



ORHAN PAMUK'UN KAR ROMANINDA DOĞU VE BATI KİMLİKLERİ ARASINDAKİ ETKİLEŞİME ANALİTİK BAKIŞ*

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ÖZET

Orhan Pamuk'un varlıklı bir aileye mensup olması, İstanbul'un batılılaşmış bir semti olan Nişantaşı'nda büyümesi ve İstanbul'da Amerikan Robert Koleji'nden mezun olması gibi sebeplerden dolayı, eserlerinin içeriğini görmezlikten gelen muhafazakâr ve milliyetçi gruplarca laik elit sınıfın bir üyesi olarak görülür. Bununla birlikte, aynı zamanda orduya ve erken Cumhuriyet (döneminin) laikleştirme projesine karşı eleştirel tavrı nedeniyle Pamuk, muhafazakâr gruplara sempati gösterdiği için laik elit tarafından eleştirilir. *Kar* başta olmak üzere Pamuk'un eserleri genellikle modern Türk kimliğinin (yeniden) inşasında çok çeşitli ideolojiler ve perspektifler olduğunu ve bireylerin çoğunlukla bir tek ideolojiye bütünüyle teslim olmadığını öne sürer. Bu yönüyle de *Kar* adlı eserinde hem militanlaşmış laiklik anlayışının hem de siyasi İslam'ın çifte eleştirisini gözler önüne sermektedir. Azade Seyhan'ın işaret ettiği gibi, Pamuk'un eserleri "onu modern İslam'ın muhafızı olarak görenlere veya onu Cumhuriyet'in Kemalist reformlarına karşı casus bir provokatör olarak kınayanlara" prim vermez.

Bu çalışmada, Pamuk'un sadece birbirine zık ikilikleri vurgulamak yerine, daha da önemlisi bunların nasıl iç içe geçtiklerini ve nasıl birbiriyle ilişki içinde yürüdüklerini göstermeye ve bunu yaparken de iki tarafın karakterler ve mekanların nasıl kullanıldığı ortaya konulmaya çalışılacak. Bunun için önce Türkiye'deki "eski" Doğu ve "yeni" Batı'ya yönelik tavırları ve bu tavırların 19.yüzyıldan modern döneme kadar geçirdiği değişimler belirlenip, sonra da Pamuk'un *Kar*'ı Kars'a yerleştirmesi ve oranın mimarisi ve çevresinin nasıl Janus'un çift yüzünün temsili olduğu incelenecek. Son olarak da, 'Ka' karakterini ve onun varsayılan laiklik ile dine çekimini uzlaştırma çabası yakından analiz edilecek. Bu yapılırken de Jacques Derrida gibi filozofların, Mikhail Bakhtin gibi edebiyat kuramcılarının bir dizi eserlerine ve Meltem Ahiska, Zafer Şenocak, Azade Seyhan ve Jameson gibi çağdaş toplum eleştirmenlerine başvurulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Orhan Pamuk, Kar, Türkiye, doğu, batı, laiklik, İslam

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AN ANALYSIS OF INTERACTION BETWEEN EASTERN AND WESTERN IDENTITIES IN ORHAN PAMUK'S *SNOW*

ABSTRACT

Because Orhan Pamuk comes from a wealthy family, raised in the westernized district of Nişantaşı and graduated from the American Robert College in Istanbul, he is seen as a member of the secular elite by religious and nationalist groups in Turkey who ignore the literal content of his work. At the same time however, because of his critical attitude to the military and to the secularisation project of the early Republic, Pamuk is criticised by the secular elite for sympathising with religious groups. In response, he has responded in works such as *Snow* which act as a dual critique of both militant secularism and politicised Islam. Pamuk's works generally, and *Snow* in particular, argue there is a broad range of ideologies and perspectives in (re)constructing modern Turkish identity, and that individuals mostly do not wholly submit to one ideology exclusively. As Azade Seyhan observes, Pamuk's work gives no credence to "those who see him as a champion of modern Islam or who condemn him as an agent provocateur against the Kemalist reforms of the Republic."

In this work, I will demonstrate that Pamuk uses double-edged locations and characters, to both highlight oppositional dualisms, but also more importantly to show their entanglement, how they work in relation to one another. To do this I will first establish the attitudes within Turkey to the 'old' East and the 'new' West and how they have changed from the early 19th century to the modern era. I will then examine Pamuk's locating of *Snow* within Kars and how its architecture and environment are representative of the two-faces of Janus. Finally, I will closely analyse the character of Ka and his struggle to reconcile his default secularism and his emotional draw to faith. In doing so, a range of works from philosophers such as Jacques Derrida, literary theorists such as Mikhail Bakhtin, and on contemporary social commentators such as Meltem Ahiska, Zafer Şenocak, Azade Seyhan, and Fredric Jameson are considered.

