

Rose is dating a Turk, and asserts that "Armanoush will be just fine" (p. 54), her Auntie Surpun, the feminist university professor, is angry, and does not understand why Barsam does not see the gravity of the situation, the importance of the perpetuation of the race:

If you have no appreciation of history and ancestry, no memory and responsibility, and if you live solely in the present, you certainly can claim that. But the past lives within the present, and our ancestors breathe through our children and you know that.... As long as Rose has your daughter, you have every right to intervene in her life. Especially when she starts dating a Turk!" (p. 55)

The concern is clear and typical of Diasporan Armenians. The issue is the perpetuation of the race and the upholding of Armenian identity. It is the pursuit of the uninterrupted continuum of historical memory, the memory of the wound inflicted by the Turk, upon which the identity of third-generation Armenians raised in the Diaspora would be built. Auntie Varsenig targets the source of the evil, the identity of the "enemy" who is threatening the integrity of Armanoush's Armenianness. "How can you give your flesh-and-blood daughter to those who are responsible for our being so few and in so much pain today?" (p. 55).

Shafak's staging of this heated conversation, which spreads over several pages in the novel, demonstrates her understanding of the issues pertaining to Armenian survival and perpetuation. The idea echoes in Auntie Varsenig's "more structural, if not primordial, concern: a fear of survival." She "simply did not want [Armanoush] to shine too bright, to stand out from the flock" (p. 96). She advises Armanoush to