գեղ մի լինիս
Ան գեղն ուր մեծ չի կենայ
Ան գեղին մեծը դուն լինիս

*Oror gançim imanas
Bargis 'vanuş kınanas
Knanas u medzanas
Medzanas u medz mi linis
Poloris u keğ mi linis
An keğn ur medz çi gena
An keğin medzi tun linis.*

I shall sing you a lullaby and you listen,
You shall go to bed and sleep sweetly,
You shall sleep and grow up,
You shall grow up and become an adult,
Become a village for all of us,
In that village where there is no head,
You shall become the head of that village.

*Traditional lullaby from Agn,
Agn U Agntsik, p. 30.*

ՆԱՆԻ, ԲԱԼԱՒ

Moderato

Grades. 9. ՍԻԼՆԻԿ

p նա-նի բա-լա՜ նա-նի նա-նի նա-նի
 նա-նի ձա-գուկ նա-նի նա-նի օ-րօր
 Ա-լիւր մաղե՛նք հեւ ընե՛նք
 Կրակ վառե՛նք լիս ընե՛նք
 Շան լակոսին դու ընե՛նք:
 Բալա՛, նանի՛, նանի՛, օրօր:
 Նանի՛, բալա՛, նանի՛, նանի՛, նանի՛,
 Նանի՛, ձագուկ, նանի՛, նանի՛, օրօր:
 Նանի՛, բալա, նանի՛, նանի՛, նանի՛,
 Նանի՛, ձագուկ, նանի՛, նանի՛, օրօր:



Նանի՛, բալա՛, նանի՛, նանի՛, նանի՛,
նանի՛, ձագուկ, նանի՛, նանի՛, օրօր:
նանի՛, բալա՛, նանի՛, նանի՛, նանի՛,
Նանի՛, ձագուկ, նանի՛, նանի՛, օրօր:

*Nani, pala, nani, nani, nani,
Nani, tsakug, nani, nani, oror
Nani, pala, nani, nani, nani,
Nani, tsakug, nani, nani, oror*

Ալիւր մաղենք, հետ ընենք,
Կըրակ վառենք լիս ընենք,
Շան լակոտին դուս ընենք:
Բալա՛, նանի՛, նանի՛, օրօր:

*Alür mağenk hes inenk
Grag varenk lis inenk
Şan lagodin tus inenk
Pala, nani, nani, oror.*

Նանի՛, բալա՛, նանի՛, նանի՛, նանի՛,
նանի՛, ձագուկ, նանի՛, նանի՛, օրօր:
նանի՛, բալա՛, նանի՛, նանի՛, նանի՛,
Նանի՛, ձագուկ, նանի՛, նանի՛, օրօր:

*Nani, pala, nani, nani, nani,
Nani tsakug nani nani oror,
Nani, pala, nani, nani, nani.
Nani, tsakug, nani, nani, oror.*

Nani, pala, nani, nani, nani,
Nani, my child, nani, nani, oror,
Nani, pala, nani, nani, nani.
Nani, my child, nani, nani, oror.

Let's sift the flour and make bread,
Let's light a fire and
Put the sun of the dog outside.

Nani, pala, nani, nani, nani,
Nani, my child, nani, nani, oror,
Nani, pala, nani, nani, nani.
Nani, my child, nani, nani, oror.

*Composed by Krikor Suni
Kantsaran Haygagan Yerkeru, p. 341.*

ՕՐՈՐՈՅԻ ԵՐԳ

Խոսք՝ Գ. Մեսյանի

Երաժշտ.՝ Գ. Գեղարիկի

Հանդարտ



Քող քեզ ծածկեմ, անգին լա-լաս, օ- թո- թեմ՝ քը- նիթ.



օ- թը մըթ- նեց, լուսինն ե-լավ, գի- շեր է հի- մի:

Թող քեզ ծածկես, անգին լալաս,
Օրորես՝ քնիր.
Սուրձն ընկել է լուսինն էլաւ,
Գիշեր է հիմի:
Արեւն արդէն գնաց հոգնած՝
Քընեց մօր գրկում.
Դու դեռ արթուն, աչքերդ բաց՝
Խոսում ես, երգում:
Էգուս նորից կգա արեւ
Քեզ համար նոր օր.
Սուրձնէ, պալաս, քնիր հիմա,
Քեզ օրօր, օրօր.

Toğ kez dzadzgem angin balas,
Ororem kınir,
Mudn ingel e, lusinn elav,
Gişer e himi,
Arevn arten gnats hoknadz
Kınets mor gırgum
Du der artun açkerit bats.
Khosum es yergum,
Ekus norits gı ka arev
Kez hamar nor or
Mutne balas kınir hima
Kez oror oror.

