

“polyphonic, multilayered memoir” in which “personal discovery and history merge.”¹² In this autobiography, the Armenian component is gradually extracted from a nebulous memory hole to become an important dimension in the Diasporan Armenians’ self-identity.

Vickie Smith Foston’s amazing journey into the past is written in a similar vein. She sets out to unveil a well-kept family secret that involved the suicide half a century earlier of her grandmother Victoria (also her namesake). In the course of her cumbersome research, Foston comes across the astonishing truth about her roots, heritage, and background. She finds out that her ancestors were pure-blooded Armenians from Mush who escaped the Turkish persecutions and massacres of 1894–96. Not exactly a Genocide survivor’s account, *Victoria’s Secret: A Conspiracy of Silence* (2001) is the story of an immigrant family in which the conflict between forgetting the past and assimilating into the mainstream on the one hand, and adhering to ethnic identity and traditions on the other hand, creates quarrels that gradually deepen the schism within the family. And although assimilation is the name of the game, national pride and ethnic consciousness nonetheless find expression in deeds and behaviors, in a family project, a collective work of art, a beaded tableau of Mother Armenia lamenting over the ruins of the homeland, or in a charcoal landscape of Armenia with Mount Ararat in prominence.

¹² Balakian quoted in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 12, 1998, p. B7).