

uding to generally unacceptable political violence. “Odzum” (Consecration, 1988) and “Telefone” (The telephone, 1988) are two short stories in which Oshagan shows how a shocking event in the life of the Armenian community can stir the ashes of oblivion and indifference in assimilated Armenian-Americans and bring the long forgotten sense of Armenianness to the surface of their consciousness. The shock in “Odzum” is engendered by an act of sacrilege deliberately staged in an Armenian church by three youths who belong to an extremist terrorist group. In “Telefone,” the news of the suicide mission of an Armenian youth group against the Turkish embassy in Lisbon brings about that turning point in consciousness. Oshagan’s literature delineates a constant effort to move from the predicament of a victim’s psychology, prevalent in first- and even second-generation survivors, toward existence as a complete and free human being. He tries to reach a new synthesis, a new image of the Diasporan Armenian with a new identity, cognizant of the past, dedicated to the present, and able to reinterpret the concept of Armenianness for the future.²⁵ Can this mindset prevail in the third generation? Is it possible to let go of the torturing memory and its impact on one’s identity? If the third-generation Diaspora Armenians have been able to forge an identity that had a strong emphasis of ethnic elements and at the same time was reconciled and at ease with the mainstream

²⁴ Oshagan, *Takartin shurj, artsak grutiunner* (1988).

²⁵ For a brief thematic analysis of works by this and the following cited authors, see Peroomian, “The Transformation of Armenianness” (1992-93), pp. 119-45.