

DOSSIER ON GENDER, ETHNICITY, AND THE NATION-STATE

Guest editors' introduction: At the crossroads of gender and ethnicity: Moving beyond the national imaginaire

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In May 2010, Sabancı University, the International Hrant Dink Foundation, and Anadolu Kültür co-organized the second Hrant Dink Memorial Workshop around the theme "Gender, Ethnicity, and the Nation-State: Anatolia and Its Neighboring Regions in the Twentieth Century."¹ Earlier versions of the articles published in the dossier of this issue of *New Perspectives on Turkey* were presented at this workshop. Focusing on moments of transformation in gender and ethnic relations during both the construction of nation-states, as well as their transformation(s) during the twentieth century in Anatolia and its neighboring regions, the workshop brought together close to 200 people from eighteen countries, turning it into a three-day conference.² Both the overwhelming interest in the workshop and the scope and quality of the presentations were testimony to the centrality of gender, ethnicity and the nation-state in contemporary academic debates in/on this region. In this introduction, we would like to contextualize the four articles that follow, as well as the commentary by Arlene Avakian, within this growing field of research, by drawing on the debates that shaped this workshop.

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- 1 The workshop was supported by the Chrest Foundation, the Open Society Institute, Sabancı University, and Anadolu Kültür. Not all of the papers presented at the workshop could be published in this volume; however, the conference proceedings will be electronically available in May 2010 (Hrant Dink Memorial Workshops, <http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/hrantdink-workshop/>).
- 2 Our friend and colleague Dicle Koğacioğlu made significant contributions to the debates on gender and ethnicity throughout the workshop and presented an insightful analysis of "honor crimes" on the panel "Contemporary Constructions of Kurdishness and Armenianness." It is a great loss that she is no longer here to enlighten and inspire us. We miss her deeply...

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Gender and ethnicity have been key categories of differentiation and conflict in nationalisms and nation-states, interacting with each other in multiple ways. Although many nation-states claim “equal citizenship” as their basic organizing principle, the histories of nation-states in the past century are marked by gender and ethnic tensions in the definitions and practices of citizenship. These tensions have taken violent forms during times of war and ethnic conflict, and over the century have gone through various transformations as a result of state-building, post-socialist restructuring, forced and voluntary migrations within and across nation-states, globalization, democratization, as well as critical interventions by feminist, LGBTT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Transgender), and religious movements, among other processes and forces. Recent scholarship, shaped largely by feminist and post-structuralist theory, addresses the multiple ways in which constructions of gender and ethnicity, as well as gendered and ethnicized conflicts within and among different nationalisms and nation-states have shaped Anatolia and its neighboring regions in the twentieth century.

Several lines of inquiry preoccupy scholars working on gender, ethnicity, nationalism, and the nation-state in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey. First is the attempt at making women’s participation in all nationalist projects, state-making, history, and contemporary society visible and intelligible. Departing from the simple, yet often unsettling question “where are the women?”³ a wide range of scholarship seeks to “add women” to the existing historical and contemporary analysis of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. A second line of inquiry has involved introducing “gender as an analytical category,”⁴ analyzing all aspects of life and politics through the critical lens of gender. How have conceptions of masculinity and femininity shaped ethnic identifications, nationalist politics and processes of state-making? How have these conceptions changed over time? Asking these and other questions, a growing body of literature has moved beyond equating gender with “women,” pointing to the need to inquire into the making and unmaking of masculinities and femininities as constitutive processes. In what follows, we discuss the contributions to this dossier along these two, often overlapping axes.

3 Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

4 Joan Wallach Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986).

Where are the women?

The official historiography of Turkey has been based on an understanding of rupture between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, particularly with regard to women's rights. There is a long history of nationalist teaching that Atatürk and the secularist republican regime presented rights to women, almost as if on a golden plate. "Even in the West" women had to organize to gain their basic rights, but not Turkish women, the argument goes. As Yeşim Arat has noted, "until the 1980s, there was a consensus in society that Kemalist reforms had emancipated women and that this 'fact' could not be contested."⁵ With the rise of the second-wave feminist movement and the development of a critical feminist scholarship over the past two decades, these assumptions have been overturned.⁶

Some of the most unsettling (of the existing historiography) works that have sought to locate women's participation in the transformation from empire to nation-state have uncovered the existence of a vibrant Ottoman and republican women's movement, situating itself within the global feminist movement (particularly the suffrage movement) in the 1910s and 1920s.⁷ This new body of scholarship has revealed that—from publishing journals in which feminism and women's rights were openly debated, to making demands for women's suffrage in the post-1908 period; from attempting to establish the first political party of the republic under the name Women's Party (to be rejected by the Ankara government)⁸, to organizing an international feminist congress in İstanbul in 1935⁹—women in the late Ottoman and early republican era were active agents in the major transformations taking shape. Challenging the view that women's rights were given from above during the republican reforms, without any need for struggle, this literature addresses

- 5 Yeşim Arat, "The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey," in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, eds. Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 103.
- 6 For a critical analysis of the development of women's studies in Turkey, see Yeşim Arat, "Women's Studies in Turkey: From Kemalism to Feminism," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no. 9 (1993). For an insightful overview of the contributions of feminist historiography by one of the pioneering scholars in this field, see Serpil Çakır, "Feminism and Feminist History-Writing in Turkey: The Discovery of Ottoman Feminism," *Aspasia*, no. 1 (2007).
- 7 Nükhet Sirman, "Feminism in Turkey: A Short History," *New Perspective on Turkey* 3, no. 1 (1989); Aynur Demirdirek, *Osmanlı Kadınlarının Hayat Hakkı Arayışlarının Bir Hikayesi* (Ankara: İmge, 1993); Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (İstanbul: Metis, 1994); Şirin Tekeli, "Birinci ve İkinci Dalga Feminist Hareketlerin Karşılaştırmalı İncelemesi Üzerine Bir Deneme," in *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, ed. Ayşe Berktaş Hacımırzaoğlu (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998); Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhittin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği* (İstanbul: Metis, 2003).
- 8 Zafer Toprak, "Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkasından Önce Kurulan Parti: Kadınlar Halk Fırkası," *Tarih ve Toplum* 9, no. 51 (1988); Mete Tunçay, "Kadınlar Halk Fırkası," *Tarih ve Toplum* 11, no. 62 (1989).
- 9 Zafer Toprak, "1935 İstanbul Uluslararası Feminizm Kongresi ve Barış," *Toplum-Düşün*, no. 24 (1986).