Key Words: Orhan Pamuk, *Snow*, Turkey, East, West, secularism, Islam

Introduction

Derrida, in *The Other Heading: Reflections of Today's Europe*, argues that "it is always in the figure of the Western heading and of the final headland or point that Europe determines and cultivates itself" (Derrida 1992: 25). Just as this is the case for Europe, in an equal and opposite reaction, the figure of the Western headland has been the locus for Turkish modernisation, and the site at which Turkish nationality has been developed for nearly two centuries. The beginnings of Turkish Westernisation can be traced to 1839 and the Tanzimat Period, which attempted to modernise the creaking Ottoman Empire. By the 1800s, the Ottoman Empire was over six hundred years old and was weakened by the increase of nationalist factionalism amongst the ethnic communities ruled over by the Empire. The Tanzimat reforms were inspired by an increasingly well-travelled and well-educated civil service who were heavily influenced by French-style secular

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liberalism. The reforms targeted the military and broad elements of cultural life in order to strengthen the Empire's relationship with Europe and delay or prevent foreign intervention.

Despite this move towards Western political ideology, Ottoman culture during and after the Tanzimat period continued to rely heavily on Islamic traditions. As Parla informs us in *Fathers and Sons: The Epistemological Origins of the Tanzimat Novel* (Parla 2004), contemporary writers did not see East/West as a necessary dichotomy. Rather, they perceived Westernisation as a simply a translation of certain Western cultural elements into the broader Eastern tradition, as a means of preserving the latter. Because this period led the authority of the Islamic culture in Turkey, the Sultan and the Caliphate, to be questioned, writers argued it was their task to provide a moral compass and navigate the boundaries of the changing East-West dynamics, rather than support one side of the dichotomy.

In the following decades, however, the influence of Western ideologies on an Eastern culture became to be seen in terms of a conflict between competing visions for the future of Turkey. This was particularly true for the generation of pro-Western intellectuals who established the Turkish Republic in 1923 at the expense of the old Ottoman Empire. By the beginning of the 20th century, the Ottoman Empire was known as the 'sick man of Europe'. As Seyhan argues, the new Republic "started life with traces and memories of that sickness in the form of financial challenges, illiteracy, and deep division between a minority of educated civil servants, military officers, and intellectuals and a vast majority of impoverished and illiterate peasants and religious and otherwise deeply conservative forces whose loyalty was not to the nation but to the sultanate-caliphate and Islam" (Seyhan 2008: 38). Atatürk was forced towards aggressive measures against such people and forces in his belief that "Turkey's future lay with Europe and the West." (Müftüler-Bac 1997: 17) Atatürk wanted to create a state that was essentially European in contrast to the Turkish-Muslim core of the Ottoman Empire. The only way he saw to accomplish this was through a nationalist, secularist, and authoritarian revolution. This revolution involved a number of reforms along Western lines attempting to bring the new Turkish state onto a equal footing with its European counterparts. The most important of these was the abolition of the Sultanate and the Caliphate, weakening ties between the new Turkish state and the Middle East by relinquishing Turkey's previous role as the world leader of the Islamic community. The Turkish Republicans, led by Atatürk, interpreted Tanzimat as a period of instability in order to justify the brutal actions of the new Republic in their secularisation project. Undoubtedly, this was partially retrospective justification: by creating a discourse that saw Turkey as a nation caught between East and West, the Westernizing reforms became part of the need for urgent resolution.

From this, we can see that the modern day perception of Turkey as a bridge between Eastern and Western is the result of a conceptual framework invented to retroactively inform the identity of the new Turkish nation-state in the formative years of the Republic. However, the synthesis between East and West was in fact a 'self-colonial' movement towards West ideologies and cultural models. Of course, Turkey has never been a literal colony of Europe; however, I use the term 'self-colonial' in this article to refer to the self-propagated socio-economic power structure within the Turkey in order to describe what the West represents to different political and social groups. As Meltem Ahiska cogently argues, "Turkey reproduces the reified images of the West to justify its regime of power in its boundary management of dividing spheres, regions, and people along the axis of East and West" (Ahiska 2003: 368). According to Pamuk, these divisions become most visible amongst Turkish Westernizers who aim "to create a country that is richer, happier, and more powerful... But as part of westward-looking movements, they remain deeply critical of certain basic characteristics of their country and culture. [and] see their culture as defective, sometimes even worthless" (Pamuk 2004: 230-231).

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The objective of this work is to analyse the self-colonising aspects of Turkish culture and challenge the discourse of Turkey as a 'bridge' between East and West through a reading of Orhan Pamuk's novel *Snow* (Kar). Rather than acting as a locus where two mutually exclusive and stable cultures encounter each other through a conflict of civilizations, Turkey is neither 'between' East and West, nor a synthesis of the two. As the critic Irzik's argues, Turkey is a nation in which "many of the fundamental social divisions have been experienced, articulated, concealed, or displaced in a cultural/ideological vocabulary mobilizing the 'West' in different power and justification strategies" (Irizik&Güzeldere 2003: 285). It is these power strategies that are clearly fore-grounded in *Snow*, a novel where the tensions over East and West within the Turkish nation provide an allegorical representation of the tension concerning Turkey's relationship to Europe. The novel presents the range of political groups who create discourses of self-identity concerning their own nation in relation to European ideals and thus complicates Turkey's position as either a Muslim country or a European nation.

