

REMEMBER EVERY TIME, NOT JUST ONCE:
HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL MEMORY
IN TURKEY AND ARMENIA



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Remember Every Time, Not Just Once:
Historical Geography and Social Memory in Turkey and Armenia

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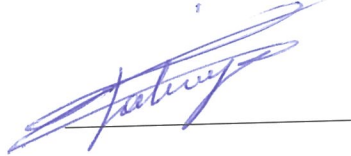
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August 2019

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ABSTRACT

Remember Every Time, Not Just Once:

Historical Geography and Social Memory in Turkey and Armenia

With the effect of modernization in the last to hundred years we see that nowadays modern nations face the risk of losing their collective identity as a result of globalization. As a reflex of this, it is an undeniable fact that modern humankind pursues some myths to cling to the past. Sometimes with a museum, sometimes with a historical monument modern human being is in attempt to sacrifice history for the sake of his or her fantasy. At this point, a problem arises because of equalizing history and memory. History and memory are scrambled.

My work analyzes the problematic of history and memory equalization within the framework of *renocide* notion, which means remember every time, not just once, through Armenian question and individual memory narrative. This study tackles the reflection of historical geography and social memory relations in Turkey and Armenia.

ÖZET

Bir Kez Değil Her Zaman Hatırla:

Türkiye ve Ermenistan’da Tarihsel Coğrafya ve Toplumsal Hafıza

Son 200 yılda modernleşmenin etkisiyle günümüzde ise, küreselleşmenin bir sonucu olarak modern milletlerin kolektif kimliklerini zamanla kaybetme riskiyle karşı karşıya kaldıklarını görüyoruz. Bunun bir refleksi olarak, modern insanın geçmişe tutunmak için bazı mitlerin peşinden koştuğu yadsınamaz bir gerçektir. Bazen bir müze ile bazen tarihsel bir anıt ile modern insan tarihi kendi fantezilerine alet eder. Tam da bu noktada, tarih ve hafızanın eşitlenmesinden ötürü bir sorun ortaya çıkar. Tarih ve hafıza birbirine karışır.

Benim çalışmam, tarih ve hafızanın eşitlenmesi sorunsalını Ermeni meselesi ve kişisel bellek anlatıları üzerinden *renocide* “Bir Kez Değil Her Zaman Hatırla” nosyonu çerçevesinde analiz etmektedir. Tarihsel coğrafya ve toplumsal hafıza ilişkisinin Türkiye ve Ermenistan’daki yansımalarını ele almaktadır.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The most intimidating reality that all livings have to learn and confront throughout their lives is destruction. Humankind has questioned the meaning of its existence throughout history, and after realizing that it is a finite being, it left its marks on the place and time where it existed as a reaction to destruction in order to eternalize human existence sometimes consciously and sometimes instinctively. Some objects, spaces and practices such as museums, archives, monuments, squares, special occasions, commemorative meetings, customs and traditions, photo albums are the memory spaces that emerge as a result of the struggles against time, against forgetting and extinction with the values they represent and the traces they left.¹

In particular, the formation of nation-states has an important effect on establishing these relevant memory spaces and institutionalizing social mindfulness. In fact, the basic concept that constitutes nation-states is identity. Identity allows an individual, group, and society to define their roots, history, and traditions. At the same time, identity provides them with a means of social integration. Traditions, customs, rituals, myths, special occasions, and celebrations are important cultural practices that make history and bring communities together around common values. In the nation-state ideology, it is essential to unite the society under a single identity, ignoring ethnic origin or past differences. Identity, like societies, varies and changes according to what time

¹ Kırıcı, *Zamana direnmek: Kişisel hafıza mekânları*, V.

and conditions bring. National identity is highly effective in the formation of social memory.²

The national identity we are talking about has an important role in the specialization or symbolization of some national codes, as well as in the formation of social memory. For example, many elements of local and collective identity were melted in a pot with the formation of national identity, and a new national identity and a nation-state emerged. Sometimes, national identity becomes the name of a geographical region as in the cases of Turkey, France, Russia, and Italy. Sometimes the name of a continent or a geographical region is reflected in the national identity as shown in the United States of America. The emergence of social and personal memory concepts in memory studies has been put forward since the twentieth century and these concepts have been examined by different disciplines within the scope of memory studies. The rapid transfer of knowledge, the economic and sociological changes and the new political structures that develop as a natural consequence of these changes, the development of the science of sociology, the processes that make this duality in memory studies, all gain importance in the twentieth century.³ The eruption of the concept of “social consciousness” in memory studies in the twentieth century is the result of the holistic approach of Durkheim, who is regarded as one of the founders of modern sociology and advocates that there are social and collective components as well as personal dimensions of memory. After Durkheim, this view was continued by his student Maurice Halbwachs, so that the concept of “collective memory” became an increasingly popular and

² Güvenç, *Türk Kimliği, Kültür Tarihinin Kaynakları*, 7-9.

³ Tanilli, *Yüzyılların Gerçekliği ve Mirası-16 ve 17. Yüzyıllar: Kapitalizm ve Dünya*, 33.

controversial concept in twentieth century memory studies.⁴ Halbwachs' *On Collective Memory* has an important role in defining and understanding the construction of social identity and the concept of nation.⁵ It has paved the way for the study of events that lead to mass traumas such as the Jewish holocaust.⁶

In the light of this knowledge, I presented in my introductory chapter, my main argument is based on the idea that there is a dynamic relationship between historical geography and social memory and this relationship is manifested by some remembering practices. It reflects the historical adventure of modern humankind trapped between national identity and collective identity. When I wrote my thesis, the basic question I asked myself was in what way modern human being follows, while codifying his or her collective consciousness and national identity into time and space, and what kind of logic does he or she conduct it? What are these remembering practices reflecting the relationship between historical geography and social memory, and how do these memorial practices manifest themselves? My conclusion was that the modern one is going through some coding to immortalize his or her existence. Some remembering practices are implemented by modern human being within the framework of *renocide* notion, which is an acronym that I created, standing for "remember every time, not just once." It includes continuous, reiterative and sometimes spontaneous practices of memorization that are embedded in everyday reality. These memories sometimes show themselves on a settlement name. Sometimes it can be historicized with a monument or museum. Occasionally, in a song, a folk story we come across with the practices of remembrance. Sometimes, these relevant practices Show us their faces on someone's

⁴ Connerton, *Toplular Nasıl Anımsar?*, 65-69.

⁵ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*.

⁶ Jacobs, *Memorializing the Holocaust: Gender, Genocide and Collective Memory*, XV.

surname. In my thesis, I will discuss these different aspects in chapters by examining the reflection of these relevant remembering practices in Turkey and Armenia.

Talking about my case-study, I marked Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus in general and the region of Ararat in particular as my research field. While doing my field work, I followed the trip observation technique and the oral history method. In this way, I have done my oral history research on a bike tour from Van to Yerevan. During and after the journey, I interviewed with six people in total, two of them women and four are men. While choosing the narrators, the ethnicity and demographic situation of Eastern Anatolia and Caucasus were taken into account. I talked to people from many ethnic groups, Armenian, Kurd, and Turk. Since three informants wanted their identity to lie snug in my thesis, I used another first name instead of their original names. In the following chapters, I will address them all.

Key words related to my field of study: toponymy, hegemony, *biko-vision*, historical geography, social memory, icon, iconography, archetype, *archetopia* and *renocide*. Most important ones among these concepts I have dealt with will be *renocide*, *biko-vision*, *freed representation*, and *archetopia*. These terms are entirely my inventions. In the proceeding chapters, I will describe these particular concepts in a more detailed way. However, as outline, I will give priority to formalize *renocide* notion.

So, what is *renocide*? Let me try to depict the *renocide*. It is an acronym for the phrase: “remember every time, not just once.” While creating this concept, my inspiration was Israeli satirist Shahak Shapira’s *yolocaust* project. *Yolocaust*’s English expression is “you only live once,” it is integrated with the concept of holocaust. The project deals with European modernity and capitalist consumption habits from a critical point of view. We see that he turned the attitudes of young people who are cycling and

skating all around Holocaust Memorial in Berlin into a research topic.⁷ Here, Shapira acknowledges the perspectives of consumerism of European youth and their view of holocaust in a critical way. The underlying reason for the disrespect to the victims of the holocaust is the consumption madness, the last stage of capitalism.⁸

Why do I need to explain a particular memorial practice within the framework of *renocide* notion? What is its connection with holocaust and Shapira's *yolocaust* project? As it is known, two great destructions occurred in twentieth century. One of them is the Jewish Holocaust, which had taken place during the Second World War all around the Europe, especially in Germany. Other one was the destruction of Armenians, which took place in the Ottoman territories during the First World War. Genocide as a notion was first conceptualized by Polish lawyer Rafael Lemkin in 1944. Lemkin defines it as followed: genocide is a combination of the word *genos*, which means ancestry or tribe and the word *cide*, which means murder or murderer in ancient Greek language.⁹ In this sense, my *renocide* idea has also connection with the word *cide* rather than *genos* as a similar to Shapira's *yolocaust* description. Considering that, humankind usually left its mark on the time and place so as to remember a war experience, so as to remember a migration or deportation, so as to commemorate a mass violence. *Renocide* is a notion describing human practices of remembrance about violence and war narratives. At this point, *renocide* is divided into four basic categories in terms of artistic, national, geographical, and cultural aspects. These subgroups are recognized as followed: artistic *renocide* will investigate the role that memorial practices such as film, music, and

⁷ Retrieved from <http://yolocaust.de/>

⁸ Pandispanya, *Yolocaust: Holokost'u Unutanları Fotoğraflama Sanatı*. Retrieved from <https://www.avlaremaz.com/2017/01/21/yolocaust-holokostu-unutanlari-fotograflama-sanati-madam-pandispanya/>

⁹ Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, 79-95.

literary artifacts played in representing any social trauma or any historical event.

National *renocide* will look at how memory spaces such as sculpture, monument, and museum are historicized and manipulated through official and national sentiments.

Geographical *renocide* will examine the origin of settlement names and its effect on people's surnames or nicknames. Cultural *renocide* will concentrate some cultural

practices of remembrance based on tradition, custom, identity, and faith. In particular,

informants I interviewed have a life story reflecting ongoing cultural and geographical kinds of commemorative ceremonies in the very fabric of life. For example, among my interviewees, Erkan Ahiska calls it a "dead journey," while talking about the story of his ancestors, who were forced to migrate from the Ahiska region in the Caucasus. One of the narrators, Gülsüm Erzurum mentions about why her husband's family migrated from Erzurum to Sivas, and what they experienced during the war. On the other hand, among my informants, Mem Ararat says that, his family came from Şengal to Mardin because of forced deportations and had a Yezidi origin, but over time, they converted to Islam.

Another narrator, Mirazê Sipanî tells the story of his ancestors, who migrated from the Qundehsaz, a village of Muş, near Sipan Mountain due to blood revenge. Also, he narrates how his pseudo-name "Sipanî" related to his family origin. All these narratives I will exemplify more detailed in the following chapters are showing us the fact that there is *renocide* notion in some human practices of remembrance such as people's surname or nickname through connection with historical geography and social memory.

My thesis consists of seven chapters. I will start talking about Atom Egoyan's "Ararat" movie and its effect on writing my thesis in the beginning of second chapter entitled "Evolving Social Memory Genocide Versus Renocide." What is my main purpose in doing this? My basic effort is to analyze how the genocide narrative in terms

of witness problem and disaster representation is historicized in connection with historical geography and social memory through Turkey and Armenia. While any historical representation and memorial practice for the 1915 events and the Armenian question is usually forbidden in Turkey, all kinds of memorial practice in Armenia have a free space following the historical representation of genocide narrative of the events of 1915. In my opinion, the main reason of this difference is the fact that both nations' views on the Armenian question and the events of 1915 remained within the framework of their own official and national narratives. I will address academic debates on mass trauma, holocaust, and the problem of representation put forward by some literary theorists and historians such as Walter Benjamin, Hayden White, Keith Jenkins, Marc Nichanian, Jean Luc Nancy, and Öykü Gürpınar. I am interested in explaining the relationship between history and rhetoric, the difference between historical reality and artistic realism, and the question of whether the representation of a disaster and witness narrative is possible in the context of historical representation. For instance, what is the relationship between history and memory, when discussing a topic on any massive trauma. Do history and memory enable to the plurality, or do history and memory replace and equalize each other? For example, even if a social trauma can be discussed freely, how much can there be a collective as long as official and national channels dominate and limit the public sphere?

In the light of the questions above, firstly, I will attempt to deal with historiographical debates in relation to history and rhetoric. While discussing this subject, I will benefit as a secondary source from Walter Benjamin's book *Gesammelte*

Schriften and Dominic LaCapra's book *History and Criticism*.¹⁰ Then, I will look for the difference between historical reality and artistic realism through discussions on the holocaust and the problem of representation in Keith Jenkins' book *The Post-modern History Reader*.¹¹ Soon after that, I will analyze some literary and visual narratives on mass violence in terms of witness problem and disaster representation. While doing it, there will be my main references as a secondary source from Marc Nichanian's book *Edebiyat ve Felaket*, Jean Luc Nancy's book *The Ground of the Image*, and Öykü Gürpınar's study *Anılardan Sinemaya Tanıklık Sorunu ve Felaket Temsili*.¹²

The reason why I often stress the issue of disaster representation will be helpful for me to conceptualize the artistic renocide notion via remembering practices from the introduction of my thesis. Again, toward the end of the same chapter, I will tackle the relationship between history and memory. I will try to find an answer for the question that if any social trauma has been discussed freely among society and, is its historical representation possible for being collective as long as official and national channels dominated its representation? In my opinion, as Pierre Nora points out in his article "Relationship between history and memory: Les lieux de mémoire," it is clear that history and memory are two different concepts.¹³ But as a result of modern human's use of history for his or her fantasies, we are faced with the problem of equalizing history and memory. Therefore, it is not possible for history and memory to allow pluralism. Even if any mass trauma finds a free space of representation or a free discussion environment in a society, the narrative becomes stereotyped when official and national

¹⁰ LaCapra, *History and Criticism*.

¹¹ Jenkins, *The Post-modern History Reader*.

¹² Gürpınar, *Anılardan Sinemaya Tanıklık Sorunu ve Felaket Temsili*.

¹³ Nora, *Between history and memory: Les lieux de mémoire*, 9.

channels come into play. It becomes a uniform as a stereotypical discourse rather than a collective representation. In recent times, there is an oral history study in New Zealand that would be a clear indication of what I mentioned above. Alistair Thomson's study suggests that the memories and narratives of the Australian Anzacs, who participated in Gallipoli war in 1915 did not reflect a collective representation as they used to, but gradually shifted to a stereotypical populist discourse through official and national sentiments. Over time, post-memories and war narratives had turned into a populist discourse away from collective representation.¹⁴ In my opinion, similar situations also exist in Turkey and Armenia. The Armenian genocide narrative and the events of 1915 have gained a uniform format through official and national channels. While Armenian national identity is informed by religion, rituals, the flood myth, and the imagination of ancient Armenia, the Genocide narrative became uniform as a stereotypical discourse and was concretized in social memory. Here, the relationship between historical geography and social memory manifests itself immediately. On the other hand, there is a similar situation in Turkey too. Though memorial initiatives for the Genocide narrative and the events of 1915 are forbidden in Turkey, similar memorials are held for 30.000 soldiers who froze to death in the Caucasian front in 1915 called “Sarıkamış Commemoration.” At the same time, the conquest of Anatolia by Turks in 1071 “Manzikert Battle” is crystallized with “Manzikert Victory Celebration” and is presented with official and national manipulations. In fact, by creating a populist discourse, even 2071 targets can be planned by the state in the manipulation of Manzikert Victory. All of these situations I mentioned above are the clearest indication of how the wars, victories and disaster narratives in Turkey and Armenia, are reduced to a uniform discursive

¹⁴ Perks and Thomson, *Oral History Reader*, 300-302.

formula or stereotype justifying pro-ethnic agendas rather than a collective representation. It shows how a historical narrative or mass trauma in both countries is formalized and historicized even if it has a liberal and free field of representation. In light of all these examples, I propose the concept of *freed representation*. To me, some nation-states especially such as Turkey and Armenia have a national renocide. Every nation develops its own national narrative and myths within a process of historical accumulation. Sometimes a war, a migration, a victory can be a mythologized. Sometimes a mass trauma or a disaster can be historicized with a museum or a monument in terms of national renocide. In using the concept of freed representation, I argue that the national renocide and its historical narrative can be restored and reorganized to create a liberal and free representation environment for itself through national sentiments. While I discuss the question of free representation fields in Turkey through “Sarıkamış Commemoration” and “Manzikert Victory” I examine the narratives of genocide over the Armenian Genocide Monument and Museum in Armenia. I tackle the relationship between historical geography and social memory in this context. While doing conceptual framework of *freed representation* and national renocide notions, I often benefit from Duncan Bell’s concept of “mythscape” in his article “Mythscape: Memory, mythology, and national identity.”¹⁵

On the other hand, I analyze responses to the events of 1915 and narratives in Turkey through concept of “prohibited icons.” I present the reactions to the Turkish-Armenian friendship monument built in Kars in 2006, through the national and international perspectives on the demolition of the monument.

¹⁵ Bell, *Mythscape: memory, mythology, and national identity*.

In the third chapter entitled “Eastern and Armenian Question” I will debate on how Armenian and Eastern questions were reviewed in Turkish, Kurdish and Armenian historiographies. At first, I explain the definition and the extent of the Eastern question. Then, I examine how the Eastern question is understood by western nations, how the Ottoman Empire's used Eastern question in external and internal affairs. In my opinion, the Eastern question on a global and local scale shows Ottoman Empire and western nations’ relationship and balance policy. Basically, the Eastern question is a land-sharing issue for both global powers and local dynamics in relation with historical geography and social memory. Following the Eastern question, I also tackle the incidence of the Armenian question. After that, I analyze the acts of Armenians, under Russian control, in the middle of the eighteenth century with the idea, according to Turkish historiography, of constructing a Great Armenia. Armenians going under Russian control from Iran, with the 1826 Türkmen Çayı Treaty and, South Caucasus’s subjection by Russian control with the 1828 Edirne Treaty, resulted in Armenians gaining power over the South Caucasus. I use Esat Uras’ book *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, Hüsamettin Yıldırım’s book *Türk, Rus, Ermeni Münasebetleri* and Armanoğlu’s book *Siyasi Tarih: 1774-1914* as secondary sources and, try to discuss the effect of the Ayastefanos and Berlin Treaties’ 16. and 61. articles, which have been signed after the Ottoman-Russian wars, on Armenian question’s gaining an international dimension. Besides, I try to examine the relationship between Turks, Kurds, and Armenians after the privileges given to the Armenians with the 61. article of Berlin Treaty to be able to reflect locals’ point of view on Armenian question apart from Ottoman Empire and European nations. As Kurds call Eastern Anatolia Kurdistan while Armenians call it

Western Armenia which shows that both nations see the Armenian question as a homeland issue.

I discuss the Kurdish-Armenian relationships via some Kurdish historians and poets like Mehmet Kalman, Mehmed Emin Zeki Bey, and Hacı Kadiri Koyi. Also, I examine how the Armenian question and eastern Anatolian geography are reviewed in Kurdish historiography and literary artifact. While doing this I utilize Mehmet Kalman's book *Osmanlı-Kürt İlişkileri ve Sömürgecilik*, Muhammet Emin Zeki Bey's writing "Kürd ve Kürdistan Ünlüleri," and Hacı Kadiri Koyi's passage of poems "Diwani Hacı Kadiri Koyi."

In this chapter, also I focus on how Armenian historiography tackles the Armenian question, and what is their point of view about the Eastern question. I benefited from Vahakn Dadrian's book *Ermeni Soykırımında Kurumsal Roller* and, emphasize the role of witness narrative in reviving Armenian social memory via Verjine Sivazlian's source *Ermeni soykırımı ve Toplumsal Hafıza*.

In the fourth chapter called "Biko-Vision and a Toponymical Perspective on My Case Study," first of all, I will define the concept of *biko-vision*. I will mention that it is a practice I decided in order to conduct my field research while traveling across Georgia and Armenia where I went on a bike to see the topography and ethnography of the region. Then, I will state that we planned to create a *biko-vision* from the pictures taken and videos recorded on tour, inspired by barcovision technique.

The main problem at the beginning of this chapter is to study how a certain region creates different associations as a reflection of social memory and historical geography in terms of toponymical context. For example, while the national toponymists such as Hüseyin Cevizoğlu and Elvira Latifova consider Caucasian peninsula and central

Asia as a hinterland of eastern Anatolia, some researchers such as Sevan Nişanyan and Bilge Umar put forward an alternative discourse related to the Turkish toponymic origin. At this point, I will be dealing with the question of what is the point of view of national and critical toponymist to the same geography. In this context, I will be looking for an answer to the question: what is the reason for the dichotomy between historical reality and political imagination? Considering the historical reality in Turkey; before 1920, there was no settlement name which had a central Asian origin as Nişanyan underscored in his book *Adını Unutan Ülke Türkiye’de Adı Değiştirilen Yerler Sözlüğü*. However, national toponymists claim that Turkey's historical geography has traces of Caucasian and Central Asian toponymy. At this point, the question that I asked shows up. Why political imagination and historical reality overlap? In clarifying the problem again, I will debate on the role of a hegemonic power in assigning any location name, or changing it, and the links of this practice with national and critical toponymy. While pursuing this argument, I will refer to the Gramscian conception of “hegemony.”¹⁶

In the same chapter, through my oral history studies, I will be shedding light on how people’s surnames carry traces of geographical names from the places where they previously lived. In this sense, my interviews with Erkan Ahıska and Gülsüm Erzurum are important. Besides, the history of the surname and the place and the importance of the family name in Turkish society will be discussed in detail in the relevant section. In the process leading to the adoption of the surname law, I will try to acknowledge the history and emergence of the surname in comparison with surname practices of other societies. While doing it, I will take advantage of Samim Akgönül’s article “Soyadları Yoluyla Kimliğin Meşrulaştırılması” in *Toplumsal Tarih* journal. In addition to this, I

¹⁶ Aytaç, *Kapitalizm ve Hegemonya İlişkileri Bağlamında Boş Zaman*.

will use Sabit Dokuyan's article "Soyadı Kanunu ve Kanunun Uygulanma Süreci" in *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*. I can say that the content was useful to theorize the conception of geographical renocide via surname system in relation with historical geography and social memory. Also, I will be discussing Ottoman population policies concerning Caucasian Muslim refugees, with particular reference to the case of the Ahıska Turks with reference to Kemal Karpat's book.¹⁷

In the fifth chapter titled "Ararat in the Eyes of Three People via Literary Sources," I will reflect the perspectives of three people of the region based on Ararat; poems, novels and songs which are written in the Caucasus and Eastern Anatolia. I will say that the works and narratives of two Kurdish artists, Mem Ararat, and Mirazê Sipanî formed the main content of the section "The Love of Two Mountains." I also did an oral history study with both artists to understand different perspectives of the region and Ararat. In addition to his poetry and lyrics, I should say that Turkish literature and the leading artists of the Kurdish music and literature will also be discussed in this section. For example, through Mahfuz Zariç's article *Ağrı dağı Efsanesi Romanında Mitik ve İdeolojik Yapı*, one of the famous novels of Yaşar Kemal *Ağrı Dağı Efsanesi* will be analyzed in terms of space, character and event patterns. Through my interview with Verjine Balyan, Armenian historian Rafael İşhanyan's perspective on Ararat will also be presented. Also, through Antony Smith's notion of "ethno-symbolism," I will make a short comparison with the other works in terms of mythology and national identity in the same part. Is Ararat an icon or symbol for defining Armenian identity? At the beginning of this section, I will be looking for a response to this question via iconography in relation with the state, hegemony, and society. I will state that, in analyzing the literary

¹⁷ Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu, (1830-1914): Demografik ve Sosyal Özellikleri*.

works, archetypal criticism approach which has been put forward by structuralist literature critic Karl Gustav Jung has an important place. In particular, this structuralist approach, which is based on the analysis of mythic elements that are frequently found in folk narratives. Such a narrative analysis will help me to go over the mentioned texts in detail. The so-called monomocite, the undead archetypes, and images based on the mythology of creation were analyzed comparatively in these literary works. The historical geography and memory spaces in the works will be interpreted as *archetopia* within the framework of the terminology I created in the triangle of time, space and character. In the sixth chapter titled “The Analysis of a Short Story in Terms of Postmodern Historiography,” through my interview with Veysel Çamlıbel, I attempt to analyze discursive and narrative fiction of Veysel Çamlıbel’s story named “Fotoğraf” which has a part in his book *Haylo Siyaro Weylo Gundo*. While doing so, Leyla Neyzi’s books, *Birbirimizle Konuşmak, Türkiye ve Ermenistan’da Kişisel Bellek Anlatıları*¹⁸ helped me a lot in terms of local memory and identity problems. I will study fictional characters and the author’s editorial intention on a particular story through Richard Evans’ book *Tarihin Savunusu*. Another way to grasp whether author has an editorial intention or not will be at giving references from Susan Sontag’s article “Regarding the pain of others” and Azulay’s concept of “political imagination.”¹⁹ Lastly, with the aid of Chaudhary’s book *Afterimage of Empire* and Roland Barthes’ works *Reality Effect* and *Camera Lucida*, I will try to analyze the dichotomy between photographic traces and referred object that reminded me of a photograph in terms of rhetoric.

¹⁸ Neyzi, *Birbirimizle Konuşmak, Türkiye ve Ermenistan’da Kişisel Bellek Anlatıları*.

¹⁹ Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*.

CHAPTER 2

EVOLVING SOCIAL MEMORY GENOCIDE VERSUS RENOCIDE

Everything started after watching Atom Egoyan's movie. As stated in Stephen Holden's review article (Film Review; To Dwell on a Historic Tragedy or Not: A Bitter Choice) at the New York Times in 2002²⁰, the thoughts jarring through "Ararat," Atom Egoyan's significant reflection on historical memory, tumble off the screen in such exciting bounty that while viewing the film you may be stressed that you'll miss something significant in the event that you to such an extent as flicker.² The reactant occasion around which it turns those thoughts is the Ottoman Empire's displacement through massacre and forced deportation of more than a million of its Armenian citizens (66% of the country's Armenian population) in 1915, a disaster where the remaining ones to a great extent hid, where no one will think to look of world history. "Ararat" has a particularly profound individual reverberation, since Mr. Egoyan is Canadian-Armenian.

Throughout the film, you can feel him agonizing passionately on the matter of remembrance and denial in an obsessive quest for an approach to take in the calamity without giving its anguish a chance. A paradoxical question that "Ararat" confronts is whether it is conceivable to leave the past and its torment behind while holding lessons that can be ingested only by chewing on history's bitter residue.

The film has a very interesting structure. There is a movie within the movie. If we take a short look at the film's script and its main characters, what I said will be better understood. One of Ararat's main characters is the film director Edward Saroyan, played by the famous French singer Charles Aznavour. He is making a film based on the book

²⁰ Holden, *To Dwell on a Historic Tragedy or Not: A Bitter Choice*.

of an American missionary, a witness of the events took place in Van in 1915. Edward's grandmother was raped in front of his mother while she was a child, during the time of deportation. Edward grew up listening to these stories all the time: In his film, he sees no harm in Mount Ararat's being seen from Van. When reminded that this means distorting the geographical realities, he hides behind his "artist license." When asked where he got his license from "from art" he answers. He doesn't hesitate adding people who were not there at that moment as characters of his movie. He insists that the Turkish soldier in the movie should be portrayed by a Turkish actor, and he doesn't even answer when something is said about the genocide claim. It is the beginning of a fictional movie within the movie.

Another character of Egoyan's film is an art historian, Ani. She is interested in an artist called Arshile Gorky, an Armenian painter who lived near Van in 1915 as a child, later on he became a painter in America and gained fame. Ani has a book about this painter. Ani's first husband was an ASALA militant. He was killed, while trying to assassinate a Turkish diplomat. During the court "I did not know of any of these activities," she said. Her second husband committed suicide when he realized Ani was about to leave him. She cannot face the realities of her own life; therefore, she distorts the history. Ani's son Raffi (played by David Alpay, who is among Egoyan's favorites) He did not want to believe that his father was a terrorist. He has hated Turks since he was a kid. Raffi's girlfriend, Celia, is also his sister-in-law. Celia blames Raffi's mother Ani for her own father's death and does not hesitate to destroy a work of art in order to free her pain. Ali, a semi-Turk, trying to be successful in his career, accepts the role without thinking twice. Ali is a homosexual and has a boyfriend who lives with him. Ali's boyfriend's father, the customs officer David, is one of the most important

characters of the film. This character, played by Christopher Plummer, cannot accept his son's being a homosexual but on the other hand, doesn't stop questioning himself along with everything else. Raffi, who has been questioned for a long time by him, says a lot of lies that he sincerely believes all are true, and in the end, he reaches his own truth. The story of Egoyan's complex fiction is the story of each one of these characters, each one of which is overlapping.

