

situation prevails in Turkey, a country that boasts of its democratic regime but practices totalitarianism when it comes to its own history. Turkish governments know well that reconstructing the past, that is, the act of reminiscing—where it diverges from the official version of history—is itself a challenge to totalitarian power.⁸

Shafak's novel, a best-seller in Turkey, is a daring exploitation of the Turkish-Armenian relationship and a realistic exposition of the rigid Turkish stance vis-à-vis the country's past history. Her candid criticism of this stance and her audacity to speak about the Armenian question, even using the word "genocide" to characterize the events of 1915, created havoc among right-wing nationalists in Turkey. Curiously, however, the word "genocide" is uttered in the novel by an Armenian character and thus does not necessarily express the author's view. In any event, for this remark by a fictitious character in the novel, Shafak was accused of "denigrating Turkishness" in accordance with Article 301. Charges were brought against her and she faced three years in prison. She was acquitted, but the trial itself was a showdown of ultranationalist sentiments in Turkey versus intellectuals who test the limits.

In Shafak's novel, Armanoush personifies the continuum of historical memory in the Diaspora. The Armenian side of her family wants to make sure that, as the Tchakhmakhchian heiress, she will carry on the burden of the Armenian identity, heritage, history, and culture. While her father Barsam Tchakhmakhchian appears to be unconcerned that his ex-wife