VICKEN CHETERIAN, *Open Wounds: Armenians, Turks and a Century of Genocide* (Oxford University Press, 2015). Pp. 393. $29.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780190263508

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"What happens when an entire nation is uprooted from its land, massacred and the survivors are dispersed around the globe, and the world simply turns a blind eye?" This rather disturbing political and moral ignorance about the Armenian genocide of 1915 is the starting point of Vicken Cheterian's *Open Wounds: Armenians, Turks and a Century of Genocide*. The international community did not keep its promise to hold the perpetrators responsible for "crimes against humanity" as the Entente had declared on 24 May 1915, while Turkey, as the legal successor of the perpetrator regime, has engaged in rigorous denial politics ever since its foundation in 1923. In recent years, however, the genocide has made its way back into public memory and discourse in Turkey, turning from a neglected, denied, and silenced topic to a vividly visible one. Cheterian wants to know "why, after suppressing the memory of this great crime for nine decades, did the debate return to Turkey?"

To pursue this question, the author looks at a period of about 150 years, from the emergence of the "Armenian Question" in the 18th century and the destruction politics of the Young Turks in 1915 to present-day Armenian–Turkish relations. This long time span already indicates that the book addresses a wider, also nonacademic audience interested in the political history of the genocide and contemporary Armenian–Turkish relations. *Open Wounds* provides a comprehensive insight into many relevant issues with regard to the consequences of denial for Armenians and other minorities such as the Kurds, in Turkey and the Middle Eastern region. Finally, Cheterian also takes the role of Turkey's foreign relations and the Armenian–Azerbaijani conflict into account. The latter played a major role in the failure of the normalization process between Turkey and the Armenian Republic.

The book gives an impressive account of how survivors and successive generations resisted erasure through Armenian historiography, memory politics, and the composition and evolution of the Diaspora. Cheterian develops two main arguments. First, he stresses continuity in terms of anti-Armenian and antiminority politics in Turkey as one of the most important consequences of the Turkish state's denial politics. From this perspective, the suppression of the Kurds, for example, is but one manifestation of this continuity. Second, when looking at survivor resistance and efforts to reframe the debate, Cheterian regards writing as the primary and most effective tool.

The strength of the book lies in the second part, where Cheterian provides a firsthand account of the local remains of the Armenian presence in places such as Gazi-Antep, Antakya, Kayseri, Diyarbakir, and the Syrian city of Anjar—most of which were the homelands of a vast number of Armenians for centuries. Cheterian details how the stories of the violence against the Armenians are still present and lively told. Most importantly, he delivers primary research on how Armenian identity is revived and contributes valuable information on the recent phenomenon of reconversions of Islamized or hidden Armenians. We also learn about the special case of Dersim, which after being a refuge for many Armenians was itself subject to genocide in 1938 by the Kemalists. In this part of the book, Cheterian succeeds in making readers aware of a highly unsettling coexistence: the dimension of total destruction on the one hand and an unrelenting resilience of the memory of Armenian life and history on the other.

With regard to his argument of continuity, Cheterian shows how lack of accountability and ignorance of the international community (or tacit collaboration) has resulted in lasting

discrimination against Armenians in Turkey. The founders of modern Turkey, who consisted of the same Young Turk elites responsible for the genocide, continued their anti-Armenian policies well into the republican period. Modern Turkey accomplished what the Young Turks started: it put great effort into eliminating any remnants of Armenian life and presence in the Armenian Highlands.

Cheterian expands the argument of continuity to the case of the Kurds and the Kurdish question, which is understandable as the Kurds who were inextricably entangled in the history of Armenian destruction and later became victims of Turkish nationalism themselves. However, relating the genocide and its denial to current conflicts in the Middle East, civil war in Syria, and particularly the rise of the Islamic State with its systematic assaults on non-Muslims seems a bit of an overstretch. Nevertheless, when it comes to showing the continuity of anti-Armenian politics and discrimination of Armenians in modern Turkish history, Cheterian's study is a strong and rich case.

Another prominent example for continuity is the case of Hrant Dink, the Armenian journalist who had become a vocal voice in Turkey in the early 2000s but was killed in 2007. While it is convincing that the racist construction of Armenians as the "quintessential other" was key in the process leading to the genocide of 1915 (p. 36), and that this deeply racist construction still prevails in Turkey, Cheterian's evaluation of Dink as having "succeeded in making the Armenian Genocide a Turkish issue" (p. 312) runs the risk of minimizing or neglecting the resistances of other, albeit invisible, Armenian protagonists. Recent scholarship by Melissa Bilal, Lerna Ekmekcioglu, and Talin Suciyan have shed light on less visible Armenians in modern Turkey, yet still, in many accounts on Dink, there is almost no mention that Dink worked closely with and relied on others in the Armenian community in and outside of Turkey. Reference to Dink's writings and visions throughout the book also shows that Cheterian, as many others, takes Dink's positions as an exclusive and unquestionable point of reference in Armenian–Turkish relations. While Dink's contribution and efforts to improve Turkish–Armenian relations and his courage to be in the spotlight in a highly Armenophobe environment should be acknowledged, it is problematic to reduce complex sociopolitical processes such as the transformation of the genocide debate in Turkey to one person alone.

