

many of the burdens of the collective experience.”² We carry the burden of the traumatic experience endured by half of the Armenian nation that perished in the deserts of Syria or somehow survived the Catastrophe and vainly tried to return to normal life.

I have chosen a long and tortuous road in search of closure for myself and my people.

With my previous monographs I wrapped up my survey of the first-generation survivor-writers’ perceptions of the past traumatic experience of the nation and their responses to it.³ I tried to unearth and map out the circumstances and influential factors prevailing in the immediate aftermath of the Genocide that were instrumental in shaping the psychology, the philosophy of life, the outlook, and the spirit of the survivors, and what could have been transmitted to the next generations. I argued that, although in terms of legal status these new members of diasporan Armenian communities were immigrants, it was nevertheless their cultural and emotional attachment and unrelenting devotion to their origins, and their perception of the mainstream society in the host country, that determined their true status: immigrant or exile. This self-image was an important factor in shaping their behavior and attitude, and also in shaping the literary imagination of

² Ervin Staub, “Healing and Reconciliation,” in *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2003), pp. 263–74. Quotation from p. 265.

³ The books I authored on the subject of genocide literature, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe* (1993) and *The Armenian Genocide in Literature* (2012, 2014), and to some extent also *And Those Who Continued Living in Turkey after 1915* (2008, 2012), embody my attempts to achieve that goal.