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## **THE SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF DEPICTIVE PORTRAYING OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE IN SPANISH LITERATURE**

During 1880–1914, deep social and cultural changes emerged in the entire Western world. It may be called century crisis, as the most distinguishing characteristics were the technical and scientific progress, the rapid industrial development, the proliferation of social and anarchic theories, the crisis of positivism (objectivity) and rationalism, when man suspected whether science and intelligence were enough to explain and recognize the world. This mentality was later turned into existentialism, according to which, the human being was created for death and the latter inevitably caused an existentialist sorrow to man. This period was eventually ended with the First World War.

Generally the twentieth century was distinguished by its cruelty, during which 180 million people were killed, while natural disasters caused the loss of 24 million people<sup>1</sup>, according to Baltasar Real, a member of Spanish Supreme Court. The professor of cultural studies at the University of Barcelona Joan Frigole Reixach's enormous cultural and anthropological research and studies allow describing the 20th century as «The Age of Genocide».

«The twentieth century has been characterized as «the Age of Genocide» and it probably keeps in contact with the collapse of various empires.»<sup>2</sup>

However, the process of dismantling and fragmentation of the past century first affects the person's inner world and the nascent effects, which make man become «a psychological structure with an extreme tension, which though seeks to be protected, sheltered from those forces and tension, puts every effort to neutralize and win them, it is in a constant risk of demolition, destruction and danger, faces the critical issue of «how to live»<sup>3</sup>. The deconstruction of human spiritual world is an evidence about the reason, consistently alienated from humanity and reminds of a two-edged pointer: on the one hand it is the beginning of the process of man's destruction by man (hence the wars, massacres, killings and human cruelty become common), on the other hand, the same effect causes deepening of «psychological collapse» and internal crisis.

This overall depressed mood also involved Spain and the Spanish of the century, because of the defeat of the Spanish and the loss of colonies, the struggle of Catalonia and Basque Country for independence in the Spanish-American War,

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<sup>1</sup> Guarch G., 2005, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Joan Frigole Reixach, 2003, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Edoyan H., 2009, 156.

which not only aggravated the relations within the country, but became deeper during the civil war. Therefore, those historical events in Spain laid a foundation for a long-lasting social and psychological crisis.

In fact, war breaks the souls of people, deprives them of comfort and joy till the end of their life, becoming a cause of human isolation and solitude. Therefore, hunger, deprivation, violence, mental emptiness became constant companions of the Civil War and post-war Spain. After the war, the period of analysis and reevaluation broke out, during which the Spanish intellectual also referred to universal issues with the help of his own problems, which had already become his subject of interest. And as always happens, the search of the most vital national issues in the art opens the way to universal. As the Spanish writers lived and thought of the root problems of the national life, they achieved creative decisions of comprehensive, universal significance<sup>4</sup>.

«Thus, the subject of genocide has begun circulating in the Spanish society since the 70s, because the atrocity and murders, occurred during the civil war, and the dictatorship of General Franco, were categorized as genocide<sup>5</sup>. This view has its supporters even today, and it is justified by the fact that «the war between different parts of the same nation also implies genocide to the extent that it is not only limited with the defeat of the other part, but also involves destruction, loss, relaxation, humiliation of the latter<sup>6</sup>. Thus, in this context of Spanish literature the topic of the Armenian Genocide has started since the 80s of the last century, which has widely developed since June of the 21st century.

The Armenian Genocide is the greatest pain and tragedy not only of the Armenian people but of all mankind. 'Genocide is a universal tragedy both in terms of human being and humanism, and it makes all of us, living on the earth, become responsible,»<sup>7</sup>. writes Kapuściński in the published article of «The Pathologies of Power».

