

to the astounded and disbelieving Kazancı family. Armanoush tells them the unheard-of story of the Armenian victims of Turkish atrocities. Their first reaction is disbelief: who could commit these atrocities and why? Then, complete detachment from the perpetrators of such crimes, though they were Turks like themselves. With a clever twist, Shafak thrusts the role of a Turkish history teacher onto one of the Kazancı women. Asya's Auntie Cevriye had learned during her twenty years of teaching Turkish national history to draw

an impermeable boundary between the past and the present, distinguishing the Ottoman Empire from the modern Turkish Republic... [S]he had actually heard the whole story as grim news from a distant country. The new state in Turkey had been established in 1923 and that was as far as the genesis of this regime could extend. Whatever might or might not have happened preceding this commencement date was the issue of another era—and another people. (p. 164)

Thus, Armanoush waits in vain for closure, an apology, or at least an admission of guilt. But as Shafak explains, "they had seen no connection between themselves and the perpetrators of the crimes. She, as an Armenian, embodied the spirits of her people generations and generations earlier, whereas the average Turk had no such notion of continuity with his or her ancestors" (p. 164). Indeed, the average Turk, who is fed a strictly nationalist history, may not even know about the existence of Armenians as the indigenous people of today's Turkey. What he/she has learned in school is the migration of Turks from Central Asia to Anatolia and the conquest of the Byzantine Empire, then the glories of the