I shall cover you my precious child,
I rock and you sleep,
It's dark and the moon shines,
It is night now.
The sun has already gone tired,
Slept in its mother's lap,
You are still awake, your eyes open,
Keep on speaking and singing,
The sun will come again,
For you a new day.
It is dark my child, sleep now,
Oror to you, oror.

*Sung by a grandmother from Yerevan,
recorded by Melissa Bilal in Kinaliada August 2002
Lyrics by K. Mesyan & music by K.Keğarig*

Տեր Չոր կ'երթանք լալագին,
 Ցաւերուն մէջ կրակին
 Չկայ լոյսու ճաճանջի
 Եավրուկս նեննի կը կանջիմ
 Օրոր քսիմ քնացիր
 Մշիկ մշիկ քնացիր
 Ճամբան երկար մի գիտնար
 Որ չխօսուի սիրտդ արդար
 Տարագիր ենք տուն չունինք
 Աքսորուած ենք տեղ չունինք
 Աստուած չունինք որ դատե
 Մեր տարապանքն երկած է
 Լալէն լալէն մարեցար
 Կաթիլ կաթիլ ձամբեցար
 Չորցած կուրծկս ծծելէն
 Արդար հոգիդ խօսուեցաւ
 Լալէն լալէն հոգնեցար
 Կաթիլ կաթիլ մարեցար
 Ալ կաթ չունիմ որ տամ քեզ
 Այրիւն կուգայ աչքերէս:

Der zor gertank lalakin,
 Tsaverun mech gragin,
 Çıga luysu cacançi,
 Yavrugs nenni gi gançim.
 Oror isim knatsir
 Mısig mısig knatsir
 Campan yegar mi kidnar
 Vor çıkhosvi sirdit artar.
 Darakir yenk dun çunink
 Aksorvadz yenk değ çunink
 Asdvadz çunink vor tade
 Mer darabank ergadz e.
 Lalen lalen maretsar
 Gatil gatil tsamkesar
 Çortsadz gurdzgis dzıdzelen
 Artar hokit khosvetsav
 Lalen lalen hoknetsar
 Gatil gatil maretsar
 Al gat çunim vor dam kez
 Ayrın guka aşgeres.

We go Der Zor by crying, through the pain of the fire,
 There is no hope of light, I say oror to my child.
 I sing oror and you sleep, you sleep in peace,
 Don't think that the road is long so that you don't worry your just heart.
 We are deported we don't have home
 We are exiled we don't have place
 We don't have god to judge, our sorrow is long.
 You become exhausted by crying
 You dried drop by drop by sucking my dried breast
 Your innocent soul worried
 You become tired by crying, you fainted drop by drop
 I don't have milk any more blood comes out of my eyes.

*Lullaby from Sivri Hisar,
 Hay Joğovirtagan Ororotsayin yev Mangagan Yerker, p. 89.*

Գարվանն անցկացաւ,

Բարձած արցունքով,

Ծունկ չոքեց գետնին,

Մնաց սեւ անապատում:

Տու լաց մի լինի, ես շատ եմ լացեր:

Հովն է հեծեծում սեւ անապատում

Այնտեղ մեռելի սուգն է այ պալիկ,

Տու լաց մի լինի, ես շատ եմ լացեր:

Ուլունք եմ շարել կախել օրօրոցիդ

Չար աչքերի դեմ մեր չար դշնամու

Տու լաց մի լինի, ես շատ եմ լացեր:

Karvann antsgatsav

Partsadz artsunkov,

Dzunk çokets kednin,

Minats sev anabadum.

Du lats mi lini, yes şad yem latser.

Hovn e hedzedzum sev anabadum,

Andeğ mereli sukñ e ay balig,

Du lats mi lini, yes şhad em latser.

Ulunk yem şarel gakhel ororotsit,

Çar açkeri tem mer çar tışnamu,

Du lats mi lini yes şad yem latser.

Caravan passed with a burden of tears,

She fell down on her knees,

Remained in the dark desert.

Don't cry, I have already cried a lot

The wind is blowing in the dark desert,

There is the grief of the dead my child.

Don't cry, I have already cried a lot

I hanged beads to your cradle

Against bad eye against our bad enemies

Don't cry, I have already cried a lot.

