

atrocities and the denial of the magnitude of the crime later on. Dehumanization was the most fearful experience for these survivors, boys and girls, whether they were sexually assaulted, bought for a few coins, enslaved, or thrown into harems as concubines. Dehumanization was the most fearful and challenging state of mind that these survivors had to overcome in order to be able to return to human society and survive as human beings.

Dehumanization was inflicted in a variety of ways and means. In a previous work I have discussed the horrible conditions that drove the deportees to extreme cases of inhuman behavior, such as men voluntarily offering their daughters to a Turkish commander in return for scant favors; or an old woman yelling, shouting, and fighting to her death with another fellow deportee because he had bribed the caretakers to remove the rotting body of his daughter. The old woman did not have money to pay them to take away his dead grandson to make room for her ailing last grandson to lie down in that skimpy makeshift tent.⁸ “Not limited to murder, Turkish atrocities also extracted the last traces of humanity.”⁹

Aram Antonian describes instances of cannibalism among the remnants of Armenian deportees in the desert. They were cooking and eating the flesh of those who died of disease and starvation. A famine-stricken young girl lies on the desert sand under the scorching sun. She is breathing her last breath as her mother helplessly watches over her. She smells flesh

⁸ See the subchapters titled “What Price Survival,” pp. 162-9, and “Class Differences: A New Motif,” pp. 169-72, in Perroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe* (1993).

⁹ I made this statement in *ibid.*, p. 156, as I began to detail the episode that followed.