the processes of silencing feminist women and their organized efforts to change the gendered articulations of the new republic and its citizenship regime. The history of the women's movement from the 1910s through the 1930s, rather than being a history of "liberation," emerges as a history of increasing pressures against autonomous women's organizing. In 1935, the only remaining women's rights organization, *Türk Kadınlar Birliği*, was closed down, signaling the beginning of an era devoid of autonomous women's organizing. Şirin Tekeli calls the years from the 1930s until the 1980s, when the second wave of feminism took shape, "barren years" (*çorak yıllar*) for women and women's activism.¹⁰

Although feminist historiography of the 1990s has successfully challenged some of the basic pillars of nationalist historiography (e.g., discourses of rupture and women's emancipation), it has hardly been unproblematic in its conceptualization of a new historiography. In the words of anthropologist Catherine Lutz, "the feminist margins have their own margins."¹¹ While recovering the feminist voices marginalized and silenced by nationalist historiography, feminist histories in Turkey have produced their own silences, reflecting the exclusionary cultural politics of republican history, shaped largely by tensions around ethnic and religious difference. In the two major collections of feminist scholarship published in the 1980s,¹² despite their radical challenges to the gendered nature of mainstream scholarship and history, there is hardly any discussion of ethnicity as a category of analysis and difference, and almost no mention of non-Turkish women and their struggles in the past century. Writing in 1998, the Kurdish scholar Rohat Alakom remarked on this silence as he wrote about the *Kürt Kadınları Teali Cemiyeti* (Association for the Elevation of Kurdish Women) established in İstanbul in 1919: "Scholars who have recently written on the Ottoman women's movement, for some reason, have not mentioned this first Kurdish women's organization."¹³ It was not only the Kurdish women's associations, but also others that initially remained outside the feminist debate: *Beyoğlu Rum Cemiyet-i Hayriye-i Nisvaniyesi* (Beyoğlu Greek Beneficial Asso-

10 Tekeli, "Birinci ve İkinci Dalga Feminist Hareketler," 337. Also see Yeşim Arat, "Contestation and Collaboration: Women's Struggles for Empowerment in Turkey," in *Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba, *Cambridge History of Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

11 Catherine Lutz, "The Gender of Theory," in *Women Writing Culture*, eds. Ruth Behar and Deborah A. Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 251.

12 Şirin Tekeli, ed. *1980'ler Türkiye'sinde Kadın Bakış Açısından Kadınlar* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1990); Ayşe Bertay Hacımirzaoğlu, ed. *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998).

13 Rohat Alakom, "Araştırmalarda Fazla Adı Geçmeyen Bir Kuruluş: Kürt Kadınları Teali Cemaati," *Tarih ve Toplum*, no. 171 (1998). Also see Yavuz Selim Karakışla, "Kürt Kadınları Teali Cemiyeti (1919)," *Toplumsal Tarih* 19, no. 111 (2003).

ciation of Women), *Türk ve Ermeni Kadınlar İttihat Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi* (Beneficial Union of Turkish and Armenian Women), and *Çerkes Kadınları Teavün Cemiyeti* (Association for Mutual Co-operation Amongst Circassian Women).¹⁴

A similar silence has marked the new histories (or herstories) that have discussed women's contributions to different realms of life since Ottoman times. References to pioneering events and people—such as “the first woman author,” “the first women's association,” “the first school for girls,” and “the first woman in theater”—all assumed Ottoman subjects to be Muslim (and Turkish). Armenian women authors and activists, the history of the education of Greek and Jewish women, or non-Muslim actresses and musicians remained outside these histories of pioneers. Scholarship on gender and literature has exclusively focused on Turkish writers, with hardly any comparative framework for non-Turkish writers and/or ethnicity as a field of inquiry concomitant with gender.¹⁵

The award-winning student essay written in 2001 by three Boğaziçi University students—Melissa Bilal, Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, and Belinda Mumcu—marked a turning point in these debates, introducing a prolific Armenian feminist activist, author, publisher, and public intellectual, Hayganush Mark, and her journal *Hay Gin*, published between 1919 and 1933.¹⁶ In 1927, Hayganush Mark wrote a daring essay responding to a statement by İstanbul's mayor that women are not equal to men and, thus, cannot vote; she likened his attitude to a “dish so cold that it cannot be brought to the table” and called feminism a “cry for justice.”¹⁷ Yet, we also learn from this essay that Hayganush Mark felt marginalized by the Muslim Turkish feminists and spent the last thirty years of her life away from the public eye, dying alone in a hospital in 1966.

Are there other Hayganush Marks that have been left out of the historical debates?¹⁸ Does she have Greek, Assyrian, Jewish, Roma, Kurd-

14 Çakır, “Feminism and Feminist History-Writing in Turkey,” 72. For an earlier discussion of these silences, see Ayşe Gül Altınay, *Vatan Millet Kadınlar* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000).

15 For a comprehensive analysis of gender and Turkish literature, see Sibel Irzik and Jale Parla, eds., *Kadınlar Dile Düşünce: Edebiyat ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004). A recent book by Nazan Aksoy has addressed questions revolving around gender and nationalism in autobiographical writing by women. See Nazan Aksoy, *Kurgulanmış Benlikler: Otobiyografi, Kadın, Cumhuriyet* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2009).

16 Melissa Bilal et al., “Hayganuş Mark'ın (1885-1966) Hayatı, Düşünceleri ve Etkinlikleri: 'Feminizm: Bir Adalet Feryadı',” *Toplumsal Tarih* 15, no. 87 (2001).

17 Bilal *Ibid.*: 48.

18 Lerna Ekmekçioğlu and Melissa Bilal's subsequent book has provided primary and secondary texts on five extraordinary Armenian woman authors and public intellectuals active between 1862 and 1933 (Elbis Gesaratsyan, Srpouhi Dussap, Zabel Asadur [Sibil], Zabel Essayan, and Hayganush Mark). Lerna Ekmekçioğlu and Melissa Bilal, *Bir Adalet Feryadı: Osmanlı'dan Türkiye'ye Beş Ermeni Feminist Yazar (1862-1933)* (İstanbul: Aras, 2006).

ish, or Circassian sisters? How were their relations with each other? How did various nationalisms shape the lives and struggles of women from different ethnic and religious backgrounds in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish nation-state? A growing body of literature, including some of the essays in this dossier, engages with these kinds of questions, mainly by drawing attention to the struggles of such women as members of their communities, or as feminists participating in Ottoman and republican women's movements.