In spite of the centenary distance, the issue of the Armenian Genocide has not lost its relevance, trying to achieve prevention and condemnation of any genocide. A vast amount of diverse literature has been accumulated, and even today the publication of books, dedicated to genocide, continues. Generally, the modern art and literature are interested in the issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century man, so this should be the explanation of the belonging of the genocide to the most pressing topics of the world literature and its intrusion into the universal issues of the modern world.

Unlike other countries, which have become refuge providers after the genocide or where the Armenian community is dominating, the topic of genocide is always in circulation, while Spain reacted to the Armenian great tragedy much later. Nevertheless, the Spanish reader was familiar with the Turkish description, which got its portrayal in the talented writer Juan Goytisolo's work, called 'Ottoman Istanbul', in which the Spanish writer restored the prevailing opinion of the West about the Turkish ethnicity in his travel thoughts to Istanbul.

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<sup>4</sup> Terteryan I. A., 1973, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Julius Ruiz, the metanarratives of extermination, Book Review, August 2014, <http://www.revistadelibros.com/articulos/las-metanarraciones-del-exterminio>:

<sup>6</sup> Joan Frigolé Reixach, 2003, 13.

<sup>7</sup> Kapuściński R., December 10, 2000, 15.

«In the West, during the luxury period of the Ottoman Empire, the dominant image of the Turkish is represented as barbaric, cruel, brutal and bloody, handed over the physical pleasure and the nasty spoil age of Sodom»<sup>8</sup>.

The Armenian Genocide began to be spoken about in Spain only in the 80s of the last century, when a group of young people tried to draw the world's attention to the incident and made the voice of the survivors audible. In this way, Spain heard about the genocide for the first time, and the famous Spanish journalist Jose Antonio Gurriaran was the first who spoke about it in the art language. Thus, in 1982 'The Bomb' novel made the Armenian Genocide issue be put into circulation in the Spanish reality. Gurriaran writes the novel with «self-reference» (absolute oneness of real narrative and fictional image), as if confession, where the story of own life becomes not only an opportunity of genocide consequences and imaging of their tragic effect, but generally a reference of painful issues of violence, terrorism and hatred. «The Bomb» is a symbol of explosion in man, when he suddenly notices or simply discovers someone's inner world, standing next to him. «The bomb» was intended to blow up the human apathy to the Armenian pain, achieve its recognition and consciousness of considering the others' pain their own.

«The Bomb» is a novel about anti-terrorism and anti-violence, the faith and love towards man deny violence in general. The book tells the story of getting rid of hatred and achieving forgiveness, which becomes relevant for all times.

An interesting pattern can be seen between revisiting the genocide, running questions and the literature of that country. In our opinion, the territorial factor is significant in this matter and it is directly proportional to the subtopic of genocide. Thus, in the Turkish and Arabic literature, the literary hero is the Islamic Armenian woman, who discovers her roots at the end of her life (typical to the Turkish literature) or tells her story through the grandchildren<sup>9</sup>, or the reader witnesses the inner psychological turmoil of the hero (in this case, too, Islamic Armenian women characters form a majority) in Arabic prose<sup>10</sup>. This should be explained by the fact that during the genocide in the mentioned countries there exists one of the genocide consequences, the reconciliation phenomenon of stolen lives and the ensuing identity acquirement with own memories. In the case of the survivors, who have settled in different countries and formed the Armenian Diaspora, trying to re-establish the national existence, the topics of nostalgia and longing are typical. In Spanish literature the discussion of the Armenian Genocide chronologically began with the Armenian terrorist activities as a result of the genocide, which was one of the topics of interest of the Spanish, related to the activities of the «Basque Etta» terrorist gang.

With «The Bomb» book the author not only focuses on the Armenian genocide, generally on the mankind theme, but also, maybe not directly, on the terrorism topic especially developed in Spain in the 80s, which is presented as one of the evils of the twentieth century.

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<sup>8</sup> Goytisolo J., 2003, 76.

<sup>9</sup> Melkonyan R., 2010, 127.

<sup>10</sup> Sargis Kirakosyan, 2005, 118–121.