Egoyan's Ararat movie undoubtedly left its mark on 2002. Much has been written about the film. In the film, some violent images and references to the events of 1915 remained in the center of debates between Turkey and Armenia. You can find the articles about this issue in the press.²¹ When I saw the film, the first thing that came to my mind as a historian was, what was the main reason behind Edward Saroyan's showing Ararat from Van, while it has no geographical reality? What was the symbolic meaning behind the huge mountain that could be seen everywhere?

The film is included in the political drama category and discusses a historical trauma through the events of 1915. At this point, what I thought was the relation between historical geography and social memory. Yes, as I will be stressing in the following chapters, there is no society and, no state without icons. Each state and society maintain its collective memory through various symbols and icons. In this context, I have determined the subject of my thesis. In particular, I decided to study in the context of the relationship between historical geography and social memory through Eastern Anatolia and Caucasia in general, and Ararat in particular. Like the Raffi character in the film, I have been looking for truth. I decided to conduct a case-study to observe the

²¹ Laçiner, *Ararat Filmi ve Türk Basını: Eleştirel Bir Değerlendirme*. Retrieved from <http://www.eraren.org/index.php?Lisan=tr&Page=DergiIcerik&IcerikNo=300>

relationship between historical geography and social memory. I planned for a bike tour that would cover many parts of eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus and would be ending in Yerevan. My basic aim would be to do area research through oral history and trip observation in Turkey and Armenia.

On June 9, 2016, Thursday, with my friend Safa İpek, who guided me, we started cycling through the Sarp border crossing Artvin's district of Hopa. Our aim was to travel through the Caucasian region covering Georgia and Armenia. We were going to discover the natural beauty and cultural texture of the region, while conducting the fieldwork of my oral history research. First, we passed through the Sarp border on our bikes. Then we moved towards Batumi. As our goal was going to Armenia, we turned our route to the south of Georgia. Our first stop in this direction was the town of Keda. On the first day we stayed in Keda. The next day, we followed the Çoruh River and reached the town of Shuakhevi. After resting there for a while, we started pedaling to the town of Khulo, where we planned to stay in the evening of the second day. The road was not challenging. Before the evening, we reached the town of Khulo. We camped in the municipal garden. The third day's stage would be quite difficult. A large part of the road was a path. The Ughelt Goderdzi Mountain with 2250 meters stretched ahead of us. In the following sections, I will describe this mountain and the highland villages we have visited in detail. Our purpose in climbing this mountain was to reach the town of Adigeni, which is located in a region close to Akhaltsiche town. We arrived in the town of Adigeni in the evening. We stayed in a small hostel. The fourth day of 12 June 2016: Our current route was very easy. The road was completely asphalt and drained. At noon we arrived in Akhaltsiche town. This city, with its Turkish name "Ahıska," had a population of approximately 210.000 people.

Firstly, the place we visited was the fortress of Ahıska. It was a major historical site built for military purposes. It had traces of many civilizations. That night, we planned to camp at a point between Akhaltsiche and Akhalkalaki. At night, we camped in a convenient spot in one of the villages. Day 5 June 13, 2016: Our goal today was to reach the town of Ninotsminda, which is located near the border between Georgia and Armenia. This is a small town near the border gate of Bavra Leninakan. The sixth day June 14, 2016: We settled our visa procedures at the Georgian-Armenian border gate. We started pedaling from Qazanci Ashtok to Gümrü city center. After a 55 km long journey, we arrived at the city of Gyumri. The next stop from Gyumri was the town of Maralık. We stayed in a place resembling a construction site. Seventh day June 15, 2016: Our route was to reach Yerevan through the towns of Talin and Kosh. We visited the church of Surp Kevork on the way. Which is located at Ashtarak region. Towards the evening we moved to our hotel in the center of Yerevan. Eighth day June 16, 2016: Our program was to attend the event to commemorate the death of the Yazidis in Armenia. We were going to Elegez village near Aparan. I will be talking in detail about the commemorative activity in the following parts of my thesis. The last day June 17, 2016: It was the last day of our stay in Armenia. We visited the Armenian Genocide Memorial and the Genocide Museum in Yerevan. I will share the details of the Armenian genocide memorial and museum in the following sections. Another point that drove me to write my thesis being inspired from the Ararat movie was due to the film's insights about the question of witnessing and the representation of disaster from a critical point of view.

What is the reason for denying the concept of genocide and the rejection of the concept of disaster? How can commemorative practices, which extends from art to literature, history, memory space research, museum works, and memorial construction,

be explained within the framework of the artistic and national renocide notions? These questions will be the main topics that I will discuss in this chapter.

2.1 The witness problem and historical representation

In this section, I will focus on the relationship of history and literature within the framework of Walter Benjamin's historical approach. I will look at how history and rhetoric are related to each other. While doing so, I will make quotations from Dominic LaCapra's book *History and Criticism* for emphasizing that the art of history and rhetoric writing has been intertwined since ancient times. On the other side, I will discuss the questioning of testimony and the problem of historical representation by offering the viewpoints of historians such as Hayden White and Keith Jenkins. What is the difference between historical reality and artistic realism? I will respond to this question through the concept of artistic renocide, searching the role that memorial practices such as film, music, and literary artifacts played in representing any social trauma or historical event. In examining the problem of testimony through catastrophic representation in terms of literary theory, I will frequently cite Marc Nichanian's book *Literature and Disaster* at the same time, I will compare the concept of Jean Luc Nancy's "prohibited representation" and Nichanian's "impossible representation." Besides all these, I will quote lots via Öykü Gürpınar's doctoral thesis titled *From Memories to Movie, Witness Problem and Disaster Representation*.

First of all, starting with Walter Benjamin's approach to the history and literature relationship will be useful for us to understand the question of testimony and historical representation. In Benjamin's words, as long as history dominates and continues to speak of everything for us, "even the dead will have a share of it. Today it appears as if

they were plunged into greater danger than ever before.”²² However, if we prefer friendship rather than reconciliation, we can bear the hope that the dead will be taken into consideration. Maybe the dead are not going to be forgotten. Maybe they will stay untouched. Perhaps their voices, coming from far beyond their own deaths will reach our ears; it is not the monolithic voice of the perpetrator, which has been heard throughout centuries. Indeed, from the very beginning of history we have been playing the ambitious reconciliation game by ourselves. It usually makes us happy to see that this game about our political origin in the victorious democracy scheme is spreading all over the world. Probably this game started in the West or Asia Minor. I am in the land where I am now, on the walls of Ilion. So, I am going to beam myself into this most distant past. The event is described in section XXII of the Iliad; When Hector and Achilles were firstly face to face. Hector stopped running away from the fight, finally looked back, and soon he would see his fate, now devoted to dying. However, the poet offers equal positions to keep the symmetry in conflict. In fact, this fight was done as if there was symmetry and everyone knew it; because the gods had already made the decision, the scale showed Hector's death. You can find this in chapter six and seven, where Benjamin explains the concept of history.²³ In this context, history is defined by Benjamin as a rhetoric of hegemony. The historical narrative also appears as a construct of the same hegemony.

In addition to this, in 1985, Dominick LaCapra called historians to return to the rhetorical quality that historiography had valued since classical antiquity. In the nineteenth century, historians often attempted to purify history from rhetorical elements

²² Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 695.

²³ *Ibid.*, 696.

when history evolved into a professional discipline and claimed to be a strict science. It was fashionable to assume that there was a simple dilemma between science and rhetoric, without understanding that every language, including that of science, had a rhetorical dimension. To quote La Capra, this tendency, which presupposes science as the thesis or antithesis of rhetoric, has often walked with the defense of the “simple style,” which is based on or appears to be completely transparent to its object. But there was absolutely no such “simple style”.²⁴ In fact, even in the 19th and 20th centuries, the era of professionalized scientific research, historiography had not yet lost its rhetorical writing and literary qualities, and all historians have accepted the fact that history is not only a science but also an art as Leopold von Ranke claimed.

On the other hand, Hayden White argued that historiography is no different from the philosophy of history, but a form of it. Accordingly, White, in his book *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in the Nineteenth Century in Europe* 1973, included four historians (Michelet, Tocqueville, Ranke, and Burckhardt) and four historical philosophers (Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Croce). He tried to show that the historical narratives had no real scientific criteria. This is why he argued that there was no fundamental difference between historiography and the philosophy of history. A critical philological study of any sources will, of course, lead to the discovery of facts; Fortunately, going beyond this, the first things that will determine a step toward the fiction of historical narrative for a historian will be aesthetic or moral concerns, not scientific for a historian. White argues that form and content cannot be separated from each other in terms of history writing. According to him, everything is under the historian’s control and his words continue as follows: “there is a certain rhetorical

²⁴ LaCapra, *History and Criticism*, 15-44.

possibility that determines form and content in narratives.”²⁵ In this context, according to Hayden White, historiography should be seen primarily as a literary genre that follows today’s literary criteria.

As Keith Jenkins notes in his book *The Post-modern History Reader*, I think Hayden White makes a critique of the relevant situation about the paradoxes of historiography and he stresses the need to leave behind the nineteenth-century burden of history. He elaborates the conflict between the nineteenth-century conception of historiography-as-science and modernity. For White, the former relies on two points of reference: positivist science and realist art. The main problem is that while both art and science construct new ideals, time passed over historiography unnoticed and the discipline went on seeing itself in the original framework. White indicates the broader context signified by modern reservedness towards history as follows: “when historians argue that history is composed of Science and art, they usually mean that it is a combination of latenineteenth-century social science and mid-nineteenth century art.”²⁶

Also, White calls on historiography to employ the successes of modern scientific theory and artistic representation so as to find suitable forms of representation for distinctive aspects of the historical past. White considers that there is a path for solving this problem, it is only if historiography can avoid radical relativism and propagandistic application.²⁷ As Jenkins underscored, historical representation is an inevitable conclusion of relativism.²⁸

²⁵ Hayden, *Tropics of discourse: essays in cultural criticism*, 82.

²⁶ Jenkins, *The Post-modern History Reader*, 418.

²⁷ Ibid., 419.

²⁸ Ibid., 425.

Now let's contemplate how Marc Nichanian defines the disaster as part of artistic representation in terms of literary theory. In voicing the concept of the disaster at the entrance of the book, we see that Nichanian conceptualized the words used in the Armenian language and used in everyday life. Under the title of the naming problem, Nichanian recognizes the concepts of disaster and genocide: "I will attempt to make a quick presentation of the history of names. In early 1919, the special name 'yegher' was used to describe persecution toward Armenian community all over the Anatolia. This word had more or less the same meaning as 'pogrom' in the common language, and between 1895 and 96 it represented the programmed massacres in Eastern Anatolia and especially near Adana in 1909. This word had a considerable meaning in terms of its origin. As the term was not yet settled, other words were also used as private names. The most commonly used name in the family environment, for example in our family, was *Akhsor*, which meant 'exile' or 'relocation' in Armenian as the *genus* noun. Later, in early 1930, another private name appeared. The Armenian equivalent of this name is *aghed*. This word, which means 'disaster,' was transformed into a private noun with the purpose of enlarging the initials."²⁹ Why does it happen in 1931? Because that year Hagop Oshagan, who lives in Cyprus, stated using this word systematically while writing his novel *The Survivors*. The Armenian version of the book is called as *Mnatsortats*. Oshagan was regarded as the greatest author of Armenian literature in the twentieth century. Of course, the word genocide had not yet been invented. Moreover, everyone knew exactly what a bill of implementation had been achieved and completed with sufficient perseverance, and none of the survivors needed to be convinced that their survivors were a collective goal of such a bill. As soon as the Armenian question was

²⁹ Nichanian, *Edebiyat ve Felaket*, 20.

politicized, the word that refers to genocide has been used. For example, in English, “the Armenian genocide” or in short (more absurdly) “the genocide” is mentioned. Nichanian champions that, this is the biggest of these insults; it is a real insult that those who have survived direct to themselves.³⁰ After a brief comparison of the concepts of disaster and genocide, let us look through the perspectives of witness problem about the Armenian issue and the perspectives of disaster representation. With the touch of Nichanian again, the aim of this study, is to make the idea that there is a fundamental relationship between literature and disaster. If disaster is a violation of the integrity of the word in order to make all kinds of representation in any human language impossible, it is not possible for survivors to inform of the event. As a result of the catastrophe, if any person is to be excluded from the civilized area where all events took place in history and to be abstracted from all events that might claim a historical existence in the eyes of the subject, the narratives of those who remain on the ground cannot give any idea about the disaster. Yes, there has been stories told about the loss of the relatives, the murders, the roads during the deportation, the mass murder, the killing of the people, the exposure of women to systematic rapes in the testimony of the survivors. On the other hand, testimonies cannot give any insight into the destruction of the witness by using the human language. Witnesses are supposed to testify. This is based on the assumption that if the witness has survived, it is also possible to testify, to witness the event to see and then to give testimony as a witness, and to testify as a witness during his or her trial. The conclusion from all this is that: In the testimony of the survivors, we never see anything about the event itself. Indeed, how is it possible to witness the impossibility of witnessing? For this reason, only a linguistic act beyond witnessing can testify the

³⁰ Ibid., 21.

impossibility of witnessing. This needs to be a linguistic action located at the boundary of language; when confronted with a disaster, it must be a linguistic act of any person who has directly experienced such a catastrophic event.³¹ This indicates that, it is impossible to represent the disaster with the statements of witnesses. As stated by Simon Wiesenthal at the beginning of Primo Levi's book titled *The Drowned and the Saved*, the idea of impossible witnessing is mentioned as a similar to Nicanor's explanation. On the first pages, Simon talks about the warning of the SS guards.

No matter how this war ends, we won't stop fighting against you; none of you will survive, even if one of you manages to escape, the world will not believe what he or she says, perhaps there will be doubts, debates, investigations of the scholars, but there will be no exact information, because we will destroy the evidence about you. No matter what you tell, people will say that the events you've told are incredibly savage: they are going to believe in us who deny everything. Because We are the ones who are going to write the history of Nazi Germany.³²

So how can disaster be represented? We need to look for the answer to this question here. The interview of Merih Şanlı, reporter of *Agos* newspaper, with Öykü Gürpınar, Ph.D. student at Mimar Sinan University will help us in this regard.³³ I will present some major parts of Öykü Gürpınar's doctoral dissertation entitled *From Memories to Movie, Witness Problem and Disaster Representation*. First of all, it would be useful to summarize the interview published in *Agos* newspaper on 21 November 2015. Öykü Gürpınar claims that, there is a concept called "prohibited representation" by Jean Luc Nancy. According to Nancy, representation is not impossible, but it is necessary to fully understand what the act of representation means. Representing does not mean producing a copy or replica of the original being. According to Gürpınar, in

³¹ Ibid., 33.

³² Levi, *Boğulanlar-Kurtulanlar*, 9.

³³ Şanlı, *Barışma siyaseti açısından 'Ararat' çok önemli*.

Fatih Akın's movie "The Cut," there was a direct representation of 1915; the images Nazarev, main character of the movie, told about genocide during and after the deportations are sequentially arranged in a fiction. However, it cannot be said that these scenes fully represent the Disaster Event; these images are actually repeated when we place them in a row. As Jean Luc Nancy says, this is not a representation, but a memorial practice. The Cut is in fact an attempt to commemorate the events of 1915, but inadequate to represent a disaster. According to Nancy, every attempt to represent the disaster should acknowledge the impossibility of this representation. The concept of prohibited representation comes into play here; because the event such a representation wants to perform due to lack of representation will not reflect the reality completely. Placing their own deficiency at the heart of the representation of the event might be an asset with a considerable meaning. At some point where any representation is unable to expound on a particular event, it can produce a representation with a self-forbidden act.³⁴ Öykü Gürpınar's theoretical framework is somewhat similar to the conceptual framework of my thesis. But as I underlined in the former parts, I argue that there is a *freed representation* as well as prohibited representation. This situation arises from manipulating the representation of the event through personal or institutional sentiments. Sometimes, representation operates in liberal and democratic areas. Sometimes, every attempt to manifest a particular event could be forbidden. That is to say, everything about the performance of the event cannot go beyond a memorial practice. Unlike Öykü Gürpınar, I account the role of commemorative practices in performing any social trauma or historical event through the concept of artistic renocide. On the other hand, our common point with Öykü Gürpınar is that we both examine the Ararat movie in

³⁴ Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, 47.

terms of testimony and disaster representation. But as I said before, we diverge in terms of conceptualizing memorial practice. After revealing the difference between each study, we can continue with the relevant part of Gürpınar's narrative. What makes the representation impossible? What causes the crisis of representation? Is it all the violence and disgusting images of the disaster? Nancy's answer, in fact, is that such representations are often already produced, not only in the case of disaster but also in the representation of violence in the representation of many other events. As Gürpınar exemplified, in the film *The Cut*, almost any narratives of violence and brutality about 1915 is demonstrated as follows: the dead Armenian corpses at the bottom of a well on the Syrian roads, the marching groups, the women who were raped in the community, the male Armenians who were taken to an uninhabited place and plundered and killed, all these images can represent directly violence within the event of a disaster, but only an illustration of violence is not enough to explain the catastrophic event, so such a representation can only produce an incomplete representation of the disaster. This demonstration of violence has an important role in triggering collective trauma in terms of the representation of disaster. From this point of view, it is possible to understand why Egoyan's *Ararat* was greeted with disappointment in the first period. In a workshop about Hrant Dink, Eric Nazarian expressed this dilemma very well: "Armenians were expecting the movie to create a catharsis through the popular representation of the genocide, instead of analysis in the first stage." This catharsis is the re-awakening of a trauma that has already taken place in the collective memory of the next generations, and therefore of Armenians, who have already heard the testimony of those who survived. Here, we regard the role of the *Ararat* movie as a recalling practice in representing any social trauma through artistic genocide notion. While Agoyan's movie

is an artistic reflection of a social trauma, artistic renocide is a critical analysis of the cathartic role of the movie. At this point, we can make a critique of releasing the emotional tension in the film through Gürpınar's statement as follows: the repeated awakening of an ongoing trauma due to denialism also undermines a policy of reconciliation hoping that such a disaster would have never been experienced. The reproduction of fear and trauma serves to intimidate, not to make peace. In the following interview, Gürpınar states that Egoyan has put a distance between violence and himself in the film. She argues that in the context of the representation of disaster, Egoyan enables viewers to think critically, while watching his movie. The film maker reflects on how an Armenian family living in Canada had experienced genocide throughout four generations via multilayered relationships sometimes between the Diaspora and Armenians, sometimes between Turks and Armenians. In this context, Ararat holds an important place in terms of reconciliation politics.

2.2 National renocide: Narrative construction of national identity in Turkey and Armenia

In this section, I will discuss national symbols that added up to the formation of national identity. I will analyze how “lieux de memories” such as monuments, museums and statues are historicized via authorized and national narratives within the scope of national renocide notion. While analyzing this, I will quote from Duncan Bell's article *Mythsapes: Memory, Mythology, and National Identity*. Especially I will talk about his “national mythsapes” concept. This concept will be useful in explaining my national renocide notion.

Duncan claims that there are certain national symbols and myths that influence the creation of national identity. While historicizing the creation period of national identity, he discussed the modern nation and nation state within the scope of a “social agency” approach. According to him, there are myths that every nation produces, leads and transfers to other generations. These myths include those nations’ specific narrative and discursive materials.³⁵ Duncan names that symbol cluster as “national mythscapes”.

I created the national renocide notion after being inspired by Duncan’s “national mythscapes” notion. In my opinion, memory spaces such as monuments, sculptures and museums are shaped and historicized through authorized and national narratives. Sometimes an eyewitness’ story, sometimes a won war, and sometimes a massacre is effective in the formation of such memory spaces. These historical events and experiences in social memory are represented by various commemorative and mnemonic practices. And I analyze how these remembering practices were historicized in Turkey and Armenia.

In this section, I will discuss primarily the practices of remembrance and celebration in Turkey. I will focus on the celebration of the Manzikert Victory and the historicization of the Sarıkamış Commemoration. Let’s start with the Manzikert Victory. I will try to explain how a historical event is manipulated through authorized and national channels, via news about the celebrations in 2018. A news published on 26th of August 2018 on *Sabah* newspaper wrote about victory celebrations as follows:

“Turkey’s president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came to the Muş Airport to attend “Anatolia’s Conquest Manzikert 1071 Commemoration Program” which will be held in Ahlat and Manzikert for the 947th anniversary of the Manzikert Victory. President

³⁵ Bell, *Mythscapes: Memory, Mythology, and National Identity*, 75.

Erdoğan who delivered a speech in the commemoration field said: “Remembering Manzikert equals remembering who we are. Take good care of this great legacy from the past to the future.” President Recep Tayip Erdoğan addressed citizens in the Ahlat district of Bitlis. Erdoğan said: “Sultan Alparslan marched from Ahlat to Malazgirt. He built his marque in here. We came here and we are here today with our friends and we will go to Malazgirt quickly. We will walk to 2071 from here,” in his speech.³⁶ We see that the historical event is being mythologized via victory celebrations in the site. A war narrative is being historicized through authorized and national channels. A past event can be a historical reference for today’s and future’s national narrative. And actually, it can turn into a political populist discourse under the name of the “2071 goals.”

The same situation also shows its presence in World War I sample Duncan gave while conceptualizing “national mythscapes”. According to him, in nationalist discourse, the perception of past and future in a linear historical timeline is considered as if the claims (often false) of age somehow imbued the nation with moral and political authenticity. He provides it an example about the mythical fiction of the First World War in which the British Empire constituted the golden age perception through literary patronage.³⁷

If we analyze the Sarıkamış commemorations within the framework of the national renocide, here we encounter a lost war narrative, unlike the victory of Manzikert. We see that Turkish soldiers who froze to death during the war are symbolized as snowdrops flowers. If we present the history of the Sarıkamış Operation and the discussions about the number of Turkish soldiers who died in the war, Operation

³⁶ *Malazgirt Zaferi’nin 947. yılı kutlamaları*. Retrieved from <https://m.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2018/08/26/malazgirt-zaferinin-947-yili-kutlamalari/amp>

³⁷ Bell, *Mythscapes: Memory, Mythology, and National Identity*, 75.

Sarıkamış (December 22, 1914) is one of the land conflicts that took place between the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire during World War I. It is a failed military initiative. Russians attacked to Azap and Köprüköy in November 1914 were defeated by the 3rd Army Commander Hasan İzzet Pasha. Hasan İzzet Pasha, instead of following the defeated Russian army, withdrew the army about 15 kilometers. Among the objectives of the operation was to destroy the already broken Russian army and reach the oil reserves of Baku and meet the industrial needs of the German Empire. In addition, when the “93 War” with Russia in 1877-78 resulted in the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, Batumi was given to Russia as war compensation, and Sarıkamış, Kars, Ardahan and Artvin were left to Russia with the Berlin Treaty. The historian-writer Mehmet Niyazi reports that the number of deaths in Operation Sarıkamış was 23,000 in all documents and that the number 90,000 was a lie of the Russians who lost 60,000. The claim that 90,000 soldiers were killed was first found in the book written by Major Şerif Bey eight years after the operation of Sarıkamış. Osman Mayatepek states that it is mathematically impossible for 90,000 soldiers to die when there are only 75,000 soldiers.³⁸ Again there is conflicting information and manipulation about the number of soldiers killed on both sides. The censorship and distortions of authorized and national historiography are the subject of a historical narrative. Every year on the 22nd of December, Sarıkamış Commemorations are performed in Kars. People participating in the commemoration leave snowdrop flowers to the monument.

³⁸ *Sarıkamış şehitleri anma sözleri, tarihi nedir? 22 Aralık Sarıkamış Destanı Harekatı ne zaman oldu?* Retrieved from <https://www.aksam.com.tr/yasam/sarikamis-sehitleri-anma-sozleri-tarihi-nedir-22-aralik-sarikamis-harekati-destani-ne-zaman-oldu/haber-805962>

Lastly, I will touch on the relationship between history and memory with reference to the article of Pierre Nora.³⁹ I will talk about the Genocide Memorial and Genocide Museum I visited during the bicycle tour made to Armenia. Then, I will make an analysis of prime minister, Erdoğan's comment on removing the Turco-Armenian peace sculpture at Kars in 2006. I will discuss both cases through the concepts of prohibited and *freed representations* within the framework of the national genocide notion.

Once I read Pierre Nora's work on how memory relates to history, I tried looking for a response to the question of how Armenian collective memory relates to history via the genocide discourse. In trying to answer this question, what was essential to me was the impact of the Genocide Memorial and museum I saw during our cycling tour in Yerevan. First of all, let us touch on the Genocide Memorial. The monument was built on April 1965. The Armenian name is Tsitsernakaberd. It means Ford of Swallow's Fortress in English. The monument is 44 meters high. There are 12 large wall monuments representing 12 cities in western Armenia. In the middle of the monument is an eternal flame which represents a fire that will burn forever. The visuals of the events of 1915 are portrayed in the monument. The Genocide Museum was built on a hill close to the monument. This is a true story building. There is a symbolic tomb at the entrance of the museum. On the second floor of the museum, exhibitions and archival documents about the events of 1915 and the previous massacres are shown. The first floor of the museum is located underground. Barco-vision displays and historical documents on what is called the "death march" are included in the mentioned section. The most interesting thing to me was that there was a monument representing the six cities in

³⁹ Nora, *Between history and memory: Les lieux de mémoire*.

Turkey Sivas, Erzurum, Elazığ, Diyarbakir, Bitlis, and Van. The soil brought from these six cities was sprinkled to the memorial grave. From the point where the museum was located, the mountain of Ararat and all its majesty was visible.

Now if I go back to the first question, my basic problem is how the Armenian genocide discourse associated with memory and history? As Nora underscored, while memory directs us to remember or forget anything as vulnerable (for recording and appropriating human life), history suppresses, destroys, and manipulates memory by turning the real environment of memory (*milieux de mémoire*) into the site of the memory (*lieux de mémoire*). In other words, history as an organized part of the collective and individual memories is a political tool for using hegemonic power. At this point, memory is divided into three categories. These are material, symbolic, and functional memories as Nora said. For example, memory is materialized through photography-based records, monumental buildings, cemetery, and memorial museums. It also means material memory or archive memory. We can think relevant type of the memory as a base for national genocide notion via Nora's conceptual framework.

