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**The Political and Feminist Landscape in the Literary World of the French
Armenian Writer Louise Aslanian (1904–1945)**

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Introduction

Louise Aslanian is a French Armenian writer, born in 1904 in Tabriz. Being brought up in a highly conservative Armenian environment shaped her literary and feminist viewpoints. Her early life was difficult, but her family gave her intellectual growth. She was raised by parents who highly valued education and art. This love for education and art led her to Paris, where she became part of Armenian intellectual circles. Her experience as an Armenian woman in the diaspora drove her to politics. Her early works are influenced by her experience of living in an Armenian community in Tabriz, while her later poems are about her participation in the French Resistance and her struggles in the concentration camp. This evolution in her literature represents her personal growth and development, changing views on identity, gender, and political engagement. This paper answers the following question: How does Louise Aslanian's work contribute to developing feminist ideas and narratives within the broader context of 20th-century political activism and the French Resistance? The thesis argues that Louise Aslanian's evolution in the representation of women in her literary works reflects the core ideas of feminist literature and contributes to its development. To show this the thesis employs content analysis, qualitative research that allows us to uncover deeper meanings and patterns within her works.

Before World War II and the Resistance, the main theme of Aslanian's writing was the average lives of Armenians in Tabriz. In those works, she subtly criticized the roles and expectations of women she witnessed. Though her works are not directly about feminism, by representing the limitations and struggles of her female characters, she challenges the reader to acknowledge them. In this way, Aslanian's writings resonate with the concept of *écriture féminine*. This is a feminist movement that started with the first generation of women who spoke about feminist literature and women's role in it; they were Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir. Hélène Cixous, representing the second generation of the feminist literature movement, suggested the term *écriture féminine*. By this, she meant that women should write about themselves and their experiences, free from societal limitations.¹

The turning point for Aslanian and her literary career was her involvement in the French Resistance. This period did not only shape her political life but also her literature. For instance, before the war, Aslanian wrote only prose; she had never written poems or verses, but after being sent to a concentration camp, she began writing only poems. Besides, if her previous works were not about herself, they were about the people from her Armenian surroundings. Her

¹ Cixous, Hélène. "The Laugh of the Medusa. Signs". *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, The University of Chicago. Vol. 1, No. 4. (1976): 875.

last works are only about her horrible experience in the camps. But what is more important for this research, her first works did not give so much space to female characters; rather, they were mostly about male protagonists, with women sometimes given secondary roles. From literary piece to literary piece, this changed, making her last works have only a female hero, herself. To express this shift, three works can be compared: the short story "Khan" (1928), her novel *On the Road of Doubt* (1936), and her poem "Mala." In "Khan," although the story is written in the first-person narrative, the main acting figure is male, Saghatel Khan. In *On the Road of Doubt*, the novel has several main characters; among them, Anoush and Vardeni are central figures, so here, from several main characters, two are women. The evolution reaches its culmination in "Mala," which is a poem about her experience; this poem has one hero, Aslanian herself. These transformations are more ideological ones, portraying her real-life path from a middle-class Armenian diasporic girl in Tabriz to a prominent figure of the French Resistance.

While introducing a French Armenian writer from the first half of the 20th century, it is necessary to mention two broader contexts, that are crucial for this period and may have had an influence in shaping Aslanian's worldview. The first is the Armenian diaspora, mainly formed after the Armenian genocide. After the genocide, the survivors spread all over the world to find a safer place. Many Armenians chose France as their destination. By the 1920th, more than 50.000 Armenians settled in France.² They made Paris the cultural and intellectual center for the Armenian diaspora, creating their cultural associations in Paris. Louise Aslanian, who settled in Paris in 1923 became an active part of it.³

The second context, shaping this period is the interwar period in Europe. Aslanian witnessed both world wars, and most of her conscious life she lived in an interwar period. This period includes between the end of WWI and the beginning of WW2. This was an era of huge political and social changes in Europe. Countries were trying to recover from the consequences of the war, and for people, this was a time of recovery and uncertainty.⁴ The interwar period is important, as it also marked a social shift in women's lives. A new generation of independent young working-class women emerged. These women were employed in offices, shops, and factories and became prominent consumers in leisure activities.⁵

² Dekhane, John. "All Roads Lead to Armenia." *The Armenian Weekly*, (January 8, 2024): <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/01/08/all-roads-lead-to-armenia/>.

³ Stepanyan, Karen. "Soviet Literature." Yerevan. (1956): 142. (Originally in Armenian, translated by the author).

⁴ "Inter-War Period." *Fiveable*. (2025): <https://library.fiveable.me/key-terms/ap-euro/inter-war-period>

⁵ Selina Todd. "Young Women, Work, and Leisure in Interwar England" *The Historical Journal*. United Kingdom. (2005): 789-790.

Louise Aslanian's Biography

Louise Aslanian, Gasparyan by birth, was born in 1904 in Tabriz in the family of Srapion Gasparyan and Maria Shahbazian. Her father, a modest merchant with a deep love for learning, often remarked that a person's true wealth comes from their mind.⁶ Aslanian's older brother taught her how to read when she was a child. Aslanian attended the local Aramian school and simultaneously took French and piano lessons.⁷ The love of learning was passed down to all three children from their father, while Aslanian's interest in music came from her mother. When she was young, she would attentively watch her mother play the tar (a traditional Armenian instrument) and try to imitate her. She often asked her mother to teach her piano.⁸ After graduating from the Aramian School, Aslanian enrolled in the Armenian Central School in Tabriz, where she discovered her literary talent. She began translating stories and poems into French and Russian.⁹

When Aslanian finished school, her father was already struggling to cover the expenses of her older siblings' education. Despite this, he did everything he could to ensure that his youngest daughter could also go to the capital and receive a higher education.¹⁰ In 1923, Aslanian married a lawyer, Arpiar Aslanian, a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak) and a native of Etchmiadzin. The couple, along with Louise Aslanian's mother and sister, moved to Paris.¹¹ Contrary to the prevailing mindset of men then, Aslanian's husband valued women's education highly. To support her ongoing training as a pianist, they relocated to Paris.¹² From the very beginning of their move to Paris, they were confronted with harsh realities and faced many difficulties. During this time, Arpiar Aslanian took on various jobs. Despite being a young graduate in law, for a time, he worked as a waiter in a restaurant and later as a manual labourer. However, they managed to persevere and push forward with their intellectual ambitions.¹³

⁶ Voskerichian, Tiran. *Memories of an Armenian Writer*. Beirut, Imprimerie G. Doniguian Fils. (1974): 28. (Originally in Armenian, translated by the author).