The issue of whether compatibility is possible between Islam and secular democracy in Turkey is the major factor concerning the country's integration to the European community. As Atila Eraip notes, the relationship "between Europe and Turkey during much of the eighties continued to unfold in terms of competing definitions of democracy" (Eralp 1993: 32). From the perspective of Europe, the repression of Islamic identity in Turkey and the exclusion of religious groups from politics by the military since the foundation of the Republic is symptomatic of a broader deficiency in Turkish democracy. The relationship between Europe and Turkey necessitates the confrontation of Islam as a political force within a democratic framework. However, as Müftüler-Bac argues, just as "Turkey's internal structure is influenced by developments in Europe and adapts itself to these external changes, so has Turkey, in its turn, the potential to contribute to the changing European order" (Müftüler-Bac 1997: 2); "Turkey is the only secular democracy with a market economy that is also Muslim. For many Europeans this is a contradiction in terms" (Ibid.: 12). The presence of a strong politically secular but culturally Muslim country on the Europe border undermines this "contradiction" and demonstrates that both Turkey and Europe must question their boundaries in relation to each other. Since 2007, when the religiously influenced AKP (The Justice and Development Party) came to power in Turkey, the role of Islam in a secular political environment has returned. Analysing a novel such as *Snow* is part of a crucial process of developing a better understanding of the political tensions between the state and the religious groups within Turkey, and the conflicts between Turkey and Europe.

Snow is set in the 1990s during the upsurge in political-religious movements across the globe and especially in Turkey where the pro-Islamic Refah Partisi (Welfare Party) began to receive an increasing share of the national vote. The novel is intricately plotted with several narrative layers. However, this work will focus specifically on the conflict between Kemalist and Islamist groups who use Turkey's relationship with Europe as the centrepiece of their national rhetoric and, in different ways, view Europe as Derrida's 'final headland'. In doing so, this work will unpick the value of the terms 'Europe' and 'European' within Turkey's political and societal discourse as represented by the symbolic city of Kars. As Irzik notes, the 'West' is a "permanent, if shifting, signifier in the language of this public sphere, and it exerts a powerful pressure on the imagining of modern Turkish identity, both positively as a developmental ideal and negatively as the figure of alienation". (Irizik&Güzeldere 2003: 285) I will show how the different communities presented in *Snow* use the concept of 'Europe' to treat Islam and secularism as binary political poles, and in doing so ceasing public debate by ushering in violence. In negotiating their uses of Europe in their discourses, I will show that in the poetics of binary opposition there is a significant entanglement network. Through his novel, Pamuk questions whether the boundaries between seemingly exclusive binaries such as Islam and modernity exist, and concludes that the distinctions

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between the two are actually flexible, even if they cannot be completely integrated. As Derrida remarks, in *Faith and Knowledge*, “the surge... of Islam will be neither understood nor answered as long as the exterior and interior of this borderline place have not been called into question” (Derrida 1998: 20).

I. Kars: A City between Two Worlds

Once Turkey's status as a 'border' between East and West has been re-evaluated, it becomes possible to understand otherness within Turkey in relation to the concept of otherness in Turkey's relationship to the West and Europe specifically. *Snow* is a good novelistic example of negotiating this sense of otherness because it sets out to understand and portray political-religious tensions and the self-colonial dynamic within a nation still dealing with the radical process of enforced Westernization enacted from the mid-19th century. The narration of *Snow* traces the mixing of Turkish identity with Europe and the West, and also enables the reader to, in the words of Zafer Senocak, delineate “a history of Orient and Occident touching each other, one that does not document the deeds and misdeeds of military generals, but rather one that excavates and decodes European images of Muslims, and Muslim images of Europe” (Şenocak 2000: 64). *Snow* develops its narrative through the intersections and diversions of differing ethnic and religious communities, without using the stereotypical dichotomies of East/West and Turkey/Europe.

Pamuk takes a historicist approach, situating his stories in an ostensibly modern nation where the signs of the Ottoman past are still present and relevant. Like the majority of Pamuk's work, *Snow* is replete with reference to Ottoman culture, as it aims to resurrect for the reader a picture of social and political life before the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Rather viewing the past as a subordinate of the present, Pamuk outlines both what has been lost and what has been gained in the transition from the Ottoman State to the Turkish Republic. In an interview with Eleanor Wachtel called ‘Combining East and West’, Pamuk remarked, “If Freud tells you that when something is suppressed it comes back in disguise, then my novels are, in fact, that disguise”. (Wachtel 2003: 251) In many respect, Pamuk's novels are exercises in memory, acting as a resistance to the loss of history and historical consciousness. Because the socio-political tensions at the centre of the modern Turkish state, and in particular the Islam-secular debate, are still heavily influenced by the repercussions of the Westernisation movement during the early Republic, Pamuk's historicist approach to the benefits and problems of modernisation provide an opportunity to move beyond partisan dichotomies and towards a more nuanced approach.

The location of *Snow* in the city of Kars, an abbreviation of the Turkish Kar-su (‘snow water’), is crucial to Pamuk's revival and depiction of Ottoman-Turkish history. Kars is a peripheral city in north-east Turkey on the border with Armenia which was “annexed by Russia during the Russo-Turkish War in 1877-1878, then briefly formed a part of the Democratic Republic of Armenia after World War I until Turkish general Kazim Karabekir re-conquered it in November 1920.” (McGaha 2008: 157) The situation of Kars on the Armenian border is highly significant in its history and thus in the political narrative of Kars. In the final years of the Ottoman Empire, nationalist uprisings among different ethnic groups were on the increase, and relations between the Armenian community which constituted around 10% of the population in Ottoman Anatolia and especially Kurdish Muslims, became fractious and violent. Describing the relationship at the start of World War I, Zürcher argues that the “Armenian nationalists saw in a Russian victory their chance to achieve the establishment of an Armenian state in Eastern Anatolia... [and] joined the Russian army; there were Armenian desertions from the Ottoman army and guerrilla activity behind the Ottoman lines”. (Zürcher 2004: 120) During this period, the Ottoman Interior Minister Tâlât Pasha ordered that the entire Armenian population situated within the war zone be relocated to Zor in the Syrian desert. That process, carried out in 1915-16, resulted in a huge number of deaths and understandable animosity between Armenians and the Ottoman state. To this day, it is a

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matter of political dispute as to whether the relocation was an unfortunate consequence of inter-communal warfare or was in fact a deliberate genocide.