The Armenian Genocide Monument and the museum, mentioned above, will be discussed with Pierre Nora's conceptions of "milieux de mémoire" a real environment of memory space and "lieux de mémoire" site of memory. According to Nora, history was born as a need to reorganize the past in consequence of modern societies' search for the change regarding today. It is effort to conserve the past, which is thought to have been lost, in the present. For example, with the disappearance of traditional real memory environments (*milieux de mémoire*), modern humankind establishes memory spaces de (*lieux de mémoire*) as an attempt to re-awaken the memory concerning the past and to materialize it, so that, the continuity of the past will be ensured. For example, together

with post-industrial societies, we see the disappearance of societies that have preserved and transferred their values for many years, thanks to their collective memory. They have lost their past through the craving for progress or, following a desire for revolution. Moreover, we witness the deaths of ideologies that often the transition from past to present or tell us what to hide about the past. Today, the perception of history has been extended by witnessing all kinds of events on our behalf, through the media, which allows these events to be stored in massive archives and even as direct video recording. In order to cope with the desperate forgetfulness of modern society, history as a demand of the past establishes a conception of memory that makes a whole out of scattered pieces. It does not hesitate to create heroes, origins, and myths for the sake of this. Nora's assertion is that, as a side effect of departure from an archaic identity, modern human being invades the real memory areas through monumental buildings and museums. Therefore, memory and history are equalized. In this way, history must be kept eternally in the museums as a timeless entity. The gap between real memory and history deepens as much as history and memory have equalized each other due to demand for the change. In this sense, Nora wants to conceptually separate history and memory. In light of the conceptual framework presented by Nora, we can analyze the Armenian Genocide Monument and museum. The twelve cities in the gigantic Genocide Memorial Tsernakabertd historically represent the real memory areas where the Armenian population had lived intensively in the Eastern Anatolia before 1915. In this context, “milieux de mémoire” represents the real memory space. However, genocide memory is materialized through monumental building. In this way, a real environment of memory has become a site of memory “lieux de mémoire.” Twelve cities which were actually among the borders of Eastern Anatolia in Turkey, were historicized in the

Armenian Genocide Monument by representing Western Armenia. Nora's problem is also present here. Both the Genocide Memorial and the Genocide Museum are materialized through official and national narratives, so history and memory have equalized each other. It will be useful to emphasize the notion of national genocide that I have defended since the beginning of the section. This is a base for everyday practice of remembering. In this sense, genocide narratives and catastrophic representations in the mentioned monuments and museums provide a strong and strict delineated continuity with the past. Such a material memory aims to historicize the genocide narrative and keep the genocide memory alive. If we consider the same situation in the Armenian Genocide Museum, we can say that the representation of the disaster in Armenia can be restored and reorganized by creating a free performing environment for itself. While the events of 1915 and Armenian deportation are discussed liberally in Armenia, any monument or artistic works about the events of 1915 can be usually prohibited in Turkey. The most obvious example of this is the reaction against the Turkish-Armenian friendship monument built in Kars in 2006. The statue, built by prominent sculptor Mehmet Aksoy, was heavily criticized primarily by the Prime Minister of the time, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and also by many other politicians. It was a monument of friendship, describing the suffering and common history of both folks. It was a huge work weighing 1,5 tons with a height of 36 meters. It comprised a human body divided into two, covered with mosaics representing tears. The reason why the monument was built in a city like Kars was the development of friendship and peace between the two countries and the opening of the closed borders. The explanation of Turkish-Armenian friendship memorial built in Kars from the eyes of national and international press coverage will be useful to see the situation clearer. First, let's take a look the headline of

the daily *Hürriyet* in 2011, where there are prime minister's and governor's statements: "In Kars they put a freak by the side of Hasan Harakani's tomb, something strange. It is unbelievable that there is such a thing among all those art works. The mayor will perform his duty rapidly on the subject. We are waiting for this. I hope we will see the result on our first visit. That area will be turned into a beautiful park."⁴⁰ Then, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu also expressed his opinion on the collapse of the statue. AK Party's Mayor of Kars, Nevzat Bozkuş, also said that if approved they will clear the monument. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's statements in Kars, echoed abroad. *The Deutsche Welle Newspaper* devoted the broadest news to the issue with a news piece entitled: "Turkey is to demolish the friendship monument." Opponents of Erdogan's Islamic rooted government were critical of his comments, with former culture minister Ercan Karakas saying that they are a 'shame' and that 'the sculpture is neither strange nor ugly,' according to AFP... The statue's sculptor, Mehmet Aksoy, defended his work, saying on NTV that its destruction would recall the demolition by the Taliban of ancient Buddhist statues in Afghanistan's Bamiyan valley in 2001 that stunned the world... "What explanation will be given to the world if the monument to humanity and peace is ruined?" Askol said. "Erdogan will become the first prime minister, who will destroy a monument to peace" the statement said.⁴¹ As we have seen, it can be said that the Turkish government explicitly forbids the catastrophic representations of the 1915 events in both national and international media. We can explain the prohibition of any kind of commemoration attempt regarding the events of 1915 by the Turkish government with the concept of "prohibited icon." In every society,

⁴⁰ Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/dis-basinda-ucube-yorumu-turkiye-dostluk-anitini-yikacak-16727025>

⁴¹ Retrieved from <http://asbarez.com/91433/turkish-armenian-friendship-statue-faces-demolition/>.

there are icons that are supported by power, as well as icons banned by it. This is because the icons are ideological. This prohibition does not always occur. If a representation rebuffs or undermines state power, the prohibition takes place. In some cases, only the act of constraining any icon is due to fact that governing power reinforces its hegemony by eliminating some oppositional channels. In the interaction of the state with socio-cultural structure, this situation manifests itself in certain proportions. In other words, the concept of prohibition can turn into a political tool. Prohibition itself can be a disciplining tool. As Marx argues, history is the history of the struggle between the exploiter and the exploited, between the ruling and the ruled classes. The social relations within this struggle can only be unfolded by studying the indicative aspects of icons.⁴²

⁴² Engels, *Komünist Parti Manifestosu*, 17.

CHAPTER 3

THE EASTERN AND ARMENIAN QUESTIONS

In this chapter, the eastern and the Armenian question will be discussed. I will analyze the reasons of the emergence of both issues in historical context. What are the intersection points of the East and the Armenian issues and how Eastern Anatolian region and Armenian issues reviewed in Turk, Kurd, and Armenian historiographies will be our basic questions. While historicizing the Armenian question, I will check upon the power relationships between global and local dynamics.

3.1 Definition and the emergence of the Eastern question

First, let's define the eastern question. The issue of the East emerged in the 19th century when the Ottoman Empire began to disintegrate. Eastern Question was used for the first time, by the Russian Tsar Alexander I in the 1815 Congress of Vienna as a political term. Later, diplomats, politicians, and historians frequently used the term and it gained importance.⁴³ Different views were put forward on the eastern question, as an international diplomatic problem. If we provide different perspectives on the content and scope of the Eastern issue, according to Edward Driault, the Eastern question is a phase of the eastern and western struggles that are mentioned in the Crusades. According to Agnes Sorel, the eastern issue is the beginning of the Ottoman Turks' showing up in Europe for Europeans. Michel Lheritier, on the other hand, bases the eastern issue on the special geopolitical position of the Eastern Mediterranean, a major road junction.

Typically, historians saw the eastern issue as an international diplomatic problem and a

⁴³ Uçarol, *Siyasi Tarih (1789-1994)*, 48; Saygın, *Yeni Şark Meselesi*, 30.

political term for inter-state competition. The East issue has a different meaning for the Ottoman State. Every crisis that the Ottoman Empire faced in its domestic and foreign politics was examined by the European States under the title of the Eastern Issue. The Eastern question has meant the fate of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁴ The Eastern question is, actually, not a question of Ottoman Empire, but the internal problem of Europe. It is a problem created by the competition and power balance among European states.⁴⁵ On the other hand, European historians acknowledge as a starting point of eastern question that, the Turks settled in Anatolia since Manzikert war August 26, 1071, and the Turkification of this geography. It also demonstrates that the Eastern question is a land issue. Indeed, the French historian Edward Driault commented that “The Eastern issue is an Islamic Christian struggle,” while Lord Kitchener, Minister of War, speaks for the eastern issue as “We will continue the war until the Turks are erased from the world map.” These words clearly show that the Eastern question is a land issue.⁴⁶ We can see these policies which have different goals depending on the centuries. In the first half of the 19th century, European states advocated the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. They wanted to share the Ottoman Empire’s lands in the middle of the 19th century, especially after the Crimean War. In the 20th century, it was aimed to share all the lands of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁷ As seen, the issue of the east is a matter of sharing the land. It is a product of international imperialist policies. It is necessary to read the eastern issue within the framework of the balance of power pursued by the Ottoman Empire and the competition of power balances in Europe. The Ottoman Empire has been at the focal

⁴⁴ Tuncer, *Metternich'in Osmanlı politikası*, 1815-1848, 37.

⁴⁵ Akşit, “*Türkiye Tarihi, Osmanlı Devleti*”, 126-127.

⁴⁶ Çay, *Her Yönüyle Kürt Dosyası*, 12.

⁴⁷ Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 207-208.

point of the conflict of interests of the European states due to its geopolitical location and strategic points such as the Bosphorus. We can look at European states and the imperialist policies they follow under four headings.

3.1.1 The policies of France over Ottoman Empire

We see that France has carried out aggressive policies against the Ottoman Empire, especially after the French Revolution. In the aftermath of the revolution, France declared Ottoman neutrality against the wars of Europe. However, during the Napoleon Bonaparte period, the French army landed in Egypt in 1798. Studies on dissemination of nationalism in the Balkans and the Aegean islands continued during the rule of Napoleon Bonaparte. Algeria in 1830, Tunisia in 1881 and Morocco in 1912 were occupied by the French army. The relevant countries were colonized. Again, in the First World War, the French took part in alliances against the Ottoman Empire and made secret treaties to share the Ottoman lands.⁴⁸

3.1.2 The policies of Britain over Ottoman Empire

England has defended the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire in accordance with its interests until the 1878 Berlin Treaty. Its aim in this policy was to prevent Russia from dominating the straits and to prevent it from opening to hot seas. It has been the main policy to keep the trade routes to India's colonies under control. After 1878, England settled in Cyprus and Egypt and increased the international competition. During the First World War, it entered alliances against the Ottoman Empire and made secret treaties to share the Ottoman lands. After World War 1, it occupied key strategic areas.

⁴⁸ Turan et al., *Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılâp Tarihi*, 18-42; Emruhan, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi*, 72.

It has carried out various projects and activities in order to separate the ethnic groups living in Anatolia from the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁹

3.1.3 The policies of Austria-Hungarian Empire over Ottoman Empire

The Austro-Hungarian Empire often had to clash with both the Ottoman Empire and Russia in line with its policy of dominating the Balkans and the Aegean Sea. Sometimes it made alliances with Russia against Ottoman states in Balkans. In 1908, it annexed Bosnia Herzegovina, which it took temporarily during the Berlin Treaty. Beside Germany and Ottoman Empire, it took part in first world war within the same alliance block.⁵⁰

3.1.4 The policies of Russia over Ottoman Empire

Russia, especially the Russian Tsar Petro Peter the Great followed the expansionist policies between 1689 and 1725 periods. These policies were based on Moscow's claim to be the 3rd Roman and the successor of the Byzantine Empire. The Russians developed policies in line with the goals such as dominating the Straits, taking Istanbul, connecting the Slavic races and opening to the warm seas. For this reason, the Ottoman Empire was the target of Russian imperialist policies.⁵¹ Russia closely followed technological developments to become a modern state and to have a strong institutional structure and military power. Therefore, it was successful against Ottoman Empire in almost every battle. With the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty in 1774, the Russians undertook the protection of the Orthodox subjects in the Ottoman territories. During the Crimean War of 1854,

⁴⁹ Armaoğlu, "Siyasi tarih: 1789-1960", 133-139; Emruhan, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi*, 73-74.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Çay, *Her Yönüyle Kürt Dosyası*, 1-7.

Russia accelerated its policy on “Panslavism” aiming to unite the Slav races in the Balkans. Ottoman-Russian wars broke out between 1877 and 1878. Russian army encompassed the Ottoman Empire from both the east and the west. Ottoman state was defeated, and Russians acquired crucial gains in the process that ended with the Berlin Treaty. Following the policy of expansion in the Caucasus, they especially used the Armenians. They provoked Armenians and Balkan people against the Ottoman Empire.⁵²

3.2 The Armenian question in Turkish historiography

The Armenian question will be shown from the eyes of Turkish historians in this section. Now, let me elaborate the origin of Russian-Armenian relationships in line with Turkish historiography.

The Armenian-Russian relations started at the end of the 17th century. Tsar Petro wanted to use the Armenians to improve the east trade. The Russian Tsar invited Armenians to his country. All kinds of moral and martial support were promised. The Armenian-Russian relations turned into an alliance in the first half of the 18th century. Thousands of Armenian artists and professionals went to Russia. Especially during the period of Great Petro and Katerina, the Armenians had good relations with Russia in order to gain their independence.⁵³ In the Ottoman-Russian wars of 1769-1774, Katerina II instigated Armenians against Turks and Muslims. Katerina II was pursuing the policy of rebuilding the Ararat kingdom that would be under the auspices of Russia. During the Alexander I period, Russia organized campaigns against Iran. Between 1804 and 1805,

⁵² Emruhan, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi*, 71-72.

⁵³ Yıldırım, “*Rus-Türk-Ermeni Münasebetleri: 1914-1918*”, 30.

Nakhichevan was captured through the south of Yerevan and the Caucasus. Russia expanded its territory from the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea. In this context, we can say that the Armenians were a tool for the expansion policy of Russia.⁵⁴ In particular, the Eastern Languages Institute, which was founded by the initiative of the Lazaryan family of Armenian riches, has been instrumental in the development of Armenian-Russian relations. The aim of the institute, which was founded in Moscow in 1816, was to create qualified human resources through education and training activities, to ensure that the Armenians were included in the Russian institutions and to be included in the Russian military power.⁵⁵

3.3 The Armenian question and its international dimension

The 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian wars were an opportunity for Armenians. Armenian-based lieutenant general Lazareff tasked in Kars and Russian general Kamsgaran and Nikosoff in Erzurum were mobilizing Armenians living in the region. Volunteer troops were created to support the Russian forces. The patriarch and the Armenian intellectuals in Istanbul were taking a stand according to the course of the war. Initially, they reported their adherence to the Ottoman sultan. But they changed their mind after the defeat of Osman Pasha in Plevna.⁵⁶ In the last days of the war, the Armenian patriarch was convened under the presidency of Nerses Varjebedian. The Russian Tsar Alexander II and the Armenian category were given the following statements: “The area from the Caucasus to the Euphrates is not given back to the Turks, the region annexed by the Russians or the privileges to be given to the Bulgarians should be provided for the

⁵⁴ Yıldırım, “*Rus-Türk-Ermeni Münasebetleri: 1914-1918*”, 30.

⁵⁵ Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, 742; Kurat, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Paylaşılması*, 51.

⁵⁶ Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, 742.

Armenians too.” Again, in the secret talks, the Russian emperor Alexander II and his deputy head Gorcakof submitted a petition with a request in this direction.⁵⁷ As a result of the intense diplomatic attempts of the Armenians, the Russian Tsar Alexander II ordered an article on the treaty to be made. Despite all the objections of the Turkish delegates, the 16th article concerning the Armenians was added to the Treaty of Ayastefanos, signed on March 3, 1878. Although the content of the article did not satisfy the Armenian delegation, it was seen as an important step taken by the Armenians towards independence. For the first time, the Armenian name was passed through a treaty. With the Treaty of Ayastefanos, the Armenian question became an international issue for the first time. So, it became part of the Eastern matter.⁵⁸ England was disturbed by the Russia’s gains in the Ayastefanos Treaty. The expansion of the Russian sovereignty in the Balkans and eastern Anatolia did not fit the British interests. As a matter of fact, owing to attempts of Austria and the UK, the Ayastefanos Treaty was updated. In line with the decisions taken at the Berlin Congress, the Russian control in the Balkans and Eastern Anatolia was restricted. The provision of the Ottoman Empire to reform in the regions where the Armenian population was concentrated was added to the Berlin Treaty as the 61st article.⁵⁹

3.4 The Armenian question in Kurdish history and literature

In this section, I will focus on Kurdish-Armenian relations. I will analyze the Kurdish viewpoints of Eastern Anatolia and the Armenian Issue. I will often refer to the Kurdish historian Mehmet Kalman and Zaro Sasuni’s books on Ottoman-Kurdish relations.

⁵⁷ Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, 199.

⁵⁸ Küçük, “*Ottoman Diplomacy Armenian Issue 1878-1897*”, 3-34.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Passages from Iraqi Kurdish historian and statesman Muhammet Emin Zeki Bey's book *Kürd ve Kürdistan Ünlüleri* (Kurds and Famous Names of Kurdistan) will be presented. I will also quote the poems of the famous Kurdish poet Hacı Kadiri Koyi reflecting the Kurdish-Armenian relations with excerpts from the book in question.

First of all, we shall take a contemplate Kurdish-Armenian relations after the 1878 Berlin Treaty with references from Mehmet Kalman and Zaro Sasuni. It is written in the chapter quoted from the Islamic Encyclopedia: Turkey's weakening after 1878, Berlin Treaty's 61st article promising reforms to the Armenians and safety to the "Kurds and Circassians", Ottoman State's hidden resistance against reforms, Armenian Revolution's association with Russia, London and Switzerland and the unification of the Kurds and Kurdish feudal lords under the Ottoman Sultan's order paved the way for the implementation of the panslavism policy. It stepped up the process of establishing Hamidiye regiments. During this period, there bloody conflicts happened between the Kurdish tribes themselves. Kurdish-Armenian relations also worsened. In the summer of 1894, in Batman's Sason region conflicts between Kurds and Armenians broke out.⁶⁰

According to what Zaro Sasuni says, the opposite situations were also experienced in the Kurdish-Armenian relations. It is said that Shaykh Ubeydullah (1885) gave the following response to his followers who suggested him to slaughter Ulmiye Christians: We Kurds are necessary for the Turks only as an element of weight against Christians. With no Christians left, the Turks will turn all their violence against us.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Kalman, *Osmanlı-Kürt İlişkileri ve Sömürgecilik*, 153.

⁶¹ Ibid, 155.

Another Kurdish historian, Mehmed Emin Zeki Bey, included many Kurdish statesmen and poets in his work *Kürd ve Kürdistan Ünlüleri*.⁶² One of them is Iraqi poet born in Erbil, Hacı Kadiri Koyi. The Kurdish poet, lived between 1815-1897, also wrote poems that shed light on the Armenian-Kurdish relations. If I were to give you an example of this poems: “Cizir and Botan / Homeland of Kurds / Shame on them, they are turning into Armenia / There is no honor left, here is my oath on Kur’an a hundred times / If they establish Armenia not even one person would be left from the Kurds.”⁶³

As it can be understood from the quote, the land issue has an important place in Kurdish-Armenian relations. While the Kurds consider the Eastern Anatolian as a Kurdish homeland, the Armenians accept the same region as the Western Armenian. This is the point where the Armenian and Eastern Issue intersect. The people living in this region and the Ottoman State approach the same geography from different angles. This difference manifests itself both in geographical nomenclature and in social and political relations.

3.5 The Armenian question and social memory in Armenian historiography

In this section, how the Armenian issue is operated in Armenian historiography, how is the relationship between the Armenian question and the eastern issue established by the Armenian historians, how much the memory space and social memory takes place in historical sayings will be discussed. I will be referring frequently to the sources of

⁶² Mehmed Emin Zeki Bey, *Kürd ve Kürdistan Ünlüleri*, 110.

⁶³ Kurdish version: “Xaki Cizir u Botan, Yeni willatî Kurdan/ Sed heyf u mixabin deyken be Ermenistan/ Hiç xiretek nemawe sed car qesem be Quran/ Peyda be Ermenistan namênê yek le kurdan.” Hacı Qadiri Koyi, *Diwani Hacı Qadiri Koyi*.

Vahakn Dadrian and Verjine Svazlian, one of the important names in Armenian historiography.

First, let's look at the concept of the Armenian Genocide that we are concerned with. According to both researchers, the 1915 events, which are the key point of the Armenian question, cannot be unclosed by the concept of deportation. Nearly a million people have been killed and systematically murdered in 1915 events.⁶⁴ The debates on whether the events of 1915 were genocide or not, while the US constitutionality agreement was discussed in the Senate on February 19, 1986, was stated by many senators as a tremendous disaster like the Jewish holocaust because the humanity was indifferent to the events of 1915. In fact, the emergence of the genocide controversy is the comparison of the events of 1915 and the Jewish holocaust.⁶⁵ Vahakn Dadrian emphasizes the need to examine the Armenian issue with the eastern question.

According to him, the Armenian issue emerged between the great powers of the world and the politics of manipulation and equilibrium which the Ottoman state pursued against them. Conflicts of interest in the Eastern issue, global and local dynamics have created conflict areas in the Ottoman geography. This has provided an environment for the massacres and the emergence of new victims. The violent suppression of the Greek uprising of 1821 and the process that prepared the mass violence against Armenians are the best examples of this.⁶⁶ On the other hand, when we look at Armenian historiography, what we often see is the use of the narratives of people who have experienced the events of 1915 or who have heard from the family elders. In the words

⁶⁴ Dadrian, *Ermeni soykırımında kurumsal roller*, 7.

⁶⁵ Bardakjian, *Hitler and the Armenian genocide*.

⁶⁶ Dadrian, *The history of the Armenian genocide: ethnic conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*, 45.

of Verjine Svazlian: The mass violence against Armenians, at the beginning of the twentieth century, was directly perceived by the sensory organs of eyewitnesses and recorded in their memory, which cannot be erased. Such narrative and memory space research have an important role in constructing Armenian social memory.⁶⁷



⁶⁷ Svazlian, *Ermeni Soykırımı ve Toplumsal Hafıza*, 10.

CHAPTER 4

THE BIKO-VISION AND A TOPONYMICAL PERSPECTIVE ON MY CASE-STUDY

Nowadays, we often come across with barco-vision techniques in modern museums and performing arts. Barco-vision is also known as slide shows, which are the projection of a certain set of photographs reflected on the screen, such as a filmstrip in a theme and graphic frame. Photographs taken and created video sections can be used in barco-vision display. From this point on, I tried to make the barco-vision of the cycling tour covering the research area of my oral history study from Van through Yerevan. The main question in this chapter will be addressing the dynamic relationship between historical geography and collective memory. For this reason, the barco-vision show that I have created is the main problematic axis of the research from a toponymical point of view. In this context, the way I relate the historical geography to the social memory in my work includes the sections of my bicycle tour. From the eyes of a cyclist historian, the research area is reflected in a topographical way. For this reason, the visual elements and presentations to be presented will be called as *biko-vision* rather than the barco-vision concept. The aim of presenting a topical view of the research area with photography and video shootings is to document a certain time and place with all the experiences and possible texture. As a matter of fact, I can say that the world-famous photographer Ara Güler, who we lost recently, stated that, “Art does not need to be photographed. Photo is a historical event. Of course, you stop the history with a machine.”⁶⁸ Of course my work, which I call *biko-vision*, not only includes the photograph and video but also covers the

⁶⁸ Retrieved from <https://www.araguler.com.tr/tr/>

local traditions and lifestyles with the people in that geography. In this sense people's lifestyles and traditions are planned on being transmitted through videos and photographs in this *biko-vision*. In the aforementioned study, there is also the use of social anthropology and visual anthropology. The fundamental problem of my research is the relationship between historical geography and collective memory. As I have already said, this relationship shows us itself as a remembering practice on a location name or in someone's surname. In this chapter, I will tackle the origin of settlement names and its effect on people's surnames within the framework of geographical renocide. The basic agent in taking this geographical kind of memorial practice to the main axis of my research is that people's surnames have traces of the previous experiences, sometimes in their ancestry and sometimes in places where they live or are born. Previous migrations, displacements or massacres that have been exposed, confirm and reflect the dynamic relationship between historical geography and social memory. A particular geography that has been lived in the past remains somehow in the collective memory with experiences such as immigration, exile or massacre. In addition to this, the life stories and memories that are experienced before are transferred in a way people migrated to the geography.

4.1 A toponymic perspective on the Caucasus and Eastern Anatolia

Vivid objects, concepts, in short, everything we see around us, have a name. All these names are defined as the science of nouns, which deals with the origins of nouns and how they emerged. Name science is divided into various branches within itself. One of them is toponymy. In short, toponymy: dealing with location names. Investigate the

origins of names of a location and the changes of place names in history.⁶⁹ In particular, the historical sources used in the identification of place names in the Anatolian language are, of course, the land registry records for the 16th century. The most important source that we can refer to in the 17th century is Evliya Çelebi's Travelogue.⁷⁰ It is possible to search the names of the Ottoman settlements in the 18th and 19th centuries from the archives. Another important source that we can refer to in terms of identifying the names of the Ottoman settlements is the Ottoman chronicles. In the Republican period, the Ministry of Internal Affairs sometimes changed the city and village names and held review reports on the subjects and those are the official sources. There are a lot of studies examining the history of the names of the eastern Anatolian and Caucasian locations. When I did a literature review about these relevant books, there was no doubt that the most detailed research on Turkey is Sevan Nişanyan's book *Adını Unutan Ülke Türkiye'de Adı Değiştirilen Yerler Sözlüğü*. In describing the name changes of settlements, in this section, I will refer a lot to the book of Sevan Nişanyan. In addition, I will offer some major arguments from Bilge Umar's book *Türkiye'deki Tarihsel Adlar: Türkiye'nin Tarihsel Coğrafyası Ve Tarihsel Adları Üzerine Alfabetik Düzendeki Bir İnceleme*. I will compare the works of Sevan Nişanyan and Bilge Umar in terms of their toponymical perspectives and their literature. I will also refer to Hüseyin Cevizoğlu and Elvira Latifova for their investigations in Caucasus and eastern Anatolian geography.

First of all, looking at the history of changed names in Turkey would be helpful. In this section, where I will be discussing Sevan Nişanyan's book, I will try to summarize the alteration period in five basic bodies.

⁶⁹ Sakaoğlu, *Göller Bölgesinde Yer Adları*, 9-11.

⁷⁰ Cunbur, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi'nde yer adları*.

4.1.1 The Ottoman period

We can say that the habit of ameliorating place names with political concerns, partially, in a different ideological context, started in the reign of Abdulaziz and Abdulhamid II. Approximately fifty settlements were named Aziziye especially between 1876 and 1879 after the Aziziye settlement which got crowded around 1870. For example, we see that the district of Milas in Ordu took the name Hamidiye. (The name of the same town changed into Mesudiye in 1909.)

4.1.2 The İttihat and Terakki era

In the psychological environment caused by the Balkan defeat, the İttihat and Terraki administration began, a Turkishization campaign proposing giving native names to settlements the names of which are coming from Greek and Bulgarian. The 1913 dated İskân-ı Muhacirin Nizamnamesi ordered that the names of the Greek and Bulgarian places to be changed and Turkish names to be given to the places where the war enforcers were to be settled. Within this framework Bursa Atranos, now Orhaneli, and Mihaliç currently known as Karacabey were among about 100 places around Marmara and Thrace Region.

4.1.3 Republican period

Starting from 1933, the staffs of the Turk Ocakları organized in Community Centers expressed their wishes and projects for the Turkishization of the place names. It is understood that Atatürk was also affected by this tendency in the 1930's as; Dersim was renamed as Tunceli in 1937, Diyarbekir as Diyarbakır and İskenderun as Hatay.

4.1.4 Great cleaning in place names

The “Turkification” effort, which seems to have been adopted in İnönü years, strangely gained a new significance in Democratic Party years. The intellectual and institutional infrastructure of the “great cleaning” which took place after 1960 was built in the 1950s. In this context, for the first time in 1956, a specialization committee was established to change the place names. Between the years 1960-1965, the names belonging to 15,000 settlements in Turkey were changed by a particular commission. During this process we can see that as well as the names with ethnic origin such as Arapköy, Ermeni Kaçağı, Kürtler Avşarı, and Acemler, names associating non-Muslims like Karakeşiş, Maşatlık, and Akkilise were also changed.⁷¹

4.1.5 Reverting back to old names

In the last 10 years, there has been a tendency to get the old names, which were changed in the first periods of republic, back among the people. They want to return to the old village names by rejecting new names. Especially in the eastern and south-eastern provinces where there is an identity problem. After the bureaucratic procedures, 120 settlements were able to get their old names back. In the period between 1940 and 2000, a total of 12,221 village names were changed. The names of the villages mostly in the Eastern Black Sea, Eastern Anatolia, and South East Anatolia have been changed. Georgian, Lazca, Zazaki, Kurdish, Armenian and Arabic village names have been changed. The names of these villages were translated into Turkish. Despite all the changes, the old names which remained in the local memory managed to come back after a hard bureaucratic process. It is quite interesting that in addition to settlements

⁷¹ Nişanyan, *Adını unutan ülke: Türkiye’de adı değiştirilen yerler sözlüğü*, XV-XVIII.

where the Kurdish problem is experienced, the demand for the old names is high also in those regions where the Turkish population is intensive. Among the places getting their old names thanks to the demands, there are location names such as Germir, Gesi, Konaklar, Filyos, Bafa, Ulu Çınar.⁷² I would like to draw special attention to such changes in this section. It is the clearest indication of the dynamic relationship between the social memory and the historical geography that it is desired to return to the names of the changed places in the early years of republic.