⁷ Mkrtichian, Paitsar. *Book of Literature and Art*. Beirut: Mshakouit Publishing House. (1956): 95. (Originally in Armenian, translated by the author).

⁸ Chobanian, Arshag. "Three Armenian Heroic Martyrs (Gegam Atmachian, Missak Manouchian, Louise Aslanian)." *Anahit: Revue Arménienne, Littéraire et Artistique*, Paris. (1946): 8. (Originally in Armenian, translated by the author).

⁹ Voskerichian, Tiran. *Memories of an Armenian Writer*. Beirut, Imprimerie G. Doniguian Fils. (1974): 28.

¹⁰ Mkrtichian, Paitsar. *Book of Literature and Art*. Beirut: Mshakouit Publishing House. (1956): 95.

¹¹ Haroyan, Arpine, and Lilit Mkrtchian. "Interview with Arpine Haroyan and Lilit Mkrtchian." YouTube video, 5:59. Posted May 26, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xtOPgILwt4>

¹² Voskerichian, Tiran. *Memories of an Armenian Writer*. Beirut, Imprimerie G. Doniguian Fils. (1974): 28. .

¹³ Mkrtichian, Paitsar. *Book of Literature and Art*. Beirut: Mshakouit Publishing House. (1956): 96

It became increasingly difficult to afford tutors, and Louise Aslanian, realizing the financial situation of her family decided to give up her dream of becoming a pianist.¹⁴ However, her passion for art always accompanied her.¹⁵ Despite abandoning her dream of becoming a pianist, Aslanian continued her creative journey through literature. She began to frequently appear in the Armenian circles in Paris, finding herself in the literary world. She started publishing short stories in Armenian and French newspapers, focusing on the lives of Iranian Armenians and French Armenians. An example of such a short story is "The Coin Collection" (Մետաղադրամների հավաքածու). To sign her work, she adopted the pseudonym Lass by combining the first letter of her first name with the first two letters of her surname.¹⁶ Some of her stories even received awards, and some of her works have been translated into French and English.¹⁷

With her relatives' support, Aslanian attended literature courses at the Sorbonne University in Paris.¹⁸ Noticing her talent, French professors encouraged her to take French citizenship and begin writing in French. However, Aslanian immediately rejected these suggestions. She stated that she wanted to write exclusively in Armenian and remain connected only to the Armenian community and diaspora.¹⁹

As her literary career progressed, she released two short stories in Beirut's Gegam L. Sewani publishing house: *Khan* (Խան) in 1928, and *Outside the Line* (Գծից դուրս) in 1935. Born and raised in Tabriz, Aslanian frequently addressed the lives of Iranian Armenians in her works. Examples of such works include the novel *The Iron Wine Merchant* (Գինու երկաթե վաճառականը), and the short story "The Lake" (Լիճը).²⁰ The next year, in 1936, Lass's first novel, *On the Road of Doubt*, was published. It was originally published as separate articles in the US-Armenian *Hairenik* monthly magazine.²¹ Krikor Beledian describes it as the most systematic and ambitious novel of its generation.²² In this work, Aslanian succeeded in

¹⁴ Chobanian, Arshag. "Three Armenian Heroic Martyrs (Gegam Atmachian, Missak Manouchian, Louise Aslanian)." *Anahit: Revue Arménienne, Littéraire et Artistique*, Paris. (1946): 8.

¹⁵ Mkrtichian, Paitsar. *Book of Literature and Art*. Beirut: Mshakouit Publishing House. (1956): 96.

¹⁶ Stepanyan, Karen. *Soviet Literature*. Yerevan: (1956): 143. (Originally in Armenian, translated by the author.)

¹⁷ Chobanian, Arshag. "Three Armenian Heroic Martyrs (Gegam Atmachian, Missak Manouchian, Louise Aslanian)." *Anahit: Revue Arménienne, Littéraire et Artistique*, Paris. (1946): 8.

¹⁸ Ayvazyan, Hovhannes. *Who's Who: Armenians. Biographical Encyclopedia*, vol. 1.2. Yerevan. (2005): 120. (Originally in Armenian, translated by the author.)

¹⁹ Chobanian, Arshag. "Three Armenian Heroic Martyrs (Gegam Atmachian, Missak Manouchian, Louise Aslanian)." *Anahit: Revue Arménienne, Littéraire et Artistique*, Paris. (1946): 8.

²⁰ Beledian, Krikor. *Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France*. California State University, Fresno: (2001).

²¹ Stepanyan, Karen. *Soviet Literature*. Yerevan (1956): 142.

²² Beledian, Krikor. *Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France*. California State University, Fresno: (2001). 41.

portraying the lives of Armenians living in Iran, skilfully describing their daily routines, customs, and material and social conditions, all within the cultural context of the region.²³

In 1936, Louise Aslanian joined the Community Party in France, and collaborated with Missak Manouchian's group, contributing to the publications of the periodicals *The Bell* (Զաւնգը) and *New Life* (Նոր կյանք).²⁴ In 1937, the Armenian Writers' Union of Paris, recognizing Aslanian's contributions, invited her to join their ranks.²⁵

During World War II, Nazi Germany declared war on France. The French Resistance, including figures like Louise Aslanian, her husband, and Missak Manouchian fought against the occupying forces.²⁶ On the morning of July 26, 1944, the Gestapo arrested the Aslanian couple and sent them to the concentration camp. Unfortunately, the camp realities were too severe for her to survive, and in 1944 she died.²⁷ In a letter, her sister, Arshalouys Grigoryan, conveyed the news of Louise Aslanian's and her husband Arpiar Aslanian's arrest. In this letter, she wrote, "The enemy received numerous blows but also took from us the heroes, among whom were Louise and her husband, Arpiar Aslanian." This statement reflects the deep sense of loss and sacrifice felt by their community for their contributions to the resistance.²⁸ Her sister also mentions that unfortunately, Germans destroyed Aslanian's manuscripts. Before her arrest, Aslanian had written *The Fall of Paris* and *The Story of the Residence* works, which were unfortunately destroyed by fascist Germany.²⁹ The police confiscated the manuscripts when they arrested the couple. Armenian literature never saw the eventful stories of the French Resistance in the form of a novel by Aslanian.³⁰

In the 1970s, Aslanian's sister Arshaluys gathered her archive and sent it to Soviet Armenia. Today, the collocation of Aslanian's legacy, which includes Aslanian's teenage diary, a 10-page war diary, several letters, photographs, and the manuscript of her novel *On the Road of Doubt* are housed at the Yeghishe Charents Museum of Literature in Arts.³¹

²³ Stepanyan, Karen. *Soviet Literature*. Yerevan. (1956): 144-146.

