

generation of Turks. They witnessed the massacres, or knew that an ancestor in the family had been an Armenian, bought, kidnapped, entrusted to a Turkish or Kurdish neighbor, or voluntarily converted to Islam to avoid the death march.

Turkish intellectuals have begun to look deeper into the sociopolitical makeup of the country and are examining its multicultural, multiethnic, and multi-communal essence as the true picture of Turkish society today. They are questioning the governments' claims of racial, religious, and cultural homogeneity. They are questioning the foundation of Kemalist Turkey and the Turkish identity. They see that precarious foundation, built on the ruins of massacres, deportation, and ethnic cleansing, as problematic. Their new approach is negating the glorious past and the heroic war of independence described in the history books. The wall of silence is breached. Rigid control over collective memory is relaxed. During the entire Republican era in Turkey, the state played a central role in forming collective memory, the sort that, in the words of James V. Wertsch, is "textually mediated," because it is based, only and strictly based, on textual resources provided by the government.³³

The road is gradually being paved for study and research on minorities in Turkey, starting with the question of the Kurds, now considered a distinct ethnic minority, and especially the past and present Armenian predicament in Turkey. Artistic literature is spearheading the exploration of this new reality. Yalçın's steps taken on this road are a clear

³³ Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering* (2002), p. 5.