In the light of the historical periods mentioned above, if we take a look at toponymical researches on Caucasia and eastern Anatolia, we see three different approaches. The first approach argues that the Caucasus and the names of the settlements in the eastern Anatolian province are generally of Turkish tribes and are of central Asian origin. Hüseyin Cevizoğlu and Elvira Latifova are the most important representatives of this thought. The sources and literature they use in their books often refer to the names of Turkish tribes and the names of settlements of Central Asian origin. The second école argues that Turkey's historical geography cannot be explained only by Turkish tribes and Central Asian origin. But because it tackles with a wide geography from a topographical point of view, it contains a number of contradictions and inconsistencies. Bilge Umar's examination of historical names in Turkey via Luvrlice is the best example for this. Umar's research is far from national historiography. In this context, we can say that Umar's work is a departure from the nationalist point of view which considers Turkey's historical geography as a reflection of Turkish Tribes and Central Asian origin in terms of settlement names. The third approach is the one which Sevan Nişanyan leads and presents an alternative perspective. Sevan Nişanyan

⁷² Ibid., XVIII.

opposes to Bilge Umar's argument that Turkey's historical geography and settlement names in Turkey come from Luvrelian language. Indeed, in his book Nişanyan makes a critique of Bilge Umar's toponymic glance as follows:

A study of the Toponymy of Turkey inevitably must confront with the legacy left by Bilge Umar's destruction of the productive imagination. According to Umar more than 6000 of historical names in Turkey are based on Luvrlice and its leftovers. Mar's approach which derives Greek and Turkish historical place names from ancient languages through phonetic evolution is worthy in principle. His predictions are sometimes intriguing and at times clever. They are praiseworthy as they don't indulge nationalist fallacies. However, his conclusions are often too bold to be compatible with scientific precaution. According to the historical records, Luwice was a spoken language in part of the South and Western Anatolia during the 2nd century BC, but based on this language, it is not reasonable to try to explain the names of the place in a geography ranging from Anatolia to Spain, Caucasus, Hadramut and Afghanistan. It is impossible to make a connection between the language that the author accepts as Luvince and the Luwi language we know from the epigraphical material in hand. Almost none of the words Umar gave as "Luvince" were found in the book of Cralg Melchert, which's name is Cuneiform Luwian Lexicon, the main academic reference in his field.⁷³

Similar to Bilge Umar's research, Hüseyin Cevizoğlu also examined a wide geography from a topographical point of view. Unlike Bilge Umar, he claimed that the names of the Caucasus and the eastern Anatolian places came from Turkic tribes and were based on middle Asia. When we go into the aforementioned research, we see that Hüseyin Cevizoğlu went into the areas where the Turkish culture spread in the triangle of Samsun, Adana and the Caspian Sea in general and extending from middle and Far East Asia to eastern Anatolia. In the book, the settlements of Central Asia and Eastern Anatolia via various sketches, mountain, river and stream names are shown. These places were compared with historical maps from a topological perspective. According to Hüseyin Cevizoğlu, the Eastern Anatolia, which is located on the Silk Road has been an

⁷³ Nişanyan, *Adını unutan ülke: Türkiye'de adı değiştirilen yerler sözlüğü*, XXIV.

important strategic point throughout the history. It has hosted many civilizations and cultures. But it has always maintained its historical identity. For this reason, it is one of the rare places that have preserved its historical identity in the world.⁷⁴ Again, according to Cevizoğlu's claims, the book's sketches are the same as the names of the place in central Asia and the eastern Anatolia. Only the names of the settlements of Erzincan, Erzurum, Malatya, and Urfa changed in different order and phonetics. For example, the name Erzincan is used in a different order with the name of Erzin in the Altay regions with “Can” at the end such as the names Sincan, Adincan, and Baycan. The name of Erzurum again was formed by the combination of the words “Eriş” and “Urum” depending on the root of Urumçi, which is located in the Çungarya Steppe of Central Asia. The name Malatya is composed of the word Maleta, which is located in Baykal. The name Urfa was born with unifying the words Ural’s root “Ur” and the syllable “ha”. Later on, the sound changed and became Urfa.

On the other side, when we review Sevan Nişanyan’s book, we see that the name of Erzincan was handled in a different order and with a different history. According to Nişanyan, the name Erzincan comes from Armenian word Erez or Eriza. Erzincan was named as Uruşa in Hittite records from 2000 BC. According to Nişanyan, the present name of Erzincan is composed of Turkish and Armenian words Eriagan and Eriza’s adaptation to Arabic.⁷⁵ Again, if we research in depth the origins of Erzurum name, we see that Nişanyan approaches with a different perspective to relevant region. According to Nişanyan, the name of Erzurum comes from the Arabic noun phrase Erzenerrum. The word Erzen meaning is not known. The oldest known name in the city is Armenian word

⁷⁴ Cevizoğlu, *Coğrafyadan Tarihe Türk Tarihi İçinde Doğu Anadolu*, 13.

⁷⁵ Nişanyan, *Adını unutan ülke: Türkiye’de adı değiştirilen yerler sözlüğü*, 123.

Karin (Garin). In the 4th century AD, the name of the city was changed to Greek Thedosioupolis.⁷⁶ Elvira Latifova, in her study on Caucasian and Anatolian regions, has included Caucasian Turkish topological names. According to Latifova, Caucasus is a treasure for learning general Turkish history. Topographical data in the Caucasus will help us to understand the layers of Turkish culture.⁷⁷ She argues that the place names in central Asia and Caucasia, as well as Cevizoğlu, continue to exist with the transfer of social memory in Anatolia. She says that the same or similar places in the Caucasus take place in Anatolia. For example, the Kanık River in Şeki province is frequently used in the Anatolian names of Kınıklar, which is the most important of the 22 Oghuz Tribes in the Divan-ı Lügati Turkish work of Kaşkarlı Mahmud.⁷⁸ Still in Ilisu, Baş Göynük ve Aşağı Göynük village names appear in Bolu and Amasya as Göynücek and Göynük.⁷⁹ In contrast to Cevizoğlu and Latifova's arguments, Sevan Nişanyan points out that, there is no place name from Central Asia before 1920 in Turkey. Horasan and Talas are also included.⁸⁰ According to Nişanyan, giving the homeland's name to the migrated settlement represents the longing of the homeland and the hope of returning one day.

Since Turks who migrated to Anatolia in the early period are generally nomadic, their naming the new settlement after their homeland does not make sense from the topographical point of view. In the very early times, the names of Turkish tribes such as Karakeçi and Sarıkeçili family were given to the Anatolian settlements.⁸¹ As it can be seen from the comparison above, Cevizoğlu and Nişanyan's Turkey toponymy

⁷⁶ Ibid., 132.

⁷⁷ Latifova, *Kafkasya'nın Bazı Türk Toponimlerine Dair (Azerbaycan'ın Kuzeybatı Bölgesi ve Güney Dağıstan Örneğinde)*, 76.

⁷⁸ Mahmut, *Divan-ı Lügati't-Türk*, 372.

⁷⁹ Latifova, *Kafkasya'nın Bazı Türk Toponimlerine Dair (Azerbaycan'ın Kuzeybatı Bölgesi ve Güney Dağıstan Örneğinde)*, 77.

⁸⁰ Nişanyan, *Adını unutan ülke: Türkiye'de adı değiştirilen yerler sözlüğü*, XXI.

⁸¹ Ibid., XXI-XXII.

perspectives are different. While Cevizoğlu adopts a nationalist approach, Nişanyan adopts an alternative view reflecting his analytic way of thinking. Here, we can ask a question. When both researchers examine the same geography from a topographical point of view, why do they define the same geography in a different way? The concept of Hegemony by Gramsci would be helpful in expressing the problem. According to the Gramscian approach, the state, with all elements of oppression, produces consent to the other masses to accept its own ideas.⁸² When we consider the subject from this perspective, we come across with the question of how the social order and historiography are idealized by hegemonic power are constructed from a topological point of view. State uses the institutional, moral and ideological framework to shape people.⁸³ What is the reaction of sub-culture to this setup? Is sub-culture producing an alternative local memory against official ideology and national historiography? Hegemony is a system not based on coercion, but on the relations that society maintains with its consent. In this system, the change of hegemonic power is only possible with the formation of opposing hegemonic power. This opposing power can be created in social memory with all its ideological elements.⁸⁴ In the light of the questions we have put forward and the basis of the study, if we study the perspectives of two different écoles, we see that both researchers present their topographic perspectives in the foreground of their books. Nişanyan emphasizes that there has been an attempt to create a virtual history through the name of the settlements, especially during the republic era. In a systematic way by the dominant power, historical geography and social memory are

⁸² Aytaç, *Kapitalizm ve Hegemonya İlişkileri Bağlamında Boş Zaman*, 118.

⁸³ Karacasulu, *Hegemonik Düzen ve Eleştirel Görüşler*, 60.

⁸⁴ Çiftçi, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrasında ABD: "Rıza" ya Dayalı "Hegemonya" dan "İmparatorluk" Düzenine*, 206.

transformed and converted into Turkish.⁸⁵ Cevizoğlu says in the introduction of his book there are no doubt that the dominant Turkish culture and the ancient Turkish language, which have been dominant in Anatolia for millennia, have been influential in the topographical structure of eastern Anatolia and Caucasus.⁸⁶ He analyzes the areas where Turkish culture is spreading from Middle Asia to Anatolia with a nationalist topographic perspective. We can say that Cevizoğlu represents the ideology and historical memory of the dominant power.

In the light of all these statements, I would like to convey my impressions from the cycling tour we did to Armenia. The most interesting thing for me during the journey, or even exactly what I am looking for the real thing that made me say: The moment is located within the borders of Armenia and the current name is a place with Kavar. This small town is surrounded by a mountainous region. Kavar in Armenian means Village. In the interviews we conducted with the indigenous people of the rate and in the subsequent research, we learned that the old one of the present name is Kavar, which was in the sense of Norbeyazed (Yeni Beyazıt) in 1954, before its name. Verjine Balyan, who is among my interviewees, said that according to what his teacher has said:

We can see the immigrants from Kars in Shirak region. It is a region in which especially those from Kars are inhabited, more specifically the border regions such as: Voskehask, Yerezgavorsk, and so on. There are those from Ardahan too. These are the ones emigrated from the frontier region. Those from Van are mostly in Yerevan. They can also be seen in Armavir region, especially in Can (Jan) which is a village of Fiida. Armenians and Kurds from Yerashkhahun village of Armavir region (Yerashk-Araks is called Aras River, the name of the village comes from there) live together. They went there together, settled down the river, thinking they would go back soon. Almost everyone living in Tallinn came from Sason and Muş. My teacher said that they may be living in Ghawar / Vader province about Beyazıt people. There are lots of Beyazıts and the center of

⁸⁵ Nişanyan, *Adını unutan ülke: Türkiye'de adı değiştirilen yerler sözlüğü*, XXIV.

⁸⁶ Cevizoğlu, *Coğrafyadan Tarihe Türk Tarihi İçinde Doğu Anadolu*, 13.

Gavar is called Nor Beyazet (Yeni Beyazıt) for example. (Interview with Verjine Balyan, Appendix, 3)

The people of this area in Armenia were mostly settled in Armenia before and after 1915 from the district of Doğubayazıt of Ağrı. Actually, this is just like a microcosm, which was a typical example of how the historical geography involved and transferred in collective memory. Not only that, coincidences, in the district of Tutak in Ağrı, also known with its former name, Entap region, we came across with the village of Entap as a similar name to that in the district of Tutak in Ağrı during our journey in Armenia. Located in Ağrı and formerly known as Entap, the region is a place where the Yazidi Kurds live intensively. Especially at the end of the 19th century, after the Muslim-Ezidi clashes and the deportation of Armenians from the region, the Yazidis who lived in this region had migrated to Armenia and established villages among the names of which are Elegez, Şamiran and Korbulah. Entap is one of these Ezidi villages. The name Entap is still used by the local people for the old Karaköse in the Erzurum, Kars and Ağrı regions, namely the Tutak district of Ağrı. There are telephones like Intap and Antab. In the archives, Tutak district especially in the late Ottoman chronicles is also called as Entap. In the Kurdish and Persian languages, the name of the district comes from the word Du-Tax, which means two districts between which Murat River lays.⁸⁷ According to another narrative, the name Tutak is Turkish. The name of the district derives from the word (Tut-ak), which means taking up space. On the other hand, Tutak who is one of the commanders of Alparslan, one of the rulers of the Great Seljuk State, has been living in this region after the Battle of Malazgirt and the name of the district is mentioned as the name of Tutak. In proceeding sections, I will try to offer

⁸⁷ Nişanyan, *Adını unutan ülke: Türkiye'de adı değiştirilen yerler sözlüğü*, 22.

topological approaches related to the Caucasus and Eastern Anatolian regions, which cover my research area from the perspective of Turks, Armenians and Kurds. Historical geography and memory transfers, not only in Armenia, but of course there are many parts of the world. In my opinion, the most striking one is the recent fire disasters in Greece. As it is known, a big fire broke out in the town of Nea-Makri in Greece on 24th of July 2018 and 26 Greek citizens died in a terrible way as a result of this fire disaster. The town of Nea-Makri, which had the greatest damage from the fire disaster in July and the historical accounts in Greece, is a typical location where historical geography and memory transfer are experienced. Because the majority of the people living in the town of Nea-Makri consists of Anatolian Greeks deported from the district of Fethiye Kayaköy near Muğla during the population exchange in 1923. In ancient Roman and Byzantine sources, Levissi was known as Latin by the name of Makri. With the Turkishization of the region, it is possible to see his name transformed in a way appropriate to Turkish pronunciation (Meghri and Mekri). Within the framework of population exchange treaty signed between Greece and Turkey have migrated to Greece. Probably, Anatolian Greeks, who had lived in Kayaköy before, gave the name of their former town to new location where they have settled right now. In Greek *nea* means new. That means Nea-Makri (New Makri). This is a good example of how a historical geography has taken place in social memory and the transfer of collective memory.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ *Yunanistan yangını: Alevlerin sardığı kıyı şeridinde Yeni Fethiye (Nea Makri) de var.* Retrieved from <https://tr.euronews.com/2018/07/24/yunanistan-yangini-alevlerin-sardigi-kiyi-seridinde-yeni-fethiye-nea-makri-de-var>

4.2 Journey to time and place through people's surnames

Just as the person's name defines him, his last name often gives information about the origin of the person, his social identity, or social class to which he belongs. Family name is especially evident in the eastern societies. In Western society, the concept of first and last name is more likely to be the last name (Surname) as in the case of (Frau Müller), while in Eastern societies the situation is different. The concept of belonging and social identity, which is based on a family name, has a great effect on creating such particular differences. In my opinion, the main reason why the practices established in both civilizations are different is that the historical processes leading to modernization and nation-state formation are so many distinctive in the eastern and western societies. While the West entered to early modern era through the nation-building process with the 1648 Westphalian Peace Treaty, modernization process and modern state practices in the east, especially in the Ottoman Empire, began in the 18th century.

Let me examine the difference of family name and surname with the argument that the modernization practices have worked differently in the eastern and western societies I have suggested above. The use of the surname among the Turks is valid for almost all the policies of the 1920s and 1930s, the main object of this policy is construction of a homogeneous Turkish nation. Therefore, the use of surnames is a recent phenomenon, and even in the early 21st century, there has not been used in Turkey especially in the rural areas, while Surnames such as (Müller, Schmitt, and Schneider) have been used in Germany, especially in city centers, where sharing of jobs and professions is common since the 12th century.⁸⁹ In the Arab world, the same kind of sharing in economic life is reflected in the surnames: al-Haddâd (Blacksmith), al-Hallâk

⁸⁹ Akgönül, *Soyadları Yoluyla Kimliğin Meşrulaştırılması*, 74.

(Berber), al-Najjar (Dülger), al-Baytâr (Veterinarian), surnames exist together with the names of the individual and the family in the administrative hierarchy.⁹⁰ In France, there is a position where occupations, as well as place names and surnames associated with the position in the community or in the nobility class.⁹¹ As compared to these examples, the Turkish case is evident with its delay. Before the 1934 law, individuals were distinguished by the name of one's extended family, by one's physical character, by one's place of residence, or by one's location or origin. However, even after the law, the surname has never been frequently used. Even today, it is rare for individuals in rural areas to know the surnames of their neighbors, friends, and long-term colleagues.⁹² On the other hand, it is customary to refer to the name or the age of the interlocutor as a kinship term or for the "gentleman" for men and the term "lady" for women. For a person not of the same age period, the use of the name is extremely rare and is often considered rude. Thus, "aunt" for older women in intimate relationships, "sister" for younger girls at older ages, "uncle" for older men and "older brother" for younger men of older age or "brother" with simplified form, accompany the name. On the other hand, it is permissible for an older person to use his name only when addressing a younger person. In official relations, "bey" or "lady" results from gender distinction. Interestingly, in the superficial Westernization period of the 1930s and 1940s, the names "lady," corresponded to "Bayan," appeared before the surname, but this practice never went beyond the films produced locally and never became widespread. In this sense, it would be useful if we understand the history of the development and emerging surname in Turkey.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 75.

⁹¹ Ibid., 76.

⁹² Ibid., 77.

4.3 Surname history and adoption of surname law

According to the Larousse dictionary, the last name, in other word, surname means taking person's family name after his or her first name. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, it is stated that there is not a surname tradition among the Turks, but there are factors such as "title, nickname and pedigree." Xiongnu Emperor Metekhan is the first to use the word "bey" in Turkish culture. This tradition was derived from the roots of "bey" and "soy" after the surname law. In the tradition of the surname of the Turks, those who showed heroism were given the nickname / title to be recognized by everyone for their success. In normal citizens, they were called by their siblings (son) indicating what they were. Zade was used earlier. When we observe the Ottoman social structure in the 17th century, we see a society composed of collective identities based on the millet system. But it would be wrong for the Ottoman social structure to reduce the collective identity into a religious and sectarian stage. All occupational, ideological and geographic networks were the components of the Ottoman collective identity. There are many pieces of research on surnames. As stated by Işık Tamdoğan, vertical and geographical belongings were classified in the Ottoman society as follows: Battal (nickname), Mehmet (name), Ağa (social position), Serturanlı (geographical belonging), Hüseyin (father's name). It can be said briefly that this is not a complete order. Only a large part of the society has followed this tradition, and some traces still exist today on a small scale. Work of Robert Spencer, who studied the Turkish surname system, is also important. Spencer's surname system in Turkey is divided into five different classes.⁹³ Surnames related to a profession, especially ending with a suffix (Demirci, Arabacı, etc. b) Surnames associated with place names, and especially ending with a suffix (İzmirli,

⁹³ Ibid., 79.

Egeli, etc. c). It is related to historical figures and heroes, especially in Central Asia. Surnames referring to Turkishness. d) Surnames containing object names (Taş, Duman, etc. e) Poetic last names (Deligönül, Esen-yel, so on).⁹⁴ In all civilized societies there was a last name beside family name. In the Ottomans, everyone was called with the name of his father. Therefore, the name similarities appeared, and this also led to great turmoil. Particularly, it was difficult for official affairs to walk. In order to prevent this kind of negativity, the applications of the civilized countries in this area had to be taken into consideration. For this reason, the Surname Law was enacted so as to avoid the difficulties and confusion of the absence of surname in daily life. In the pre-Republican Turkish society, the fact that families carried religious, social, familial and nobility-based nicknames led to the separation between people and the social relations. This was incompatible with the republic's understanding of equality of all people within national borders. Therefore, such a division should not be included in the rapidly modernizing Turkish society. On June 21, 1934, Surname Law was adopted. According to this law; each Turk will receive a surname which is used jointly by his family other than his first name. These surnames will be in Turkish, names of foreign nations will not be used, and their surnames will not be immoral or funny. The surnames are left to the preference of individuals. For this reason, the same family, even a few siblings could have different surnames. In addition, the use of the old nicknames has been prevented as a surname. As a result of the modernizing and centralizing state paradigm, the surnames given to the people have often undergone a national character or Turkishization form. But after the death of Atatürk, during the Second World War, nationalist understandings out of Kemalism in Turkey spread and surname law was criticized. For example, Dr. Rıza Nur

⁹⁴ Ibid., 80.

criticized last name's coming after the first name and claimed that it is conflicting with the Turkish customs and traditions. He also criticized the use of -man and -men suffixes in the surnames. He argued that these surnames were not enough Turkish. In this case, all the reforms by the Kemalist regime between 1923 and 1936 were made by the imposition of an elite class from the top, without popular demand.⁹⁵ The Jacobin approach was on the carpet. The ideal of reaching the level of modern civilizations and rapid application of the reforms were causing Turkish society to cut its tie with Ottoman past. As Ziya Gökalp emphasizes in his book *The Principles of Turkism*, there are 3 steps of the process of nationalization. The sociological classification that Gökalp used in Arabic is as follows: First, the concept that defines a clan is a family (Cemia). Then there is an evolution (from Cemia to Camia). A multinational multicultural society is formed in such an evolutionary stage. So-called empires are formed. Finally, we see that Camia is transformed into Cemiyet. In other words, we see that the process of nationalization has begun. As it is seen, surname law as well as centralizing and modernizing Turkish state paradigm in the nation-building process was also reflected in this situation. The surnames reflecting the common culture and common geography are more accepted. So, a common culture, a historical geography and even many of the family names filled with analogies in Turkey are reflecting a collective memory.

In the light of all discussions above, we shall observe together how much the historical geography and social transfer of memory could play a deterministic role in rising human last name through interview on which I had done with Erkan Ahıska.

⁹⁵ Dokuyan, *Soyadı Kanunu ve Kanunun Uygulanma Süreci*, 160-161.

Mustafa İşçier: Firstly, can you introduce yourself?

Erkan Ahıska: Hello!

My name is Erkan Ahıska.

I was born in 1968 near Sivas.

I have been living in Istanbul for 15 years.

Mustafa İşçier: Does your surname have a story that means something from Ahıska?

Who are your elders? Are there things in your memories that are related to the history of your family? Immigration / war / exile or a massacre, which would have been experienced...

Erkan Ahıska: If we mean our surname, in our family, there are no current survivors, who have been subjected to exile, left in case of emigration and were on the journey of exile, which we call the death journey.

In our lineage; grandfathers of our grandfathers, even in their grandfather since they migrated from Ahıska, our last name remained as Ahıska.

You can take more information from our Ahıskan citizens who have migrated to our country.

Ahıska has a very history of victimhood; they are taken to a journey of 8-9 days where they do not know where they are going to be victimized and they are taken away from their life resources and left to death and have come to this time under many difficulties.

Fortunately; given the value they deserve more recently, in several countries, including Turkey began to pursue life with their free living conditions.

It is not possible to say that there is no massacre I witnessed; because there was a serious 9-day exile, which was called as a brutality of the death journey. Our grandparents had heard from their grandfathers. They also told us what they told them. According to narratives, our compatriots have suffered the difficulties. What they experienced directly affects us.

Finally, let me pass on this; in exile, when we looked at the reactions from different countries, it is obvious that they played a game with great cruelty to the descendants of Ahıska.

Mustafa İşçier: Can you open a little bit of this game statement?

Erkan Ahıska: The policies of assimilation of Stalin era ... Our people living in today's Turkish republics, especially those of Ahıska Turks, suffered oppression and persecution. They have been subjected to an intense assimilation policy. For example, the main homeland of Turkic people, Central Asia and Caucasus were

wanted to be isolated from Turkish identity. (Interview with Erkan Ahıska, Appendix, 1)

4.4 Interview with Erkan Ahıska

Before analyzing Erkan Ahıska's narrative, I would like to express what I've observed in Ahıska region, which has been called as (Akhaltsikhe) in Georgian through Caucasus, where we did a cycling tour. After Khulo, we traveled across Akhaltsikhe and passed through a badly damaged road. Along the way, we came across unique landscapes and countless natural beauties. After about 15 km, we began to climb the Ughelt Goderdzi Mountain. Of course, it was very difficult to climb with our bicycle since; the mountain's altitude was around 2200. But the beauties that we encountered along the road made us forget the exhaustion of the way. The break we took in a highland village called Ganisparok and the people we met are a clear example of this situation. Of course, I am talking about the Mamuko and Revaz brothers. They opened their houses to us and shared their lunch. The two brothers, who stated that they were Georgian Muslims, spoke Turkish quite well. They served us food from that region. Cheese, honey and clotted cream accompanied by a highly nutritious bread resembling Trabzon Bread in Turkey, also there was a large menu. They told us the Georgian names of the foods: The bread was puri, cheese was named nuhelia and the kaymak as nakhedi in Georgian. After satisfying our stomach, we received information about the route we were following, and we thanked the two brothers for their sincerity. We had to leave early because our road was hard, and we had to cross the mountain. After a long climb, we reached the top of mountain. In June 2016 there was a cold air, atmosphere which was reminiscent of the March and the snow at the top. Then, we drank water from a fountain

we came across. Then, we went down a path that was similar to the slope that we went up. We started to move through Adıgeni. This town was a place worth seeing before we went to Akhaltsikhe. We stayed in this town for one night in a hostel which we agreed at an affordable price. As soon as we had breakfast in the morning, we began cycling toward Akhaltsikhe. We were moving fast on the road, which was broken once in a while. But in general, the road was in a good condition. After a 2-hour drive, we arrived at Akhaltsikhe. We came across a city with a green and beautiful plan. The city population was written as 210000 on a sign of city entrance. There wasn't a very crowded place. I think we were spending energy on our way to town, because my friend who was guiding me and I were so hungry. When looking for a place in a deluxe or buffet style, my friend laughed “Ohhhh right Dönerci” he said. Yes, there was a buffet style venue in Akhaltsikhe center and Döner was written in Turkish upon the managing sign. We went to the buffet. We met the man who ran the buffet. He was saying that he was a Turk and Ahıskan Turk. During our conversation, he was also making us chicken breads. In an abstemious tone, he said, there is no more Turk left. I told him that I would like to have an oral history interview. However, he insisted on not recording audio and video. We couldn't have a full conversation, but we had a little chat. He stated that the majority of the region was composed of Armenians. In this region, the Georgians are the second ethnic group as a population. After the chat on foot, we moved towards the Akhaltsikhe Fortress in the city center. At the entrance to Georgia, we learned the word Gamajoba, which means hello as a way of Georgian greeting all around Bathumi. We were saying it to all people we met along the road. This was from that moment on a habit for us. Considering that we were in Georgia, we were trying to say the same word of greeting (Gamajoba) to the people we met in Akhaltsikhe. But we were getting an

interesting response. As my friend told me, the people we greeted, grimacing, greeted us with the word Armenian (Parev). Then, are you Armenian (Hayek)? They were directing us Armenian question. In particular, these questions and greetings increased with the arrival of Akhaltsikhe. In the regions close to the Armenian border, it was more and more increasing. I claim that the nationalist and conservative discourses are making itself felt quite intensely in the border regions. As far as the border with Armenia was concerned, especially in the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda regions, there were Armenian flags on the balconies of houses, and on the car plates (Am) Armenia (Hayastan). According to official sources, this region, which forms the south-west of Georgia, does not have an autonomous status. But the people's lives and practices give the impression of the province as if this region belonged to Armenia. Of course, in line with nationalist and conservative discourses, such practices in the border regions are not only experienced on the border between Armenia and Georgia. We can observe a similar mentality in Sarp border gate of Turkey & Georgia. Moreover, we have witnessed the same practices. For example, there is a mosque, while leaving the Turkish border. Immediately after crossing the border, a Georgian Gregorian Church welcomes visitors. Is this a coincidence? I don't think it's a coincidence. It is a concrete indicator of nationalist and conservative discourse and practices in the border regions. Do not be surprised if people crossing the Georgian border and moving towards Batumi will greet you by making a pilgrimage. From this point of view, when looking at Erkan Ahıska's narrative in the light of historical documents, we say that, the assimilation policies towards the Caucasian people such as the Turko-Georgian Muslim and Circassian people who started in the period of Tsarist Russia, are ethnic homogenization. As in the article that Prof. Dr. Yusuf Sarıay wrote Russia's Armenian card in its Turkish Policy

(1878-1918), he expresses the historical transformation of the Caucasian region under the title of Russian Control on the Armenians. The Russian-Iranian wars, which resulted in the Turkmen Çay Treaty, began in 1826. The war that broke out during the rule of Tsar 1st Nikolai, marched on Iran under the command of the general Madatofs, who was originally Armenian. Katagikos Merses Asdarage closely followed the developments and with the support of the Russians, they wanted Armenians to enter the war in the hope that they could establish Armenian independence in the Caucasus. In a short time, voluntary Armenian units were formed by the mean of Armenian Katagikos. 12 of the Armenian generals had entered Kanzak before the Russian forces. However, Russian troops on the head of Russian general, Pankradievs ruled over the region. The Armenian troops only guided the Russian forces not to know the geography of Iran.⁹⁶ Russian-Iranian wars ended with the Turkmen Çay Treaty, signed on February 8, 1828. In addition to the treaty in 1813, Iran had to leave Yerevan and Revan Khanates to Russia. Owing to this treaty, Achamedin Katagikos, living in the northern Iranian borders, was also included in the Russian territory. Tsar Nikola I rewarded the Armenians for this victory. He proclaimed the name Yerevan and Revan in the name of the Armenian homeland (Armiyanskaya Oblast). In the same years, there was a great Greek uprising in the Ottoman lands on the Mora peninsula. Russia moved to take advantage of the difficult situation of the Ottoman Empire so as to advance to the west of the Black Sea and to dominate the South Caucasus. Russian troops under the command of General Pankradievs captured Anapa and Ahıska. Then, they advanced toward Kars, Beyazıt, and Erzurum. On the other hand, they occupied the strategic points on the Danube coast to the west of the Black Sea. The war that ended with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire

⁹⁶ Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, 755; Göyünç, *Osmanlı İdaresinde Ermeniler*, 54.

resulted in the Edirne Treaty signed on September 14, 1829. Via this treaty, the Ottoman Empire's relationship with the Caucasus was cut off in a political context. The South Caucasus was from that point on, in the hands of the Russians. When the South Caucasian region was captured by the Russian army, it is clearly stated that the ethnic structure in the region has changed and transformed. In particular, 100,000 Armenians from the eastern Anatolia (Kars, Eleşkirt and Erzurum) regions were settled in the Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki areas, which were occupied by the Russians. Although it was in the interest of the Armenians to take control of the southern Caucasus in the beginning, all the Armenians living in the Russian territory with the edict issued in 1836 were defined as Russian citizens. With the treaty called Pologenia, the Russians defined Eçmiyazin Katagikos as the archbishop of all Armenians in the world. In addition, he was directly involved in all the national and religious affairs of the Armenians. Based on the example of the Russian tsar to declare himself the king of Poland, they thought he would identify himself as the Armenian king. But nothing happened as imagined. The Russian tsar had increased the pressure on the Armenian people.⁹⁷ After the Berlin Treaty, migrations and population changes continued in an increasing manner. As Kemal Karpat emphasized, apart from the Ottoman-Russian wars, Ottoman's need for manpower, and its economic needs were influential in the migrations from Caucasia to Anatolia. Going through a crisis after the Crimean War, it needed manpower to process the agricultural land in order to recover. At the same time increasing the decreasing population was necessary. On March 9, 1857, the Ottoman government declared a decree stipulating attractive promises for immigrants in order to fill the population gap. According to this decree, approved by the Sultan; It is emphasized that the Ottoman

⁹⁷ Hovannisian, *“Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918”*, 9.

lands are open to all on condition that they will respect the laws, and that immigrants will have the religious freedom, they will be provided the necessary fertile lands of public without any cost. And they will be exempted from military services and taxes.⁹⁸ In the Ottoman-Russian war of 1877-1878, Ottoman was once again defeated by Russia. Although the Treaty of Ayestefanos was signed between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in 1878, this treaty was later deemed to be invalid and the Treaty of Berlin was signed. Although the lands given to Russia with the Treaty of Ayestefanos, Eleşkirt and Beyezid, were given back to Turkey, Kars, Ardahan and Batum were given to Russia. Due to the redrawing of the Ottoman-Russian border an article about the people of the places left to Russia was put, saying

Those will be released if they want to go to another place. In this respect, they were given a three-year deadline as of the date of the approval of this contract. At the end of the said consignment, those who have not sold their property and have not left their country will remain under Russian nationality.”⁹⁹

This situation accelerated the migration process from Caucasia to Anatolia. With the separation of the Ottoman army from the region, some Muslims, including Ahıska Turks, left the region and came to Anatolia. Russian wars have been instrumental in making the migration from the Caucasus to Anatolia a permanent and collective movement.¹⁰⁰

In this context, the narrative of Erkan Ahıska is consistent with historical reality. But a part of Erkan Ahıska’s narrative aroused my attention so much. Hence, Erkan Ahıska's attempt to describe the ethnic transformation of the Caucasus through Soviet Russian leader, Joseph Stalin is an anachronistic way. Indeed, especially in Turkey, the

⁹⁸ Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu, (1830-1914): Demografik ve Sosyal Özellikleri*, 104.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 16.

majority of the population living around Sivas and Erzurum has Ahıska origins and all of them are consisted of the people, having experienced a particular historical process I mentioned above. In 1829 Edirne Treaty and the 1878 Treaty of Berlin, a massive deportation had occurred from Caucasia to Anatolia. Probably, the ancestors of Erkan Ahıska have also been all among Ahıska Turks, who forced to migrate from Caucasia either during Edirne treaty or during Berlin treaty. Where can we understand it from?

