

imaginable horrors do not, however, include the torture of male sexual organs. He stops short of this in his descriptions, leaving the almost certain implication that men too were sexually tortured. He writes: "I have by no means told the most terrible details, for a complete narration of the sadistic orgies of which these Armenian men and women were the victims can never be printed in an American publication" (p. 321). Morgenthau was too considerate of the American public, whose imagination and moral principles could not digest the scenes of Turkish sexual tortures of men (imagine the American society of 1919, not that of the present unbridled television era). Morgenthau avoided putting unsuitable material into writing, but Edgar Hilsenrath, eighty years later, does not have that constraint. On the contrary, he describes it in graphic detail.

And thus, one of the most poignant and horribly unbelievable scenes of sexual torture is pictured in *The Story of the Last Thought*.¹⁸ It is astounding to see how Edgar Hilsenrath, the author of this novel, was able to unearth so much information about life in Turkish prisons and the torture techniques employed there, unsurpassed in the world. It is important to note here that I do not hold this or any work of fiction—but this one in particular because of its abstract conceptualization—as a mirror of reality; however, I strongly believe in the truth that a work of fiction reveals. This approach should not be seen as paradoxical or self-contradictory, for it is dictated by the nature of fiction, by the

¹⁸ Hilsenrath, *The Story of the Last Thought* (1991). For a detailed analysis of this work, see Peroomian, "The Truth of the Armenian Genocide in Edgar Hilsenrath's Fiction" (2003).