Despite the centrality of a critical lens in feminist scholarship towards Turkish nationalism from the 1990s onwards, how can we explain this initial silence on "other" women and the processes of their "othering"? What can account for the absence of any serious debate on ethnicity and ethnicized difference in critical feminist scholarship on Turkish nationalism until recently? One major reason, undoubtedly, is the history of successful marginalization and silencing of all ethnic difference in Turkey, including scholarship on such difference. Sociologist İsmail Beşikçi's years in prison for his work on Kurdishness from the 1970s onwards provide the most striking case of such silencing, in the form of direct censorship and incarceration. The 1980 *coup d'état* and its restructuring of the university system into a centralized (and heavily controlled) structure have further intensified the difficulties of any research addressing ethnic difference within Turkey. In other words, the absence of any critical work on Armenian, Kurdish, and other ethnic groups in Turkish academia until recently has also found its reflection in feminist scholarship. Secondly, one needs to recognize the language barriers, maintained and reinforced by the language policies of the republic. In the absence of translated works and scholars with the necessary language skills to read primary texts, Turkish readers have remained ignorant of minority literatures.¹⁹ It is not surprising that the first interventions on the writings and activities of Kurdish and Armenian feminists in Ottoman and early republican times were by Kurdish and Armenian scholars, respectively. Thirdly, in the case of Armenian and Turkish historiography, the great antagonism around the concept of genocide has resulted in a split between Turkish and Armenian scholars, making exchange and collaboration on this joint history difficult.

As a result of these, and possibly other, obstacles, the first decade of critical feminist scholarship on women remained oblivious to questions of ethnicity. One can analyze this blindness as a form of "methodological

19 Aras Publishing House, established in Istanbul in 1993, has played a crucial role in making Armenian texts available to Turkish readers.

nationalism," whereby a critical attitude to nationalism and the recognition of nations as modern, historical constructs does not guarantee a framework of analysis that does not reproduce some of the basic assumptions of nationalism. In their insightful discussion, Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznaider have criticized methodological nationalism as a social-scientific perspective that takes the "normative claims of nationalism" as a "socio-ontological given."²⁰ In their analysis, methodological nationalism often results in the equation of societies with nation-state societies and the naturalization of nations as real communities.²¹ In the Turkish case, the most striking form of methodological nationalism with regard to historiography has been the equation of Ottoman with "Turkish," which finds its most salient articulation in the exclusively Turkish (or Muslim marked as Turkish) identification of "pioneers/firsts," including in the early feminist historiography of women pioneers. A related form of methodological nationalism that has shaped Turkish scholarship until recently has been the equation of republican citizenship with an ethnicized understanding of nationhood, whereby the "(ethnically) Turkish-Sunni Muslim" has become the norm.²²

If Turkish scholarship has been shaped by various forms of methodological nationalism, the same can be said of the scholarship about Armenianness and Kurdishness, both in Turkey and internationally.²³ The essays in this issue by Marc Nichanian and Nerina Weiss, as well as Arlene Avakian's commentary, challenge this body of scholarship on more than one level. Although they do not use the concept of methodological nationalism, all three essays draw attention to the need to critically analyze the silencing of (some) women, not only by hegemonic Turkish nationalism, but also by Armenian and Kurdish nationalisms in their political and academic forms. Each of these contributions opens up new questions and avenues of research that complicate and enrich the question of "where are the women?" with regard to gender, ethnicity, nationalism, and the nation-state.

20 Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznaider, "Unpacking Cosmopolitanism for the Social Sciences: A Research Agenda," *The British Journal of Sociology* 57, no. 1 (2006).

21 *Ibid.*: 3.

22 For an insightful discussion of how the concept of citizenship has recently been denationalized, see Ayşe Kadioğlu, "Denationalization of Citizenship? The Turkish Experience," *Citizenship Studies* 11, no. 3 (2007).

23 In fact, even in international academic exchanges, the discussion around the Ottoman women's movements and literature across ethnicities is quite a new development. The inaugural panel on the topic, entitled "Ottoman Women's Movements and Print Cultures," took place at the Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) in 2007. This panel has provided the source for the following forthcoming book: Sima Aprahamian and Victoria Rowe, eds., *Ottoman Women's Movements* (Austin: University of Texas Press, forthcoming).

Arlene Avakian's insightful commentary on Armenian identity through the prism of trauma, nationalism and gender problematizes two major gaps in the academic and political debates in the Armenian diaspora: a critical debate on nationalism (particularly Armenian nationalism), and an interest in women, gender, and feminism. In her analysis, these silences are constitutive of both the Armenian-American diasporic community and the literature on the Armenian experience of genocide; these are not unconnected. On the contrary, Avakian argues that there are intricate links between the "narrow focus on genocide recognition" (exacerbated by the denial by the Turkish state) and "the absence of a feminist voice in both scholarship and community debate." One major outcome of genocide recognition politics is that Armenian national identity, constructed through victimhood, is taken for granted, with no "discussion of who the 'we' is and what that construction means." As an extension, a feminist critique of the "patriarchal past and present" of the Armenian community, which unsettles the notion of a harmonious, innocent "we," is persistently marginalized. In the words of Avakian, "the genocide and its denial are center stage, and anything else is a distraction." Avakian's own research with Armenian-American women and feminists shows that the conservatism of the Armenian community (particularly in relation to questions of gender, sexuality, and "race") has made it difficult for many Armenian women to associate with the Armenian-American community.