Now, let me try to acknowledge the anachronistic situation that Erkan Ahıska mentioned in his own account.

It is not possible to say that there is no massacre I witnessed; because there is a serious 9-day exile, called the brutality of the death journey. Our grandfathers heard from their grandparents. What they told us, taking into account the difficulties they had experienced, directly affects us too. As it is seen, he tells about his grandfather's life story three generations ago. Beside's that our narrator identifies with the Ahıska Turks who forced to migrate or migrated in the next period. Let's start with the main problem that causes anachronism via section on the Stalinist era. (Interview with Erhan Ahıska, Appendix, 1)

On the hand Erkan's another point that caught my attention in the Meskhetian narrative is establishing identification with the audience, who immigrated from Akhaltsikhe to Turkey. There is appreciation in his discourses in terms of being of the same race and Turkey's opening its doors to them. What came to my mind at this point was Samim Akgönül's research on the immigrants from the Aegean and the Balkans. The research analyzes the process from the time of the surname law to the adoption of the law. According to Samim Akgönül, the construction of the nation-state and the attempt to create a national identity with the surname law came into being systematical. Together with the exchange of non-Muslim subjects, the Muslim population from the Balkans and Caucasians came to Anatolia and it was an undeniable fact that there was an immigrant mass trying to become a citizen of the new homeland. In order to conceal

their previous geographical belonging and to prove their Turkishness, the aforementioned exchange migrants built their surnames on the basis of their commitment to the new country. The point of this research is to confirm the intuition that appears when observing the behavior of minorities. Groups that consider themselves to be minority have essentially two pillars of identity in order to preserve the particularity of the group in the face of the supposedly assimilated and threatened majority and to prove the group's “cohesion” to the same majority. These are language and religion. The society has been organized according to a bunch of demands for loyalty guarantees, both from the majority and from the minority group. The individual has to play with these demands in the construction of a permanent identity by using the means of proof both to maintain their autonomy and to prove their belonging.¹⁰¹ We are faced with a special positioning in terms of 1923 exchanges. There is a group of people showing differences compared to where they are now and replaced because of seen as Turks. The Turkishness of the group was disputed by the locals, especially because of those who did not know Turkish well. Therefore, many of these people had to show evidence of belonging to Turkishness in order not to be seen as foreign elements anymore. Individuals, who consider themselves to be fully and legitimately Turk, but who have been denied this due to their geographical origin, may experience a painful cracking reaction which, in turn, can be related to what they call, dissonance cognitive. It is the discrepancy between the two elements of recognition (or recognition in the example that concerns us), one of which leads to the denial of the other. The community that embraced the emigrants as “Turks” was unable to understand their religious and linguistic identity. Just as increased expression of religiosity was seen as one of the

¹⁰¹ Akgönül, *Soyadları Yoluyla Kimliğin Meşrulaştırılması*, 81.

methods of loyalty assurance, the Surname Law was also presented as a way of doing it. In fact, it is a voluntary process and, in a sense, is the choice of one's own identity! Actually, when we look at the table, it is the obvious preference for multiplying the values and the positive remarkable qualities. (about 32 percent in the population of the other two groups, compared to 22 percent). Likewise, the fact that the ones accused for not being a true Turk, feel the need to affirm their commitment to the country and the nation more than the natives (11 percent in the other two groups, compared to 6-7 percent). In the opposite direction, the surnames indicating the belonging to the vertical names (Kökoğlu) and the place names are particularly rare in the population as if they wanted to hide the origin of the local identity. In the light of the aforementioned research, if we review the discourses of Erkan Ahıska, it is because of his identification with Ahıska immigrants that he has a common moral origin with. The emphasis on gratitude to Turkey and I can say that based on common ethnic belonging and loyalty of muhacir represented in the research. The fact that the surname of Erkan Bey is Ahıska can be explained by the fact that in the light of the data of the research, immigrants reflect their geographical belonging and vertical belonging more than their native people.

Erkan Ahıska: Finally, let me pass on this; in exile, when we looked at the reactions from different countries, it is obvious that they played a game with great cruelty to the descendants of Ahıska.

Mustafa İşçier: Can you open a little bit of this game statement?

Erkan Ahıska: The policies of assimilation of Stalin era ... Our people living in today's Turkish republics, especially those of Ahıska Turks, suffered oppression and persecution. They have been subjected to an intense assimilation policy. For example, the main homeland of Turkic people, Central Asia and Caucasus were wanted to be isolated from Turkish identity. (Interview with Erkan Ahıska, Appendix, 1)

In this section, I will try to analyze the foundations of anti-communist propaganda applied by Americans during the Cold War period through the concept of perception management. During this period, Stalin was demonized by western public opinion. First of all, let's see what the concept of perception management and propaganda is. The concept of perception management has been included in the international relations literature by the US Department of Defense. According to this, perception management is the activity of disseminating the information chosen to influence the emotions, motives, and objectives of external audiences. Although it has similarities with the propaganda in terms of objectives and results, it has differences in terms of tools and methods. One of these is that it is a multi-faceted and horizontal process rather than a one-way and vertical process.¹⁰² Again according to Saydam perception management; it is a product of all activities carried out to influence the views of target groups in foreign countries.¹⁰³ It consists of a combination of elements such as deflecting facts, hiding the truth and distortion using various ways. Perception management, unlike propaganda, focuses on the impact it creates on the target audience, not on the nature of the messages conveyed. It is important to ensure that the message is perceived as intended by the target audience (based on the perception threshold level) and adapted to the point of view of the source.

In this respect, the press reports by the US governments were used frequently to bring negative meanings to communism. To this end, in the early years of the Cold War, President Truman sought to reverse the perception of Stalin, known as Uncle Joe in the Soviet Union and American society who fought together against the Nazis in World War

¹⁰² Ozan, *Türk Dış Politikasında Algı Yönetim*, 186-187.

¹⁰³ Saydam, *İletişimin Akıl ve Gönül Penceresi Algılama Yönetimi*, 80.

II (with a relatively positive image).¹⁰⁴ In this stage, Truman and his team made a strategic move and decided to use Churchill. At the Fulton Conference, held in 1946 at Fulton University, Churchill made the famous iron curtain speech that surprised the entire world and hinted that Stalin was dangerous. After that, two options emerged for European countries: being a communist or a capitalist.

The traditional Marxist approach is a challenge to describe nationalism as the struggle between imperialism and anti-colonialism. In this struggle, an instrumental nation is a capitalist formation seeking for local bourgeois activities which pursue their economic interests under the ideological cover.¹⁰⁵ According to Jaffrelot, Stalin carries out these two ideologies together. So, when we think about it, we can say that in the center of the American anti-communist propaganda against Stalinist era, Russian Nationalism and the other Soviet nations have reacted to the Soviet nationalism that Soviet state policy wanted to create.

In conclusion, I want to summarize the main argument I developed over the surnames of individuals with the section where Erkan Ahıska tells the history of the family surname. Again, Erkan Ahıska between me and the transfer of the dialogue as follows: Is there a meaning or a story to have the surname Ahıska? Erkan Bey's response is as follows:

Erkan Ahıska: If we mean our surname, in our family, there are no current survivors, who have been subjected to exile, left in case of emigration, and were on the journey of exile, which we call the death journey. (Interview with Erhan Ahıska, Appendix, 1)

¹⁰⁴ Churchill delivers Iron Curtain speech. Retrieved from <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/churchill-delivers-iron-curtain-speech>

¹⁰⁵ Jaffrelot, *Bazı Millet Teorileri*, 55.

In our lineage; our grandfather's grandfathers, even in their grandfather since they migrated from Ahıska, our last name remained as Ahıska! Here again, Erkan Ahıska calls it as "Dead Journey", while talking about the story of his ancestors, who were forced to migrate from Ahıska. This historical geography embodies its existence in social memory with surname system. Thus, the dynamic relationship between historical geography and social memory has an evidential basis. At the same time, through geographical renocide notion we see how Erkan Ahıska relates his surname to his family origin.

4.5 Interview with Gülsüm Erzurum

Since both Gülsüm Erzurum, whose interview I will be talking about her life story in the proceeding paragraphs, and Erkan Ahıska are from Sivas, to have a better understanding about the narratives I wanted to inform you about the demographic changes of the region which are based upon the Armenian and Ottoman sources of the time. One of the Armenian Patriarchs, Mağakya Ormanyen, states in his book "Armenian Church", which was published in 1912, the Armenian population living in the sanjak as 104 thousand 500 on the basis of church records, consisting of 97,000 Gregorians, 5,500 Catholics and 2,000 Protestants.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, according to Ottoman census conducted in 1914, the number of Armenians living in this sanjak was recorded as 82 thousand 915, consisting of 78 thousand 605 Gregorians, 2,395 Catholics, and 1,915 Protestants. Different sources mention that Sivas city center's population's, which was approximately 45 thousand, one-third was made up of the Armenians in these years. The name of Sivas in Greek sources is Sebastia. In 63 BC, the name Sebastus was the Roman

¹⁰⁶ Karpas, *Osmanlı Nüfusu, (1830-1914): Demografik ve Sosyal Özellikleri*, 226-227.

name of the city founded by Pompeius in honor of the Roman Emperor Augustus.

Sebastus means megalopolis. In Greek, Sebastus is equivalent to Augustus.¹⁰⁷ Apart from the Greek and Roman sources, if we examine the roots of Sivas's name's, there are also those who claim the name derives from the Turkish Tribe Sibirs. Hüseyin Cevizoğlu argues that the name of the city belongs to a commander of Sibir. He claims that one of the commanders of Alper Tunga gave the name of the city. It is said that Sibir is phonetically altered. First, it is claimed that Sibir turned to Sivir, then to Sibar, Sivar, and Sivasar.¹⁰⁸

Considering the fact that this city, formerly known as Sebastia, was the center of Roman Empire's state called Armenia Minor and received a lot of Armenian immigrants from the east in 11th century, these numbers should not be surprising. If we take a look at the Ottoman records, according to the *1903 Vilayet Salnamesi*, if the population of Suşehri and Koyulhisar, which were among the townships of Karahisar-ı Şarkı and now within the border of Sivas, is taken into account, 393 thousand 882 people were living in the present Sivas province. Today (according to the 2008 census results) 631 thousand 112 people live in this area. If the 53 thousand 298 people, total population of Suşehri and Koyulhisar townships, is not taken into account, the population of Sivas would be 340 thousand 584 back in those days. In 1903, Sivas' population, which was 393 thousand 882, was consisted of 78 percent (306 thousand 331) Muslims and 22 percent (87,551) non-Muslims. The non-Muslim population was mostly located in, Sivas center, Suşehri, Tenos (Şarkışla), Hafık, Koçgiri (Zara), Divriği and Georgia. In Yıldızeli and Koyulhisar, non-Muslim people residence was barely seen. 90 percent of non-Muslim

¹⁰⁷ Nişanyan, *Adını unutan ülke: Türkiye'de adı değiştirilen yerler sözlüğü*, 280.

¹⁰⁸ Cevizoğlu, *Coğrafyadan Tarihe Türk Tarihi İçinde Doğu Anadolu*, 14.

population (77 thousand 960) was made up of Armenians, 7 percent (6 thousand 46) of Greeks and 3 percent of other nations.

All in all, through Gülsüm Erzurum's narrative, I want to support my argument that the surnames of people gave us a clue about their origins and identities. In addition to origins and identities of the people, their surnames have the traces of the historical geography they live in. In fact, it continues to exist with social transfers of memory. Here is an obvious example to this argument. First, let's get to know our narrator. In 1945, she was born in the Karapınar village of Sivas. Her father's name is Mehmet. Her mother's name is Saniye. She says her pre-marriage name was Sağır. When she got married to her husband, she took his surname, Erzurum. Then I asked her if her husband's surname had a story or a different meaning. She connects the story of her husband's family's taking Erzurum as their surname to the mentioned immigration. At this point, if we quote the relevant parts of the interview with Gülsüm Hanım's narrative, the conversation has improved as follows: Is there any meaning or a story in taking your surname of Erzurum? Gülsüm Hanım's answer to this question:

My husband's surname is Erzurum... My mother-in-law and father-in-law migrate from Erzurum to Sivas. They settled here. My husband was born in Sivas. They are three brothers. When they migrated to Sivas, they settled here until the mobilization ended. My husband was born in Sivas. The other two brothers of my mother-in-law remained in Erzurum. Then they came to Karapınar through an acquaintance. They asked my father's permission for our marriage. I married my husband. So, I took my husband's surname. We are not in Sivas right now. We went to Bursa with my children after my husband died. I live in Bursa now. (Interview with Gülsüm Erzurum, Appendix, 2)

During the conversation, I learn that the reason why Gülsüm Hanım's father-in-law and her mother-in-law migrated from Erzurum to Sivas was due to mobilization.

The campaign is about the invasion of the region by the Russian army as a result of the

Ottoman defeat in the Caucasian Front, which was opened during the First World War. Again, here, we see that, there is *renocide* notion describing human practice of remembrance about the violence and war narrative. As illustrated in the narrative of Erkan Ahıska, there is a transfer of the historical geography to social memory through surname in terms of geographical renocide. Then I asked Gülsüm Hanım about her mother and father-in-law. I also asked if her mother and father-in-law said anything about the things they went through during the immigration. The answer of Gülsüm Hanım is as follows:

Things they lived... My mother-in-law had two sons. They arrived at Sivas from Erzurum on foot in 3 months. When they came to Sivas, the government gave them a big house, one of the oldest buildings. (Mustafa İşçier): Like a mansion? (Gülsüm Erzurum): Yes, the mansion is like an old ruined mansion. Then they thought it is too big for them. A smaller place was given for them in the same neighborhood. Then my husband was born. Then his two sisters were born. (Interview with Gülsüm Erzurum, Appendix, 2)

Right after that, I asked Gülsüm Hanım whose host belongs to. Her answer is as follows: That mansion was originally belonged to the Armenians. They used to sit in that mansion. When they went to Constantinople, they placed those who had come in empty places from the eastern frontier. My deceased mother and father-in-law used to mention so about. There are two points that I noticed in my last narrative. The first of these is the Armenian Mansion. The second is that the host is given to the people who migrated to Sivas and the Armenians living in the city have migrated to Istanbul. To my surprise, despite the fact that the Armenians living in the eastern regions included the deportation of Armenians to the south, Syria, and Lebanon, according to Gülsüm Hanım's account, the migration was to the west. The Armenians who owned the mansion in Sivas seem to have migrated or forced to migrate to Istanbul. Of course, we cannot generalize about

the Armenian deportation via this narrative. But considering the local memory, it is clear that there are some different narrative and discursive contents rather than official ideology and national historiography. On April 29, 2015, I saw a file published in *Agos* Newspaper, when I searched whether there is an article or a similar narrative about the immigration of Armenians to Istanbul.¹⁰⁹ In the article titled “Every Armenian is a Document”, life stories of the Armenians, who were deported from the region in 1915 and later, are told by their family members from the second and third generational point of views. In the aforementioned article, there are migration stories as a similar to Gülsüm Hanım’s narrative. But the difference here is that it is told through the perspectives of the Armenians. In addition, the Armenian properties are given to immigrants as well as migration to Istanbul. Let us try to present these narratives. There are two narratives. First of all, let's start with a migration story in Sivas. The second-generation narrator conveys his father's experiences as follows:

My father is a first-year student at the Esayan School in Istanbul in 1915. They lived in prosperity together with their family and they were the mills in Sivas. When the mills were confiscated in 1915, my father and his family began experiencing poverty and misery... My father's younger brother, Hayguhi, is starving gatig gatig Bab. My father Artaki left school and started to work with my mother at the Beykoz Shoe Factory. My mother and I cross roads in Beykoz.

As we can see, there is a family narrative that confiscated mills and other properties and the place they migrated from Sivas is described as Istanbul Beykoz. The other narrator is a grandson of the third generation. Describes his grandfather, an Ottoman soldier, and his experiences. The narrative proceeds as follows:

My grandfather Mesrob, was an Ottoman soldier in 1915. His story is no different than an adventure movie. While fighting for the Ottoman army in the Yemen Front he was captured by the British. He and a few other prisoners,

¹⁰⁹ “*Her Ermeni bir belgedir*”, <http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/11432/her-ermeni-bir-belgedir>

escapes from the prison by digging up a tunnel. They walk in the desert at night, hide during the day. But an English plane finds them in a short time and, they bring them back. Then the French buy a bunch of Armenian prisoners from the British and take them to the Cyprus. My grandfather used to say, 'They paid 20 pounds per man.' and repeat the French commands he learned. They take military training for 6 months. What happens to their families in the village is told one by one. He couldn't believe it. They were taken from Cyprus to Adana, they understood the truth after seeing what happened in there. They dressed French army's clothes; in a rage they start marching to Erzurum burning everything down on their way. Finally, one day they say to them 'The war is over.' He runs through his village throwing his gun without looking back even just for once. He could find neither his parents, nor his wife and his three young children. His two older and 16-year-old younger brother, his sister, his relatives were killed. All alone, by himself... The elders of the village have my grandfather married. My grandfather gave the name of his younger brother, that he lost, to his first child, my father, Arşak. They wipe out everything, they build a new life, and they live in Burunkışla; dealing with land and agriculture, until 1930. Albanian immigrants were brought to the region and placed in Armenian families' homes. My grandfather could not handle living with strangers in the house that he built with his own hands, but then He gives up. They are leaving their homes. They became homeless, penniless and unemployed. They migrated to Istanbul with three young children one of them swaddled. The Surname Law which has been legislated after a short period of time steals their surname from them. The officer finds Hampartsum very long and hard to write so, he writes 'Turay'. When my father, years later, named brother Hampartsum, my grandfather cries for days and, he called my brother 'my father'.

Again, in this narrative, there is a migration to Istanbul. At the same time, it is clearly seen that the Armenian properties were allocated to the immigrants placed in the region. In both narratives, they tell the life stories of the people of the region, who have been displaced from different perspectives. At this point, I don't want to be misunderstood. My goal here is not to compare people's suffering. My main goal is to show how the dirty games of imperialism influence the lifestyles of the people of the region. My main goal is to stand against the understanding of everything in war, to strangle each other in the psychology of war, to question the normalization of the understanding of Volkermord. In doing so, I don't want to be the advocate of any party. I do not want to consolidate the discourse of genocide or evaluate the narratives through

genocide. I just try to reflect the life stories of the people in the region through narratives and try to do the narrative analysis and discursive analysis of these stories within the historical context.



CHAPTER 5

ARARAT IN THE EYES OF THREE PEOPLE VIA LITERARY SOURCES

Sometimes we encounter the mountain of Ağrı in a song, sometimes in a folk story or in a mythological fiction. This region has also hosted many events and civilizations throughout history. The name of the region in Turkish narratives is called as mountain of Ağrı. In the Armenian sources, we often see the name Ararat. The Kurds gave the name Çiyayê Agirî or Gili Dex. Although Ararat has received different names for each culture, it can be said that when every culture is taken into account the images imposed on the mountain are sanctity and sublime. In the Turkish and Kurdish folk stories, Ağrı Mountain has been considered as an impossible point to reach forever. Sometimes it is deified. Sometimes it becomes the subject of a love story. For Armenians, Ararat contains a different meaning. Almost every poet's poem involves the name Ararat. Because Armenians have identities built on exile, deportation, and genocide narratives. Ararat means more than a mountain to them. It is the starting point of Armenian ethnic identity and Armenian history. To understand this situation, you should go to Armenia. If you have a conversation with anyone, you will definitely hear of their mentioning about the events of 1915. With a wistful smile they will ask you, "Ararat looks more beautiful from here, right?" They longing for a mountain that is not within the borders of Armenia. As Hrant Dink said in the title of his book *Two Close Neighbors and Two Distant Countries are Turkey and Armenia*. Aret Gıdır, the famous caricaturist, has the most humorous attitude. He portrayed the Turko-Armenian tension and the Armenian approach to the mountain of Ağrı in *Agos* newspaper. There is a model in the cartoon symbolizing Ararat. A cat on the other side of the border sighs "Van! Van!" I think that

the cartoon that I want to tell the situation in the best way.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Aret Gıcır's "Azınlıkyan" typing in the *Agos* newspaper is valuable because it reflects the situation of minorities both in Turkey and in Armenia. In this part of my thesis, I will often use this minority typing. How Ararat is first described in Armenian history and Armenian folk stories? I will answer this question. I will emphasize the influence of Ararat in the construction of Armenian identity and in Armenian historiography. I will make quotations frequently from the narrative of Verjine Balyan and the book of Armenian historian Rafael Ishanyan (*Armenian History from The Beginning to The 20th Century*) while historicizing this process. Also, does the iconography have a role in defining the Armenian identity through Ararat, based on the idea that I underscored; There are no states and society without icon. Ararat is also an icon for other communities, especially for the Armenians? I am going to answer all these questions in the next paragraphs.

5.1 Interview with Verjine Balyan

First of all, let me make an introduction to the topic of my interview with Verjine Balyan. Let us know Verjine Balyan through her narrative.

Mustafa İşçier: First, could you introduce yourself?

Verjine Balyan: My name is Verjine Balyan. I was born in 1992 in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia. I came to Turkey in September 2013 under the European Cooperation Volunteers program. I have been living in Istanbul since 2013. I am having master in Civil Society Studies at Istanbul Bilgi University. Although I occasionally go to Yerevan for seeing my family, I am usually in Istanbul.

Mustafa İşçier: What do you think about living in Turkey as an Armenian?

Verjine Balyan: I love Turkey. Especially living in Istanbul is a privilege for me. I have made many friendships here. I have had many friends. When I go to Yerevan, I look for Istanbul and my friends. Here I have friends from different

¹¹⁰ Temelkuran, <http://tabdc.org/agrinin-oteki-yakasi/>

backgrounds and from different origins. Kurdish, Turkish, Alevi, etc... I believe that a part of me is still in these lands. Actually, according to what our elders say we are originally from Muş.

Mustafa İşçier: In 1915, did your ancestors migrate from Muş?

Verjine Balyan No. It is said something in between 1883-1886.

Mustafa İşçier: Finally, I have a last question. What does Ararat mean to you?

Verjine Balyan: Ararat is very sacred for the Armenians. I do not know whether the ancient Ararat Kingdom was established in this geography makes us see it as sacred. But for many Armenians, Ararat is sacred. First of all, Ararat is a myth. There are myths that tell the story of the emergence of every nation. Something like that. Ararat is a sacred myth that we can say a must for the Armenians. (Interview with Verjine Balyan, Appendix, 3)

Just like what Verjine Balyan said in the last part of the interview “Holiness and the symbolic meaning that Armenians ascribe to Ararat are based on historical and mythological origins”. In this context, I think it would be useful to consider it in Armenian historiography and folk tales through the book of Raphael İşhanyan (*Armenian History from The Beginning to The 20th Century*). The Armenian historian and ancient manuscripts expert Raphael İşhanyan takes research subject as historical geography that the Armenians had been living in Ancient Araratian Kingdom and Armenian identity emerged in a relevant topography. Ararat’s role in emerging Armenian identity and Ararat's symbolic meanings on the event of 1915 in terms of genocide memory are discussed through İşhanyan’s book in detail. When we examine the sources of Khorenatsi, an Armenian historian, who had lived in A.D. 410-490, we see that Ararat has a mythological origin about the emergence of Armenian ethnic identity at a number of historical realities hosting according to mythology, one day, the flood of Noah broke out all around the world. Only those who got on the Noah’s ark

would have been escaped from a great disaster. So, there were people involved in the ark, and other creatures that survive all the rest. Noah's ark stopped at Ararat. According to the legend, it is estimated that the ancestors of the first Armenian king "Hay" are originated from Armenian descendants of Noah's son Hapet Torkomian. It is stated that Khorenatsi sources relied on the Assyrian and Akkadian historical records which are references to Armenian origin. This name is located as Torkomyan Armenians in the Assyrian sources at the first time and transferred that Torko's descendants moved from Mesopotamia to Ararat. Those people began living within the north of Van Lake. When the Armenian King Hay defeated in the Lake Van after thrashing, he and his family moved to the south. The king of this region, "Hark "united all descendants of Torkom under the Armenian identity. the birth of Armenian identity as an ethnic community relies on a relevant legend that reflects this geography. According to Akkadian sources, the Assyria and Urartu are an Armenian civilization. The philological and epistemological origins of the name Ararat are descended to the "Urartu," Uarak "by turning the name Ararat. My main research is that human geography as a historical transformation which lasted until 1915 Armenian Genocide discourse relying on the modern history of mythology.¹¹¹

Using the icon and iconographic concepts, let's see how the Ararat mountain is symbolized in Armenian mythological narrative and historiography. There are certain social control mechanisms in every community. These social mechanisms are sometimes structured and organized by ideological devices in a sensible way; and sometimes through the internal dynamics of the society, it remains within the norms of social life and is sustained by the way of everyday life. Icons are one of these social control

¹¹¹ İřhanyan, *Başlangıçtan 20. Yüzyıla Kadar Ermeniler'in Tarihi*, 48-52.

mechanisms. The Greek word “eikon” stands for “image” and “iconography” is a representation of a subject by means of pictures or other visual elements. The icon is a meaning generator and a copy of the detection. All icons are indicators and these indicators refer to a different phenomenon other than themselves. The phenomenon they refer to, however, does not go beyond an indication as far as Kant's philosophy is concerned, and the whole culture is dominated by the dominant ideology, given the fact that it is considered in the context of the impulse cultural issue. In this context, we can say that there is no state and no society without any icon.¹¹² The icon is an indicator in a larger cluster. However, it is asserted that by making a more conservative claim on the icon, there is no distinction between icon and what it shows; according to this claim, icon transforms itself into a more propagandistic structure. This operation is much more insidious than the symbol and grasps itself as a direct object. As Roland Barthes puts it, solving the indicators in the world means fighting a certain purity of objects. For icons are also indicative of this purity because they are indicators, and these purity claims are a sign for their ideological function.¹¹³

“In addition to these, lets debate the same topic through the notion of “Ethno-symbolism.” The approach advocated by John Armstrong and Anthony D. Smith is called historical ethno-symbolism. According to this approach, the development process of the nations should be evaluated in a wide time frame. It is not possible to explain the birth of modern nations without considering their ethnic backgrounds.¹¹⁴ This approach provides a dual starting point in the analysis of nation formation. The first is the importance of symbols, values, memories, myths, heritage or historical groups for the

¹¹² Guiraud, *Göstergebilim*, 21.