²⁴ Karajan, Henry. *Group of Manouchian: Memoirs and Reflections*. Éditions du Résistance, Paris. (2023): 45-47.

²⁵ Mkrtichian, Paitsar. *Book of Literature and Art*. Beirut: Mshakouit Publishing House. (1956): 97.

²⁶ Ibid, 98

²⁷ Ibid, 8.

²⁸ Voskerichian, Tiran. *Memories of an Armenian Writer*. Beirut, Imprimerie G. Doniguian Fils. (1974): 30.

²⁹ Stepanyan, Karen. *Soviet Literature*. Yerevan. (1956): 144-146.

³⁰ Chobanian, Arshag. "Three Armenian Heroic Martyrs (Gegam Atmachian, Missak Manouchian, Louise Aslanian)." *Anahit: Revue Arménienne, Littéraire et Artistique*, Paris. (1946): 9.

³¹ Haroyan, Arpine. "From the Forgotten Pages of History: The Resistance of Louise Aslanian." *EVN Report*. (2019). <https://old.evnreport.com/raw-unfiltered/from-the-forgotten-pages-of-history-the-resistance-of-louise-aslanian>

Chapter 1; Breaking Boundaries: *Écriture Féminine* and Feminist Perspectives in the Life and Writings of Louise Aslanian

Chapter 1.1. Foundations of Feminist Literature And *Écriture Féminine*

To understand how Louise Aslanian's writing influences feministic literature, it is crucial to first explore the concept of *écriture féminine* (feminist literature). In this chapter, I explore the idea of feminist literature and show that Louise Aslanian's works contribute to feminist literature by subtly addressing the limitations imposed on women within society by questioning gender stereotypes. Feminism started as a response to gender asymmetry in society. Feminist philosophy is based on the idea that gender differences are not only a product of biology but also the consequence of cultural and societal biases. "They believed that sexes are culturally, and not just biologically, formed."³² Feminists argue that women's roles are mostly shaped by social norms. These social norms mostly come from various expectations that women need to fit into.

This feminist theory is not monolithic, it rather includes a wide range of categories and subcategories. As highlighted by Charlotte Bunch's definition feminism is "a way of viewing the world, rather than a monolithic or radical ideology."³³ Different women throughout the world have different experiences according to their problems, struggles, and needs. All these problems need to be referred to and properly solved, each according to its nuances and characteristics. What is interesting is that each period dictates its own goals for feminists across different areas. To illustrate this, I will bring some examples that show how feminist's goals have changed according to the conditions of their period and era. For example, in the United States and the United Kingdom, women had no public identity, the only way they were defined was by their male relatives, fathers, or husbands at the end of the 18th century. During this time emerged the early feminist theory to examine the gaps in legal and social life and the lack of basic rights existing for women.³⁴ Already in the late 19th, the aim of feminism was radically changed, giving every woman the chance to reach her full potential based on her innate qualities and capacities was the main objective of feminism. A prominent British feminist Millicent Fawcett mentioned that "the opportunity of becoming the best that her natural faculties make

³² Kolmar, Wendy. *Feminist Theory*. New York. McGraw-Hill Higher Education. (2010): 7.

³³ Bunch, Charlotte. *Charlotte Bunch on Feminist Theory and Education*. In *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*, edited by Carole R. McCann and Seung-kyung Kim. New York: Routledge, (2010). 125-132 in Kolmar, Wendy. *Feminist Theory*. New York. McGraw-Hill Higher Education. (2010).

³⁴ Kolmar, Wendy. *Feminist Theory*. New York. McGraw-Hill Higher Education. (2010): 34-36.

her capable of" ³⁵ was the aim of feminism. Her approach was mainly about access to education, employment, and other basics that were cut off from women.

With the progress of the movement of feminism, other prominent feminist figures appeared and brought their different goals and ideas. The late 19th was the period for involving literature in feminist thoughts. Feminist literature is a battleground for gender equality, it challenges patriarchal norms of presenting women in the literature and challenges the space given to women's voices in literature. It promotes the idea of a true and real depiction of women's experiences, criticizing the traditional male-dominated literary canon.³⁶ While the term *écriture féminine* emerged after Aslanian's death, the concept of women's authentic expression in literature existed decades earlier. The main goal of *écriture féminine* is to free women from traditional stereotypes and give them a chance to express their deep feelings and personal experiences.³⁷ Miral Al Tahawy states that this feministic movement in the literature was a "revenge on marginalization."³⁸ She describes this to oppose the long-standing marginalization. She gives her solution to how women writers can get the opportunity to write about female characters openly, by overcoming "the inner fear of expressing feelings."³⁹ *Écriture féminine* serves as an effective means of feminist resistance, empowering women to reclaim their voices and express their experiences beyond the constraints imposed by patriarchal norms.

In his book about the Western canon, Harold Bloom states, that the first attempts to criticize the "great" works of art and literature from a feministic point of view failed. Bloom argues that the first critiques tried to re-evaluate already existing "great" works giving them secondary importance because of their patriarchal canons. The criteria of judgment were replaced from aesthetic to ideological. From the perspective of nowadays re-evaluating existing art is a matter of ethics. For him, the first one to change this canon was Virginia Woolf, as in her literature, she does not try to reevaluate the already existing order, rather she widened the topics of literature. By this, she created a new reality that became part of the existing literary canon.⁴⁰ Virginia Woolf, one of the pioneering figures of feminist literature, explores the relationship

³⁵ Millicent Fawcett Garrett. 1878. *The Future of Englishwomen: A Reply*. Nineteenth Century, 4, 347-357. In Kolmar, Wendy. *Feminist Theory*. New York. McGraw-Hill Higher Education. (2010).

³⁶ Kari Weil, *French Feminism's Écriture Féminine* Cambridge University. (2006):153.

³⁷ Miral Mahgoub Al Tahawy. *Women's Writing and the Question of Feminism*. Toronto, Inana Publishing House. (2014): 211

³⁸ Ibid, 211.

³⁹ Ibid, 211.