Arlene Avakian also problematizes the absence of an analysis of the gendered nature of the genocidal process in the Armenian genocide literature. According to Avakian, a focus on gender and sexuality is critical not only for analyzing the immediate genocidal experience itself, but also for making sense of its aftermath: "What was the effect of [the] gendered genocide on constructions of masculinity and femininity in the post-genocide generations? How did the rape and abduction of Armenian women and girls impact conceptions of and the practice of sexuality among subsequent generations? How is gender implicated in the ongoing constructions of Armenian-American notions of the nation or in our ethnic and diasporan identities?" It is only in recent years that women's gendered experiences of genocide and its aftermath have been taken seriously by scholars.²⁴ This issue constituted a major point of

24 Eliz Sanasarian, "Gender Distinction in the Genocidal Process: A Preliminary Study of the Armenian Case," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 4, no. 4 (1989); Ara Sarafian, "The Absorption of Armenian Women and Children into Muslim Households as a Structural Component of the Armenian Genocide," in *God's Name: Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Omer Bartov and Phyllis Mack (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001); Katherine Derderian, "Common Fate, Different Experienc-

departure for a number of presentations and debates during the Hrant Dink Memorial Workshop of 2009. While some papers discussed women's experiences and narratives of 1915 (as well as its "before" and "after"),²⁵ others presented critical analyses of the silence around women and gender in both Turkish and Armenian scholarship.²⁶

In his article "Zabel Yesayan, Woman and Witness, or The Truth of the Mask," Marc Nichanian weaves together letters, biographical information, and in-depth analyses of Yesayan's fictional and non-fictional narratives in order to explore Yesayan's "literary gender"—that is, what it means to be a woman writer testifying to and criticizing the policies of the Unionist regime (1908-1918) and writing in the service of the Soviet regime of the 1930s.²⁷ Both regimes plotted to destroy Yesayan; she, in turn, only managed to escape the annihilation policies of the former. Despite her services to the Soviet regime, exemplified by several of her fictional works, such as *Krake Shapike* (The Burning Shirt), she was arrested during the Great Purge by the Stalinist forces in 1938 and disappeared in 1942.

With the exception of a few singular studies on Zabel Yesayan's narration of the Adana massacres of 1909 and the Armenian Catastrophe—such as Marc Nichanian's "Zabel Yesayan: The End of Testimony and the Catastrophic Turnabout," and Victoria Rowe's "Exile and Genocide: Zabel Yesayan"²⁸—this article is unprecedented in the way in which it explores Zabel Yesayan in great profundity and complexity beyond the perpetrator/

es: Gender Specific Aspects of the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 19, no. 1 (2005); Matthias Bjornlund, "'a Fate Worse Than Dying': Sexual Violence During the Armenian Genocide," in *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century*, ed. D. Herzog (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Vahe Tachjian, "Gender, Nationalism, Exclusion: The Reintegration Process of Female Survivors of the Armenian Genocide," *Nations and Nationalisms* 15, no. 1 (2009).

- 25 Arlene Avakian, Hourig Attarian, Fethiye Çetin, and Marc Nichanian addressed women's various representations of their experiences of the 1915 Catastrophe. Ruben Melkonyan's insightful analysis of memoirs and literature depicting Islamized Armenians, and Neery Melkonian's presentation on Armenian women artists were some of the other presentations that enriched the debate on gender, ethnicity, and genocide.
- 26 For instance, Ayşe Gül Altınay's presentation based on her collaborative work with Yektan Türkyılmaz discussed the gendered silencing of Islamized Armenian survivors. See Ayşe Gül Altınay and Yektan Türkyılmaz, "Unravelling Layers of Gendered Silencing: Converted Armenian Survivors of the 1915 Catastrophe," in *Untold Histories of the Middle East: Recovering Voices from the 19th and 20th Centuries*, eds. Amy Singer, Christoph Neuman, and Selçuk Akşin Somel (London: Routledge, forthcoming).
- 27 See also Hasmik Khalapyan's "Kendine Ait Bir Feminizm: Zabel Yesayan'ın Hayatı ve Faaliyetleri" for an in-depth discussion of Zabel Yesayan's feminism. Hasmik Khalapyan, "Kendine Ait Bir Feminizm: Zabel Yesayan'ın Hayatı ve Faaliyetleri," in *Bir Adalet Feryadı*, eds. Lerna Ekmekçiöğlü and Melisa Bilal (İstanbul: Aras, 2006).
- 28 Marc Nichanian, "Zabel Yesayan: The End of Testimony and the Catastrophic Turnabout," in *The National Revolution*, ed. Marc Nichanian, *Writers of Disaster: Armenian Literature in the Twentieth Century* (London: Gomidas Institute, 2002); Victoria Rowe, "Exile and Genocide: Zabel Yesayan," in *A History of Armenian Women's Writing, 1880-1922* (London: Gomidas Institute, 2009).

victim divide typical of nationalist historiographies of genocide. In *Among the Ruins* (1911), Yesayan acts as “witness” to the Adana massacres, with the purpose of legitimizing the Ottoman fatherland through the sacrifices that the Armenian victims made for it. Nichanian questions Yesayan’s sincerity in her advocacy of Ottoman-ness; however, it seems that in 1911 Yesayan did envision the possibility of a better regime and equal citizenship in the Ottoman Empire. Hence, the sacrifices of Adana would have meaning only if the tragedy of the victims was announced to her fellow “Ottoman compatriots” who would be wounded in their humanity upon reading the testimony recorded by the “secretary of witnesses.” Such empathy might lead to collaboration in the struggle against the “greatest danger threatening the [Ottoman] fatherland, [...] the return of dictatorship.” Yesayan was witnessing in order to become a “citizen” of her own country; her witnessing was tantamount to envisioning a better future for the Ottoman Empire.

A similar level of historical complexity is necessary to analyze Ottoman-Turkish women in their complicity with Unionist policies and/or resistance to the Armenian Catastrophe. İpek Çalışlar and Hülya Adak’s presentations on the panel “Ottoman Women Writers: Zabel Yesayan and Halide Edib on Gender, Ethnicity and Violence” at the Hrant Dink Memorial Workshop of 2009 attempted to analyze the complexity of Halide Edib’s reaction to the Catastrophe in a way that overcame her simplistic association with the Unionist regime during World War I; on the one hand, she was collaborating with Cemal Paşa in conducting educational work at the Aintoura orphanage with the aim to convert Armenian orphans to Islam; on the other hand, she publicly spoke out against genocide and recorded her resistance in her *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, openly criticizing Talat Paşa’s policies.²⁹

Nichanian’s article also explores the significance of trans-national collaboration for promoting women’s rights, such as the *Ligue de Solidarite des dames ottomanes*, a peace organization for establishing solidarity among Ottoman women of all nationalities, founded by Yesayan and the wife of Hasan Fehmi.³⁰ From this significant example, we might conclude that the possibilities that the Unionist regime offered for women’s social organizations had a Janus-faced nature. On the one hand, the CUP promoted the professionalization of women, the publication of journals and literary works on women’s rights, the formation of women’s social organizations,

29 İpek Çalışlar, *Halide Edib* (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, forthcoming in 2010). See also Hülya Adak, “A Valediction to the “Interdiction of Mourning,” or, Walking with the Turkish Jeanne D’Arc (Halide Edib) through Ambiguous Terrains Beyond the Catastrophic Divide,” in *Ottoman Women’s Movements*, eds. Sima Arahamian and Victoria Rowe (Austin: University of Texas Press, forthcoming).