¹¹³ Barthes, *Gösterge Bilimsel Serüven*, 186.

¹¹⁴ Guibernau and Hutchinson, *History and National Destiny*, 1.

formation of cultural society. The second is the vital role that ethnic communities and ethnic ties or ethics provide for the emergence and continuity of nations. Ethnicity can be defined as a common myth, shared historical memory, one or more common cultural elements, a bond with a historical land, and at least a population of people with a measure of solidarity between the elites.¹¹⁵ This definition suggests a connection between the two starting points. This link is the central position of Armstrong's "mythic-symbol poem", which he expresses in emphasizing the identification and continuity of ethnicities. Smith adds to this the subjective history of members of a society of historical memories and traditions or ethno-history, and in particular the important role of heroes and golden ages. Descendants and ethnic selection among myths play a vital role in the identification and continuity of ethnicity, while symbols, or "symbolic border watchers" as Armstrong named them following Fredrik Barth, play an important role in the revival of collective emotions and long-term cultural diversity.¹¹⁶

We can see the same ethno-symbolic approach in the case of Armenians and Kurds as they symbolize Mount Ararat within the framework of this approach. As I mentioned before, Ararat is an icon for Armenians. It is a symbol with an ideological function. It shows an ethnic origin and the place of an ancient land based on the ancient Kingdom of Ararat in the social memory. At this point, there are a few questions that we can ask: What are the roots of existence? What is the meaning assigned to existence throughout the history? The answers of these questions will help us in explaining the *archetopia* notion. *Archetopia* is the combination of Greek word *arche* meaning the origin of existence and *tophia* which carry the same meaning with image, view or

¹¹⁵ Smith, *Theories of Nationalism: Alternative models of nation formation*, 11.

¹¹⁶ Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*. 5-8.

landscape.¹¹⁷ It was conceptualized to analyze the place of Mount Ararat in the Armenian history and mythology. It is a concept put forward by me. The notion of *archetopia* tries to examine the meaning imposed on an entity and the connotations evoked by geography in social memory.

Now I am going to answer the questions we asked above with the help of ontology. It can be said that primitive theories and the events they experienced in their time were effective in the studies of the existence and existence concepts of ancient thinkers who tried to understand the essence and reason of existence. Therefore, the human being, who is intertwined with nature, tried to explain and make sense of the meaning of his being with his knowledge, observations and experiences that have been transferred to him. Firstly, especially in the eastern philosophy, the essence of existence was sought in nature, so nature elements such as wind, sun, water, fire and air were seen as symbols of existence by societies. With the advancements in civilization, the supernatural meanings imposed on natural phenomena have been replaced by more rational considerations. Thus, a process began in which the answers to the questions about existence and existing beings were sought outside nature. In ancient times, Plato studied the concept of being on two axes. One is the world in which matter exists, and the other is a world of ideas, a higher world. Accordingly, existence in the universe is governed by ideas. Ideas shape matter and leave the matter when the time comes, so that existence is terminated. According to Plato, “demiurgos” is the creator of the universe and all creatures were created by this creator in parallel with ideas.¹¹⁸ Aristotle, on the other hand, blended physics and the science of thought in interpreting existence. In his

¹¹⁷ *Topia*. Retrieved from, <https://en.m.wiktionary.org/wiki/-topia>.

¹¹⁸ McGowan Tress, *Relations and Intermediates in Plato's Timaeus*, 146-149.

work *Metaphysics*, Aristotle argued that in order to make sense of existence, first of all, it is necessary to think about the existence not only as being, but with the beings that create and add meaning to them.¹¹⁹ Some thinkers have constructed the existence on numbers. According to them, being can only be interpreted by starting from numbers. When it comes to the Middle Ages, the phenomenon of religion that dominated the period can be seen also in the thought system. In this period, the idea of “the reflection of God”, which was frequently used in religious discourses, was dominant. Spinoza argued that human beings, nature, in short, the universe is created by God, and therefore, existence is actually proof of the existence of God, existence bears traces of God, and that it is a reflection of it.¹²⁰ Giordano Bruno argued that the universe and the nature we are living in is the reality of God.¹²¹ According to George Berkeley, who thinks in the same parallel, spirit is a divine phenomenon that gives shape to existence. Therefore, in fact, every being that is formed is a work of God. St. Augustine, St. Thomas, Descartes and other important names in the history of philosophy also argued that existence cannot be considered separate from the concept of God.¹²² With the age of enlightenment, political, cultural and economic changes made itself felt in every field. In this period, traditional ideas and interpretations began to lose their influence in both spatial areas that could be noticed with the eye and intellectual areas. This change has affected many fields as well as the field of philosophy, and the concepts of being and existence were tried to be explained by emphasizing “science” and “reason” instead of traditional discourses.

¹¹⁹ Marx, *Introduction to Aristotle's Theory of Being as Being*.

¹²⁰ Van der Bend, *Spinoza on knowing, being and freedom*, 188.

¹²¹ Blum, *Giordano Bruno: An Introduction*, 75.

¹²² Weber, *Felsefe Tarihi: Felsefe, Metafizik ve Bilim*, 40.

All in all, people have questioned the meaning of their existence throughout the history. While doing it, they left some traces to time and place. Especially, archaic images became effective in rising ethno-symbolic elements. In this context, Ararat is an archaic image referring a certain historical geography in terms of *archetopia*.

5.2 The love of two mountains

In this section, I will try to find answers to the question of what the views of Kurds are specifically on Ararat and generally on Serhat region through my interviews with two Kurdish artists, Mem Ararat, and Mirazê Sipanî. Mem Ararat's song *Evina Du Çiya*, the love of two mountains in English, the love story of the Ararat and Sipan Mountains and how they are personified will be analyzed through the concepts of archetype and *archetopia*. I will also emphasize that similar archetypal and mythic elements exist in both works by quoting from the famous novelist of Turkish literature Yaşar Kemal's *Ağrı Dağı Efsanesi*. In analyzing the archetypes in both works, I will benefit from the archetypal theory of criticism of the silk skies and Carl Gustav Jung.¹²³ I will often refer to the monomitos plot, mythic fiction and archetypal elements in the novel of the Ağrı Mountain. If the personification of a mountain and its divinity in the form of human image can be considered as archetypal in terms of giving ideological references, we can say that the ideological substructure and social memory personified a mountain through certain icons and mythic elements in the texts. Okay so what do we think about abstracting the archetypes from the space? Is it possible to read the Ararat as an *archetopia* via the ideological message and the reflected social memory in the mentioned artistic works? In this section, I will often emphasize the concept of

¹²³ Jung, *İnsan Ruhuna Yöneliş*.

archetopia. I will try to clarify at which points the notion of archetype and *archetopia* intersect and replace each other. I will also indicate the effects of icons on state, power and society relations. I will try to assess the rituals of the Zoroastrianism and Ezidi faith through works and narratives.

First of all, let us enter the topic with the narrative of Mem Ararat. The relevant section of our interview is as follows.

Mustafa İşçier: Do you have a meaning and a story to use the Mem Ararat pseudonym? I am very curious to know the story of taking the name Ararat. I know you are from Mardin. I wonder if your roots are in Ağrı?

Mem Ararat: You know, Mem is the hero of a Kurdish epic. When I was a kid my loving relatives called me Memê, or Memo. Mem is my real name, actually. Of course, my name is written as Mehmet on the records. However, nobody calls me Mehmet in my daily life. In the official sense, everything in this country is Turk. As for the name Ararat, I am a mountain Kurd and I grew up, I spent my childhood in the countryside and in the village. My relationship with soil, animals and plants has always been good. Even now, when I hear happiness, the people I love and the view of a green mountain village come to my mind. If I could, I would surely live in a mountain village, producing everything by my own hands. In fact, this request for me is a luxury, unfortunately. Social problems do not leave time for our imagination. In this country, our time has been stolen for us to deal with our own small problems. Yes, I am a mountain Kurd and Ararat is the name of an unusual mountain in our geography. So, maybe.

Mustafa İşçier: I listen to your songs with interest. In the context of the question I asked above, could you tell the story of your beautiful song “Evîna Du Çiyayan”? What does it mean for you?

Mem Ararat: Evîna Du Çiya was on the album Kurdîka. Kurdîka is actually a story I wrote. Evîna Du Çiya is also a part of the story. If time, place and conditions allow, one day I want to include that story in a book. Sîpan and Ararat represent two lovers in the story. I have Ezidi origins. My ancestors migrated from the Shengal region to Mardin after the previous Edict (Exile). We still have relatives there, and unfortunately, we no longer know each other, since we did not see them long time. My parents are Sunni Muslims. But we lived with the Ezidis. We had very close relations with the people living in the Vireşehir, Urfa, who still belong to Ezidi faith. We have seen them as if our relatives. They have embraced us too. I don't know why. I have always felt close to Armenians, Alevis and other minorities. Maybe it is the reason why I chose the name Ararat,

as Ararat is an Armenian name. Kurds call Ararat Mountain “Çiyayê Agirî” or “Glîdax Kürt”.

Mustafa İşçier: In the song, the love of Ararat and Sipan mountains is processed. What does this region mean to you?

Mem Ararat: In my story, Sipan and Ararat represent a woman and a man who fall in love with each other. After a concert I was returning from Bazîd (Doğubayazıt). When I passed Patnos and took the road to Xelat (Ahlat) Sîpan Mountain was standing in front of me. Along the way, I felt the memories that I forgot a long time ago, were reviving. I swear I'd lived there before. I don't have superstitious beliefs, but I have thought that a strong feeling may be an extension of the truth that has not yet come into being. Maybe my great-great-grandfather or my great-great-grandmother's memories passed on to me. I know on side of me belongs there. Sometimes you like a place or a person so that you can embrace its past. (Interview with Mem Ararat, Appendix, 4)

As can be seen in the narrative of Mem Ararat, the mountains of Ararat and Sipan represent two people in love with each other. In the following sections, I will present the original version of the song and its English translation in comparison with the section of Yaşar Kemal's *Ağrı Dağı Efsanesi*.

5.2.1 Archetypes and archetopia in the Legend of Ağrı Mountain

First of all, let us explain the notion of heroic archetypal, conceived by structuralist literary critic Carl Gustav Jung. The archetypal criticism, which is fundamentally structuralist in its view as individuals and images, symbols, situations and event patterns, is the essence of the elements in literary texts and tries to uncover a series of immortal archetypes that affect and deeply address people since the ancient times. Archetypal criticism argues that the first examples are repeated in narratives with partial differences, the origins of archetypes should be searched in mythos and primitive rituals, and literature is the expression of archetypes; the author tries to solve the myth of the text that he used without realizing it. This theory follows from Gustav Carl Jung's view that

the myths belong to the common consciousness of the human race. The archetypes modellings of Jung are called the hero archetype, phase archetype or monomitos. Monomitos is a cyclical time composed of three stages. These are the stages such as leaving the hero's house, living a series of adventures and returning home.¹²⁴ In this context, if we examine the novel of the Legend of Ağrı Mountain, the phase of leaving the house and escape is as follows: Ahmet will make a series of journeys following his horse as a fate; Firstly, he will move away from the outer self and will leave home and village, he will make a journey towards the inner self, the subconscious, the inner world, and the social unconscious. Ahmet, who escaped from the danger of Mahmud Khan, will take shelter to the people of Ağrı Mountain. Second stage is ride with a prize, Kır At: Ahmet takes the horse away from his house three times and accepts the horse that comes back in the third. Although he does not know the Han, who threatened him, he does not break the doctrine; therefore, he passes the honor test successfully. Third stage is "Return and Surrender." Ahmet Concerns about the damage Han will inflict on other innocent people, Ahmet sought to surrender himself and gives the horse back, so Ahmet wants Mahmut Khan not do them something by tradition. Together with Musa Bey who convinced him to return, Ahmet were taken into the dungeon of the Palace as soon as they returned.¹²⁵

If we review the approaches of the other archetypal critical theorists, Joseph Campbell classifies the hero's three-staged adventure as separation (finding the object), quiz (journey to the underworld) and return (achieving the result with success). Northrop Frye, one of the constructivist critics, developed archetypal criticism around mythos

¹²⁴ Ibid., 75-78.

¹²⁵ Zariç, *Ağrıdağı Efsanesi Romanında Mitik ve İdeolojik Yapı*, 61.

theory. According to Frye, there is a system in the history of literature functioning according to a number of laws, and there are four basic types in literature. These species can be matched with the myths of the seasons.¹²⁶ Axel Olrik, who attempts to identify epic laws in myths as archetypal critics place the literary text at the center, tries to identify the roles and functions of tales and they are included in the class of structuralist critics like Lord Raglan who tries to determine the behavior patterns of the hero in the folk epics. Archetypal critics also point to a number of universal principles in narratives, like other Structuralist critics, that derive from species and which, independently of the author, allude to works. Archetypal Criticism treats each literary text as mythology, with its first-instance reflections. In the narratives, heroes can form an archetype; “anima us,” animus and many other archetypes; works called realistic can also be found hidden in ‘human images’.¹²⁷ In Mem Ararat’s song, Evina Du Çiya, Yaşar Kemal took advantage of many mythic symbols and an archetypal image in the novel *Ağrı Dağı Efsanesi*. ‘The archetypal image / primordial image, in other words the symbol ket, is called up archetypal image / primordial image to the form of consciousness that reflects its meaning and function to some extent by making the archetype perceptible. The symbol is both the product and the expression of the archetype.’¹²⁸

In line with the theoretical framework mentioned above, let's look at the lyrics of Mem Ararat's song “Evina du çiya.” Both the English and the Kurdish version are as follows: I said, “I am Ararat, lonely and deserted.” You said, “I am Sipan, snow-capped and marine” “My snow melted waiting on you.” “Let me be your blues, let me be your

¹²⁶ Moran, Edebiyat Kuramları ve Eleştirisi, 219-225.

¹²⁷ Gökeri, *Arketiplere Dayanan Yeni Bir İnceleme Yönteminin Tanıtılarak İngiliz ve Türk Edebiyatında Bazı Romans ve Epik Niteliğinde Yapıtlara Uygulanması*. (Unpublished PhD Dissertation), 18-23.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 12.

tears.”¹²⁹ As can be seen, the Ararat and Sipan Mountains represent two people in love: the two mountains are personalized and have become the subject of a love story, in which both mountains have been transformed into archetypes, which symbolizes two lovers. There is a similar situation in Yaşar Kemal’s novel *Ağrı Dağı Efsanesi*. For example, Mountain: The Mount Ağrı, which is described as a human image representing a person with anger, is often projected through the art of similitude in the novel, and Ağrı mountain moves emotionally like a person.¹³⁰ Mount Ağrı represents the public’s anger that has accumulated for centuries: “If Ağrı’s head gets angry, he fights the world.”¹³¹ The hero of the novel, Gülbahar, will compare Ahmet to Ağrı mountain. Gülbahar saw Ahmet at the bottom of the dungeon deep well. He was walking like a mountain, ripping off every step, heavy, imposing, male.¹³² As seen in the novel of the legend of Ağrı Mountain, topography has been personalized. Sometimes the character of the novel is associated with the Ağrı Mountain. In the light of all these examples, we can say that in the works, the topography that is personalized through art of similitude is actually a mythological reflection of historical geography and social memory. It is the expression of a minority typology in the shadow of the dominant power. In short, it refers to the notion of *archetopia*, which defines an archaic image representing a certain historical geography beside the concept of archetypes.

¹²⁹ For original Kurdish lyrics, see <https://kurtcesarkisozu.com/2016/01/mem-ararat-evina-du-ciya-sozleri-iki-dagin-aski.html>

¹³⁰ Zariç, *Ağrıdağı Efsanesi Romanında Mitik ve İdeolojik Yapı*, 64.

¹³¹ Kemal, *Ağrı Dağı Efsanesi*, 16.

¹³² Ibid., 34.

5.2.2 Ideology and mentality of Zoroastrian Revolution in the Legend of Ağrı Mountain

There are many references to the Zoroastrian belief in the novel. According to legend, the first fire in human history was found at the top of the Ağrı Mountain. In this sense, the main character of the novel, Ahmet, is the first man, who burns the fire at the top of the Ağrı and achieves the impossible in this sense. According to the legend, it is impossible to go to the top of the mountain of Ağrı and no one can return from the top of the mountain alive, because the mountain of Ağrı is a God. If we give examples of the novel to the situation, Ahmet conveys the situation; so, the horse came to it and stopped at the door. So that's what God said. this girl and horse are the gift of God, Ağrı. You need to know its value. Gülbahar was a breathtaking, tang as Ağrı flower, fresh and healthy.¹³³ In these sentences, there is a reference to the fact that the most sacred fire in Zoroastrianism is the fire between God Ahura Mazda and people. In this context, God's Divine Ağrı, which gave him the horse as a gift was the source of the first fire according to legend. In the ideological substructure of the novel, blacksmith Hüso and Ahmet are symbols of Zoroastrianism and Demirci Kawa Rumi: after that, some people, the relatives of the palace said to Demirci Hüso "Firemaster." "Religion enemy! What's with you if we are united or not! You are a worshiper of a fire."¹³⁴ The blacksmith did not hear what was said behind him. Rom and Mahmud Khan who is the only representative of the aggressive action field, cruel, discriminating, ruthless and not knowing tradition, were mentioned with prayers off is one of the Marxist ideological reflections in the novel.¹³⁵

¹³³ Ibid., 42.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 43.

¹³⁵ Zariç, *Ağrıdağı Efsanesi Romanında Mitik ve İdeolojik Yapı*, 66-67.

5.3 Ezidis culture and faith

In this section, I will present cultural motifs from Ezidi culture and beliefs through an interview with the Kurdish artist Mirazê Sipanî, who is a member of Ezidi faith. How is the Ezidi identity formed? What are the similarities and differences between Ezidism, Zoroastrianism and Islamic faith? What are the religious and social characteristics that distinguish Ezidi identity and belief from other cultures? I will try to answer these questions in this section. In particular, I will often pay attention to the grave visits in the Ezidi culture, the importance they attach to their ancestors' graves, and endogamic marriages. I will historicize the Ezidi culture and belief system through the narratives of Mem Ararat and Mirazê Sipanî within the scope of cultural genocide notion.

First of all, I would like to tell you about the background of my meeting with Mirazê Sipanî. Our interview was a part of our cycling tour to Armenia. I met Mirazê Sipanî at Yerevan University through my friend who worked on Dengbej culture. My friend's name is Osman. He was born in the Kurtalan district of Siirt. He has been living in Yerevan for almost five years. On June 15, 2016, when we went to Yerevan with our bikes, our friend Osman welcomed us. Our trip was progressing as planned. We came to Yerevan on the predicted time. On June 16, 2016, there would be a commemoration event in the Elegez region, where the majority of the Ezidi population lived within Armenia. Osman would guide us. The next day, we left our bike to the hotel and headed to Elegez. After an hour-long journey, we arrived at Elegez, near the Aparan district. According to the information given by Osman, the Ezidi Kurds, who lived in the Elegez region, gathered in June every year together to visit the graves of their ancestors. We also participated in such a commemoration event thanks to our friend Osman. We got

the opportunity to meet Mirazê Sipanî. The relevant section of our interview is as follows.

5.3.1 Participation in the remembrance event and welcome

Mirazê Sipanî: The Kurds in Armenia are very happy with our brother Osman. He is doing everything that he can to develop the Kurdish culture here. We have been friends for a long time.

Mustafa Îşçier: I come to this village and I come to do an interview. The man says: But first of all, you need to see the traditions of the Ezidi villages close to the village of Textebi, and today is the day of commemorating the dead of the Ezidis, not only our dead, but also in Armenia, especially in Iraq and Georgia, and Syria. In Shengal, we are commemorating the dead all over the world.

Mustafa Îşçier: First, could you introduce yourself?

Mirazê Sipanî: My name is Mirazê Cemal. I was born in 1945 in the village of Rya-Taza near the Elegez region. I belong to Ezidi faith. I am writing poems with the name of Mirazê Sipanî. I worked as a journalist for many years. I am the permanent member of the Kurdish writers and journalists association in Armenia.

Mustafa Îşçier: Is there a particular reason why you use the Mirazê Sipanî pseudonym? Sipan mountain is a mountain located in the eastern part of Turkey. Is your origin based on that area?

Mirazê Sipanî: In fact, our full origin is based on the town of Duhok in Northern Iraq. We belong to the Behdinan tribe. From the Behdinan region, we migrated to Muş. There is no political reason for our migration. Our ancestor may have been fighting for a sheep or a chicken. We are a nomadic culture. We settled in Qundehsaz village in Muş. This village is located at the foot of the Sipan Mountain. We lived in this village for half a century. Then we migrated to Kars. We settled here in the village of Beyremi.

Mustafa Îşçier: Was there a reason for your immigration to Kars?

Mirazê Sipanî: Again, there is no political reason for our migration. Family is a personal matter. There is a girl kidnapping issue. A member of our tribe has killed a Muslim teenager. Her father also killed both her daughter and Muslim boy. For this reason, there was a fight between the Muslims and Ezidies in the village. Ali Ağa, one of the prominent figures of the village, tried to placate both sides and he was a mediator. First, they wanted a blood price to be given to the family of a young Muslim by our tribe. Then they wanted to confiscate our sheep. Ezidi's father paid the blood price. The Ezidis left their sheep and cattle

and left the village. On the sides of Erzurum crossing the river Aras, Ali Ağa and his men stopped the Ezidi tribe. Ali Ağa said: My brothers don't go. We have no eye on your property. You are our brother. Take all your sheep and cattle. Come back to our village. He said we should live together. Our tribe, despite Ali ağa's insistence did not return. They went on their way. Our Behdinans are very stubborn. In Kurdish, we say "Serhish." Returning to Ali ağa again, he was a very good man, although he was a Muslim. He did not make any distinction between Kurds, Ezidis and Armenians. He was fair to all of them. If you say how you know them, our elders, who were tribesmen, would tell us everything about our past on long winter evenings in Elegez. We used to listen them with our ears. What our elders lived seemed like a story.

If we come to the Mirazê Sipanî pseudonym, yes, my origins are based on the Sipan region. The story of our ancestors living in the village of Qundehsaz are in our memory. This should have an effect on my choice of the Sipanî pseudonym. (Interview with Mirazê Sipanî, Appendix, 5)

As it is seen in the narrative, there is an internal marriage system in Ezidi faith and culture. Ezidi society structure is introverted. The social structure consists of certain layers. There is a hierarchy that we can call the caste system. The fact that Ezidi culture has such a sociological background has a relationship with the belief system. For this reason, it will be useful to look at the origins of Ezidi identity and Ezidi faith in order to conceptualize cultural renocide notion.

5.3.2 The origin of the Ezidi faith

According to many scholars, the Ezidi faith has a close relationship with Zoroastrianism. Both belief systems are of Indian origin. Some of his religious teachings are similar. Fire and sun are sacred in both faiths.¹³⁶ However, according to a different view, the Ezidis are called as Yazidis. According to this view, the Yazidis are actually Muslims. After the death of Sheikh Adi Bin Musafir, who theorized the belief system of Ezidism in the 12th century, the principles of the Ezidi belief were changed. Due to the geographical

¹³⁶ Yalkut, *Melek Tavusun Halkı: Ezidiler*, 103.

conditions, the Ezidis living in the mountainous Sincar region of Iraq have become a faraway society. They formed an inconsistent religious doctrine by blending the Zoroastrianism and Christian teachings of the ancient religions with the Ezidi faith. First of all, in the context of the teachings of Zoroastrianism and Islamism, it is only up to a point to explain Ezidism. Though the views of religious scholars are partly true, they are far from objectivity. There is no scientific basis. It is based on various pieces of evidence and subjective judgments. Within the framework of social science theories, it will be more objective to look at how the Ezidis describe themselves and how Ezidism is named.¹³⁷ The term Yezidi refers to an event that poses a problem in Sunni-Alevi relations. The Umayyad caliph, who both the Sunnis and the Alevis had cursed in history, recalled Karbala massacres as “Yezidi.”¹³⁸ In the Yezidi tradition, the caliph is considered the renewal of the Yezid religion. From this point on, some researchers base Ezidism on counter-movements and teachings during the Umayyads. But the Ezidis strongly reject this approach. There is only naming similarity between Yazid bin Muawiyah and Yezid bin Azidiyan, the figure of the Ezidi tradition. the Ezidis claim that the name of Yazid bin Azidiyan is not a real historical personality, but a mythical folk hero.¹³⁹ Using the word Yazidi usually brings about conceptual confusion. As a matter of fact, I frequently emphasize the name Ezidi as it is understood from my discussions with Mem Ararat and Mirazê Sipanî. With caution, both narrators use the name “Ezidi” in describing themselves and their family origins rather than “Yazidi”. In particular, the word Yazidi is often used in western sources. For this reason, I wrote the

¹³⁷ Şakire Çelik, *Yezidilerin Yaşam Pratikleri ve Kimlik Algısı*, 163-164.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 84.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 85-86.

word Yazidi in English as Ezidi, which corresponds to Ezidi, based on the original state of the narrative.

If we look at Ezidis' geographical and historical perspective, we see the area they live intensively as communities in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Georgia and we see that they live in a scattered way in Armenia. They were particularly hostile to the European countries, such as Switzerland, France, Belgium, and Germany, since they were subjected to Daesh attacks. The mother tongue of Ezidis is Kurdish.¹⁴⁰ Particularly, they live intensively in the center and villages of the town of Şeyxan, Sincar and Duhok in Armenia and Iraq.¹⁴¹ In the light of the sources I have applied, analyzing Mirazê Sipanî's narrative, Mirazê Sipanî is from the Duhok town, which is located in the borders of today's Iraqi Kurdish administration, where the Ezidis live heavily. His mother tongue is Kurdish too. The narrative of the source coincides with the historical reality in this respect.

On the other hand, the use of nickname "Sipanî" by narrator is not a coincidence. Mirazê Sipanî's ancestors had lived in the village of Qundehsaz near Sipan mountain before migrating to Armenia. As stated by himself, his family origin has a deterministic role in taking nickname "Sipanî." This is a clear indication of the relationship between historical geography and collective memory in terms of geographical genocide.

If we come to the Mirazê Sipanî pseudonym, yes, my origins are based on the Sipan region. The story of our ancestors living in the village of Qundehsaz are in our memory. This should have an effect on my choice of the Sipanî pseudonym. (Interview with Mirazê Sipanî, Appendix, 5)

¹⁴⁰ Adsay, *Kültürel Sınırların Edilgen Taşıyıcıları, Kadınlar: Viranşehir Ezidileri Örneği*, (Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi), 1.

¹⁴¹ Açıkyıldız, *The Ezidis: The History of a Community, Culture, and Religion*, 33.

5.3.3 Marriage tradition in Ezidi culture and Ezidi identity

Identity is the name of a person or group to define their own characteristics. It enables people to position their own characteristics between the other person or group.¹⁴² In this regard, the Ezidis did not define themselves through their Kurdish identity. In this dilemma, besides the difference of faith, it is because the massacre of the Ezidis in the period of Ottoman Empire was exposed by the Muslim Kurdish tribe, Bedirxanzade.¹⁴³ There is a similar situation in the person's narrative I interviewed. In particular, Mirazê Sipanî describes himself in Ezidi faith. He frequently emphasizes the distinction between Muslim Kurdish and Ezidi in his narrative.

Mustafa İşçier: Was there a reason for your immigration to Kars?

Mirazê Sipanî: Again, there is no political reason for our migration. Family is a personal matter. There is a girl kidnapping issue. A member of our tribe has killed a Muslim teenager. Her father also killed both her daughter and Muslim boy. For this reason, there was a fight between the Muslims and Ezidies in the village. Ali Ağa, one of the prominent figures of the village, tried to placate both sides and he was a mediator. First, they wanted a blood price to be given to the family of a young Muslim by our tribe. Then they wanted to confiscate our sheep. Ezidi's father paid the blood price. The Ezidis left their sheep and cattle and left the village. On the sides of Erzurum crossing the river Aras, Ali Ağa and his men stopped the Ezidi tribe. Ali Ağa said: My brothers, don't go. We have no eye on your property. You are our brother. Take all your sheep and cattle. Come back to our village. He said we should live together. Our tribe, despite Ali Ağa's insistence did not return. They went on their way. Our Behdinans are very stubborn. In Kurdish, we say "Serhish." Returning to Ali Ağa again, he was a very good man, although he was a Muslim. He did not make any distinction between Kurds, Ezidis and Armenians. He was fair to all of them. If you say how you know them, our elders, who were tribesmen, would tell us everything about our past on long winter evenings. We used to listen them with our ears. What our elders lived seemed like a story. (Interview with Mirazê Sipanî, Appendix, 5)

¹⁴² Bilgin, *Kimlik İnşası*, 11.