The setting of the novel in Kars is highly symbolic. Just as Kars is a peripheral and historical border town marginal to Turkey, so too is Turkey marginalized from the rest of the world. This allegorical link runs throughout the novel as Pamuk accentuates the desolate condition of the city on which “the nation has turned its back... and so had God” (Pamuk 2004: 27). The snow in the novel also has symbolic value: it surrounds and connects all the characters to one another, as well as the main protagonist to the scene. Ka is in Kars surrounded by kar (snow). At the same time, however, the snow also freezes time, allowing different periods and histories overlap and come into conflict with one another. In this regard, Kars becomes a microcosm of Turkey, where the memories of the former Ottoman Empire – the harmonious co-existence of multiple cultures, languages, religions and ethnicities – are juxtaposed with the modern era of harsh modernity. As if building a theatrical stage, Pamuk highlights the buildings and the city’s architecture to exemplify and show the progression of the changes in Turkish history. He describes the changing hands of buildings to show the different priorities of the changing societies: “the Kars Police Headquarters... where the old stone buildings that had once belonged to wealthy Russians and Armenians, now housed mostly government offices” (Ibid.: 13) and “the run-down single-storey mansion,” (Ibid.: 200) which following the formation of the Republic was passed onto Maruf Bey, a trader who sold wood and leather to the Soviet Union. As the narrator explains, Maruf Bey had held onto the mansion for forty-three years until at the start of the Cold War, whereupon the government had arrested merchants who did business with the Soviet Union, accusing them of being spies. In the 1970s, a violent Marxist splinter group had used the building as its headquarters whilst after the 1980 coup the building had been empty before a rich tailor who had traded in Istanbul and Arabia transformed it into a sweatshop. (Ibid.: 201) In this passage, the architecture of Kars metaphorically allows the reader to trace the history of the Ottoman Empire and Republic. Because it is a ‘mansion’, as symbol of wealth and power, it all demonstrates the shifting power from Soviet era trading, through Marxist radicalism, and finally to the new market economy of the later Republic.

These descriptions of the city’s history also draw attention to the effect of nationalism in the years following the creation of the Republic on this cultural mosaic. By referring both to the ongoing Turkish-Armenian problem and bringing to life the once harmonious co-existence of several cultures under the Ottoman Empire, Pamuk forces the reader to contrast the periods before and after the formation of the Turkish Republic. This comparison is explicitly drawn by Serdar Bey, the owner of the local newspaper, who states, “although the people of Kars once lived side by side in happy harmony, in recent years outside forces have turned brother against brother. Disputes between Islamists, secularists, Kurds, Turks, and Azeris drive us asunder for specious reasons”. (Ibid.: 318) The changing dynamic between conflicting groups - secularists, Islamists, Jacobins, fundamental Islamists, Leftists, Turkish nationalists, Kurd nationalists, Marxist Kurds, Islamist Kurds and so on – are all represented against the white, snow-laden backdrop of a melancholic Kars, providing a microcosm of Turkey as a whole.

In this way, *Snow* is a fictional response to the Turkish identity crisis of the 1980s caused by the 1980 coup. The political theorist Tanil Bora has astutely recognised that Turkish nationalism has risen since the 1990s because of the fragmentation of social and cultural identities in the 1980s after the coup. (Bora 1995: 71) Bora argues that Turkish capitalism and modernism in the 80s were a catalyst for issues and questions that had formerly been repressed to resurface, which brought with it a concomitant rise in the division of the populous into various ethnic and political groups. Along these lines, it is possible to read *Snow* as a critique of two varieties of nationalism, manifested through the characters of Sunay, the Western-secularist actor who aspires to lead a new

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Turkish Enlightenment and Blue, the Kurdish-Islamic leader who seeks to re-establish the Ottoman age. Though their discourses of nationalism are very different, Pamuk demonstrates that attitudes to the 'West' and 'Europe' are at the centre of both Sunay and Blue's identities, extremely positive in the case of the former and the reverse in the latter. That the social and political tensions at the margins of the Turkish nation all have Westernism at the heart of their discourses, supports Ahiska's assessment that the "imagined Western gaze is an integral part of [...non-Western] identity". (Ahiska 2003: 365) Pamuk demonstrates in *Snow* that, in fact, the official ideology of the Turkish state contains this contradiction, being at the same time Westernizing/modernizing and authentically nationalist in outlook. As Konuk argues, the modernization of Turkey "promoted sameness with Western Europe" but at the same time "maintained a notion of national particularity". (Konuk 2008: 84) Pamuk's work is an examination of the tension that arises from the differing attitudes as to whether Turkey should "represent" or "resemble" the West (Ibid.: 79) As Nurullah Ataç contends, on the one hand, there is a desire to mimic the West with the equally important sense that Turkey is 'late' or behind Europe in its modernisation. On the other, there is a constant fear that a nation with a long and unique history and culture is becoming an inauthentic imitation of a European nation. (Ergin 2009: 29) *Snow* demonstrates this interplay between desire and fear through the characters of Sunay and Blue, in the architecture of Ottoman buildings crumbling in the face of modernity or being put to new monetary purposes, and in the setting. It is highly ironic that Pamuk's reputation in Turkey is tarnished by the notion that he has 'sold out' to attract a European audience when his controversial status is an element of precisely the East-West debate and aggressive nationalisms his novels negotiate.

