

aware of the abyss,
on one side father Armenia
on the other, son America

In 1971, as the editor of *Ararat: A Quarterly*, an Armenian-American literary journal based in New York, Kherdian expressed his and his generation's oscillation between past and present in these terms: "The movement is ever back and forth, from who we were to what we have become, and this is the tension of life that we speak of when we speak of it creatively."⁴⁵ And indeed, his literary response to his parents' stories and through them to his own understanding of the nation's traumatic past is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the second-generation mindset and responses through art. Kherdian's painful quest into the past brought him back to his mother's life story which he had refused to listen to before.⁴⁶

Theodore Kharpertian, the author of *Hagop*,⁴⁷ was born in America of an American-born Armenian mother whose family had migrated long before the Genocide, and a father who bore all the psychological scars of the trauma he had experienced as a child in Malatya during and after the First World War. Hagop was eight years old when his father was arrested and murdered for reasons he could never understand, no matter how much he grappled with it all his life (77).

⁴⁵ David Kherdian, "Editorial," *Ararat: A Quarterly* 12/1 (Winter 1971): n.p. (front cover verso).

⁴⁶ I discuss Kherdian's *The Road from Home: The Story of an Armenian Girl* (1979) in chapter 2 of the present study.

⁴⁷ Theodore D. Kharpertian, *Hagop: An Armenian Genocide Survivor's Journey to Freedom* (Belmont, MA: Armenian Heritage Press, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research [NAASR], 2003).