⁴⁰ Gjurgjan, Ljiljana Ina. "Feminist Future(s): Women's Writing and the Question of the Literary Canon." *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)*, vol. 4, no. 1/2, (1998). 202. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41274003>

between women and fiction in her seminal essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929). This essay is a feminist manifesto that advocates for women's financial independence and personal space to create their art. She critiques the suppression of women's voices in literature, and her arguments have profoundly influenced modern literature, inspiring generations of writers to continue the fight for gender equality.⁴¹

Standing with Wolf, Simone de Beauvoir can also be considered one of the fundamental figures of this new canon. She mentions how women were defined as "the other", subordinate to men. She states, "Hence woman makes no claim for herself as subject because she lacks the concrete means because she senses the necessary link connecting her to man without positing its reciprocity and because she often derives satisfaction from her role as the Other."⁴² She challenges the way of portraying women as subordinate and dependent on men.

Hélène Cixous is the forerunner of the term *écriture féminine*. In her seminal essay "The Laugh of the Medusa" (*Le Rire de la Méduse*), published in France in 1975 and translated into English by Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen in 1976⁴³, she emphasizes the importance of women writing about themselves or other women's experiences. She states in her work "Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies."⁴⁴ This is a call for women to start using writing to express their emotions and transfer them to the reader through their writings.

The ideas of feminist literature laid by Wolf, de Beauvoir, and Cixous found resonance among Armenian female writers too. "Among the key female writers who played a significant role in the movement were Sibyl and Zabel Yesayan, whose writings advocated for women's justice and equality."⁴⁵ They brought to Armenia the first wave of feminist literature. Zabel Asadour was born in Constantinople in 1863.⁴⁶ She was an Armenian poet, better known under the pseudonym Madame Sibil. She was the co-founder of the *Azkanver Hayuhyats Enkerutium* (Society of Armenian Women Devoted to the Nation). This organization opened schools for

⁴¹ Roy, Palash. "A Room of One's Own: Virginia Woolf's Feminist Manifesto and Its Influence on Modern Literature". *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*. London.(2019): 1.

⁴² Bergoffen, Debra and Megan Burke, "Simone de Beauvoir", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2024 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman. (2024).
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/beauvoir/#SecoSexWomaOthe>

⁴³ Elizabeth Grenier, "Why the Laugh of the Medusa Remains Influential Today," *Deutsche Welle*. (2023):
<https://p.dw.com/p/4S1hC>

⁴⁴ Cixous, Hélène. "The Laugh of the Medusa. Signs". *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, The University of Chicago. Vol. 1, No. 4. (1976): 875.

⁴⁵ Berberian, Hourì. *Roving Revolutionaries: Armenians and the Connected Revolutions in the Russian, Iranian, and Ottoman Worlds*. University of California Press. (2019): 5.

⁴⁶ Blackwell, Alice Stone. *Armenian Poems, Rendered into English Verse*. Boston, MA: Atlantic Printing Company, (1917). <http://armenianhouse.org/blackwell/armenian-poems/zabel-assatour.html>

Armenian girls in parts of the Ottoman Empire, where Armenians lived. She was a solid fighter for women's education and touched on the themes of gender inequality in her poetry and novels, such as *The Heart of a Girl* (Աղջկան սիրտը) published in 1891, Constantinople, and *Reflections* (Յիշխեր) published in 1902, Constantinople. Much of her writings are dedicated to the injustices experienced by girls and women. She died at the age of 70 in 1934.⁴⁷ Together with Asadour, Zabel Yesayan presents the first generations of Armenian women speaking about women's role in literature pieces. She was born in Constantinople in 1878. Her father greatly was the one who put the ideas of women's education and justice into her thoughts. This later impacted her writings, which often addressed the struggles of women. Her two short stories, "The Blind Girl", and "Feminine Souls" published in 1895 in the journal *Dzaghig* (Flower), are about women's education and gender roles.⁴⁸

After Zabel Asadour and Zabel Yesayan, Louise Aslanian presents the third generation of feministic thought among Armenian women. Even though the life of Aslanian clearly shows the image of a powerful feminist fighting for freedom and resistance, feminism was never the central idea and theme of Aslanian's writings. This raises the question of how Aslanian reflected the principles of feminist writing in her works. Her works present the inequalities women illustrate daily through everyday situations, without addressing them directly. Rather she gives situations where her female heroes struggle because of society's limitations on their freedom. By this, she challenges the reader to recognize the problem and feel the limitations of the heroes. This style of uncovering the characters through their everyday situations is typical for Aslanian. Aslanian characterizes her characters through every day, ordinary interactions, revealing their personalities realistically. She avoids artificial exaggeration or the creation of extraordinary events. Instead, she prefers to uncover her characters' emotional states through small, simple occurrences and daily activities. Aslanian rejects overtly expressing her attitudes toward her characters' actions.⁴⁹ Her prose serves as a quiet yet powerful protest against patriarchal norms, fulfilling *écriture féminine's* aim.

⁴⁷ Zabel Asadour Poems. My Poetic Side. <https://mypoeticside.com/poets/zabel-asadour-poems>.

⁴⁸ Manoukian, Jennifer. "Zabel Yessayan: Portrait of the Writer as a Young Woman." *The Armenite*. (April 2014): <https://thearmenite.com/2014/04/zabel-yessayan-portrait-of-the-writer-as-a-young-woman/>

⁴⁹ Stepanyan, Karen. *Soviet Literature*. Yerevan: 1956. p. 144.

Chapter 1.2. Louise Aslanian's Feminist Vision

In this subchapter, Louise Aslanian's portrayal of women in *On the Road of Doubt* is explored to show how she aligns with the concept of feminist writing. It argues that in her novel Aslanian challenges entrenched patriarchal norms within both Armenian and wider societal contexts. Aslanian's literature mainly portrays the average life of Iranian Armenians in Tabriz. Through the characters, she shows what the lives of Armenians living in Iran were like: their routine, dialogues, interests, advantages, and disadvantages. Within this context, she also presents women characters, whose lives exemplify the inequality in education and social status. One such novel is *On the Road of Doubt*, 1936, Paris. According to Krikor Beledian, an Armenian literary critic, Aslanian was the first Armenian woman who published a full-length novel.⁵⁰ This can also be considered a barrier-breaking step for Armenian women in literature.