II. The Centre of the Snowflake: Ka's Internalising of the East/West Struggle

The figure of Ka and determining his personality is key to understanding the symbolic nature of how the East-West discourses run through the novel. The different ways in which Ka is perceived by other characters and by the multiple narrators, reveals the variety of political discourses in Turkish socio-political society. When Pamuk began writing *Snow*, he saw the tale as part love story and part political thriller based on a poet visiting a town in eastern Turkey. In an interview with Hakan, the author describes one scene in particular that he had in mind based on two men meeting in a prison cell. One man would be committed to political Islam, whilst the other a devout secularist. Despite their differences, they strike up an unusual friendship and begin a debate about civilization. (Pamuk 2004: 61) This framework led Pamuk to create an expanded version of that debate taking place between several characters with the prison being substituted for a bleak and remote city. The narration of *Snow* covers three days where the protagonist Ka visits Kars. He is a poet and journalist from Istanbul who had been exiled to Germany for publishing an anti-Government article. He returns from Frankfurt to Istanbul for his mother's funeral after twelve years of exile and travels to Kars to try to track down the woman he once loved, Ipek, as well as write an article for the Turkish newspaper 'Cumhuriyet' ('Republic') on politics in the region and, in particular, the epidemic of suicide among young girls who have been banned from attending school wearing headscarves. The story is told by the narrator, Orhan, a friend of Ka.

The influence of Dostoyevsky's *Devils* on *Snow* is clear not only on a thematic level, but also on the level of the narrative and the similarities between the carnivalesque poetics that both Pamuk and Dostoyevsky use. Like Dostoyevsky, Pamuk adopts a multi-layered narrative calling to mind Bakhtin's description of the carnivalesque, using a variety of genres including "novellas, letters, oratorical speeches [and] a mixing of prose and poetic speech". (Dostoyevsky 2000: 118) Instead of creating a closed testimonial narrative which returns to a stable identification model in a circular and teleological movement, Pamuk multiplies the number of characters with authorial input. In this way, the novel becomes metafictional, reflecting on the act of constructing a story from fragments of other stories and other traces of memory. (Seyhan 2006) As Pamuk collects

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several testimonies without reaching a verdict, the reader must gather the remnants of incomplete information and create their own narrative. This is particularly obvious in the reader's relation to Ka: we depend on various testimonies of people who have known Ka to give external accounts, whilst the narrator allows insights into Ka's emotions.

Within the opening chapters of *Snow*, there is limited information about Ka's background; the details of his life before the time period of the novel are revealed later in the form of brief flashbacks. The political element to his exile is made clear – it is revealed that he published an article which angered the authorities – but no information is given as to what the article was about or what specifically aroused the ire of the state. The focus, therefore, is much more on the absurdity of the situation: after the 1971 coup, small newspapers printed with considerable freedom of expression, beyond the bounds of the penal code. However, in the build up to the coup of 1980 the authorities started rounding up those who had been in technical breach of the law. Ka is tried for a political article which, it transpires, he did not even write, and he flees to Germany. (Pamuk 2004: 35) This background information is revealing but of the tragic – the despotism of the Turkish state in the period – and the comic: Ka is sentenced despite not even being committed to the ideology in the article. From the outset, then, Ka's character and life is guided by a series of absurd and unexpected events, which makes tracing continuity or causal links challenging. Symbolically, this identity crisis is reflective of the Turkish situation – not only is it difficult for the reader to determine Ka's personality, seemingly Ka is not even in control of his own identity.

Ka's relationship to politics in Kars is directly linked with his lack of power in controlling the mishaps and misadventures that shape his life. Equally, because he is raised by secular parents and spends twelve years in Frankfurt, he has little real understanding of the conflict between secular and religious groups. This means that he sees himself as a product of Western ideology and education, but at the same time is intrigued by the religious traditions that he has been deliberately kept from in his upbringing. In some respects, Ka's personality is recognisable within the 19th century European tradition of central protagonists being isolated men who fail to make decisions and whose cynicism leads them to permanent solitude, such as Dostoyevsky's "man from the underground" or Kafka's 'K'. However, Ka breaks from this stereotype in that he embodies "hüzün", a wry sadness, as Pamuk describes in *Istanbul*, which is an inherent part of Turkish culture. Pamuk argues that hüzün is caused by living in the ruins of a lost empire, different yet in full view of the West. In Turkish literature, the term has a social function, placing emphasis on communal myths and discourses and binding society. In this respect, *Snow* shares commonalities with the works of third-world writers such as Marquez who see loneliness and isolation as part of communities and nations, rather than individuals. In this way, Ka as a novelistic character is imbued with elements of the European tradition but with distinctive Turkish qualities that are reflective of the nation.