This brings me to a related point that is quite noticeable in *Open Wounds* when it comes to the question of how the genocide debate returned to Turkey: the book has a tendency to focus on individual (Turkish) progressives and some well-known key events that are widely perceived as decisive milestones in the beginning of a critical discourse in Turkey, such as the "alternative Armenian conference" in 2005 or the Apology Campaign in 2008. Yet, it does so by underestimating their specific political contexts. I bring your attention to Cheterian's discussion of Turkish writers who have extensively dealt with the genocide topic: publisher and human rights activist Ragip Zarakolu, historian Taner Akcam, and journalist Hasan Cemal, who is not only a very well-known journalist in Turkey but the grandson of Cemal Pasa, the third top name in the Young Turkish regime responsible for the genocide. These three actors wrote and published under very different political and social contexts. Zarakolu started to publish on issues related to the genocide at the height of the armed conflict between the Turkish military and the Kurdish movement in the 1990s, while Taner Akcam did his research in German exile in the 1990s. Hasan Cemal revised his denialist position and acknowledged the genocide in the late 2000s, when democratic conditions were more conducive than in the 1990s, when human rights activists such as Ragip Zarakolu or Eren Keskin were pushing the boundaries of the speakable.

Another example of the tendency to overlook the political context of specific events that led to more critical engagements with the past in Turkey is the impact of political pressure on Turkey—particularly the effect of Turkey's European Union (EU) candidacy. It should not be forgotten that the most noticeable political steps (e.g., renovation of cultural artifacts and some form of restitution) and the regress since 2010 (renewed wave of expropriation of properties

belonging to Armenian institutions) were carried out under the *very same* Justice and Development Party government. It is also not a coincidence that the most visible progress in the genocide discussion took place in the most dynamic phase of Turkish–EU relations between 2000 and 2005, when international pressure on Turkey with regard to genocide acknowledgement was at its height. Cheterian bypasses the fact that the European Parliament was among the first international institutions to acknowledge the Armenian genocide in 1987. Here, the parliament also suggested that genocide acknowledgement by Turkey be a precondition for its eventual EU entry.

Nevertheless, *Open Wounds* is a highly informative and comprehensive book for readers who want to learn about key aspects of the legacy of the Armenian Genocide and its denial.

BASHAR ABU MANNEH, *The Palestinian Novel from 1948 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016). Pp. 245. $99.99 cloth. ISBN 9781107136526

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Palestinian prose fiction in Arabic has received unprecedented attention in English-language scholarship in recent years. In his 2012 *Catastrophe and Exile in the Modern Palestinian Imagination Telling Memories* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), Ihab Saloul examines memories of the *nakba* (the catastrophic forced exodus of Palestinians from what became the state of Israel in 1948) in narratives of exile. This was followed five years later by Joseph Farag's *Politics and Palestinian Literature in Exile: Gender, Aesthetics and Resistance in the Short Story* (London: I.B.Taurus, 2017).

Bashar Abu Manneh's *The Palestinian Novel from 1948 to the Present* is a more theoretically ambitious treatment of modern Palestinian prose literature. Engaging with Georg Lukács' theory of the relationship of the novel to history, and Theodor Adorno's defense of modernism, Abu Manneh situates his own analysis of Palestinian works within a critical reading of postcolonial theory. Through his readings of works by Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, Ghassan Kanafani, Imil Habibi, and Sahar Khalifeh (supplemented with brief analyses of Jean Genet's *Prisoner of Love* [New York: New York Review Books, 1986], and Elias Khoury's *Gate of the Sun* [Brooklyn, N.Y.: Archipelago Books, 1998]), he argues that until the 1967 and 1973 Arab–Israeli wars, and the failure of the Palestinian revolution and concurrent demise of progressive political regimes across the Arab world, Palestinians wrote realist novels whose form and narrative perspective were informed by the *nakba* and the political optimism of the postwar Arab world. Diminished hopes in the Arab world from the late 1970s and 1980s then gave rise to modernist works that, he argues following Adorno, simultaneously serve as reflections and forms of resistance to political defeat and the impossibility of an emancipatory politics.

Relatedly, Abu Manneh makes an argument about the nature and history of the Palestinian revolution itself and its implications for postcolonial theory. The Palestinian movement for national liberation was, in its early years, a humanist and universalist movement that sought to emancipate the Arab world through the liberation of Palestine. However, in time, he argues, and in particular in the wake of the 1970–71 Jordanian civil war and the 1973 Arab–Israeli war, it evolved into a statist movement whose primary goal became the liberation of the land rather than the liberation of Palestinians and other Arabs. This distinction allows Abu Manneh to make the case for the nation (as opposed to narrow nationalism, particularly as it relates to ethnicity) as a potentially emancipatory and anticolonial category. The distinction between the early years of the revolution