

explication, and presentation of this genre of literature, I have striven to show the world the horrifying reality that escapes human imagination, the landscape of blood and tears, the ugly image of the prototype of the crime against humanity and civilization⁵ that played a major role in inspiring Raphael Lemkin to coin the term “genocide.”

Years of exploration in the field of genocide literature has convinced me that while it is not too complicated to draw a map of the immediate literary responses to the Armenian Genocide, a map of the responses of succeeding generations requires broader investigation, closer scrutiny, and a more cautious approach. Without ruling out the role and significance of the first-generation survivor-writers’ literature as well as the oral or written testimonies of first-generation survivors in understanding genocide and in their function as effective transmitters of memory, I suggest that in most cases they served as raw material to inspire literary responses by the second and third generations, who take on the role of storyteller, for they rarely leave the raw material untouched. The raw material is transformed into a structured memoir or a novel with a specific form and style, embellished by the author’s artistic skill and rich imagination. The most common difficulty in this complicated task is the struggle to overcome one’s emotions, to be able to relive the world of genocide and produce an authentic expression of the painful saga. These responses—fictionalization of the first generation’s eyewitness

⁵ “Crimes against humanity and civilization is a phrase used by the Allied Powers, i.e. France, Great Britain, and Russia, in a declaration dated May 28, 1915, holding the Ottoman government responsible for the ongoing massacres of the Armenian population of the Empire.