In his interview with 'Hakan', Pamuk states that Ka does not believe in politics, but becomes entangled in the political situation in Kars because he is in pursuit of a woman he loves, Ipek. He did not write the article that got him exiled and is initially extremely hesitant about taking a political stand. However, because of his outsider status and his investigative role, he gradually finds himself caught in the middle of political debates and acting as mediator. Ironically, however, the negotiations he initiates between the secularists and Islamists are simply a means of meeting with Ipek, an active member of the religious community. Ipek has divorced from her husband Muhtar, the head of the local Islamist political party that is looking certain to win the upcoming election. Only gradually does the reader learn that Ipek and her sister Kadife are deeply implicated in the political crisis in Kars, through both their romantic lives and their ideological positions. As unwilling mediator, Ka attempts to find reconciliation and thus oscillates between the two political groups of Sunay and Blue. When Ka is with Blue's group of militant Kurdish-Islamists, he is

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labelled as one of the “mediators... [who are] just smart alecks who think they can stick their nose into your private business on the pretense of being impartial” (Ibid.: 345). From Blue’s perspective, Ka’s wish to reconcile the conflicts between him and Sunay, the former leftist activist who has become a Kemalist dramatist, demonstrates Ka’s naïve view of religion, a “love of God [that] comes out of Western romantic novels”. (Ibid.: 354) With each other group Ka takes on differing labels and identities reflective of their own political position. In time, Ka himself uses these different masks for protection to ensure he does not become too involved in the heart of the debate.

Ka begins to recognise that his self-perception is heavily influenced by the perception of those around him. He is clearly different from the Kars locals and feels like a member of the Istanbul bourgeoisie; however, he is able to relate that feeling to being around German people in Frankfurt. Ka recognises that he feels the same way next to Germans as the local populous of Kars feel next to him: humble, but also angry at being marginalised from the dominant culture. For this reason, Ka oscillates between two versions of himself: the Westerner, based on secular cynicism, and the melancholic poet Ka who acknowledges the possibility of faith and identifies with the marginalised. “Reflective and poetic Ka confronts more questions at every turn; his tolerance and compassion paralyze him in his search for answers.” (Seyhan 2006) To increase the symbolism of Ka’s changing personal perspective, it is also noticeable how his personality shifts from one city to another. Pamuk uses the different cities and nations Ka visits to illustrate the permeable boundaries between the many Easts and Wests Ka traces within Turkey and Europe. Each border-crossing – Kars to Istanbul, Istanbul to Frankfurt, Kars to Frankfurt – disorients Ka meaning he tries to he holds on to interior thoughts and detach himself from the surrounding environment. For example, Ka is proud that during his time in Frankfurt he has not even attempted to learn German, thus preserving himself as a Turk in Germany: “My body rejected the language, so I was able to preserve my purity and my soul” (Ibid.: 35). However, once in Kars and caught up in the hopeless politics of the city, he inoculates himself against the local community by dreaming of returning to Frankfurt with Ipek. His coat, which he bought at a Kaufhof in Germany, becomes symbolic of his detachment from Kars: “This coat protects me from evil,” (Ibid.: 237) says Ka when he refuses to take it off during his meeting with Ipek’s sister Kadife. The symbolism of the coat is made clear from the first page, where it seems as if it is part of Ka’s personality:

He was sitting next to the window and wearing a thick charcoal coat he’d bought at a Frankfurt Kaufhof five years earlier. We should note straight away that this soft, downy beauty of a coat would cause him shame and disquiet during the days he was to spend in Kars, while also furnishing a sense of security. (Ibid.: 3)

As well as a protection, however, the coat also becomes the way in which the local population of Kars recognise Ka and identify him as different. When Ka enters the National Theatre to see a play staged by the Sunay Zaim Theatre Company, he is noticed by a young religious boy called Necip, who tells Ka that he recognized him from his coat. This recognition leads them into a conversation about God, love and atheism demonstrating the way in which Ka becomes the mediator for political and social discussions because of his position as being from both East and West (and equally from neither).

The significance of Ka’s coat carries an implicit reference to Nikolai Gogol and his short story ‘The Overcoat’. The protagonist of Gogol’s narrative is a government clerk named Akakii Akakievich, who saves up money to buy an expensive new coat. Because of the coat’s finery, however, it draws enormous attention to Akakievich who is soon attacked by thieves who steal the coat from him. Akakievich asks the director of a department, a Russian General, for help, but the General treats him extremely harshly and Akakievich dies soon afterwards. As the General returns home, Akakievich’s ghost attacks him and who steals *his* overcoat, and so the stealing of coats continues with the coats increasingly representing the background and personality of the wearer.

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This is certainly true for Ka, whose coat identifies him as a foreign presence in Kars which alerts the secret service and the Islamic fundamentalists. The coat carries with it layers of assumptions: from just the coat, he is identified as Western, atheist, an “ambassador to the West” (Ibid.: 252), and a bourgeoisie. Like Akakievich, the coat is also eventually Ka’s downfall and causes his death. The Russian name Akakii in Gogol’s story also carries a verbal echo of the Russian “obkakat” or ‘kaka’, which means “defecator” in Russian, German, French, and Turkish. Ka’s name references this word because, like Gogol’s protagonist, Ka is a weak character, guided accidents rather than his own personality.