Sung by a woman from Yerevan,

Recorded by me in Kinaliada in August 2002

Piece from "Nazeyi Orori" by Avedis Aharonyan

Զուն եղիր, պալաս, աչերդ խուսի արա՛,
 Նաշխուն աչերոռուդ քուն թող գայ վրրայ
 Օր օր իմ պալաս, օր օր ու նանի
 իմ անուշիկիս քունը կը տանի:
 Ոսկի խաչ վրդիդ՝ քեզի պահապան,
 Նարօտ կապել է ծարեն տերպապան:
 Մափի հիլուններ կախել եմ ես ալ,
 Նազար չիս ամնուլ, քուն եղի՛ր, մի՛ լալ:
 Աս քանի՞ մօրդ անքուն աչքովը
 Անցիլ է օրեր օրոցքիդ քովը:
 Օրոցքըդ օրրիմ, օրով բոյ քաշիս,
 Մըղկրտան ծանով սիրտս չի մաշիս:
 Դուն ալ քուն եղիր, ինձի ալ քուն տո՛ւր,
 Սուրբ Աստուածամայր անուշիս քուն տուր:
 Օր օր իմ պալաս, օր օր ու նանի
 իմ անուշիկիս քունը կը տանի:

Kun yeğir balas açerit khup ara,
 Naşkhun açerut kun toğ ka vran,
 Or or im balas or or u nani,
 Im anuşigis kuni gi dani.
 Vosgi khaç vizit kezi bahaban,
 Narod gabel e dzaren derderbaban,
 Mavi hilunner gakhel yem yes al
 Nazar çis armul kun yeğir mi lal
 As kani mort ankun açkovi
 Antsil e orer ororotsit kovi
 Orotskit orrim orov boy kaşis
 Miğgıdan dsanov sirdis çı maşis.
 Tun al kun yeğir indzi al kun dur,
 Surp Asdvadzamayr anuşis kun dur
 Oror im balas or or u nani
 Im anuşigis kuni gi dani.

Sleep my child close your eyes
 Let the sleep reach your sweet eyes
 Oror my child oror and nani
 The sleep takes my little sweet.
 Golden cross on your neck will be your protector
 The priest had hanged narod on the tree
 And me I had hanged blue beads
 So you don't take bad eye, you sleep don't cry
 How many days have passed your mother
 With sleepless eyes next to your cradle?
 I rock your cradle that you grow up day by day
 Don't exhaust my heart with your voice.

Lyrics by Kamar Katiba and music by Parseğ Ganacıyan

Kantsaran Haygagan Yerkeru, p. 21.

քուն եղիր, պալաս, աչերդ խոփ արա,
 քուն եղիր, պալաս, աչերդ խոփ արա,
 Օրօր օր, օրօր օր, օր նեննի:
 Օրօր օր, օրօր օր, օր պալաս:
 Իմ անուշիկս քուն կը տանի:
 Իմ անուշիկս քուն կը տանի:
 Սուրբ Աստուածամայր
 Անուշիս քուն տուր:
 Սուրբ Աստուածամայր
 Անուշիս քուն տուր:
 քուն եղիր դուն ինձի ալ քուն տուր,
 Օրօր օր, օրօր օր, օր նեննի:
 Օրօր օր, օրօր օր, օր պալաս:
 Ոսկէ խաչ վրդիդ քեզի պահապան,
 Նարօտ է կապել Սուրբ տէրպապան:
 Օրօր օր, օրօր օր, օր նեննի:
 Օրօր օր, օրօր օր, օր պալաս:
 Իմ անուշիկս քուն կը տանի:

Kun yeğir balas açerit khop ara
 Kun yeğir balas açerit khop ara
 Oror or oror or or nenni
 Oror or oror or or balas
 İm anuşigis kun gı dani
 İm anuşigis kun gı dani
 Surp Asdvadzamar
 Anuşis kun dur
 Surp Asdvadzamar
 Anuşis kun dur
 Kun yeğir tun indzi al kun dur
 Oror or oror or or nenni
 Oror or oror or or balas
 Vosge khaç vizit kezi bahaban
 Narod e gabel Surp derderbaban
 Oror or oror or or nenni
 Oror or oror or or balas
 İm anuşigis kun gı dani

Sleep my child, close your eyes (2)
 Oror or oror or or nenni, oror or oror or or balas,
 Sleep takes my little sweet. (2)
 Holy Mother grant sleep to my sweet, (2)
 You become sleep and give me sleep,
 Oror or oror or or nenni, oror or oror or or balas,
 Golden cross on your neck protects you,
 The holy priest ties the narod.,
 Oror or oror or or nenni, oror or oror or or balas,
 Sleep takes my little sweet.

*Sung by a grandmother from Vakıfküğ
 Recorded by Melissa Bilal in Vakıfkü in August 2002*

Lento

Op op fo vuce gpf, fo vuc - - gpf fo vuc fo - vuc. uo-fo

fo vuc fo vuc - gpf, gpf fo vuc op u. vuc fo - - vuc, op

op fo vuc - gpf, fo vuc - gpf fo vuc fo - - vuc:

Օրոր, իմ մանկիկ,
 Քնացիր սրճիկ, սրճիկ,
 Աղւոր ճերմակ լուսընկան
 Յաթեց օրրանիդ վըրան.
 Օրոր, իմ մանկիկ,
 Քընացիր սրճիկ սրճիկ:
 Օրոր, իմ թռչնիկ,
 Քնացիր սրճիկ, սրճիկ,
 Աղւոր ճերմակ լուսընկան
 Յաթեց կակուղ բոյնիդ վըրան.
 Օրոր, իմ թռչնիկ,
 Քնացիր սրճիկ, սրճիկ,
 Օրոր, իմ ծաղիկ,
 Քնացիր սրճիկ, սրճիկ,
 Աղւոր ճերմակ լուսընկան
 Յաթեց ցողունիդ վըրան.
 Օրոր, իմ ծաղիկ,
 Քնացիր սրճիկ, սրճիկ:

Oror im mangig,
 Knatsir mişig mişig,
 Ağvor cermag lusingan,
 Tsatets orranit viran,
 Oror im mangig,
 Kınatsir mişig mişig.
 Oror im trçnig
 Knatsir mişig mişig
 Ağvor cermag lusingan,
 Tsatets gaguğ puynit viran,
 Oror im trçnig
 Knatsir mişig mişig
 Oror im dzağig
 Knatsir mişig mişig
 Ağvor cermag lusingan,
 Tsatets tsoğunit vran
 Oror im dzağig
 Knatsir mişig mişig

Oror my child sleep peacefully
 Beautiful white moon-light shone on your cradle
 Oror my child sleep peacefully
 Oror my little bird sleep peacefully
 Beautiful white moon-light shone on your soft nest,
 Oror my little bird sleep peacefully.
 Oror my flower sleep peacefully
 Beautiful white moon-light shone on your body.
 Oror my flower sleep peacefully.

Recorded by Melissa Bilal in Kadıköy in March 2001
Composed by Hagop Edilyan, Kantsaran Haygagan Yerkeru, p. 448

Օրօր, օրօր իմ սիրունիկ,
Օրօր ասեմ դու նանա,
Երկար ապրես կարմիր օրեր,
Կարմիր արեւ ունենաս:
Օրօր, օրօր իմ անուշիկ,
Օրօր ասեմ դու նանա,
Ալ վարդ դառնան քարն ու փուշը,
Որ ճամբով էլ դու գընաս:

*Oror oror im sirunig
Oror asem tu nana
Yergar abres garmir orer
Garmir arev unenas
Oror oror im anuşig
Oror asem tu nana
Al vart tarnan karn u puşu
Vor campov el tu genas*

Oror, oror my lovely
I say oror and you sleep
I wish that you live long, red days
You have red sun
Oror oror my sweet,
I say oror and you sleep
The rock and thorn shall turn into red rose
On the road that you go.

*Lyrics traditional, music arranged by Romanos Melikyan
Kantsaran Haygagan Yerkeru , p.699*

Գիշերը իջաւ շողաց լուսին,
 Ելան հովերն ալիք ալիք,
 Վարդ է ծաղկել քո երեսին,
 Իմ միևնուճար անուշ բալիկ:
 Օրոր, օրոր, օրոր տղաս,
 Օրոր ասեմ, շուտ մեծանաս:
 Որ շուտ դառնաս օճախի ծուխ,
 Դու իմ երագ, արել իմ թուխ:
 Իմ սերն է միշտ քեզ պահապան,
 Ոչ մի չար ձեռք քեզ չհասնի:
 Դու ես միակ յոյսիս ճամբան,
 Դու իմ անմեղ դու իմ ազնիւ:
 Չայրը պանդուխտ, հայրը հեռու,
 Աստուած գիտէ, թե ուր է նա,
 Ոչ մէկը մի լուր չի բերում
 Երանց կարօտ սիրտն հովանայ...

Kişer içav şoğats lusi,
 Yelan hovern alik alik,
 Vart e dzağgel ko yeresin,
 İm minucar anuş balig.
 Oror, oror, oror dğas,
 Oror asem şud medzanas.
 Vor shud tarnas ocakhi dzukh,
 Tu im yeraz arev im tukh.
 İm sern e mişd kez bahaban,
 Voç mi çar tserk kez çıhasni,
 Tu yes miyag huysis campan,
 Tu im anmeğ tu im azniv.
 Hayrı bantukht hayrı heru,
 Asdvadz kide te ur e na,
 Voç megi mi lur çi perum,
 Nirants garod sirdn hovana...

Night has fallen, moon started to shine, waves of wind blew,

Rose has opened on your face, my sweet child.

Oror, oror, oror my son

I shall say oror, you grow up,

So that you will have a home, you, my dream, my dark sun.

My love will always protect you, and won't let bad hands reach you,

You are my only road for hope, you my innocent, you my pure.

Father is away from his home, father is far,

God knows where he is, no one brings any news,

Their hearts full of yearning shall be relieved.

*Lyrics and music by Khaçadur Avedisyan,
 booklet of Sayat Nova Choir's concert devoted to the composer's 70th anniversary
 in April 1996.*