30 Marc Nichanian has mentioned that the organization was inspired by Marya Cheliga’s *Alliance Universelle des Femmes pour la Paix par l’Education*. It is noteworthy that the name of Hasan Fehmi’s wife was not available in any of the sources we were able to access.

and women's access to education; on the other hand, its militant policies impeded the fostering of ties of solidarity among Ottoman women from different nationalities. Zabel Yesayan's reaction to the Adana massacres of 1909 is significant in this context. Whereas Abdülhamid II's absolutist rule or absolutism *per se* could be blamed in the case of the Hamidian massacres (1894-1896), after the revolution of 1908, which promised equality, fraternity and liberty to all Ottomans, what could account for the Adana massacres? As Yesayan's claim to equal citizenship became a utopia to be realized in a distant future, after 1909 she was unable to continue dreaming of a peace organization among all women of the Ottoman Empire. Hence, the possibilities that the CUP offered for feminist organizations of a nationalist nature were perhaps at the detriment of feminist activism beyond national affiliations. At this point, we might *prematurely* conclude that the state's ethnicist nature prevented trans-national women's activism only *after* 1909. But a closer analysis reveals that, in fact, women were divided along nationalist and ethnicist boundaries starting from 1878 onwards. This period does not only coincide with pogroms, massacres, and forced conversions targeting specific ethnicities, but also with other demographic policies, such as the ethnically-oriented abortion and reproductive policies of the Ottoman state, thus defining which women and which mothers were "citizens" of the Ottoman nation.³¹

If Ottoman women writers and activists at the turn of the twentieth century struggled to construct their agency within the context of state violence and pressure, competing nationalisms, and patriarchal gender regimes, the lives of women in the Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey a century later have been shaped by similar forces. In her critical analysis of the predicament of women in the Kurdish movement based on her ethnographic research in the 2000s, Nerina Weiss argues that the "party line" regarding the emancipatory role of the Kurdish struggle for women's rights (turning "uneducated and suppressed" women into "empowered women") is problematic and should be approached with caution. Based on the life stories of four politically active women in a Kurdish community in Southeastern Turkey, Weiss shows that not all women subscribe to the party line in defining their struggle and agency, and that

31 After the Russo-Turkish War of 1878, in contrast to the early modernization efforts of the nineteenth century that entailed Ottomanist policies, the Turkish-Muslim population was defined as the "main demographic pillar of the Empire" and received state protection through strict anti-abortion campaigns instigated through state surveillance. Demirci and Somel have speculated that the CUP regime continued the anti-abortionist and pro-natalist discourse and practices of the Hamidian era, by exercising strict control over Turkish-Muslim subjects. Tuba Demirci and Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Women's Bodies, Demography, and Public Health: Abortion Policy and Perspectives in the Ottoman Empire of the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17, no. 3 (2008): 402, 19-20.

the “emancipatory processes are enmeshed with the introduction of new mechanisms of control over women’s bodies and lives.” In other words, the answers of Weiss’s research participants to the question of “where are the women in the Kurdish struggle?” does not correspond to the Kurdish nationalist discourse of women’s emancipation and empowerment through this struggle.

Weiss’s research suggests that women active in the Kurdish movement face (and articulate) multiple constraints. Resistance to state violence and military interventions in their lives result in torture and incarceration, while transgressing the boundaries of accepted conduct in the Kurdish political community also comes with social and political sanctions of various kinds. While the Kurdish nationalist movement has opened up a space for women’s political activism, this space has been guarded with a set of expectations for “proper conduct” for women. For instance, Weiss discusses the story of Zehra, an illiterate rural young woman who achieved a prestigious position in local Kurdish politics through her involvement in the armed struggle. After serving a prison sentence for this involvement, Zehra became active in her local community as a respected party member and organizer. Yet, this involvement came to an abrupt end with her decision to marry a co-activist; upon marriage, both her husband and herself were expelled from membership in the cadre and even the party itself.

Nerina Weiss’s essay seeks to discuss Kurdish women not as victims of the multiple constraints on their lives, but as women elaborating heterogeneous gendered subjectivities from within these constraints. Weiss is critical of both the Kurdish nationalist movement (for treating feminist issues as secondary to the national cause) and the scholarship on the Kurdish conflict and movement, for disregarding the patriarchal constraints within which Kurdish women activists articulate their political subjectivities.³² As such, Weiss problematizes both the nationalist struggle as a gendered site providing an ambivalent set of opportunities and constraints for women, as well as the methodological nationalism of the literature on this struggle for disregarding its nationalist and gendered nature. Her critique has strong resonances with Arlene Avakian’s critique of Armenian nationalism and genocide scholarship; both Avakian and Weiss force us to take seriously the

32 Yet, these authors think that Weiss’s critique of Handan Çağlayan’s pioneering study on women in the Kurdish movement does not do justice to the multi-layered analysis and critique posed by Çağlayan, particularly regarding the patriarchal constraints faced by women in this movement and the ongoing militarization of their lives and struggle. See Handan Çağlayan, *Analar, Yoldaşlar, Tanrıçalar* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007).

intricate links between gender, ethnic identification, and nationalism, and provide the contours of a feminist analysis of these links. In the words of Cynthia Enloe, both authors invite us to engage in “feminist curiosity”³³ regarding the question of “where are the women?” in ethnicized conflicts, genocides, and nationalist “liberation” struggles.