Ka’s name and its symbolic value are most obvious in the circumstances surrounding his death. In the chapter ‘A Godless Man in Kars’ an article is published in the local paper which depicts Ka as a “godless imitation-European” attempting to “stick his tongue at our country and even at the great Atatürk” (Ibid.: 319). The article causes Ka to reflect on his childhood:

Early in his youth, Ka firmly believed that there could be no higher honour than to die for an intellectual political cause or for what he had written. By his thirties, he’d seen too many of his friends and classmates tortured for the sake of foolish, even malign principles... On the corner of Halitpaa and Kazim Karabekir avenues, Ka saw a pipe protruding from an icy hole in a windowless wall, imagined it was the barrel of a gun aimed straight at him, and in his mind’s eye saw himself dying on the snow-covered pavement. What would they say about him in the Istanbul papers? Had there really been a German journalist called Hans Hansen, and had Ka really been his friend, the Frankfurter Rundschau, might have run a story about his murder... Ka took some consolation in imagining that his poems might be translated into German and published in Akzent magazine, but it was still perfectly clear to him that should this article in the Border City Gazette prove to be the death of him, the published translations would mean nothing. (Ibid.: 320-324)

In the original Turkish, the last sentence includes the vulgar Turkish expression ‘bok yoluna gitmek’ meaning ‘to die for shit/to die in vain’. This expression is a perfect summation of the absurd events that shape Ka’s life and his eventual death. In the novel, Ka will be murdered by a religious group when he returns to Frankfurt; however, whilst still alive, his fear doesn’t stop him attending meetings in Kars with dangerous Kemalist and religious groups. Because Ka sees both sides of this debate, he displays both his personalities: the secular, cynical ‘Avrupai Istanbul’ (a Westernised person from Istanbul) and his romantic and faithful side that wants to blend in with the locals in Kars. By acting as the mediator in the political communities of Kars, he acts not only as negotiator, but is also challenged to become able to accommodate all the available perspectives.

It is clear as the novel progresses that Ka becomes increasingly influenced by the religious characters he meets; through interaction with them, rather than theoretical discussion of religion, he begins to turn from early Turkish Republicanism and starts to believe in a hidden order. Within his character, therefore, we see the evolution of self-colonialism as he struggles with both aspects of his heritage. Ka hopes to unpick the hidden religious order through openness to pluralism and diversity, and by assembling detailed recollections of events, conversations, and concealed signs. At the same time, he retains his narrative authority: he remains a journalist in search of meaning at a critical distance from both the paternalism of state nationalism and the authoritarianism of political Islam. Nature and poetry become the tools he uses to unite his sense of duality and he sees himself increasingly as a protagonist from the “magnificent nineteenth century novels, English romantic poetry... Turgenev’s novels.” (Ibid.: 36) Whilst he wishes to be a romantic hero, he fails. As Todd Kontje explains in *The German Bildungsroman*, the German word Bildung “originally referred to both the external form or appearance of an individual (Gestalt, Latin forma) and to the

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process of giving form (Gestaltung, forination)". (Kontje 1993: 1) This changed significantly during the eighteenth century when "organic imagery of natural growth replaced a model of divine intervention." (Ibid.: 2) The transition from divine intervention to natural growth in forming an individual's character is hugely relevant in understanding Ka as a protagonist who reflects on both the unity of God and nature as an attempt to resolve his inner struggle.

Ka never states that he believes in God; however, he constantly grapples with the question of faith. God is an important force in Ka's life, even experienced as an absence. The closest he comes to religious faith is his perception of divinity as manifested in the harmony of nature, which is the catalyst for his own creativity and inspires him to write poetry. The natural snow that covers the city brings unity to chaos, and is given Romantic divinity by Ka. Because of this, he takes the geometrical and symmetrical form of a snowflake as the narrative scheme for investigating and displaying his own thoughts. This is motivated by the belief that he can use the "hidden symmetry" of nature to bring harmony to his own life. When he discovers the old volumes of "The Encyclopaedia of Life", he immediately turns to the entry on snow:

SNOW. The solid form taken by water when falling, crossing, or rising through the atmosphere. Each crystal snowflake forms its own unique hexagon. Since ancient times, mankind has been awed and mystified by the secrets of snow. In 1555, a priest named Olaus Magnus in Uppsala, Sweden, discovered that each snowflake, as indicated in the diagram, has six corners... (Pamuk 2004: 231)

From then on, Ka begins to organize his thoughts around the hexagon shape of a snowflake. Towards the end of the novel, Ka has organised a figure based on the snowflake for organising his thoughts, where each corner of the snowflake represents a concept such as "Imagination," "Reason" and "Memory." On each intersecting pole, are the titles of the nineteen poems Ka composes whilst in Kars. The titles reveal both his inner conflict and the conflicting ideologies of the city: 'Hidden Symmetry', 'The Place where God does not Exist'. At the centre of the snowflake is a poem titled 'I, Ka', thus geometrically reconciling otherwise irreconcilable notions within Ka's personality. The narrator Orhan demonstrates that the individual ideas and motifs of the poems unite to make a "mysterious whole":