¹⁴³ Özcoşar, *Bir Yüzyıl Bir Sancak Bir Cemaat 19.Yüzyılda Mardin Süryanileri*, 257-258.

In my opinion, this distinction is clearly demonstrated. But here we need to clarify. Mirazê Sipanî did not use hostile language for Ali Ağa. He said that although he was a Muslim, he was a good person. Here, there is a reference to the Muslim Kurds over the difference of faith. There is an affirmation towards Ali Ağa's personality.

Again, in order to see how the Ezidis describe themselves over the difference of faith, it is useful to look at the rules of the Ezidi faith and the rules of marriage. Ezidis are an introverted society. The basic rule of asking for girl demanding and marriage traditions is based on the endogamy meaning inner marriage. According to this rule, an Ezidi can only marry with an Ezidi. Thus, the Ezidis claim that if Ezidi girl is escaped by her muslim lover, both of them need to be killed according to Ezidi faith.¹⁴⁴ In other words, the caste system, which is based on strict rules, is a set of rules, which, in addition to religious requirements, are created to keep the Ezidi's social order alive and the eternal existence of the Ezidi identity forever.¹⁴⁵ Ezidis think that they continued to exist owing to the rigorous application of the internal marriage system. The tendency of a social group to differentiate is based on the belief that it is superior to other groups.¹⁴⁶ In this sense, the Ezidis see themselves as a popularly superior people chosen by God. For this reason, they do not accept the sin of the blood of another community to interfere with their own generation. The girl kidnapping in Mirazê Sipanî's narrative is the clearest indication of the cultural renocide notion based on endogenic system we are trying to conceptualize. In the narrative, a Muslim youth is abducting a girl, member of Ezidi faith. As a result, Ezidi father kills both his daughter and the young Muslim. In this context, the sociological framework of the narrative and Ezidi beliefs overlap.

¹⁴⁴ Allison, *Ezidi Sözlü Kültürü*, 68.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 25.

¹⁴⁶ Bilgin, *Kimlik İnşası*, 110.

Finally, I want to underline the importance of the Ezidis grave visits and the ancestral culture. In Ezidi faith, it is not possible for a person to be included in the Ezidi community afterward. Anyone with Ezidi faith must fulfill their beliefs. In this context, there are some ceremonies considered sacred in the congregation. In this context, the life of a Yazidi contains ceremonies to be admitted to his association which won him the identity of Ezidi.¹⁴⁷ The most important of these is to visit the graves of their ancestors. Ezidis think that a dead person ultimately breaks away from his body and that his body is absent. But they argue that the same soul will come to life again in another body. In this sense, the ancestral culture is important for the Ezidis. The grave visit in Elegez, which I mentioned at the beginning of the section, is an indication of a commemorative practice based on tradition, custom, and identity within the framework of cultural genocide notion. In the aforementioned commemoration event, the Ezidis recall the deceased ancestors at the top of their graves.

Mirazê Sipanî: The man says: But first of all, you need to see the traditions of the Ezidi villages close to the village of Textebi, and today is the day of commemorating the dead of the Ezidis, not only our dead, but also in Armenia, especially in Iraq and Georgia, and Syria. In Shengal, we are commemorating the dead all over the world. (Interview with Mirazê Sipanî, Appendix, 5)

¹⁴⁷ Gennep, *Übergangsriten*, 55.

CHAPTER 6

THE ANALYSIS OF A SHORT STORY

IN TERMS OF POSTMODERN HISTORIOGRAPHY

First of all, let's get to know Veysel Çamlıbel, who is the writer of the short story titled *Haylo Siyaro Weylo Gundo*.

Mustafa İşçier: Could you briefly introduce yourself?

Veysel Çamlıbel: My name is Veysel Çamlıbel. I was born in Ağrı, Doğubayazıt in 1940. I am an investigative writer.

Mustafa İşçier: How did you start writing?

Veysel Çamlıbel: During my university years, I mostly worked on the field of agricultural engineering. I graduated from Erzurum Atatürk University as an agricultural engineer. Until 1980 I took part in various civil society foundations and political organizations. After 1980 I moved away from social and political turmoil to explore myself. At this point, I can say that my writing adventure began. During this period, I focused mostly on learning and researching.

Mustafa İşçier: I believe you are interested in stories especially?

Veysel Çamlıbel: Yes. Most of my works are of stories, especially short stories.

Mustafa İşçier: You are producing in Kurdish, right? Most of your works that I have seen were in Kurdish.

Veysel Çamlıbel: Yes. I have written many of my works in Kurdish. My mother language is Kurdish, and my works are harvests of a life experience. Kurdish is also a living language. In addition to my Kurdish works, I also have books written in Turkish called "*Kavalımın Sesindeki Büyü*" and "*Sabır Taşı Çatlamadan Kürtler*"

Mustafa İşçier: I would like to tell you that I read your story "*Haylo Siyaro Weylo Gundo*" with great interest. I especially found the story which is entitled "*Photograph*" quite interesting. There are no photographs in that chapter. But the story depicts a photo that does not exist. Does the photograph in question have a story?

Veysel Çamlıbel: First of all, thank you very much for enjoying my storybook. There are many stories from everyday lives. Of course, "*Photograph*" also has a background. Hrant Dink was murdered in the years when I was working on it. This sorrowful incident is mentioned in my story. But it is another event that actually prompted me to write it. Inspired by a photo in my sister's house in Istanbul, I wrote this story.

Mustafa İşçier: What was the photograph about? Can you tell me more?

Veysel Çamlıbel: My sister showed me an old photograph in something similar to a jewel box. In the photo, in an old ruined place, there were a few girls. There was a little girl with old clothes on sitting by herself in the faded photograph. My sister pointed out the little girl and said that she is my mother-in-law. In 1918, many of her family members were deported from Ağrı and were exposed to massacred. A few girls in the photo and my sister's mother-in-law survived. Later, a Kurdish family adopted and raised these girls. My sister's mother-in-law was also one of them. All of these children were converted to Islam. My sister's mother-in-law was named as Emine. When she was old enough, she got married to my sister's father-in-law. My sister's husband learned that his mother was of Islamized Armenians a lot later. When he first found out, he was very surprised. Many members of the family were also keeping this secret. He told my sister about his mother with Armenian origin before he died. And he left her photo in the jewelry box I mentioned at the beginning of my speech as a souvenir. His desire was that my sister was not giving the photo to anyone. That is why I couldn't put the picture in my story. My sister did not give me the photograph even though I did insist. She told about her husband's last will.

Mustafa İşçier: I understand. So, the Xwededa in your story should be representing your brother-in-law?

Veysel Çamlıbel: Yes, in a sense. I can say that I built a story by linking it with everyday events. (Veysel Çamlıbel, Appendix, 6)

Through my interview with Veysel Çamlıbel, I will talk about the primary source, which is more about Islamized Armenians life stories exposed to 1915-1918 deportations and mass violence near Ağrı, Doğubayazıt. As stated of Veysel Çamlıbel's book named *Haylo Siyaro Weylo Gundo* under the title of "Fotoğraf" the chapter of the book is more about the life stories of Islamized Armenian young girl. Here there is an Islamized Armenian young girl and her girlfriends, whose photograph survived from Armenian deportations. In this story, it is told that the family members of this Armenian young girl were killed during deportations and she was given to a Kurdish landowning family as a bride converting to Islam. The story reflects the historical picture of tragic position through 1915 events within the socio-cultural, political and economic

relationships between Armenian and Kurdish people, but this event is merely portrayed by the story writer. That is, in the story, there is no photograph. Clearly, this fiction made me surprised. For a long time, I thought about why the author did such a fiction while writing his story. Then, I asked him why a particular photograph does not exist in his story, in spite of being entitled photograph. He also told me that, the Armenian young girl whose photograph was mentioned in the story belonged to mother in law of his grand sister, so she safely preserved her photograph. Furthermore, his grand sister couldn't give himself that photograph, although he urgently wanted to take its copy. In this regard, my basic aim will be to analyze the relationship between photographic trace and referred object. I will try to understand whether the absence or presence of a photograph is more effective in persuading the audience. Also, I will indicate how genocide narrative was designed in the text without any photograph. Besides that, there will be some basic questions about when we consider the tragic position in the story, what kind of a representation and rhetoric involved in a textual fiction in the name of persuading the audience. In this way, I will be showing the role that a short story played in representing a disaster within the scope of artistic genocide notion. To better conceptualize the relationship between photographic trace and referred objects by the aim of interpreting some rhetoric and representations in the text, I will make extensive use of Chaudhary and Roland Barthes books as secondary sources. On the other hand, I will tackle with some major questions about how story's characters, their identities, and lifestyles were operated in the text. In the story, are there no traces of local memory or national historiography in line with official or subaltern ideologies to put subjects concerned with identity issue and local memory in the context of the research paper, I will benefit from Leyla Neyzi's books as a secondary source. Besides all that, in terms

of political imagination and regarding the other's pain, my focus will be on identifying with traumatic position and on how any tragic instance might have been aestheticized or politicized in this frame story. In order for me to indicate this dead-block, I think, it would be better to benefit from Susan Sontag's *Regarding the Pain of Others* and Azoulay's book *Civil Discourse and Political Imagination*.¹⁴⁸

First of all, if we briefly take a look at the characters in the story, we encounter two basic characters in continuous dialogue throughout the story. These are Kamil Bey and his sister, Zeytun Hanım. The story begins when Kamil Bey visits her sister, Zeytun Hanım, in İstanbul. There are a breakfast table and a family portrait at the beginning of the story. Kamil Bey's talking about the photographs hanging on the walls of the house is the starting point of the story. In the light of the statements of Kamil Bey, we are informed about the history of Şamil Efendi family. Şamil Efendi and his wife Gülistan is from a noble family. They are a wealthy family. They belong to one of the city's leading tribes. Ms. Zeytun is the eldest daughter of this family. Kamil Bey is the youngest child. The Xwededa character is the husband of Zeytun. Four girls and two children were born from the marriage of Zeytun and Xwededa. In the story, we learn from a phone call of Mrs. Zeytin that the name of one of the sons is Heja. We see that Heja went abroad because of a political reason and lived abroad as a political refugee.

6.1 Historiography and morality for historians

This section will be focusing on the post-modern challenge to historiography. To put post-modern theory in a historical context, I think it will be better to have benefited from

¹⁴⁸ Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 11-13.

Richard J. Evans book *In Defense of History* as a secondary source while historicizing the conceptual framework.

First of all, let me talk about the post-modern challenge to history-writing in line with language, the way of understanding objectivity, and interpretation. Post-modern historiography is a challenge, which the historians involved between the years of 1980 and 1990. Post-modern theory analyzes narrative and discursive fiction of the text through linguistic turn. As a matter of fact, language is related to nothing, but only to itself. At this point, there is a dialogue between historians and their texts.

As follows Richard Evans' example:

Paul De Man: Literary theorist founded constructionist literary theory. In this theory, we see an idea of the authorial attempt. He was an academic, wrote pieces about Nazi German supporting Nazi policies which came out in 1980s Evans underlines how this fits author intend how author intend does not have response of thinking how the text will be interpreted.¹⁴⁹

The idea either that is a direct or transparent relationship both his and text that you go to archive and feet are revealed is naive equally naive the idea that his found unproblematically accepts everything he sees in archive.

In this section, so as to contextualize a historical fiction in the text, I will attempt to deal with some major questions of how history should be written and what is the measure of being moral for any historian in accordance with postmodern theory.

Therefore, we have the need to test provincial and uncertain characteristics of interpretation in historical writing. In this way, now, we shall try finding a fiction as similar to Paul De Man whether the story of Veysel Çamlıbel has authorial attempt or not. His storybook has been published by Peri Printing-house in 2009. At the beginning

¹⁴⁹ Evans, *Tarihin Savunusu*, 130-133.

of the story, as the main character, Kamil is portrayed in person with physical characteristics and atmosphere in which he sits down at the living room. More importantly, the mother of the groom, Xwededa whose Kamil later informed of his mother with Armenian origin is fostered via a photograph, which the mother of Xwededa, Zeytun had shown him: “In this photograph, there is a poor woman without anyone and she likens a birth with a broken wing.”¹⁵⁰ Also, for a long while, it is told about Hrant Dink’s memories of Kamil, who picks up the *Agos* newspaper through commemorating Hrant’s death and Kurdo-Armenian relationships at the level of local memory. Especially, this picture gives us some major clues about how the story has an authorial intention. It is clear that fiction was based on having empathy for the mass violence against Armenians whose Kurdish political movement identified with Armenian victims of violence as similar pains, experienced in the past.

Actually, we see that influence of the same sub-consciousness is making itself more and more increasingly felt on a textual fiction of the frame-story by Veysel Çamlıbel. For example, During the story, Kamil is characterized as a person, who has a humanitarian perspective on social issues, but this humanism is based more on the religiosity than a universal notion. It is undoubtedly open marker of this position, that when Kamil firstly heard of his groom, Xwededa’s mother with Armenian origin, he surprised this event and then, he moved like other family members in a horror to be possible if all everyone learned about this event. It is fear to be otherized and excluded by the other people.

¹⁵⁰ Çamlıbel, *Haylo Siyaro Weylo Gundo*, 177.

“gelekî kevn û zebûyî, fotografêk rengavêtî... Di fotografê de jineke belengaz; çawa bêjim, wek teyreke per û bask çikestî, yekê belengaz û gelekî bedbîn û xemgîn... Kamil wê fotograf ji destê dayika Zeytûn girt û lê meze kir, “Ev kêye, bi rastî kê ye?”, tiçtekî jê demexist. Dayika Hecî, ji Kamil re got; “Hela baş lê binihêre, bala xwe bidê.” Kamil demekê bala xwe ser wî fotografê girt, jê tiçtekî fam nekir. Lê li fotografê, jineke stûxar, per û bask lê çikestî, feqîr û belangaz, rûxemgîn... Gelo ew kê bû? Kamil bi xwe xwe mijûl bû, ser sekînî...”

Here, on one hand, there is a Kurdish subconsciously political way to identify with Armenian victims of mass violence in the name of regarding the other's pain. On the other hand, there is a particular way to absorb Armenian question into Islamist and Universalist notions with regard to humanistic rituals for cultural integrity and common past. In this context, I think it will be better to evaluate this dilemma within Azoulay's concept of "political imagination." Literally to put this term concerned with anesthetization of any tragic instance in a historical context, Azoulay focuses on how any traumatic position was aestheticized and politicized in a historical fiction and she tries analyzing how a civil discourse developed under condition of state-made-disaster by looking at a photograph of Ayshe al Kurd, who appears on Palestinian refugee problem in the Israeli state. Finally, she reaches the conclusion that political imagination is necessary for understanding how to imagine a civil discourse under the condition of state-made-disaster. And it is possible only if we think of existence beyond cultural boundaries away from the state-centric idea. What we imagine ourselves for a while as if we were a French ruler in 17th- century is a very good example to define the concept of "political imagination."¹⁵¹ There is a similar case for sad story of Xwededa's mother with Armenian origin too. Her family's exposure to mass-violence in 1918 and her conversion to Islam are aestheticized and politicized as a similar to Palestinian woman in Azoulay's notion of political imagination. Here, we observe that, there is an identification with regarding the pain of other as Susan Sontag points out.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Azoulay, *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography*, 1-5.

¹⁵² Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*.

6.2 Individual and local memory

In this part I will try to show how the individual and local memory is reflected onto conflicts and the identity crisis between story characters through a short story. The fact that Kamil and his family members keep a secret about Armenian origin of Xwededa's mother is actually a reflection of the local memory onto how Kurdish dominant identity repressed Armenian identity. As Leyla Neyzi stated in her book in the last thirty years in Turkey, especially after the slaughter of Hrant Dink, it has been started discussing on national history and personal memory narratives in society.¹⁵³ With the development of revisionist historiography, interest in exploring alternative identities has increased. Also, it felt in Turkey in 1980 after a dimension of globalization spread, increasing the use of mass media and social media have brought people closer. In the globalized world where information and experiences are shared, it has become easier to reach all kinds of information. Before 1980, it was a fact that a middle class had internalized the narrative of national history. After 1980, we see that both globalizations occurred both the narrative of national history in Turkey was questioned by new generation through revisionist historiography. In this context, there is a difference in public memory and individual memory narratives. The new generations also seek to explore alternative identities. At this point, the search for identity in the shadow of the narrative of national history stands out. Who am I? Where did I come from? Do I belong to Kurdish, Armenian, or any other ethnicity? These questions reflect the search for identity. In particular, after the murder of Hrant Dink, both the Armenians and those who were Armenian in their family's origin had a free environment to express themselves. As Leyla Neyzi points out, in the narrative of local and personal memory, the number of

¹⁵³ Neyzi, *Birbirimizle Konuşmak, Türkiye'de Kişisel Bellek Anlatıları*, 19.

people who stated that in most of the individual narratives in the middle and eastern Anatolian regions, where Armenians had lived intensely before 1915, first or second generations said that they were Armenians of their grandparents.¹⁵⁴ Going back to the story of Veysel Çamlıbel, we can see the similar identity search in Xwededa and in other family members. There is an Armenian identity in the shadow of the Kurdish hegemonic identity. Xwededa's reading of the *Agos* newspaper at the entrance of the story and making references to the massacre of the Hrant Dink reflects the free expression of Leyla Neyzi. In this context, the storybook was published in 2009. The section I will quote now is a summary of the process emphasized by Leyla Neyzi.

According to Kamil Bey's point of view the Armenian issue and his impression of Hrant Dink is as follows:

Kamil Haji told Zeytun about the Armenians. Kurds called them *gavur*: For example, there was Hrant Dink, one of the elite intellectuals who lived in Istanbul. He was a journalist, he published a newspaper called *Agos*, he was murdered no more than five years ago, the issue took a large part of the public opinion, and the murder was often mentioned before the murder of Hrant Dink, the Armenian issue was not so much in mind: look at the original Kurdish version of the story.¹⁵⁵

As Leyla Neyzi points out, there is a dichotomy between national historiography and local memory. While the Turkish government followed denialist politics on the mass violence against Armenian, unlike this policy, local society has a more objectivistic position about Armenian deprivation of national existence and socio-economic status in Anatolia through mass violence and relocation policies. For instance, Leyla Neyzi's

¹⁵⁴ Neyzi, *Birbirimizle Konuşmak, Türkiye'de Kişisel Bellek Anlatıları*, 15-16.

¹⁵⁵ Çamlıbel, *Haylo Siyaro Weylo Gundo*, 180.

"Kamil ji Hecî re bi gotineke kin qala Ermenan (ku Kurd ji wan re File dibêjin) kir, mesela Hrant Dînk ku ew rewşenbirê bijartî, li qStenbolê dijîya, rojname Agos derdixist, însanek zana, rojnamevanekî Ermen bû, çend salên dawîyê hat kuştin, ser kuştin jî mesele hat tapankirin, wê cînayet anî ser ziman, ser meseleyên fileyan sekînî. Hrant Dînk berê kuştina xwe psikolojîya nemisilmanan, ya Ermenan çawa bi cî û war didan ber çavan."

book *Birbirimizle Konuşmak*, talks about Zübeyde Hanım, who was a member of the Kurdish land-owning family from Van. She offers us all of the things, she heard of her grandfathers about Armenians living around Van. Before 1915, most Armenian people were living near Van and they were working as goldsmith and merchant here. Moreover, they were all leading a very much wealthy life as compared to the Muslim majority. Then, Armenian revolts broke out with Russian intrigue. Armenian committees killed thousands of Muslim people and burned their houses. In contrast, Muslim people of the city attempted to clean from Armenian rioters and plundered all Armenian properties on the city by instigating them and deporting from their motherland to other places. According to one legend, while Armenians migrated from Van, they committed all their properties to the ground for taking them back on their return to Van. During the interview, Leyla Neyzi observes that Zübeyde Hanım says in a horror to be possible if Armenians returned to their motherlands, they would take revenge from Muslim people on the city.¹⁵⁶

What Zübeyde Hanım mentioned in a fear to be possible if Armenians returned to their motherland is actually a clear indication of that Kurdish hegemony considers Eastern Anatolian region as a Kurdish motherland “Kurdistan.” Such a particular reaction is a product of the land issue as discussed in sub-section of the second chapter entitled “Armenian question in Kurdish press.” In other word, Kurdish perception on the Armenians is in attempt to see them as a threat to Kurdish existence and Kurdistan in Ottoman Kurdish newspapers from 1898 onward 1918.

¹⁵⁶ Neyzi, *Birbirimizle Konuşmak, Türkiyede Kişisel Bellek Anlatıları*, 59-61.

6.3 The analysis of a non-existing photograph in terms of postmodern theory

As I mentioned in my interview with Veysel Çamlıbel, despite the story titled photograph, there is no photograph in the book. It has only a depiction of the events. It is a very interesting situation. But this is not the first time. There is a similar situation in Roland Barthes' books, *Reality Effect* and *Camera Lucida*, creating a narrative over a non-existing photo. In fact, it reflects the character Xwededa's feelings and emotions about his mother's photo. I quote the relevant passage from Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*. It will help to express the case I mentioned.

If I love a photo, it bothers me, I cannot leave it easily. So, what do I do when I am with it? I look at it, like I would like to know more about the person it is representing. The face of my mother, lost in the depths of the Winter Garden, is obscure and pale. With the first impulse, "That is hers! She is really there! Here, finally!" I screamed. Now I want to know why and what it is made of her image, and to say - as required. I want to encircle the beloved face with thought; to see better, better understand and to learn the truth of this face I want to enlarge (sometimes naïve I trust a laboratory in this work). I believe I will finally reach my mother's self-existence by enlarging the detail in "arrays" (each frame will reveal details that are thinner than the previous step). I want to see what Marey and Muybridge do as an operator. In the end, I need to know, to save time, it solves, enlarging, in a way I slow down. The photograph affirms it even if it doesn't satisfy the passion: since I only live in the illusion that the nobility of photography is fully present, and that it is enough to clean the surface to reach the one behind the image, I might have the passion of discovery: to study, to say, to go back to the bottom of the paper and reach the other face (we are hidden from what is visible to Westerners is "true"). But what a pity! No matter how much I look, I cannot discover anything: if I enlarge, I can see nothing but the grain of the paper: I am spoiling the image for the sake of substance; If I do not raise, if I am satisfied with the examination, I already have at first glance the information that I have acquired, that is indeed I have acquired information: for the sake of this pressure to print something did not reveal. I am a bad dreamer who has opened his arms in frustration to have an image against the Photo of Winter Garden; "My miserable life!" Golaud ym shrieking: Melisande does not conceal or speak, nor does the photograph.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 119-120.

Hacı Zeytun's keeping Xwededa's mother's being an Armenian as a secret and her reaction while she is opening up to her brother, Kamil, reflects the part of Roland Barthes' book, I believe.

The Section where Zeytun tells the situation she is in through his husband Xwededa's story is the reflection of the repressed Armenian identity in the eyes of the dominant Kurdish identity. The identification she established with Xwededa, the husband of Zeytun, is told: "For example, if I were a *gavur*, your brother-in-law would not have told this secret to anyone, he would have kept it forever. He wouldn't say anything to anybody."¹⁵⁸

Throughout the story, we see that Kamil Bey analyzes his brother-in-law Xwededa's the lifestyle and his view of life from a skeptical perspective. His brother-in-law's constantly shopping with foreigners of the city, being interested in city culture, his family's not being one of the respectable tribes in his region and being a minority is some of the doubts that Kamil Bey had throughout the story. From the skeptical point of view of Kamil Bey, we can present anecdotes as follows. "Her sister's husband was a talented person who was recognized by everyone. But no one in his family was famous. They were among the most prominent families and tribes in the region. Xwededa's behaviors resembled to a city person's behaviors. He was staying away from local ones and making friends with the ones from the city. He was getting along with Laz, Georgian and Terekeme tradesmen. They all knew Xwededa well, I don't know how his

¹⁵⁸ Çamlıbel, *Haylo Siyaro Weylo Gundo*, 180.

"xwesîya min file bû, zavê we, derdê xwe tu car ji kesekî re nedigot, tim vedişart, tu tişt eçkere nedikir."

educational background was, but he was always reading a newspaper, keeping a close watch on the world issues.”¹⁵⁹

In the discursive and lexical fiction of the text Kamil and his grand sister Zeytun represents the dominant Kurdish identity. On the other hand, Xwededa represents the hidden and repressed Armenian identity. The conflicts between generations and identity problem are shown through the relationship between Xwededa and Kamil. It can be considered as rhetoric of Kurdish-Armenian political imagination and identification. Finally, despite of being no photograph in Veysel Çamlıbel’s story, there is a particular narrative of a certain event and a moment. Here, we observe the role of a literary artifact in representing a disaster through Xwededa’s mother who has Armenian origin within the scope of artistic renocide conception. According to Roland Barthes and Chaudhary, our story is a way of closing our eyes so photograph might be a way of reflecting its moments. There is a relationship between photographic trace and referred object. Through some representations, this bond is activated in line with a couple of rhetoric and paradox.¹⁶⁰ Even without any photograph, those being told about a certain matter might be more effectively transmitted to a larger mass of readers.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Çamlıbel, *Haylo Siyaro Weylo Gundo*, 179.

“Merê xwenga wî ya ku dihat zanîn, xortekî bi merîfet bû, lê ji malbatê tu kesên wî yên usa serdest jî tune bûn. Di nav êl û eçîratan de, di nav malbatên giran de ev kêmasîyek bû. wekê din; hal û hereketa wî ser bajarvaniyê bû, bi pêwendîyên xwe ve ji gundîyan dûr dihat xuyan. Di nav xortên hevalên wî de yên pîrî ji malbatên bajarîyan, lê bi taybet jî ji malbatên, xortên biyanîyan bûn. Çend malên Laz, Gurcî, Terekeman, xortên wan Xwedêda baş nas dikirin, hevaltiya wan xortan, bi hev re bû. Xwedêda, ji çer û dewan, dibe ku bo wî jî ji xortên gundîyan dûr disekinî. Nizanim xwendikariya wî çiqas bû, lê daîm rojname dixwend, guhên wî ser meseleyên dinyayê bû.”¹⁵⁹ Kamil Bey describes the identity crisis that his brother-in law was going through as “He was looking as if trapped between a church and a mosque.” The original version is “Usa dihat xuyanê ku di navbera dêr û mizgeftê de mabû...”

¹⁶⁰ Chaudhary, *Afterimage of Empire*.

¹⁶¹ Barthes, *Reality Effect*, 16.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

As a result, if I summarize my work, the basic notion I put forward is the concept of *renocide*. This is based on the idea of remembering every time, not just once, which describes human practices of commemoration about violence and war narratives related to any historical events, any massacre, or any deportation. I divided relevant notion into four basic categories in terms of artistic, national, geographical, and cultural aspects. Fundamentally, this approach is looking for a response to the question of how the genocide narrative in terms of witness problem and disaster representation is historicized in relation with historical geography and social memory through Turkey and Armenia. While a representation of the genocide narrative has a free space in Armenia, all kinds of representation that reflects genocide narrative of the events of 1915 is usually forbidden in Turkey. In this context, the main argument of my research is based on the idea that there is a dynamic relationship between historical geography and social memory, but it should be criticized within the framework of *renocide* notion.

The first critique was the subject of second chapter in line with disaster representation and narrative construction of national identity through Turkey and Armenia by the means of artistic and national *renocide*. Second critique concerned with the root of settlement names and its effect on people's surnames or nicknames through geographical *renocide* notion along the fourth chapter. If we consider that their surnames generally reflect a family origin or a geographical belonging, we can better understand how a historical geography has taken place in social memory. In this respect, I have often referred to some major toponymic elaborations in my work. I have specifically

chosen the Caucasian and the eastern Anatolian region as a research area for my study. My purpose here was to make comparison of national toponymists, who think Turkey's historical geography as a hinterland of Caucasus and Central Asia with critical notion of toponymy. While doing it so, I have tried to show that both perspectives reflect the relationship between the historical geography and social memory, even if they are approaching to the same topic in different ways.

My field research was limited to Ararat, the Caucasus and eastern Anatolian regions. It was based on Turkish, Kurdish and Armenian relations. The method I followed was a trip observation technique and oral history research. I did oral history study with 6 people in total. I have paid attention to the fact that the ethnicity and family origin of each of them is appropriate for the research area through Caucasia and Eastern Anatolian region. The age range of the people I interviewed was different. The largest age range is 79 years old. The smallest age range is 27 years old. Two of the participants were female while four were male.