In this novel, Aslanian describes the average life of Armenians in Tabriz through the main characters of the novel, mainly Nubar's family: Nubar, Anush, Tigran, Vardeni, and Zareh. The themes of homeland, war, and discussions about the 'enlightened' Europe ("Germany-enlightenment and civilization⁵¹") are the novel's core themes. In this work, Aslanian also represents how the ideas of the homeland were engraved in the diasporic mind, making this novel significant in Armenian Diasporic literature. Literary critiques refer to this novel so, "In diasporan Armenian literature, Louise Aslanian's works hold a unique place; she is one of the rare figures who, years ago, built a bridge between the diaspora and the homeland through her novel *On the Road of Doubt*,"⁵² and "It can be said that Louise Aslanian's novel *On the Road of Doubt* holds a special place in diasporan Armenian literature. It explores the lives of Iranian Armenians and French Armenian communities."⁵³

As mentioned above, through her female characters whose lives exemplify the inequality in education and social status, Aslanian sheds light on the systemic challenges faced by women in patriarchal societies. Such an example is the situation with Nubar's children, Vardeni and Zareh. Nubar has two sons and two daughters, but he treats them equally. After finishing school, Vardeni wants to continue her education in Paris, as her male classmates do. Her brother, Zareh, is against it since he thinks "girls do not need higher education."⁵⁴ While

⁵⁰Beledian, Krikor. "Louisa Aslanian (LASS) et L'expérience Concentrationnaire - Krikor Beledian (en arménien)." *YouTube*, uploaded by Études Arméniennes - Inalco / SEA, (5 July 2024): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rf4KWGshAkE&t=1s>

⁵¹ Aslanian, Louise. *On the Road of Doubt*. Yerevan, Armenian State Publication. (1959):148. (Originally in Armenian, translated by the author).

⁵² Voskerichian, Tiran. *Memories of an Armenian Writer*. Beirut, Imprimerie G. Doniguian Fils. (1974): 31.

⁵³ Mkrtichian, Paitsar. *Book of Literature and Art*. Beirut: Mshakouit Publishing House. (1956): 97

⁵⁴ Aslanian, Louise. *On the Road of Doubt*. Yerevan, Armenian State Publication. (1959): 205.

reading the novel, it is surprising to hear such statements from Zareh's character, as he is described in the novel as a clever and highly educated man. He also studied in Paris, he has a progressive viewpoint. Yet when it comes to studying and the future of his sister, he opposes the idea. This situation shows the limitations in education for girls that Louise Aslanian witnessed while living in Tabriz. Luckily for Vardeni, their father is so caring and loyal that, despite the financial struggles and Zareh's disagreement, he lets Vardeni go and study in France. What's more, he also sends Vardeni's younger sister, Anoush, with her to see the world and develop a worldview. In this situation, Nubar Khan's character can be compared to Louise Aslanian's father, Srapion Gasparyan's personality. In the novel, Nubar is already at a respectful age, and he has two sons studying abroad. It is hard for him to cover their lives and education. Nevertheless, he does everything to send his daughters, Vardeni and Anoush, to Paris, much like Aslanian's father. Aslanian's father also despite having financial difficulties, sends his daughter to Paris to study. Nubar Khan prioritizes his daughters' education, much like how Aslanian's father supported her education. This parallel suggests that the character of Nubar was likely inspired by Aslanian's father, Srapion Grigoryan, as they share many similarities.

When Zareh with her new foreign wife returns home after finishing his education in Paris everyone discusses this situation not in a good light. In one of these gossip discussions, Anna, Nubar Khan's neighbor says, "Our beautiful girls are left at home; doesn't this cause pain?"⁵⁵ This is the clearest representation of how society viewed the role of women in society. Aslanian illustrates that in her society married woman means a happy woman, and an unmarried woman means an unhappy woman. Unfortunately, even today some may argue that this bias is present in some societies. Getting married is the final point and goal of every woman, this shows how patriarchal standards and expectations of women limit their growth. The later quotations are just severe the situation, "the women desire to become wives of the Khans."⁵⁶ In her portrayal of women wanting to marry khans, Aslanian criticizes marriage as a system that limits women's ambitions to gain material wealth through powerful men. What is more disappointing, is that Anna later adds "Thank God, I have no daughters."⁵⁷ As if, to her, having a daughter is an abuse while having a son is a privilege. If she had daughters, she would likely marry them off as quickly as possible to rid herself of them, as she views having an unmarried daughter as a disaster.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 306

⁵⁶ Ibid, 157.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 306

In most literary works created by white men, women's role is limited to housewife, housekeeper, and mother or it is just skipped.⁵⁸ *Écriture féminine* opposed this by starting a new way of literature, a free space for women to write about their problems and issues independently. Female writers have started to write about the issues they are dealing with in the way they want, as there are some problems of women, that only women can properly address. What this movement suggests women do is isolate themselves from the ideological portrayal of women created by men and existing in masculine ideologies.⁵⁹ Fortunately, through characters like Armenouhi, Aslanian also illustrates that women can be powerful, self-sufficient, and independent. Armenouhi is Agha Grigory's ex-wife and Agha Grigory is Nubar's old friend. Armenouhi and Grigory have two children ten years old girl, and eleven years old boy. Everything seems quite usual until we know that Grigory has several affairs with other women, one of them is a Russian tailor, and the rumors of their romance reach Armenouhi. Immediately after knowing this, his wife divorces him, takes their two children, and goes to Paris to stay at her brother's house. Louise Aslanian challenges the notion that women must stay in miserable relationships despite their feelings and encourages women to prioritize themselves in such situations. After their divorce Agha Grigory becomes alcoholic. Every night he buys one bottle of vodka and empties it on his own.⁶⁰ Even after years of divorce Agha Grigory still loves his ex-wife, he keeps his portrait in his house and always admires it. He still likes his ex-wife, yet, he never stops alcoholism or never ends his love affairs with other women. Here, Louise adds several characters to the novel to oppose Armenouhi's courageous actions, Armenouhi's friends and relatives, who state that "It is ok, he is a man, not a woman."⁶¹ For them, if a man is cheating it is ok, nothing extraordinary or unusual. They try to keep Armenouhi not to divorce. For them, divorce is a shameful act for a woman, a symbol of failure. Aslanian encourages the reader to reevaluate the norms and restrictions on women. Nevertheless, Armenouhi is so self-sufficient, that she never changes her mind, does not return to Grigory again, and stays in France, while Agha Grigory dies in loneliness.

Armenouhi's character can be opposed to Gyulabathun's character. They are two antonym characters, while Armenouhi rejects the societal expectations put on her, Gyulabathun conforms to them, embodying the traditional values Armenouhi challenges. Gyulabatun always

⁵⁸ Timothy E. Stroud. *Redefining Feminine Virtue: Écriture féminine and the Voyage in the Dark*. (2016): 11.

⁵² Muhammad Numan, *A Note on Ecriture Feminine Theory*. National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad. (2019): 1.

⁶⁰ Aslanian, Louise. *On the Road of Doubt*. Yerevan, Armenian State Publication. (1959): 283.

⁶¹ Ibid, 284.

sees her husband's thoughts as authoritative and beyond question. "Gyulabatun Khan always agreed with her husband. The khan is a wise man, and since he thinks this way, nothing else could be possible."⁶² Through her portrayal of these characters, Aslanian highlights the strong influence of patriarchal norms on women's lives echoing Tong's assertion that *écriture féminine* represents "a radical reworking of self-expression."⁶³ Gyulabatun's blind obedience critiques the societal structures that silence women, showing how beliefs in male superiority and female subservience shape relationships and decisions.

This devaluation of women is further highlighted when Aslanian addresses the idea of women's inferiority, which has been widely perpetuated in literature and society. The prevailing idea of portraying women as lacking was significantly questioned and challenged due to the contributions of Hélène Cixous and other pioneering feminist thinkers like her. Even Freud used this term when referring to women, he mentioned them as lacking.⁶⁴ Aslanian also addresses this issue in her novel. "A woman is almost always 95% inferior to her husband"⁶⁵ This remark addresses the systematic devaluing of women. It is not surprising that this remark was made by Gyulabatun's husband. By employing such remarks, Aslanian criticizes these deeply embedded cultural assumptions through her literature. In keeping with *écriture féminine*, Aslanian challenges these notions' ridiculousness.

The ending of the novel illustrates, that despite societal norms, only the daughter, Vardeni, returns to support her parents. As I mentioned above Nubar has four children, and he sends them all to Paris, but the one who returns later to family to give back the support to the old parents is only Vardeni. One of the sons, Tigran gets mad and dies, the other, Zareh returns to Paris and lives with his wife, Anoush is still a university student, and only Vardeni thinks about giving her parents the care they need in old age. Vardeni feels the duty to return to the parents the effort, love, and care they gave her. Unfortunately, before Vardeni's arrival Nubar dies, and the only family member she Varteni has now is her mother. The prevailing idea concerning sons and daughters in the society where Nubar lives is that the son is the main heir and carer for the parents, while a daughter marries and goes to another family. This shows, that despite this, in the end, only Vardeni returns to Tabriz to fulfill her familial responsibilities.

⁶² Ibid, 38.

⁶³ Tong, Rosemarie. *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*. 3rd ed., Westview Press.(2008):137.

⁶⁴ Freud, Sigmund. *Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes*. In *Collected Papers*, Vol. 5. London: Hogarth Press. (1925): 252-253.

⁶⁵ Aslanian, Louise. *On the Road of Doubt*. Yerevan, Armenian State Publication. (1959): 89.

Chapter 2: From Resistance to Poetry: Louise Aslanian's Political Journey

Chapter 2.1. Women in the French Resistance: Louise Aslanian's Leadership and Legacy

While her works till 1941 are all mostly about the Armenians' life, her last poems "Mala" And "At the Factory" tell about her experience as a concentration camp prisoner. With an emphasis on these poems, this chapter explores her contributions to feminist narratives in the larger framework of political action and the French Resistance in the 20th century. These pieces demonstrate Aslanian's revolutionary role in questioning gender conventions in addition to highlighting the psychological and physical consequences of war.

The contribution of women to the French Resistance, which has often been undervalued, was essential in shaping the outcome of the war. While male figures like Charles de Gaulle and Jean Moulin are universally recognized as national heroes, the contributions of women are frequently overshadowed by the dominant narratives of male heroism. Histories of the Resistance typically fall into two types: one filled with personal stories but lacking sufficient data for sociological analysis, and another that is methodologically rigorous yet unable to capture the personal experiences of those involved. Historians face the challenge of blending scientific analysis with the emotional and traumatic realities of the resisters, such as suffering, fear, and death, which are difficult to convey through conventional sociological or political frameworks. Neither of these histories examines the experience of women. The formal study of women's involvement in the Resistance began in the mid-1960s and, with a few exceptions, remains largely focused on narrative accounts.⁶⁶

As a member of a prominent political party, a participant in the French Resistance, a supporter of underground publishing, a weapon supplier for freedom fighters, and even the founder of a women's division in the Resistance, Aslanian's life broke many boundaries for women in the first half of the twentieth century. Were these the usual actions of the women in the first half of the twentieth century? Even today most women in politics cannot boast about such deeds in the field that initially was thought to be only for men. Louise Aslanian's life was marked by boundary-breaking achievements in both political and social spheres.

As mentioned in the biographic part in 1936 Aslanian joined the Communist Party.⁶⁷ Aslanian's interest in politics started way before this. In the 1930s, like many Armenians in France, she joined Hayasdani Öknut'ean Gomidē ("Committee for Aid to Armenia", HOG),

⁶⁶ Andrieu, Claire. *Women in the French Resistance: Revisiting the Historical Record*. Université de Paris-I, Institut d'études politique. (2000): 2-3.

⁶⁷ Karajan, Henry. *Group of Manouchian: Memoirs and Reflections*. Editions du Résistance, Paris, 2023, 45-47.

and the members of it were usually also members of the local communist parties. The surroundings of communists shaped her political views, and she also joined the party with her husband. When the war started, Armenians who were engaged in the Communist Party, including the Aslanian couple, opened Hay Azgayin Jagat (Armenian national front).⁶⁸

Aslanian joined Missak Manouchian's group. Missak Manouchian is one of the prominent figures of the Resistance. He was born in Turkey, Atiaman. When Manouchian was a child, he witnessed, how the Turks killed his parents, his sisters, and his brother, and burnt their homes during the Armenian genocide.⁶⁹ Maybe this also contributed to his strong wish to become a part of war and fight to maintain peace. After he lost all the members of his family, he was sent to an orphanage, later all the children from the orphanage were sent to France.⁷⁰ In Paris, he started his literary career, but as soon as the war started, he joined it.⁷¹ From the very first days of the war, he took the organizational position and opened secret periodicals. Then he formed groups of Armenians ready to fight for freedom and support his ideas. As the Gestapo checked men in the streets to find the weapons, guns, and armor, Manouchian gave the responsibility of transporting the weapons to women of the group, including Louise Aslanian and his wife Meline Manouchian. Louise Aslanian was not the only Armenian woman in the French Resistance, Manouchian's wife, Meline Manouchian also made huge contributions to the war. Manouchian's group had 23 victims of the war, two of the 23 were Louise Aslanian and her husband.⁷²