In his last letter from Frankfurt, Ka had happily announced that after four years of hard work he had finally completed a new book of poetry. The title was Snow. Most of the poems were based on childhood memories that had come to him in flashes during his visit to Kars, and he carefully recorded these inspirations in a green notebook. In an earlier letter written almost immediately upon leaving Kars, he had told me he had come to believe that the emerging book had a "deep and mysterious" underlying structure; he had spent his last four years in Frankfurt filling in the blanks in this hidden design... abstaining from [the world's] pleasure like a dervish... he would have a manuscript typed up and duplicated once he was sure everything was in its rightful place. (Ibid.: 27-29)

Despite this, however, the reader never sees the "mysterious design": Ka is killed and a complete manuscript of poems never finds gets to the publishers or to Orhan. Whilst Ka might have discovered how to put everything in "its rightful place", this is hidden from the reader. The avoidance of absolute meanings draws comparison with Derrida who does not conceptualize the "secret" to life as knowable, but rather as an empty signifier, which makes the future possible. The impossibility of resolution is what enables Ka to accept his dual-state between East and West by letting "the Westerner in him discompose," a reference to Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*. When Ka visits the sheikh in Kars, he states most plainly his desire to be accepted as both Westerner and Easterner:

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"I grew up in Istanbul, in Nianta, among society people. I wanted to be like the Europeans. I couldn't see how I could reconcile my becoming a European with a God who required women to wrap themselves in scarves, so I kept religion out of my life. But when I went to Europe, I realized there could be an Allah who was different from the Allah of the bearded provincial reactionaries." "Do they have a different God in Europe?" asked the sheikh jokingly... [Ka:] "I want to believe in the God you believe in and be like you, but because there's a Westerner inside me, my mind is confused." (Ibid.: 104-105)

Ka's poem 'Hidden Symmetry' most strongly reflects his near-recognition of a divine design at work in the world. Accordingly, he feels the poem, like the world itself, is not his creation. It is moments such as this - poetic inspiration and the labelling of "divine signs" - that Ka uses to challenge the rationalism and certainty of the "Westerner inside [him]." in him. Importantly, 'Hidden Symmetry' is placed on the 'Reason' section of the snowflake diagram: the juxtaposition of such notions refers back to Pamuk's own statement on the double-edged nature of all people. The excerpt from Browning's 'Bishop Blougram's Apology' at the start of *Snow* indicates the multi-sided quality of the lives of Pamuk's characters: "Our interest's on the dangerous edge of things / The honest thief, the tender murderer / The superstitious atheist." Like a snowflake which has six faces and still possesses a symmetrical and harmonious structure, Ka wants to find a way of both accepting and presenting his internally conflicted identity.

The presentations of Ka's struggles with his inner conflict allows a broader questioning of the relationship between seemingly antagonistic concepts such as reason and faith, whose conflict in Turkey in the wake of European modernity gave rise to the secular/Islam dichotomy. As Chérif remarks in *Islam and the West*, "modernity encourages the primacy of reason... [and] this is a positive thing... [but] there are fewer and fewer connections between the concept of the modern citizen and the horizon toward which monotheistic peoples in general, and Muslims in particular, are reaching". (Ibid.: 48) Through Ka's struggle with dualism, the novel is able to ask whether religion is an antidote to reason and whether reason can only be present in the absence of faith. Ka feels "two-faced" (Ibid.: 196) for wanting to be both provincial and urban and be both a modern secularist and faithful. This conflict deliberately recalls Tanpınar's use of Janus as a metaphor for the East-West debate in modern Turkey. His simultaneous attempt and failure to recover a self-symmetrical identity is what Derrida refers to as a "double interdiction". Pamuk's two-sided character supports Bakhtin's remark that "everything in his world lives on the very border of its opposite... Faith lives on the very border of atheism, sees itself there and understands it". (Dostoyevsky 2000: 176) The entanglement of the seemingly opposite characteristics reveals the entanglement of the different communities that are seen from both within and without as segregated. Ka's snowflake brings faith and reason, atheism and divine harmony together in order to mirror the community of Kars and the Turkish nation as a whole in its full diversity. Ka's collection of evidence from everyone he meets and everything he observes represents in tangible form the different subjectivities each individual is exposed to. Rather than the "sphere of a single and unified monologic consciousness, a unified and indivisible spirit unfolding within itself," (Bakhtin, 1984: 177) Ka embodies an "authentic polyphony," (Ibid.: 178) from which Pamuk is able to draw profound symbolic parallels to the state of Turkey and its relation to the West and the East.

Conclusion

In 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism', Fredric Jameson remarks that "all third-world texts are necessarily [...] national allegories [...] the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society". (Irzik & Güzeldere 2003: 554) Whilst Jameson's observation is too broad

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generally, it is certain that *Snow* can be read as an allegory for the Turkish nation, and that within Ka's Janus-faced character we see the conflict that has raged between the secular modernists and the political Islamists for decades. In the ambiguity of its ending, with Ka's source of unity – his snowflake poems – permanently lost, Pamuk avoids the cliché of suggesting that the divisions of the Turkish state, and indeed the modern world, can be resolved by open-mindedness. *Snow* is not a novel which suggests solutions. However, by acknowledging a multiplicity of voices in his polyphonic text, the author allows the reader to see a nation occupied not by ideologies and abstract concepts but the two-faced – or multi-faced – people that inhabit it.

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