

words, the interconnection of the Armenian Genocide and the diasporan Armenian self-image or identity, that is, if we consider the diasporan Armenian communities as minorities within the societies of their host countries. This vantage point implies certain questions, such as how strong is this interconnection and what is its role in the formation of national or ethnic identity; how effectively is the memory of the Armenian Genocide transmitted; how has the suffering of first-generation survivors affected their offspring; and finally, how intimately can these successive generations relive the world of genocide in order to be able to reproduce it in art. The anecdotal reference below can be illustrative.

Jewish tradition tells the story of a youth who was traveling from Jerusalem to Rome at the time of King Herod. He took with him the pillow on which he always slept. One night his pillow caught fire—it was the night the Temple in Jerusalem was set ablaze. Commenting on this story, Elie Wiesel writes, “Yes, one can live a thousand miles away from the Temple and see it burn. One can die in Auschwitz after Auschwitz.”⁶ This analogy supports the presupposition of the impact of the Armenian Genocide on the generations born to its survivors, or to the “former victims,” as Lawrence Langer would call them.

From this point of departure, I venture to demonstrate that the transgenerational psychological impact can shape the outlook and individuality of succeeding generations and can

⁶ For Elie Wiesel’s comment on this tale as told by Uri-Zvi Greenberg, see Alan L. Berger and Naomi Berger, Introduction to *Second Generation Voices: Reflections by Children of Holocaust Survivors and Perpetrators* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001), p. 1.