Erkan Ahıska and Gülsüm Erzurum, who were among the people I did interview, reflected the migration movements and social memory of Turkish population in their narratives. The geographical belonging and family origin reflected in the surnames of both narrators are the clearest indication of the relationship between historical geography and social memory within the framework of geographical genocide conception. Again, there were two Kurdish artists Mem Ararat and Mirazê Sipanî among the people I interviewed. It can be argued that there is the same relationship when we think about the pseudonyms and nicknames, they use. In this regard, we say that, geographical belonging has a crucial place in social memory. Also, in their narratives, there have been some major commemorative practices belonging to Ezidi culture and faith. In this sense,

third critique focused on analyzing Ezidi culture and faith through cultural renocide notion. The youngest narrator, Verjine Balyan, who told me about Ararat and her view of Armenian history, in my thesis, helped me how to position Ararat between history and mythology. I have tried to emphasize that Ararat is an icon that is constantly used to describe the Armenian ethnic identity in keeping the narrative of genocide alive by the notion of *archetopia*.

Finally, I discussed the content in the story of Veysel Çamlıbel's book *Haylo Siyaro Weylo Gundo*; which is part of "photography." Through the narrative of the author, I analyzed the plot of the story. From the perspective of the dominant Kurdish identity, I tried to present the Armenian question and its point of view to the Muslim Armenians.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEWS IN THE ORIGINAL TURKISH

1. Interview with Erkan Ahıska in September 16, 2017

Mustafa İşçier: Öncelikle kendinizi tanıtabilir misiniz?

Erkan Ahıska: Merhaba. Adım Erkan soyadım, Ahıska.1968, Sivas doğumluyum.

Yaklaşık 15 senedir İstanbul da oturuyorum.

Mustafa İşçier: Soyadınızın Ahıska olmasının bir anlamı ya da hikâyesi var mı?

Erkan Ahıska: Soyadımızın anlamına gelecek olursak, sülalemizde sürgüne maruz kalmış, göç etmek durumunda bırakılmış ve ölüm yolculuğu dediğimiz sürgün yolculuğunda bulunan dedelerimizden, hayatta olan yok. Bizim soyumuzda; dedelerimizin dedeleri, hatta onların da dedeleri Ahıska'dan göç etmeleri nedeni ile soy ismimiz Ahıska olarak kaldı.

Mustafa İşçier: Büyüklerinizin bu konuda anlattığı şeyler nelerdir? Ailenizin geçmişi ile alakalı hafızanızda anılarınızda yer eden şeyler var mıdır? Göç/ savaş/sürgün veya yaşanmış bir katliam olabilir.

Erkan Ahıska: Bizler kulaktan dolma bilgiler paylaşırsak ta, yaşayan, Ahıska'dan yeni ülkemize göç etmiş vatandaşlarımızdan daha detaylı bilgi edinmek mümkün. Ahıska'nın çok mağduriyet dolu geçmişi var; bulundukları ülkede mağdur duruma düşürülerek nereye gittiklerini bilmedikleri 8-9 günlük bir yolculuğa çıkartılarak, adeta yaşam hakları elinden alınıp, kendi imkânlarına bırakılmış ve birçok zorluklar altında bu zamana kadar gelmiş bir soy. Daha doğrusu vatandaşlar. Neyse ki; son zamanlarda hak ettikleri değer verilerek, Türkiye dâhil birkaç ülkede kendi özgür yaşam şartları ile hayat sürdürmeye başladılar. Şahit olduğum bir katliam yok demek mümkün değil; çünkü 9

günlük sürgün adı verilen ölüm yolculuğunda yaşanan vahşet, dedelerimizin dedelerinden duydukları, onların da bizlere anlattıkları göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, soydaşlarımızın çekmiş olduğu sıkıntılar, bizleri de doğrudan etkiliyor. Son olarak şunu da aktarayım; sürgün döneminde, farklı ülkelerden gösterilen tepkilere, bakıldığında, Ahıska soyuna büyük bir zulüm eşliğinde oyun oynadıkları apaçık ortada.

Mustafa İşçier: Oyun ifadesini biraz açabilir misiniz?

Erkan Ahıska: Stalin dönemi asimilasyon politikaları... Ahıska Türkleri başta olmak üzere, bugünkü Türki cumhuriyetlerde yaşayan soydaşlarımız baskı ve zulüm gördüler. Yoğun bir asimilasyon politikasına maruz kaldılar. Türk'ün ana yurdu olan Orta Asya ve Kafkaslar Türk kimliğinden soyutlanmak istendi mesela.

2. Interview with Gülsüm Erzurum in March 25, 2018

Mustafa İşçier: Adınızı ve soyadınızı öğrenebilir miyim?

Gülsüm Erzurum: Adım Gülsüm soyadım Erzurum.

Mustafa İşçier: Nere doğumlusunuz?

Gülsüm Erzurum: Sivas'ın Karapınar köyünde doğmuşum.

Mustafa İşçier: Anne babanızın adı nedir? Onlar da ora doğumlu mu?

Gülsüm Erzurum: Babamın adı Mehmet, annemin adı Saniye. Babam Karapınar doğumlu, annem ise Sivas'ın bir kazasından. Benim kızlık soyadım Sağır. Evlilik soyadım Erzurum.

Mustafa İşçier: Kaç yaşındasınız?

Gülsüm Erzurum: 73 yaşımdayım.

Mustafa İşçier: 1945 Doğumlusunuz yani?

Gülsüm Erzurum: Evet.

Mustafa İşçier: Ailenizin kaçınıcı çocuğusunuz?

Gülsüm Erzurum: Ailemin 4. çocuğuyum. Ailemin Konya'dayken soy ismi Eraslan imiş.

Daha sonra Sağır soy ismini almışlar.

Mustafa İşçier: Aileniz varlıklı bir aile miydi?

Gülsüm Erzurum: Orta şekeri orta karek bir aile idi. Önceden çok varlıklı değillermiş.

Sonradan rençberlik yapmışlar, çalışmışlar. Malları varlıkları olmuş. Güzel şeyler yaşamışlar.

Mustafa İşçier: Sivas'ın Karapınar köyünden olduğunuzu söylemişsiniz. Aileniz de aslen Konya Karapınar'dan gelmiş. Köyünüze atalarınızın geldiği Karapınar'ın adı verilmiş olabilir mi?

Gülsüm Erzurum: Onu bilmiyorum.

Mustafa İşçier: Peki eşinizin soyadının Erzurum olduğunu söylediniz, soyadının Erzurum olmasının bir anlamı veya hikâyesi var mı?

Gülsüm Erzurum: Eşimin soyadının Erzurum olması... Benim kaynanam, kaynatam seferberlikte Erzurum Narman'dan Sivas'a göçmüşler. Buraya yerleşmişler. Benim eşim Sivas'ta doğmuş. Kaynatamgil üç kardeşmişler. Sivas'a göçünce, seferberlik bitene kadar buraya yerleşmişler. Benim eşim Sivas'ta doğmuş. Kaynatamın diğer iki kardeşi Erzurum'da kalmış. Sonra bir tanıdık aracılığıyla bizim köye Karapınar'a geldiler. Nemi babamdan istediler. Eşimle evlendim. Böylece eşimin soyadını aldım. Şu anda Sivas'ta değiliz. Bursa'ya intikal ettik çocuklarımla birlikte eşim öldükten sonra. Şu an Bursa'da yaşıyorum.

Mustafa İşçier: Peki kaynatanız kaynananız neden Erzurum'dan göçmüşler? Hiç anlatırlar mıydı yaşadıklarını?

Gülsüm Erzurum: Köylerini basmışlar, camilerini basmışlar. Çok işkence etmişler.

Onlar da bu çekilmez deyip çekmiş gelmişler.

Mustafa İşçier: Göç yolunda yaşadıklarını anlatır mıydı kanatanız ve kaynananız?

Gülsüm Erzurum: Vallahi yaşadıkları... Kaynanamın iki oğlu varmış benim kayınlarım.

Gelirken, 3 ayda yürüyerek gelmişler Erzurum'dan Sivas'a. Sivas'a gelince de

kaynanama kaynatama büyük bir ev vermişler. Şey, eskinin büyük binalarından.

Mustafa İşçier: Konak gibi mi?

Gülsüm Erzurum: Evet, konak gibi eski yıkık dökük bir konak. Sonra bura büyük demişler. Aynı mahalleden daha küçük ufak bir yer vermişler. Sonra benim eşim olmuş, iki görümcem.

Mustafa İşçier: Peki anlatırlar mıydı, o konak kime aitmiş, kiminmiş?

Gülsüm Erzurum: O konak önceden Ermenilerinmiş. O konakta eskiden otururlarmış.

Onlar, İstanbul'a gidince, boş kalan yerlere gelenleri yerleştirmişler. Rahmetli kaynanam kaynatam ve eltilerim öyle anlatırdı.

Mustafa İşçier: Konağa neden yerleşmemiş de küçük bir yer seçmişler?

Gülsüm Erzurum: O zamanlar eşya var mı ki? Seferberlikten göçmüş gelmişler. Bir şeyleri yokmuş. Sonradan iş güç sahibi olmuşlar. Benim kaynatam kayınlarım soğuk demirciydi. Sonradan görümcem gelin olmuş. Öyle bir hayat yaşamışlar.

3. Interview with Verjine Balyan in December 29, 2016

Mustafa İşçier: Öncelikle kendinizi tanıtabilir misiniz?

Verjine Balyan: Adım Verjine Balyan. 1992 yılında Ermenistan'ın başkenti Erivan'da dünyaya geldim. 2013 Eylül'ünde Avrupa Gönüllüler İş birliği programı kapsamında Türkiye'ye geldim. 2013 yılından beri İstanbul'da ikamet ediyorum. İstanbul Bilgi

Üniversitesi'nde Sivil Toplum Çalışmaları yüksek lisans programında STK yönetimi üzerine master yapıyorum. Ara sıra Erivan'a ailemin yanına gitsem de genellikle İstanbul'da oluyorum.

Mustafa İşçier: Türkiye'de yaşamak sizce nasıl bir şey, bir Ermeni olarak?

Verjine Balyan: Ben Türkiye'yi seviyorum. Özellikle İstanbul'da yaşamak benim için bir ayrıcalık. Birçok arkadaşlar edindim burada. Birçok dostum oldu. Ne yalan söyleyeyim, Erivan'a gittiğimde bile İstanbul'u ve dostlarımı arar oluyorum. Burada birbirinden farklı kökenlerden, birbirinden farklı kesimlerden olan arkadaşlarım oldu. Kürt, Türk, Alevi... Bir tarafımın halen bu topraklarda olduğuna inanıyorum. Zaten ailemizde büyüklerimizin anlattıklarına göre aslen Muş kökenliyiz.

Mustafa İşçier: 1915'te mi atalarınız Muş'tan göçmüş?

Verjine Balyan: Hayır. Daha önce bir tarihte. 1883, 1886 gibi çeşitli tarihler söyleniyor.

Mustafa İşçier: Muş'tan göçme sebepleri nedir? Onu anlattılar mı?

Verjine Balyan: Bu konuda ailemin anlattığı pek bir şey yok. Oradan göçmelerinin nedeni neydi bilmiyorum. Fakat şunu çok iyi biliyorum; Ermenistan'ın birçok farklı noktasında şu an yaşayan insanlar, küçük bir araştırma yaptığınızda göreceksiniz ki aslen şu anki Türkiye sınırlarında bulunan Batı Ermenistan'dan göçmüştür.

Mustafa İşçier: Biraz daha açabilir misiniz bu göç mevzusunu?

Verjine Balyan: Ermenistan'da bir hocam var. O anlatıyordu. Doğu Ermenistan'da yer alan şehirler, köyler ve diğer yerleşimlerde yaşayan nüfusun aslen nereden geldiği köy köy, kasaba kasaba bellidir.

Mustafa İşçier: Bu yerleşim yerlerine örnekler verebilir misiniz?

Verjine Balyan: Hocamın anlattığına göre, Kars'tan göç edenleri Shirak bölgesinde görebiliyoruz. Shirak bölgesi yoğunlukla Karşlıların ikamet ettiği bölgedir. Özellikle de

sınır bölgelerinde: Voskehask, Yerevan ve başka köylerde. Buralarda Ardahanlı da çok. Bunlar Kemal bölgeden göç edenler. Vanlılar yoğunlukla Erivan'dalar. Armavir bölgesinde de çok var, özellikle de Can (Jan) Fiida köyünde. Armavir bölgesinin Yerashkhahun köyünden (Yerashk-Araks-Aras nehrine denir, köyün ismi oradan geliyor) Ermeniler ve Kürtler birlikte yaşıyorlar. Beraber oraya geçmişler, çok erken geri dönecekler diye düşünerek de nehrin kenarına yerleşmişler. Talin'de hemen hemen herkes Sason'dan ve Muş'tan gelmiş olanlar. Beyazıtlılar hakkında da Kavar bölgesinde yaşıyor olabilirler demişti hocam. Orada Beyazıtlılar çok var ve Kavar'ın merkezine de Nor Beyazet (Yeni Beyazıt) diyorlarmış mesela.

Mustafa İşçier: Son olarak bir sorum daha olacak, Ararat sizin için ne anlam içeriyor? Neyi ifade ediyor?

Verjine Balyan: Ararat, biz Ermeniler için çok kutsaldır. Kadim Ararat Krallığının bu coğrafyada kurulmuş olması mı nu kutsal görmemizi sağlıyor bilmiyorum. Ama birçok Ermeni için Ararat kutsaldır. Her şeyden önce bir bittir Ararat. Her ulusun ortaya çıkış öyküsünü, yani varoluş hikâyesini anlatan mitler vardır ya hani, onun gibi bir şey. Ararat'ta biz Ermeniler için olmazsa olmaz diyebileceğimiz bir kutsal mit bence.

4. Interview with Mem Ararat in January 2, 2019

Mustafa İşçier: Öncelikle kendinizi tanıtabilir misiniz?

Mem Ararat: Adım Mem Ararat. 17 Eylül 1981 yılında Mardin'in Derik ilçesinde dünyaya geldim. 1989 yılına kadar bu mevrada yaşadım. Bazı siyasi ve ekonomik sıkıntılardan dolayı 1989 yılında Türkiye'nin batısına ailemle birlikte göç ettim. Eğitim hayatım ilkokulla sınırlı kaldı. Arkadaşlarımla motivasyon ve destekleriyle 2014 yılında

müzik hayatına atıldım. İlk albümümü çıkardım. Müzik hayatımdan önce inşaatçılık, rençberlik gibi çeşitli işlerle ede uğraştım.

Mustafa İşçier: Mem Ararat mahlasını kullanmanızın bir anlamı ve hikâyesi var mı?

Özellikle Ararat ismini almanızın öyküsünü çok merak ediyorum. Mardinli olduğunuzu biliyorum. Acaba kökeniniz Ağrı'ya mı dayanıyor?

Mem Ararat: Biliyorsunuz ‘Mem’ bir Kürt destanının kahramanıdır. Çocukken beni seven akrabalarım bana Memê veya Memo diye diye seslenirdi. Mem benim gerçek ismim aslında. Elbette ismim nüfus cüzdanıma Mehmet diye Türkçeleştirilerek yazılmış. Ne var ki günlük hayatımda kimse bana Mehmet diye seslenmez. Malum resmîyette her şey Türktür bu ülkede. Ararat ismine gelince...

Ben dağlı bir Kürdüm ve öyle büyüdüm. Çocukluğum kırsalda ve köyde geçti. Toprakla, hayvanlarla ve bitkilerle ilişkim hep iyi olmuştur. Şimdi bile ‘mutluluk’ dendiğinde zihnimde sevdiğim insanlar ve ağaçlı, yeşilli bir dağ köyünün görüntüsü canlanır. Eğer yapabilseydim mutlaka bir dağ köyünde, tükettiğim her şeyi kendi ellerimle üreterek yaşardım. Doğrusu bu istek şu sıralar benim için bir lüks maalesef. Toplumsal sorunlar küçük dertlerimize zaman bırakmıyor. Zira bu ülkede insanın kendi küçük dertleri ile uğraşacak zamanı çalınmıştır. Evet ben dağlı bir Kürdüm ve Ararat bizim coğrafyamızda bulunan sıra dışı bir dağın ismidir. Bu yüzden belki de...

Mustafa İşçier: Şarkılarımızı ilgiyle dinliyorum. Yukarıda yönelttiğim soru bağlamında, sizin güzel şarkılarınızdan olan (Evîna Du Çiyayan) şarkısının öyküsünü anlatabilir misiniz? Sizin için ifade ettiği anlam nedir?

Mem Ararat: Evîna Du Çiya, Kurdîka isimli albümde yer alıyordu. Kurdîka benim yazdığım bir hikâyedir aslında. Evîna Du Çiya da o hikâyenin bir parçasıdır. Eğer

zaman, mekan ve şartlar el verirse bir gün o öyküye bir kitapta yer vermek istiyorum.

Sîpan ve Ararat öyküde geçen iki aşığı temsil ediyor.

Ben Êzîdî kökenliyim. Atalarım bir önceki Fermannan (ya da kıyımdan) sonra Şengal bölgesinden göçüp gelmişler Mardin'e. Oralarda halen akrabalarımız var ve maalesef artık birbirimizi pek tanımıyoruz. Zira çok uzun zaman geçmiş aradan. Annem ve babam Sünni Müslümanlar. Ama Ezidilerle iç içe yaşadık. Urfa'nın Virenşehir ilçesinde yaşayan ve halen Ezidi inancına mensup olan insanlarla çok yakın ilişkilerimiz vardı. Akrabalarımız gözüyle bakardık onlara. Onlar da bizi sahiplenirdi. Halen de görüşürüz ara sıra.

Bundan dolayı mıdır bilmiyorum, Ermenileri, Alevileri ve diğer azınlıkları kendime hep yakın hissettim. Ararat ismini belki de çok da farkında olmadan bu yüzden seçtim.

Çünkü Ararat Ermenice bir isimdir. Kürtler Ararat Dağına 'Çiyayê Agirî' veya 'Glîdax' der.

Mustafa İşçier: Şarkıda Ararat ve Süphan dağlarının aşkı işleniyor. Sizin için bu bölge ne anlam ifade ediyor?

Mem Ararat: Süphan ve Ararat benim hikâyemde birbirlerine âşık bir kadını ve bir erkeği temsil ediyor. Düzgün bir şekilde seviyorlar birbirlerini.

Bir konser sonrası Bazîd'den (Doğubayazıt) dönüyordum. Patnos'u geçip Xelat'a (Ahlat) doğru yol alınca Süphan Dağı karşımda dikiliverdi. O yol boyunca, içimde uzun zaman önce unuttuğum anıların canlandığını hissettim. Oralarda daha önce yaşamış olduğuma yemin edebilirdim o an. Batıl inançlarım yoktur, ama güçlü bir hissin gerçeğin belki de henüz gün yüzüne çıkmamış bir uzantısı olabileceğini düşünmüşlüğüm vardır. Belki de büyük büyük büyük babamın ya da büyük büyük büyük annemin anıları

bana sirayet etmişti. Bir yanımın oralı olduğunu biliyorum. Bazen bir yeri veya birini öyle seversiniz ki onun geçmişini de sahiplenirsiniz.

5. Interview with Mirazê Sipanî in June 16, 2016

Mirazê Sipanî: Ermenistan'daki Kürtler, Osman kardeşinizden çok memnunlar. Kendisi, burada kürt kültürünün gelişmesi için elinden gelen herşeyi yapıyor. Biz eskiden beri arkadaşız.

Mustafa İşçier: Sonra ben konuşuyorum bu köye röportaj yapmak için geldik diyorum.

Mirazê Sipanî şöyle diyor: elbette hoşgelmişsiniz! Ne isterseniz baş üstüne... Ama öncelikle, Textebi köyüne yakın Ezidi köylerinin örf ve adetlerini yerinde görmeniz gerek. Bugün Ezidilerin yani bizlerin ölülerimizi anma günümüzdür. Sadece bizim ölülerimizi değil tabiki... başta Ermenistan ve Gürcistan'da olmak üzere, Irak'ta, Şengal'de, Suriye ve dünyanın heryerinde var olan ölülerimizi anıyoruz."

Mustafa İşçier: Öncelikle, kendinizi tanıtabilir misiniz?

Mirazê Sipanî: Adım Miraze Cemal. 1945 yılında Elegez bölgesi yakınlarındaki Rya-Taza köyünde doğdum. Ezidi inancına mensubum. Mirazê Sipanî mahlası ile şiirler yazıyorum. Uzun yıllar gazetecilik yaptım. Ermenistan'daki Kürt yazarlar ve gazeteciler birliğinin daimi üyesiyim.

Mustafa İşçier: Mirazê Sipanî mahlasını kullanmanızın özel bir sebebi var mıdır? Sipan dağı Türkiye'nin doğu bölgesinde bulunan bir dağ. Kökeniniz o bölgeye mi dayanıyor?

Mirazê Sipanî: Aslında bizim tam kökenimiz, Kuzey Iraktaki Duhok kasabasına dayanıyor. Biz Behdinan aşiretine mensubuz. Behdinan bölgesinden Muş'a göçmüşüz. Göçmemizi siyasi bir sebebi yok. Bir tavuk, bir koyun için bile kavga edilmiş olabilir. Biz göçebe bir kültürüz nihayetinde. Muş'ta Qundehsaz köyüne yerleşmişiz. Bu köy,

sipan dağının eteklerinde yer alır. Bu köyde, acısıyla tatlısıyla yarım asır kadar yaşamışız. Sonra, Kars'a göçmüşüz. Beyremi köyüne burada yerleşmişiz.

Mustafa İşçier: Kars'a göçmenizin bir sebebi var mıdır?

Mirazê Sipanî: Yine buradan da göçmemizin siyasi bir nedeni yok. Ailevi şahsi bir mesele. Bir kız kaçırma olayı var. Bizim aşirete mensup bir ezidi kızı, müslüman bir genç kaçırmış. Kızın babası da hem kendi kızını hem de Müslüman genci adetimiz gereği öldürmüş. Bu sebepten, köydeki Müslümanlar ve Ezidiler arasında kavga çıkmış. Köyün ileri gelenlerinden Ali Ağa her iki tarafı da yatıştırmaya çalışmış ve ara buluculuk yapmış. Önce, Müslüman gencin ailesine verilmek üzere kan bedeli istemiz bizimkilerden. Sonra, koyunumuza davarımıza el koymak istemişler. Ezidi kızın babası kan bedelini ödemiş. Ezidiler, koyun ve davarlarını bırakıp köyden ayrılmışlar. Erzurum taraflarında Aras nehrini geçerken, Ali Ağa ve adamları Ezidi kabilesini durdurmuş. Kardeşlerim durun gitmeyin. Bizim sizin malınızda mülkünüzde gözümüz yok. Siz bizim kardeşimizsiniz. Alın tüm koyun ve davarlarınız sizin olsun. Gelin köyümüze dönelim. Birlikte yaşayalım demiş. Bizim aşiret, Ali Ağanın tüm ısrarlarına rağmen köye geri dönmemiş. Yollarına devam etmişler. Bizim Behdinanlar çok inatçıdır. Kürtçe'de "Serhişk" deriz. Dik başlı asi anlamına gelir. Ali Ağaya tekrar dönecek olursak, müslüman bir Kürt olmasına rağmen çok iyi bir insanmış. Kürtler, Ezidiler ve Ermeniler arasında hiçbir ayırım yapmazmış. Hepsine adil davranırmış. Bunları nereden biliyorsun diyecek olursan, Elegez'de uzun kış akşamlarında bizim aşirete mensup büyüklerimiz ve bilgelerimiz anlatırlardı. Biz de can kulağımızla dinlerdik. Hikâye gibi gelirdi o zamanlar büyüklerimizin yaşadıkları şeyler.

Mirazê Sipanî mahlasına gelecek olursak, evet bir anlamda kökenim sipan bölgesine dayanıyor. Qundehsaz köyünde atalarımızın yaşadıkları anılar, tüm canlılığıyla hafızamızda. Sipanî mahlasını seçmemde bu durumun etkisi olmalı.

6. Interview with Veysel Çamlıbel in July 12, 2016

Mustafa İşçier: Kısaca kendinizi tanıtabilir misiniz?

Veysel Çamlıbel: Adım Veysel Soyadım Çamlıbel. 1940, Ağrı Doğubayazıt doğumluyum. Araştırmacı yazarım.

Mustafa İşçier: Yazarlığa nasıl başladınız?

Veysel Çamlıbel: Üniversite yıllarında daha çok ziraat mühendisliği alanında çalışmalar yürüttüm. Erzurum Atatürk Üniversitesinden ziraat mühendisi olarak mezun oldum. 1980'e kadar çeşitli sivil toplum kuruluşlarında ve siyasal örgütlerde yer aldım. 1980 sonrasında toplumsal ve siyasal karmaşadan uzaklaşıp kendimi keşfetmeye yöneldim. Tam da bu noktada yazarlık serüvenim başladı diyebilirim. Daha çok bilgi edinmeye, daha çok araştırmaya yoğunlaştım bu süreçte.

Mustafa İşçier: Özellikle, öykü alanında eser veriyorsunuz sanırım?

Veysel Çamlıbel: Evet. Yazdığım eserlerin çoğu öykü türünde. Özellikle kısa öykülerden oluşuyor.

Mustafa İşçier: Kürtçe eser veriyorsunuz anladığım kadarıyla? İncelediğim birçok eseriniz Kürtçe yazılmış.

Veysel Çamlıbel: Evet. Birçok eserimi Kürtçe olarak kaleme aldım. Kürtçe benim ana dilim ve yazdığım eserler yaşanmışlığın bir ürünü. Kürtçe de yaşayan bir dil. Kürtçe eserlerimin yanı sıra, Kavalımın Sesindeki Büyü ve Sabır Taşı Çatlamadan Kürtler adlı Türkçe yazılmış kitaplarım da var.

Mustafa İşçier: Haylo sıyaro weylo gundo öykü kitabınızı ilgiyle okuduğumu söylemek isterim. Özellikle fotoğraf başlıklı hikayeniz bir hayli ilginç geldi bana. Öykünün olduğu bölümde herhangi bir fotoğraf yok. Fakat öykü, var olmayan bir fotoğrafı betimliyor.

Söz konusu fotoğrafın bir hikayesi var mıdır?

Veysel Çamlıbel: Öncelikle, öykü kitabımı beğendiğiniz için çok teşekkür ederim.

Kitabın içinde gündelik hayattan birçok kesit var öyküleştirdiğim. Tabi ki fotoğraf başlıklı öykümün de bir hikayesi var. Öyküyü kaleme aldığım yıllarda Hrand Dink katledilmişti. Bu hazin olay, öykümde de yer alıyor malumunuz. Fakat benim fotoğraf başlıklı bu hikâyeyi yazmamda etkili olan şey başka bir olay aslında. İstanbul'da yaşayan kız kardeşimin evinde gördüğüm bir fotoğraftan esinlenerek bu öyküyü yazdım.

Mustafa İşçier: Gördüğünüz fotoğraf neyle ilgiliydi? Biraz anlatabilir misiniz?

Veysel Çamlıbel: Mücevher kutusuna benzer bir şey içerisinde yer alan eski bir fotoğrafı kız kardeşim bana göstermişti. Fotoğrafta, eski yıkık dökük bir yerde, birkaç kız çocuğu görünüyordu. Üstü başı sefil bir kız çocuğu sararmış fotoğrafta bir köşede oturuyor halde duruyordu. Kız kardeşim fotoğraftaki kız çocuğunu göstererek bu resimdeki kız, benim kayın validem imiş dedi. 1918 yılında ailesinin birçok ferdi Ağrı'dan sürgün edilmiş ve katliama uğramış. Fotoğraftaki birkaç kız çocuğu ile kız kardeşimin kayın validesi sağ kurtulmuş. Sonradan, bir Kürt aile bu kız çocuklarını evlatlık almış ve büyütmüş. Kız kardeşimin kayın validesi de onlardan biriymiş. Bu çocukların hepsi Müslüman olmuşlar. Kız kardeşimin kayın validesi Emine adını almış. Yaşı kemale erdiğinde ise, kız kardeşimin kayın pederiyle evlendirmişler. Kız kardeşimin eşi çok sonraları öğrenmiş annesinin Müslümanlaştırılmış bir Ermeni olduğunu. Eniştem annesinin Ermeni kökenli olduğunu duyduğunda, önceleri çok şaşırılmış. Ailenin birçok ferdi de bu durumu sır gibi saklıyormuş zaten. Eniştem ölmeden önce, kız kardeşime

durumu anlatmıř. Konuřmamın bařında szn ettiėim mcevher kutusundaki fotoėrafı da hatıra bırakmıř. Kimseye fotoėrafı vermemesini vasiyet etmiř. O sebeptendir ki ykme fotoėrafı koyamadım. ok ısrar etmeme raėmen kız kardeřim fotoėrafı vermedi. Eřinin vasiyeti olduėunu syledi.

Mustafa İřier: Anlıyorum.

Mustafa İřier: O halde, yknzdeki Xwededa karakteri biraz rol deėiřtirerek eniřtenizi temsil ediyor olmalı?

Veysel amlıbel: Evet, bir anlamda yle. Gndelik olaylarla da baė kurarak hikyeyi kurguladım diyebilirim.



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