In 1999 the Catalan classic writer Maria Angels Anglada introduced the «Aram's Diary» novel with the conscious element of moral commitment of an individual, which was the writer's tribute to one of the victims of genocide, Daniel Varujan, who symbolized the collective image of the killed Armenians in the novel.

Anglada depicts national temperament, habits, culture, especially poetry, with her unique lyricism, ensuring that it is impossible to conceal the indelible memory with oblivion. The writer exposed the inhuman and anti-cultural character of the Armenian Genocide, observed Genocide in the cultural profile, drawing parallels between the poet and the haters, and the poetry against barbarism. Culture is the best remedy against hatred and the argument of justice, truth. It is indicated that barbarism and brutal hatred are born from the lack of culture or, even worse, from its absence. Anglada aggravates the role of memory, confirming the opportunity of transferring memory, achieving justice and truth through culture and literature in particular.

Already in the 21st century, the movement condemning Genocide in Spain became more powerful and there were published books dedicated to Genocide one after another. The Catalan architect and writer Gonzalo Hernandez Guarcha presented a trilogy, dedicated to the Armenian Genocide, to the Hispanic community: «The Armenian Family Tree» (2002), «The Armenian heritage» (2008) and «White Mountain», published in 2009 (the novel was originally titled «East Man») novels, which reflected the atmosphere and the reality of the Turkish state with a deep realism, where the hatred and envy were dominating.

The author highlights the display of the art space and time «openness»: the time and space of the novels are historical and social. It is open in the space of the Ottoman Empire of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20th centuries and of the historical time, depicting from different groups of representatives to politicians, the whole state system, built on the fabrication, non-legality and self-seeking. It also depicts the struggle for the throne of Turkey and discovers the killing tendency of the Turkish on the genetic level. It seems like everyone from Sultan to common soldier is infected with this disease, and it leads to public exposure, which reveals all the viciousness of the Ottoman Empire. The writer first describes the murder, cruelty and violence as the characteristics of the human crisis of the 20th century, as the «crisis of humanism»<sup>11</sup>, where the writer examines the issues of the genocide. Thus, the writer depicts the effect of the genocide on the people's spiritual world and fate. The psychological complexes, grieving in pain and keeping silence, the hopelessness, the inability of believing the observed horrors, the lost childhood, the refund of family, life and time, getting rid of the shadows of the past or just starting from the new page have been presented in cases of genocide survivors.

The writer represents the theme of women, exposed to violence, and children born as a result of violence, reveals the Armenian children's psychological complexes. It should be noted that the discussion of the mentioned themes, which has been ignored in the Armenian literature, is a brave step by the Spanish writer, whose characters are chosen successfully.

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<sup>11</sup> Guarch H. G., 2009, 439.

In case of Gonzalo Guarch's works, the art standard is inferior to the historical cognitive value, but if a foreigner writes it, and it is once again a humanity call to the worldwide reader and it is a denial of the human tragedy, then the historical cognitive value should be highlighted, which is extremely important for foreign readers.

Twenty-five years after publishing the first book, Jose Antonio Gurriaran again revives the Armenian topic and publishes 'The Armenians: Forgotten Genocide' (2008) novel, in which he creates his novel-tour with deep penetration of the Armenian essence and history, with psychological deepening of the national fate, with stories heard from various meetings. The writer tries to tell with deep recognition about the Armenians, living in the homeland and in the Diaspora, about the difficulties they have overcome, and in case of the genocide survivors, he tells about the overcome sufferings. During this period the authorial feelings and impressions are accompanied by the historical events, the stories of genocide survivors, the evidence-memories of witnesses or heirs, resulting in a tour, rich in historical, cultural thoughts with an autobiographical basis, which reveals Armenia and the Armenian people with their experiences and of course the genocide pain.