Later she started mobilizing women and girls for the war, and in 1942 Louise Aslanian founded the *French Armenian Women's Union* (FAWU, *Fédération des Femmes Arméniennes en France*). She mobilized women with her husband to join FAWU. Aslanian's contributions were not limited to these; she also led the Armenian Resistance members in the northern parts of France and the women's section of the Resistance, operating under the codename Madeleine.⁷³ On the morning of July 26, 1944, the Gestapo arrested the Aslanian couple and sent them to the concentration camp. Louise Aslanian was transported to Ravensbrück, the largest women's concentration camp in Nazi Germany. At the same time, Arpiar Aslanian was transferred to Dora-Mittelbau, a camp infamous for its harsh conditions and its participation in

⁶⁸ Ekmekcioglu, Lerna. "Armenian Feminist Literature." OpenEdition Journals. (2023). <https://journals.openedition.org/eac/3353>.

⁶⁹ Voskerichian, Tiran. *Memories of an Armenian Writer*. Beirut, Imprimerie G. Doniguian Fils. (1974): 141.

⁷⁰ Chobanian, Arshag. "Three Armenian Heroic Martyrs (Gegam Atmachian, Missak Manouchian, Louise Aslanian)." *Anahit: Revue Arménienne, Littéraire et Artistique*, Paris. (1946): 5.

⁷¹ Voskerichian, Tiran. *Memories of an Armenian Writer*. Beirut, Imprimerie G. Doniguian Fils. (1974): 141.

⁷² Ibid, 76.

⁷³ Karajan, Henry. *Group of Manouchian: Memoirs and Reflections*. Editions du Résistance, Paris. (2023): 49.

the development of V-2 rockets. They were moved from Toulouse to Buchenwald on August 15, 1944. Unfortunately, in 1944 Louise Aslanian died, and no one knows where her grave is.⁷⁴

Throughout the entire war, her friends and relatives had no information about her. Only after the war did Riz Nichol, who had become close to Aslanian in the concentration camp, bring several of her manuscripts, written in the camp, back to Paris. These manuscripts were two poems, one titled "At the Factory" and another was "Mala." These works reflect the harsh camp life, based on real events, in which she shows how the German fascists treated the prisoners.⁷⁵

After the war, FAWU, originally formed by Aslanian to fight for the Resistance, shifted its focus to the Armenian women, helping them to find equality, in alignment with communist and feminist values. The group launched the journal *Hai Guine* (Հայ կինը) in 1947. Through *Hai Guine*, FAWU emphasized the important role of women in the repatriation process, encouraging them to influence family decisions regarding settlement in Armenia. Despite the neglect of FAWU's history during the Cold War, their work remains a vital archive of Armenian immigrant women's political perspectives.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Stepanyan, Karen. *Soviet Literature*. Yerevan. (1956): 144-146.

⁷⁵ Chobanian, Arshag. "Three Armenian Heroic Martyrs (Gegam Atmachian, Missak Manouchian, Louise Aslanian)." *Anahit: Revue Arménienne, Littéraire et Artistique*, Paris. (1946): 8.

⁷⁶ Ekmekcioglu, Lerna. "Armenian Feminist Literature." *OpenEdition Journals*. (2023). <https://journals.openedition.org/eac/3353>

Chapter 2.2. Echoes of Resistance: Poetry and Memory from the Concentration Camps

This subchapter explores Louise Aslanian's final works, particularly the poems "Mala" And "At the Factory", to highlight their feminist dimensions and the ways they give voice to women's experiences in the context of concentration camps. After the war ended, Aslanian's manuscripts from concentration camps survived through her friend from the camp period. The poems "At the Factory" and "Mala" are the last pieces written by Aslanian. Both poems cover the theme of concentration camp life. Aslanian gave to paper her thoughts and feelings from that period, leaving real eyewitness accounts of the conditions of camps. She wanted to run from the camp and tell everybody about the inhumane deeds of the Nazis. Sadly, she never had a chance to do it by herself, thus after the war her friends and relatives published her poems. In 1946, Armenian writer and journalist Arshag Chobanian, originally from Western Armenia, published "Mala" And "At the Factory" In the French Armenian literary magazine *Anahit*.⁷⁷

Aslanian described her life in the concentration camp, what she was forced to do, and how hard life was there. She described in detail what work the war prisoners were doing.

Days and nights working at Nortverq's factory.

And all around, the factories,

Unnamed, marked with numbers,

Melting, piercing, grinding, forging,

*Ceaselessly crafting weapons of war.*⁷⁸

The Germans forced the war prisoners to make weapons, later to kill their compatriots with them. In the oppressive environment of the factory, they had constant labor, day and night. In these lines Aslanian also speaks about how Germans tried to take even their names from them, giving them numbers, and making them "unnamed". This is the representation of the physical and psychological abuse they faced in the camps.

Especially touching are the lines, where the author remembers her previous life and describes it. "Walking around with the secret press in hands"⁷⁹ and "secretly bringing weapons to forests."⁸⁰. She missed her life before she was arrested, she wished she were with her friends,

⁷⁷ Haroyan, Arpine. "From the Forgotten Pages of History: The Resistance of Louise Aslanian." *EVN Report*. (2019). <https://old.evnreport.com/raw-unfiltered/from-the-forgotten-pages-of-history-the-resistance-of-louise-aslanian>

⁷⁸ Chobanian, Arshag. "Three Armenian Heroic Martyrs (Gegam Atmachian, Missak Manouchian, Louise Aslanian)." *Anahit: Revue Arménienne, Littéraire et Artistique*, Paris: (1946): 14.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 14

⁸⁰ Ibid, 14.

helping them, but rather she was in the camp making weapons, that were meant to later kill them.

In "At the Factory", Aslanian writes not only about her experience but also includes all the women from the concentration camp in her poems. She gives voice to all the women in the concentration camp. She writes,

*..they brought the women of every nation,
filled the factory with them,
as punishment for their race,
for the sacred idea.⁸¹*

She highlights how women from various nations: Russians, Poles, Czechs, and Armenians were brought to the factory, and punished collectively. This is a poem about women's cruel experience in the concentration camp, that Aslanian shares with others.

While "At the Factory" is generally about what concentration camps were for women, the main hero of "Mala" is only Louise herself. It consists of six parts and a prologue. In the first lines of the prologue, she describes how the conditions of the camp changed her appearance, "Sunken cheeks, skeletal body, white hair, and darkened colorless eyes." She repeats these lines twice in the poem. Of course, the famine, hard labor, and lack of hygienic conditions had their effect on prisoners' image. In this poem, Aslanian remembers herself before she was arrested and before the war had started. She describes herself as "Mala is a little girl, /energetic, a poet by craft, /she knows how to sing, play music, love, /and is full of life." The constant physical and emotional violence changed her a lot. These lines indicate that Mala is Louise herself. There are two interpretations of why she chose Mala to refer to herself and as a poem's title. It may be the combination of the first letters of the names of her family members, Manya, Arhsalouys, Louise, and Arpiar. The other opinion by Krikor Beledian suggests that Mala is a Jew from Belgium with Polish ancestry⁸².

In the poem, Aslanian thoroughly describes how Germans used physical violence toward prisoners, "The German officer held the whip in his hand, he was like a wild beast."⁸³ The officer, described as a "wild beast," evokes a sense of dehumanization, symbolizing the oppressive and savage nature of the regime. "With a kick, the crack of a whip, an iron rod, and

⁸¹ Ibid, 14.

⁸² Haroyan, Arpine. "From the Forgotten Pages of History: The Resistance of Louise Aslanian." *EVN Report*. 2019. <https://old.evnreport.com/raw-unfiltered/from-the-forgotten-pages-of-history-the-resistance-of-louise-aslanian>

⁸³ Chobanian, Arshag. "Three Armenian Heroic Martyrs (Gegam Atmachian, Missak Manouchian, Louise Aslanian)." *Anahit: Revue Arménienne, Littéraire et Artistique*, Paris. (1946):15.

a wooden cudgel, he yells and roars."⁸⁴ This intensifies the brutality underscoring the systematic cruelty that prisoners endured.

Aslanian gives an eyewitness account of the brutal ways in which the Germans killed prisoners. She compares the crematorium to a monster "devouring its victims,"⁸⁵ showing how the Nazis killed people without mercy. While many are familiar with the systematic burning of Jewish people during the Holocaust, Aslanian emphasizes that these inhumane methods were not limited to one group. In this line, "Fire, death, persecution on all sides,"⁸⁶ she points out that such cruelty was used on all prisoners, showing the widespread nature of the violence.

*Every morning, at the same time,
hundreds of thousands of slaves
silently shiver in the blackened yard.
At that time every prisoner must be present,
and if someone died during the night in their cell,
their corpse must be carried out on their back.*⁸⁷

These lines indicate, that besides physical labour and violence, the Nazis used also psychological violence making the prisoners carry the dead bodies. Aslanian is so strong that despite all these struggles and sufferings she never gives up hope of escaping one day, in the poem she imagines how she will escape one day and tell everybody what is happening in the camp. "I wait in silent faith for the coming attack"⁸⁸ in the worst times, the will to live and the hope for freedom are powerful. Sadly, she never managed to do that and dies in the camp.

As we can see these last works are solely about women's experiences, Aslanian makes women her heroines and gives them space to share their experiences and feelings. If we look at the progress of her works, we will notice a notable shift in her representation of female characters. Over time, the "space" given to women in her narratives gradually expanded. This change seems to repeat Aslanian's own journey from a young diasporic Armenian woman to an active member and participant of the French Resistance. Comparing three of her writings from different periods will make this transformation tangible. In one of her earliest works, the short story "Khan", published in 1928 in Beirut's Gegam L. Sewani publishing house, she has one main acting figure, Saghatel Khan. Saghatel is an archetypal Iranian Armenian man who represents the cultural and social characteristics of his time. Though the narrative is from the

⁸⁴ Ibid. 17.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 17.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 17.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 17.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 18.

first person, the core of the story is Saghatel's everyday life. He is the main hero and acting figure of the story. In her later work, like her first novel *On the Road of Doubt*, described in the first chapter these changes. In this novel, she already has multiple characters, both male and female, but significant space is given to female characters, Anoush and Vardeni. The novel is centered more on their inner struggles and feelings than the male characters. This evolution culminates in her final poem, "Mala", written in the concentration camp. As described above this poem is about Aslanian herself, her experience. A woman writing about women, a woman writing about her experience and struggles, this is what "Mala" is about, and this is the main idea of feminist literature.

Conclusion

To sum up, Louise Aslanian's life is an inspiring journey of personal and ideological transformation. Her life and writings reflect her inner struggles and conflicts, from early engagement in politics to her active participation in the French Resistance. The evolution of her path is also reflected in her way of portraying women in her pieces. As she grew as a person, she increasingly gave space to women's voices, resonating with the ideas of feminist literature. Although the term *écriture féminine* was coined after Louise Aslanian's death, the idea of women's genuine and transformative expression in literature had been present for decades. The primary aim of *écriture féminine* is to liberate women from conventional stereotypes, allowing them to convey their profound emotions and personal experiences.

While Louise Aslanian did not directly address feminism, her writings contain elements that criticize the unequal reality created by society for women. By presenting characters like Zareh, who is against his sister's education because she is a girl, and Gyulabatun, who always agrees with her husband because she thinks that men are naturally cleverer, Aslanian shows how women are treated as unequal and obedient. She challenges the reader to feel barriers and the societal expectations placed on women's shoulders. Opposing these characters, Aslanian presents barrier-breaking heroes who try to alter the system. For example, Nubar, even though he is old, is very open-minded and does everything to send his daughter to France for education. Or Armenohi, who, after learning about her husband's love affairs, immediately divorces him despite society pressuring her to forgive him.

When the war started, Louise Aslanian and her husband, Arpiar Aslanian, joined the front lines. Her involvement in politics, in general, the participation of women in politics and wars, extends the role of women, changing it from housewives to influential participants in political spheres. Her last two poems are about her experience in the concentration camp. In "At the Factory," she presents the lives of women who were caught and brought to the camp, and in "Mala," she writes about her feelings in the camp. The last two pieces by Louise Aslanian are about women, including her own experience in the camp. A woman wrote about the experiences of women, embodying what Hélène Cixous meant when she first used the term *écriture féminine*. Her experiences shed light on the crucial role of women in resistance movements and the ways in which their contributions have been historically overlooked. Aslanian's writings demonstrate that women's voices, even when silenced by violence and oppression, continue to resonate through the power of literature and memory.

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