

these first-generation survivors, there was also the need to communicate with others who had suffered the loss of family and relatives during the Genocide, to communicate with relatives in the same predicament, a predicament they cherished as a "valuable commodity they possessed." Consequently they felt themselves foreign and alienated from the larger local society. Their children picked up this feeling at home and from remarks by their teachers or other children (45). Armenians were looked down upon in school and in the workplace, especially when they spoke Armenian (40). The result was a sense of humiliation, "the common Armenian inferiority complex" (39) that spread across the second-generation survivors and generated different interpretations and reactions.

Helene observes, for example, that "ethnic children will sometimes reject the food that reminds them of the ethnicity they feel makes them inferior to others in the country whose groups are more dominant in the culture" (36). They rebel and refuse to learn the Armenian language, as Helene did. Many rebelled yet still remained stranded between the demanding atmosphere at home and the margins of mainstream society, incapable of mixing with the popular kids, which their parents thought was crazy. "I was thus a square according to my training, wasn't popular, didn't know how to be popular..." (52). Helene admits that in her youth she had "an inferiority complex about being an Armenian, that is, the child of immigrants whose language and ways were ethnic." But she got over her inferiority complex, in part because Americans came to accept the concept of ethnic and cultural diversity and not to despise foreigners (214-15).