The impressions of the Caucasian trip were sketched in "The Caucasus between Legends and Kalashnikov" book published in 2007 by the Catalan writer and photographer Mark Morte, dedicated to the history of the three nations. Mark Morten refers to the genocide in the form of the essay in «The Armenian Disaster» chapter (let's remember that it was Yervand Otyan who called genocide a 'Disaster' in the valuable work of «Cursed years»), noting that «the history of the Armenian Genocide is a wrinkled topic till today, almost a century later. In 2008 Morte published a fiction novel, «The Children of Ararat», which he created with the collision of realism and poetry and built a classic novel. By the way, both the plot and the characters have an indirect development: they are complicated and psychological characters that help the writer embody the genocide survivors, an entire generation, whose childhood coincided with the period of the genocide and suffered the so-called «lost generation», people, who were devastated internally, lost spiritually, whose life was crippled because of the genocide. The writer creates positive image of the Turk (Mehmet), used in the novel to reveal the man's personal drama when a person faces the monstrousness and tragedy of life, the impossibility of changing «the life path» causes the defeat of the hero and the havoc of the hero reflects the destruction of human values and the deformation of moral and humane systems.

Thus, both Morte and other authors see the absurdity of war and the genocide as a symbol of worldwide evil, observe the tragic destiny, helplessness and loneliness of a person; not only causes of genocide, violence and war, but also the nascent tragedy becomes a conception of life, an inevitable defeat.

In Guarch's novels the priority is given to the narrative with factual basis and creative decisions, Gurriaran introduces the psychological complexes of the survivors' children and the genocide, nascent from silence. Mark Morten and Maria Anglada create lyrically separated fiction novels with the memories of children, who survived the genocide, and with the psychological deepening, where the history of the Armenian Genocide and the Ottoman Empire is explained to the

Spanish reader in detail: the period and atmosphere that gave birth to the Genocide. In Spanish Literature Genocide is represented from Hamid Massacres to 1915 and then the psychological trauma, pain and indifference of the post-genocide period, genocide survivors and descendants. In general, in Spanish literature the following trend is observed in terms of the Armenian Genocide reference is discussed in terms of the observed trend: The Spanish writers especially pay attention to the psychological consequences of genocide and the victim-executioner relationship. In the 20th century, the theme of human loneliness, nascent from the spiritual emptiness of life, is displayed at the genocide survivors, and the genocide traumas become a reason of a spiritual crisis of the characters, those characters feel solitude on two levels, spiritual (terrible and unforgettable memories) and physical (loss of family).

Genocide survivors remind of Dostoevsky's heroes, who reveal the human degradation in the psychological background<sup>12</sup>. There are almost no straight lines of the image of genocide, there is the history of the Armenians of the second, third generation, rich in the effects of 1915. Perhaps, only Gonzalo Guarch and Mark Morte try to create historical characters and give episodes of direct events.

In Spanish literature the books of the genocide (eight fiction works of four authors) are written only in prose. This should be explained by the fact that the novel is able to achieve poly-background portrayal of life, besides, "the novel is the most changeable genre that is why it reflects the transformation of reality in a profound, significant, sensitive and rapid way<sup>13</sup>. Genocide is expressed in Spanish literature with all the subtypes of autobiographical prose (diary, tour, memoirs and autobiographical novel), and Historical genre (providing the best opportunities of raising historical, national issues). It is difficult to determine the question of belonging to a particular genre (it is synthesis of several types of genres), which is characteristic to the modern literature in general, when the clear genre boundaries are deleted and today's literary critic continues disputing the distinct formulations of genre belonging.

In terms of the genre type, these books should be classified as a novel journal, novel-tour and novel-chronicle.

Spanish authors speak about the double genocide: physical and oblivion. If in Gurriaran's works the genocide oblivion is in the foreground, and it is reflected from the title of the book, then the others also condemn oblivion, which exists in the context of fiction work or is the reason of the idea creation. Meanwhile, in Spanish literature the double genocide is expressed in the historical concept, as well. Aside from the 1915, the Hamid massacres of 1894–96 are also described as genocide.