Gender as an analytical category

A second line of inquiry in the literature on gender, ethnicity, nationalism and the nation-state has involved the introduction of “gender as an analytical category,” analyzing all aspects of life and politics through the critical lens of gender. Responding to Joan Scott’s famous call to move beyond “writing women into history” towards reconceptualizing history (and other realms of life) from a gender perspective,³⁴ a growing body of literature now takes gender as a central concept around which Ottoman and republican societies have been organized, histories have been written, and scholarship has been shaped. The most sophisticated examples of this literature problematize the equation of gender with women and critically analyze how conceptions of masculinity and femininity have informed and constituted processes of ethnic identification, nationalist politics, state-making, economics, literature, and other realms of life and intellectual production.³⁵ This debate has also extended into the area of sexuality, with the links between gender and sexuality being explored, not only in terms of the control over women’s bodies and sexualities, but also the constructions of men’s bodies and sexualities as they have shaped the understanding of hegemonic masculinity.³⁶

33 Enloe, *The Curious Feminist*.

34 According to Scott, this perspective is shaped by two propositions: “gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power.” Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” 1067.

35 For the growing body of literature on masculinity, see Deniz Kandiyoti, *Cariyeler, Bacılar, Yurttaşlar* (İstanbul: Metis, 1997); Ayşe Durakbaşa, “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Modern Kadın ve Erkek Kimliklerinin Oluşumu: Kemalist Kadın Kimliği ve ‘Münevver Erkekler,’” in *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, ed. Ayşe Berktaş Hacımırzaoğlu (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998); Nükhet Sirman, “Gender Construction and Nationalist Discourse: Dethroning the Father in the Early Turkish Novel,” in *Gender and Identity Construction: Women of Central Asia, the Caucasus and Turkey*, eds. Feride Acar and Ayşe Güneş-Ayata (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Ayşe Gül Altınay, *The Myth of the Military-Nation: Militarism, Gender and Education in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Aksu Bora and İlknur Üstün, “Sıcak Aile Ortamı”: *Demokratikleşme Sürecinde Kadınlar ve Erkekler* (İstanbul: TESEV, 2005); Nil Mutluer, *Cinsiyet Halleri: Türkiye’de Toplumsal Cinsiyetin Keşif Sınırları* (İstanbul: Varlık, 2008); Serpil Sancar, *Erkeklik: İmkansız İktidar* (İstanbul: Metis, 2009); Pınar Selek, *Sürüne Sürüne Erkek Olmak* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2009).

36 See Ayşe Kadioğlu, “Cinselliğin İnkârı: Büyük Toplumsal Projelerin Nesnesi Olarak Türk Kadınları,” in *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, ed. Ayşe Berktaş Hacımırzaoğlu (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998); Ayşe Parla, “The ‘Honor’ of the State: Virginity Examinations in Turkey,” *Feminist Studies* 27, no. 1 (2001); Ayşe Öncü, “Global Consumerism, Sexuality as Spectacle, and the Cultural Remapping of Istanbul in the 1990s,” in *Fragments of Culture: The Everyday Life of Modern Turkey*, eds. Deniz Kandiyoti and Ayşe Saktanber (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002); Dicle Koğacıoğlu, “The

From emphasizing gender as being constitutive of nationalisms (including minority nationalisms), over drawing attention to the nationalist tensions among ethnic minority communities, to exploring the possibilities of “queering” studies of sexuality in the Ottoman Empire, the essays in this dossier open up new lines of research and theorizing on gender and sexuality, especially in their interconnections with ethnicity and nationalism. It is noteworthy that three of these pioneering essays that explore uncharted (or relatively less charted) territories are by young scholars who present here parts of their PhD research projects (Weiss, Doğan, and Delice).

Setenay Nil Doğan’s critical intervention in the debates on ethnicity and gender begins with her conceptualization of her research community as “Circassian diaspora nationalists.” Bringing together studies of diaspora and nationalism with a feminist perspective in order to analyze Circassians (who have received very little academic attention in Turkey),³⁷ Doğan starts charting new territory. Her main goal is to understand the historical transformation of the image of the Circassian Beauty in the discourses of Circassian diaspora nationalists. An image popular in nineteenth-century Orientalist literature and twentieth-century Turkish cultural and political discourses alike, the Circassian Beauty, so argues Doğan, constitutes an important sign around which Circassian ethnic identification is organized. Reflecting on Sylvia Walby’s conceptualization of nationalist projects as “simultaneously gender projects,”³⁸ Doğan explores the ways in which this gendered image shapes Circassian diaspora nationalism, albeit with different meanings attached at different times. Doğan’s research draws attention to the ways in which minority nationalisms define themselves *vis-à-vis* the hegemonic majority nationalism, as well as to the changing nature of the relationship between these nationalisms. Nationalist self-identification, in Doğan’s analysis, appears historical, contingent, and dynamic.

Serkan Delice makes a similar intervention into debates on sexuality. According to Delice, perceptions and conceptualizations of sexuality, too, are historical, contingent and dynamic. Delice’s article is unprecedented in the way in which it brings issues of same-sex intimacy (although he

Tradition Effect: Framing Honor Crimes in Turkey,” *Differences* 15, no. 2 (2004); Demirci and Somel, “Women’s Bodies, Demography, and Public Health: Abortion Policy and Perspectives in the Ottoman Empire of the Nineteenth Century.”

37 For earlier works, see Setenay Shami, “Circassian Encounters: The Self as Other and the Production of the Homeland in the North Caucasus,” *Development and Change* 29 (1998); Irvin Cemil Schick, *Çerkes Güzeli: Bir Şarkiyatçı İmgenin Serüveni* (İstanbul: Oğlak, 2004).

38 Sylvia Walby, “Woman and Nation,” in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. Gopal Balakrishnan (London: Verso, 1996).

problematizes this conceptualization), friendship, desire, and sexuality together with an analysis of gender, class, and ethnicities. Delice analyzes the transformation of masculinities and male intimacy in the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century through the exploration of two works: Mustafa Ali's *Mevâ'idü'n-Nefâis Fi-Kavâ'id'l-Mecâlis* (Tables of Delicacies Concerning the Rules of Social Gatherings), and Ahmet Cevdet Paşa's *Ma'rûzât* (Reports). His analysis also illustrates the ways in which power operates in otherizing strategies of the nation-state, as corruption, decadence, and deviance are mapped onto the *ancien régime* through its association with non-normative sexualities in comparison to the hetero-normative metaphors mapped onto Republican Turkey.

Delice's article opens doors to multiple sites of analysis: In the realm of literary analysis, it points to the significance of conducting queer readings of literary texts, or auto/biographies. Delice not only criticizes the existing frameworks for discussing sexuality (particularly male intimacy) in the Ottoman Empire, but he also introduces an alternative framework to conduct such analysis. At the same time, his discussion evokes new questions regarding ethnicity, nationalism, and genocide. How can ethnicity, nationalism and genocide research be queered? How would the communities involved react to the queering of these bodies of literature? How would Turkish and Armenian readers interact with texts such as Arlene Avakian's memoir *Lion Woman's Legacy*, or Micheline Aharonian Marcom's *Three Apples Fell from Heaven*?³⁹ How has hetero-normativity been mapped onto genocidal practice or various forms of nationalism? Delice's analysis inspires a set of questions that would fundamentally challenge some of the basic assumptions of the existing literature in this field.

"The opposite of forgetting":⁴⁰ The case of the Armenian Catastrophe

In her commentary, Arlene Avakian provides an insider's perspective on the Armenian-American community whose existence has been based on an incessant proof of their own victimization during 95 years of genocide-denial by the Turkish state. Avakian points to possibilities of healing beyond the debilitating state of trying to prove obsessively that Ottoman Armenians were "genocided" and waiting for the Godot of genocide-recognition from Turkey. "On the other side of the ocean,"

39 Arlene Avakian, *Lion Woman's Legacy: An Armenian-American Memoir* (New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY, 1992); Micheline Aharonian Marcom, *Three Apples Fell from Heaven* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2005).

40 In the words of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, "the opposite of forgetting is not just remembering, but justice." Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), quoted by Meltem Ahiska, "Occidentalism and Registers of Truth: The Politics of Archives in Turkey," *New Perspectives on Turkey Special Issue on Memory*, no. 34 (2006): 28.

in Turkey, for decades, the tug of war between the “destruction” or “uncovering” of archival documents mapped onto the “denial or proof” of the Armenian Catastrophe⁴¹ has been incapacitating for scholars and non-academics alike in understanding or studying the issue. In fact, the Armenian genocide still remains the topic for “one of the most heated debates about archives,”⁴² particularly in the way in which the opening versus closing, destruction versus availability of the “archive” is politicized to serve the interests of the state.

“Genocide” is *per definition* based on the destruction of the archive and the elimination of the witness.⁴³ However, this is a philosophical postulate. In the case of 1915-1916, it is true that most records of the Unionists have been destroyed and that most archival documents in Turkey have been made inaccessible, but not all. Leading scholars writing histories of the Armenian genocide, such as Taner Akçam and Fuat Dündar, have conducted their historical research based on Ottoman “archival documents.”⁴⁴ Furthermore, in the past decade, with the memory boom of World War I, the histories, testimonies, memoirs, and fictional narratives in Turkish have provided a wide array of sources to study and analyze the period.

These sources, as well as the efforts of a number of scholars and civil society,⁴⁵ have created a space for challenging the “Republican defensive

41 In “Occidentalism and Registers of Truth: The Politics of Archives in Turkey,” Meltem Ahıska argues that “one of the most heated debates about archives in Turkey” revolves around the Armenian genocide. On the one hand, historians on either end of the “event” versus “non-event” polarity refer to different documents in the Ottoman archives to support their claims; on the other hand, historians argue that the archives are not entirely accessible. Unchanging in the debates is the prioritization of the archives in telling the truth about 1915-1916. Ahıska, “Occidentalism and Registers of Truth,” 10.

42 Ibid.

43 Marc Nichanian defines genocide as an act that entails that entails not only massacring but also destroying archives, obliterating memory, and interdicting the mourning of the victims. Marc Nichanian, *The National Revolution*, vol. 1, *Writers of Disaster: Armenian Literature in the Twentieth Century* (London: Gomidas Institute, 2002), 134; David Kazanjian and Marc Nichanian, “Between Genocide and Catastrophe,” in *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, eds. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

44 See, for instance, Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London: Zed Books, 2004), and Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi. İtihat ve Terakki'nin Enisite Mühendisliği (1913-1918)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2008).

45 The interviews given by historians such as Halil Berktaş in Turkish newspapers and periodicals, (see Düzel's interview with Halil Berktaş, *Radikal*, 9 October 2000; Halil Berktaş, “Söylem ve Gerçeklik” [Discourse and Facts], *Nokta*, 22-28 November 2004), and the organization of a multitude of conferences and lecture series—including the groundbreaking conference “Ottoman Armenians during the Demise of the Empire: Responsible Scholarship and Issues of Democracy” that took place in 2005 at Bilgi University; the Hrant Dink Memorial Workshop Series since 2008, at Sabancı University; the Hrant Dink Memorial Lectures since 2008, at Boğaziçi University; the Marc Nichanian Lecture Series on “Writers of Disaster” and “Adana 1909: History, Memory, and Identity from a Hundred Year Perspective” in 2009 at Sabancı University—have contributed significantly to enabling interactions between scholars and non-academics and the process of making cutting-edge scholarship on World War I publicly accessible. In December 2008, a group of scholars announced a website with the name

narrative"⁴⁶ of the Turkish state, which has entailed a multitude of defense strategies—including the justification of the massacring of Armenians as a retaliation for the massacring of Muslim Turks in the Balkan Wars; the thesis of mutuality which claims that the numbers massacred were equal on either side; the attempt to prove that the deportations were a measure of defense to suppress Armenians rebelling against their own government—and hence forged an antithetical relationship between the “deportations” and “massacres.” Lastly, the Republican defensive narrative has concealed the expropriation of land and wealth, the Turkification of place names, and the nationalization of the bourgeoisie.⁴⁷

Contemporary scholarship has uncovered that critical testimonies and fictional works about World War I are not necessarily products of the last decade. In fact, since 2005 literary studies have unravelled a plethora of memoirs and fiction published over the century, narrating or criticizing the deportations, massacres, pogroms, and genocide that took place during and in the aftermath of World War I, ranging from the work of Falih Rıfkı Atay, Refik Halid Karay and Halide Edib to leftist writers such as Orhan Kemal, Yaşar Kemal, and Dido Sotiriu (in translation), as well as the contemporary writers Mıgırdiç Margosyan, Mehmed Uzun, Orhan Pamuk, Elif Şafak, and Esmahan Aykol.⁴⁸

Two leading factors have contributed to this radical shift in scholarship: (1) One among them is the process of denationalization of Turkish

“I apologize,” in an attempt to collect signatures from citizens of Turkey apologizing for the Catastrophe of 1915 and empathizing with the pain of “our Armenian brothers and sisters.” In the span of one year, despite defamation campaigns against the website, 30,474 people publicly apologized (“Özür Diliyorum,” www.ozurdiliyoruz.com).

- 46 Müge Göçek has analyzed the narratives of the Armenian massacres in Turkish historiography under three headings and epochs: The “Ottoman investigative narrative” (1915-1923), the “Republican defensive narrative” (1923-present), and the “postnationalist critical narrative” (1990s-present). The Republican defensive narrative has obliterated the deaths as “distant memories” and assigned the moral blame for the incidents to all parties except the Ottoman Turkish perpetrators. Even the Armenian victims themselves were blamed alongside the Western powers for the events of 1915. Fatma Müge Göçek, “Reading Genocide: Turkish Historiography on the Armenian Deportations and Massacres of 1915,” in *Middle East Historiographies, Narrating the Twentieth Century*, eds. Israel Gershoni, Amy Singer, and Y. Hakan Erdem (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 110-11, 17.
- 47 Ibid. For an exploration of the different sub-narratives of the “Republican defensive narrative” and how they have influenced discursive processes and national myth-making, see also Hülya Adak, “Identifying the “Internal Tumors” of World War I; Talat Paşa’nın Hatıraları [Talat Paşa’s Memoirs], or the Travels of a Unionist Apologia into History,” in *Räume des Selbst: Selbstzeugnisforschung Transkulturell*, eds. Andreas Baehr, Peter Burschel, and Gabriele Jancke (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2007). Altınay and Türkylmaz, “Unravelling Layers of Gendered Silencing.”
- 48 See Murat Belge, “Edebiyatıta Ermeni Sorunu,” *Birikim*, no. 202 (2006); Erol Köroğlu, “Susunluğun Farklı Kırılma Noktaları Olarak Türk Edebiyatından Unutma ve Hatırlama Örnekleri,” *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, no. 5 (2007); Hülya Adak, “Ötekileştiremediğimiz Kendimizin Keşfi: 20. Yüzyıl Otobiyografik Anlatıları ve Ermeni Tehciri,” *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, no. 5 (2007).

scholarship *per se*.⁴⁹ Such sources may have existed during the century of Turkish state denial, unhampered by censorship due perhaps to reading strategies determined by the “dominant paradigm in Turkey, that of nationalism.”⁵⁰ This paradigm may have blinded readers’ eyes to episodes, events, characters, and different modes of “poetic justice” not in harmony with the “official truth.” The denationalization of scholarship may, in turn, have *unblinded* critics, enabling them to notice and engage with moments of resistance (to official history) and history-writing from different perspectives (such as not taking the Turkish protagonist or the allegory of the Turkish nation as the norm). (2) A fundamental paradigm shift in history writing has enabled the study of these sources as significant histories of World War I not subservient to an outside, external, objective history imposed as “official truth.” This coincided with the post-structuralist turn and the “testimonial revolution” in Nichanian’s terms—that is, the process of studying sources in their own right as “monuments,” and not as “documents” instrumentalized for the purposes of proving the truth of a particular “archive.”⁵¹ When analyzed as monuments in their own right, Turkish memoirs and fiction do not singlehandedly serve the interests of the national imaginary. Even those that have been show-cased as perfect examples of “national literature” (for instance, Halide Edib’s *Ateşten Gömlek*) harbor contradictions and inconsistencies that unsettle the “Republican defensive narrative” of 1915.

What awaits future research are questions revolving around different narrations of the Armenian Catastrophe, as well as other critical accounts of World War I in men’s and women’s writing. How is genocide gendered and sexualized in their works? How do these works represent other ethnicities (such as Kurds, Greeks, Assyrians, and Yezidis), be-

49 The growing scholarship on the Armenian Catastrophe is one instance within a series of works illustrating the post-nationalist turn in literary scholarship. See also Erol Köroğlu, *Türk Edebiyatı ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı (1914-1918): Propagandanadan Milli Kimlik İnşasına* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2004); *New Perspectives on Turkey* Special Issue on Literature and the Nation, no. 36 (2007); Murat Belge, *Genesis: “Büyük Ulusal Anlatı” ve Türklerin Kökeni* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2008); Murat Belge and Jale Parla, eds., *Balkan Literatures in the Era of Nationalism* (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi University Press, 2009).

50 Fatmagül Berktaş, “Cumhuriyet’in 75 Yıllık Serüvenine Kadınlar Açısından Bakmak,” in *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, ed. Ayşe Berktaş Hacımırzaoğlu (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998), 1.

51 Marc Nichanian draws on the work of Michel Foucault to distinguish between monument/document; the document is always already instrumentalized, whereas a monument “exists only for itself, to be analyzed as a text in its own right.” The “testimonial revolution” entails analyzing documents (which were always subservient to the archive) as monuments on their own. Nichanian’s specific example is the Armenian testimonies of genocide which were always subservient to the archive of proof. With the testimonial revolution, a new historiography of such testimonies has started to be written, as these texts were now analyzed as “monuments.” See Marc Nichanian, “Testimony: From Document to Monument,” in *The Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard Hovannisian (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 41-42, 44.

yond the polarity of Turks vs. Armenians? Such questions could be analyzed through comparative studies of the Armenian Catastrophe that juxtapose Turkish literature next to Greek and Armenian literatures, and Armenian literature in the diaspora (e.g., Armenian-American literature).

Towards a different future

In one of the televised debates in which he participated, Hrant Dink defined discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation as a form of racism. In his dedicated struggle against all forms of discrimination, oppression, and exploitation, the crossroads between gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity constituted spaces of critical and creative intervention to imagine a different future.

Whether they engage in an open discussion of “a different future” (as does Avakian), or draw the contours of that future through their analysis, the contributions to this dossier chart creative paths for moving beyond the various methodological nationalisms, the normalization of gender roles, the silencing (or, conversely, naturalization) of ethnic identifications, as well as the hetero-normativity in scholarship and politics alike—just like the legacy of Hrant Dink, whose memory and struggle has brought us together in the first place, and that of Dicle Koğacıoğlu, whose work on gender, ethnicity, and nationalism has been profoundly inspiring.

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