

To be absorbed into the foreign culture means enduring transformation that is partly suicide, partly betrayal, and partly reincarnation. Which part of the identity will be kept, which sector will be reshaped, and which segment will be abandoned are subject to debate. (182)

In *Orphan in the Sands*, Virginia Haroutunian tells of her shock when she discovered that her family's lifestyle—their daily rituals and cultural practices—was different from that of everyone else in her class. After observing the difference between the strict oversight of her Armenian parents and the freedom that was given to her American friends, she protested to her mother but Victoria wouldn't budge. She was firmly convinced that the Armenian way of raising children (or the Old Country way) was better than permitting such behavior as going out with friends and even dating which she considered "improper and immoral." "Only street girls sit in a car alone with a boy," she chided her daughter (74). Virginia felt "a growing sense of isolation and depression" and an intense desire to become a true American, to cast out everything foreign—from Armenian values to daily rituals—and blend into the society she was living in (56). But she could not. She was not like her school friends. She was shy and timid.

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Egyptian society at large. Refugees of the 1915 deportations and massacres who joined this established social structure were inclined to stay within the boundaries of their own community and had difficulty opening up to Egyptian society. This was also the case in other Middle Eastern countries with established Armenian communities. Many survivors who took refuge in those countries could not, would not master the local language and for the most part remained confined in their dealings and relationships within the boundaries of the Armenian community.