Thus, the Spanish writers examine the genocide in the aspect of the existence of the degradation of human and world integrity and the searches of human existence, typical to the 20th century, where genocide is viewed as a motivation of the mentioned-above phenomena, moreover, as a universal problem.

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<sup>12</sup> Edoyan H., 2009, 172.

<sup>13</sup> Bakhtin M., 2000, 300.

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## ОСОБЕННОСТИ ИЗОБРАЖЕНИЙ НА ТЕМУ АРМЯНСКОГО ГЕНОЦИДА В ИСПАНСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ

### РЕЗЮМЕ

В статье анализируются восемь романов из произведений испанских писателей, посвященных теме армянского геноцида, в которых для испаноязычного читателя раскрывается история Османской Империи и армянского геноцида, эпоха и атмосфера, которые родили геноцид. Представляется изображение темы со стороны разных авторов. В статье представлены использование художественных принципов и критериев, аспекты рассмотрения геноцида, характеристика армянского и турецкого народов, мотивы геноцида, круг выдвинутых вопросов.

Писатели исследуют тему одиночества человека, которое исходит из жизненной пустоты, в контексте первого геноцида 20 века. Писатели взяли на себя цель раскрыть историческую правду, а некоторые из них старались изобразить геноцид в рамках отношений человека и войны. Главная тема романов – отношение жертвы и палача. Это история непотери человеческого в страданиях и в труднейших ситуациях. Проблематика романов – человек и его проблемы, когда они увеличиваются в состоянии ослабленных жизненных ориентаций.

**ՍԻՐԱՆՈՒՇ ԿԱՐԱՊԵՏՅԱՆ**  
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**ՀԱՅՈՑ ՑԵՂԱՍՊԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԹԵՄԱՅԻ ՊԱՏԿԵՐՄԱՆ  
ԱՌԱՆՁՆԱՀԱՏԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ ԻՍՊԱՆԱԿԱՆ  
ԳՐԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄԵՋ**

**ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ**

Հոդվածում քննվում են հայոց ցեղասպանությանն անդրադարձած իսպանացի գրողների ստեղծագործությունները՝ գեղարվեստական ութ վեպեր, որոնցում իսպանալեզու ընթերցողի համար բացահայտվում է Օսմանյան կայսրության ու հայոց ցեղասպանության պատմությունը, ժամանակաշրջանն ու մթնոլորտը, որոնք ծնեցին ցեղասպանությունը: Հոդվածում ներկայացվում է տարբեր հեղինակների կողմից թեմայի պատկերումը, գեղարվեստական սկզբունքների ու չափանիշների կիրառումը, ցեղասպանության քննման հայեցակերպը, հայ և թուրք ժողովուրդների բնութագիրը, ցեղասպանության դրդապատճառները, առաջ քաշած հարցադրումների շրջանակը:

Կյանքի հոգևոր դատարկությունից սկիզբ առնող մարդու մենության թեման գրողները քննում են 20-րդ դարի առաջին ցեղասպանության համատեքստում: Գրողներն իրենց առաջ նպատակ են դնում հանդես գալ պատմական ճշմարտության մեկնաբանությամբ, իսկ նրանցից ոմանք ջանացել են ցեղասպանությունը պատկերել մարդու և պատերազմի փոխհարաբերության շրջանակում: Վեպերի հիմնական թեման գոհ-դահիճ փոխհարաբերությունն է, տառապանքի ու դժվարագույն իրադրության մեջ անգամ մարդ տեսակը չկորցնելու պատմությունը: Վեպերի պրոբլեմատիկան մարդն է ու նրա հիմնախնդիրները, երբ նրանք ավելի են սրվում կյանքի բարոյական կողմնորոշիչների թուլացման պայմաններում: