

**CONFLICTS AND SYNTHESIS:
A STUDY ON THE CULTURAL HETEROGENEITY AND
HYBRIDITY IN SELECT WORKS OF ORHAN PAMUK**

*Dissertation submitted to
the University of Calicut for the
award of the Degree of*

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

by

MUHAMMED NOUFAL K



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT
NOVEMBER 2017**

DECLARATION

I, **MUHAMMED NOUFAL K**, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled **Conflicts and Synthesis: A Study on the Cultural Heterogeneity and Hybridity in Select Works of Orhan Pamuk**, submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in English Language and Literature**, is a bona fide work done by me under the guidance of **Dr. K M. Sherrif**, Associate Professor, Department of English, University of Calicut, and that I have not submitted it or any part of it for any degree, diploma or title before.

Muhammed Noufal K
Department of English
University of Calicut

University of Calicut
.11.2017

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **Conflicts and Synthesis: A Study on the Cultural Heterogeneity and Hybridity in Select Works of Orhan Pamuk**, submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in English Language and Literature**, is a bona fide work carried out by **Muhammed Noufal K.**, under my guidance and supervision. Neither the dissertation nor any part of it has been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma or title before.

Dr. K M Sherrif
Associate Professor and Head
Department of English
University of Calicut

University of Calicut
11.2017

Countersigned by

Head of the Department

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Completion of this doctoral dissertation was possible only with the support of several people. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of them.

First of all, I am extremely grateful to my research guide, Dr. K M Sherrif, Associate Professor and Head, Department of English, University of Calicut, for the valuable guidance, scholarly inputs and consistent encouragement I received throughout the research work. I am also thankful to all other faculty of the department for their constant support and inspiration.

I thank the library personnel and the ministerial staff of the department for their assistance and support for facilitating my research work.

I also express my sincere gratitude to all my friends and colleagues for their valuable suggestions and motivations. I thank my parents, brothers, sisters, nephews and my wife for the love, care and motivation they showered upon me during the period of my research work.

Muhammed Noufal K

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Introduction

While awarding Orhan Pamuk the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2006, the Swedish Academy praised him for his innate quality of integrating the diverse cultural paradigms of Turkey by stating that, “Orhan Pamuk, in the quest for the melancholic soul of his native city, has discovered new symbols for the clashes and interlacing of cultures”. As a creative writer and social analyst, Orhan Pamuk could internalize and absorb the rich socio-cultural and religious distinctiveness of Turkish tradition. A sweeping glance at the novels of Pamuk would clearly indicate that his understanding of his own cultural heritage is abundant, and it further shows his sensibility of being a creative explorer of not only the rich history and diverse cultural past of Turkey, but its contemporary life as well. Pamuk’s works provide substantial evidence that the novel is still the best medium to capture the subtle, changing qualities that unite and distinguish people of different backgrounds. Güneli Gün, assessing Pamuk's contribution to Turkish literature, comments that “Pamuk is the champion of educated New Turks who yearn for a legitimate place in the world of ideas. His works meet the West on its own terms, resonating with philosophic and aesthetic concerns that go beyond national boundaries” (60).

A creative writer often carries the weight of an inherited cultural consciousness and identity through which he/she articulates, in a subtle manner, the nuances and characteristics of that specific socio-cultural sphere.

The writer may adopt different literary forms to highlight and establish the complexities as well as the significance of the culture in which he/she was born and brought up. As an aesthetic explorer of the nuances of human civilization, Pamuk provides a panorama of the wide ranging demographic and artistic topographies of Turkey in his novels. Hailing from a complex cultural and geographical terrain, his works are largely the exploration of the cultural multiplicity of Turkey. The unique position of Turkey, located on the geographical and cultural border between Europe and Asia, provides the context for Pamuk's fictions which draw from the cultural and religious traditions of both the East and the West. His novels are often viewed as lyrical allegories portraying a modern Turkey caught between different polarised attitudes and tastes. Pamuk is also known for utilizing self-conscious and experimental narrative forms which can draw comparisons to the works of postmodern authors such as Italo Calvino, Umberto Eco, Salman Rushdie and others.

Pamuk enjoys the reputation of being the most popular writer Turkey has ever produced. There were many creative writers in the pre-republican era of Turkey and most of the Ottoman Sultans had promoted art and culture in the empire. As Pamuk explains in his autobiographical work *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, writers such as Yahya Kemal Beyatlı and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpinar had greatly influenced him in his developing years. After Turkey was transformed into a republic, the Kemalist ideology sought to

bring about major transformations in the cultural sphere of Turkey. The modernizing project consistently aimed to wipe out the existing Islamic images and symbols which had been nourished by the Ottomans until the early part of the twentieth century. The notion of a unified Turkish identity was reinforced by the replacement of the traditional Turkish alphabet with the Western one. Putting aside all ethnic, linguistic, religious and gender variances, the project aimed to unify the country by highlighting the principles of nationalism. The secular intelligentsia of the Kemalist movement tried to build a positivist mentality in the society and largely advocated the principles of Enlightenment rationality. It also aimed at a holistic social order and extensively used various mediums, including literature, to fortify this new ideology of progress and sagacity. Thus, the early literary works in republican Turkey showed a profound interest in the ideological assumptions of Kemalism. The important writers of the period such as Halide Edip Adivar, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu, Falih Rifki, Rusen Esref Unaydin, and others followed the Romantic ideal of “good triumphing over evil”, and their works characteristically perpetuated, wittingly or unwittingly, the dominant vision of the time. Xenia Celnarova observes in the essay “New Trends in Turkish Literature”, that their characters were also factual representations of the prevalent social condition:

They are imagined to signify a component of the social structure. This has prevented the authors from achieving a more

metaphysical style and discourse. Novelists of the early republican period are chroniclers of history, a tradition whose roots are to be found in the nineteenth century. (67)

Similarly, drama, films, and other art forms were used as tools to propagate the fundamental principles of Kemalism, which resulted in the Turkish elites imbibing the values nurtured by the culture industry of the time.

However, the post 1950 scenario witnessed a deviation from the republican cult formation. Marxist oriented writers like Attila İlhan and Kemal Tahir spearheaded a movement for creating an alternative literary discourse and thereby transcend the accepted versions of literary representations. While remaining critical of Kemalism, Tahir stressed the importance of reclaiming the cultural legacies of the Ottoman Empire. Attila İlhan went a step further to “merge the principles of Marxism with Kemalism” (Celnarova 67). However, he also viewed Kemalism as an attempt to resist western imperialism. In the 1980s, the poet Hilmi Yavuz further stressed the point of reclaiming the past, so as to cross over the rigid nationalistic principles prevalent in the republican era. These writers were instrumental in the reintroduction of the Ottoman heritage into the Turkish literary discourse.

The advent of globalisation in the closing years of the twentieth century put the notion of a collective homogeneity in question, and Turkey

witnessed the emergence of a number of writers in this period. New demands for the acceptance of ethnic, linguistic and religious differences mushroomed not only among writers, but within the intellectual, academic and journalistic communities as well. This new sensibility attempted to accept and maintain the multicultural characteristics of the Turkish society by embracing differences. The rise of Islamism also helped to transcend the logocentric principles of secular modernity. Muslim intellectuals, thus, were also instrumental in bringing about a radical deviation from the unilateral approach of the republican intelligentsia in the socio-cultural discourses and practices. Prominent among them were Ismet Ozel, Cahit Zarifoglu and Sezai Karakoc, who focussed their attention largely on the hegemony of the state and its impact on art forms. But the growth of Islamism also paved the way for the rise of radical outfits in the country, which resorted to armed violence to oppose the republican ideology. However, Uner Daglier argues in “Orhan Pamuk and the Turkish Modernisation Project”, that it was the stringency of Kemalism which is responsible for the cultural polarisations in contemporary Turkey: “The republican intelligentsia’s inability to develop or unwillingness to defend an argument for secularism that can convince an Islamic public is at the root of current political crisis in Turkey” (152).

Apart from the Islamists, a secular group of intellectuals including Adnan Ozer, Osman Hakan, Haydar Ergulen and Envar Ercan also strongly resisted the republican efforts to perpetuate a homogenous culture in Turkey.

By this time, Western modes of experimental literary representations had gradually crept into the Turkish domain, and the young writers of the era also imbibed these post-structural critical practices. These writers were furthermore influenced by Latin American magical realism and other metafictional literary devices of European authors. Important among them are Bilge Karasu, Enis Batur Letife Tekin and Orhan Pamuk. Among these promising writers, Pamuk remains the most ardent follower of this new aesthetic sensibility in the twenty-first century, and his experimental modes of creative endeavours transcend national and cultural boundaries.

Ferit Orhan Pamuk was born in 1952 in the westernised district of Nisantasi in Istanbul. He assimilated the secular outlook and credentials of his family right from his adolescent years, the distinctive features of which are reflected in many of his novels. As he explains in his autobiography, after relinquishing his academic studies in Architecture, he decided to follow the career of a writer when he was twenty-two years old. By refuting the accepted models of literary representations of his country, Pamuk fashioned a unique stylistic device for his creative endeavour by actively incorporating materials from his own cultural past and the contemporary social surroundings. He persistently revised the discourses of Turkish culture and heralded a literary modernity hitherto unknown within the literary circle of Turkey. His secular background did not prevent him from actively confronting the authoritarian tendencies of the secular modernity that was established right after the

formation of the republic. At the same time, he also remains critical of the tendencies of religious extremism and the ideology of political Islam, which had crept gradually into the socio-cultural domains of contemporary Turkey. He wholeheartedly embraces the diversity and social synthesis of his tradition, and attempts to highlight the cultural plurality of Turkey through his works. As against the extreme positions taken primarily by religious fundamentalists and secular extremists, Pamuk seems to offer a broader view of the cultural integration of Turkey and he expresses these sentiments in his collection of essays, *Other Colours*: “It is not a big problem for Turkey to have different cultures and spirits and they should not worry about it because it is not a bad thing. Just let this process become natural, for if you worry too much about one part of you, which can kill the other part, you will be left with a single spirit” (369).

Pamuk’s works revise and re-historicise the important tropes of the artistic tradition of Turkey. The contexts of his work emanate from a wide variety of issues like the hybrid elements and clashes of the Ottoman Empire, the transition from an imperial monarchy into a modern republic, the Cultural Revolution, Kemalism, modernity, secularism, Islamism, Sufism, conversion, veiling and others. The works also visualise the social practices and belief system prevalent both in the Ottoman past and modern Turkey. Thus, his literary discourse largely reflects the heterogeneous nature and hybrid elements which are deeply rooted in Turkish culture.

Pamuk offers many insights regarding the formation of the modern Turkish psyche which happens to be oscillating and placed in an “in-between status”. As Hande Gurses observes, no work of Pamuk leaves this problem untouched:

It can be said that the exploration of the East-West paradox as a result of the Turkish modernisation process constitutes the heart of Pamuk’s writings. Instead of trying to obtain a homogenous final answer, Pamuk explores the aporetic space that opens up in the in-between. In all of his writings Pamuk portrays different aspects of the state of being in-between, exploring the margins rather than standing at the centre, within fixed and predetermined boundaries.

In the same way, the fictional representations of Pamuk focus on construing the West and the East as both conflicting as well as reconciling entities. He also seems to suggest that slavish imitation or protest must be discouraged, and that the ideal stand would be a balanced position to accommodate diversity and heterogeneity. Soli Ozel, in his essay “Turkey faces West”, refers to the observation made by the Swedish Academy while honouring Pamuk for his literary accomplishments: “It cited his literary achievements as a master novelist who transformed the literary form in the process helped to make East and West more intelligible to each other” (18). Nonetheless, this

ideal position puts Pamuk in trouble, for on many occasions, both the religious conservatives and the ardent secularists have vehemently showered their ire on him.

The thesis focuses on the ways in which Pamuk reflects the socio-cultural life of Turkey in his literary representations, and the hypothetical position is to analyse how far he has exhibited the complexities and multiplicities of Turkey both as an empire and as a nation-state in his novels. Out of the vast oeuvre of Pamuk, five major novels have been selected for the purpose. The selected works, *My Name is Red*, *Snow*, *The White Castle*, *Museum of Innocence* and *A Strangeness in My Mind*, the themes of which are identical in nature since Pamuk attempts to highlight the configuration of complex Turkish identity in all his works, have gained considerable international acceptance and wide readership. The non-fictional autobiography *Istanbul: Memories and the City* is also analysed to examine the direct personal observation of the author on Turkish culture.

The works of Orhan Pamuk have been chosen for this study primarily because they have not been subjected to in-depth critical studies in the contemporary academic scenario, regardless of the fact that he is a Nobel laureate. Full-length critical works solely about the works of Pamuk are not available to the best of the researcher's knowledge, and the published articles are also extremely limited. However, all the available online sources have

been used for the study and they have been duly acknowledged in the “Works Cited” section of the thesis. These supporting materials include articles, reviews, essays, interviews, documentaries, critical observations by other writers, and Newspaper reports about Pamuk’s life and works. Since Pamuk wrote in Turkish, all the primary sources and most of the secondary sources are available only as translated versions, and almost all the material available in English has been incorporated into the text of the thesis and duly referenced.

The first chapter of the study, “Integrated Pluralism: An Overview of the Socio-Cultural and Political Lineage of Turkey” is devoted to the analysis of the history of Turkey, especially the pluralistic nature of the Ottoman Empire and the republican Turkey in the modern era. Here, the term “Pluralism” refers to diversity in its various forms- including, but not limited to religious, political, and social multifacetedness. The uniqueness of the Ottoman system and the legacies of the successive Sultans, which are interwoven with the political developments of the empire, its territorial expansion, disintegration and its cross cultural relationship with western countries and other continents are highlighted here. Since Pamuk has brilliantly portrayed the social diversity of the empire in his Ottoman novels, its subtle characteristics are also accentuated. The chapter further analyses the growth of nationalism and the Kemalist ideology in Turkey which spearheaded the westernisation drive and brought about radical transformation

in modern Turkey. The cultural pluralism prevalent in the modernised Turkey is also stressed, since Pamuk's works crucially debate these aspects. The chapter concludes with a critical note on the complex relationship between Orhan Pamuk and the Turkish culture, emphasising the secularist modernity and the rising influence of political Islam in the state.

The second chapter of the dissertation "Plurality and Hybridity in Form and Content: The Fictional Discourse of Pamuk", critically examines the hybrid nature of the fictional discourse of Pamuk, especially the formal features of his works. The term "plurality" is used here to refer to concepts or forms that resist categorisation owing to their many sided nature, as well as their diversity. "Hybridity" refers to the mixing of different literary forms and story-telling tradition, more specifically the unique literary discourse popularised by Pamuk. This hybrid literary discourse was made possible as part of the cultural interaction between the East and the West. (However, Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity as a subversive tool to challenge colonial oppression is not applicable here). Pamuk largely attempts to problematize and divulge the plural nature of Turkish culture by employing a unique stylistic discourse, which is a combination of the postmodern literary strategies and the oriental story-telling tradition with the active incorporation of fables, parables and fantasies. Here the researcher attempts to compare and contrast the eastern artistic sensibilities and the postmodern experimental modes of narrative designs used by Pamuk, which are marked by the

combination of the mythical narratives from the tradition of the author and the western experimental form. The narrative patterns and employment of specific strategies in the selected works are scrutinised in this chapter, so as to establish that the formal features in the novel are compatible with the themes and content of the novels. Since the author himself appears as one of the characters in most of the novels, the chapter emphasises the semi-autobiographical elements of these literary discourses.

The third chapter, “Discord and Assimilation: Echoes of East-West Conflict and Cross-Cultural Interaction,” discusses the operational aspects of the East-West binary in the novels of Pamuk. Here, “Culture” refers to, and encompasses expressive forms of art, rituals, food, clothing, social interaction and organisation, and religious practices that are inherent in a society. Turkey maintained an active cross-border relationship with European countries right from the inception of the Ottoman Empire. Pamuk’s Ottoman novels such as *My Name is Red* and *The White Castle* debate the influence of Western culture on the empire and also show the ways in which Turkish sensibility has been consistently modified by the influence of Western culture and art. The conflicting aspects of the Oriental-Occidental relationship is also emphasised in this part of the thesis. The chapter also analyses how Turkey, after the formation of the republic, has imbibed the value system and cultural paradigms of Western countries, chiefly reinforced by the Kemalist ideology. Pamuk problematizes these issues in his novels *Snow*, *The Museum of*

Innocence and *A Strangeness in My Mind*, the events of which take place in the contemporary Turkish society. The chapter furthermore attempts to throw light on how the inherent East-West conflict is deeply rooted in the collective psyche of Turkey.

The fourth chapter, “Between Harmony and Polarisation: Issues of Religion and Secularism”, deals with the deep-seated confusions regarding the questions of faith and secularist practices in Turkey which are significantly demonstrated in Pamuk’s novels. It also analyses Pamuk’s treatment of the prevalent value system and moral codes in the selected novels, and offers a comprehensive analysis of religious standards, not only in modern Turkey but in the cultural terrains of the Ottoman Empire as well. The term “Secularism” is used here to differentiate the non-religious public sphere of governance and administration where leaders are not necessarily religious figures, to that of “Religion”, where teachers and interpreters of religious texts have their final say in matters of morality, as well as in public issues. Pamuk’s characters recurrently struggle to identify their religious identity and the protagonists are consistently driven by this religious dilemma which often casts them in awkward and bewildering situations. The conflict between secularist principles and religious extremism remains a burning issue in modern Turkey, and *Snow* crucially articulates the problematic existence of individuals who are caught between the polarised religious ideologies and secularist practices.

The final chapter, “Paradigms of Pluralism: Structures of Culture and Society,” offers a detailed discussion on the subtle features of the socio-political as well as the cultural life of Turkey that are echoed in Pamuk’s novels. Since Orhan Pamuk’s oeuvre is profoundly connected to the temporal, spatial and cultural position of Turkey, they replicate its overall life with the minute details of its own peculiarities. Pamuk has problematized various social issues in his works including the emergence of modernity, identity crises, ethnic skirmishes, gender related troubles and patriarchal oppression. The *Ottoman* novels are analysed to identify the realistic portrayal of the prevailing culture of the respective eras. It includes the functions of family system, the relationship between the state and the citizen, the clergy system, the functions of the state economy and others. The novels also offer a wide-ranging view of the lineage of Persian art and culture, which had made a tremendous impact on Turkish culture in general.

Pamuk’s works have broad dimensions in the present day socio-cultural scenario, and they acquire huge contemporary relevance since the author primarily deals with the heavy discord as well as the harmony of cultures through his literary representations. The study is thus an attempt to make a comprehensive analysis of Turkish culture as reflected in the selected works of Pamuk. The dissertation concludes with a recapitulation of the major arguments discussed in the aforementioned chapters.

Chapter I

Integrated Pluralism: An Overview of the Socio-Cultural and Political Lineage of Turkey

“I want to be a bridge that doesn’t belong to any continent, doesn’t belong to any civilization”

- Orhan Pamuk, *Bridging Two Worlds*.

Turkey has a unique position in the world map by virtue of its geographical bearings, and also due to its rich social and cultural legacy in human civilization. In addition, Turkey also enjoys the prerogative of being one of the most wonderful locations for cultural historians and social scientists. Turkish cultural heritage and its influence over almost all the continents in the world can be traced back to the power established and maintained by the grand Ottoman Empire in the initial and latter parts of the early modern age. Since the country is situated in a complex geographical and cultural crossroads of the East and the West, the present day social life of Turkey has been greatly influenced by both Eastern traditions and the rapid socio-cultural changes in Western countries.

Orhan Pamuk’s literary discourse internalises and successfully articulates the complexity and ambivalence of both individual identity and cultural identity of Turkey. In “Orhan Pamuk and the Ottoman Theme”,

Erdag Gokner states that “each of Orhan Pamuk’s novels contains a representation of unstable identity within a specific Ottoman or Turkish historical context” (1). Modern Turkish society still carries its hybrid and heterogeneous forms inherited from the Ottoman tradition. Post-World War II Turkey has undergone deep-seated cultural transformations and identity shifts. The influence of Western intellectual streams and cross-cultural interactions has had a tremendous impact on the perception and outlook of the Turks. As observed by Ibbey Reilly, Pamuk’s works depict this dilemma:

Despite the influence of the West on Pamuk’s writing, *Snow* and a good deal of his other works, seem to mourn the loss of the once glorious Ottoman Empire and lament Ataturk’s hacking away at the roots of history. At the very least, Pamuk’s works suggest the impossibility of escaping history through denial or through dismissing one’s own culture in favour of Western attitudes. (3)

This also posits Pamuk’s characters in a highly ambiguous and uncertain position which is characterized by confusion and instability.

The conflict between the Western outlook, and the Ottoman and the Islamic traditions mark the core of Pamuk’s works. Pamuk has also been extensively influenced by the conflict between tradition and modernity that is prevalent in Turkey. Almost all his protagonists suffer from this dilemma, and

are the typical representations of all rational Turks who are doomed to a perennial search for their socio-cultural identity. Moreover, the clash between secular democratic principles and the Islamist worldviews posits another impasse in the works of Pamuk. Likewise, Turkish Islam does not have a monolithic status because of its flexibility and coexistence of several sects and spiritual groups such as the Sufis, the Hanefis, and the Kurds. This ongoing tension between Turkish Islamic culture and the pan-Islamic tradition prevalent in the Middle East poses an additional predicament for the characters of Pamuk.

The Ottoman Empire: Growth of a Unique Socio-Political Culture

The geographical privileges of being at the centre of three major continents i.e. Asia, Africa and Europe gave immense possibility for the Ottoman state to emerge as a global power as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century. The empire made its mighty presence felt around the world for six centuries, and even after its disintegration, its remarkable contribution for the modern world is still relevant. Since its rise was the result of the disintegration of the Byzantine Empire, in the initial stages, Greco-Roman influence was pervasive in the Ottoman state. The cross-cultural interaction was visible among the wandering tribes and pastoralists even at this early period as described by Marshall G S Hodgson:

The Ottoman state was much under Greek cultural influence- partly by way of Greek converts among its chiefs. At the same time it was militantly Islamic. The pastoralists tended to be prejudiced against Christian villagers while they were more tolerant of Muslim ones... and the wandering dervishes that pastoralists and ghazis alike revered commonly encouraged imposing Islam on the conquered by force. (425)

Though the values nurtured by the empire were deeply rooted in Islam and the successive rulers were Muslim Sultans, it upheld the basic principles of secularism and religious tolerance. This could have been the primary reason for the sustenance of this stunningly vast empire, for the empire itself was an amalgamation of different religious sects and ethnic groups. Almost all rulers were also aware of the fact that inter-communal harmony would be necessary to maintain and consolidate their power.

The Ottomans influenced almost all cultures around the world. At the same time, however, they were also receptive of different cultural patterns across the world. On the one hand, they were highly influenced by Oriental cultural paradigms and owing to this, they preserved the values of Persian or Islamic traditions; on the other hand, they exerted enormous influence over the collective cultural psyche of Western powers. Apart from adopting many technological and cultural legacies of the Ottomans, the Western states also

imitated the administrative methods and strategies of the empire. The everyday European life, as pointed out by Donald Quatert, was affected by this influence in a subtle manner: “In a truly intimate way, the Ottomans became part and parcel of everyday European life, usually in ways that today are overlooked or forgotten... From early times the Ottoman Empire has been intertwined in the daily lives, religion and politics of what became Europe” (7).

The relationship between the Ottomans and the Western countries was reciprocal in nature, and being a creative explorer of Turkey’s cultural past, Pamuk is particularly fond of analysing this cultural influence. Most of his novels deftly discuss this aspect.

A close analysis of the political trajectory of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent formation of Turkey as a nation state would reveal the swift dynamism prevalent in the territory throughout its history. Before materializing into an empire and subsequently becoming, as part of the disintegration of the empire, a nation-state, the country was part of the Byzantine Empire for a long period of time. After the formation and the following expansion, the empire incorporated many and various cultural and social groups, and also witnessed a series of clashes among the different religious as well as political and ethnic groups. As Pamuk’s major *Ottoman*

novels *My Name is Red* and *The White Castle* indicate, the rulers of this vast empire, the Sultans, held absolute power over the area and the subjects.

The rise of the Ottoman Empire was one of the most significant events in the history of the medieval and the modern world. Its growth and expansion from a small principality into a vast and powerful empire across the Mediterranean can be seen as the result of the flood of the Turcoman nomads into the heart of Byzantine Empire. The seeds of the empire were planted in 1290 by Sultan Osman Gazi who was keen on expanding its territory. The interest of Sultan Osman and his troops for territorial expansion was more than merely religious- they were looking for better material gain and social mobility. He was succeeded by his son Sultan OrhanGazi. In 1326, he captured the Byzantine town of Bursa and declared it as the new Ottoman capital. He then successively conquered many nearby states and principalities including the towns of Nicaea, Izmit, Ankara and Gallipoli, and by adding the latter two he could establish his strong foothold in Europe. He was, as Mehrdad Kia observes, “the first Ottoman ruler to assume the title of Sultan” (3).

The Ottoman Empire considered religion only as “a partner in its governance over subjects”, and all successive Sultans firmly held this view (Kaya 81). They expanded the empire not only by force but also through diplomatic approaches. In the 1390s, Sultan Bayezid expanded the Ottoman

territory into Anatolia and Wallachia (modern Romania). It was the time when the European Crusaders were marching towards the Eastern continents, and the powerful Ottoman force inflicted humiliating defeats on this European army. The expansion of the empire faced a setback in 1402 when the Central-Asian conqueror Timur defeated the Ottoman army and captured Sultan Bayezid who died at the hands of his enemies. But this defeat was temporary and the successors, both Mehmed I and Murad II, consolidated many of the lost principalities and the territorial gains of their predecessors. During this time many adjacent states like Serbia and Mentese were attached with the empire. In 1451 Mehmed II assumed the throne, and in 1453 he captured Constantinople and received the title of *Fatih* (Conqueror). The capturing of the city was a significant event in the history of the Ottoman Empire, for Constantinople was, a crucial platform for trade and imperial expansion:

The city connected the Black Sea to the Aegean and provided the shortest and easiest land route from Anatolia to the Balkans...

Economically, Constantinople was an important center of commerce and trade, the most important stop for the traders and merchants who carried goods from Central Asia, Iran and Anatolia to Europe... The symbolic aspect of conquest was as important as its strategic and economic value. (Kia 39)

After the successful invasion, he stepped into the city and declared the sixth-century Hagia Sophia church as a Muslim mosque. But he was aware of the fact that being an emperor also meant to be open and tolerant. Hence, he allowed the Greek Orthodox Church to stay and prosper in the empire. He built a grand palace overlooking the Bosphorus, which came to be called as the Topkapi palace. Eventually, he seized Morea, Bosnia, and the Empire of Trebizond which was an influential trade centre on the Black Sea.

Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent brought the Ottoman state to the zenith of its power. He recruited slaves on a massive scale from various parts of the empire and trained them in order to create a strong and powerful army. He opened a road to Hungary by capturing the strategic fortress of Belgrade, and after that Hungary became a vassal state of the empire. He extended his empire to North Africa by sieging Tunis. At the same time he was also planning to control the entire Middle East. As part of this strategy, he invaded Iran in 1533.

However, more than being an efficient ruler and a man of action, Sultan Suleiman promoted different art forms and he himself was involved in many cultural practices. In *The Ottoman Empire*, Mehrdad Kia states that,

The might of the empire under Suleiman was best manifested not only in its armies but also in the ottoman arts, architecture, prose and poetry, which achieved a golden age under the

patronage of the Sultan. An accomplished artist and poet, Suleiman financed numerous mosques, medrasa, aqueducts and architectural complexes. (54)

Suleiman the Magnificent also implemented many western models of reforms in the empire. There are several references about the artistic glory of the empire during his rule in Pamuk's Ottoman novel *My Name is Red*. But above all his western models, nothing proved more significant than the act of falling in love and getting married, which was hitherto unknown and unconventional among the Ottoman Sultans. Until then, the Ottoman Sultans never got married but produced heirs using concubines they kept in the royal harem. The existence of the harem with strict civil and moral codes was another phenomenon of the Ottoman palace. In opposition to the negative perception about harems in the western world, the harem in the Ottoman Empire followed regular codes of conduct and implemented many rules and regulations, especially the rules of Islam. In the Ottoman harem, even though it was a place for political intrigues and conspiracies, women enjoyed an egalitarian power structure in the premises. In "Feminine Power in the Ottoman Harem", Phillip Emeritz states,

Women established their own community in the harem and operated within their own area. The organization of the harem hierarchy and the training of princesses and concubines

mirrored that of the eunuchs and young men and pages in the third courtyard of Topkapi palace. Therefore, the boundaries within Islamic society and the boundaries that Western observers imagined are quite different. (2)

Sultan Suleiman changed the custom of producing Ottoman heirs from the royal harem. Moreover, by marrying a Ukrainian slave girl, he was also changing the course of the Ottoman dynasty. By the time of the death of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, the Ottoman Empire had made its presence felt across vast areas of the Asian, African and European continents.

The glorious success of the Ottoman Empire in the midst of the European imperial venture was the result of the implementation of certain systematic administrative strategies. The absolute hegemony of the empire was vested exclusively on male heirs. Since the empire was divided into different provinces, the Grand Vizier and the provincial governors played vital roles for the effective maintenance of the empire. The expansion was done even by means of marriage i.e. the Sultans would marry the princess of neighbouring states and thereby legitimize their control over the states. “Such marriages hardly were confined to the Christian neighbors of the Ottomans but often were with other Muslim dynasties as well” (Quataert 26). Gradually the states with which the Ottomans had made marital relations would become vassalage states under their control.

After the ascension of Sultan Murad III to power, a series of clashes took place between the Ottoman Empire and many of the European powers. Many internal conflicts also took place during this time. Among them, the clashes between the different religious sects are noteworthy. Pamuk discusses this horrible sectarian violence in *My Name is Red*. The revolt of the Janissaries in Istanbul and their attempts to control power is also discussed in Pamuk's novels. Janissaries were the special armed forces directly appointed by the Sultan, and were endowed with modern military equipment. The internal conflict within them could lead to complete chaos. Knowing this fact very well, Sultan Murad III effectively managed and suppressed the revolt. However, the era was also marked by consistent decline of the empire. It was mainly because of the indifference on the part of the Sultan and his royal officials. The debauchery of the Sultan and the factional feuds in the palace were also responsible for the deterioration of the entire administrative system.

The Decline and Disintegration of the Ottoman Empire

A panoramic view of a couple of centuries after the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent would reveal the various factors responsible for the decline of the Ottoman Empire. Even after the economic factors become visible in the first analysis, there existed innumerable social and religious factors too. First and foremost, the diminishing influence of the Sultans over the provinces and the consequent grasping of power by the appointed Grand

Viziers resulted in the disintegration of the powerful centre. The successive Sultans were confident of the superiority of the empire and thus paid minimal attention to the modernization of their troops and of the administrative system. At a time when the European powers were focusing on modernization and industrialization, the Sultans and their retinue were lying torpid.

It was also a period of the so-called “discovery” of new lands. While the European powers were engaged in amassing wealth and wielding military power from the newly occupied lands, the Ottomans remained largely inactive. The age was also characterized by the emergence of large scale industrialization. The geographical explorations reinforced fresh advances in science and technology. Freshly armed with wealth and passion, the Western forces started creating havoc across the Ottoman Empire. These forces also established sea routes with China, India and other Asian and African states for their commerce. They controlled trade and commerce and greatly regulated the flow of capital across continents. Thus, the Ottomans lost much of their control and monopoly over trade and commerce.

The demographic explosion also played an important role in the decline of the Ottoman Empire. The end of territorial expansion after the death of Suleiman the Magnificent resulted in scarcity of land. At the same time, it was a period of rapid population growth and the empire witnessed acute paucity of resources for the sustenance of its population. The political

unrest and depression of the people resulted in mass agitation and revolt against the authorities. Thus, the seeds of decline started from within the empire itself. Moreover, a series of wars with the European countries and other alien states caused a gradual collapse of the vast empire.

In the seventeenth century, the empire went through massive rebellion and internal conflicts. This chaotic situation was intensified when gangs of bandits joined hands with the distressed Janissary corps and fought for the control of Istanbul. As a part of the Sultan's military campaign against the dissident rebels, thousands of officials and individuals were executed. In 1633, a devastating fire claimed the lives of thousands, and hundreds of shops were burned down. The Sultan, Murad IV, deduced it as a divine sign of the moral degradation of the empire and ordered a total ban on alcohol, tobacco and even coffee. Centres of social interaction such as the coffee houses were thus effectively banned. Even high officials and the Ulemā were brutally punished. In this way, the Sultan re-established order and stability in the capital, as well as in other turmoil-afflicted areas. Pamuk refurbishes these historical details in his autobiographical work *Istanbul: Memories and the City*.

The failure of the Ottoman army before the well-equipped Russian force in the eighteenth century was seen as the supremacy of modern military technology over the traditional one. Understanding the need of the hour,

Sultan Abdülhamid I introduced reformative steps in military technology and in the administrative system. He was keen on employing European military instructors and consultants without attempting to get them converted to Islam. In addition to these changes, the Grand Vizier Halil Hamid Pasa also tried to bring about many modifications and modernizations including the introduction of engineering schools. Nevertheless, there were some protests against these reforms from the part of some custom-oriented sects like the Úlemas, the Janissaries and the Sipahis. They viewed reforms to be against the cultural and moral fabrics of their tradition, and also as an attempt to import the novelties of Christian Europe.

Sultan Selim III was well aware of the technological advancement and progressive modernity of European countries. He was keen on restoring the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and with this in mind he created a new modern army called the *Nizam-i Djedid* (The New Order). He also established a military engineering school in 1795. By recruiting trainers and instructors from Europe, especially from France, he provided sufficient space for Ottoman officials to interact with their Western counterparts and learn not only military tactics but, the socio-cultural changes that were taking place in Europe as well.

“The introduction of permanent Ottoman embassies in European capitals gave rise to a new class of Ottoman diplomats, who

spent a great deal of time interacting with European politicians, learning not only European languages and customs, but also European history, politics and modern ideas” (Kia 101).

This interaction also resulted in the mushrooming of a class of officials who could establish durable familiarity with their European diplomatic counterparts. But there were protests on the part of the orthodox religious sects, especially against the introduction of European education which, they believed, was against the basic tenets of Islam.

The mounting protest turned into a violent internal strife backed by both the Janissaries and the Úlema. But by this time many social and religious changes had occurred. The supremacy of traditional hierarchies was challenged by the emergence of a new class of intelligentsia that was inspired by the secularist principles of the French Revolution. The rise of “nationalism” was a direct result of this social change. Moreover, the provinces attached with the Ottoman Empire were highly influenced by the emergence of independent nation states in Europe.

In due course, the political scenario also underwent radical transformations. The relationship with France became complicated at the end of the eighteenth century. Even so, there were attempts on the part of the central administration to adopt and implement the European model of governance. In 1839, Sultan Abdŭlmeceid introduced the *Tanzimat*

(reorganization) or the *Gülhane hatt-i sharif* (Noble edict of the Rose Garden), a decree which entailed many modern reformative steps. This imperial decree declared that the state was committed to securing the rights of its subjects, and every citizen was guaranteed a just and fair treatment regardless of their background. The general administrative system was divided into different ministries and to a great extent, power was decentralized. In spite of facing pressures and hostilities from the conservative sects, Science and Engineering began to be taught at educational institutions. The *Tanzimat* system also allowed free trade with the European countries. However, the Ottoman economy could not compete with the larger economy of the European states. As a result of the reform, the Sultanate was reduced to the status of a semi-colony of the European countries. It also led, as Ibrahim Kaya points out, to two significant changes in the economy of the empire, “First, a commercial bourgeoisie arose, most of whose members were of non-Turkish origin – Greeks, Christians and Jews. Secondly, Turkish agriculture in Anatolia was, to some extent, opened to the western market” (88).

However, none of these reforms could save the crumbling political and economic structure of the empire. All efforts at modernisation were emasculated by both internal as well as external conflicts. Even if the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire had started as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century, the nineteenth century was witness to its horrible

culmination. Many of the vassal states proclaimed independence, and some of them were lost to the European powers. In 1878, the European countries held a meeting in Berlin, historically known as the “Congress of Berlin,” to prevent Russia from becoming a Superpower. It was an important event in the history of the Ottoman Empire. The Congress freed many states including Serbia, Romania, Montenegro and Albania from Ottoman control. The empire thus lost a significant percentage of its territory and population. A mass exodus of the Christian population from the Ottoman territory also took place around this time. The internal conflicts, especially the dissatisfactions of the Young Turks, resulted in the implementation of many reformative steps by Sultan Abdülaziz.

These successive defeats paved the way for new introspections in the minds of Muslim intellectuals, especially among the Young Turks. They advocated the need for Islamic unity. Their sense of patriotism was ignited by the inability of the Ottoman forces to counter the Western attacks. Inspired by the political mobilization in the European countries, they made a resolution to modernize political and economic institutions, concurrently retaining fundamental Islamic principles. They propagated pan-Islamic principles across the region.

In 1889, a Young Turk collective formed the “Ottoman Unity Society” which later came to be called the “Committee of Union and Progress” (CUP).

It emphasized the need for unity among different sects across the empire irrespective of their religious, ethnic or social background. It sought a political system for reinforcing the integrity of the state. Even as they tried to conduct a coup, Sultan Abdulhamid's secret police disrupted it, and many of the Young Turk intellectuals were forced to flee and seek asylum in European states. In exile, they actively took part in discussions about the possibility of preserving a just and secular political system in Turkey. A revolt erupted in 1908, spearheaded initially by disillusioned military officials. Later, other minority groups and dissatisfied sects such as the Jews, the Arabs, the Albanians and others joined them, and the Sultan was forced to reinstate the constitution and also directed to conduct a general parliamentary election.

However, prominent religious orders such as the *Úlema* were critical of the secular leadership of the CUP. They sought the restoration of the *Seriat* (Sharia) or the complete implementation of Islamic law. The clash was followed by the deposition of Abdulhamid, and Murad V ascended the throne. With these developments, the army emerged as the most powerful and decisive factor in the state. It also restricted the hegemony of the Sultan by providing him the power only to appoint the Grand Vizier. The age also witnessed the rise of new political parties including the "Ottoman Socialist Party". Thus, multiple reforms were introduced across the empire by the end of the nineteenth century in order to bring about comprehensive changes in society as a means to embrace the western model of modernity. These reforms

indeed had a large impact in the cultural life of modern Turkey, as Ibrahim Kaya observes:

The Ottoman reforms, mostly of the military, did not achieve modernity but, at the same time, they played a part in the development of the Turkish project of modernity. The successful answer that the Kemalists found to the question of how to establish a modern state distinguished them from the Ottomans, and Kemalism emerged as a new phenomenon in the Turkish world. (78)

The empire signed a treaty with Germany in 1914 according to which both countries were committed to provide military assistance to each other whenever a crisis came up. Hence, when the World War I broke out, Turkey was forced to take sides with Germany and its allies. It ultimately led to open warfare with the Triple-entente of Russia, France and Great Britain, and the Ottoman land became a field of combat. The Ottomans faced several challenges from the British Empire during the war. Russia, on the eastern side, tried to take control of the entire eastern region. In the combat, several Armenians sacrificed their lives. The Armenians had already started fighting for independence as early as the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The beginning of World War I reinforced their spirit for attaining sovereignty, and some of the trained Armenian officers tacitly allied with the Russian force

against the Ottoman Empire. Sensing an armed upheaval from the Armenians, the Turkish authorities deported the entire Armenian population to the deserts of Syria. In the course of the rearrangement, several thousands of Armenians were brutally murdered. Turkey never claimed responsibility for this massacre, until Orhan Pamuk acknowledged the role of the Turkish troops in the carnage in an interview given to the Swiss media *Das Magazin* in February 2005. This resulted in a huge controversy and Pamuk was subsequently forced to face legal prosecution on account of this statement.

Social Diversity of the Ottoman Empire and European Influence

The Ottoman Empire was noted for its vastness across the Euro-Asiatic continents, and remained one of the widest and long-lasting empires in the history of human civilization. It prospered mainly through intercontinental interactions and trade, which all the successive Sultans maintained effectively for more than six centuries. Ruling from Constantinople, the second Rome of the Christian world, it accommodated a wide variety of religious sects and ethnic groups, and therefore allowed differences in their occupied provinces. Consequently, the Sultans preserved the eclectic nature of its social life throughout the empire. It included the cultural practices of both the traditional Christian nomads as well as the Islamic belief system and spiritual life. As pointed out by Donald Quataert, “the Ottoman system should be seen as a

highly effective blend of influences deriving from Byzantium, the Turkish nomads, and the Balkan states, as well as the Islamic world” (4).

Among all the important features of the Ottoman administration, the most remarkable one with contemporary relevance was its religious tolerance. Although Islam was the official religion and all the successive Sultans promoted Islam, the general reforms and administration of the empire, unlike other Islamist states, remained free from Islamic influence. “The state did not rely on the origins of Islam and this could be considered as a reason why the Ottoman Empire was ‘developmental’ in comparison with other Islamic states” (Kaya 58). The Christians and Jews made up a considerable part of the population in the empire. Also the basic doctrines of Islam held the view that both Christians and Jews had received part of God’s revelation, even if it was imperfect or incomplete: “The Sultan was required to protect the lives and properties of his Jewish and Christian subjects. In return, his Jewish and Christian subjects were obligated to remain loyal to him and pay the Ottoman government a poll tax or *cizye* in return for not serving in the military” (Kia 2).

However, recurrent warfare with European countries and other Asian states resulted in the flood of a large number of slaves to the Ottoman territories. These captured slaves were eventually converted to Islam. Pamuk’s novel *The White Castle* debates this issue of conversion.

The empire also effectively implemented a unique system called *Devşirme* for the recruitment of the Janissaries and administrative officers. As part of this system, young boys of all religious and rural backgrounds were taken to the royal palace from their abodes, and after being converted to Islam, they had to undergo intense military training and technical education. They would be delegated for military and administrative purposes after the successful completion of their training. These new recruits would later become highly influential and powerful officials in the empire and hold prominent positions including that of Governors and Grand Viziers. Even if these officials were officially converts, they actively maintained links with the background of their upbringing. This in turn effectively prevented the Ottoman bureaucracy from implementing uniform policies.

There were different sects and groups even within Islam like the Sunnis, the Alevis, the Shias and the Hanefis. The *Ottoman* novels of Pamuk convey this general tendency in the empire. There are numerous allusions in Pamuk's novels about the existence of these different sects. Moreover, many non-Muslim characters appear in *My Name is Red* and *The White Castle*, and those characters, even if less significant, enjoy the privileges of society. However, there were some occasional signs of inter-communal conflicts in the state. There are references about the persecution of Jews in *My Name is Red*, and the protagonist of *The White Castle* suffers physical harassment because of his Christian identity. Latter years of the imperial regime also

witnessed mass communal carnage. Nevertheless, the Ottoman model of religious tolerance still remains significant and worthy to be emulated in the contemporary Turkish scenario which is dominated by, as Pamuk depicts in *Snow and A Strangeness in my Mind*, rising religious fundamentalism and intolerance.

The general administration of the empire also was largely carried out with the active participation of the West European, Bulgarian, Serbian, Byzantine and many other Christian nations as technicians, artists and soldiers. In this way, the empire also accommodated the European models of governance and adopted many Occidental cultural paradigms. Europeans, on the other hand, also admired and followed the effectiveness of the Ottoman administration and accepted a wide variety of Ottoman items into their everyday life. For example, Coffee became an essential item in the European culture due to their trade with Turkish markets. Similarly, the Europeans are indebted to the Ottomans in the use of many other items like tulips, medicines and vaccines for various diseases like small pox and others. The Ottoman legacy is still visible in almost all European countries and even in the United States.

During the early reformation struggles in Europe, the Ottomans were regarded as the curse of God for the corruption and illegal activities of the Catholic Church. Protestant reformers such as Martin Luther viewed them as

“Gods punishment for a corrupt papacy, an instrument of God’s anger” (Quaetert 8). It subsequently produced the image of all Turks as the incarnation of evil, and many European writers also subscribed to this popular imagination and used it in their creative works. Thus, prominent Ottoman Sultans like Memet II and Suleiman the Magnificent were portrayed as brutal tyrants in popular European narratives. This cross-cultural tension is exposed in Pamuk’s novel *The White Castle*, which primarily deals with the East-West interactions and conflicts. However, by the end of the seventeenth century, especially after the Ottomans failed before Vienna in 1683, this negative image of the Turks receded, and large-scale cultural interactions took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

An important Ottoman legacy in European art is in the field of classical music. Turkish music, percussions, drums and cymbals became “widely admired art forms across Europe” (Quataert 8). Along with classical music, the Janissary band for inspiring soldiers in the battlefield also became a hot-cake for European rulers, and subsequently, the Sultans gifted several bands of this kind to their European counterparts. All these factors paved the way for the emergence of what is today called as “Western Music”. Another important Ottoman influence on European popular culture was the wide usage of Ottoman garments including billowing silk trousers and Turkish slippers. The nobles of the European aristocracy were fascinated by the emergence of a new life-style and the smoking of Turkish pipes in coffee houses. Other art

forms like the painting also underwent many mutual influences. The collision of the Ottoman Miniature painting or Persian style with the Western painting style is the basis of Pamuk's novel *My Name is Red*. Nevertheless, by the nineteenth century the "Turkomania" of European culture had faded, and the powerful European states, with the fresh acquisition of large wealth from the colonized countries, started looking down upon Turkey. The beginning of the twentieth century, with the defeat it faced in the World War I, culminated in the absolute failure and disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.

The Growth of Nationalism in Turkey

The World War I ended with the humiliating surrender of the Ottoman army before the mighty allied forces led by Britain. By this time Britain had possessed complete dictating power across the Middle East. At this critical juncture, Mustafa Kemal Pasha was appointed as the commander of the Ottoman forces. An efficient, well-experienced and formidable officer, Mustafa Kemal was given the responsibility of maintaining law and order across the empire. His initial attention was on the creation of a national congress to unite all the dissident voices in the state and thereby address the basic aspirations of the general public. Anguished by this development and the growing popularity of Mustafa Kemal, the British authority tried to subvert the nationalist movement, initially by ousting the Grand Vizier.

Notwithstanding, the “Grand National Assembly” was formed and established on national sovereignty in 1920.

Mustafa Kemal focused his first attention on the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire where, by driving back the Armenian influence, he reclaimed Ardahan and Kars in 1920. In 1921, he defeated the Greek army which was encroaching Ankara, and managed to establish complete dominion over Anatolia. The nationalists also announced that the Sultan would no longer have the power to represent the nation, and consequently, the Ottoman Sultanate was eliminated by the Grand National Assembly on November 1, 1923. The Grand National Assembly also proclaimed the formation of the “Republic of Turkey” and Mustafa Kemal became the first President of the newly formed republic. With the intention of building a secular democratic state, the Republic abolished the Caliphate in 1924. The new government assumed power with some visionary steps and its primary objective was to ensure equality for all citizens before the law. It ensured political and civil rights for all the citizens including the non-Muslims.

The rise of nationalism played a crucial role in the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Several other factors including inter-communal conflicts within the society and external invasions had paved the way for the collapse of this mighty imperial monarchy. The Republic of Turkey, despite having a strong and powerful administration under the charismatic leadership of

Mustafa Kemal, witnessed a series of inter-communal clashes in the decades after World War I. It was also due to the fact that the Turkish identity had undergone radical transformations at this time. As part of the formation of a nation state, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk propagated the concept of a unique national identity undermining the vividness of ethnic and cultural identities that had hitherto existed in Turkey. As Meltem Ahiska points out, the consequences of the formation of a national identity were quite serious:

...national identity was erected on the basis of displacement, denial, projection/introjection- namely, the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey, the denial of the Ottoman past and significant events such as the Armenian catastrophe, the violent crushing of Kurdish uprisings, the Turkification of religious and ethnic minorities on the basis of privileging Sunni Islam together with the repression of the Islamic religion as an organizing element of culture in many localities, and consequently a complex dynamic of identification with the abstract notion of the people and the West. (55)

The Atatürkian model of bypassing this cultural dilemma was to implement Occidentalism in Turkey. Large scale implementation of Western technologies, he hoped, would help people to get around the political turbulence and social unrest.

Secular-Liberal Turkey in the Modern Era

After World War I, the Ottoman Empire faced severe setbacks to its existence as a free and sovereign country with political freedom. The triumphant group of the war tried to dictate norms and modalities to be followed in the country, and the subjects were forced to accept them in order to sustain the supremacy of the Sultan-Caliph. But there was a strong wave of massive revolution in the minds of the Young Turks who wanted to bring about a total change in the political as well as the social scenario in the country. The accumulated anger, distrust and sense of patriotism ultimately resulted in the formation of a national resistance movement. Mustafa Kemal Pasha, who later on was conferred the name *Atatürk* or Father of Turk, held a key position in the organization of this movement. Born in a middle class family, he was educated in the military school and later on became a combat soldier in the Ottoman army.

The World War I was very crucial in the career of Mustafa Kemal who had become a Lieutenant General in the Ottoman army by that time. He was a great success as an Army General and began to be viewed as the saviour of the country. As a daring officer and charismatic leader, he could exert influence even upon the Allied forces. He was critical of Germany's design to use the Ottoman army for satisfying the ambitions of Berlin. After the war, the successful Allies forced humiliating conditions on the Ottoman territories

and it paved the way for the total disintegration of the empire. By 1919, many of the provinces had declared independence, and the Sultan could maintain his power only over a limited area around Anatolia. Mustafa Kemal was dejected by the established framework of power around the palace, and moreover, was also denied a place in the Sultan's cabinet.

With the active cooperation of military commanders and many local leaders, Mustafa Kemal started a national liberation movement. He defined the national border in such a way so as to include all Islamic and ethnic elements. In 1920 the last Ottoman parliament was assembled and the members were keen on adopting a National Pact. It deliberated over the use of the word "Turk" to include ethnic minority and majority elements including the Kurds and the Ottoman Jews. Kemal himself put forward these ideas:

What is intended here...is not only Turks, not only Circassians, not only Kurds, not only Lazes, but the Islamic ethnic elements of all of these, a sincere community... the nation, the preservation and defense of which we have undertaken, is not only composed of one ethnic element. It is composed of various Islamic elements. (qtd. in Ahmad 81)

Much like the Ottoman notion of citizenship, the National Pact emphasized the inclusion of citizens in the Turkish territory on the basis of residence within the boundary, and not on the basis of religion or ethnicity. Thus the

Muslims, the Christians and the Jews were retained as such in the evolving nation-state. In due course of the national struggle, religion played a crucial role, for non-Muslims such as the Greeks and the Armenians argued and fought for separate states.

The rise of the nationalist movement posed a threat to the supremacy of Britain over the region, and the swift response from the part of Britain was the occupation of Istanbul. On the other hand however, the nationalists faced threats from the royalist supporters as well, and were branded as infidels by the Sultan and faced a fatwa for being anti-Islam. Thus, the nationalists had to counter both internal and external opposition and hostility. By the spring of 1921, it was a “do or die” situation for them as the attacking Greek army had advanced to the nationalist movement’s headquarters in Ankara. After assuming complete military authority, Mustafa Kemal methodically plotted a counter attack, and ensured that food and ammunition was deprived to the Greek front-lines, thus forcing the Greek army to retreat. Thus he won the Battle of Sakarya in a systematic and comprehensive manner. It was a turning point in his career as well as in the liberation struggle, and it further strengthened his power over his rivals in the movement. He was conferred the title of *Gazi* (a holy warrior) and after signing a treaty with Moscow, he settled the Turkish-Russian boundaries. The complete victory of the nationalists materialized after their entry into Izmir.

The British government, although unwittingly, had facilitated the culmination of the supremacy of the nationalists who argued for the authority of the Ankara government. This was immediately followed by the abolition of the Ottoman Sultanate in 1922. Mustafa Kemal knew very well that every Turk carried an uncritical belief in “Caliph as the ambassador of Allah” (Kaya 79). Thus, even if monarchy was eliminated, the Caliphate continued in order to maintain popular support among the people and, very soon, Abdulmecit II was elected as the new Caliph of the country. Nonetheless, the internal strife within the nationalists put Kemal’s prospects of being the ruler aside, and he started amassing public support by launching a new political party called the “People’s Party” which later on came to be called as the “Republican People’s Party”. Unlike other nationalist groups and their leaders who wanted the Caliph to hold absolute power over the country, the Kemalists wanted to bring about a radical political as well as socio-cultural transformation throughout the country. They believed in human intelligence and rationality with which, they thought, Turkey could be advanced and modernized. The Kemalist ideology strived to maintain Enlightenment rationality based on European models which would bring about, as per its dreams, a comprehensive and radical transformation in the socio-cultural life in Turkey. They wanted to establish a secular government which would, they believed, herald a new era of material growth by following the footsteps of western countries. Mustafa Kemal was also attracted to the gradual process of modernization and

understood that the traditional form of government would fail to perpetuate this process. Ibrahim Kaya aptly reviews the objectives of the Kemalist outlook:

The Kemalist ideology, then, could be summarized as follows: adopting modern civilization, stressing Turkish culture and making Islam a matter of personal conviction. At this stage, Kemalist nationalism should be clearly defined. As Suna Kili (1930:286) argued, 'Kemalist nationalism is not racist and it is not a persecuting nationalism. According to Kemalist ideology one's Turkishness is not determined by one's race or religion but by the degree [to which] a person associates himself with the ideals and goals of the Turkish republic and through commitment to Turkey's independence and modernization'. Thus, first, Kemalist nationalism is not 'imperialist' in the sense that the idea of the nation is not invoked to justify the invasion of other nations. Secondly, Kemalist nationalism is, in principle, not an ethnic nationalism. Thirdly, Kemalist nationalism is inseparable from republicanism. (63)

The process of nationalization in Turkey brought about many cultural changes across the country. Mustafa Kemal attempted to modernise the country by following western models of modernity and secularism. The fifteen years rule

of Ataturk transformed Turkey from a semi-feudal agrarian society to a modern industrial one. As Pamuk indicates in *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, large-scale industrialization took place in this period. Pamuk's grandfather also was part of this process, and had made investments in rail road and infrastructure developments which helped the Pamuk family to accumulate huge wealth. Moreover, since Ataturk adopted the western model of development, the reforms were affected in the socio-cultural spheres too. The traditional Arabic alphabet was replaced by the Latin alphabet.

Unlike his contemporary dictators in the West, Ataturk focused his attention on domestic affairs rather than on territorial expansion. He wholeheartedly accepted the cultural pluralism that was inherent in Turkey since the beginning of the Ottoman Empire. He upheld secular, liberal and democratic principles in order to bring about changes in the social fabric of Turkey. Consequently, his death in 1938 resulted in a political vacuum not only in Turkey, but across the entire Mediterranean region.

The Ataturkian model of secularism practically distanced Turkey from its cultural past. It also resulted in bringing about an extreme form of secularism in the country, which may be considered as the root cause of the prevalence of religious extremism in present-day Turkey. His modern critics argue that he failed to understand the plurality of Turkish tradition, and that the imposition of secularism only helped in creating a further dilemma for the

citizens who were already caught between their Islamic tradition and the new model of secular modernity.

Moreover, the replacement of Arabic script in favour of Latin one created larger repercussions in Turkish society in the modern era. Turkish population all of a sudden became illiterate owing to the implementation of this reform and the new alphabet reform subsequently distanced them from the cultural archives of the country. It virtually delinked the nation from its cultural past. By having turned the Turkish population unable to read the Arabic script, the reform further alienated people from their past literature and history.

Ismet Inonu succeeded Ataturk and attempted to continue with the liberal principles. When the World War II broke out in Europe, he was cautious to maintain neutrality between the two forces. But, Feroz Ahmad points out that the war created several internal reverberations in Turkey:

German success in Russia encouraged the racist elements in the Turkish elite to harass their own minorities, so much so that in November 1942, the assembly passed the notorious and controversial wealth tax law, known in Turkish as *Varlik Vergisi*. Its ostensible purpose was to raise around US \$360 million from businesses that had profited from the war; but taxes were assessed according to the taxpayer's religion and not

his wealth. There were separate lists for Muslims, non-Muslims, foreigners and for the Donme, a sect of Jews who had converted to Islam in the seventeenth century. As a result of this tax, many non-Muslims were forced to sell their assets (real estate, factories, etc.), which were then purchased by members of the new Muslim bourgeoisie at well below market prices, enriching that class, at the same time as alienating it from the government!

(98)

However, with the German defeat in the war, this new racist movement was banned and many of its leaders were prosecuted. The post-war period witnessed further deviation from the Kemalist ideology, and the rising religious conservatives started playing crucial roles in the policy decisions. In order to isolate both the National Party and the Democratic Party, the republic government was forced to abandon basic theories and principles such as Evolutionism, Laicism and Statism. As a means to appease popular sentiment, the government restored religious instruction at schools. Nonetheless, the general elections in 1950 witnessed the ouster of the Republican government, and the Democratic Party came to power. Later on, it passed several laws to liberalize the practice of religion in the public domain, the prayer call in Arabic being one. Moreover, in the Cold-war climate, leftist parties also faced severe treatment from the regime. Many leftist writers such as Sabaheddin Ali were murdered and many more were forced to flee the country.

Turkey witnessed rapid industrial growth in the 1960s and, by adopting a capitalist economy, large scale productions also occurred by active collaboration with foreign firms. Many of Pamuk's novels are the exploration of the socio-economic growth of Turkey at this period. *The Museum of Innocence* and *A Strangeness in my Mind* portray the growth of big industries and infrastructural developments in the country. The economic reforms resulted in urbanization, and the agrarian economic system was replaced by the emergence of industrial capitalism. The changes also crept inside social life. Large scale migration took place from the rural areas to the urban and the semi-urban areas. It also perpetuated the growth of the bourgeois class which profited from the economic reforms. A new political group, the radical Left, emerged with a strong anti-American sentiment, and waged an ideological war with the conservative Right. The conservatives used Islam as an effective tool to resist the influence of the leftists. The tension between these two polarised classes was further reinforced by the ascension of the Justice Party to power, with its leader having a strong alliance with the United States. The situation became almost explosive and resulted in military intervention. Subsequently a coup was staged and the military took absolute control over the state.

A brief analysis of modern Turkish history would reveal the crucial role played by the Military to stabilize the often turbulent political environment in the country. This practice was actually started by Mustafa

Kemal himself. The Military often assumed that it was its responsibility to maintain stability in administration and save the country from social and economic breakdown. In this way, military coups were often legitimized and people saw it as a parallel way of maintaining law and order. In 1980, another coup was staged under the leadership of certain military officials who formed the National Security Council apparently to save the country from complete anarchy, and proclaimed martial law in the state. However, general elections were held in 1983, and Turgut Ozan, who was instrumental in bringing about radical transformations in the social and economic spheres of the country, came to power.

A vast socio-cultural change began to be visible during the time of Ozan. Turkey witnessed mass privatization of institutions, and foreign firms mushroomed all across the country. In the second half of the twentieth century, Turkey underwent a comprehensive economic transformation also. Provincial towns became sophisticated metropolitan cities. The new educated Turks were drawn towards the prospects offered by foreign companies. English language gained prominence among the educated middle class which viewed it as a status symbol. The socio-cultural changes were further reinforced by the emergence of a dynamic female leader, Tansu Ciller, who succeeded Ozan. Turkey gained considerable international acceptance during her rule. She attempted to find effective solutions for the burning issues in

Turkey; among them was the entry to the European Union and the arrival at an amicable settlement with the Workers Party of Kurdistan (PKK).

However, despite her efforts and earnest wishes, Ciller never could resolve the problems related to the Kurdish minority in Turkey. The Kurdish issue had started in the 1960s in the eastern provinces of Turkey, especially when the political elites tried to assimilate different ethnic groups as part of national integration. A law was passed in 1983 forbidding the use of any language other than Turkish. The state enforced this law by using the armed forces. After the Gulf war in 1991, the PKK gained considerable power and control over the region, and there followed several armed encounters between the Turkish army and the Kurdish supporters. The authorities' secret alliance with criminal elements in the country to suppress the Kurdish revolt was also eventually promulgated. The PKK also acquired sympathy from the Western powers on account of the violation of human rights across the region. Even as Abdullah Ocalan, the powerful PKK leader, was captured and sentenced to death, Turkey could not carry out the execution on account of the intervention of the European Union. It is because of the failure of the Turkish authority to discern the multicultural and multi-ethnic fabrics of Turkey that the Kurdish issue remains a burning one even in the twenty-first century.

Along with several ethnic issues, Turkey also faced the hard-line stand of political Islam, which is the focal point of Pamuk's novel *Snow*. The right

extremist forces were gradually creeping into the political terrain, and the Islamist Party formed a coalition government under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan in 1996. But very soon Erbakan's policies came under attack, and he was accused of damaging the secular fabrics of Turkey. The intervention of the Constitutional court further clamped down upon Islamist activity by prohibiting women from wearing headscarves in universities. The Islamists found this to be an instance of fundamentalist secularism. In 2003, Recep Tayyip Erdogan came to power, and managed to stabilize the turbulent situation prevalent at that time in the country. Despite making several efforts to contain the extremist forces, Turkey still faces the threat of fundamentalism, even in the twenty-first century. Erdogan's primary focus was to assure entry to the European Union, and in order to meet the requirement, he declared Turkey to be a permanently secular state. Erdogan gained considerable popularity as a judicious ruler who had withstood the threat of the Arab Spring uprising that lashed across the Middle East in 2008 and 2009. He successfully conducted a referendum in 2017 to change the prevalent parliamentary system in Turkey to the presidential one and thereby maintain his power until 2029.

Ever since becoming a republic, Turkey has strived to be a part of the European Union. The Treaty of Lausanne, signed between the European powers and Turkey after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, specifically postulated several conditions to preserve the secular integrity and minority

rights in the state. The first part of Article 39 of the treaty states that, “Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities will enjoy the same civil and political rights as Moslems”. However, only the Jews, the Greeks and the Armenians were officially considered as minorities under the treaty. Several ethnic groups and minority sects like the Kurds, the Alevis, the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the Protestants, and the Catholics were excluded from the minority status. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, many reform packages had been proposed as part of securing an entry to European Union. New articles and clauses were added to the Constitution to safeguard the civil and political rights of minority groups. Liberal intellectuals and writers played crucial roles in the comprehensive reforms. However, regardless of the many efforts on the part of the state authority, liberalization attempts remain incomplete, and the prospect of entry to the European Union also continues to remain a distant possibility. It exemplifies the incompatibility of these two cultures. The socio-political culture of Turkey is rooted in Islam whereas European countries uphold a different liberal culture rooted in Christianity and the European model of modernity. Nonetheless, a positive impact of the attempt is that the very discussion regarding the EU entry helped in liberalizing, albeit in a slow and steady manner, the political culture in Turkey.

Cultural Pluralism and National Identity

A cursory view of Turkish history would reveal the deeply embedded pluralistic nature of its cultural terrain. Turkey accepted and accommodated different ethnic and religious sects on its soil right from the early Ottoman period. Despite several efforts from different quarters to homogenize Ottoman culture on religious basis, both the imperial and modern Turkey never deviated from its pluralistic nature and, over the years, it has consistently maintained the vividness and diversity of its socio-cultural pattern. After embracing Islam, the socio-cultural life in Turkey was determined to a certain extent by Islamic principles. Nonetheless, the territorial position also hints that Turkey is a part of the European continent. The pluralistic nature and mosaic structure of the country reveals that the Turks remained far from being unique and original, and were instead culturally heterogeneous. They adopted several aspects of other civilizations and went on being influenced by other cultural patterns. It was mainly because the Turks had always lived in coexistence with people from different background and origins.

Before the emergence of Islam, the people in the region had led a nomadic life without settling anywhere. After reaching Central Asia, they formed a civilization for themselves, and the emergence of Islam reinforced their cultural integrity. However, Turkish society remained different from other Muslim societies in their way of life, chiefly owing to their association

with other cultures and social forms. A critical analysis of the growth and prevalence of Islam in the Middle Eastern and West Asian countries would reveal the different ways in which the religion was imbibed and contextualized in different societies. It was never categorized as specifically communitarian i.e. it was always subjected to interpretations in terms of the socio-cultural and historical context of the country to which Islam was introduced. Unlike Christianity, in which a strong hierarchical clergy system exists, Islam never demanded mediation between the believers and God. It opened immense possibilities of individual interpretations of the significance of Islam as a religion. Moreover, Islam was never against knowledge and modernity, even though it does not promote the Western model of liberalism, and though “the modernity within Islamic culture does not resemble the modernity in a Christian society” (Kaya 113).

However, there were divisions within Islam in Turkey. Islam never retained a monolithic structure in the country. Turkish Islam remained exceptional in the sense that they perceived the principles embedded in Islam in their own ways, without giving up their socio-cultural orientations. There are several views that the Ottoman rule and administration was based on Islamic Sharia laws. However, the Ottomans never implemented Islamic theocracy in the empire. Consequently, uniformity of Islam was never visible in Turkey and it embraced many and varied forms of the religion. Ibrahim Kaya points out this diverse nature of Islam in Turkey:

The plurality of Islam in the Turkish lands has been remarkable. The Kurdish population has adhered to the Safi branch of Sunnism, a relatively orthodox form of Islam, while the Turkish population has embraced different or even conflicting, although coexisting, conceptions of Islam. According to the Safi school of Sunnism, life must be led according to explicit Islamic rules, while the Hanefi school of Sunnism is more open to revision.

(71)

One of the major Islamic sects in Turkey is the Alevi. The supremacy of Sunni Islam had alienated the Alevi community which included the followers of Ali, the son-in-law of Prophet Muhammed, from the mainstream. It was a mystical sect of Islam that flourished and gained considerable prominence during the prevalence of the Ottoman Empire. The Alevi are unique in Turkish culture in terms of their openness to fresh ideas and innovative thoughts, and “its followers do not practice Islamic rules as they are explicitly defined in the Koran, but interpret the Koran as permitting Muslims to go further in finding perfection” (Kaya 58). When Turkey turned out to be a democratic republic, the presence of the Alevi was perceived as a reinforcing factor for implementing secularist principles in the country. The clashes between the Alevi and the Sunni majority broke out when the latter started showing an intolerant attitude towards the former. The situation escalated in the 1990s when an angry mob attacked a conference held under the leadership

of Alevi scholars. The participation of a secular writer, Aziz Nesin, who had started translating Salman Rushdie's work *The Satanic Verses* (1988), infuriated the mob and several people were brutally killed in the attack. The Alevis suspected complicity on the part of the authorities in the event owing to the passive response from the police force in containing the mob. Later, unidentified gunmen shot down a prominent Alevi leader at Gaziosmanpasa, a poor neighbourhood in Istanbul. The two incidents provoked the Alevi community to go for a massive movement against the state. It also caused several incidents of sectarian violence across the nation. Pamuk provides a fictional narrative of these events in his novel, *A Strangeness in My Mind*.

The Nationalists used religion as a tool to consolidate Turkey during the early years of the Republic. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Nationalists attempted to define the Turkish identity in terms of territorial and religious sentiments:

The seeds of nationalism, spread from its Western European cradle, found fertile soil in the Ottoman Empire. In a region where multi-ethnic, multicultural empires had prevailed since antiquity, identities and affiliations had been developed on non-national lines. Religion and locality remained the determining factors in the formation of collective identities. (Grigoriadis 124)

The role played by the Ottoman Empire in the Islamic world reinforced the growth of Islam across the whole of the Anatolian region. The presence of Islam was also crucial in the formation of the Turkish identity. However, the Atatürkian model of development undermined pan-Turkist and pan-Islamist ideals, and focused on reforms based on Western models. He put forward the idea of creating a national identity, effectively excluding other features such as ethnicity, language and religion for determining individual identity. In this way, the republic of Turkey maintained its secular principles by being inclusive and becoming friendly to all groups across the Anatolian region. The younger generation of the republic did not find Islam to be an integral part of Turkish identity; instead they viewed Islam as an impediment to the growth of the state. Many elite Turkish families, including that of Orhan Pamuk, subscribed to this view. But religion remained a crucial factor among the working class people. Pamuk clearly explains this proclivity in *Istanbul: Memories and the City*. However, the state did not denounce Islam, for “Islam was the only unifying factor of the multilingual, multi-ethnic populations of Anatolia and the most tangible element of their Turkish identity” (Grigoriadis 130).

The pluralistic nature of Turkish society is visible in its language as well. Even if the Turkish language was largely neglected during the Ottoman period, it survived and maintained its power in the twentieth century. The Ottoman ruling class had devised and used a mixed form of Persian, Arabic

and Turkish. In its earlier form it resembled the Arabic script, the written form of which was read from right to left. But, as part of the comprehensive reforms, Atatürk introduced a modern script for the language, modelling it after European languages and the new script now runs from left to right. Nevertheless, the Turkish language never abandoned its ability to embrace borrowed words. Many Arabic, Persian and European words were visible in the Turkish language in its original form. However, in the modern period, it showed greater influence of European languages. It is mainly because of the assimilation of European culture into the Turkish society. Due to this factor, the mosaic nature of Turkish society, with the existence of divergent ethnic and cultural groups, is reflected in the vocabulary and structure of the Turkish language as well.

The Turkish model of modernity also accommodated women in the mainstream. Kemalist ideology attempted to subvert traditional Islamic perception of women, and thereby women were freed from the confinement of their religious identity. Women therefore wholeheartedly embraced the nationalization project. It gave emphasis to education and employment. Women acquired the right to vote in Turkey as early as 1934. Their participation in the public sphere was also perpetuated and the post-1950 socio-political life in Turkey witnessed the presence and active involvement of many women in public administration. Pamuk attempts to figure out the free spirit of Turkish womanhood through the character of Fuzun in *The*

Museum of Innocence. However, the rise of Islamism in Turkey resulted in several attempts to undermine the liberal principles and secularist views of Kemalism. They labelled many reforms as “anti-Islamic”. Even Islamist women saw modernity as a means to corrupt women by adopting the Western model of sophistication. This notion also is contextualized by Pamuk in his work *Snow*. Thus, a series of cultural conflicts and socio-political unrest sprang up in the later part of the twentieth century in Turkey.

Orhan Pamuk and Turkish Culture

A quick view of Pamuk’s literary output reveals that he attempted to both represent and visualize the different periods of Turkish history in his literary endeavours. Pamuk was born in Istanbul into a middle class family which had significantly profited from the developmental reforms of Ataturk. Pamuk’s grandfather had hugely benefited from the railway industry in the early periods of the Turkish Republic, and it posited the family into a privileged position by the mid-twentieth century. It was also the time when Turkey wholeheartedly embraced secularism and the Western model of progress. The cultural ambience of Istanbul and the privileged lineage enabled Pamuk’s family to accept and adopt Western outlooks and life-styles. However Pamuk bespeaks in his autobiographical work *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, that this privilege did not free him from the burden of carrying and articulating his tradition and culture.

Each of Pamuk's works is inextricably linked with the soul of Turkey, and each artistically delineates the socio-political and cultural aspects of the time in which they are set in. His earlier work *Cevdet Bey and his Sons* is a semi-autobiographical one in which he sets forth the fabrics of his own family system and tradition in the fast transforming urban aura of Istanbul. The works such as *The White Castle* and *My Name is Red* are set in Ottoman Turkey, and they largely explore the socio-cultural nuances of the empire. *My Name is Red* portrays the life of a group of artists associated with the Ottoman palace, and their deep seated cultural tensions and anxieties concerning their tradition and the encroachment of Western civilization into their personal and artistic life. Moreover, it also offers a panorama of the plurality of the cultural life, as well as the day to day life of Istanbul in the sixteenth century. *The White Castle* further reflects on many historical events in the seventeenth-century Ottoman life. It revolves around a scholar named Hoja and his association with a Venetian slave who teaches Hoja the specific principles of Western science. Moreover, Pamuk also visualizes the palace life, as well as the political intrigues surrounding the palace during the time. In many ways, both works attempt to showcase and analyse the heterogeneous cultural paradigms of the Ottoman Empire.

The novel *The Black Book*, ingenious in both form and content, vividly portrays Turkish life with many references to the Ottoman past. It attempts to expose the negative impacts of the Atatürkian model of secular nationalism and westernisation in Turkey. The story revolves around a lawyer named

Galip who searches for his lost wife Ruya. The novel is also noted for its intricate plot and innovative structure with characters being portrayed as individuals who perennially search for their lost identity. Pamuk makes many exotic and esoteric references in the novel about the cultural changes that had happened throughout Turkey since the beginning of the Ottoman era. The novel also contains several remarks about Sultan Mehmet II and Ataturk who had been to a great extent responsible for the westernisation of Turkey. The novels *New Life* and *The Silent House* also attempt to disclose the cultural hybridity and pluralism which are deeply embedded in the Turkish culture. The autobiographical non-fiction *Istanbul* is marked by the incorporation of several materials from Turkish history, which reveal the vibrant cultural heritage of the city. Pamuk has designed the book in such a way so as to communicate the deep seated cultural conflicts and ethos of the city. It is a stunning narrative of the bond between a creative mind and a specific geographic space. Pamuk expresses the same emotional fervour in his later non-fiction, *The Naïve and the Sentimental Novelist* (2010), which delineates the experiences of making an intense artistic journey across the landscape of a creative mind.

Pamuk brilliantly portrays the polarised socio-cultural life of modern Turkey in his apparently political novel *Snow*. The novel is a critique on the rising tendencies of religious extremism and political Islam in the republic. It offers a bleak, eerie and intimidating image of Turkey caught between two

dominant ideologies- secular nationalism and religious extremism. Pamuk offers a broad vision of the process of westernisation in the novel, and seems to criticise both secular extremism and the motives of political Islam. The subtle cultural features of Turkey are highlighted in the novel *Museum of Innocence*, which is, even though the tale of a romantic affair between an upper class business man and a lower class girl, a critique of the middle class life of Istanbul in the modern era. The novel highlights the specific characteristics of the class system and its implications in Turkey. One of his recent novels *A Strangeness in My Mind* (2015) again offers a broad view of the cultural changes that happened in the republic from the second half of the twentieth century through the early part of the twenty-first century. It also analyses the transformation of Istanbul from a provincial city into a metropolitan one, and the cultural changes associated with this transformation that occurred in Turkey.

Even as Pamuk embraced the rich cultural legacy of Turkey and attempted to articulate the socio-cultural fabrics of the country in a subtle manner throughout his creative endeavours, he was also sensitive and quite critical of the official position of the Turkish authorities regarding many socio-political issues. He made several critical comments on the violation of human rights, lack of freedom of expression, deviation from democratic principles and others. His open remarks about the sensitive issues like the Kurdish dispute and the Armenian massacre that took place in the early

decades of the twentieth century sparked several controversies in the Turkey and abroad. In an interview given to the Swiss magazine *Das Magazin* in February 2005, Pamuk harshly voiced his protest against the official position of Turkey regarding the issues, “Thirty thousand Kurds and one million Armenians were killed in these lands, and nobody but me dares to talk about it” (qtd. in Gokalp 177). Following the interview, the French Parliament passed a resolution making the denial of the “Armenian massacre” a crime. It enraged the Turkish authorities, the media, and a large section of the general public, and Pamuk was branded as an agent of the Western conspiracy to tarnish the image of Turkey.

Pamuk’s words were viewed as an open admission of the genocide which was a blot in the history of modern Turkey. A sedition case was subsequently registered against him invoking Article 301 of the Turkish constitution. When Pamuk won the coveted Nobel Prize for Literature in 2006, it was reported in the mainstream media as a reward for partaking in a Western alliance to insult “Turkishness”. In “Pride and Anger: Orhan Pamuk’s Nobel Prize and Discourses of Nationalism”, Emre Gokalp studies how Pamuk was represented by different Turkish newspapers after he was awarded the Nobel. He arrives at the understanding that, “The author is seen as nothing but an enthusiastic denigrator of his own country. He was criticised for ‘selling out’ his country to clinch the Nobel” (179). However, the Turkish authorities acknowledged Pamuk’s international acceptance, and he was

acquitted from all the charges registered against him. The mainstream media also, nonetheless, stated that Pamuk could bring a new literary modernity into the Turkish cultural context by incorporating both postmodern literary styles and Eastern narrative traditions.

Chapter II

Plurality and Hybridity in Form and Content: The Fictional Discourse of Pamuk

“The art of the novel is the knack of being able to speak about ourselves as if we were another person, and about others as if we were in their shoes”

*-Orhan Pamuk, *The Naive and the Sentimental Novelist*.*

Ever since the advent of postmodernism and the application of its technical devices in literature came into being, the basic strategies regarding literary composition have undergone radical transformations. The modernist project of undermining the traditional narrative focalisation was further accelerated by many postmodern theoreticians as well as creative writers. In order to achieve a unique style for the manipulation of realism, postmodern writers adopted various narrative techniques including magical realism, reflexivity, intertextuality and flash-forward narratives, counter narratives, embedded narratives, metafiction or metanarratives, and others. Moreover, narratives often would be packaged with several deviations, twists and turns, in such a way so as to provide ample space for multiple interpretations by the readers. In that sense, readers are also challenged to decipher meanings out of the available words on the page. These narrative strategies are employed by

many postmodern writers such as Italo Calvino, Umberto Eco, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Salman Rushdie, Orhan Pamuk, and others.

Among many other narrative techniques employed by postmodern writers, metafiction is often viewed as a popular and widely used narrative strategy. It self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its position as a craft in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also attempt to explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text as well. It also follows several strategies such as the personal commentary of authors about the characters, the author's involvement with the personal life of the characters, narrative footnotes and comments. As Patricia Waugh defines it in *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction*, metafiction explores and estimates the basic process of creative writings:

Fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality... Metafiction explore[s] a theory of writing fiction through the practice of writing fiction. (2)

Thus writers offer a different aesthetic experience for readers by establishing internal intimacy with them. The elements of metafiction are used by different writers in varied forms. Narrative reflexivity, an important aspect of metafiction, is a common element used by many postmodern writers. Through internal commentaries and direct interaction with readers, authors often maintain a rapport with the readers. It also helps writers to make objective commentaries about characters and actions.

While dealing with metafictional narratives, it must be kept in mind that language is not as coherent, meaningful and objective as being a self-contained system that creates its own meanings. Waugh continues,

Metafictional novels tend to be constructed on the principle of a fundamental and sustained opposition: the construction of a fictional illusion (as in traditional realism) and the laying bare of that illusion. In other words, the lowest common denominator of metafiction is simultaneously to create a fiction and to make a statement about the creation of that fiction. The two processes are held together in a formal tension which breaks down the distinctions between 'creation' and 'criticism' and merges them into the concepts of 'interpretation' and 'deconstruction'. (6)

Unlike the nineteenth-century realism which derived itself from a rational and objective world, and the modernist response of denying traditional values,

postmodern metafiction realises that realism and history are provisional and relative, and that the world is a “series of constructions, artifices, impermanent structures” (7).

Eastern Sensibility vs. Postmodernism

Orhan Pamuk, with his innovative and sophisticated creative endeavours, and much like his own country which interlaces many diverse cultural paradigms, attempts to build a bridge between the Eastern tradition of story-telling and the Western model of narrative strategies. A close analysis of his artistic output reveals that he has made use of not only the innovative and sophisticated postmodern literary devices, but the mythical and traditional mode of narrative patterns as well. The formal aspects of his works are compatible to the themes and subjects he deals with. His mastery lies mainly in his capacity to defamiliarise the socio-cultural life of Turkey by adopting various formal techniques in order to bring about a better understanding of it.

The changing scenario of the mode of fictional representations in the West influenced Pamuk so much so that he adopted many of the literary techniques employed by a wide range of postmodern writers. Even if he did embrace a traditional realistic creative mode at the beginning of his career, in due course, he shifted his attention to many inventive formal styles and methods for his works such as *My Name is Red*, *The Black Book*, *Snow*, *A Strangeness in My Mind* and others. His works incorporate not only the

innovative literary strategies of postmodernism but also the traditional realistic mode of narrative designs.

Postmodern narrative styles often employ traditional mythologies, fantasies and fables in order to provide a new aesthetic experience for the readers. This proclivity is apparent in the works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Italo Calvino, Umberto Eco and many other postmodern writers in the second half of the twentieth century and after. Even if traditional narratives also follow elements of intertextuality and incorporate many self-conscious aspects of the process of narration, postmodern narrative methods are differentiated by the ways in which they treat mythologies and fantasies, and also by the employment of the aspects of reflexivity. The unique aspect of this narrative packaging, unlike the traditional ways of epic story-telling, is the manner in which the mythologies are exceptionally treated so as to provide new dimensions for their significance in the contemporary social scenario. Moreover, postmodern writers use narrative reflexivity as an effective tool to defamiliarise the very process of creativity. Pamuk has extensively followed these modalities in his literary works. His employment of this narrative design is often contextualised by the active incorporation of the mythologies of his own socio-cultural background. Thus, his works integrate a wide variety of oriental mythologies, especially Persian fables and fantasies.

Pamuk consistently endeavours to blur the division between fact and fiction. He adopts the elements of metafiction in a simple and candid manner. The elements of reality and fantasy recurrently converge together in Pamuk, in such a way as to give a puzzling confusion to readers. The strategy is devised to lead readers to believe that the events in his novels have actually happened, and is achieved through the incorporation of the author's own commentaries, the voices of historical personalities and actual historical events in his works. In most of the novels, Pamuk himself appears as one of the characters who comments about other characters and also about the plot line. In *Snow*, Pamuk appears as the narrator who is a friend of the central character Ka and the authorial intervention occurs on many occasions all along the story line. His commentary gives ample scope for readers to discern many of his personal matters. Sibel Erol opines that he goes to the extent of mentioning his next literary venture here, "Pamuk even gives away the title of his next book, *The Museum of Innocence*, when Snow's narrator Orhan talks of the book he is currently writing" (409). In *My Name is Red*, the author appears bearing his own name to comment about the nature of storytelling. Moreover, the characters in the novel also engage in constant interaction with the readers by sharing their personal matters and secrets. This strategy recurs in *The Museum of Innocence*, in which the characters organically maintain a rapport with the readers. Unlike many other postmodern writers, Pamuk employs a simple and lucid form of metafiction which helps readers to make

out the circumstances which led to the composition of his works. In this way, Pamuk uses a wide range of postmodern narrative stratagems in his works and attempts to synthesise the eastern tradition of story-telling with it, and thereby offers a hybrid form of literary representation.

My Name is Red: Episodic narration and Points of View

The novel *My Name is Red* exemplifies Pamuk's technical excellence and innovative methods in story-telling. The events in the novel take place when the Grand Ottoman Empire was ruled by Sultan Murat III between 1574 and 1595. The story revolves around a group of Ottoman miniature painters who follow the Persian miniature painting tradition, but at the same time are attracted towards the Western style of portraiture. The novel offers a panorama of the cultural, social, as well as the political life of the Ottoman society. With the active employment of postmodern narrative strategies, Pamuk creates a world which is dominated by terror, anxiety and deep existential crisis. The entire novel is in the form of the first person narrative verbalised by different characters who appear in the novel from time to time. The impressions, thoughts, feelings and anxieties of the major characters are vividly portrayed in their own points of view. The fifty-nine episodes in the novel can be considered as a visual feast for the readers, as each of the episodes supplement the reflections of previous chapters. This episodic

patterning and narrative points of view also allow the characters to converse with the readers.

Right from the beginning, Pamuk maintains an element of mystery which persists throughout the story. The first chapter “I am a Corpse” creates an element of terror and trepidation in the readers’ mind. The narrator in the chapter is a dead body lying deep in the bottom of a well, apparently unknown to anyone except the murderer. It can be inferred that the narrator is an artist who briefly explains the circumstances that necessitated his death. He urges the reader to be curious and careful in order to have a better understanding of his situation, and also to identify the murderer and the circumstances which had ultimately led to his murder. He explains in minute details the experience of death, and the condition after death. He makes a lamentation to the readers about the pitiable situation of lying dead in a well without having been recognized or without being given a proper burial. This unusual situation is summarized exquisitely by the speaker, “Before my birth there was infinite time, and after my death, inexhaustible time. I never thought of it before: I’d been living luminously between two eternities of darkness” (3). The narrator introduces himself as Master Elegant Effendi, and explains the background and nature of his work. He had been a master illuminator and gilder in the workshop attached to the palace of the Ottoman Sultan. He further urges the readers to be aware of a possible conspiracy

behind his murder. He seems to win the reader's confidence by effectively maintaining a personal rapport and further explains:

My death conceals an appalling conspiracy against our religion, our traditions and the way we see the world. Open your eyes discover why the enemies of the life in which you believe, of the life you are living, and of Islam, have destroyed me. Learn why one day they might do the same to you. (6)

Thus the first chapter creates an atmosphere of tension, anxiety and mystery. The inquisitive readers themselves have to be special detectives to solve the problem and thereby unearth the horrendous conspiracy mentioned by the late Master Elegant Effendi. Pamuk effectively maintains this "suspense thriller" aspect throughout the novel with its vividness and subtlety.

The story then is carried forward by a series of living voices. The murderer appears and directly converses with readers in the chapter "I will be called a Murderer". Even if the killer takes utmost care to conceal his identity, he is eager to communicate with the readers. The voice resolves to be calm and seems to utilise the opportunity to narrate his point of view to the readers. Although he is worried about the present situation, the careful reader can also decode his mental stability, "Now and again, I even feel as if I haven't committed any crime at all" (18). The voice narrates the events that occurred on the day of Elegant Effendi's gruesome murder. Here, Pamuk poses a real

challenge for the readers to speculate the identity of the murderer, for the voice does not even provide a hint that may lead to his whereabouts. In this way, the readers' anxiety is suspended and carried forward till the end of the novel. The murderer recurrently appears as a narrative voice and makes several commentaries about the events that are taking place around him.

The murderer seems to have undergone a post-traumatic stress disorder, and recurrently ponders over his actions. Right after the dead body of Elegant Effendi is unearthed, in the eighteenth chapter, readers again confront the murderer who is so meticulous to hide his identity that even an attentive and conscientious reader fails to perceive the identity of the voice. He also attends the funeral feigning grief, and meets Master Osman, Enishte Effendi, Black and the other miniaturists. Readers can only guess from his words that he is one of the master miniaturists selected by Enishte and is working for the new book of illustration in his workshop. He hints that he is speaking in his second voice, and that his actual voice is already familiar to readers:

When a God-fearing man like myself unexpectedly becomes a murderer, it takes time to adjust. I've adopted a second voice, one befitting a murderer, so that I might still carry on as though my old life continued. I am speaking now in this derisive and devious second voice, which I keep out of my regular life. From

time to time, of course, you'll hear my familiar, regular voice, which would've remained my only voice had I not become a murderer. But when I speak under my workshop name, I'll never admit to being "a murderer". Let no one try to associate these two voices, I have no individual style or flaws in artistry to betray my hidden persona. (119)

Readers are thus caught up in a circle of thrilling mystery and suspense, and must assume the role of an investigator to make out this challenging voice. Even if the voice proclaims that he has no unique style or signature to be followed, he drops a hint to readers that, if there is a style in his voice or action, it must be hidden or buried deeply in his words and crime, and he poses an open challenge to readers, "Yes, try to discover who I am from the colour of my words!" (120).

The murderer appears again in the twenty-eighth chapter and shares many of his desires and anxieties with readers. This time he pays a visit to Enishte Effendi seeking clarifications regarding the changes they have adopted in their painting style. He informs readers that he does not have any intention of committing another murder when he steps into Enishte's house, even if, when Enishte greets him, he is reminded of a fable in which an old man faces death:

If there are those among you who believe, since I've just now mentioned 'Death', that I have come here to involve myself in such an affair, you've completely misunderstood the book you're holding. Would someone with such designs knock on the gate? Take off his shoes? Come without a knife? (188)

The revelation comes at a crucial moment when the murderer is in his complete capacity to execute another gruesome murder. Here, Pamuk engages in a verbal and conceptual play with the readers, and he seems to be afraid of being a culprit i.e. he has underestimated the readers' capacity to discern things. Hence, he uses the murderer to remind the readers about the manner of his appearance and bares the murderer's mind before the readers. The killer is again curious to know the response of the readers after committing the second murder. In the very next chapter "I Am Your Beloved Uncle", Pamuk makes the readers hold their breath by effectively maintaining an ambience of terror and perplexity. Readers are made to listen to the voice of Enishte, describing, in a subtle manner, the experience of undergoing death.

Thus, the thirty-seventh chapter of the novel offers another dead voice to narrate the after-death experience. This time it is the dead body of Enishte Effendi which is speaking to the readers about the after-death experience, and what it means to be "death and life" after death. Here Pamuk again uses the voice of a dead man to narrate the terror of being alienated from the actual

world, and the gradual journey of a departed soul to another world. He explains, colourfully, his own funeral rites being attended by Pashas and Grand Viziers from different provinces of the empire. Among the painters who attended the ceremony, the narrator could spot his murderer sporting a dignified and exceedingly tormented expression. Here, readers are reminded to see the stark contrast and difference between the turbulent and conflict-ridden life before death, and the calm and forgiving life after death:

Pray, don't think that I'm infuriated by my murderer or that I'm set on a path of revenge, or even that my soul is restless because I've been treacherously and cruelly slain. I am, at present, on a completely different plane of being, and my soul is quite at peace, having returned to its former glory after years of suffering on earth. (277)

It is to be assumed by the words of the dead voice that the colour "red" plays a crucial role in the life after death. He feels the presence of a matchless red colour around him and gradually, to him it seems that the eternal force approaches him. He suddenly becomes conscious of his activities over the past twenty years as the follower of Venetian art forms, and as in response, he hears the words "East and West belong to me". He is then buried with all the necessary rituals being performed and, in his own analysis, it is a "lovely funeral" (279).

The murderer again appears in the forty-sixth chapter and it is also titled “I will be called a Murderer”. It further posits many challenges to the readers, for here again the readers are openly challenged to make out the identity of the murderer. The voice seems to test the intelligibility of readers by asking, “Were you able to determine who I am from the way I sketched a horse?” (339). The murderer reflects that he can now sense the motive of Master Osman in conducting the contest among the three master miniaturists to draw the picture of a horse. He further explains that he has taken utmost care to render the new horse as natural as possible so that nobody could discern his identity. He then starts wandering around the street thinking about his destiny of being a painter, a disciple, a human being and the possibility of being branded as a despicable murderer. He seeks Satan’s company and invokes his damned voice in order to find a mental solace in this agonizing situation. This turbulent state of being is beautifully projected in the chapter “I, Satan”.

The murderer’s final interaction with the readers in the fifty-fifth chapter is emotionally charged. The voice seems to be feeble in this part of the novel, and he begins by asking, “You’d forgotten about me, hadn’t you? Why should I conceal my presence from you any longer?”(466). He admits that he is going to be recognized soon and, it appears, he seems to know of his upcoming fate after being exposed before others. He goes on recounting the good old days in their lives. When the Sultan had commissioned them various

assignments, they had been given warm welcomes from every quarter of the empire and had been venerated by all the elders and dignitaries associated with the palace.

Pamuk seems to have designed a unique plan for implementing an unconventional narrative strategy in the novel. The series of voices in the novel also include the points-of-view of several non-human objects and animals. Thus, a lonely tree appears in the tenth chapter of the novel titled “I am a Tree”, and expresses its feelings and concerns to readers. The voice of this illustrated tree is so much animated that it expresses its anxiety over the fate of painters who have been hitherto following the Persian style in their paintings. By drawing on several mythical examples, the tree warns the Ottoman miniature painters of the danger of imitating Frankish art, “I shall make mention of Frank painters, so if there are degenerates among you who have pretensions to be like them, may you heed my warning and be deterred” (61). Similarly, in the nineteenth chapter, a gold coin speaks directly to the readers about the ways in which it was painted by Stork, one of the master miniaturists in the Ottoman workshop. Through the voice of the gold coin, Pamuk also attempts to give a broad idea about the general culture of the Ottoman Empire. The coin, bearing the royal insignia, travels across the empire passing from person to person. The coin also tries to gain the confidence of readers before revealing its actual identity i.e. it is only a counterfeit one, “There are no strangers among us, we’re all friends; as long

as you promise not to tell anyone, and as long as Stork Effendi won't take offence, I'll tell you a secret. Do you swear not to tell?" (125). Here Pamuk shows his technical excellence by effectively maintaining a consistent intimacy between objects as characters who voice their feelings, and readers are persuaded to be active listeners.

The unconventional narrative is further carried forward by means of various personifications of abstract entities. The colour "red" also voices its concerns in the novel, which emphatically proclaims that it is the colour of life. Pamuk makes use of the voice to recount the significance of the colour in not only the lives of painters but in general life as well. The colour almost haughtily reiterates its capacity to vitalize life, "I'm so fortunate to be red! I'm fiery. I'm strong" (225). Death itself appears in the form of an illustration in the twenty-fourth chapter titled "I am Death" in which Pamuk visualises the archetypal images associated with death. This cool and detached voice detects "terror in readers' eyes" (151). Thus, even abstract ideas make ingenious commentaries about human life and culture.

The entire narrative of the novel is packaged in such a way so as to provide elements of fantasy by incorporating many Turko-Persian mythologies, fables and parables. With his rich knowledge of oriental tradition and Persian culture, Pamuk enhances the narrative with several commentaries about Persian artists and mythical figures. When Black Effendi

approaches the three master miniaturists Olive, Stork and Butterfly for the first time to gain a better understanding of their style, they explain, in a parabolic manner, the lineage of their style. Many Persian anecdotes, parables, fantasies and archetypal images recurrently appear in their narratives and they provide a peculiar aesthetic experience for readers.

Many characters in the novel share important secrets with readers. The character Shekure effectively establishes an emotional bond with the readers throughout the novel. The confidence of Shekure is paramount when she discloses the secret affair between her father Enishte Effendi and the slave-servant Hayriye. She also beseeches the readers to ignore what she has already disclosed:

I regret having just now told you, out of spite, about the matter between my father and Hayriye. No, I wasn't lying, but I'm still so embarrassed that it would be best if you forgot about it. Pretend I never mentioned anything, as if my father and Hayriye weren't thus involved, please? (110)

Shekure seeks the readers' confidence further by disclosing the bottom of her heart, and she reveals her secret love for Hasan even when she is eagerly courted by Black. When Hasan threatens to take her away from home, she maintains her composure and reveals the secrets to readers, "Anyway, let me tell you what's going on in my heart just now: I believe I'm not so afraid of

Hasan because I love him as well” (169). She is also conscious that other characters are also interacting with the readers and she shares her awareness of the readers’ better knowledge regarding the things happening in her life. She suspects that Esther shares her letter for Black with Hasan, and she rightly points it out, “You know better than I whether my suspicions are justified” (169). She is also hopeful of gaining the readers’ empathy when she reveals her deep seated anxiety about Black’s manners after having a rendezvous with him in the hanged Jew’s dilapidated cottage for the first time. She is quite critical of Black’s physical urge and immodest approach to her, and desperately wants the readers to be attentive towards her distress, “I want to share something with you before I arrive home” (214).

The narrative maintains this emotional bond between the characters and the readers throughout the story. Pamuk also seeks the emotional involvement of readers in the events narrated in the novel. Thus the reader functions as a responsive companion for the characters rather than merely being detached observers. It provides a space for the characters to engage with the readers’ reaction and assessment of things. The narrative even goes to the extent of asking the readers to put themselves in the position of the characters. Pamuk makes use of this technique quite brilliantly in the thirtieth chapter of the novel. When Shekure discovers that her father has been murdered, it is to the readers that she interacts first:

Listen, I can tell by your tight lipped and cold-blooded reaction that you've known for some time what's happened in this room. If not everything, then quite a lot. What you're wondering about now is my reaction to what I've seen, what I feel. As readers sometimes do when studying a picture, you're trying to discern the pain of the hero and thinking about the events in the story leading up to this agonizing moment. And then, having considered my reaction, you'll take pleasure in trying to imagine, not my pain, but what you'd feel in my place, had it been your father murdered like this. I know this is what you are so craftily trying to do. (216)

In this way Pamuk patterns the narrative by effectively ensuring the direct participation of the readers in discerning the motives of the characters. The characters recurrently ask the readers' impressions of the events happening in their life. By using this metafictional strategy, the author deconstructs the conventional ways of story-telling.

The novel ends in a manner befitting a typical postmodern metafiction. Shekure's final voice sums up the later developments of all major characters. Black and other miniaturists have identified the murderer who is none other than Olive, one of the master miniaturists. A terrible fight with the murderer severely injures Black. Later on, Olive is killed by Hasan while he attempts to

escape to Hindustan. In order to save Shekure and the kids from any possible attack, Black has hidden them in the house of a distant relative. She has been anxiously waiting for Black and when he comes back at last, she is taken aback by his terrible and bloody appearance. He is severely wounded and his nose is torn apart. He tells her everything and also reveals the identity of the murderer, that it was Olive who had killed her father and Elegant Effendi.

The later events in the life of the major characters are briefly highlighted by Shekure. Even if she and her kids are happy throughout their life, Black remains melancholic, partly because he has become crippled forever and that he would never recover from this handicap completely. Even so, they lead a peaceful life with Black as the formal guardian and protector of the family. Hasan flees Istanbul after murdering Olive and has never returned to Istanbul again. Master Osman dies two years after becoming blind, and Stork succeeds him as the head illuminator. Butterfly spends the rest of his life ornamenting carpets and tapestries. She informs the reader that she would tell the entire incidents to her younger son Orhan who is going to narrate the story, "In the hope that he might pen this story, which is beyond depiction, I've told it to my son Orhan" (503). Thus, it is Orhan's destiny to recount the life of all the characters that are figured in the novel.

The name "Orhan" evidently indicates the author Orhan Pamuk, who not only listens to his mother's version of the story but also witnesses most of

the events narrated in the novel. Moreover, Pamuk's elder brother's name is Sevket who appears in the novel with the same name as Orhan's elder brother. A meticulous reader would identify many events from the author's personal life, especially his frequent domestic quarrels with the elder brother. Here Pamuk offers a different dimension to literary representations by putting himself in the novel as a character whose destiny is to record the events narrated in the novel.

Snow: The Blurring of Fact and Fiction

Pamuk has brilliantly portrayed the cultural conflicts of Turkey in his politically charged novel *Snow*. The novel is also noted for its structure and techniques, and Pamuk harmoniously combines narrative realism and metafictional strategies in this work. The incidents in the novel take place in Kars, a western province in Turkey. The novel is quite sensational and controversial, primarily because Pamuk touches upon several burning issues and conflicts that are prevalent in Turkey. The novel is presented through the voice and memories of an omnipresent narrator named Orhan, who may virtually be considered as the author himself. He apparently writes about one of his friends, a poet named Ka, who pays a visit to Kars in search of love and happiness. The entire plot revolves around his three-day stay at Kars, the snow-clad border city in Turkey. The novel also visualizes the composition of almost nineteen poems composed by Ka during his stay at Kars. He would

write poems, or poems would come to his mind whenever he found himself in an extreme emotional state of being. The narrator describes the protagonist as naïve and sentimental, and consistently driven by both melancholy and passion for poetry. Even if he had been in Germany for the last twelve years, his Turkish identity is still within him. It is primarily because he had spent his childhood and early adult life in Istanbul. He visits Kars in winter and the entire region is covered with snow at that time. Unlike *My name is Red* that presents many voices interacting with the readers, *Snow* presents the voice of a narrator who, by the end of the novel, is revealed to be none other than Orhan Pamuk himself. The narrator often directly interacts with the readers by making comments about Ka:

For the traveller we see leaning on his neighbour is an honest and well-meaning man, and like those Chekhovian characters so laden with virtues that they never know success in life- full of melancholy. We will have much to say about melancholy later. But he is not likely to remain asleep for very long in that awkward position, for now suffice to say that the traveller's name is Kerim Alakusoglu. (4)

The author recurrently intervenes throughout the novel and directly converses with readers. Even if the man's name is Kerim Alakusoglu, he prefers to be called 'Ka'. He assumes the role of a journalist for a German daily and wants

to report some of the sensational events in Kars, including the imminent municipal election in the town and the ban of using head-scarf in public places which had subsequently led to a “suicide epidemic” among the young girls in Kars.

The entire account includes many inventive narrative methods such as embedded narrative, points of view, flash-forward and others. Among the devices, a significant one is the use of the flash-forward, which anticipates or explains things that will happen in the future life of characters. This is evident when Ka meets a man on his way to Kars, and the narrator comments that Ka will meet this man again, “Three days later, while standing in the snow of Halitpasa Avenue, with tears streaming from his eyes, Ka would see this slim, handsome villager again” (6). Similarly, while Ka engages in a friendly conversation with the young Islamist Necip, the narrator comments in parenthesis about Necip’s fate in next two and half hours, “There was a tense silence, during which Necip raised his beautiful eyes (one of which, in two hours and three minutes, would be shattered by a bullet)” (111). The narrator anticipates the future events in the life of Necip in the following chapter as well.

The narrator maintains a constant rapport with the readers by recurrently intervening to offer his comments and personal impressions on the events happening in the novel. When Ka witnesses the brutal murder of the

director of an educational institution by an Islamic militant, the narrator intervenes in the following chapter. He informs the reader that, years later, he was able to retrieve from the director's widow, a video tape that had been attached to the director's body, and that it had recorded the conversation with the young murderer. It contains a heated debate between the director and the young Islamist who seems to be very much agitated and extremely angry with the director. In addition, his secular and progressive reforms have infuriated the larger Islamists in Kars. The conversation consists of a socio-cultural and religious debate. The young man accuses the director of being an agent of Europe, and he further brands him to be an anti-Islamist and a proponent and propeller of atheism. The youth is a typical representative of the growing fundamentalist groups in Turkey. In his view, the director has insulted and humiliated Islam and Muslim womanhood by denying the basic right of girls to cover their heads in the educational institution. As far as any Muslim woman is concerned, the headscarf is an emblem that proclaims a person's religious belief and, by violating the basic rights of all those girls, the director has committed a mortal sin and deserves to be punished. He accuses the director for being the reason of the girls' mental disorder and distress:

Think about the girls whose lives you destroyed. One had a nervous breakdown; four were kicked out of school in their third year. One committed suicide. The one who stood

trembling outside the doors of your school all came down with fevers and ended up in bed. Their lives were ruined. (48)

The director, trembling and dumbfounded, desperately tries to pacify the young man by offering him various explanations. He even feels sorry about being a cause of the general distress. But the young man is so determined that he wants the director to be repentant and forces him to proclaim “God is great” (49). He finally fires his gun several times and the director falls down, fatally shot.

The twenty-ninth chapter, “It’s Not Just You I’ve Lost,” is another flash -forward in which the narrator directly explains the latter events that happen in the life of Ka. The events in the chapter take place in Frankfurt, and the narrator, Orhan Bey, pays a visit to this city forty-two days after the death of Ka. This happens after four years of Ka’s visit to Kars. The narrator informs the reader that Ka was brutally killed by unidentified assailants, and now he pays a visit to Frankfurt with the intention of retrieving Ka’s last poetry collection, *Snow*, the poems of which were written while he was staying at Kars. He seeks the assistance of Tarkut Olcun, who had been the lone companion of Ka in the city, to trace the whereabouts of Ka in the city. Olcun explains, “Orhan Bey, your friend Ka Bey was a solitary man. No one in Frankfurt apart from me knew much about what he was doing” (257). Even after sifting through Ka’s belongings and scrutinizing the entire apartment,

Orhan is unable to find the green note book which must have contained the poems. The terrible spectacle of Ka's loneliness and pain flashes through his mind when he pays a visit to the spot where Ka was brutally shot dead. The police had been unable to identify the assailants; nevertheless they arrived at the conclusion, that since Ka was shot from the back, it must have been a well-planned and premeditated murder. The narrator also informs readers about a letter Ka wrote to him before his death, in which he describes his painful life ever since his return from Kars four years earlier, and also reveals the existence of a collection of poems titled '*Snow*', that he had written during his stay at Kars. Despite having all of Ka's belongings thoroughly checked, the narrator is unable find the collection. He recovers around forty love letters that Ka wrote to Ipek after coming back from Kars, but nowhere could he find a letter from her. Ka's deep seated anguish and pain is embedded in one of the letters: "All my life, I've felt as lost and lonely as a wounded animal... But here I am, abandoned and wasting away. I carry the scars of my unbearable suffering on every inch of my body. Sometimes I believe it is not just you I've lost, but everything in the world" (266).

The eternal isolation experienced by Ka can be traced in each and every line, and the narrator remains motionless and still, pondering over the fate of true poets, for he makes out very well that poetry and happiness can never coexist. The narrator seems to be overwhelmed by Ka's passionate life of being an artist who craves eternally for love. In the same way, the narrator

recurrently intervenes to communicate Ka's love as well as his own admiration for Ipek. The narrator shares the impression with readers:

If I say now that I saw the same impressive jade stone hanging on a black silk cord around Ipek's neck exactly four years later, as she sat across from me at a dinner hosted by the mayor of Kars, I hope my readers won't accuse me of having strayed too far from the subject. To the contrary, we are now approaching the heart of the matter. For, until that moment, I could have said I had seen nothing for which I had been prepared so utterly, and so it must be for all of you following the story I have related in this book: Ipek was more beautiful than anyone could have imagined. (349)

Here, the narrator deliberately blurs the division between fact and fiction. Since the novelist himself appears as the narrator bearing his own name, with many of his personal details attached, readers may wonder whether the events have actually occurred or if they are the product of the narrator's imagination. Moreover, the narrator's deliberate effort to maintain an intimacy with the reader is also visible throughout the novel. For instance, when Ka plans to pay a visit to Blue as per Blue's request, the narrator informs readers about the possible outcome of the visit, "...the mission on which Ka was now embarked would change his life for ever. So I feel obliged to caution readers against

viewing Ka's decision to accept Blue's invitation as the pivotal moment in this story". (355)

The narrator's straightforward attitude and frankness with the reader is further testified with the open admission of his own love for Ipek. It is revealed when he narrates the elegant movements and the charming beauty of Ipek while she prepares to go to Frankfurt with Ka. She is packing her essentials to be transported to Frankfurt. It includes several artefacts she has collected from childhood. Ka becomes jovial by looking at her dear possessions tied up neatly in order to be taken with her. At this moment, the narrator intervenes to explain his own experience of looking at Ipek, while on one of his visits to Kars years later. He is intensely enchanted by her beauty and cannot resist himself from falling in love with her. He further renders the passion within him into words, "I was beset by all manner of feelings that women of exceptional beauty never fail to inspire: gazing at this paragon before me, I felt myself crumbling; I felt possessed" (349). His heart also throbs with the deep-seated longing to get united with her and lead a happy life with her in Istanbul.

The novel also contains many other embedded narratives. The most important among them is the enactment of an emotionally charged play on the controversial headscarf issue. The inserted narrative offers many dramatic scenes. Sunay Zaim, the radical-secularist theatre activist, stages the play on

the burning headscarf issue. He wants Kadife, who spearheads the women's agitation against the headscarf ban, to act in the play and perform the role of a revolutionary girl who openly bares her head in the climax scene of the play. Ka is entrusted to convince Kadife to act out the role and, after having a prolonged discussion with her, succeeds in persuading her to play the proposed role. Ka explains the plan to Sunay who, along with his close associate Colonel Osman Nuri Colak, ponders over it. After getting sincere assertion from Ka that Kadife will perform on stage, they swiftly make the necessary plans for rehearsals. Sunay summons Serdar Bey to cover the news regarding the performance in the next day's edition of his newspaper. When Serdar pleads with him to dictate the actual words to be printed, Sunay, with his own dramatic improvisation proclaims the title "Death on Stage". Ka is bewildered listening to Sunay's words. Years later, Orhan retrieves the article from Serdar Bey:

DEATH ON STAGE

ILLUSTRIOUS ACTOR SUNAY ZAIM SHOT DEAD DURING YESTERDAYS PERFORMANCE

Yesterday, while appearing in an historic play at the National Theatre, Kadife the headscarf girl shocked audiences first by baring her head in a moment of enlightened fervour, and then by pointing a weapon at Sunay Zaim, the actor playing the villain,

and firing. Her performance, broadcast live, has left the people of Kars trembling in horror. (343)

Trembling at the words of Sunay, Serdar asks him if he really means what he has already dictated. A mysterious smile appears on Sunay's face as if he is saying all is well that ends well. His mysterious air is reinforced again when he says, "What I am trying to do is push the truths of art to their outer limits, to become one with myth" (344).

The forty-third chapter of the novel titled "Women Commit Suicide to Save Their Pride" is about the enactment of the complicated and controversial play "A Tragedy in Kars". Sunay Zaim has changed the title as an adaptation of *The Spanish Tragedy* by Thomas Kyd. The narrator retrieves a videotape of the performance four years later. When the performance started, the entire hall had come under a transfixed silence. Sunay Zaim was playing the role of a villain, and Kadife, a revolutionary heroine. The play discusses some of the important issues in Kars such as the suicide epidemic among young girls. The first act itself contains a prolonged discussion in this regard. When Sunay questions Kadife and seeks the reasons behind it, he asks:

'Very well then. What is the real reason?

The main reason for suicide, obviously, is for pride. At least, that's why women kill themselves.

You mean they have been humiliated by love?

You don't understand a thing! Said Kadife. A woman doesn't commit suicide because she's lost her pride; she does it to show her pride'. (405)

The audience become more and more impatient and anxious about what is happening on-stage. It is for the first time in their lives that they are witnessing an issue of such great gravity being discussed on stage.

The final act of the play showcases terrible spectacles for the audience. Sunay has ingeniously planned the sequences in such a way as to transcend art above all earthly life. By doing so, he also justifies that art always triumphs over life. An infuriated Kadife proclaims that she is going to bare her head as a challenge against all existing socio-cultural norms. She also reminds Sunay that she will kill him soon after baring her head. He agrees to it by saying that he did all, including the coup, for the betterment of his fatherland. Kadife, with her extreme histrionic talents, bares her head before the audience as if she is challenging the entire tradition. Then Sunay hands over a loaded gun to Kadife who, without any conscience, violently pulls the trigger. With the gunshot, the packed hall witnesses Sunay's final fall with his last dialogue delivery, "How stupid all of this is, said Sunay. They know nothing about modern art. They will never be modern" (412). As confusion prevails over the hall, the audience gradually understand that what they have

witnessed is not histrionic talent but death itself. Pamuk seems to suggest, by mixing art and actual life together on stage, that the aesthetics of art can always win over life.

The last chapter of the novel summarizes the events that follow the performance of Sunay's play. Soon after the play, Kadife is arrested to ensure her own safety. Rumours spread across Kars that Kadife had wilfully killed Sunay to avenge Blue's death. But considering the fact that Sunay had already advertised his own death, the court gives a verdict favourable for Kadife. Yet she has to serve a prison term for three years and one month, since she has been found guilty of negligent homicide. Fazil also visits Kadife at prison with Turgut Bey and Ipek. Two months after her release from prison, Kadife marries Fazil. The narrator also indicates that they have a child and that she leads a happy life after that.

The narrator visits Kars after four years of Ka's departure from the city. He lets the reader know of his intention to write a novel based on the incidents related to Ka's three-day visit to Kars. He meets several people such as Muhtar, Serdar Bey and others. He meets Fazil also and gains much information regarding the events of those days. Fazil now leads a peaceful life with his wife, and a child named Omercan. The narrator also pays a visit to the Snow Palace hotel where he meets Ipek. He too, like Ka, is dazed by the charming beauty of Ipek, and when they are together in Ka's room in the

hotel, he almost proposes to her by revealing the burning passion within him. However, she maintains her composure on hearing this:

‘Orhan Bey, said Ipek. I tried hard to love Muhtar, but it didn’t work out. I loved Blue with all my heart, but it didn’t work out. I believed I would learn to love Ka, but that didn’t work out either. I longed for a child, but the child never came. I don’t think I’ll ever love anyone again; I just don’t have the heart of it. All I want to do now is look after my little nephew Omercan’. (430)

Orhan then meets Saffet the detective who had accompanied Ka as a body guard. He informs the narrator that Ka had been a good-hearted and amiable man, but for reasons unknown, nobody in Kars likes him anymore. While waiting for his train, he could see Turgut Bey and Kadife hurrying towards him. Kadife has wrapped her head with a nice headscarf, and she is holding little Omercan on her lap. She hands him a photograph of her sister with Sunay Zaim on the national theatre stage. She also passes Ipek’s greetings to Orhan’s daughter Ruya. After giving due acknowledgments, he boards the train bidding them a final adieu.

The final chapter is largely about the ways in which the novel was written. Here Pamuk provides many information regarding his personal life. Orhan Pamuk himself appears in the chapter bearing the same name, and he

mentions the name of his daughter Ruya too. Moreover, by inserting himself as a witness to all the incidents in the story, Pamuk has designed the novel as a semi-autobiographical one. Thus, several formal elements have been hybridized in order to bring about a new aesthetic appeal to the work.

The White Castle and Hybrid Subjectivity

Orhan Pamuk has successfully proved his skill in dealing with historical themes, especially the Ottoman themes, in his novel *The White Castle* which can be categorized as a compact story of the question of displacement and identity crisis. The formal features of the novel are again noteworthy because of the employment of large-scale technical devices. The story highlights the deep-seated cultural conflicts and the ideological confrontation between the East and the West, and also portrays the ways in which both cultures have interacted in the seventeenth century across the Mediterranean Sea. The novel is significant owing to the time frame within which the story takes place. The Ottoman Turkey in the seventeenth century engaged in constant battles against nationalities that would later in the twenty-first century be considered part of the European states- the Bulgarians, the Poles, the Hungarians and other peoples of Europe. The Ottoman Empire at that time used to be a source of trouble to many Western empires, and it had even laid siege to Vienna in 1642. *The White Castle* also narrates the

background of the Siege of Edrinne where the Ottoman Empire was pitted against the Hungarians and Austrians.

The Ottoman socio-cultural life is authentically portrayed in the novel, which is characterised by heterogeneity and coexistence of people from different parts of the world. It was also the time when the Ottomans had made their presence felt in many European countries. The Ottoman administration was interested in the European model of development, which was largely the result of the Renaissance and new geographical discoveries. The new settlements provided economic superiority to many European countries, which again reinforced fresh scientific advancement and technological innovations. It also led to the emergence of fresh ideas based on a new culture of rationality. Although the Ottomans had made an early mark in terms of developing a bureaucratic apparatus, the empire very soon witnessed much administrative disarray. Pamuk has chosen this ideal time-period to reflect not only the East-West conflicts inherent in the Turkish psyche, but also to offer an eye-view of the presence of heterogeneity and hybridity in Turkish culture.

The novel begins with a preface by a character named Faruk Darvinoglu who had appeared in one of Pamuk's earlier novels *The Silent House* (1983). It is a frame tale which is dedicated to Faruk's late sister Nilgun Darvinoglu. Pamuk has deliberately rendered the frame tale as real by providing the dates of birth and death of Faruk's sister. The frame tale is in

the form of a first person narrative which recounts the personal experience of Faruk who happens to discover an unknown manuscript in the archive of the governor's office in Gebze:

I found this manuscript in 1982 in that forgotten archive attached to the governor's office in Gebze that I used to rummage through for a week each summer, at the bottom of a dusty chest stuffed to overflowing with imperial decrees, title deeds, court registers and tax rolls. (9)

The book bears several references to historical events in the seventeenth century and Faruk inspects many supporting documents in order to verify the veracity of the contents described in the book. He also finds that some references were compatible with historical events and personalities mentioned in the manuscript, whereas some others were not:

When I consulted the basic sources for the period, I saw right away that some events described in the story bore little resemblance to fact: for example, I confirmed that at one point during the five years Koprulu served as a Grand Vizier a great fire had ravaged Istanbul, but there was no evidence at all of an outbreak of disease worth recording, let alone of a widespread plague like the one in the book. (10)

Here Pamuk again blurs the distinction between reality and fiction, and renders the manuscript as an original one which, at some crucial historical point, must have been composed by an enlightened mind. This is further confirmed when Faruk says,

Our knowledge of history generally verified the events in the book. Sometimes I saw this realism even in small details: for example, the historian Naima described in similar fashion the Imperial Astrologer Huseyn Efendi's execution and Mehmet IV's rabbit hunt at Mirahor Palace. (10)

The preface of the novel thus serves to authenticate the incidents which are significant in one way or the other, in the history of the Ottoman Empire. However, Faruk's prolonged attempts to track down the author of the manuscript become futile and he decides to publish an encyclopaedia article based on the events in the story. But it is rejected outright by the publishing authority and, unable to restrain himself from promulgating the story, he decides to publish the story in book form after making some literary and linguistic modifications so as to make it more intelligible to modern readers:

My readers will see that I nourished no pretensions to style while revising the book into contemporary Turkish: after reading a couple of sentences from the manuscript, I kept on one table, I'd go to another table in the other room where I kept

my papers and try to narrate in today's idiom the sense of what remained in my mind. It was not I who chose the title of the book, but the publishing house that agreed to print it. Readers seeing the dedication at the beginning may ask if it has a personal significance. I suppose that to see everything as connected with everything else is the addiction of our time. It is because I too have succumbed to this disease that I publish this tale. (12)

Here readers would wonder whether the preface is part of the novel or an actual preamble to the story offered by the author. The author is also conscious of the possible curiosity on the part of readers about the dedication, and the voice attempts to clarify the doubts in the preface itself. Thus, here also Pamuk repeats the typical metafictional strategy through which he relates the process of artistic creativity.

The story starts with the first person voice of an unnamed narrator who, while sailing from Venice to Naples, was captured by a Turkish fleet and subsequently brought to the Istanbul slave market. A Pasha buys him after being impressed by his skills in medicine. Later, he is instructed to prepare a firework display along with a Turkish scholar, Hoja, who is an ardent enthusiast of Western science and technology. The Pasha tries to coerce the narrator to convert to Islam but he refuses. After the failed attempt,

the Pasha hands him over to Hoja who bears a striking resemblance to the narrator. The incredible sameness puts the narrator in a transfixed state:

The resemblance between myself and the man who entered the room was incredible! It was me there... for that first instant this was what I thought... As our eyes met, we greeted one another. But he did not seem surprised. Then I decided he didn't resemble me all that much, he had a beard: and I seemed to have forgotten what my own face looked like. As he sat down facing me, I realised that it had been a year since I last looked in a mirror. (22)

Hoja promises absolute freedom to the narrator provided he teaches Hoja all the secrets of Western science including medicine, astronomy, engineering and other subjects. Very soon there develops a complex emotional bond and intimacy between them, and both of them join the Sultan's army on a mission to manufacture a powerful weapon. But the mission turns out to be a failure and the Sultan's army is defeated in an encounter to capture the White Castle. By this time, Hoja had managed to extract all the spirits and secrets of the Italian scholar and, after borrowing his identity, Hoja flees from Istanbul to Naples. This shifting of identity serves as the essence of the novel. In fact, the novel realistically portrays the anxiety commonly shared by every Turk when coping with Western culture.

Thus, by detailing the personal impressions and feelings of a foreign personality on the Turkish socio-cultural life, Pamuk indirectly exposes the deep-seated cultural dilemmas and anxieties of Turkish consciousness. Even though the novel does not contain complex metafictional devices, Pamuk focalises the narrative in an unconventional manner. Moreover, the novel delineates, in a subtle manner, the ways in which the formation of Turkish subjectivity takes place.

The Museum of Innocence: Author as Agent

Pamuk's narrative excellence and the hybrid formal features of his novels are again visible in one of his recent best-sellers *The Museum of Innocence*. In this novel, the author functions as an agent of the central character who seeks the assistance of a writer in order to write a novel on his friend's behalf. The novelist appears in the novel in his original self, and provides many comments about his own personal life. The novel also attempts to create a sense of authenticity with obvious references to the museum which the author had actually established in Istanbul in 2012. Readers are invited to visit this museum, and a ticket is also enclosed in the novel. This self-conscious reference to the actual mode of creative process recurrently appears as one of the most significant aspects in his novels.

The most romantic of all Pamuk's novels, *The Museum of Innocence*, realistically depicts the socio-cultural and familial life of Istanbul society

from the early nineteen-seventies to the early twenty-first century. Pamuk had started collecting several objects for the museum right from the 1990s, and he states in the *Innocence of Objects*, “I wanted to collect and exhibit the “real” objects of a fictional story in a museum and to write a novel based on these objects” (4). Several items on display in the museum are real-life objects connected with his personal as well as social life. Thus a blurring of fact and fiction is achieved here also in such a way so as to give an innovative style for literary composition.

Even if the novel is basically about love, and the individual and social complexities produced by love, it also attempts to critique the Istanbul bourgeois society. It highlights the Turkish trauma regarding the adoption of Western cultural values, and the need to follow traditional precepts in society. The story centres on Kemal Basmacı, a well-off upper-class business man of thirty, and Fuzun, a lower-class shop-girl of eighteen, who also happens to be a twice removed cousin of Kemal. Kemal enjoys all the privileges of being a part of a wealthy, westernised and modern family which has amassed riches through the export business since the mid-twentieth century. He has inherited the business firm started by his father and is running it successfully when the novel begins. Like many of his upper-class friends in Istanbul, Kemal possesses a westernised disposition, which he had acquired through his western education. The novel is presented in the form of a first-person narrative. The protagonist narrates the events in his life that had taken place

towards the end of the twentieth century. The entire novel is presented as a series of flashbacks and flash-forwards through which Kemal connects his past life with his present one.

When the novel begins, Kemal is engaged to a wealthy upper class girl named Sibel. However, he falls in love with Fuzun under some unexpected circumstances. They meet secretly for two months in one of his apartments and indulge in love making. The affair rocks Kemal's accustomed way of life and he becomes completely obsessed with Fuzun. His engagement with Sibel is broken, and Fuzun also estranges him owing to his secret premarital sexual relationship with Sibel. By the time he manages to meet Fuzun again, she has been married to an aspiring film maker. Nonetheless, Kemal continues his visits to her household.

The narrator reminds readers about the passage of time. Kemal has been a regular visitor in Fuzun's apartment for the last seven years and eight months. He would pay a visit to this family at least four times a week. By this time he has amassed a wide variety of objects ranging from domestic utensils to imported foreign artefacts from Fuzun's apartment. The narrator also informs that all those artefacts have been displayed in his museum, and that the interested readers can pay a visit to this museum of innocence and love. He was able to collect many objects and souvenirs associated with her in addition to many other little things used by her. As years pass by, his

obsession with Fuzun also increases. He regularly pays visits to her family until she gets divorced from her husband. After a long wait of nine years, Kemal and Fuzun agree to marry even if he is not able to completely extinguish her anger towards him. They plan to make a trip across Europe. On the way, Fuzun is killed in an accident and Kemal is severely wounded.

Kemal remains unconscious for several days after the accident, having sustained multiple injuries, and remains hospitalised for many days. After his recovery and subsequent discharge from the hospital, he feels lost without Fuzun. Haunted by her memory, he mobilises all the objects associated with her, which would provide, he hopes, consolation. At this point, the idea of setting up a museum of love occurs to him. He devises a grand plan for the establishment of the museum which he prefers to be named the “Museum of Innocence”. He travels across Europe, Asia and other continents to examine and inspect museums of all sorts. He decides to buy Fuzun’s house in Cukurcuma in order to convert it into the museum. He buys another apartment for Fuzun’s mother, Aunt Nesibe and, after extensive preparations, he sets up the museum. This personal museum displays various objects including the cosmetics used by Fuzun. Around this time, the idea of writing his own story occurs to him. It compels him to approach one of his old acquaintances, Orhan Pamuk, who is gaining popularity in Turkey as a successful writer. Thus, Orhan Pamuk is deputed as an agent to retell the entire story, and he impersonates Kemal in order to narrate the incidents of his life.

The novel offers a first-person voice right from the beginning, and it is through this omnipresent voice that the past and the present unfold. Pamuk has configured the plot in such a way so as to give the impression that the central character Kemal has actually existed and that the author is merely functioning as an agent who is speaking to the reader on behalf of Kemal. It seems to be a fact that Pamuk has taken extreme care to provide clarity to readers by deliberately putting several occasions for the narrator to interact with readers. This is evident while the description of Kemal's sexual intercourse with Fuzun is described. The voice or the author warns the probable readers such as the teachers of religious schools to skip those pages if they "are beginning to get nervous" (38). The readers' sentiments are valued recurrently while describing events, which again indicates that readers should be kept from becoming immersed in the disastrous events in the novel, "for a novel need not be full of sorrow just because its heroes are suffering" (139). It also helps readers to maintain a critical distance from such descriptions, a process preventing naturalisation. In this way, while providing a sense of authenticity for the story, Pamuk also tries to keep the readers at an aesthetic distance.

The author also wants the readers to visit the actual museum he has established in Istanbul, and he is conscious of what the visitors would think about him while they surf across the museum. He wants to communicate his pain not only to the readers but also to the possible visitors. It is evident when

he describes his mental pain while setting up the museum, “But neither the reader nor the visitor should on any account think that I could forget my pain even for an instant” (209). Since the museum actually exists in Istanbul, readers will be confused and be forced to take the narrator’s story at its face value. Moreover, the ticket printed in the text is in fact a real entry-pass for the readers to enter the museum. The narrator further emphasises that the museum would be a promising place for potential lovers, “The Museum of Innocence will be forever open to lovers who can’t find another place to kiss in Istanbul” (712). Here, readers would be puzzled over the actuality of the narrated events.

The direct communication with readers is visible when the narrator lets readers to speculate on his own disposition. When he avoids Sibel without showing any empathy for her sufferings, he allows readers to brand him as pitiless, “But I shall not dwell on the expression of genuine concern and sorrow on my fiancée’s face as I started up the car- let readers judge me as heartless” (211). In the museum he stuffs four thousand two hundred and thirteen cigarette stubs used by Fuzun in order to express how meticulous he has been in collecting even the apparently insignificant items used by her. When he says this, he is also conscious of setting a bad model for future generations to emulate. He admits that he is deliberately withdrawing from giving further colouring to it, “as I have no wish to set a poor example for future generations, let me not dwell lovingly on those seductive details”

(540). Moreover, the author also functions as a reminder for the readers on many occasions. For example, when Fuzun informs Kemal that she did not have any physical relationship with her husband, Feridun, during the past eight years, and that she is a virgin if they forget the two months of their love making, the narrator secretly informs readers the exact period of their physical intimacy in parenthesis, “(Actually, dear reader, it was a month and a half, less two days)” (626).

As part of the narrative strategy, the narrator introduces Orhan Pamuk himself in the initial part of the novel while Kemal holds his engagement party in a hotel. Pamuk’s involvement with Kemal is emphasised here, and the narrator informs the readers to check what Orhan had experienced in Fuzun’s presence while dancing with Fuzun in the final chapter of the novel named “Happiness”. Here Pamuk is directly addressing readers, “HELLOW, THIS IS ORHAN PAMUK! With Kemal Bey’s permission I shall begin by describing my dance with Fuzun” (708). In this chapter, the readers are also informed of the circumstances which had led to the composition of the novel. Orhan had also felt a fascination for Fuzun while he was dancing with her at Kemal’s engagement party. He offers to narrate the exact feeling of that moment and the chapter called “Happiness” is devoted for the same. Having explained all the incidents in his life, the narrator expresses his wish to write a novel based on his life. Since he is incapable of rendering his experiences into words, he needs to find a suitable person for the purpose, “... a writer might

undertake to write the catalogue in the same form as he might write a novel. But having no desire to attempt such a book myself, I asked: who could do this for me?" (703). This apparent anxiety leads him to think of Orhan Pamuk whose father had been a business associate of his own father. Moreover, he also thinks that Pamuk has gained considerable popularity in Turkey as a successful writer, "This is how I came to seek out the esteemed Orhan Pamuk, who has narrated the story in my name, and with my approval" (703). Orhan also intimates that when he writes the novel, he will be speaking in Kemal's voice, "In the book you are telling your own story, and saying 'I', Kemal Bey. I am speaking in your voice. Right now I am trying very hard to put myself in your place, to be you" (707). Kemal then asks the readers directly to visit his museum in Istanbul and explains why he intends to provide a ticket in the book.

It is at this point that readers understand that it was in fact, Orhan Pamuk who had been narrating events on Kemal's behalf. Their conversation also clarifies several other matters related to the narrative. During their conversation, Orhan also informs Kemal the intention of using the first person singular for narrating the story which, he thinks would help him establish a rapport with readers. Kemal expresses his doubt whether Orhan was ever in love with anybody and is also disturbed by the idea of this impersonation:

Though I had no doubt that it would remain my story, and that he would treat it respectfully, the idea of his speaking in my voice was disturbing. It seemed a failure of courage, a sort of weakness on my part. While I thought it perfectly normal to tell the story to visitors myself, pointing out relevant objects along the way, for Orhan Bey to put himself in my place, for him to make his own voice heard in place of mine- this annoyed me. (707)

Nonetheless, he allows Orhan to use his voice to serve the purpose. It also occurs to him that Orhan will invariably be truthful to his life, “I left it to him to finish my story” (708). The author here is an external agent invited or adopted by the central character to represent him. The agent then assumes the role of the protagonist whose thoughts and emotions are forwarded to readers.

Orhan wants to meet many people mentioned in Kemal’s story so that he can collect first-hand information from them, and later on he reveals Kemal’s reluctance to accept this proposal, “In fact, Kemal Bey did not like my seeking out the people mentioned in the story, but he tolerated my novelist’s ways” (715). In due course, Orhan meets several persons who are related to Kemal and Fuzun to get clarifications for the story. Among many others, he meets Fuzun’s husband Feridun. He asks Orhan if he could use the first sentence of Orhan’s novel *The New Life* for his movie and Orhan gladly

allows him. He also visits all places related to Kemal's story including the Merhamet apartment and inspects all the objects collected by Kemal to set the museum. After getting all the necessary information related to the story, Orhan promises Kemal that the book will be finished after setting the museum. The only demand put forward by Kemal is to let him write the last words of the novel. Orhan agrees with him and ends the novel with the last words, "Let everyone know, I lived a very happy life" (728).

As in many other novels of Pamuk, the final chapter of *The Museum of Innocence* too is a discourse on the composition of the novel itself. The very nature and presentation of the novel is discussed by the author and the central character who is forced to seek help from the author in order to narrate the events happened in his life. As Irmak Ertuna observes, readers also come to know of the real identity of the narrator at this stage:

The ultimate blow to Kemal's ego- the culminating moment when his subjective position dissolves- comes when he commissions the author Orhan Pamuk to write a novel about his love story. At this point, the reader learns that the story is not in fact narrated by Kemal himself, but by his delegate who has assumed his voice. (109)

Pamuk has skilfully devised this plan in order to give an impression that the fictional elements are factual ones. Moreover, the real museum in Istanbul

also provides readers sufficient reason and cause to speculate that the events have actually taken place. This employment of stylistic devices and novelistic ways of narrative packaging renders the novel unique, and Pamuk proves himself to be a champion of executing those techniques in his works.

A Strangeness in My Mind: Traditional Realism and Non-linear Templates

One of Pamuk's most recent novels *A Strangeness in My Mind* also is noted for its technical excellence and innovative methods. Even if the novel is a realistic depiction of Istanbul life in the second part of the twentieth century, and devoid of complex and obscure narrative designs, it contains many fictional strategies employed by Pamuk in a unique manner. The novel presents, like many other novels by the author, an individual with a typical Pamukian identity crisis who searches for emotional solace and eternally craves for happiness. Moreover, it contains many twists and turns with an active employment of flashbacks and flash-forwards. The formal aspects of the novel are also compatible with the theme and subject matter.

The novel *A Strangeness in My Mind* revolves around the fate of a man who is forced to shift from a rural background to an urban area, and the strange things that happen in his life. As the title indicates, the protagonist is possessed of a strange mind which is deeply introspective and passionate. It also vividly portrays the gradual growth of Istanbul from a mere old fashioned

Ottoman city to an ultramodern metropolitan town with all its flamboyance and skyscrapers. Using a plain and lucid narrative, with the individual perceptions of several characters, the novel offers a panorama of Istanbul life in the second half of the twentieth century and after. Pamuk has not employed, unlike many of his previous novels, any complex metafictional strategies in the novel, but the narrative is packaged in such way so as to include fragmented episodes and points of view. The process of westernisation, the cultural changes and conflicts in Turkish society are apparent in the novel.

The narrative of the novel is non-linear in nature. The narrator maintains, as in other novels by Pamuk, an intimacy with the readers and speaks directly to the possible listeners on many occasions. The first person narrative voice also claims that the events in the novel are not fictional but part of a real story. It is evident when the protagonist is introduced in the initial part of the novel:

Had my readers actually met Mevlut, as I have, they would agree with the women who found him boyishly handsome and know that I am not exaggerating for effect. In fact, let me take this opportunity to point out that there are no exaggerations anywhere in this book, which is based entirely on a true story; I will narrate some strange events that have come and gone and

limit my part to ordering them in such a fashion as to allow my readers to follow and understand them more easily. (4)

Pamuk has made extensive use of the “episodic points of view” technique in the novel. The characters speak directly to the readers with their names as subtitles in bold letters. This strategy further enables the characters to establish a rapport with the readers, and it also helps the characters to share their views and personal anxieties regarding the events that unfold in the due course of the novel. This method also enables the characters to intervene in the middle of the narrative to clarify their positions, as, for instance, Abdurrahman Efendi does on many occasions, “I will take the liberty to quickly interrupt here, as I actually live in the abovementioned village of Gumusdere” (39).

The story centres on Mevlut Karatas, a young man hailing from a poor village in Central Anatolia, who is forced to follow his father’s footsteps to Istanbul in his childhood. When the novel begins, Mevlut is getting ready to elope with his sweetheart Rayiha with the help of his cousin Suleiman. Mevlut had met Rayiha only once and a single glance of her beautiful eyes was enough for him to fall head over heels in love with her. Rayiha is the sister of his cousin’s wife Vediha. After the first meeting, he communicates with her only through letters. Even if he does not receive any letters from her, he manages to send her letters through Suleiman. Their elopement takes place

in the middle of the night and both of them are unable to see each other's faces. Suleiman further offers his assistance at this time also. He takes the lovers from her village to the nearest railway station and they feel safe after reaching the station. After bidding adieu to Suleiman, they seek shelter in the railway platform.

The events following are described in the first chapter of the novel. He had mistaken someone else for Rayiha, and this realisation puts him in an embarrassed state of mind. However, they soon get married with the help of a local arbitrator. A reception is also arranged and everyone, including Rayiha's father and sister Samiha, take part in the function. When he meets Samiha, Mevlut realises that it was in fact Samiha who had captured his attention years ago. He had addressed his letters to Rayiha with the image of Samiha in mind. This realisation causes him great pain. He also realises that it was in fact Suleiman who was behind this trickery. Suleiman wants to marry Samiha, and the only obstacle was the less attractive Rayiha who had to be married off to someone else so that he may marry Samiha easily.

However, Mevlut accepts the reality and views optimistically the things that have happened. He starts living with Rayiha in the one-room house in Istanbul. He sells *boza* in the evenings, and Rayiha helps him to prepare *boza* and yogurt. Here, the narrator attempts to prove that he is mindful of

both foreign readers and the possible readers in future generations. The narrator's concern is visible in the initial part of the novel:

“Before we go any further, and to make sure that our story is properly understood, perhaps I should explain for foreign readers who've never heard of it before, and for future generations of Turkish readers who will, I fear, forget all about it within the next twenty to thirty years, that boza is a traditional Asian beverage made of fermented wheat...” (18)

After spending a few days with her, Mevlut realises that only Rayiha can be an ideal wife for him, and he feels completely satisfied with the love and care he gets from her. Later on, to overcome the financial difficulties, he starts an ice cream business also, and very soon he is able to open a small shop selling ice cream and other sweets. Suleiman and Vediha visit them frequently.

Rayiha is quite happy and very soon she delivers a baby girl which gives Mevlut extreme happiness. Samiha and her father visit Vediha and they stay there for some months. Suleiman declares his love for Samiha, but even though both of them go out together frequently, Samiha is unable to tolerate Suleiman's naïve and childish behaviour. However, everyone in the family wishes their union, and Abdurrahman even goes to the extent of arranging their marriage. Sensing that a fatal future is awaiting for her, Samiha elopes with Ferhat. No one had ever known of their secret love. Even Mevlut is

surprised on hearing this news. Suleiman becomes so frantic that he searches for the eloped couple everywhere. After a prolonged search for Samiha, he gives up pursuing her and marries another girl.

Troubles prop up in the relationship between Samiha and Ferhat, and he is killed under mysterious circumstances. Left alone, Samiha continues her life in the one-room apartment and she frequently visits her sister Rayiha and Mevlut. An unknown illness claims Rayiha's life, and Mevlut with the persuasion of the people around him, finally marries Samiha. Seven years have passed by in their life and now they lead a peaceful life. In the meantime, several changes have taken place in the city. The old buildings have been restructured. A company owned by Hadji Hamit Vural now plans to build several apartment complexes across their street. Mevlut's cousins, Korkut and Suleiman, also are working in the company. They plan to demolish their old apartment and build a twelve storied apartment block instead. Samiha insists that they must get their rightful share of the upcoming block. In her view, it is their genuine demand and if they are unable to accept it, Mevlut should not sign the necessary documents. After having a hard bargain with Korkut and Suleiman, Mevlut manages to obtain his rightful share.

The final part of the novel describes the life of Mevlut and Samiha in their new apartment. The entire family live in the apartment on different

floors. Mevlut is still working as a street vendor selling *boza* in the evenings. He has adapted himself to the new circumstances and the changing scenario of Istanbul city life. Even if Samiha is sweet to him, her stubborn and obstinate nature often causes him distress. Yet he leads his life as a satisfied man. He reflects on his past life, and wonders that throughout the years, he had been keeping a strange mind with uncommon thoughts. Even if he is satisfied with the present way of life, in his final analysis, he has loved Rayiha more than anything else in the world.

Istanbul Memories and the City: Musings of the Native

Pamuk's non-fictional work *Istanbul Memories and the City* goes beyond any specific categorization. It delineates the growth of a young talented mind to maturation, and it can also be read as a work which portrays a deep emotional bond between a city and a passionate, sentimental writer. The work successfully portrays the early life of the author, Orhan Pamuk, right from the time of his birth to the moment he realises the real mission of his life i.e. to become a creative writer. He touches upon all the autobiographical elements in his life ranging from the family details, to the history and tradition of Turkey in general and that of Istanbul in particular. The deep seated cultural conflicts, the subtle features of the remnants of Ottoman rule, the transition of Turkey to a modern democratic republic, and others, are brilliantly exposed in the book. The work has been configured as if the author is making an imaginary journey across the heart and soul of a grand

city, and he has successfully rendered all the details into words. *Istanbul*, thus, can be a useful entry-gate for readers to enter into the Pamukian world of letters.

Pamuk has employed a non-linear random method for the composition of the book. It goes deep into the soul of Istanbul city by highlighting the socio-cultural lineage and the status quo of the glorious city with its rich cultural heritage. The most important element of Pamuk's description of Istanbul is its capacity to emanate *huzun*, which in Turkish means "melancholy". It denotes a sense of deep spiritual loss with a metaphysical anxiety. In the Sufi tradition, it denotes the incapacity of the human mind to maintain a close relationship with God, for man cannot do sufficient things to get closer to God. This melancholy or black passion stems from a spiritual anxiety commonly shared, in Pamuk's analysis, by the Turkish elites. Pamuk attempts to hold to these feelings and it ultimately paves the way to happy solitude in his creative life. For Pamuk, *huzun* is deeply embedded in the Turkish consciousness and no one would wish to get away from this feelings, especially creative artists:

Istanbul does not carry this huzun as 'an illness for which there is a cure' or 'an unbidden pain from which we need to be delivered': it carries its huzun by choice... Likewise, the huzun in Turkish poetry after the foundation of the Republic, as it, too, for the residents of Istanbul as they resign themselves to poverty

and depression. Imbued still with the honour accorded it in Sufi literature, *huzun* gives their resignation an air of dignity, but it also explains why it is their choice to embrace failure, indecision, defeat and poverty so philosophically and with such pride, suggesting that *huzun* is not the outcome of life's worries and great losses, but their principal cause. (93)

In this way, much like the city, Pamuk also optimistically embraces *huzun* in order to find out answers or solutions to the burning problems that remain dormant in his rational mind.

The book also contains many precious photographs that Pamuk has collected from various sources. They include family photographs as well as the ones related to the formation of the Turkish Republic. The loose narrative also traces the perspectives shared by Western painters and writers on Istanbul city and culture. Thus Pamuk talks at large about the impressions of western artists including Melling, Flaubert, Gautier and others who had visited Istanbul during different historical periods. Moreover, the work beautifully paints an artist's colourful imagination of a grand city that is caught between the Eastern and Western civilizations. While going through the chapters, readers experience the intense emotional bond between a budding creative mind and a majestic melancholic city.

Chapter III

Discord and Assimilation: Echoes of East-West Conflict and Cross-Cultural Interaction

Everyone is sometimes a Westerner and sometimes an Easterner- in fact a constant combination of the two.

- Orhan Pamuk, *Other Colours*

The process of adaption of Western ideas and modalities in Turkish culture started right from the Ottoman period itself. One of the notable rulers of the Ottoman Empire, Sultan Mehmet II, recognized the need to reform society by implementing many western policies. He stressed the need for effecting equality in social life, and the military system also underwent radical reforms. By promoting education, he envisaged the emergence of a class of refined people in the empire. After the conquest of Constantinople, Mehmet II invited a large number of Western artists to the Ottoman capital, which resulted in the arrival of many innovative styles not only in paintings, but also in medals, sculpture, architecture, and others. Among them Gentile Bellini, one of the notable painters of Venice in the fifteenth century, was invited “to produce the *Portrait of MehmetII*” (Jardine and Brotton 8). This imitation of European culture emphatically points out the unconscious urge of the Ottoman Sultans to assimilate Western models of modernity. All the successive Sultans followed the footsteps of Mehmet II and effectively attempted to bridge the cultural paradigms of both the Orient and the

Occident. Sultan Murat III even went to the extent of commissioning a group of painters to prepare an illuminated manuscript based on Western models to commemorate the thousandth anniversary of the *Hegira* year (migration or journey of the Islamic prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Yathrib), which is the theme of Pamuk's novel *My Name is Red*. Even if the Sultan and the ruling elites wholeheartedly embraced western models, the popular sentiment was against this uncritical acceptance of Western styles. This was mainly due to the influence of Islamic ideology which is deeply rooted in the Ottoman socio-cultural life.

The relationship between Turkey and Western societies remained a complex one ever since Mehmet II captured Constantinople. The European countries considered Turkish culture to be exotic and remote. This constant process of "othering" is visible in the popular imagination of European artistic productions. Edward Said problematizes this notion in his densely critical work *Orientalism* (1978). As his work summarises, the Oriental-Occidental conflict has always been a conflict for power, and the relationship is always accompanied by varying degrees of complex hegemony and domination. In this context, as stated by Edward Said, the negative stereotype is always associated with the orient: "...the other feature of the orient was that Europe was always in a position of strength. There is no way of putting euphemistically... the essential relationship, on political, cultural, and even

religious grounds was seen to be one between a strong and weak partner” (40).

Even then, the scientific advancement and technological innovations in the West reinforced cross-cultural interactions across the Bosphorous. As Pamuk projects in his novels *My Name is Red* and *The White Castle*, the Ottoman society was influenced deeply both by the material advancement of the West and by the artistic innovations of European masters. Pamuk has exceptionally portrayed the complex relationship between Turkey and Western societies in his works, emphasising both the dissonance and absorption of these different cultural paradigms.

Turkey, and especially Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, never abandoned its multicultural status. This was also the result of a complicated rendezvous of several cultural and religious sects, right from the inception of the empire. The existence of different ethnic groups and the commercial interests of the countries to its east and west resulted in transforming Istanbul into a cosmopolitan city. Benton Jay Komins observes that even after Istanbul was captured, it remained pluralistic for several centuries, “The city had flourished as a multicultural society for hundreds of years and returned to its imperial mode of tolerance” (369). This cultural hybridity is intensely perceived and analysed by Pamuk in his creative works.

The process of westernisation was perpetuated along with the crumbling status of the Ottoman Empire. The entire administration of the empire perceived the West to be a source of knowledge and new cultural forms. This was evident in the nineteenth century, which witnessed a large number of Western books being translated into Turkish as part of instilling new scientific consciousness in the empire. As Ozlem Berk observes, it was a crucial point in Turkish history:

In the Turkish case, the west as the source culture was given a superior status as early as the nineteenth century. By the start of the nineteenth century, new influences began to enter the Ottoman Empire. Knowledge started to increase. Educational institutions multiplied, while military and technical works were being translated. (2)

After the transition from an empire to a democratic republic, Turkey witnessed a much stronger radical process of modernisation and westernisation under the judicious leadership of Kemal Ataturk. As Soli Ozel further states, “The strategic aim of Ataturk and other founding fathers of the Turkish Republic in 1923 was to be part of the European system of states, just as the Ottomans had been” (25). They primarily underscored the relevance of secularism and the need to avoid religious scriptures as the guiding principles of the state. But at the same time, they were also wary of the uncritical

acceptance of every western model. This dilemma has been carried over from generation to generation, and is prevalent even among modern Turks. In almost all his works, Pamuk has depicted this eagerness and anxiety of Turkish subjects towards the adoption of Western culture. In fact, he combines Eastern and Western traditions in his creative works and exhibits the inherent hybrid nature of Turkish culture. Pamuk treats this theme in a unique manner, as Parpala and Afana note:

As a major authorial theme, the East-West dichotomy, which is a concept of geopolitical, sociological and cultural signification, was treated by Pamuk in a deconstructivist manner. Although the Turkish novelist does not write political novels, he questions the explanatory power of current theories in political science or in cultural studies, and offers answers to the global politics of interculturalism and transculturation. (42)

His works also problematize the question of cultural identity and almost all his characters are noted for their perennial search for identity.

Paintings and Perceptions: East-West Dilemma in *MyName is Red*

Pamuk's works visualise the historical contexts in which the perspectives of the East and the West have collided, and thereby bring about a fusion of divergent ideas. This problematic fusion is quite visible in *My Name is Red* and, to assert his position, he has inserted a quotation from the Koran

at the beginning of the novel, “To God belongs the East and West” (2). He has brilliantly portrayed the influence of Western perspectives in the Turkish society during the Ottoman period in this work. The events in the novel *My Name is Red* take place towards the end of the sixteenth century when the Ottoman Empire was at the zenith of its glory. At that time Sultan Murat III was ruling the empire. Even if Islam was the official religion, the empire accommodated several other religious and ethnic groups. The novel presents the sixteenth-century Istanbul society with its divergent socio-cultural life. The work is concerned with the life of a group of painters associated with the Sultan’s palace. The Ottoman rulers ardently promoted different art forms, especially painting. Unlike the Western painters who followed individual style and perspective in their paintings, the Ottoman painters were well-versed in miniature painting and calligraphy. Since they followed the Persian tradition in their artistic renderings, they were forbidden from following Western models.

The confrontation between the Eastern tradition of art, especially painting and calligraphy, and the Western form of perspective or the Frankish art form, is the crux of the novel. Pamuk provides a detailed account of the history of Ottoman miniature painting, and the intrigues and professional jealousy prevalent among miniature artists and calligraphers of the time. The novel also focuses on the identity crisis inherent in the Turkish psyche and explores the confrontation between Eastern cultural tradition and the intrusion

of Western perspectives into Ottoman paintings. As Parpala and Afana point out in “Orhan Pamuk and the East-West Dichotomy”, Pamuk realistically portrays the artistic dilemma commonly shared by every Turk:

In accord with postmodern epistemology, Pamuk transcodes the identity crisis of his country on the grounds of iconicity in a fascinating story about painting and its impact on reality. *My Name is Red* is a parable about modern Turkey which has to choose between staying an isolated power in the Middle East, or adhering to the European Union. In the novel, this dilemma is built around the artistic conflict between two different ways of representing the world. One is that of seeing the world through God’s eyes or with the mind’s eye as the Islamic miniature painters did. The other is of seeing the world through the eyes of any individual person: the Frankish/Venetian art of portraiture. The breaking point of the canon is allegorically represented in *My Name is Red* on the symbolic ground of visual artistic styles. Thus style becomes the basic isotopy of the text and the stake of the East-West hybridization. (44)

The incidents in the novel take place as part of a project commissioned secretly by the Sultan to compose a book of paintings modelled after Frankish methods. It is to commemorate the thousandth anniversary of the Islamic

calendar, the *Hegira* year and also to showcase the grandeur and glory of the Ottoman Empire to the outside world.

The story proper begins with the arrival of the protagonist Black in Istanbul to finish the book. Black had been travelling around many provinces and cities in Persia. During the exile, he had engaged in many works and gained considerable experience as a tax-collector, illuminator and painter. He is called back to Istanbul by his uncle Enishte Effendi, one of the master miniaturists associated with the palace of the Ottoman Sultan, in order to help with the completion of the grand book of manuscript illustrations commissioned by the Sultan. Enishte Effendi was chosen to coordinate the completion of this work with the assistance of four other miniaturists associated with his workshop. Moreover, he had been the major force behind the idea of this book of illustration. While on a visit to Venice, he had happened to experience the captivating power of the Western art forms. The European perspectival art form was bewitching for Enishte primarily because the works seemed to him superbly original and realistic, since they followed specific styles and standards in their art work.

Back at the Ottoman palace, Enishte convinces the Sultan to prepare a book of illustration in the Western model, glorifying the achievements of the Grand Empire. The other master miniaturists who help him prepare the book are Butterfly, Olive, Stork and Elegant Effendi. However, Elegant Effendi is

mysteriously murdered in the due course of finishing the book. In the absence of the murdered Elegant, Enishte Effendi needs the assistance of Black whose experience in miniature painting can be made use of in order to finish the commissioned book. It is also revealed, in the course of Black's reflections, that he had been in love with Enishte's daughter Shekure, and his exile from the city itself was the result of the failure of his affair with her.

The fifth chapter "I am Your Beloved Uncle," explains the background of the story. Enishte Effendi describes to Black the secret of the Sultan's book. Black learns that Enishte had been to many European countries, and is well aware of the Venetian as well as the Frankish style of painting, and that, as per the Sultan's order, the book must exhibit the glory of the Ottoman Empire in Western style. Enishte explains to him the reasons for this fresh undertaking:

My client is, in fact, His Excellency Our Sultan, the Foundation of the world. Because this book is a secret, Our Sultan has disbursed payment to me under cover of the Head Treasurer. And I have come to an understanding with each of the most talented and accomplished artists of Our Sultan's atelier. I have been in the process of commissioning one of them to illustrate a dog, another a tree, a third I've charged with making border designs and clouds on the horizon, and yet another is

responsible for the horses. I wanted the things I depicted to represent Our Sultan's entire world, just as in the paintings of the Venetian masters. (29)

However, the specific project is a little bit different from the usual style of the European masters in both its form and content, and Enishte Effendi evidently articulates the variation: "But unlike the Venetians, my work would not merely depict material objects, but naturally the inner riches, the joys, and fears of the realm over which Our Sultan rules" (29). He later explains the real motive for the composition of the book to Black: "Once the book was completed, it would become a symbol of the vanquishing power of the Islamic Caliph Our Exalted Sultan, in the thousandth year of the Hegira" (133). It can also be viewed as a conscious attempt on the part of the Sultan to modernise his empire in Western ways. In addition to that, he makes use of Western styles in order to emulate the superiority and strength of the West. Enishte redistributes the major works to other master illuminators of the Royal Workshop. Nevertheless, when the project is promulgated, the painters panic. Apparently the project is against the very principles that they have been following in their workshop right from its establishment. Anxiety takes hold when one of the miniaturists, Elegant Effendi, is mysteriously killed and his body is found abandoned in a well.

Enishte's insistence of utmost care and secrecy in dealing with the book reveals the prevailing tension among the master artists associated with the Sultan's palace. Several rumours have spread across the town about the book, and Enishte as well as other miniaturists associated with the book are afraid of the possible dangers lurking in their way. When one of the master miniaturists in the group is mysteriously killed, it becomes the sole responsibility of Enishte to abide by the Sultan's order. Even if dismayed by the events narrated, Black decides to stick to the project chiefly because of the possibility of fulfilling his unrequited love for Shekure whose husband has been missing in battle, and who, almost like a widow, is now living with her father and her two sons, Shevket and Orhan.

At the time of Elegant's murder almost all the major illustrations for the Sultan's book have been completed, and Enishte explains to Black the key characteristics of the major illustrations. He entrusts the masters to depict certain cardinal images like that of Satan, a horse, a gold coin and a dog. A depiction of the image of "Death" is illustrated by Stork and, in the words of Enishte, the text would be a harmonious blending of poetry and painting, of words and colour. There remains only some final finishing strokes and arrangement.

When Black visits master Osman, the head-illuminator in the Sultan's workshop in order to establish a rapport with the master, as well as with the

other junior masters associated with his workshop, he learns that the other master miniaturists are working from their homes as per the special instructions given by the Sultan. Except for the murdered Elegant Effendi, the other three masters are toiling hard in their respective workshops to contribute as much as possible towards the finishing of the book. He subsequently pays visits to each of these master miniaturists, and comes to know about the aspects of retaining a painter's unique style and signature. Even as Black carries the notion that one of these master miniaturists is the murderer, and despite having spent much time on conversing with each of them, he is unable to make out any clue which may point to the murderer's identity.

Since the Ottoman miniature painting is deeply rooted in Persian tradition, any deviation from this original form would apparently be hazardous. On several occasions, the head-illuminator, Master Osman, stresses this point. When Black approaches him to know more about the Ottoman tradition, he points out the matter of "style" and "signature". According to him, Western painters follow individual style and they put their signature in their paintings to assert their own distinctive style. Persian tradition does not follow this pattern, and they effectively refute any sign of individuality or uniqueness in their paintings. Since the Ottoman tradition follows the principles of Islam, any deviation from their original paradigm would also be blasphemous. The great master-painters associated with the royal workshop are obsessed with this awareness. Their anxiety is visible

whenever they confront the question of style. Butterfly, one of the master painters, expresses this anxiety when Black asks him to explain the notion of individual style: “I’m well aware that this lust for ‘style’, ‘signature’ and ‘character’ has come to us all the way from the East by way of certain unfortunate Chinese masters who’ve been led astray under the influence of the Europeans, by pictures brought there from the West by Jesuit priests” (75).

He further explains that only a faithless person who refutes the fundamental principles of Islam can follow the Western style. In addition, he also explains to Black that the prevalence of poverty, sickness and scandals in Istanbul is a direct result of the “flourishing of European sensibilities in their homeland” (82). Moreover, there is a radical group in the novel, led by a preacher from Erzurum, who would go to any extent to safeguard the uniqueness of Ottoman culture from being distorted by Western influences and interventions. They indulge in armed violence on many occasions to voice their protest against the dissident miniature painters.

The voice of the murderer of Elegant Effendi puts the readers in a confusing abeyance regarding his real identity. The murderer justifies his actions by saying that whatever he did, despite being branded heinous and ugly, was to protect the faith of his land. All the same, he is also fascinated by the beauty of Frankish art and lured by the prospect of becoming a master of

both Eastern and Western painting styles. He remains confused and agitated even after committing the murder, for he further approaches Master Enishte effendi to seek clarification regarding the nature of the book they are composing. This mental dilemma is encapsulated in his words:

I was going to confess what I'd done to protect us, and to ask him: 'Is it true what Elegant Effendi had claimed? Are we abusing Our Sultan's trust through the illustrations we've made? Are our painting techniques traitorous and an affront to our religion? And have you finished that last large painting?' (123)

The murderer is deeply conscious of his own position as an Ottoman miniature painter and he cannot tolerate anybody who attempts to degrade his tradition. He strongly suspects that master Enishte is mainly responsible for the imitation of Western perspective and this realisation leads him to commit one more murder to safeguard his tradition.

When the murderer approaches Enishte to know more about the secret book, Enishte understands the grave situation which he finds himself in. The tormented murderer repeatedly seeks clarifications regarding the real meaning of the book. Since they are living and painting according to the principles of Islam, the book posits several threats for their existence. By following European models, the murderer reasons that they have violated the fundamental principles of their faith and age-old customs. Enishte desperately

attempts to pacify the murderer by pointing out the mastery and greatness of all Ottoman miniature painters, and the Venetian style in his argument, is nothing but an alluring phenomenon owing to its resemblance to life itself, which does not possess the purity of the tradition to which they belong:

Believe me, none of the Venetian masters have your poetic sensibility, your conviction, your sensitivity, the purity and brightness of your colours, yet their paintings are more compelling because they more closely resemble life itself. They don't paint the world as seen from the balcony of a minaret, ignoring what they call perspective; they depict what's seen at street level, or from the inside of a prince's room, taking in his bed, quilt, desk, mirror, his tiger, his daughter and his coins. They include it all, as you know. I'm not persuaded by everything they do. Attempting to imitate the world directly through painting seems dishonourable to me. I resent it. But there is an undeniable allure to the paintings they make by those new methods. They depict what the eye sees just as the eye sees it. Indeed, they paint what they see, whereas we paint what we look at. Beholding their work one comes to realise that the only way to have ones face immortalised is through the Frankish style... Painting people, not as they are perceived by the mind, but as they are actually seen by the naked eye, painting in the

new method, allows for this possibility. One day everyone will paint as they do. (205-206)

However, these words do not appease the agitated murderer who is driven by desire, regret and guilt, and he aims to silence all possible threats before him. Enishte understands that this anxiety must have prompted him to kill Elegant Effendi. However, rather than being an individual trait, this anxiety is shared commonly by all the miniature artists in the novel. This is the cultural clash between the Western artistic tradition and the Oriental art form. This deep-seated mental agony and remorse further prompts the murderer to kill Enishte Effendi, who in the murderer's reasoning, is primarily responsible for the deviation from the original oriental art form. Pamuk hints that there is an ardent Westerner deeply hidden within Enishte who is even ready to cast off his Ottoman identity without knowing the repercussions of the act. In fact, as Uner Daglier points out, Pamuk deliberately creates such oriental modernists in almost all his novels:

Interestingly, Enishte Effendi is not the only oriental modernist in Pamuk's novels who partly or completely rejects his Eastern identity due to an implicit sense of inferiority or a strong yearning for the western civilization. However, all of these fictional characters share similar fates. In *Cevdet Bey and His Sons*, Omer, who returns to Istanbul with a youthful sense of

enthusiasm after completing his engineering studies in London, and, in *The Silent House*, Selahettin, the enlightenment era throw back encyclopaedist, both eventually fall into despair and choose to lead reclusive lives. In *The White Castle*, the reclusive pseudo-scientist Hoja goes through an identity transformation, completely sheds his eastern identity, and eventually flees to Venice claiming to be one of them. (11)

The murderer, who turns out to be Olive at the end of the novel, is ready to commit a crime again to protect himself from future dangers. After murdering Enishte Effendi, he steals all the paintings and hides it in his lodge in a remote village. Those paintings had been prepared for the completion of the Sultan's book. Master Osman, being well-versed in both Eastern and Western painting styles, identifies the identity of the murderer after having a prolonged inspection of the paintings of all the master miniaturists associated with him.

The irony of the situation is that Master Osman identifies the unique individual style followed by the murderer in painting the peculiar nostrils of the horse drawn for Enishte's book, even if the murderer recurrently claims that he does not have any individual style and therefore would not leave any clue regarding his identity. Osman identifies it by connecting the genealogy of Olive, "I believe that Olive drew the horse because he's the one who's most bound to the old masters, who knows most intimately the legends and styles

of Herat and whose master-apprentice genealogy stretches back to Samarkand” (406). As per Osman’s argument, Olive preserved a memory of the style down through many generations and he followed this peculiar style by divine grace, “So then, this is the horse that dear Olive, in his childhood, learned directly from the Persian masters without ever being able to forget it. The fact that the horse suddenly appeared for the sake of Enishte’s book is a cruel trick of Allah’s” (407).

When Black and others find out his identity, Olive conveys his wishes to go to Hindustan so that he can paint according to his wishes under the patronage of the Emperor Akbar. But Black reminds him of the impossibility remaining pure there also: “Don’t nourish the illusion over much that you’ll be able to escape Frankish methods, said Black. Did you know that Akbar Khan encourages all his artists to sign their work? The Jesuit priests of Portugal long ago introduced European painting and methods there. They are everywhere now” (489).

Thus, the novel ends with an open-ended discussion regarding the relative merits of the Eastern and Western art forms. It also shows the deep-seated anxiety prevalent among the Ottoman miniature artists who are caught between the Eastern and Western cultures. Pamuk also seems to promote the distinctive characteristics of his tradition and culture through the novel. It provides a broad view of the aesthetics of the eastern tradition of miniature

painting. In an interview given to A.A. Knopf in 2003, Pamuk defines the unique features of the tradition:

To be influenced by the Western ways of portraiture is a dilemma for the traditional Islamic painter who is devoted to repetition and purification of traditional forms. Beyond this lie two different ways of seeing, painting and even representing the world. One is that of seeing the world through the eyes of any individual person- looking at things from our humble point of view. The other is seeing the world through God's eyes, from high above as the Islamic painters did, and perceiving the totality of, say, a battle from above. The latter is more like seeing with the mind's eye, rather than the eye itself.

The novel also offers a comprehensive view of the gradual cultural changes that were creeping into the Ottoman society due to Western influence. This is evident in the description of architecture. Right from the time he returns from Persia after twelve years of exile, Black observes the changes that have taken place all across Istanbul, and is left stupefied:

Some of the neighbourhoods and streets I'd frequented in my youth had disappeared in ashes and smoke, replaced by burnt ruins where stray dogs congregated and where mad transients frightened the local children. In other areas razed by fire, large

affluent houses had been built, and I was astonished by their extravagance, by windows of the most expensive Venetian stained glass, and by lavish two-storey residences with bay windows suspended above high walls. (9)

The description clearly indicates the prevalence of a Westernised cosmopolitan culture. The buildings are large and affluent, and they have replaced the traditional Ottoman architectural style. The change also reminds readers about the large scale structural alterations of buildings in Turkey after it had been transformed into a democratic Republic in the twentieth century. Another important instance of cosmopolitanism is the popularity of Venetian gold coins which were widely circulated in Istanbul at that time. It indicates the existence of a cordial trade relationship between Venice and the Ottomans at that time. Moreover, the novel also has many references about the presence of counterfeit Venetian coins that were prevalent in open markets. Black feels that these counterfeit coins are almost like many foreigners in Ottoman society who would recurrently cause moral deprivations:

The pickle seller who passionately informed me about the cleric from Erzurum said that the counterfeit coins- the new ducats, the fake florins stamped with lions and the Ottoman coins with their ever-decreasing silver content- that flooded the markets and bazaars, just like the Circassians, Abkhazians, Mingarians,

Bosnians, Georgians and Armenians who filled the streets, were dragging us toward an absolute degradation from which it would be difficult to escape. (10)

The excess of fake Venetian coins further indicates the decline of the Ottoman economy, which would apparently cause economic and social unrest.

Moreover, Black's concern at the collapse of moral values in society also suggests the negative impacts of the European model of modernity on Ottoman culture.

Between East and West: Issues of Identity in *Snow*

Pamuk has successfully underscored the ambivalent nature of the Ottoman society regarding the question of Western influence in *My Name is Red*. This cultural conflict inherent in the Turkish tradition is emphasised in other novels as well. One of the controversial novels, *Snow*, realistically portrays these deeply embedded cross-cultural issues in the Turkish society. It can also be considered as a realistic depiction of political anarchy in the contemporary world; an attempt to analyse the elements of “modernist anti-modernism” (Berman 113). Through the novel, Pamuk provides an eye view of the prevalence of extreme violence and terror in Kars, a provincial border town in Turkey. Like in many other novels, Pamuk creates a protagonist who is alienated and estranged in his own homeland. The protagonist can be considered as a prototype of Pamuk himself, a solitary poet who is trapped

between love and pain. The ever present melancholy within him is manifested throughout the novel. He has been living in Germany and pays a visit to Kars assuming the role of a journalist. This cultural “otherness” further reinforces his social alienation.

The novel presents a turbulent border city in Turkey with many political and cultural struggles. The story takes place in a politically sensitive city where numerous radical upheavals have taken place in the post-republican period. The protagonist Ka visits the city to investigate the reasons behind the “suicide epidemic” among the young girls in Kars. This is a recent phenomenon in Kars, where the educated girls have committed suicide as a protest against the state for not allowing the wearing of headscarves. Ka finds himself as a stranger among the people, for he had been living in Germany the last fifteen years. Even if he has adopted and accepted Western culture, and enjoyed the privilege of being a reputed poet in German society, his mental discourse in the novel shows his mixed and problematic identity. He admires the sophisticated Western lifestyle, and its secular and democratic credentials. At the same time, he is unable to cast off the roots deeply installed in his psyche. Even if he is sceptical of Turkish tradition and belief system at several points, he cannot altogether refuse to be a part of it. The novel explores this identity crisis and presents a bleak world which is completely covered by snow.

Pamuk has highlighted the pluralistic nature of Kars, where several ethnic groups reside. The city was captured by several foreign forces in the beginning of twentieth century:

After endless wars, rebellions, massacres, and atrocities, the city was occupied alternately by Armenian and Russian armies; and even, briefly, by the British. For a short time, when the Russian and Ottoman forces had left the city following the First World War, Kars was an independent state; then in October 1920, the Turkish army entered under the command of Kazim Karabekir, the general whose statue now stood in Station Square. (20)

The present situation in Kars is also highly problematic. There are Kurdish separatists who resort to armed rebellion against the government. The Kurdish separatist outfit PKK had formed an alliance with the Communists and the city witnessed several armed rebellions in the 1960s and 1970s. There are also several extremists groups in the city who attempt to consolidate their power-base in order to resist the “extreme form of secularism” imposed and popularised by the government. After the Ataturk regime transformed Turkey into a secular democratic republic, people were forced to abide by the stringent rules and regulations imposed by the authorities. The story takes place in this background, and Ka feels this sensitive political situation right when he sets his foot in the city. He is taken to the headquarters of the city

police chief. Since he is there feigning to be a journalist from Germany, the city administration is wary of his visit. When the police chief Kasim Bey asks Ka if he needs protection, Ka is surprised and his immediate response is, “If Kars is a peaceful place, then I don’t need protection” (11). He is startled when the police chief fails to give him any assurance regarding his security. Ka had been accustomed to the Westernised life in Istanbul in his childhood and now he is “worried over the changing scenario in Turkey, especially in Kars” (27).

Despite being terrified by the events happening in Kars, Ka resolves to continue his life there. It is also because of his love for Ipek. He witnesses several incidents that hint at the anxieties commonly shared by people. When he meets Muhtar, Ipek’s estranged husband, he informs Ka about the dreams he had cherished. He had wanted to be a “westernised, modern and self-possessed individual” (55). But the present situation has distanced him from becoming what he wanted to be. Muhtar exemplifies the typical aspirations of all the educated people in Kars. Even if he had wanted to follow a sophisticated Western life-style, several factors have prevented him from it. He used to be a leftist-atheist in his youthful days. But now all his perspectives of life have undergone radical transformations. It was mainly because of his association with Sheikh Saadettin Effendi, the holy man who drew numerous people towards faith and God. His association with Blue, a radical extremist, has also resulted in this change of attitude.

Blue is presented as a complex character in the novel with numerous temperamental contradictions. Moreover, “The conflict between Ka and Blue is one of the book’s driving forces” (Berman 113). The character of Blue undermines the stereotypical image of an Islamic terrorist with long beard and deadly weapons which is, in fact, constructed out of a western point of view. Despite being a follower of religious dogmas and an alluring charismatic figure for young Islamists, he actively associates himself with several women in the novel, and is portrayed as a nihilist who is sceptical of all who are around him. When Ka pays a visit to Blue for the first time, he is warmly welcomed to the abode by Blue and his associates. The mysterious air in the apartment so puzzles Ka that he becomes afraid and confused at the same time. Ka remembers some of the news reports about Blue’s infamous activities. Blue seems to be sceptical of Ka’s visit to Kars, and after a brief interrogation in this regard, Blue opens up the discussion on the suicide of young girls. When Ka announces his intention to report the suicide issue to the Western media, Blue opposes him and criticises the general attitude of Turkish media and he blurts it out: “The Turkish press is interested in this country’s troubles if the Western press takes an interest first, said Blue. Otherwise it is offensive to discuss poverty and suicide. They talk about these things as if they happen in a land beyond the civilized world” (77).

He further asks Ka about what he had witnessed on the day when the young man had attempted to murder the director of an educational institution.

He defends the attempt by claiming that what happened was an instance of spontaneous ire from the part of believers who were deprived of their basic religious rights. The charismatic leader also urges Ka to be wary of the people around him by saying that since Ka is leading a sophisticated and westernized life, he is unable to understand the religious sentiments of the Turkish people.

Blue is quite cynical about the motives of Ka, for, in his view, Ka is a westernised Turk who cannot accept and accommodate religious faith as a normal human affair. Blue harshly criticises the Western perspective of the Turkish society and its collective tendency to look down upon the Oriental culture in general. He had been to several European countries and was witness to many incidents which showed the prejudiced mind-set of the Europeans. He openly reprimands Ka for severing his actual roots, and his false pretension of being a Westerner. When Ka meets Sheikh Saadettin, their conversation also turns out to be a prolonged discussion on the difference between the Eastern and Western perception of God. Ka points out the burning headscarf issue in Kars and the insistence of religious personalities to force women to wear headscarves. He reminds him that a Westerner can never accept such a thing.

Snow projects Kars as a highly polarised city with its cultural pluralism and heterogeneity. People in the city share common apprehensions towards Western culture and art. People develop disbelief in the Western project of

Enlightenment as well. This is evident when Ka meets a few boys who study at a religious school. Since Ka is coming from Germany, they are inquisitive to know the European notion of faith and God. When Necip asks Ka if he believes in God, he answers in the affirmative. But Necip is doubtful of Ka and he cannot believe Ka's words because he is westernised, "People in high society never believe in God. They believe in what Europeans do, so they think they're better than ordinary people" (105). This is the notion they nurture towards the West right from the beginning of their lives. This apprehension is visible not only among the Islamists in the novel, but also among Westernised characters like Ka who share this problematic Turkish psyche.

Ka wants to escape from the eerie and intimidating atmosphere in Kars, and the only motive that drives Ka forward is Ipek. He dreams of attaining a secure life in Germany with Ipek who also finds it to be a safe place where she can retrieve her hopes for happiness. Pamuk offers, in her aspirations, a stark contrast between the turbulence in Turkey and the comfortable living atmosphere in Germany. Both Ka and Ipek see Germany as a source of light "against the background of their shared darkness" (Berman 115). But their hopes are shattered because of the undesirable incidents that occur in their lives.

The novel also presents a few characters who fight against religious fanaticism. Sunay Zaim, a military officer-turned-theatre activist, claims to be the true follower of the reforms of Ataturk. The staging of his play on the burning headscarf issue is another focal point of the novel. He harshly criticises the growing intolerance in Turkey, and is an embodiment of the cultural reforms initiated by Ataturk at the beginning of the Republic. “His job in Kars is to be a kind of public relations man for modernity, for the enlightenment, for secular humanism. Sunay overflows with cliché versions of ideas that most readers of *Dissent* believe in, and that some of us would die for” (Berman 2). Sunay makes use of the power of art, with the active involvement of his wife, in order to bring about changes in the Turkish society. When a military coup is conducted in Kars under his control, he justifies the act by saying that it is all for the protection of the people, “No one who’s even slightly westernised can breathe freely in this country unless they have secular army protecting them...” (207).

Sunay questions Ka for being sentimental towards the Islamists and he also brands him too weak to accept his own Western model of secularism. To the question as to why he had kissed the Sheikh’s hand with piety, Ka has no answer and remains dumbfounded. Unlike Ka, Sunay seems to be more resolute regarding the configuration and implementation of his ideas. However, even if he admires European models of progress, he disapproves of the cultural superiority of the West. Even if Sunay is a follower of the

secularist democracy, he is not ready to accept the Western mode of functioning uncritically, and he asks, “Are you afraid of the shame you’ll feel when the Europeans see what we’ve done here? Do you know how many men they hanged to establish that modern world you admire so much?” (207). Ka seems to blush in front of him, and openly admits that he started believing in God right after his arrival in Kars. Sunay becomes a symbol of modernity in the novel because of his attempts to rationalise people through his histrionic talents.

Ka’s second meeting with Blue also turns out to be a long discussion on the relative merits of Western culture and also a critique on the Western socio-cultural paradigms. Blue wants Ka to stop reporting about the suicide issue, and further he urges him to report the coup that has just taken place in Kars to a German daily with which Ka has some connections. In his view, the developments after the sudden revolution and subsequent death toll, which is more than eighty so far, must be exposed before the Western press so that the atrocities in the name of a coup might be made public. But in Ka’s assessment, it would be impossible to get anything published in the Western press unless it was a joint statement signed by all the stakeholders including the Kurds and the liberal democrats. Further, he suggests that if they can hold a meeting with the participation of a Communist-turned new Democrat like Turgut Bey, it will be taken more seriously by the Western media. When Turgut Bey’s younger daughter, Kadife, reminds them that her father never

leaves their hotel, Ka intervenes and reminds her that it will be better for their plans and therefore, it is their duty to convince him to take part in the proposed meeting.

While explaining the details regarding the joint statement with which the Western media can be informed of what is happening in Kars, Ka also suggests that the meeting can be arranged at the Hotel Asia which would be, in his view, a convenient place for others to participate. On his part, Turgut Bey seems to be confused about the proposed meeting. The secular nationalist within him prefers to keep solidarity with the coup, while the inner unadulterated democrat urges him to go to the meeting and put his signature in the joint statement. When Kadife learns (or pretends to be learning) about the meeting, she proposes that she can also accompany Turgut Bey to the Hotel Asia.

A crucial discussion on the East-West conflict takes place in the meeting convened by Blue at the Hotel Asia. The main objective of the meeting is to sign the joint statement for the Western media to expose the atrocities in Kars as part of the military coup. By the time Turgut Bey and Kadife reach the Hotel Asia to attend the secret meeting, the venue is already crowded. Among them Kadife could spot Blue sitting with a few militants and some Kurdish nationalists. Blue has decided to go along with the document which will duly be signed by all the stakeholders. But he adamantly opposes the proposed title, “An Announcement to the People of Europe about the

Events in Kars”. In his view, “The people of Europe are not our friends but our enemies. And it’s not because we are their enemies- it’s because they instinctively despise us” (277). Instead, he proposes that it must be a statement appealing to the entire humanity. Further, he adds that Europe should not be imitated as a model. He does not want to beg the help of the European media to assist Turkey to overcome obstacles, for the Europeans can never accept them as normal people. So the statement should be addressed to all of humanity instead of Europe. But Turgut Bey makes some reservations regarding Blue’s statement by saying that they must look towards Europe in order to attain a brighter future. Blue disapproves of this statement as well, and in his view, there cannot be any natural synthesis between these two cultures. The episode evidently conveys the incredulity shown by most of the Turkish citizens towards the adoption and acceptance of European culture.

When everybody agrees upon the title “An Announcement” for the proposed statement, it follows several heated debates and arguments in favour of and against the Western press, and Turgut Bey, getting exhausted after the prolonged discussion, signs the statement and makes his way out. Kadife declares that she is even ready to bare her head in order to get global media attention on Kars issue. On hearing this, Fazil jumps on his feet and proclaims that “he would commit suicide, if Kadife removed her head-scarves” (289). Agitated by the discussion Blue storms out of the room saying, “No one in this city is allowed to talk about suicide” (289).

Ka invariably remains a tormented human being who is caught between two polarised cultures. His mental agony becomes apparent whenever he communicates the matter regarding the adoption of Western culture and the Western model of secularism. He hails from a comfortable middle class family from Istanbul. He is also accustomed to the fashionable life of an educated and westernised Turk. After spending more than fifteen years in Germany, he had believed himself to be an atheist. But soon after his arrival in Kars, he discerns his own wavering mind. He gradually identifies the notion of God within him. His mental agony shows this traumatic disposition. His mind oscillates between the inherited value system and the imbibed ideology. He was unable to write poems for four years before coming to Kars. But soon after his arrival in the snow clad city, several poems flow to his mind. He considers this energy to be the power of God. When he informs this intuition to Blue, he mocks Ka for romanticising the existence of God:

I don't want to destroy your illusions, but your love for God comes out of Western romantic novels, said Blue. In a place like this, if you worship God as a European, you're bound to be a laughing stock. Then you cannot even believe you believe. You don't belong to this country; you are not even a Turk any more. First try to be like everyone else, then try to believe in God.

(334)

Ka remains bewildered by these words, for he understands his own temperamental complexities. He could not even distinguish illusion from reality. Blue later on provides further clarifications regarding this. A westernised Turk can never escape from the Western perspective of life, even if he lives in Turkey or anywhere in the world. Ka can be seen as a prototype of all educated and westernised Turkish individuals who knowingly or unknowingly attempt to cast off their own imbibed value system.

The novel obviously offers an alternative for the Western model of modernity. The secular intelligentsia could not offer a convincing solution for the cultural conflicts inherent in Turkish society. The pessimistic ending of the novel suggests that the extremist Western model of secularisation is no longer a tenable way to bring about a positive change in society. Almost all the Westernised secularists are doomed to end their life tragically. The secular republican Sunay Zaim resorts to committing suicide on the stage. The liberal democrat Ka is killed by the supporters of the radical Islamist, Blue.

However, Pamuk seems to suggest that the emergence of Islamic identity politics in Turkey had some positive values. With their uncompromising attitude, the Islamists are largely individuated in the novel. As Uner Daglier points out, “they are presented as the potential engines of a progressive Turkish modernity” (148). He further buttresses this argument by equating the emergence of Islamism with the prospect of Turkish modernity:

There is no doubt that a possible modernisation process to be led by the Islamists would be quite different from what the westernised or secular Turkish modernists had envisaged, but from an orientalist perspective, they have genuine ties to their society and, therefore, Islamic modernity offers a more tenable alternative for Turkey than westernisation. (148)

Thus, it can be argued that Pamuk also offers a new dimension for the emergence of Islamist forces in Turkey in the novel. By doing so, unlike the accepted western model of progress, he also proposes a new model of modernity based on the individuated Islamic principles.

Self and the Other: The East-West Identity Shift in *The White Castle*

The White Castle provides a panorama of the socio-cultural and political life in seventeenth century Ottoman Empire. By narrating the complex relationship between a Turkish scholar and a Venetian slave, Pamuk visualises the perennial dilemma of the Turkish psyche in terms of its search for identity and the influence of Western cultural values. It also encapsulates the innate desire of Turkey to be westernised and its longing to attain the scientific and technological advancement attained by western societies in the early modern period. The work also complicates the binary opposition of the self and the other, by projecting the Venetian slave as a potential source of Western knowledge, with the capacity to educate his master Hoja who always

dreams to learn Western science. Moreover, Hoja secretly despises the activities of the Sultan and the Pasha, for their idea of knowledge is solely based on some illogical interpretations of dreams and omens. That is why he wants his slave to teach him “whatever he had learnt in his country” (32).

The adoption of European technology and science existed in the Ottoman Empire right from the reign of Sultan Mehmet II. The previous chapter discussed and highlighted his interest in the sophisticated western war equipment and technology. He also invited many European scientists, technicians and scholars to get the latest updates in those fields. He “employed many German metal smiths to produce cannons and other deadly weapons” (Stierlin 100). Pamuk has brilliantly outlined this aspect in his maiden Ottoman novel *The White Castle*, which underlines Turkey’s interest in Western science and technology. He presents the complex relationship between an Italian slave and a Turkish scholar, and also features the young Sultan Ahmed I, the reigning monarch at that time, as an ardent enthusiast of Western knowledge. His interest in the European science grows ever since Hoja is appointed as the Head Imperial astrologer, and wants him to interpret all his dreams. He also entrusts Hoja to prepare a war machine in order to defeat the enemies of the Empire.

The novel portrays Hoja as an ardent scholar who desperately attempts to attain objective knowledge throughout his life. He is fed up with the

traditional ways of Ottoman knowledge-production based on outmoded irrational sign systems and is forced to embrace the identity of the Venetian slave in order to ward off his own scientific backwardness. The Venetian slave positions himself as an alter-ego for Hoja, and by the end of the novel, after the failure of manufacturing a potential war-machine, readers witness a complicated shifting of identity between the two.

Pamuk has skilfully presented the complex tendency prevalent in the Ottoman Empire to mimic Western models and its oscillation between the West and the East. The novelist seems to convey the idea that Western science and technology are more prominent in the eye of the central character Hoja, who adores the West and secretly cherishes the desire to live in Europe. It also mirrors the present situation in Turkey, which is characterised by the desire to be a part of the European Union. The novel also posits the internal struggle in Turkish society and a complex search for identity, which puts Turkey in a self-inflicted ordeal, for they attempt to wipe out the cultural legacy of the grand Ottoman Empire. As Pamuk says in *Other Colours*, this self-imposed westernisation brings isolation also, “the Turkish citizens are alienated from the western world they try to emulate” (370). In this way, Pamuk makes the binary opposition between the West and the East complicated. By presenting the two central characters, one belonging to the East and the other one to the West, the author tries to problematize the

intricate connection between the two cultures. Ulker Gokberk offers his observation in this regard:

Pamuk's oeuvre is dedicated to themes such as Turkey's stance between East and West, its Ottoman past and western-oriented present; conflicts arising from old and new definitions of the artist, of faith and non-religious life-style. Even though these themes seem to imply binary oppositions, Pamuk complicates dualities through various strategies, most notably the doubling of his fictional characters and their switching of identities.

Thus, it's a conscious endeavour on the part of the author to complicate the "self-other" binary opposition. He also puts the "other" as both a seduction and a threat. The novel projects the dual characters, the Venetian slave and Hoja resembling each other, and the slave even goes to the extent of saying that "both of them are one person" (82).

However, even though the Italian scholar is a slave, he nurtures the idea that he is superior to Hoja and he secretly treats Hoja in this manner. This is evident in his monologues: "Since I was accustomed to treating him as an inferior, even if only in secret, I thought they would consist of a few petty, insignificant sins... after Hoja had thoroughly humiliated himself I would make him accept my superiority, or at least my independence, and then derisively demand my freedom" (70).

Here the West is represented by the Italian slave who feels that it is his responsibility to teach Hoja the master, a representation of the East, the latest scientific technologies and scientific innovations. The East is associated with many negative stereotypes here, by being branded as ignorant, weak and unstable. Being modern is always associated with the notion of accepting Western science and technology. This wholehearted acceptance of the Western model of modernity is visible in the character of Hoja, who is obsessed with the idea of westernising the Ottoman society by implementing all the methods invented by the Europeans. In addition to that, his mind oscillates between the East and the West, and gives priority to the West, especially Italy, as a better place to dwell. He recurrently expresses this ever-present desire within him:

I sensed he wanted this post for himself, wanted to escape from the idiots here and live among them... He let slip only once or twice that he wanted to establish relations with 'their' men of science;... he wanted to correspond with men of science in Venice, Flanders, whatever far away land occurred to him at the moment. Who were the very best among them, where did they live, how could one correspond with them, could I learn these things from the ambassadors? (121)

Pamuk obviously seems to suggest, by presenting a character like Hoja, the conflicting nature of Turkish psyche, which is caught between the two cultural patterns. Moreover, the resemblance between Hoja and the Italian slave is quite compelling, and Pamuk also explains in *Other Colours* that he modelled the relationship between them after his own relationship with his brother Sevket Pamuk:

After writing *The White Castle*, I realised that this jealousy- the anxiety about being influenced by someone else- resembles Turkey's position when it looks west. You know, aspiring to become Westernised and then being accused of not being authentic enough. Trying to grab the spirit of Europe and then feeling guilty about the imitative drive. The ups and downs of this mood are reminiscent of the relationship between competitive brothers. (368)

Even if the powerful Ottoman Empire had created many dramatic events in modern history such as the takeover of Constantinople in 1453, the siege of Vienna in 1529, and made its presence felt across the Mediterranean, and extended its domination over a large part of South-Eastern Europe, Turkey still remains inferior to the West and requires to be guided by the Western idea of modernity. The work problematizes this cultural domination and hegemony of the West in Turkey even in the modern era. This tendency is

encapsulated in Hoja's allegiance to his slave, his consistent demand to the look-alike to teach him everything, for he considers the slave to be the source of all knowledge and the apt model of modernity. Hoja's demand puts the slave in a privileged position and he considers this to be the recognition of the superiority of his country and its socio-cultural progress: "Later he said I would teach him everything; that's why he'd asked the pasha to give me to him, and only after I had done this would he make me a freedman... Everything meant all that I'd learned in primary and secondary school;... everything that was taught in my country" (32).

Despite the fact that Hoja is a noted scholar in his country, especially as one who had specialised in science and astronomy, he still needs the Venetian slave to teach him all that the slave had learned including medicine, astronomy, engineering and other subjects. At the same time, the slave also thinks that it is his duty to teach and guide Hoja. He further considers Hoja's previous knowledge of medicine and astronomy to be less useful than his own advanced learning in the same disciplines. While teaching Hoja, the slave feels like a solicitous elder who has promised to review his former lessons so that his sluggish little brother can catch up things. The popular notion that the Orient is far away from the progressive position of European science and technology is embedded in this attitude.

It can be rightly argued that Hoja's adoption of European science and technology is the direct result of not only his obsession for the same, but also the outcome of his frustration with the system around him. His acceptance of the sophisticated machinery is the direct result of his blind admiration of Western technology and, in this way, his "grand plan" is directly influenced by the European model of development. However, the young Venetian slave also, much like his master, shows many signs of imitating his master, and tries to learn his master's language, traits and mind. The genuine interest shown by Hoja in Western science yields positive results when he implements many innovative steps when Istanbul is affected by a deadly plague. He makes use of the knowledge known from "the scenes in Hippocrates, Thucydides, and Boccaccio, to decrease the spread of the disease that is contagious" (72).

The success of Hoja in reducing the threat of the plague elevates him to great esteem in the royal court, and he is subsequently appointed as the Imperial astrologer, replacing the incumbent Imperial Astrologer Sitki Efendi. After taking crucial control over the government, he prompts the young Sultan to adopt Western science. He presents a book to the Sultan written by the Venetian slave and convinces him of the necessity of making the war machine for the welfare of the Ottoman Empire:

We wanted our sultan to be interested in our science...and ...
we even exploited his nightmares towards this end... Hoja

would explain that on the throne he would remain forever young, but only making weapons superior to those of our ever-vigilant enemies could be safe from their treachery. (104)

Hoja's interpretation of the Sultan's dreams ultimately resulted in the grant of the approval of "the grand plan". After a month of deliberations and calculations, the Sultan gave the order to "start work on the incredible weapon... that will ruin our enemies" (110). The war-machine would destroy, as per the Sultan's calculations, the potential enemies of the empire i.e. the Western powers. His intention is to use the same technology designed and used by Western powers against them, so that he would be able to cope with many issues related to the Ottoman army. The situation is ironic, for the Sultan attempts to conquer the West by emulating the same technology designed by them, and which is brought and manufactured by the Venetian slave.

The novel also attempts to analyse the ways in which Western culture and social practices are appropriated by the Ottoman society. Apart from the adoption of sophisticated artillery technology, Hoja also embraces Western tradition and culture. He strains to follow the West by asking the slave to sit opposite him and record their story. He attempts to explore his true identity by asking the slave some questions such as "Why am I what I am?" (58). Further, he learns the tradition and culture of the West by taking his food at a table

much like an infidel, which is against his own “traditional way of sitting cross-legged” (77). At the same time, the Italian slave also tries to imbibe the customs and practices of Turkish society by imitating the life-style of Hoja. This is the crucial point at which the cultural exchange takes place between the two. Moreover, this is also the point in which they shift their identity. Thus, Hoja feels that he is actually the Italian slave, and the slave is in fact Hoja himself. Hoja is jealous of his Western counterpart, much like his own country which is jealous of Europe. Both Hoja and the slave compete with each other consistently, and both are worried about the strength and success of the other. Pamuk seems to point out that this jealousy, the perennial anxiety of the possibility of being influenced by the other, reflects the position of Turkey when it faces the West. Similarly, the failure of the powerful weapon also hints at the fall of the empire in its constant competition with the West for the accumulation of scientific and technological knowledge. The exchange of identity between the Italian slave and Hoja in *The White Castle* further corroborates Pamuk’s critical stance on the westernisation project implemented by Ataturk in the post-imperial era. The project undermined the rich cultural legacy of the Ottoman Empire and erased its cosmopolitan tradition rooted in Islam.

Both the Italian slave and Hoja in *The White Castle* find themselves in distress owing to the failure of their scientific experiment of launching the powerful artillery weapon. When the war-machine fails to break the Pole’s

Doppio Castle, Hoja feels disappointed and, along with it, all the expectations of the empire also come to a halt. In addition to that, many other countries also join against the Ottoman Empire to help the Poles at this critical situation:

After the sun had set and we learned not only that Huseyn pasha the Blond had failed, but that Austrians, Hungarians, and Kazaks had joined the Poles at the siege of Doppio, we finally saw the castle itself... I knew now that our soldiers would never be able to reach the white towers of the castle. I knew only too well that when we joined the siege in the morning our weapon would founder in the swamp leaving the men inside and around to die. (143)

The failure of the weapon forces Hoja to flee his country and, assuming the identity of the Italian slave, he flees to Venice, where he can have a better exposure to advanced science and technology. It can also be considered as the materialisation of his unconscious dreams, which must have been within him right from the beginning of his life. At the same time, however, the Venetian slave is also compelled to stay in Istanbul replacing the position of Hoja. They exchange their identity with only a simple swapping of their clothes: “We exchange clothes without haste and without speaking... then he left the tent

and was gone. I watched him slowly disappear in the silent fog. It was getting light” (145).

The Italian slave in the novel is an embodiment of the eternal search for knowledge and power. He used even the failure of the grand weapon as a lesson to be self-learned. He wholeheartedly embraces his master’s identity in order to have a better understanding of the situation. That is why he is ready to make a better assessment of the loss faced by the empire, after the failure of the weapon designed by them:

Did we understand ‘defeat’ to mean that the empire would lose all of its territories one by one? We’d lay out our maps on the table and mournfully determine first which territories, then which mountains or rivers would be lost. Or did defeat mean that people would change and alter their beliefs without noticing it? We imagined how everyone in Istanbul might rise from their warm beds one morning as changed people; they wouldn’t know how to wear their clothes, wouldn’t be able to remember what minarets were for. Or perhaps defeat meant to accept the superiority of others and try to emulate them. (109)

The slave does not seem to rejoice over the victory of the West. Instead, he objectively analyses the situation and provides emotional comfort for his master. He even goes to the extent of criticising the “pretentious aspects of

western culture” after listening to the orchestra brought by the ambassador from Venice (261).

Changing Cultural Paradigms: East-West Conflicts in *The Museum of Innocence*

The conflicts in the Turkish socio-cultural sphere recurrently appear in Pamuk’s novels. If *Snow* and *The White Castle* depict a turbulent social atmosphere where several polarised forces are at work and the loss of individual identity in the conflicting East-West discourse respectively, *The Museum of Innocence* mildly exhibits this cultural plurality and dichotomy acutely embedded in the Turkish sensibility. A romantic tale of a westernised, young, middle class man, *The Museum of Innocence* explores the urban life style and cultural practices of the middle class in Istanbul. Even if the novel narrates the story of the love affair between Kemal and Fuzun, on a wider and larger scale, it offers a realistic critique on the westernised and modernised life-style of the Turkish society. Pamuk records the subtle socio-cultural changes that happened in Turkey in the second half of the twentieth century through the novel. It also exhibits the ambiguous nature of oriental culture and the traumatic aspects of westernised Turkish identity, thereby providing a large narrative of the Eastern eye-view of the West.

As the title indicates, the novel is indeed a museum filled with several objects and artefacts. The objects displayed in the museum indicate its

background, and a scrutiny of those objects would reveal the cultural aspects of the background. The novel is set in Istanbul and the story takes place amidst the elite bourgeois life in Istanbul. The protagonist Kemal Basmati is a western-educated businessman who follows, as per his claims, a sophisticated western life-style. Even if he is betrothed to Sibel, another westernised middle class person, and shares his bed with her even before marriage, he develops a fascination towards Fuzun, one of his distant cousins who hails from a poor family. The western-educated man within Kemal does not find any problem in having a relationship, including physical intimacy, with Fuzun. But the events that follow undermine all his westernised notions of relationships and social existence.

Fuzun is working as a shop-girl when Kemal spots her for the first time. A stigma, in the view point of Kemal's mother and some of the elite groups, associated with Fuzun is that she had participated in a beauty contest, a fashion shaped by Europeans and exported to Eastern countries. In fact, Fuzun's mother Aunt Nesibe had prompted her to participate in the event, and she had thought that it would be better for the career of her daughter. Apparently Aunt Nesibe belongs to a lower middle class family, which again carries the assumption that she is not educated or westernised. She is proud of having her daughter in a fashionable contest and rejoices at her act. On the other hand, the reaction from Kemal's mother, who belongs to a wealthy, educated and westernised family, is quite contrary to her class and position.

She ridicules Nesibe's degradation, and blurts it out openly, "she just lied about her daughter's age and entered her in that beauty contest" (9). It becomes disgraceful for her because it is ostensibly an "uncultured" activity. It shows the duality of the Turkish middle class subjectivity. Even if they have imbibed Western culture, and to a great extent practice it in their everyday life, they cannot refrain from the traditional mode of thought. Kemal's parents and relatives actively take part in Western social and cultural activities prevalent among the Istanbul elite class families, such as dance parties and club life. At the same time, they keep many traditionally inherited values and principles intact. Pamuk has meticulously displayed this middle class tendency and the confrontation between two cultural standards, in the novel.

The protagonist Kemal has had his education from America, an exposure which modified many of his notions and sensibilities. His life in Western society gave him ample space to accommodate many of the deviant thoughts and taboos hitherto prohibited in Turkey. Thus, premarital sex was considered to be a taboo in Turkish society, and Pamuk hints at the changing scenario in the later part of the twentieth century, "Little by little sophisticated girls from wealthy Westernised families who had spent time in Europe were beginning to break this taboo and sleep with their boyfriends before marriage" (12). Kemal's premarital physical relationship with Sibel shows his uncritical acceptance of the Western value system. But he also hints a truth that "this

can only be an illusion” (12). He openly admits that their mutual bond is strengthened owing to the fact that she submitted her virginity to him. Moreover, he is far away from the Western notion of free sex and cohabitation. It is the sole reason for making his relationship with Fuzun complicated. He is surprised by the way in which Fuzun has given him her virginity. She showed no “coyness or indecision” (44). Later incidents in his life show that he is perturbed by a prick of the conscience for ruining her virtue, and leading her to go against her own moral values. It shows that even if the process of Westernisation and urbanization had taken place in Turkey, people could not discard their inherited value system, and Pamuk points it out in the novel:

Following the drive to Westernise and modernise, and (even more significantly) the haste to urbanise, it became common practice for girls to defer marriage until they were older, and the practical value of this treasure began to decline in certain parts of Istanbul. Those in favour of Westernisation hoped that as Turkey modernized (and in their view, became more civilized) the moral code attending virginity would be forgotten, along with the concept itself. But in those days, even in Istanbul’s most affluent Western circles, a young girl who surrendered her chastity before marriage could still expect to be judged in certain ways... (83)

It clearly hints at the ambiguous Turkish middle class proclivity. On the one hand, they are fascinated by the prospects of following a Western life-style and the tag of “cultured behaviour” it subsequently offers; and on the other hand, they are unable to fervently embrace all Western notions because of an indefinable fear of being morally degraded. Pamuk has vividly portrayed this Turkish trauma in *The Museum of Innocence*.

Kemal’s rendezvous with Fuzun in the Merhamet apartment further corroborates his deep sense of guilt in engaging in a physical relationship outside marriage. He is wary of the social stigma it is likely to create, and warns her not to reveal their secret meeting to anybody. Fuzun is more advanced in her assessment of the situation, despite the fact that she does not belong to an affluent and westernised middle class family. She mocks his fear on several occasions by asking questions like “are you saying that this isn’t Europe...” (117). The novelist hints at her lack of religious education on several occasions. She seems resolved to undermine many of the pseudo-moral codes prevalent in Turkish society. As Kemal admits to Sibel, “Turkey, too, would probably be modern like Europe in a hundred years’ time” (164). However, no one can emulate the Western perspective of relationship in the society even while they boast of being modern. Sibel harshly criticises Kemal for his apparently false notion of morality, for she reminds him of her own chastity being at stake: “If we’re really meant to be modern in our outlook, if we’re really European, as I said, it has no

importance. If, on the other hand, we're still tied to tradition, and virginity matters to you, as something you want everyone to respect, then everyone's should be considered in the same way!" (306).

Even after disclosing all about his affairs with Fuzun, Kemal lives with Sibel in a *yali* by the Bosphorous River and everybody around them knows about it. Now Kemal refrains from moving ahead with Sibel into a married life. Moreover, Sibel is also worried over the possible disgrace to which she will be subjected in future.

The narrator presents Kemal to be a complex character who fails to understand the essence of his cultural background. He claims to be modern and attempts to emulate Western life-style on many occasions. When his friend Zaim accuses him of spoiling Sibel's chastity, Kemal blurts out, "If we insist virginity is still so important how can we pretend we're modern and European? Let's be honest with ourselves, at least" (572). At this point, Zaim harshly criticises Kemal's failure to understand the socio-cultural difference and the imposition of his own Western perspectives upon others. In Zaim's view, even if Sibel, with her French education and subsequent European exposure, does not care much about her virginity and chastity, the society cannot accept it unreservedly. He reminds Kemal about the fact that premarital abstinence is still an important concern in Turkish society. But Kemal's temperamental contradiction is a bit more visible when he openly

admits that he does not want Fuzun to kiss anybody, and that even the thought of it is almost unbearable for him. Fuzun seems to have understood Kemal better than anybody, for by the end of the novel, she wants him to believe that she did not have any physical intimacy with Feridun, her husband, even though they had been living under the same roof for many years.

The novel further offers an eye-view of the process of Westernisation in Turkey. The urban middle class adopted many of the Western life-styles. Thus, consumption of liquor was almost natural among the educated middle class Turks. Kemal and his friends would actively involve themselves in club life and dance parties. The Hotel Hilton is a typical symbol of Europeanization in the country, and people throng there to revel in all the luxuries it offers, “The Hilton had been, since the day it opened, one of the few civilised establishments in Turkey where a well-heeled gentleman and a courageous lady could obtain a room without being asked for a marriage certificate” (142). There are several western-made soft drinks mentioned in the novel including Pepsi and Coca-Cola that clearly articulates how indigenous drinks had been replaced by European drinks.

Likewise, the novel offers a glimpse of Westernisation in the domestic sphere as well. Changes are taking place gradually in Turkish households, where a large number of Western domestic utensils and appliances such as the tape recorder and the television can be seen. Westernised Pashas and other

wealthy people began furnishing their households with several European products like the “wall clocks” (389). The narrator informs readers that such changes had taken place in his own household as well. In the changing scenario, people also care about reputed brands available in the shops, especially the European brands which are quite expensive in the Turkish market. It is exemplified in Sibel’s fascination of the “Jenny Colon handbag” displayed in the Sanzelize Boutique where Fuzun worked as a sales girl. But she despises it soon after realising that it is only a fake Turkish imitation of the European model and Fuzun rightly points it out to Kemal at a later stage, that “people care more about brands rather than the product itself” (197).

The novel is also a discourse on the influence of Western films on the Turkish movie industry. Fuzun’s husband Feridun is an aspiring film-maker and admires the Western model of film making. He offers many comparisons and contrasts between Western and Turkish films. He criticises the deficiency of creative talent among Turkish film-makers, “The rich of our country who have been to Europe only go to Turkish films to laugh at them” (351). But things are changing in the film industry as well, and he wishes to contribute his share towards the growth of films in the country. He is also confident of making Fuzun a famous film star. Kemal helps him to establish a production company named “Lemon Films Inc”. The company produces a film *Broken Lives* featuring a leading actor Papatya for the main role and it becomes a big commercial success.

Loss of Uniqueness and the Presence of Alien Culture in *A Strangeness in My Mind*

Pamuk visualises the socio-cultural changes in Turkey in a subtle manner in his later novels such as *Snow* and *The Museum of Innocence*. In the same way, his latest novel *A Strangeness in My Mind* also explores the gradual transformation that had happened in the Turkish socio-cultural sphere during the second part of the twentieth century. Unlike *The Museum of Innocence*, this novel is set in a working class background and also highlights the difference between the rural and urban life. The story revolves around a young man from a village who is forced to live in Istanbul because of his father's occupation. It also traces the process of urbanisation in Istanbul. The story narrates the sufferings and hardships that the working class, the marginalised section of Turkey, always undergoes. It is also a critique on the process of modernisation in the post-Ataturkian Turkish society.

Mevlut Karats, the protagonist, is presented as a timid, estranged man who is far away from the highly westernised and sophisticated ways of cosmopolitan life in Istanbul. He sells *boza* not merely as a means of living, but he also believes that *boza* is part of the unavoidable Turkish tradition despite the availability of several European drinks imported from Western countries in the Istanbul market. By the time he grows up, the majority of the inhabitants of Istanbul have started avoiding their traditional drinks, and have

focused their attention on other modern soft and hot drinks, especially the imported beverages. Since Mevlut is a street vendor, he visits most of the Istanbul households regularly, and he feels the attitudinal changes that happens over the years in those households. On many occasions, people, especially the educated and westernised middle class, look down upon him with scorn. But he bears everything and goes on living with the “strangeness in his mind”. It is also the time when major changes are taking place in Turkish trade and commerce, especially because of the cross-border engagements with Western countries. Capitalism gradually creeps in and makes its presence felt in every nook and corner of Istanbul.

The novel discusses several burning issues in Turkey owing to Occidentalism and the interventions of the European model of modernity. Since the novel covers a vast period of more than fifty years, it showcases many tensions and conflicts in the Turkish society. It also marks the emergence of the micro-family system in the country. When massive migration took place from the villages to the urban localities, people adopted the urban value systems, and subsequently, family planning came into being. Moreover, the belief system also undergoes radical transformations. Ataturk’s secularist reformations resulted in the formation of new outlooks among people. For instance, Mevlut can never understand whether he is a true believer or not. He visits mosques occasionally, but cannot really understand the purpose of his visits. He does not care as much about God as many others

around him, including his wife Rayiha and kids, do. Whenever others ask him if he is a religious man, Mevlut senses an accompanying political connotation. It is because the Islamist Party had just won the municipal election. So he carefully gives them a simple answer, “I am a salesman, Mevlut replied cunningly. How could a salesman possibly be religious” (24). Nevertheless, he is charmed by the charismatic presence of the Holy Guide in the town. He seeks refuge in the words of this Holy Guide whenever he is in distress. Once, he was attacked by street dogs while he was selling *boza* at night, which is an unusual experience for him. He approaches the Guide and seeks a satisfactory explanation for his newly emerged fear of dogs. The Holy Guide asks him if he had done anything wrong to disturb other people’s lives. Then he explains it in detail:

Perhaps you have and you don’t realise it, said the Holy Guide. Dogs can sense when a person doesn’t belong among us. This is their God-given gift. That is why people who want to copy the Europeans are always afraid of dogs... With this wealth of experience in their blood, all our dogs now have a very keen sense of who is their friend and who is their foe. (458)

The Holy Guide is quite critical of the process of Westernisation in Turkey, and is also disturbed by the loss of traditional value system and faith among

people. He further opines that the dearth of spiritual conviction had resulted in anarchy and loss of purity.

The novel visibly focuses on many of the Western influences on the everyday lives of people. The emergence of Western movies is one such instance. Mevlut visits cinemas regularly in his youth. He often compares Turkish films with the Western films. Most of the films screened in Istanbul at that time were imported from Europe. He stresses upon how he was moved by watching sex scenes in those films:

Most of the films shown were imports. Mevlut didn't know like how, in Italian films, the lustful female lead, her voice dubbed into Turkish, was made to seem so absurdly naïve and foolish. In German films, it made Mevlut uncomfortable to hear the protagonists cracking jokes throughout those 'sex scenes' he'd waited for so eagerly, as if sex were something to be taken lightly. In French films, he would be amazed, if not serious to see women jumping into bed with someone with practically no excuse. (93)

Mevlut used to visit the Elyazar Cinema where people, including elderly ones and perverts, thronged together to enjoy Western films. Even when westernisation was visible in almost all areas of life, Turkey could not accept "sex" as a natural affair. Women, unlike their counterparts in the west, did not

enjoy freedom in society. At many points in the novel, Vediha emphasises this point, “Most men are stingy, especially when it comes to their wives... Most men beat their wives, too” (461). Vediha’s husband Korkut does not allow her to attend functions where alcohol is served. Moreover, Pamuk devotes a whole chapter in the novel to discuss Vediha’s depressed anxieties over the ill-treatment of others, including her husband and sons.

Towards the end of the novel, Pamuk offers an overview of the vast changes that have taken place across Istanbul in the early years of the twenty first century. Large scale infrastructural changes have taken place by this time. Old-fashioned buildings have been demolished and in their stead, new western-model skyscrapers have appeared, and along with the infrastructural changes, people have accepted the cosmopolitan culture. But Mevlut cannot not adapt himself to the new environment even if he had been living in the city for many years:

Mevlut had been in the city for forty-three years. For the first thirty-five, every year that went by seemed to strengthen his bond with the city. Lately, however, he’d begun to feel increasingly alienated from it. Was it because of that unstoppable, swelling flood, the millions of new people coming to Istanbul and bringing new houses, skyscrapers, and shopping malls with them?... Whenever he looked at these new thirty- and

– forty story towers, Mevlut felt that he had nothing to do with any of the new people who lived in them. (374)

Coupled with the eternal presence of the strangeness in his mind, this new sense of alienation distresses Mevlut. Yet, he is resolved to lead his life amidst the encroachment of all the Western elements around him. Thus the novel offers a fictionalised history of Istanbul right from the nineteen-fifties to the early part of the twenty-first century. Moreover, it records the transition of Istanbul from an old fashioned Ottoman city to an ultramodern metropolitan one. Above all, the novelist attempts to figure out the pitiable condition of working class people and their life in the novel.

A Western Eye-View of Istanbul: *Istanbul Memories and the City*

Pamuk has drawn a realistic picture of the socio-political changes that happened in Turkey over the years in his semi-autobiographical non-fiction *Istanbul: Memories and the City*. He stresses all the potential aspects of Turkey in general, and of Istanbul in particular, in the work. The work shows a deep connection between the emotional terrain of the writer and the creative space around him. He also touches upon the cultural history and tradition of the Ottoman Empire and its relationship with Western countries. Moreover, he provides a detailed analysis of how the process of Westernisation has changed Turkey, and how the Turkish people have coped with the changing scenario over the years. As he points out in several parts of the work, even

during the Ottoman era, the Sultans had been fascinated by “western comforts” (24). With the westernisation drive of Ataturk, later generations wholeheartedly embraced this proclivity. Pamuk begins the discussion from his own family. The family lived in the Pamuk apartment complex where they followed the joint-family system. Even an ordinary visitor could understand that the family was a highly westernised one, for there were displayed several objects which attested to this fact. The living room was more like a museum where several western artefacts were displayed. But Pamuk points out ironically that people could not understand what it meant to be Western:

Although everyone knew it as freedom from the laws of Islam, no one was quite sure what else Westernisation was good for. So it was not just in the affluent homes of Istanbul that you saw sitting-room museums; over the next fifty years you could find these haphazard and gloomy (but sometimes also poetic) displays of Western influence in sitting rooms all over Turkey.

(10)

So, on the one hand westernisation may be viewed as an attempt to escape from the rigid and rigorous principles of Islam, and on the other hand it is also an assertion of being modern. But, by the 1970s, the arrival of the television had superseded these household museums, and gradually the Turkish domestic life turned towards Western channels. Pamuk nostalgically recounts

the phenomenon of the “unconscious urge shown by people to erase the past” (27). At the same time, the sumptuous culture of Istanbul retained its originality even though large scale western influence was visible everywhere. Moreover, Pamuk opens a broad window in the book regarding the stance taken by many European countries towards Turkey, especially their views regarding the entry of Turkey to the European Union. As Paula Martins observes, Pamuk shares this feeling with readers in the work:

Pamuk’s *Istanbul: Memory and the City* invites readers to assess the validity of many Europeans’ opinions, according to which Turkey’s membership is a real threat to Europe’s history of liberty and democracy, despite the country’s advantageous geographical position as far as the Middle East is concerned, fact that translates an unequivocal Eurocentric position. Moreover, the book highlights the Turks’ internal division as a nation when the maintenance of a secular government (even if the leading politicians nowadays are confessed religious people) and the wish to reach economic development with the financial support given by the European Union are at stake. (174-75)

The work also gains considerable significance when the debate regarding Turkey’s admission into the European Union is increasingly becoming a hot topic for discussion in the contemporary scenario.

Pamuk also stresses the influence of Western art in Turkish society. In his observation, the past life of the country is available now mainly through the artistic perceptions of Western painters. They painted the beautiful melancholy of the city in black and white. Among many Western artists, it was the German painter Antoine Ignace Melling who had visualised the beauty of the Bosphorous realistically. Being primarily a painter, Pamuk recounts the great influence of the painter in modifying his sensibility as an artist. Moreover, European writers had also rendered their influence among Turkish writers. Western writers and travellers, in the middle part of the eighteenth century were obsessed with the existence of harems and slave markets in Istanbul, and it used to remain an exotic place for them to deal with. The curiosity shown by these writers resulted in the “dissolution of slave market” (218). Turkish writers such as Yahya Kemal, A S Hisar, Tanpinar and others held many European writers like Theophile Gautier and Andre Gide in high esteem. These writers paved the way for the creative endeavours of Turkish writers who viewed their own country through the eye of westerners. Some writers have shown an ambiguous attitude towards westernisation. For example, for the journalist Ahmet Rasim, “Westernisation was something that had created a slew of new poseurs with new affectations he was happy to ridicule” (123). Gustave Flaubert had also visited Istanbul as early as 1850 and appreciated the cultural diversity of the city. Moreover, Pamuk seems to suggest that he has acquired the better prospect of

approaching the city with a nostalgic mind of European writers, especially French writers, from whom he had gained a considerable account of the history and tradition of his city. Verena Laschinger offers her observation in this regard:

In *Istanbul: Memories and the City* Pamuk reads the history of his hometown in connection with the imprints French culture has made on Istanbul. He understands French as *pars pro toto* for the western world. And it is from these Western sources that he gets an idea of his hometown's history. By reappropriating someone else's memory as if it were his own, Pamuk and "millions of other Istanbulers" generate the "luxury of enjoying our own past as 'exotic'".

The influence of Western society and culture on Turkish society is recurrently presented in almost all the chapters of the book. The modernization of Turkey results, in his view, the westernization of Turkey. Pamuk feels himself a westerner in his maturing years, "Between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, part of me longed, like a radical westernizer, for the city to become entirely Western" (291). At the same time, Pamuk is also critical of the cultural superiority commonly shared by westerners. As he expresses in *My Father's Suitcase*, Western fantasy of having brought Enlightenment modernity to the Eastern world derives from their own stupidity:

I also know that in the west- a world with which I can identify with the same ease- nations and peoples taking an excessive pride in their wealth, and in their having brought us the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and Modernism, have, from time to time, succumbed to a self-satisfaction that is almost as stupid.

Turkey had been an exotic place for Western travellers and since it had a special geographical position, many of them realized its importance. Gustave Flaubert made a prediction that Istanbul would be the capital of the world within a short span of time. However, in the twentieth century, after the formation of the republic, it witnessed considerable decline and became the ruins of a great empire. Nevertheless, Turkey continued its project of westernisation in the post-imperial era. It wholeheartedly accepted both modernisation and westernisation by considering them as the new paradigms of progress, paving the way for the formation of a complex and conflicting state-of-being across the country. Hande Gurses observes that Pamuk's work illustrates this unique Turkish experience, "*Istanbul: Memories and the City* illustrates the geographical, literary, temporal, and autobiographical dimensions of this experience while using the city as a non-linear text". Thus, Pamuk primarily deals with the conflicting aspects of modernisation and westernisation in Turkey in his works, both in his fictional writings and the non-fictional works like *Istanbul*.

The work further argues that this cross-cultural interaction created a group of writers and intellectuals in Turkey, who would look at appropriating western intelligentsias. They belonged to the educated middle class group and ardently embraced westernisation. Pamuk reminds readers that, even if the change is gradual, the general life and atmosphere in Istanbul is not free from this western perception. Along with this process, tradition and the belief-system also are at stake:

Count the French and English words on billboards and posters, in shop signs, magazines and businesses: this is, indeed, a city moving westwards, but still it's not changing as fast as it talks. Neither can the city honour the traditions implied by its mosques, its minarets, its calls to prayer, its history. Everything is half-formed, shoddy and soiled. (288)

Pamuk recounts his own perception to this changing scenario. In his youth, a part of his mind longed earnestly for westernisation, but the other part always wanted to retain its originality untainted by westernisation. In his youthful days he desperately longed to be a painter. But the people around him, including his mother, reminded him that art, painting and creativity were the “affairs of the Europeans” (323). His mother would always reason that whatever may be his achievements in painting, nobody would pay any attention to them, “This isn't Paris you know, this is Istanbul” (326). It implies the assumption that Turkey cannot accommodate and admire a painter

as Europe does. So, as a practical solution, she wants Pamuk to study architecture. It illustrates the typical Turkish subjectivity and the paradoxical attitude towards Western culture.

Both the followers of Ataturk, who sought to establish more liberal and secular policies, and the political Islamists, who emerged as a crucial force in the 1970s and the 1980s, shared a common scepticism towards the policies of the West. Even when they accepted and accommodated the Western idea of modernity and development, they did not wholeheartedly embrace all the Western ways of life. Soli Ozel summarises this proclivity, “The Republic sought to Westernise, be part of the European universe, but kept its guard up against Western encroachments and did not quite trust its partners-to-be” (6). Turkey also found itself as a mediator between the Eastern and Western civilizations. It was chiefly because of its historical association with both cultures and, moreover, this capacity also came from the secular and democratic lineage of its ruling order.

Chapter IV

Between Harmony and Polarisation: Issues of Religion and Secularism

“Even if I didn’t believe in God as much as I might have wished, part of me still hoped that if God was omniscient as people said, She must be clever enough to understand why it was that I was incapable of faith- and so forgive me”.

-Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul*

The rich and wide oeuvre of Orhan Pamuk has divulged into the reality of Turkish society and culture from the view-point of a creative mind that is both passionate and sensitive. Rather than merely playing with figments of imagination and thereby rendering a sense of fantasy into words, Pamuk objectively analyses the society around him and attempts to provide an account of actual reality in his works. Therefore, he has been successful to a great extent in exposing the basic undercurrents and assumptions of the social order in Turkey. This chapter endeavours to scrutinise the ways in which Pamuk has represented the traditional values and belief-system in Turkey, and how the advent of secular modernity has affected this system. Religion played a crucial role in modifying the sensibility of the Turkish psyche right from the Ottoman period. Even after Turkey emerged as a republic, traditional values, moral codes and belief systems persisted in the country in one way or the other. Even if Turkey was famous for its religious tolerance and communal

harmony, the twentieth century scenario, especially the post-Ataturkian period, witnessed several religious polarisations and communal discord. Pamuk deals with this subject matter intensely in his literary representations.

Ataturk transformed the visibly religious Ottoman Empire into a secular democratic nation by separating religion from the state and public life. He restricted the use of veils and hijabs in schools and the parliament. This new era was also marked by the replacement of the traditional Arabic alphabet with the Latin one. In *Other Colours*, Pamuk reminds the readers that nobody in Turkey could read Arabic script in the modern era, and that Turkey had “embraced Latin alphabet as part of the wholehearted acceptance of modernity” (192). It resulted in the marginalisation of Islam, which was further viewed as a threat and an impediment to the formation of a civilized and prosperous republic. Moreover, the change of alphabet also delinked Turkish citizens from their cultural past and the people of Turkey were alienated not only from their history but also from the religious life of their ancestors. In “The Sacralization of Secularism in Turkey”, Maeyda Yegenoglu comments on the cultural impasse of Turkey in this regard:

The main social, political and cultural conflict between the secularists and the Islamists is rooted in the exclusion of Islamic culture, ways of life and codes from the public domain as legitimate markers of Turkish identity. Current demands for

more public visibility of Islamic identity, aesthetics and ways of life should be seen in the light of this historically rooted split.

As Yegenoglu points out, people began to be conscious of their religious identity, and this sentiment intensified in the later part of the twentieth century. By this time, Turkey had witnessed the rise of religious extremism and political Islam, which tirelessly created sustained ideological and physical confrontations with the secularist forces and the powerful army. Pamuk has touched upon all these conflicting issues in his novels.

Pamuk's visualisation of Turkey is marked by a deep melancholic description of a glorious culture which had been deeply rooted in Islam. Thus, as Ian Almond puts it, the recurrent images in many novels remind readers of the religious tradition of both the Ottoman Empire and its cultural remnants in modern Turkey: "descriptions of sad concrete minarets, forlorn mosques, not to mention the badly illuminated Mosque of Selim the Grim... all reinforce a definite melancholy echo to the idea of Islam" (2). Moreover, in all his novels, the characters suffer from an existential dilemma and anxiety which actually stems from their faith and religious orientation- which is again the reason why the protagonists of his novels engage in a perennial search for individual and cultural identity.

Belief is not a Personal Affair: The Question of Faith in *My Name is Red*

The novel *My Name is Red* closely discusses and critically examines the fundamental issues regarding the private religious life of some individuals in the sixteenth century Ottoman Turkey and the interventions of certain external forces in their personal life. Major incidents in the novel take place as part of the inner struggles of these individuals who are unable to cope with a situation in which their accepted belief system is shaken by the interpolations of certain external heretic practices in their belief, art and culture. It portrays the sixteenth century Ottoman world with its rich cultural diversity and varied forms of socio-religious life. Religious symbols abound in the novel and, as Leonard Stone examines, the narrative includes,

... old morality, blasphemy, Koran, Mongols, coffee, *The Lives of the Saints* by Sheikh Osman Baba, Franks, dervishes, winter sunlight, the cities of Isfahan, Herat and Tabriz, and the pivotal Muslim restatement of submission, *La ilahe Illallah*. Typical of mosques in the old times were their enormous domes and expansive courtyards. There is also the ever-present shadow of the Sultan, *Your Shadow on Earth*, and a person who owns both East and West. (196)

The narrative is filled with many symbols and images related to the oriental Islamic life, and a large part of it also discusses stories, fables, and anecdotes

concerning the Persian tradition and Islamic culture. Pamuk has also incorporated countless mythical allusions and oriental fantasies in the novel.

One of the major incidents in the novel, the murder of Elegant Effendi, happened as part of an “appalling conspiracy against his religion” (6). All the narrative voices express their personal concerns regarding the matter of their custom, tradition and religious belief. The characters share these tensions and anxieties with readers after establishing a personal intimacy with them. This tension is visible in the novel right from the first chapter “I am a Corpse” in which a dead man communicates his personal pangs in connection to his mysterious death with the readers. The dead man’s untainted belief even after his death is broadly reflected in his description of the possible experiences he can have as part of his religious belief:

Contrary to the claims of sinful infidels, who’ve fallen under the sway of the Devil, there is indeed another world, thank God, and the proof is that I’m speaking to you from here. I’ve died, as you can plainly tell, I haven’t ceased to be. Granted I must confess, I haven’t encountered the rivers flowing beside the silver and gold kiosks of heaven, the broad-leaved trees bearing plump fruit and the beautiful virgins mentioned in the Glorious Koran- though I do very well recall how often and enthusiastically I made pictures of those wide-eyed houris

described in the chapter “That Which is Coming”. Nor is there a trace of those rivers of milk, wine, fresh water and honey described with such flourish, not in the Koran, but by visionary dreamers like Ibn Arabi. (4)

Even if he had lived in an age of growing scepticism and had been surrounded by infidels who despised his religious beliefs and traditional ways of artistic production, he was not ready to abandon the basic principles of his faith. So he still keeps the expectations regarding life in the “other world”. He also feels that his soul will never depart from his body unless a proper burial has been arranged for him. The master-miniaturist Enishte Effendi also expresses his apprehension over the fate of Elegant’s soul, “I thought of Elegant Effendi’s bitter end at the bottom of the well and how upset his soul naturally must have been having come to visit, and finding his body not at his grave, but in the well” (111).

Another testimony of Elegant’s staunch belief in Islam and untainted conviction in his tradition comes from his wife Kalbiye. When Black entrusts Esther to find out a clue leading to the identity of the murderer, Esther asks Kalbiye whether Elegant was aware of the blasphemous manuscript illumination that he had undertaken to finish. She informs Esther that even if Elegant had harboured some doubts regarding the sacrilegious task he had undertaken, he was not fully aware of the real nature of it. Moreover, she also

adds to testify the intensity of Elegant's faith and deep devotion that "he comforted himself by never missing a sermon given by Nusret Hoja of Erzurum, and if he skipped one of his five daily prayers, it unsettled him. Just as he knew that certain scoundrels at the workshop ridiculed his complete devotion to the faith" (296). He keeps his faith with him even after death. Thus, when the novel begins, the abandoned dead body of Elegant in the well is wailing for salvation, for he feels that he is innocent and has paid the penalty of death for a reason with which he does not have any logical connection.

The lamentation of the dead body of Elegant Effendi is the direct result of the turbulent and changing socio-cultural ambience of Ottoman Turkey towards the end of the sixteenth century. Pamuk seems to suggest that his fate is inevitable, for he has unknowingly happened to be a part of the conspiracy against his own religion. Here, in the initial stage itself, Pamuk articulates the question of having an unpolluted conviction regarding a person's religious life. The concern regarding many of the socio-cultural changes that have taken place in Istanbul over the years is further visible in the reflections of Black, who returns to Istanbul after twelve years of absence. He witnesses considerable deterioration in almost all spheres of life in the country and longs for a positive change. He also hints at the emergence of a fundamentalist group in the city under the leadership of Nusret Hoja of Erzurum, and the way people throng around him for a better explanation of

the changing atmosphere. Hoja often would attribute all the catastrophes in the country to the changing attitude of certain people, especially in religious matters, and he reasons that all those calamities are happening because of the deviation from the true path of God:

A cleric by the name of Nuzret, who preached at the Bayazid Mosque and claimed to be descended from Our Glorious Prophet Muhammad, had made a name for himself during this period of immorality, inflation, crime and theft. This Hoja, who was from the small town of Erzurum, attributed the catastrophes that had befallen Istanbul in the last ten years... to our having strayed from the path of the Prophet, to disregard for the strictures of the Glorious Koran, to the tolerance towards Christians, to the open sale of wine and to the playing of musical instruments in dervish houses. (10)

The situation described in the initial part of the novel is parallel to the events that took place in modern Turkey, especially in the post-1950 period. The rising voice of Islamic militancy is symbolised by the presence of Hoja from Erzurum. This radical outfit is against the modernisation and westernisation of Turkey, and they brand the westernised liberals as heretics who are accountable for all the catastrophes in society. The novel further illustrates their strong opposition to many of the cultural changes that are taking place in

Istanbul over the years, especially their attack on the coffee houses and also on the dervish houses where musical concerts were conducted.

The third chapter of the novel “I am a Dog,” offers the voice of a dog. The canine critically examines the ways in which people abuse dogs in the name of their faith. The dog recounts a parable in which a religious scholar named Husret Hoja severely criticises people for deviating from the norms of Islam. At first he condemns the habit of drinking coffee: “Ah, my devoted believers! The drinking of coffee is an absolute sin! Our Glorious Prophet did not partake of coffee because he knew it dulled the intellect, caused ulcers, hernia and sterility; he understood that coffee was nothing but the Devil’s ruse” (14). This preacher also denounces the presence of dogs in the name of Islam and further argues that dogs can be a menace to the stability of an ideal society. The dog voices its protest against its cultural alienation and harshly reprimands the campaigns of Hoja by quoting a chapter from the Koran. It argues that the popular notion of dogs to be malicious actually stems from a misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the original teachings of the Prophet, and that dogs are mentioned in the chapter “The Cave” in the Koran as affectionate and friendly creatures. “Obviously, anyone would be proud to appear in the Koran. As a dog, I take pride in this chapter”, it says (15). Moreover, the dog reminds the readers that the people who despise dogs will rightly be called infidels: “If they intend both to treat us as enemies and make infidels of us, let me remind them that being an enemy to dogs and being an

infidel are one and the same” (17). This episode points to the idea that the misrepresentation of religious scriptures had been prevalent in the Istanbul society at that time, and also how people have abused the original ideas in the Koran and teachings of the Prophet.

The narrative voice of the murderer carries many religious dilemmas deeply imprinted in his psyche. The murderer admits that he is an ardent believer and is therefore tormented by the thought that he has committed a gruesome murder. He attempts to justify his act by saying that whatever he did was to protect his faith and therefore he does not even “feel that he has committed a murder at all” (18). He further admits that he used to have a moral dilemma regarding his faith. For example he confesses that he was bothered by wicked thoughts even while he was offering his prayers, “I force myself to think of different things, just as I forced myself, writhing in embarrassment, to banish thoughts of women when performing prayers as an adolescent” (20). This mental conflict is constantly with him and it is intensified by the murder he has committed. He recurrently tries to convince himself that all he did was for the benefit of his faith and the well-being of his traditional belief system. When he meets Enishte after the murder, many questions emanate from his tormented mind, “I was going to confess what I’d done to protect us, and to ask him: “Is it true what Elegant Effendi had claimed? Are we abusing Our Sultan’s trust through the illustrations we’ve

made? Are our painting techniques traitorous and an affront to our religion?”
(123).

With the discovery of Elegant Effendi’s dead body from the bottom of a well, panic spreads throughout the fraternity of the painters. Several rumours spread across the city about the mysterious death of Elegant. The radical religious outfit under the control of Nusret Hoja of Erzurum finds the situation favourable for getting its control over the city. The murder is viewed as the direct result of the greed and disrespect against the Islamic value system. It is also interpreted as an outcome of the unfair deeds done by the miniaturists and artists associated with Sultan’s court. Several artists gather at the funeral ceremony of Elegant Effendi and they show their dismay and anxiety over the sudden development of things. Enishte Effendi is so terrified that he feels as if he is on the verge of being murdered by the unknown enemy at any moment.

When the vile murderer makes his appearance before Enishte Effendi apparently with the intention of committing another murder, Enishte is surprised initially, but identifies the murderer as one of the master miniaturists associated with his workshop. The long conversation between them unfolds many aspects regarding the secret book. The conversation also reveals the anxiety concerning the murderer’s religious faith. Enishte could not initially comprehend the fact that his visitor was in fact the murderer of Elegant. He

asks the murderer whether he is afraid of the paintings they have drawn for the book. The murderer's reply leaves Enishte dumbfounded and it makes him suspicious of the motives of his visit:

Our book is no longer a secret," I answered. Perhaps this isn't important. But rumours are spreading. They say we've underhandedly committed blasphemy. They say that, here, we've made a book —not as Our Sultan had commissioned and hoped for- but one meant to entertain our own whims; one that ridicules even Our Prophet and mimics infidel masters. There are those who believe it even depicts Satan as amiable. They say we've committed an unforgivable sin by daring to draw, from the perspective of a mangy street dog, a horsefly and a mosque as if they were the same size —with the excuse that the mosque was in the background- thereby mocking the faithful who attend prayers. I cannot sleep for thinking about such things. (190-191)

The words obviously are filled with fear and terror, and they penetrate deep into the heart of Enishte Effendi who discerns that his visitor is in fact the murderer, and even though he tactfully manages to maintain his composure, he soon begins to suspect that he will be doomed to die at the murderer's hands. The murderer is provoked by Black's involvement in the matter, and also by the intention of Enishte to finish the book with the help of Black.

After a prolonged argument over the necessity and significance of their book, the murderer reveals, cold bloodedly, his actual identity of being the murderer of Elegant. On Enishte's part, having discovered the murderer, it is not merely a realization, but rather a kind of understanding that his minutes are numbered.

The murderer wants to know whether he is justified in committing a murder, and to this Enishte explains the moral dilemma in the minds of miniaturists who have been working for the book by reflecting, "You murdered him because you wanted to paint as you wished, without fear" (201). It seems to Enishte that the murderer really wants to be provoked so that he can easily execute his intention without putting himself in a Catch-22 situation, and for this reason, Enishte puts him in a limbo by asking some cardinal questions about the purity of a person's faith, the destiny of artists and also of the significance of being an illustrator.

The murderer further blurts out in panic how painters will be brutally punished by Allah after death: "Because they remembered Our Prophets warning that on Judgement Day, Allah will punish painters most severely" (193). However, Enishte pacifies him by saying that, as per the original instructions in Bukhari, only idol-worshippers will be punished in hell, and that painters do not advocate people to be idol-worshippers. This can be an authentic observation and many interpreters of Islam have later confirmed it.

Kathleen Kuiper in *Islamic Art, Literature and Culture* explains the Koranic instructions in this regard:

The Koran is not totally against the representation of living things. It is equally true that from about the middle of the eighth century, a prohibition against life-like imagery had been formally stated and thenceforth it would be a standard feature of Islamic thought. The justification for the prohibition tended to be that any representation of a living thing was an act of competition with God, for he alone can create something that is alive. (131)

Even if Islam prohibits the depiction of images, miniature painting is allowed because it is an inherent part of a text, and it has universal characteristics as well. Moreover, in miniature painting, images are not rendered realistically. It is never an expression of the artist's individuality. Pamuk explains it in *Other Colours*, "painting in Islamic culture was permissible only to decorate the insides of the books and...never were these paintings meant to hang on walls, and they never did!" (318).

Enishte's consoling words do not make any positive impact on the murderer, whose only intent at that time is to alleviate his tormented emotional state. Hardly convinced by the soothing words, he goes on

questioning the very process of creativity which is exclusively vested in the hand of the Creator, the Almighty Allah:

On Judgement Day, the idol makers will be asked to bring the image they've created to life, I said cautiously. Since they will be unable to do so their lot will be to suffer the torments of Hell. Let it not be forgotten that in the Glorious Koran 'creator' is one of the attributes of Allah. It is Allah who is creative, who brings that which is not into existence, who gives life to the lifeless. No one ought to compete with Him. The greatest of sins is committed by painters who presume to do what He does, who claim to be as creative as He. (193)

The words penetrate deep into the heart of Enishte Effendi, who is able to easily sense the murderer's agitated disposition. Here, Pamuk provides an extraordinary situation through which he communicates the fact that the human being is a product of a belief system and that one can go to any extent in order to preserve one's faith. The murderer had killed Elegant Effendi simply because the hapless Elegant had pointed out the murderer's deviation from his own faith. The irony of the situation is that the murderer is hardly aware of his own deviation from the basic principles of Islam.

Enishte explains to him his ultimate fate of becoming a murderer, for it was necessary for him to discard his fear. The anxiety of being exposed and

the subsequent crisis in his artistic life had put him in a frantic situation, which had eventually prompted him to murder Elegant Effendi. It is as if Enishte is attempting to sail through a turbulent sea while he is interacting with the murderer:

I'm not surprised you killed him, I said. Men like us who live with books and dream eternally of their pages fear only one thing in this world. What's more, we're struggling with something more forbidden and dangerous; that is, we're struggling to make pictures in a Muslim city. (200)

But these words are insufficient to dissuade him from executing his plan. He wants to silence the old voice coming incessantly to his ears. Taking a large inkpot, he strikes Enishte with all his might. He strikes Enishte again and again with the inkpot, and this time a series of fleeting memories pass through his mind. Enishte describes his own face as being drenched with blood, and he desperately moves his eyes to have a last glance of the room which is filled with paintings and manuscript illustrations. Pamuk seems to indicate that the entire prospect of heralding the secularist modernisation in the Ottoman Empire is also doomed with the death of Enishte. As he dies, Satan approaches Enishte, urging him to denounce the Prophet: "Denounce the Prophet Muhammad as a liar, he said. Deny all that he has said" (213). But Enishte remains silent holding on to his belief until his last breath. He feels

his soul departing from his body, and he also senses that he is “cupped in Azrael’s hand” (213). He describes, finally, the calm and peaceful state of being, after a momentary journey from the mortal world to the immortal one: “Death did not cause me the pain I’d feared; on the contrary, I relaxed, quickly realizing that my present situation was a permanent one, whereas the constraints I’d felt in life were only temporary” (214).

When Enishte Effendi’s death is formally announced two days later, his relatives and friends follow all the religious instructions for the handling of a dead body. After anointing the body, the people recite several verses from the Koran. Black insists on treating the body with utmost care and respect, “I said *La ilahe illallah*, there is no God but Allah... I wanted my Enishte to go to Heaven with these words on his lips... I opened my palms to Heaven and recited from the Ya Sin chapter” (269). Black also arranges the final ablutions for Enishte, even if he is forced to bribe the priest. By providing such details regarding the greedy attitude of the religious order, Pamuk also sheds light on the corrupt clergy system prevalent at that time.

The novel further offers the voice of Enishte Effendi, the second dead body to speak about the experience of life after death. In the chapter, Enishte visualises his own funeral procession which is conducted as per the detailed funeral rituals prescribed in Islam, and his soul now is, “quite at peace, having returned to its former glory after years of suffering on earth” (277). Now, he

is least bothered about his murderer. At this stage he also feels that he understands the divine proclamation, “East and West belong to me” better than ever before (279). All worldly aspects seem to have faded away from his consciousness. Instead, he focuses his attention on the spiritual glory that his soul has attained after death. He feels the presence of the divine red colour all around him. The description is quite consistent with the death experience explained in the holy scriptures of Islam: “As is recorded in books and confirmed by scholars, the soul dwells in four realms. 1. The womb; 2. The terrestrial world; 3. Berzah or divine limb, where I now await judgement day; and 4. Heaven or Hell, where I will arrive after the judgement” (281). He also feels that it is a bliss to dwell on earth without a body, and now he earnestly implores the Almighty to lead his soul to heaven. In the description of the experience of life after death, Pamuk gives importance to the colour “red”, as if the colour red is related to the presence of divinity and eternity. Enishte experiences the manifestation of this colour while feeling himself to be closer to God. He says, “As soon as I realised this freedom, with fear and ecstasy I knew I was close to Him; at the same time, I humbly felt the presence of an absolutely matchless red” (278).

The novel offers a broad view of the religious customs and beliefs in the sixteenth century Ottoman Turkey. Thus, whenever the details of social and familial events like birth, marriage, death and funeral are described, readers can clearly witness how people strictly adhere to religious norms and

conventions while taking part in such ceremonies. When Enishte Effendi is murdered, his daughter Shekure takes utmost care to hide her father's death from other people. Since she is not legally separated from her husband, and her estranged husband's brother is pursuing her, she cannot possibly have a second marriage in the absence of her father. She entrusts Black to arrange the Uskudar judge to obtain divorce papers as soon as she comes to know of her father's death. As per the arrangements made by Black, she also prepares for the marriage with Black before the funeral of Enishte takes place, in order to avoid any further complications in the absence of a legal guardian. Thus the village Imam solemnises their marriage in the presence of the "dead" Enishte Effendi, which is necessary in Islam.

However, when Shekure's brother-in-law Hasan comes to know of the wedding, he fiercely objects to it by quoting the very Islamic principles of marriage solemnisation. In his argument, even if Shekure has secured a divorce from the Uskudar judge, according to Islamic law, she cannot have an instant remarriage, but must wait for at least a month. "Otherwise it's a sacrilege contrary to the Koran," he says (258). He goes on accusing Shekure and Black for deviating from the basic principles of Islam, even though all those arguments are to serve his own personal interest. He accuses Black of murdering Enishte Effendi and threatens to alert the judge and the *Sheikulislam*, the head of religious affairs in the city. He wants Shekure to abide by the law of Islam. "Shekure", he says, "as you are my brother's wife,

your best course of action is to return now with your children to the house of the hero spahi cavalryman to whom you're still wed according to the Koran" (261). This episode throws light on the powerful role played by religion in almost all affairs of people in the Ottoman Empire, especially in the sixteenth century Istanbul, where the story takes place.

The end of the novel is also marked by violence and murders in the name of faith and religion. The murderer admits that he has done all those atrocious things in order to save their belief, their tradition and their religion. When Black demands to know the circumstances which had led to the murder of Elegant Effendi, the murderer having no other way, starts explaining the circumstances of Elegant's murder. On that fatal day they were together, Elegant Effendi was quite suspicious about the motive of the Sultan's book and he was not in a sound mental state to carry the secret forward. The murderer senses that Elegant would reveal all the secrets about the book to others and they would, thereby, be exposed before the followers of Nusreth Hoja of Erzurum who have been waiting for a chance to attack the entire lot of the miniaturists on account of their blasphemous activities. This radical Islamist outfit was against all the miniaturists for their attempt to deviate from the true path of God. In fact, his fear was reasonable, for, as the Jewish woman Esther explains to Black by the end of the novel, the followers of Nusreth Hoja had started their rebellion and demolished all the places where the heretics may possibly have converged: "Yesterday the Erzurumis first

raided a tavern and then the dervish house at Sagirkapi, beating up everyone they found in both places. An elderly man who took a blow to his head with a stick died. In this pitch blackness, they might think you're of their lot" (416-417).

The presence of this extremist group throws light on the socio-cultural condition of Istanbul society at that time and, as Pamuk illustrates in his much acclaimed novel *Snow*, it can be compared to the condition of modern Turkey, which is marked by growing violence and extremism in the name of faith and religion.

The murderer explains to Black that he has committed the appalling deeds in order to save the entire miniature fraternity: "I committed this deed not only for us, to save us, but for the salvation of the entire workshop. Elegant Effendi knew he posed a powerful threat" (481). The murderer explains that it was Elegant's fear of blasphemy that had ultimately led to his own death. Further, he points out the circumstances of Enishte Effendi's death. He had gone to Enishte's house in order to see the final picture made for the Sultan's book. But instead of showing the picture, Enishte provoked him by saying that the entire book should not be taken seriously, but only as the destiny of a committed artist. It seemed to be a humiliation to him and reinforced his sense of guilt. It compelled him to admit to Enishte his true identity. The fear of being exposed before others as the murderer was

haunting him, and when he sensed that Enishte would reveal his true identity, he did not have any other choice except to silence him.

The murderer then shows the picture that he had stolen from Enishte's house on the day of his brutal murder. It contains an artistic arrangement of several paintings including that of a tree, a horse, Satan, Death, a dog and a woman. It makes them feel as if they are watching a world through a window. The portrait of the Sultan, the "refuge of the world", should have been there at the centre of the picture. But instead of Sultan, the murderer has painted his own picture, and he revels over it. Even if the readers had been getting sufficient hints to infer that the murderer is none other than Olive, this fact becomes clear only on this occasion. Then Stork asks the question, "You mean to say that you feel no remorse?" and the reply given by the murderer perfectly encapsulates the entire theme of the novel. It shows his internal turbulence of being deviated from his faith and tradition:

I feel like the devil not because I've murdered two men, but because my portrait has been made in this fashion. I suspect that I did away with them so I could make this picture. But now the isolation I feel terrifies me. Imitating the Frankish masters without having attained their expertise makes a miniaturists even more of a slave. Now I am desperate to escape this trap. Of course, all of you know: After all is said and done, I killed them

both so the workshop might persist as it always has, and Allah certainly knows this too. (486)

By now, Olive's voice has become quite feeble, and he is desperately trying for a way out to escape from this predicament. The ultimate end of his life also highlights the concept of nemesis embedded in the Holy Scriptures.

Pamuk has incorporated a number of allusions concerning faith and religion in the novel. In the chapter called "I am Death", the narrator is none other than death itself, and it recounts the ways in which it is depicted and imagined in different ways by the artists and the common people. Here, the personification of death points out how the Christian idea of death differs from the Islamic conception of death and it recounts a story to enlighten the inquisitive readers further. "Death, whom the Venetians depict in human form, is to us an angel like Azrael, he said. Yes, in the form of a man. Just like Gabriel, who appeared as a person when he delivered the Sacred Word to Our Prophet" (153). The narrative here is filled with many references to Islam, and how the concept of death is viewed in Islamic scriptures.

The religious belief of the characters is also intensely scrutinised in the novel. The painters share a deep conviction in their religious tradition. This is evident in their assessment of specific style to be followed in their workshop:

Butterfly said, "The illuminator draws not what he sees, but what Allah sees. Yes. I said, however, exalted Allah certainly

sees everything we see. Of course, Allah sees what we see, but He doesn't perceive it the way we do, said Butterfly as if chastising me. The confused battle scene that we perceive in our bewilderment, He perceives in His omniscience as two opposing armies in an orderly array. (450-451)

Likewise, when master Osman shares his observations with Black about other master miniaturists in order to identify the identity of the murderer, he stresses the point of their religious faith. Thus, Osman considers Butterfly to be a divinely inspired painter and one who has a passionate affinity with God, "There are times when I think Allah wants the world to be seen the way Butterfly illustrates it" (314). Similarly, he holds the same view of Stork also, who, in Osman's opinion, has deep conviction and passion. But when he points out the attributes of Olive, master Osman holds the view that Olive always has been a non-believer. He says:

Olive didn't believe in anything. He had no faith in money, but he'd nervously squirrel it away. Contrary to what is commonly believed, all murderers are men of extreme faith rather than unbelievers. Manuscript illumination leads to painting, and painting, in turn, leads to- God forbid- challenging Allah. (312)

Nevertheless, later revelations and turning of events prove that master Osman's observations are wrong. The murderer is none other than Velijan or

better known as Olive in the novel and, moreover, he also has claimed on several occasions that he has observed his daily prayers and that he has deep conviction in the presence of a divine power. It further pins Osman's view down that ardent believers can commit murders as against the common perception. Nonetheless, the discussion reveals the anxiety that all characters commonly possess in the novel regarding the connection between individual faith and the existence of a religious ideology.

The novel also incorporates numerous mythologies related to the advent and expansion of Islam as a dominant religion in Persia, especially in the Middle and Western parts of Asia. Moreover, it scrutinises and elaborately discusses numerous parts of the Koran. For example, the forty seventh chapter, "I, Satan" offers the perspectives of Satan who, in his argument, is disparaged and belittled in the Koran without even having an opportunity to explain his own version of his emergence as an undesirable creature:

All right then, let me begin with God's book, the Glorious Koran. Everything about me in there is the truth. Let it be known that when I say this, I do so with the utmost humility. For there's also the issue of style. It has always caused me great pain that I'm belittled in the Glorious Koran. But this pain is my way of life. This is simply the way it is. (350)

He further refutes the popular notion of Satan as the source of all the sin and evil in the world. People commit sin of their own accord and then they always ascribe them to the evil designs of Satan. This injustice has been prevalent right from the creation of the world and this tendency persists among human beings, since they indulge in numerous malevolent acts of their own volition. “Many people sin out of their own blind ambition, lust, lack of willpower, baseness and most often out of their own idiocy” says Satan, “without any instigation, deception or temptation on my part” (351). In addition, he further argues that even God can understand the absurdity of attributing all the evil to Satan, “Even the almighty couldn’t find anything evil in passing wind or jacking off” (351). He justifies his ways by saying that at least he is truthful to his words. Similarly, the fiftieth chapter of the novel offers the voice of two painted dervishes, who are painted in the Frankish art form. Dervishes are one of the sects in Islam, and they are the wandering clerics. They also claim that they belong to the time of Prophet Muhammad. However, they complain about the common misperceptions about them in different historical periods. For example, they quote a reputed Hoja as saying only negative things about them:

These wretched Kalenderi dervishes wander around thieving and begging, they take hashish, drink, wine, bugger each other, and as is evident from the way they look, know nothing of performing or reciting prayers, nothing of house or home or

family. They're nothing but the dregs of this good world of ours. (374)

In the concluding part of the novel, Pamuk recounts an event that happened years later. Sultan Ahamed, the grandson of Sultan Murat III, demolished the large clock in the courtyard of the palace and many statues associated with it, which had been presented to him by Queen Victoria. He did all the things in the middle of the night, after having a dream in which God commanded him to do so. He was actually executing the will of God:

He shattered the clock and its statues to pieces. Those who brought us the news and the rumours explained how as Our Sultan slept, He saw the sacred face of Our Exalted Prophet bathed in holy light and how the Apostle of God warned Him: if our Sultan allowed his subjects to be awed by pictures and, worse yet, by objects that mimicked Mankind and thus competed with Allah's creations, the sovereign would be diverging from divine will. (501)

The episode reveals how Islam despises life-like images and statues, and how even the Sultan has to abide by the religious rules. It is mainly because the Sultan is also the Caliph of the Muslim world, the protector of Islam and Muslim community. Pamuk furthermore hints at this moment that it was also the time when the Ottoman painting tradition collapsed, and that it has never

recovered its glory after that. Thus, *My Name is Red* offers a perfect view of Islamic culture and the subtle aspects concerning the beliefs and practices of Islam in the Ottoman Empire. With colourful visualisation and narrative subtlety, it offers readers an opportunity to have an imaginary journey across Istanbul and the sixteenth century Ottoman Turkey.

The Politics of Religion and Secularism in *Snow*

Pamuk's *Snow* brilliantly exposes the socio-cultural condition of modern Turkey, which is characterised by tensions, polarisations, identity crisis and the undercurrents of many other boiling political issues. The discussions in the novel largely focus on the choice before Turkey: whether to follow their cultural tradition and to accept the Islamic identity based on the principles of Sharia, or to choose the entry into the European Union and thereby secularise and westernise the nation. Since *Snow* concentrates on the discourse concerning political Islam and its implications in the Turkish cultural context, it opens a way for discussing the aspects of individual identity and the social formation of reality. Pamuk seems to have hinted at the problematic issue of individual identity, especially whenever he uses words like Muslim, Islam and Islamist in the novel, for, as Nilufer Gole puts it, these are different words denoting different political positions:

‘Muslim’ is not synonymous with ‘Islamist’ in the sense that the first expresses a religious identity and the latter implies a

political consciousness and social action. Accordingly, Islamist counter-elites can be both actors in the Islamist movements and professionals and intellectuals aspiring for political power. Islamism however does not only denote membership in an Islamist political organization, but also suggests a sense of belonging and a group identity. (47)

The Atatürkian model of modernity diminished the prevalence of Islamic values in Turkey, and secularist principles were endorsed and promoted in the newly emerged republic.

In *Snow*, Pamuk has made the theme and settings compatible by locating the background of the novel in the turbulent North-Eastern border city of Kars in Turkey. The city is boiling with a number of socio-cultural and religious issues when the story begins. Foremost among them is the rising tendency among young educated girls to commit suicide. By the time the protagonist Ka arrives at the city, this has almost become an epidemic. The apparent reason for the suicide is the denial of their basic right to cover their heads in educational institutions where they pursue their studies, and the young girls seek refuge by ending their lives. The banning of the hijab has far-fetched implications in the global cultural context, especially where questions of individual choice and freedom are concerned. Sheila Dillon has rightly connected the novel with the contemporary world in this regard:

“Women and the veil is a topic of great contemporary currency and political urgency. From the controversial headscarf ban in French schools to Orhan Pamuk’s new novel *Snow*, the veil is a potent visual symbol of political Islam and the clash of civilizations” (682-683).

The ban on headscarves irks the rising Islamist outfit in the city, which is functioning under the charismatic leadership of Blue, a techie-turned Islamist who had spent many years in Europe. The issue has also intensified the tussle between secularism and Islamism in the novel. The political Islamist movement finds a contradiction in the issue, since suicide is a carnal sin in Islam. Moreover, the religious affairs department of the government had undertaken many measures to tackle the issue. “As a preliminary measure, the Department of Religious Affairs had plastered the city with the posters Ka had seen the day before. They proclaimed, “Human beings are God’s masterpieces and suicide is blasphemy” (14). Nevertheless, the epidemic worsens, which infuriates the Islamists who resort to extreme steps to fight against the government and the Ataturkian model of secularism.

The city is also about to hold municipal elections, and the Islamist party had already gained considerable popularity among the voters. Its leader, Muhtar, who along with other Islamists are making their tirade against the present regime, is running as the mayoral candidate. As Serdar Bay, the owner of the newspaper *BorderCity Gazette*, explains to Ka, the Islamists are

running from door to door invoking religious sentiments, “They say, ‘give your vote to the Prosperity Party, the party of God, we’ve fallen into this destitution because we’ve wandered off the path of God’” (26). Bey also informs Ka that Blue is camping in the city and actively campaigning for the Islamists. Moreover, the suicide-issue is the focal point of the election, and when Ka tries to understand from Ipek the real reason for this extremist tendency, she aptly summarises what is really happening to the men and women in Kars: “Why is everyone in this city committing suicide? Asked Ka. It’s not everyone who’s committing suicide, it’s just girls and women, said Ipek. The men give themselves to religion, and the women kill themselves” (35).

Ipek’s reply points out the real situation in Kars. On the one hand, men are drawn towards the rising extremist politics and resort to physical violence, which is in her assessment, suicidal; whereas women on the other hand, having no other way to protest against the secularist extremism, resort to ending their life.

The assassination of Professor Nuri Ilmas, the director of an educational institution, takes place as part of the violent protest against the ban on headscarves. The young Islamist brutally murders the director in cold blood, and openly admits that he is doing it in order to protect his faith and religion. He virtually conducts a trial for the professor before silencing him

forever. He accuses the professor for ruining the lives of young girls by not allowing them to follow their religious practices, and thereby spoiling the basic principles of Islam. He even quotes the Koran to justify his arguments:

With all due respect, Professor Nuri Yilmaz- if you fear God, if you believe that the Holy Koran is the word of God, then let's hear your views on the beautiful 31st verse of the chapter entitled "Heavenly Light". / 'Yes, it's true. This verse states very clearly that women should cover their heads and even their faces'. (40)

He accuses the director of being an agent of the infidels, and severely reprimands the Western notion of freedom and secularism. In his argument, the secular principles are practised only by the enemies of Islam. The professor remains baffled at the emotional outburst of the young Islamist. The long conversation between them reveals the deep seated anxiety and tension prevalent among the emerging young Islamists all across Turkey.

In fact, Pamuk seems to have taken a soft stand on the religious conservatives in the novel, and the hard-line secularists often find themselves in dismay whenever the rationale of their violence is questioned. As Uner Daglier points out, the contrast between the portrayal of these hard-line Islamists and secularists is obvious:

In contrast to individuating or modernizing Islamists in *Snow* who defy popular stereotypes, Pamuk's depiction of hard-line secularists is caricature. They are not able to defend their grounds on an intellectual plane; consequently, they are pathologically idealistic, exhibit authoritarian tendencies, and are prone to violence when conservative social realities clash with their enlightenment utopianism. (147)

Thus, Pamuk hints that Islamic modernisation can also be a viable alternative than the forced secular modernisation in Turkey. Moreover, he seems to support the agitation of Islamists against the banning of head-scarves in educational institutions, especially when the girls vent their ire against the ban by resorting to extreme measures. Rajmohan and Noorjahan argue that the novel instils the idea of individual freedom, "The headscarf is a recurring trope in *Snow*. The novel presents the dilemma of the headscarf girls, Hande and Teslime, who are dismissed from a local education institution in Kars, in north-eastern Turkey. The text, it appears, upholds the right of the women to wear it" (47).

The banning of the use of headscarf in public places is a burning issue in the novel. Some girls in the novel subvert all traditional stereotypes of feminine submissiveness by resorting to suicide which is, in their point of view, an effective form of protest against the violation of their fundamental

rights. The girls who commit suicide in the novel have gone to this extreme step in cold blood without any immediate provocation whatsoever.

Muhtar, an important spokesperson of conservative Islam, attempts to enlighten Ka while discussing about the changing socio-cultural scenario in Kars. Unlike Blue, he is not a radical Islamist, and Pamuk seems to have used Muhtar as his spokesperson in the novel, in order to analyse and explain the true nature of political Islam in Turkey. Muhtar does not believe in armed militancy and violence, and he joins the “Prosperity Party, the party of God” (26). In his assessment “this is after all a religious party, a party that values the spiritual side. My experience as a party member during my Marxist years prepared me well” (58-59). He had abandoned his atheistic life because of the influence of the Kurdish Sheikh, Saadettin Effendi who actually showed him “the road to God Almighty” (57).

Ka’s meeting with Muhtar results in a long conversation about the relative merits of the Western model of secularism and the Turkish conservative belief system. In Muhtar’s words, “all these religious men are modest, gentle, understanding. Unlike westernised Turks, they don’t instinctively despise the common folk. They’re compassionate and wounded themselves” (62). Here Pamuk exposes the hypocrisy and double-standards of the cultural elites in Turkey who follow the Western model of liberalism and

secularism. In Muhtar's words, they are blindly imitating the Western model of modernity while paying little attention to the real issues in Turkey.

Blue is an embodiment of religious fanaticism, and also of pleasure in the novel, and opens up many fundamental issues regarding the religious-secular debate in Turkey. Blue used to be a godless leftist in the past, but has returned to Islam because he had been greatly influenced by the speeches of Ayatollah Khomeini. After coming to Kars, he acquires several admirers, and despite the fact that he has to move from one hideout to other, he has attained a powerful base in the city. The irony of the character of Blue is that even if he is an ardent Islamist and advocates the principles of the Koran and the Hadis, he is also featured as a chronic womaniser in the novel.

The purpose of Blue is to endorse the ideological base of political Islam, and as he explains to Ka, "the most important thing today is not to pray or fast but to protect the Islamic faith" (328). Pamuk also hints that his activism is imbedded in violence, "Blue's fame derived from the fact that he was held responsible for the murder of an effeminate, exhibitionist TV personality named Guner Bener" (71). The provocation was that Bener expressed some wrong remarks about Prophet Muhammad. Blue is even ready to accept a capital punishment in order to protect his faith. This is evident when he imperturbably rejects Ka's proposal that he can be saved, if Kadife bares her head on stage. This uncompromising attitude and sincere

approach earns him high reputation among his followers. He considers himself as “an agent of Islam” and seems to be well aware of his goals (330). Ka also perceives that Blue is “a mixture of pride and extraordinary tenderness” (239). Ka feels that the army is scared of Blue’s charisma and that it considers him to be an arduous enemy of the state. The round-faced agent expresses it to Ka while interrogating him to find out the whereabouts of Blue:

Blue was a dangerous terrorist and a formidable conspirator. He was a certified enemy of the republic and in the pay of Iran. It was certain that he had murdered a television presenter, so a warrant had been issued for his arrest. He had been sighted all over Turkey. He was organizing the fundamentalists.” (182-183)

However, in Blue’s version, the state is instigating violence in the city to justify the coup, and he defends the deeds of Islamists with a calm composure. When he finds that he cannot escape from the confinement unless he agrees to Ka’s proposal, he conveys his consent to allow Kadife to bare her head on stage. But as soon as he is released from prison, he changes the decision and exhibits his real nature of being a militant Islamist. Here Pamuk brands him to be “the villain” and, on hearing this, Ka understands the meaning of righteousness for the first time after reaching Kars. Blue is killed

in a military raid along with Hande. His death also signifies that fundamental attitudes and militancy can never survive in the modern world.

Ka discerns that the young boys of the religious high school are fascinated by the Islamic ideology perpetuated by Blue. Ka meets Necip and his two classmates, Fasil and Mesut. Necip tells him a story of a man who is infected with atheism and the man in the story is ultimately tormented by his atheistic disposition. They demand to know Ka's assessment of the story. Moreover, they also ask Ka a question which he finds very difficult to answer, "Do you or don't you believe that God Almighty created the universe and everything in it, even the snow that is falling from the sky?" (85). Ka being an educated and secular poet, they value his words. But he remains baffled in front of them. The boys are greatly confused, and Mesut insists on getting a proper answer:

You're not giving me an answer, said Mesut. If a person knows and loves God, he never doubts God's existence. It seems to me that you're not giving me an answer because you're too timid to admit that you're an atheist. But we knew this already. That's why I wanted to ask you a question on my friend Fazil's behalf. Do you suffer the same terrible pangs as the poor atheist in the story? Do you want to kill yourself? (58)

Ka rightly discerns that the seeds of atheism are within them too. He informs them that even when he felt the most certain that he was an atheist, he had never felt the urge to commit suicide. Ka also recognises that those boys have a sentimental attachment with the suicide issue. Fasil defends the objectives of the girls who committed suicide by saying that what they did was only to protect their religion and faith. At this moment a beautiful poem comes to Ka's mind, and soon after reaching his room he writes it down and titles it as "Snow". For him, the only emotional solace from the existential crisis comes from poetry and, in fact, he renders the religious conflicts within him into words.

Ka's meeting with Necip creates some intense moments of deliberations on spirituality and atheism. By citing a personal fantasy, Necip confesses that he is curious to know whether God truly exists or not, and as Uner Daglier observes, he does not fit into the traditional stereotype of an Islamist,

Even those Islamists with unqualifiedly traditional backgrounds in the novel are prone to defy stereotypes. For example, Necip who is a devoutly religious student of the local imam-preacher high school (imam hatip lisesi) expresses traces of doubt concerning the existence of God. (17)

He entreats Ka to provide a possible solution for his dilemma. Ka feels that Necip's belief is crumbling and, just like others in Kars, he too shares a less self-assured conviction. But Necip is too adamant to subscribe to Ka's views:

I looked it up in an encyclopaedia once, and it said that the word 'atheist' comes from the Greek word 'athos'. But that word doesn't refer to people who don't believe in God: it refers to the lonely ones, the people whom the gods have abandoned. And so this proves that people can't really be atheists. Because even if we wanted Him to, God would never abandon us here. To become an atheist, then, you must first become a Westerner.

I'd prefer to be a westerner and a believer, said Ka. (145)

Through these boys, Pamuk communicates the impact and influence of political Islam on the young generation of Kars, especially among the boys in religious high-school. They explain to Ka how political Islam is viewed in Turkey, "political Islamist is just a name that westerners and secularists give to us Muslims who are ready to fight for our religion" (69).

Pamuk has portrayed the protagonist Ka as a muddled man who is caught between atheism and religious belief, and he carries this internal conflict and confusion throughout his life. He had grown up in a secular and liberal family and did not have any formal religious education in his childhood. However, he had never been associated with any organisation,

either in favour of, or against secularist thoughts. The oscillating nature of Ka in terms of his religious belief is echoed as he moves from childhood to the grown-up stage. In his childhood, he frequently visits the Tesvikiye Mosque with others. But instead of offering prayers, he mostly spends his time in the mosque playing with other children. All the same, “at school, I memorised all the prayers very well, to ingratiate myself with the teacher. He helped us memorise the *fathiha* by hitting us... but then I forgot it all” (95).

When Ka receives a letter from Sheikh Saadettin, the moderate spiritual leader of the town for a meeting, the secularist within him feels uncertain and he asks Ipek’s advice regarding the matter. She identifies the vulnerable part of his mind and outright posits her concern, “Are you worried that the sheikh will discover a God-fearing part of you and send you scurrying back into the fold?” (93). Ipek’s apprehension is rightly reflected on Ka’s face when he meets the Sheikh, who endeavours to enlighten Ka of the importance of spirituality, and the possibility of having divine grace. Ka’s inner struggle is more evident here, and he acknowledges his own turbulent state of mind at last, “I want to believe in the God you believe in and be like you, but, because there is a westerner inside me, my mind is confused” (100). He goes on asking the Sheikh about the probability of attaining humility in life and posits all his internal anxieties with ease.

When Kadife meets Ka, he senses from her demeanour that she is more radically sentimental towards the burning issues in Kars than anybody else he has already met in the city. She severely criticizes the nonsensical reforms being implemented in the name of modernity. Moreover, she is the undeclared leader of the girls who are against the ban of headscarves in public places, and she openly condemns Ka for being an atheist, and refuses to talk with him: “I will say that I am not prepared to discuss my faith with an atheist- or even a secularist” (114). She explains to Ka why she continues to be the leader of the girls who are trying to protect their faith. Her transformation from a fashionable modern girl to an ardent activist of Islamism astounds Ka, and he further learns that, “she’d go on television and bare her bottom, and flaunt her legs” (110). She used to be a model and the daughter of a “proclaimed atheist”. But now she is ardently protects the interests of political Islam. She blurts out to Ka, “I’m not one of those Islamist toadies who go around trying to convince secularists that Islam can be a secular religion” (114).

When Hande is introduced to Ka, she explains to him the circumstances which led to the suicide of one of her friends named Taslime, and Ka discerns that the real situation in Kars is beyond his meagre imagination. Hande optimistically explains the real motive of the girls who took the extreme step, “...For girls like that a suicide wish is a wish for innocence and purity” (126). She is also desperately trying in vain to concentrate and articulate all her pangs in the form of poetry. But Kadife

disdains Taslime's act because in her view, "Human beings are God's masterpieces and suicide is blasphemy... If you turn to the twenty ninth line of the Nisa verse of the Glorious Koran, you'll see that suicide is clearly prohibited" (114). She further elaborates that all the followers of Islam have the responsibility of adhering to the words of Allah. Ka recognises that she has aptly comprehended the principles of Sharia and that she harbours a sense of regret for her past life of being a non-believer. She openly admits it to him, "Now I've come to see that God put me through all this suffering to help me find the true path. Once I was an atheist, like you" (116).

Kadife admires Blue, and the paradoxical part of it is that she functions not only as a close aid of Blue, but also as a mistress to him. By the end of the novel, she is even ready to abandon her belief by baring her head as part of a theatre performance which would thereby endorse secularist ideas, in order to save Blue from execution. It infuriates not only the followers of political Islam, but the general believers as well.

Pamuk has created the characters in the novel in such a way so as to make them compatible with the tense atmosphere of Turkey in general and Kars in particular. Turgut Bey appears in the novel as an introvert father, who is driven by an ambiguous longing for a liberal and secular way of life. He used to be a left-wing radical in the past, and had been greatly exposed to European culture as well. All the same, he is too timid to accept that he is an

atheist and, to a great extent, his mind oscillates between faith and atheism. “Stubborn and quarrelsome though he was, he was too soft-hearted to be an implacable atheist” (131). Even if he favours the army coup and strongly criticises the Islamists for being violent, he is reluctant to allow Kadife to bare her head on stage, and he expresses his concern to Funda Eser, “If my daughter does this, the religious fanatics in this city will never forgive her” (353).

The staging of the revolutionary plays and an army coup mark the turning points in the novel. The radical theatre activist Sunay Zaim and his wife Funda Eser invite Ka to recite his poems as part of a stage performance. As soon as Ka finishes the poem, the announcement regarding the main performance of the day, the play “My Fatherland or My Head Scarf” is heard. The play features a woman who bares her head and thereby declares her independence. It creates a ripple among the audience and many viewers are bewildered due to the unprecedented spectacle. The boys from the religious high school get so much annoyed that they start voicing their protest against this apparently anti-religious exhibition. Some of them jump onto the stage and attempt to punish Funda Eser for violating God’s law: “From this point on, the situation escalated very quickly. Two religious fanatics sporting round beards and skullcaps appeared on stage. They carried ropes and knives and left no one in any doubt that they were there to punish Funda Eser for burning her scarf and defying God’s law” (156).

Sunay Zaim, wearing a military uniform in the style of Atatürk, comes to rescue Funda. It leads to a coup, and Sunay assumes absolute power. The young Islamists including Necip violently protest, “Damn the godless secularists! Damn the fascist infidels!” (159). The army men with loaded rifles stand guard onstage. The protesting voices are silenced with bullets. Many protesting youths, including Necip, are killed. It seems to Ka that Sunay has been planning such a move right from the rehearsals for the play, and Sunay declares, “This is not a play- it is the beginning of a revolution” (163). Now under the commanding voice of Sunay, the army completely takes over the control of Kars. The army also attacks and demolishes the “religious high school dormitory” (172).

Throughout his life, Sunay advocates the principles of Kemalism which attempts to provide a new identity for Turkey. As against the Ottoman effort to bring about an Islamic civil society in Turkey, Kemalism upheld the relevance and values of secularism. Sunay uses the theatre for propagating his ideas of secularism along with Funda Eser. The production of the play “My Fatherland or My Headscarf,” is thus a brilliant exposition of female independence, in which Funda Eser unveils herself as a proclamation of freedom. Even if the production of the play is an attempt to unite the Islamists and the secularists, the overall effect was just the opposite and it ultimately leads to the coup. “Fear of the political Islamists was so great that they had long ago accepted that the city must remain as it always had been. I say

‘dreams’, but not even in their sleep, they have imagined the state forcing women to remove their headscarves as it had done in the early years of the republic” (151).

Ka finds the situation in Kars worsening, even after the army takes absolute power. The Islamists have intensified their agitation by actively seeking external support. Even if he is at the threshold of happiness, with the prospect of having a happy life with Ipek in Frankfurt, Ka feels that his life is doomed in that conflict-ridden city. The fate of many secularist liberals passes through his mind at this critical juncture:

The many writers killed in recent years by Islamist bullets paraded before his eyes: first the old imam-turned-atheist who had tried to point out ‘inconsistencies’ in the Koran (they’d shot him from behind, in the head); then the righteous columnist whose love of positivism had led him to refer in a number of articles to girls wearing headscarves as ‘cockroaches’ (they strafed him and his chauffeur one morning as they drove to work), and finally there was the determined investigative journalist who had tenaciously sought to uncover the links between the Turkish Islamist movement and Iran (when he turned the key, he and his car were blown into the sky). (303-304)

The thought of all those martyrs infuses a severe mental distress in him. His insecurity principally arises out of his identity as a secularist writer.

The staging of the second play “A Tragedy in Kars”, confirms Sunay’s commitment to enlighten the people to develop secularist ideas. He manages to make Kadife perform the role of a revolutionary woman who bares her head on stage. As Sunay explains to Kadife, the objective of the performance is to free the women of Turkey from their conservative religious framework. She concedes to this demand also because of her love for Blue. In the performance, after having a long heated argument with the fellow character, she uncovers herself. “Anguish flashed across her face, then, with a clean, single stroke, she lifted her hand and pulled off her scarf” (412). While the audience look at her bare head, she shoots Sunay and kills him instantly, “Kadife’s last words (I guess I killed him) had turned her into something of an urban legend” (415).

While exposing the inherent clashes between the secular laws and the religious customs in Turkey, Pamuk attempts to address a crucial contemporary issue with global significance. Pamuk asserts that these clashes in the name of belief virtually ruin the life of ordinary people who believe in peace and harmony. This is exactly what is happening to the harmless innocents in the novel, whose lives undergo drastic transformations as the tension escalates around them. Ka makes a critical observation on the

situation in Kars, and communicates the cultural condition of Turkey from the perspective of a secular Turk. But his life ultimately ends at the hands of Islamic militants, the followers of Blue:

...those young Islamists were following the same path Blue had taken on his own pilgrimage. They'd escaped to Germany, had founded a fast-growing radical Islamist group in Berlin, and, according to Fazil's old classmates from the religious high-school, had written a statement- published on the first page of a German based journal called *pilgrimage*- in which they'd vowed revenge against those responsible for Blue's death. It was this group, we guessed, that had killed Ka. (433)

Ironically, the perpetrators of violence and communal clashes also fall prey to their own violence by the end of the novel.

The White Castle and the Discourse of Religious Identity

Pamuk offers a significant discourse on the questions of religious identity prevalent in the seventeenth-century Ottoman Turkey in the novel *The White Castle*. Even if the novel is basically about the identity crisis and civilizational anxiety of Ottoman individuals, it also highlights the system of belief, customs and traditional dogmas of the time. Moreover, the novel has far-reaching implications regarding the socio-political lineage of Turkey. The events in the novel also indirectly connote the cultural clashes in modern

Turkey. Erdag Goknar points it out in “Orhan Pamuk and the Ottoman Theme”:

The self-conscious juxtaposition of a seventeenth century story set in Ottoman Istanbul to the post 1980 coup is significant and gives us important clues to what the Ottoman theme means to the author. Importantly, these two distinct historical times are sutured through the narrative structure in a way that makes an implicit argument.

The novel also sheds light on how the Ottoman authority and the common people have upheld religious commitment and treated individuals on basis of their religion. It also highlights the importance given by the people to religious identity at that time. This is visible in the awe of the protagonist, the Venetian slave, who is captured by Turkish pirates while sailing from Venice to Naples. They had employed some Muslim slaves in their ship, and some of them had been whipped for being lazy. After being captured by the Turks, the Venetian’s first anxiety was about his Christian identity. At the same time, the Muslim slaves in the ship turn hilarious, “The Muslim slaves, loosed from their chains, were shouting with joy, and a gang of them set about taking vengeance right away on the men who had whipped them” (15).

In the beginning of the novel, Pamuk hints at the presence of a large number of foreigners, especially the Italians in Istanbul, which renders the

city into a cosmopolitan one. The novel also shows the Ottoman tendency at that time to convert the captors into Islam. There are ample indications in the novel, that most of the foreigners had been forced to change their Euro-Christian beliefs and even their names. For instance, after he is captured, the Venetian slave meets one of the converts, “a Genoese captain” who treats him with magnanimity on account of the narrator’s education. But the captain’s treatment of other Christians is brutal, and puts the narrator in further anguish, “But this privilege cost me dear. The other Christians who were put to the oars despised me instantly” (16). It is also noted here that the religious symbols on their flags were hardly treated with respect, “They hoisted their banners on every mast and at the bottom hung our flags, our icons of the Virgin Mary and crucifixes upside down, letting hotheads from the city who jumped aboard shoot at them” (16).

The narrator further explains the fate of captured non-Muslims at that time. If they wanted to have a peaceful life, that too as slaves, they had to allow themselves to be converted to Islam, “A former slave who had converted to Islam many years before advised me not to run away... If I became a Muslim as he had done, I could make a freedman of myself, but nothing more” (20). The narrator feels that only conversion to Islam would ensure him a respectable life even with Hoja, who, even as he admires the narrator’s skills and knowledge, recurrently attempts to have arguments with him. He tells, “While we were discussing our experiments and another time

when he asked me why I still had not become a Muslim, I felt he was covertly trying to draw me into an argument so I did not respond” (24).

When the narrator is produced before the Pasha, the first demand made by the Pasha is to change his religious identity. Since the Pasha is greatly impressed by the scientific knowledge of the Venetian slave, especially his expertise in arranging fireworks, he would even ensure his freedom, provided that he becomes a Muslim. “Suddenly he said that if I became a Muslim he would make me a freedman at once” (29). The narrator is stupefied by the demand, and he cannot even imagine changing his religious identity. He conveys his wishes to the Pasha and implores him to arrange his safe return to Italy. It enrages the Pasha. “When I said I would not abandon my faith, the Pasha was furious. I returned to my cell” (29). Changing his religion would definitely have helped the slave to escape confinement, and he could even have had a safe journey back home. The Pasha again summons the slave before him and endeavours to enlighten the narrator by listing out the purity and glory of Islam:

In a sudden moment of courage, I said I would not change my religion, and the Pasha, surprised, called me a fool. After all, there was no one around me whom I would be ashamed to tell I had become a Muslim. Then he talked for a while about the

precepts of Islam. When he had finished, he sent me back to my cell. (29)

Even the prospects of marrying a beautiful girl and the subsequent happy life in Istanbul do not deter him from rejecting the proposal of the Pasha. His adamant stance again comes from the deep conviction he nurtures in Christianity. This is also significant, because he remains firm on his stand even when the Pasha threatens to execute him, “they said the Pasha had commanded that I should be beheaded at once if I would not become a Muslim” (30). The executioners later approach him and start the preparation for execution by admonishing him, that he “was the enemy of God and Muhammed” (31). But the Pasha intervenes and unties him. But, even if the Pasha is impressed by the narrator’s stubborn nature and conviction by not abandoning his faith, he further counsels him, “saying I was being stubborn for nothing, Islam was a superior religion” (31). Nevertheless, the Pasha forsakes his intention to slay the narrator and instead hands him over to Hoja.

When the city is ravaged by a fatal plague, people attribute the phenomenon to divine wrath. They interpret the disease as a punishment from the Almighty for deviating from the path of God. The narrator cannot believe the mysterious theory of the plague. When Hoja is absent, the narrator sets out to gain a better understanding of the situation. He meets several other Italian

converts while strolling through the Istanbul Street and learns their new names:

When Hoja went to school, I flew out into the streets. I searched out the Italian converts I'd managed to meet during the eleven years I had spent here. One of them, known by his new name Mustafa Reis, had left for the dockyards; the other Osman Effendi, wouldn't let me in at first although I knocked at his door as though I would beat it down with my fists. (71)

Osman Effendi reprimands the narrator for not believing what is actually happening around him. He further accuses that since the narrator is still being a Christian, he could not possibly internalise things, "he said I was scared, he could see it in my face, I was scared because I remained faithful to Christianity! He scolded me, a man must be a Muslim to be happy here" (71). It clearly shows how people have accepted and internalised Islam at that time, even if they were converts. Their faith is so strong that they are ready to go to any extent in order to protect it.

However, the central character in the novel, Hoja, is not leading the life of a true adherent of Islam, and the people accuse him that his unnatural way of life has actually caused the plague in the city. It is apparent in the words of a visitor who calls on Hoja and the narrator when the entire city is suffering from the plague:

With the spleen of a merchant criticising the goods he intends to buy, our visitor added that the neighbours were saying that Hoja ate his food at a table like an infidel instead of sitting down cross-legged; that after paying purse upon purse of money for books, he threw them on the floor and trod on the pages in which the Prophet's name was written; that, unable to placate the devil within him by gazing at the sky for hours, he lay on his bed in broad daylight gazing at his dirty ceiling, took pleasure not in women but only young boys, I was his twin brother, he didn't fast during Ramadan and the plague had been sent on his account. (77)

Nevertheless, Hoja remains unperturbed even after being accused of causing the plague in the city. The narrator feels that since Hoja has developed a scientific spirit and temper within him, his conviction and commitment is not compatible with the belief system of the time. Hoja is confident of tackling the epidemic by using his scientific knowledge with the active help and support of the Italian slave. But, at that time, the society could hardly accept scientific spirit and rationality. People do not even worry about the plague, for, "disease is God's will and if a man is fated to die he will die" (72). Moreover, waging war against the plague was perceived as a challenge against the supremacy of God, since "to make war on the plague was to oppose God" (92). So in order to avert the danger of "violating the divine

will”, Hoja along with his Venetian slave, concocts a story to impress the Sultan and the general public:

Things had gone well. The story we invented had affected the Sultan deeply. His mind accepted the idea that the plague was like a devil trying to deceive him by taking on human form... When Hoja was asked when and how the plague would end, he had talked up such a storm that the sultan said fearfully that he could see Azrael, the angel of death, wandering the city like a drunkard; he'd take by the hand who ever he fixed his eye on and drag him away. Hoja was quick to correct him, it was not Azrael but Satan who lured men to their deaths: and he wasn't drunk but extremely cunning Hoja, as we planned, had made clear that it was imperative to make war on Satan.... Although among his retinue there were those who said that to make war on the plague was to oppose God, the sultan paid no attention.

(92)

But the Ottomans oppose Hoja's effort by saying that it is an attempt to compete with God. This tug of war between Hoja and the general public can also be seen as a war between faith and rationality. Here, Hoja is an embodiment of the scientific inquisitiveness, judiciousness and practicality. However, his story frightens the general public, and the Sultan orders a limit

on the activities in the markets and coffee houses which had led to clashes in the open space. "... Janissaries discontented with the preventive measures had joined forces with a couple of idiot imams preaching in the mosques, some vagrants eager for loot, and other idlers who said the plague was God's will and no one should interfere with it" (97). The tension eases only after Hoja has reduced the threat of the plague, and the much impressed Sultan appoints him as the Imperial Astrologer.

Thus, Pamuk has highlighted the nuances of the belief system in the seventeenth-century Ottoman Turkey in the novel. The narrator in the novel is an estranged "other" who is not ready to abandon his faith for material benefits. The narrative is packaged in such a way as to give an objective analysis of the cultural condition of Turkey through the impression of the Venetian slave, who, being an outsider, is able to make a cross comparison of the belief system of the time with his own cultural background.

Issues of Secular Modernity and Religious Identity in *The Museum of Innocence*

Orhan Pamuk provides a colourful picture of Turkish society in his romance-novel *The Museum of Innocence*. Even if the novel primarily focuses its attention on the delicate side of romance and love, it also visualises the socio-religious life of Istanbul in the second half of the twentieth century. It also chronicles the changing attitudes and belief system of the Turkish society

in the post 1950 era. The novel is indeed a museum which, as Maureen Freely observes in “Misreading Orhan Pamuk”, displays the rich cultural past of Turkey:

The Museum of Innocence refuses to see itself through Western eyes. It claims its place at the centre of its world: it aspires to permanence in a real space beyond the words and the story. It is a house full of objects that carry the past inside them. The objects are there not just to illustrate one man’s story, but to invite reader-visitors to immerse themselves so deeply into his world that they dream the same dreams. (1-2)

Even if the protagonist of the novel, Kemal, does not carry a firm religious ideology, he is forced to be involved in the cultural politics of the Istanbul society because of his relationship with a girl whose social status is lower than his. As Irmak Ertuna points out, he is unwittingly drawn to this social reality by Fuzun who, “initiates Kemal’s entry into a world unknown to him. This is the world behind the phantasmagoria of objects, the world of social reality that brings about Kemal’s failure to pursue his love for Fuzun” (116).

Pamuk has delineated, in the novel, the general belief system of Istanbul in a comprehensive manner. Kemal Basmacı can be seen as a prototype of the novelist in the sense that, like Pamuk, Kemal too has grown up in a modernised, secular family in Istanbul. Despite the fact that he did not

have any formal religious education, and that the family generally did not follow any religious practices, they share a common sense of belonging to Islam. Kemal points out the situation in his family in the beginning of the novel:

Neither my mother nor my father was religious. I never saw either of them pray or keep a fast. Like so many married couples who had grown up during the early years of the Republic, they were not disrespectful of religion; they were just indifferent to it. And like so many of their friends and acquaintances they explained their lack of interest by their love for Ataturk and their faith in the secular republic. (49)

The family had internalised the principles disseminated by Ataturk in the first part of the twentieth century while Turkey was transforming into a republic, and the subsequent generation maintains the belief intact. However, Kemal also hints that they too are part of the prevailing belief system at that time. It means that they too have imbibed the basic values and rituals of Islam commonly shared by the Muslim community:

Our family, like most other secularist bourgeois families living in Nisantasi, would sacrifice a lamb for the Feast of the Sacrifice and distribute the meat and the skin to the poor according to custom. But my father would have nothing to do

with the sacrifice itself, and neither would anyone else in the family; we left it to the cook and the janitor to distribute the alms. Like my relatives, I had always kept my distance from the annual ritual sacrifice in the empty lot next door. (49-50)

Their belief is exemplified in the description of the annual rituals that they follow in the household. Kemal admits that he used to witness the sacrifice out of curiosity. Whenever he seeks an explanation for the rituals, people around him would give him an answer, which, he believes, only children and uneducated people would accept as true. Fuzun gives him her version when they happen to be together in a car in their childhood, “one day, when we go to heaven, the lamb will take us over the Sirat Bridge, which is thin as a hair and sharp as a sword...” (50). The driver Cetin Efendi too attempts to satisfy their curiosity by giving an elaborate description of the story of the Prophet Abraham and his son Ismail.

From their conversation, it is clear that Cetin Efendi carries an unwavering belief in religion, God and tradition. He explains to Kemal and Fuzun the way Abraham had held absolute belief in God, and thereby followed the words of God by putting his son’s life at stake. He further maintains his deep conviction, “God is great, said Cetin Effendi. He sees everything and understands everything ... and he understands that we expect nothing in return for our love. No one can fool God” (53). The words of Cetin

Efendi communicate the general belief system of the time. A large section of the society, especially the middle class and the lower middle class in the novel, believe in God and religion. Cetin Efendi, the representative of the working class, firmly holds the view, citing the example of Prophet Abraham, that God would protect people and will definitely reward or punish people after the judgement day:

“Actually, the Prophet Abraham didn’t want to kill his son at all. But the command was from God. If we don’t submit to God’s every command, then the world will turn upside down, the Judgement day will be upon us... the foundation of the world is love. The foundation of love is the love we feel for God. (54)

The prolonged discussion between Cetin Efendi, little Kemal and Fuzun clearly marks the division of common perceptions in Istanbul society. Kemal’s family belongs to the upper class section of the Istanbul society and he admits that his family does not have any religious orientation whatsoever. At the same time, Cetin Efendi, who is working as a driver for Kemal’s family, proves himself to be an ardent believer and clearly communicates this fact to the readers. It evidently illustrates that one’s class-status also determines one’s belief and religious commitment. While secular views and principles are quite popular among the well-educated upper class, the less-

modernised and less-westernised lower classes fervently follow their customary beliefs and religious practices. Moreover, the provincial poor people who become rich all of a sudden also carry their religious orientation forward. While Kemal holds business discussions with the former foreign minister, the conversation conveys this fact, and the foreign minister readily states it as well:

You are in the world of business, so you know better than I do that we're being swamped by ill-mannered nouveaux riches, and provincials with their head-scarf wearing wives and daughters. Just the other day I saw a man with two wives trailing him, draped in black from head to toe, like Arabs. (151)

It further illustrates the attitude of the upper-class rich towards the provincials or the nouveaux riches, who are often ridiculed and looked down upon by the secular modernists.

Pamuk presents a highly secular and fashionable society in the novel. Almost all the characters in the novel have imbibed the prevalent value system of the time, which has been perpetuated and popularised by the Atatürkian model of modernity. Thus, the wealthy youths presented in the novel, and that too a significant number of girls, do not share any traditional Ottoman perception of Islam or its traditional value system. Pamuk hints this fact in the initial part itself, "It seemed a universal conviction that these

women, who did not cover their heads, wore miniskirts, and made love with men for pleasure... all lived in places like Nisantasi (where our story takes place)” (85). An important example of a character of this type is Sibel, who does not follow any of the customary practices, belief system or traditional attitudes of the Turkish society. Kemal feels it when she takes him to a psychologist because of his severe mental stress: “Sibel, with the felicitous intuition so prevalent in the bourgeois of non-Western countries, and most particularly Muslim countries, saw psychoanalysis as a ‘scientific sharing of confidence’ invented for westerners unaccustomed to the curative traditions of family solidarity and shared secrets” (241-242).

Pamuk considers Turkey to be a Muslim country and asserts on many occasions that its tradition is deeply rooted in Islam. But at the same time, he also exhibits the changing scenario in Turkey so far as religion and conventional practices are concerned, especially among the younger generations in metropolitan cities.

Even if Kemal openly admits that he is not religious nor does not have any religious education in his youth, his belief in God and divine power recurrently pops up. This is apparent when he cherishes the memory of Fuzun after their meeting in the Mermehet apartment, “Though not at all religious, I have engraved in my memory what I still regard as a postcard of bliss, sent by God: the image of merry guests, now dispersed to the outer reaches of the

garden” (162). Similarly, Kemal considers Fuzun as a fashionable lady who is devoid of any religious orientation, even if she belongs to a lower class family. But he is astonished when he sees Fuzun discussing spiritual matters enthusiastically with Sibel, and is surprised by the ways in which Fuzun holds her views on spiritual power, “Fuzun, whom I’d assumed had little religious education, declared that souls certainly existed, “as our religion decrees”, but that for us in this world to attempt communication with them was a sin” (194-195).

When Fuzun deserts Kemal after his engagement, he subsequently plunges into gloom. Having no other way, his soul yearns for mental consolation and he intermittently engages in prayers, “time had not faded my memories (as I had prayed to God it might), nor had it healed my wounds as it is said always to do” (219). He desperately searches for different signs from God to have optimistic news about Fuzun, and even goes to the extent of checking horoscopes, so that he can figure out her whereabouts:

I began to take an interest in coded messages, mysterious signs and newspaper horoscopes. I put the most faith in the ‘your sign your day’ column in *Son Posta* and the astrologist of *Hayat* magazine. The cleverest astrologers would say to their readers and most especially to me “today you will receive a sign from a loved one... and I was so convinced I would read these

horoscopes very carefully, but having no systematic belief in the stars, I did not spend hours playing with them, as bored housewives are given to do. (250)

The passage also reveals the general tendency of the people in Turkey to follow astrology and horoscope in the hope of understanding their fortunes. The magazines and newspapers promote such articles, which are primarily meant for the unemployed women in households. Kemal's mental distress results in pursuing those coded messages, and it ultimately leads him to follow superstitious beliefs prevalent at that time. Moreover, he searches for other divine indicators also, and begins to trust them as valid signs of God, "The world, life, all reality were swarming with signs sent by God so that we could discern our fortune" (250).

The novel likewise indicates, though lightly, the conflicts between the conservative religious groups and the secular modernists. The Istanbul society projected in the book is highly secular and fashionable. Still, several incidents are narrated in the novel in which religious extremists appear, and they often assault secular modernists. Pamuk mentions in the initial part of the novel itself, that drinking and gambling were quite popular among the bourgeois of Istanbul as early as 1980. However, some of the hotels, which facilitated such activities, were attacked by the Islamists in later years: "A few years later the conservatives' anger at the drinking and gambling during the celebration

overflowed when Islamists set off a bomb in the Marmara Hotel on Taksim Square, in the patisserie that had been decorated for New Year's with an enormous pine tree" (446-447).

The novel also contains several indications about the religious proclivity in Turkey in the years following the military coup in 1980, and marks the rise of Islamism and large scale campaigns for reinstating pre-Ataturkian Islamic tradition all across the country.

Religious Conflicts and Identity Crisis in *A Strangeness in My Mind*

Pamuk's novel *A Strangeness in My Mind* can be considered a modern saga of the cultural life of Turkey. Unlike his other novels, it minutely chronicles the familial, social and political changes that Turkey was subjected to in the second half of the twentieth century. In addition to that, Pamuk also attempts to portray the changes of the belief system and religious practices that have happened over the years in Turkey. Even if the story revolves around the fate of an ordinary *boza* seller, who is forced to shift from his provincial town to Istanbul, the novel also covers the lives of a large number of people, families, and their struggle for survival. The customary way of life, rituals and religious practices of both men and women in Turkey are vividly represented and discussed in the novel.

The contrast between secular modernists and traditional Islamists is perceptible in this novel too. At the beginning itself, Pamuk points out the

existence of divisions in the society based on religious orientations and belief. The protagonist of the novel Mevlut feels this difference while stepping into different buildings to sell *boza*. The general information about the system is instantly communicated to readers:

There are three types of buildings in Istanbul, he used to say: (1) those full of devout families where people say their daily prayers and leave their shoes outside, (2) rich and westernised homes where you can go in with your shoes on, (3) new high-rise blocks where you can find a mix of both sorts. (22)

When Mevlut visits the second type, the fashionable household, he is interrogated and asked to convey his religious orientation. Mevlut discerns that they are the followers of the Ataturkian model of secularism, and that they are afraid of the rising popularity of the Islamist party in Turkey. They would ask, “All right, fine, but what will become of Ataturk, of secularism, if the Islamist parties take power? Will Turkey become like Iran?” (28). But at the same time they also firmly believe that the intervention of the powerful Army would prevent the Islamists from holding absolute power.

The fashionable area also holds numerous billboards which display figures of women without headscarves or any other signs of their religious orientation, “the women, like those in European movies or in Mevlut’s schoolbooks, did not wear headscarves” (63). At the same time, the women

from provincial areas strictly followed the customary dress code of a Muslim woman and it is pointed out in several parts of the novel:

Ninety-seven percent of the women on both hills covered their heads when they went out on the streets, just as their mothers used to do. They had all been born to village life, but now that they were in the city, they discovered that the ‘street’ here was something else entirely, and so even in the summer they wore a loose-fitting coat of faded dark blue or brown whenever they went out. (112)

But over the years, changes have taken place and the women have stepped out from the confines of traditional attires. For instance, Mevlut’s daughter Fatma does not wear headscarves, especially after starting her university education, “Fatma didn’t always wear hers, and she had to take it off every time she went to the university” (496). The Turkish authorities had banned headscarves in universities, and this is a major issue in Pamuk’s *Snow*. However, women were still not allowed to participate in certain religious ceremonies, especially those happening in mosques, or concerning the involvement of clerics. This is evident after the death of Rayiha, “...women aren’t allowed to attend funerals... after the men went off to the mosque, all the women in the house, Mevlut’s daughter included, started crying” (432).

The novel critically discusses the rise of Islamism in Turkey, and its subsequent encounter with the secular militia in the second half of the twentieth century. Mevlut recurrently finds that the army's objects of attack are always the Islamists, the Kurds and the Communists. The Islamists engaged in armed attacks against the authorities, and at times their target would be other Islamic sects like the Alevis. Mevlut finds it tough, "In July, when Islamists attacked Alevis in Sivas and thirty five people- including writers and poets- were burned alive inside the Madimak Hotel" (370). Mevlut's association with the Holy Guide enables him to observe the activities of the Islamists in Istanbul. However, he always distances himself from their violent activities. When he gets older, towards the end of the twentieth century, he finds considerable changes in people's lives, which is reinforced by the rise of political Islam:

In the past ten years, the streets all around the house in Carsamba had filled up with votaries of many different sects, all wearing robes of one colour or another. It was the same traditional religious garb that people wore in Iran and Saudi Arabia. These people's political Islamism had begun to unnerve Mevlut and eventually he stopped going there altogether. (551)

These political Islamists were against the Ataturkian model of secularism, and they "had no use at all for Ataturk but never said a word against him" (358).

Instead of accusing Atatürk and blaming the early ideology of the republic, they focused their attention on developing their own ideology based on Islamic principles and propagated them among the common folk in Turkey.

The function and prevalence of the belief system is specified in this novel in as much the same way as in *The Museum of Innocence*. The formation of individual identity also takes place as part of the people's belief and religious orientation. The underprivileged, the uneducated and thereby the less modern rural people retain their faith and religious practices intact, whereas the elite fashionable people proclaim themselves as secular and modern. A large number of people, including Mevlut's family, migrate from rural areas to the cosmopolitan life of Istanbul. Pamuk indicates, while analysing the population in the hills of Duttepe and Kultepe, that a considerable number of those people follow the basic rituals of Islam:

Ninety nine percent of the people of Duttepe and Kultepe fasted, in theory, during the month of Ramadan. But in Kultepe, those who did so in practice were no more than seventy percent, because Kultepe was home to a high proportion of Alevis- Alawites- who had come in the 1960s from in and around Bingöl, Dersim, Sivas, and Erzincan. The Alevis of Kultepe did not use the mosque in Duttepe. (113)

By describing the faith of those people, Pamuk also indicates that different sects with multiple forms of Islam also existed among them. He further points out, “there were many more Kurds in Kultepe than in Duttepe” (113), and many of them did not like to be called by their ethnic names. Moreover, the Alevis are rampant in the novel and many of them resort to armed violence against the state in different areas. They have even gone to the extent of putting a bomb in a mosque and as Korkut says, the people could not comprehend this violence properly, “to be honest, I didn’t believe that the Alevis had put a bomb in the mosque” (129).

The novel comprises, in addition to various allusions to the different sects in Islam, numerous references about the non-Muslims in Turkey, especially the Christians and the Jews. It touches upon the ways in which non-Muslims were brutally treated by the Turkish authorities during Turkey’s transition from an empire into a democratic republic. In the republican era also, non-Muslims were not spared from the ill-treatment of Turkish authority:

The first blow against the non-Muslim population of Beyoglu after the birth of the Turkish Republic was the 1942 property tax, through which the government, having become increasingly open to German influence during World War II, imposed levies on Tarlabasi’s Christian community that most of them would never be able to pay. (315)

Pamuk has designed the narrative in such a way so as to include multiple historical events in which the religious minorities in Turkey had suffered fatal attacks. The novel also contains many references about the Armenians and the Greek Christians who were forced to flee Turkey on account of the armed uprisings against them. The religious minorities again suffered fatal blows during the Cyprus war:

Most of the Greek population went over to Greece after the anti-Christian uprisings of the sixth and seventh of September 1955, during the war over Cyprus, when mobs armed with sticks and carrying flags looted and vandalised churches and shops, chased priests away, and raped women. Those who didn't leave the country then had to do so overnight in 1964, by government decree. (316)

As Mevlut reflects, stories about these anti-minority attacks were quite popular in Turkey and the people often would discuss them whenever there arose conflicts between the Kurds and the Alevis. Sometimes he also hears the people say, “the Greeks were better than these Kurds” (316).

Mevlut gets married with the help of a Kurd, who having graduated from a religious institution in Ankara, is qualified to solemnise marriages. He is primarily a scrap dealer who “claimed he was a Hanafi because only Sunnis of the Hanafi school were allowed to marry young people without their parents' permission” (213). According to Mevlut, anybody who wanted to get

married as per their faith could approach him. Mevlut's belief in God is strengthened by his close association with the Holy Guide who always inspires him to think hard about life after death. However, he understands the importance of belief and prayers in life only after the death of his wife, Rayiha. He feels that he is left alone and desperately seeks consolation in divine power, "Mevlut began to feel the need for God more than ever before. He started performing midday prayers before he went to work at the clubhouse- not just on Friday but whenever he felt the need to do so" (511).

Although Mevlut is a believer, he sells *boza* to make his living, and he always holds the view that *boza* is a holy drink specially designed for the Turks. But many people do not agree with him and often contradict his claims, as Suleiman does, "Oh, fuck off, *boza* is just something someone invented so Muslims could drink alcohol; its booze in disguise- everyone knows that" (270). Mevlut finds that there are two different types of people who consume *boza* with different types of conviction. The conservative religious customers drink *boza* and want to believe that there is no sin in it, whereas the westernised secular customers consume *boza* knowing well that it contains alcohol. The second category of people often attempt to enlighten the religious peasants like Mevlut to expose themselves to modernity and secularism. Nonetheless, Mevlut still considers *boza* to be a harmless drink and resolves to sell it throughout his life.

Religion, Secularism and Family: *Istanbul Memories and the City*

Pamuk delineates the cultural condition of Istanbul in his much acclaimed work *Istanbul Memories and the City* from the perspective of a confused and sentimental writer. Since he had been born and brought up in Istanbul, he is able to sense the pulse and vibrancy of the city. He has brilliantly articulated his personal impressions and objective commentaries about the grandeur and subtleties of the city which used to be the capital of the grand Ottoman Empire. He uses this platform also to talk extensively about the belief system in Turkey and renders his own personal thoughts about religion and God into words.

Pamuk begins the discussion on the system of faith and God by citing his own personal experience, “Until I was ten, I had a very clear image of God: ravaged with rage, and draped in white scarves, God had the featureless guise of a highly respectable woman” (160). This idea of God essentially derives from Pamuk’s capacity to fantasize things. His other family members are least interested in God or religion, because they are educated, civilized and modern, and lead a secular way of life. So they do not need the help of a metaphysical entity to solve their issues. Pamuk feels that the categories of people who are interested in God in his household are the servants and other helpers. Since they are not educated and modern, they need God Almighty to pacify them whenever they are in distress, “God was there to help those in pain, to offer comfort to those who were so poor they could not educate their

children, to help the beggars in the street who were forever invoking Her name and to help pure-hearted innocents in times of trouble” (160).

Thus, his family members, who are in Pamuk’s version, “creatures of logic” (161), do not do anything in order to get the attention of God, whereas the poor people in the household use all available opportunities to appease God with their prayers and sacrifices, “they even fasted for an entire year” (161). Pamuk seems confident that even if his family members do not offer their prayers, God will not do anything undue to them. Although he is relieved by this thought, he is also disturbed by the possibility of a situation in which the poor people might use their power, the rapport with God, against them. He admits that it can also be the reason why he used to watch the maid Fatma while she performed her daily prayers. He also checked her loyalty to God by making slight disturbances to distract her attention, and she would then say, “If you tug at my scarf when I’m praying, your hands will turn to stone!” (162).

Pamuk hints that he did not have any formal religious education and that the entire family had remained indifferent to religious practices. After the formation of the republic, this tendency was passed on from one generation to other, “in the secular fury of Ataturk’s new republic, to move away from religion was to be modern and western” (163). As a boy, he was curious to know the implications of having religious faith, and he looked anxiously around his huge building complex, where they followed the joint family

system. He could not spot any traces of religious signs in the family, “I never saw anyone in my family bowing down on prayer rugs, or fasting, or whispering prayers” (163). So the family finds religion to be a strange and interesting “set of rules on which the lower classes depended” (163). However they could not completely escape from the hangover of their religious tradition and so, even though his mother, father, grandmother and others did not fast, “at Ramzan they awaited sunset with as much hunger as those keeping the fast” (164).

After paying a visit to the Tesvikiye mosque for the first time in his childhood with the maid Esma Hanim, Pamuk understands his own prejudices about Islam and religious worship. He finds only humble people there, who are far away from the sophisticated ways of modern life. While he was having his playful fun in the mosque, no one scolded and everybody was smiling at him, which made him aware of their simplicity and civility. This was absolutely against the perceptions he had attained from his family, “I saw that- contrary to the caricatures in newspapers and my republican household-religious people were harmless” (165). However, he could spot only pity and contempt directed at religious people from his family apartment complex, for, in their view, it is religion and traditional belief system that hinders Turkey from becoming a modern, westernised and prosperous country. Pamuk discerns the prevalence of a popular notion among the secular modernists in Turkey that the country primarily belongs to them and hence, it is their

responsibility to eradicate the age-old belief system and superstition from Turkish soil.

Pamuk's family, as well as any other modern secular family, are not able to completely cast off their religious consciousness, as is evident in *The Museum of Innocence*. This ambivalence is evidently manifested at the annual Feast of Sacrifice. They too would buy a ram, as per the tradition and belief, and the neighbourhood butcher would slaughter it. The meat would then be distributed to the poor, and his entire family too would have a sumptuous feast "at which we drank the beer our religion forbade us" (167-168). He further adds, "The point of the ritual is to prove our bond with the Almighty by sacrificing an animal *in the place of a child*" (168). The ritual illustrates the inherent complexities and incongruities of the Turkish psyche in religious affairs. Pamuk also senses the persistence of silence among the people who are the least bothered about human existence, faith, meaning of life, love, compassion and others. This silence, he feels, is the result of a spiritual void in both the domestic sphere and the society at large.

As a sentimental and passionate writer, Pamuk possesses a deep sense of spirituality. He admits that he cannot believe in God in the conventional manner and that his belief is quite exceptional and personal. He is also confident that God would be magnanimous enough to understand his attitude and mind. Nonetheless, the most alarming thought he carries in his mind is not about God or non-believers, but about extreme believers. "What I feared

most was not God but those who believed in Her to excess” (168). In fact, many of his friends, who were half-secular and half-religious, share identical feelings with him and some of them even share their secret guilt for wavering between faith and scepticism. He further talks about one of his classmates who once declared, “If God exists, let Him strike me dead!” (169). Pamuk admits that he feels guilty for being unable to proclaim so.

Pamuk points out the general belief system in Turkey at that time by citing examples from his own family, school and other familiar areas of the city. The socio-cultural situation of the time allowed the privileged people to cast doubt on the existence of God, and Pamuk’s belief too, as he puts it in the book, is a product of that system: “Like everyone else in my prudent family, I learned that it was always wise, if you’d just derided religion or expressed your lack of interest in it; to change the subject right away, we equated piety with poverty but never in too loud a voice” (162).

The fact that these people cannot articulate their religious scepticism in a loud voice reveals the problematic cultural condition of Turkey. Turkish citizens are caught between their own inherited Islamic tradition of the Ottoman Empire, and the imported secularist modernity of the republic.

Chapter V

Paradigms of Pluralism: Structures of Culture and Society

“...My novels perhaps... are addressing the issue that we have all these general questions-- questions of identity, belonging to a civilization, the fact that some people tell you that civilizations don't come together, or there are likes of me through literature have addressed these issues and to tell the reader that actually what matters are not civilizations but human lives...”

- Orhan Pamuk, *Bridging Two Worlds*

One of the most significant features of the narratives of Pamuk is the combination of memories, in the form of both national history and the subjective impressions of contemporary culture. For Pamuk, fiction would always be the incorporation of modified historical materials. Thus, in his novels, the past is invariably being rewritten, and through which a new definition of identity is being obtained. The fifth chapter of the thesis analyses the manifestation of different cultural paradigms in Pamuk's novels and their significance in the Turkish social context. The chapter also attempts to analyse the perceptions of the problematic socio-cultural aspects of Turkey reflected in the novels of Pamuk right from the Ottoman era up to the twenty first century.

Pamuk's works echo the plurality of Turkish tradition, discussing at large the questions of displacement, ethnicity, communal harmony, linguistic

difference, the dissolution of the grand Ottoman culture, the birth of the republic, the nationalist movement, the emergence of modernity, and the complicated debates on secularist principles and religious fundamentalism. In doing so, the works have also problematized the aspects of identity formation, gender issues, and the growth of political Islam. The *Ottoman* novels, for instance, *My Name is Red*, posit crucial questions on gender issues. The Ottoman Empire was patriarchal in nature and as Pamuk indicates in his novels, large-scale gender inequality existed in the familial and social life. Men dominated all the spheres of life because, “women’s putative physical and moral weaknesses rendered them subject to men. As a general rule women were economically dependent on men and derived their social positions from their husbands and fathers” (Zilfi 16). Similarly, the novels set in modern Turkey such as *Snow* and *The Museum of Innocence* crucially debate the questions of gender discrimination and religious identity. The novels largely mirror many challenges, confusions and turmoils faced by Turkey in its attempts to attain the status of a modern liberal country.

Cultural Plurality and the Ottoman Social Life in *My Name is Red*

Since the events in the novel *My Name is Red* take place in the sixteenth century, it offers a broad view of the socio-cultural life of that time with minute details and descriptions of everyday life. Even if the novel is framed within the limit of ten days, with Black’s arrival from Persia and the

subsequent discovery of the murderer, it contains a large number of references, which enables readers to discern and identify the nuances of popular culture and social norms prevalent at that time. Readers can have a critical commentary and objective analysis of the general life of Istanbul society from the perspectives of all major characters in the novel. It includes the perspectives and voices of not only the elite and the privileged, but also accommodates the viewpoints of several other suppressed and marginalised sections of the Ottoman society.

The glory and grandeur of the Ottoman Sultan is recurrently emphasised in the novel with multiple references to the richness of the Ottoman Palace and its gorgeous life-style. The Sultan wishes to showcase the magnificence of his empire before the Western world, and therefore spends huge amount of wealth to promote his popularity. This proclivity is evident in the commissioning of the book of manuscript illuminations in Western/Frankish perspective and, as Enishte Effendi claims in the novel, the Sultan is ready to deplete his treasury to achieve this objective. Similarly, all rituals related to the royal palace are celebrated extravagantly with splendour and a wide variety of festivities. For example, Black recalls the circumcision ceremony of the young prince, “when I was still in Persia, I heard stories about this fifty two day circumcision ceremony wherein people from all occupations and all guilds, all of Istanbul, had participated” (68).

The wealth and flamboyant life-style attract even the master miniaturists associated with the palace. It is because of the prospect of material wealth that the master artists become involved in the Sultan's project. Moreover, the corpse in the beginning of the novel admits that he took part in the Sultan's project because he was primarily influenced by the prospect of obtaining huge wealth, and he further emphasises the value of money, "You know the value of money even when you are dead" (4). It shows the general tendency even among reputed artists to go after wealth and material gains.

Istanbul society at that time was flourishing with material prosperity and the elites were largely leading an ostentatious life. Black notices it when he comes back from Persia, "There were more wealthy people, or so it seemed to me. I saw an ornate carriage, a citadel drawn by proud horses, the likes of which couldn't be found in Arabia or Persia" (8). Black also describes many luxurious houses in the neighbourhood and the affluent families residing in them. The glitzy buildings puts him in dismay, "I was astonished by their extravagance, by windows of the most expensive Venetian stained glass, and by lavish two-storey residences with bay windows suspended above high walls" (9).

However, he also hints that the money-value was decreasing in Istanbul at that time and, in fact, other cities were also facing the same problem. Prices of essential goods were shooting up and the situation is made

worse by the influx of counterfeit money in the markets, “But I knew the problem of devalued money was the same everywhere. It was rumoured that Flemish and Venetian merchant ships were filled with chests of counterfeit coins” (10). The flow of spurious coins from foreign markets was a grave issue, and the Ottoman administration was unable prevent this illegal flow. Furthermore, while the Ottoman Sultan was engaged in interminable war with the Persian countries, the royal mint produced coins disproportionately as the demand for money grew. The inflation stirred up internal rebellions and the dissatisfied Janissaries revolted against the Sultan.

It can furthermore be perceived against this backdrop, that the novel also underscores the rampant influence of Persian culture on the Ottoman Empire. Turkish culture was predominantly based on Arabian tradition and it was visible not only in the art and architecture, but in the general life-style as well. There are a number of references about the Persian artistic tradition, and a wide range of artists such as Bihzad, Nizami, Firdusi and others appear recurrently in the novel. Their masterpieces are also scrutinised to verify the specific styles they followed in their paintings. Moreover, Pamuk has inserted a number of Persian anecdotes, parables and mythologies in the narrative in order to make readers feel that they are making an imaginary journey across the art and culture of the Orient. Pamuk incorporates several fables also in the novel, and among them those which appear under the title “Alif”, “Ba” and “Djim” are remarkable illustrations of Persian culture. Other fables under

different titles also convey the nuances of oriental artistic and cultural practises.

The customs, rituals and other activities of Persian tradition are also emphasised to colour the imagination of readers:

Two hundred and fifty years ago, Arab miniaturists were in the custom of staring at the western horizon at daybreak to alleviate the understandable and eternal anxieties about going blind shared by all miniaturists; likewise a century later in Shiraz, many illustrators would eat walnuts mashed with rose petals on an empty stomach in the mornings. (96).

Pamuk offers a broad view of the general features of social life of the sixteenth century Istanbul in the novel. The Ottoman Empire accepted and accommodated people from different communities and ethnic groups. But those groups were sometimes bereft of certain privileges enjoyed by the general elite. It is exemplified in the portrayal of the character Esther, the Jewish merchant woman. She belongs to the lowest rung of the social ladder and lives among other working class people of the time. The first description of Esther reveals that the society demands even her to follow a specific dress code, “Esther was all atwitter in the pink dress she was forced to wear as a Jew, with her large and lively body, her mouth which never stopped moving, and her eyebrows and eyes which twitched madly and signalled to me;

indeed, this is how she was among the shopping slave women” (73). She follows the stereotypical attributes of the working class and, as the novel affirms on several occasions, her mannerism and behaviour is quite apt for a Jewish woman. She makes her living by selling clothes and small ornaments at almost every household in Istanbul. More than being a seller of clothes and other domestic articles, she often undertakes the task of connecting people by carrying letters and messages, “I’ve been a clothes peddler and matchmaker for years” (99). Esther is also instrumental in connecting Shekure and Black. Nevertheless, Esther understands the value of women in society and often encourages Shekure to fight against all sort of patriarchal oppression:

Although she is ready to do everything for the sake of money, during the course of the novel, she is seen encouraging Shekure. When Shekure feels depressed and lonely, it is Esther who calms her down and makes her aware of her dignity and value. Somehow, Esther can be considered the novel’s heroine, someone who has a great influence upon the novel’s chain of events. She helps Shekure to find her identity and personal life and she is the only person who defends Shekure’s rights.
(Arjomandi and Faghfori 114)

The novel records the communal clashes and tensions in Ottoman Turkey. Important among them is the clash between the predominant Muslims and the

Jews, which perpetuated the socio-cultural alienation of the Jewish community. Esther, in this context, explains the fate of the Hanged Jew: “Years ago in Amasya, on the eve of Passover, when a Greek youth supposedly disappeared in the Jewish quarter, people claimed that he’d been strangled so unleavened bread could be made from his blood. When false witnesses were brought forward, an execution of Jews began...” (162).

Other references also suggest the systematic marginalisation of the Jews from the mainstream and the harassment they were forced to undergo from time to time. It was also impossible for them to discard their Jewish identity. Jews were accused of having evil dreams, and were brutally treated and executed. This is aptly summed up by narrating the treatment of Jews by Portuguese church:

Even if Esther’s forebears denied their Jewishness by declaring, “We have become Catholics like you”, the Jesuit torturers of the Portuguese church, unconvinced, would torture them, forcing them to describe the jinns and demons of their dreams, as well as burdening them with dreams they never had. Then they’d force the Jews to confess these dreams so in the end they could burn them at the stake. (171)

The novel also highlights the norms and conventions of the Istanbul society at that time. People had to adhere to the traditional norms and stipulations in

their personal life. For example, there were strict rules and regulations for events like marriage, divorce, remarriage and funeral rites. It is visible in Black's prolonged attempt to marry Shekure. Back to his uncle's abode after twelve years, Black feels himself disheartened, and desperately searches for an opportunity to marry Shekure whose husband is a soldier who has been missing for the last four years after taking part in a military expedition. Since Shekure has not been legally separated from her husband, Black cannot overcome the legal hurdles between them. Obtaining legal divorce papers through proper channels is also very difficult because of the application of distinct marriage and divorce rules and regulations for different sects. Shekure frequently expresses her concern over it: "If we were followers of the Maliki or the Hanbeli sects, I said, the judge, acknowledging that four years have passed, would grant me a divorce in addition to securing a support allowance for me. But since we are Hanefis... this option is not open to us" (107-108).

This points out the prevalence of sectarian rules and regulations in the Ottoman Empire. Shekure's husband is simply missing and therefore, she needs to get at least two witnesses to certify that her husband is dead. Moreover, her husband's brother Hasan has been trying to court her for several months. All these factors prevent Black from going ahead with his plans. Nevertheless, he manages to assert his everlasting commitment to Shekure by being passionate and sentimental and, having no other way, he seeks the help of Esther who wholeheartedly concedes to be their mediator.

Shekure's situation becomes complicated after her father's sudden death. She is not officially declared a widow, and Hasan has already started to woo her. Now that in her father's absence, Hasan would legally be entitled to look after her, she shares this anxiety with Black:

In the eyes of the judge, it is my husband and his family who succeed my father as my guardians. This was the case even before his death, for according to the judge my husband is still alive. It was only because Hasan tried to take advantage of me during the older brother's absence, a failed assault that embarrassed my father-in-law, that I was allowed to return to my father's home though not officially a widow. (230)

Shekure gropes desperately for a way out to make her life secure by marrying Black. As a possible solution, she urges him to make arrangements for their marriage so that, before the burial of her father's dead body takes place, she can be in a safer zone, where the threat of her vanished husband's family would not affect her. If the outside world comes to know of her father's death, she will not be able to go for a remarriage soon. Moreover, Hasan also poses a threat to her existence in her own home. A hasty marriage with Black can possibly save her from the advances of Hasan and his father. Black is pressed to obtain her divorce papers from the concerned authority so that she can be declared a widow. The judge may not grant her divorce, since she was not

provided alimony by her vanished husband. However, since the number of such aggrieved women increases day by day, the Ottoman administration sometimes allows exceptions:

Considering that my husband left me without alimony and hasn't returned from war for four years, even judges of our Hanefi creed couldn't grant me a divorce. The Uskudar judge, however, knowing how the number of women in my situation is increasing each day, is more sympathetic and so-with a nod from Our Excellency the Sultan and the SheikhuIslam-the judge occasionally allows his proxy of the Shafi creed to rule in his place, thereby granting divorces left and right to women like me, including conditions of alimony. (232)

The Ottomans followed stringent rules and conditions of social life, which forces Black to meet the religious authority in order to obtain the necessary documents to get Shekure's widowhood declared. Black is also forced to arrange two false witnesses to testify the death of Shekure's husband in order to take the judge into confidence.

The prevalence of corruption and bribery among the religious order is also emphasised here. After offering a substantial sum of amount to Imam Effendi, Black gets him under his influence, and along with the Imam's brother, they move to the Sultan's court where they meet the proxy who is

entitled to declare the widowhood of women in the province. The proxy is persistent that he must get the testimony of Shekure's father Enishte Effendi before delivering such a declaration. Black, tactfully convinces him that Shekure's father is severely ill, and that he wants to marry Shekure himself, since it is his sole responsibility to protect the family. The proxy, after asking the whereabouts of Black, at last concedes and records the official divorce in the ledger.

Black takes utmost care to maintain secrecy regarding the divorce procedures so that they can thwart all possible opposition from others, especially the intrusion of Hasan and his men. But Hayariye explains to him Shekure's wish to have a marriage procession and, for her, it does not matter how secretive the wedding ceremony would have to be. Black attempts to avoid these social conventions, and he is unable to even comprehend the logic of such norms. He hurries to meet the Imam who would solemnize their marriage. But he receives a message from Shekure through Shevket, which conveys to him that she is not ready for the marriage unless there is a wedding procession. Here, Black is again pressed to abide by the necessary procedures of the Ottoman marriage system.

When the wedding is announced in the neighbourhood, many family friends and neighbours throng around the couple as part of the procession. After the parade, the party reaches back home, and only then is the wedding

formally solemnized in front of the deceased Enishte who is perceived as the living guardian of Shekure. The episode indicates the importance of rituals and ceremonies in events like marriage and death in Ottoman Turkey.

Shekure insists that a procession be arranged for the marriage despite the fact that the ceremony takes place soon after her father's death. Similarly, the description of the funeral ceremony of Enishte also confirms how strictly the Ottomans followed customary practices. Before the burial rites are offered, the death is ceremoniously announced in the neighbourhood, "I requested that he recite the death prayer before the azan and appoint his brother as crier to go around announcing the death to the entire neighbourhood" (270).

Likewise, the specific custom of sending pots of sweets to the house of a dead person is also emphasised here. Shekure becomes upset when she finds neither condolences nor *halva* sweets from Kalbiye:

Hayariye was rattling off who'd sent which pot: "this one's from Kasim Effendi of Kayseri; this one, the assistant from the miniaturists division who lives two streets over, that's from the locksmith, Left-handed Hamdi; that one the young bride from Edirne- when Shekure interrupted her.

"Kalbiye, the late Elegant's widow, didn't come to offer her condolences, didn't send word and didn't send any halva either." (293)

Evidently Shekure is distressed by the absence of Kalbiye and she immediately assigns Esther the duty to enquire the reasons for Kalbiye's absence.

The novel also gives an overview of the functioning of the Ottoman palace and administration, especially when the palace administration summons Black to investigate the death of Enishte. It becomes very important for Black to procure the confidence of the palace authority in order to free himself from the doubtful shadows of Enishte's death. When he is produced before the commander and the torturers, they strip his clothes off and he is subjected to an intense episode of interrogation. Astounded by the sudden treatment, he cries out in pain. The treatment of Black by the palace officials throws light on the system of execution and torture prevalent in the Ottoman palace at that time:

They took off my vest and shirt. One of the executioners sat on me, driving his knees into my shoulders. Another placed a cage over my head with all the practised elegance of a woman preparing food and began slowly turning the screw at its front. Nay, it wasn't a cage, but rather a vise that gradually squeezed my head. (300)

The vivid details of the Ottoman treasury are also recounted in this part of the novel. When Master Osman demands to find out the details regarding the

unique picture of a horse, the Head Treasurer takes them to the vast and highly confidential treasury. Jesmi Agha, the man in charge of the Royal treasury, shows them the rare works of the ancient as well as the contemporary artists. Through the narrative, the grandeur and uniqueness of the Royal Treasury becomes visible to readers. The description of the wide range of items in the treasury also gives the readers a comprehensive awareness of the Ottoman tradition and culture:

I saw mother-of-pearl inlaid boxes, iron trunks, Chinese vases, belts, long-necked lutes, armour, silk cushions, model globes, boots furs, rhinoceros, ornamented ostrich eggs, rifles, arrows, maces and cabinets. There were heaps of carpets, cloth and satin everywhere, seemingly cascading over me... the boxes, the caftans of sultans, swords, the huge pink candles, the wound turbans, pillows embroidered with pearls, gold filigree saddles, diamond-handled scimitars, ruby handled maces, quilted turbans, turban plumes, curious clocks, ewers and daggers, ivory statues of horses and elephants, narghiles with diamond-studded tops, mother-of-pearl chests of drawers, horse aigrettes, strands of large prayer beads, and helmets adorned with rubies and turquoise. (363-364)

All specific items in one way or the other indicate the grandeur as well as the socio-cultural life of the empire. It further shows that the Ottomans had been actively involved in trade relations with China, Persian countries and other European states. The treasury also contains a huge number of books and manuscripts produced by great masters and artists. Master Osman and Black spend a long time examining book after book. They find the works of great masters such as Bihsad and Shah Tehmasp, and ponder over the power of art to transcend time and age. However, nowhere could they locate a painting with the peculiar horse nostrils which had been drawn by the wretched murderer. In the course of the inspection, Master Osman, deeply touched by the legend of the destiny of the true artist to be turned blind at the pinnacle of his mastery, spots a golden plume needle, with which, it occurs to him, he can seek asylum in blindness. Deeply moved by this possibility and resolved to follow the great masters of yore, he applies the needle to both of his eyes. Being the representative of the Persian tradition of painting, he cannot even think of a change of style and would not accommodate modernity in his workshop as well. This can be the major motive behind his inclination to blind himself at the highpoint of his artistic glory, just as Bihzad did:

I looked at the needle for a long time. I tried to imagine how Bihzad could've done it. I'd heard that one doesn't go blind immediately; the velvety darkness descends slowly... I sat down again and gazed at my own eyes. How beautifully the

flame of the candle danced in my pupils- which had witnessed my hand paint for sixty years... without hesitation, as if making a hole at the end of an ostrich egg soon to be embellished, I bravely, calmly and firmly pressed the needle into the pupil of my right eye... I pushed the needle into my eye to the depth of a quarter the length of a finger, then removed it... smiling, I did the same to my other eye. (349)

Thus blindness starts overpowering him gradually. This self-inflicted blindness, in his reasoning, is the fate of all miniature artists after achieving greatness in artistic life. He lingers in the treasury to find out the painting of the horse with the peculiar nostrils. Even after finding out the secret of the painted horse-nostrils, Master Osman goes on inspecting the mesmerizing paintings available in the treasury. He is immersed in the beauty of old artistry so much that he does not feel going out of it.

Pamuk has drawn a large picture of the heterogeneous life of Istanbul in the novel. Even if the society was a hybrid space where many religious and ethnic groups cohabited, the dominant religion was Islam. Muslim life-style, manners and even food habits are vividly described here. At one point, Esther wonders why Muslims always keep a unique food habit in their life: “Why don’t Muslims eat the heads and feet of chickens? Because they are so strange! My grandmother, may she rest in peace, would tell me how chicken

feet were so inexpensive when her family arrived here from Portugal that she'd boil them for food" (159).

The novel indicates the presence of coffee houses in sixteenth century Turkey. Coffee was popular not only among common people, but even high ranking officials and artists also regularly visited coffee houses and consumed coffee. It was also the place where people gathered to meet, chat and gossip. However, it was a place of alarm for the government, for these places usually witnessed skirmishes. The religious order of the state despised coffee houses, for, in their analysis, these were the "places where pleasure-seekers and wealthy gadabouts sit knee to knee, involving themselves in all sort of vulgar behaviour" (13). By the end of the novel, Butterfly witnesses the destruction of the coffee houses by the men of Nusret Hoja, and the master story-teller being hacked to death. Nevertheless, the place witnesses the gradual cultural transition of society. Painters and story-tellers freely converge in the place and share their concern and anxieties with others.

The Ottoman society was highly stratified at that time. If it was the Sultan who held absolute power over the empire, it was the Pashas and the Viziers who held control over the provinces. Apart from that, the broad division in society is mentioned by the two dervishes who do not belong to any of the recognized categories, "Kalenderi dervishes are the unnecessary dross of the world because they don't belong to any of the four categories into

which men are divided: 1 notables, 2 merchants, 3 farmers, and 4 artists” (375). There is also the working class which is divided into different guilds based on their occupation. Even artists were divided into different guilds based on the specific skills in the production of artefacts, “Our Sultan’s craftsmen’s guilds: mace makers, boot makers, silversmiths, master velvet makers, ivory engravers, and luthiers” (272).

Multiple references in the novel confirm that slavery was rampant in the sixteenth century Ottoman Turkey. Hayariye, the woman working in Enishte Effendi’s household, and an important slave character in the novel, is submissive and subservient to all others around her. Domestic slaves are also used in order to satisfy the physical needs of men, and Enishte uses Hayariye for the same purpose. Likewise, Hasan uses his slave girl for similar use, and in the absence of the slave girl, he approaches Shekure. Shekure confirms that in her husband’s home she was treated as a slave girl who has to obey all the commands of her father-in-law and brother-in-law. She shares some of her bitter experiences with the readers:

They wanted me to do the kitchen work, wash the clothes and even go out to the bazaars to do the shopping in her stead. I didn’t protest by saying “Am I the type of woman to take on such drudgery?” I swallowed my pride and went to work. But when that brother-in-law of mine Hasan, now without his slave

girl to take into his room at night, began forcing my door, I didn't know what to do. (49-50)

The portrayal of the slave girls confirm that they were denied all rights and dignity in society. These references in the novel specify the bitter condition and predicament of slave girls.

My Name is Red explicitly reveals the patriarchal nature of the Ottoman society in the sixteenth century. Thirty eight chapters of the novel are narrated by male voices, whereas women voices interact with the readers in thirteen chapters. The other eight chapters are recounted by non-human narrators. Readers can discern the gender discrimination and related issues from these narrative voices. Pamuk must have consciously incorporated the voices of women in order to shed light on the position of women in the Ottoman society. The chapter "I am a Woman" critically portrays the situation of women in society. The voice in the chapter challenges even the story teller, and conveys that nobody can imagine the experience of being a woman, "My dear Storyteller Effendi, you might be able to imitate anyone or anything, but never a woman" (428). The male voice expresses the wish to have a mental and physical change in order to have the experience of a woman. The voice also indicates a lesbian trait in her character and does not even hide her love for another woman, "Despite never having spoken with her, I've nursed feelings of lust toward her for years and still do" (429).

Among the female voices, Shekure is the leading figure who recurrently attempts to revolt against the conservative attitude of the Ottoman society and tries to articulate her freedom. Richard Eder states that she is brilliantly portrayed in the novel: “Elusive, changeable, enigmatic and immensely beguiling, she is the finest portrait in the book. Not a portrait, in fact a Persian miniature”. A meticulous reader can understand her strong will-power and sense of independence. Shekure is capable of choosing the course of her life, even if she has been bestowed with limited opportunities. This decision making power enables her to go beyond the stereotyped image of an ordinary woman in Istanbul society at that time. In David Damrosch’s assessment, her character attempts to cross all traditional confines, “Shekure is one of the most interesting characters in the novel. It’s a very sympathetic portrait of a complicated woman who is trying to negotiate her position within the traditional confines of a patriarchal society of her time”.

Shekure is ready to marry her husband simply because he possesses a different temperament as against the general attitude of men. She finds him “gentle and quiet as a lady” (49). Even after his disappearance, she resists all attempts made by Hasan to court her. Even if she finds herself alone, she is not weak or sentimental. She even rejects the proposal of Black initially, asserting her individuality as a woman:

I might feel lonely, hopeless and weak living with my two children and an elderly father. I miss the strength and protection of a man, but let no one assume he might take advantage of my situation; therefore it would please me if you ceased calling on us. You did embarrass me once before, and afterward, I had to endure much suffering to regain my honour in my father's eyes.

(41)

She also expresses her concern for women in the society, and informs readers that women are always marginalised in History, which glorifies the brave deeds of only men. Shekure understands the value of women in society. Even Art sidelines women from the mainstream, by portraying them as worthless and weak. Nevertheless, she also expresses her optimism about a blissful future, “perhaps, one day someone from a distant land will listen to the story of mine. Isn't this what lies behind the desire to be inscribed in the pages of a book?” (48).

Shekure's widowhood does not prevent her from going ahead with bold steps. The society expects her to be acquiescent and obedient to her husband's family. This status further distresses her. She revolts against all the oppressions in the household, and considers Hasan's approach as an attempt to objectify her. She resists all attempts to diminish her honour, and declares her independence from the clutches of a patriarchal mind-set. By projecting

the character of Shekure, Pamuk seems to suggest that there were also attempts on the part of Ottoman women to resist male oppression and misogyny. In doing so, Pamuk also alludes to the present condition of women in Turkey, where women are recurrently objectified and oppressed.

Reflections of the Socio-Cultural Reality in *Snow*

The novel *Snow* is a systematic assessment of the socio-cultural debates prevalent in modern Turkey, and narrates the ideological and political clashes between the members of certain budding Islamist groups and the secularist forces in the country. The plot of the novel is quite ingeniously devised, and it includes a military coup and an armed rebellion prior to the ascension of an Islamist party to power in Kars, the snow-clad provincial city. A number of references in the initial part of the novel convey the fact that the city faces severe social unrest and political turbulence. The city reflects the pluralistic nature of Turkish society with the existence of a large number of ethnic groups and religious sects. The protagonist Ka wonders at the highly sensitive nature of the inhabitants when he pays a visit to the city for the first time.

The novel also assesses the socio-cultural lineage of Kars in the novel. The city is well known for its large number of ethnic groups and religious minorities. The city had retained its eclectic space right from the beginning of the Ottoman era, and the novel features this cultural pluralism and integration.

The divergent and hybrid nature of the city is visible not only among the population, but also in its landscape and architecture:

During the Ottoman period, many different peoples had made Kars their home. There had been a large Armenian community; it was now gone, but its thousand year old churches still stood in all their splendour. Many Persians fleeing first from the Mughal and later the Iranian armies had settled in Kars over the years. There were Greeks with roots going to the Byzantine and Pontus periods. There were also Georgians and Kurds and Circassians from various tribes. (20)

But Pamuk seems to suggest that numerous transformations have taken place in the city, and that its rich cultural legacy and tolerance over the years has been affected. The republican era had witnessed several disputes among the different ethnic groups and minorities, and the post-Ataturkian period categorically finds the seeds of fundamentalism. The situation escalated, as Serdar Bey explains to Ka, in the 1970s and the 1980s:

In the old days we were all brothers, said Serdar Bey. He spoke as if betraying a secret. But in the last few years, everyone started saying, “I am an Azeri, I am Kurd, I am a Terekemian”. Of course, we have people from all nations. The Terekemians, whom we also call the Karapapaks, are the Azeris’ brothers.

The Kurds, whom we prefer to think of as a tribe, in the old days didn't even know they were Kurds. (26)

The novel highlights the presence of the Kurdish separatist group in Turkey and their involvement in armed violence against the state. After reaching the city, Ka is directed to visit the police headquarters in order to let the authorities check his credentials and whereabouts. He discerns that it is primarily because of the presence of many insurgent groups in the area. "That all newcomers, even journalists, should pay a visit to the police was a provincial custom dating back to the forties... even though no one had mentioned it- he sensed the presence of the separatist Kurdish Guerrillas (the PKK) in the city" (10). The officials also insist that it is better for him to have police protection as long as he stays in Kars.

The sectarian violence all across Turkey also finds special mention in the novel. Identity politics is promoted and encouraged, and multiple factors are also responsible for inciting tribal pride. Kars is particularly affected by this growing tendency, especially because of the growing influence of Communism: "It was the communists and their Tiflis Radio that spread tribal pride and they did it because they wanted to divide and destroy Turkey" (26). Ka reflects that the city has been disintegrating since the 1960s and gradually losing its hybrid cultural traits: "Gone now were all the Armenians, Russians, Ottomans and early republican Turks who had made this city a modest centre

of civilization” (135). Pamuk has imbibed the history of violence in the city and he aptly explains it in *Other Colours*: “During the second half of the 1970s, Kars went through a period of extreme violence. Oppressive measures instigated by the state and its intelligence services changed the course of the city’s history. In the mid-nineties, Kurdish guerrillas came down from the mountains” (275). Thus the setting of the novel invariably indicates its theme.

Pamuk also exposes the unpleasant everyday life in the city where people starve and desperately seek better material comforts. Ka is stunned while listening to the people in Kars and their stories of poverty and wretchedness. Moreover, the suicide stories further puts him in great distress and “would haunt him for the rest of his life” (13). He passes through acute mental agony while witnessing the unrest around him. It is also because he is unknown to both poverty and faith:

Raised in Istanbul and surrounded by the middle-class comforts of Nisantás- a lawyer for a father, a housewife for a mother, a beloved sister, a devoted maid, a radio, rooms full of furniture, curtains- Ka knew nothing of poverty; it was something beyond the house, in the outer world (18).

Moreover, the emotional disturbances and tensions in the city aggravate Ka’s anxiety, who is flabbergasted by the idea of committing suicide in the name of

faith. It is mainly because he had been raised in a secular republican family and hardly had any connection with religious extremism.

In *Snow*, Pamuk has touched upon both the process of modernisation and radicalisation in Turkey. An important anti-Ataturkian incident in the novel is the assassination of the director of an educational institution at a local restaurant. Ka witnesses the horrible spectacle which ultimately leads to a coup. The powerful theatre activist Sunay Zaim and his wife Funda Eser are instrumental in bringing about the coup. They represent the spirit of modernity and rationality. They use theatre as an effective tool to rationalise people. As Marshall Berman states it in his essay “Orhan Pamuk and Modernist Liberalism”, Sunay represents the principles of secular humanism in Turkey:

He is broadly a comic character, as if on loan from some road production of *Pal Joey* or *Guys and Dolls*; it is surprising to meet him in the solemn world of *Snow*. His job in Kars is to be a kind of public relations man for modernity, for the enlightenment, for secular humanism. Sunay overflows with cliché versions of ideas that most readers of dissent believes in and that some of us would die for. (114)

Being an ardent follower of Ataturk, Sunay wants to uphold the principles of republican ideology. He desperately tries to suppress the growing tendency of

extremism among the young men in the city. He attempts to imitate the towering personality of Ataturk. He also wears the type of army uniform which was popular in the 1930s. Likewise, the staging of two coups has a striking resemblance with actual events that had happened in the final decades of twentieth century in Turkey.

Sunay holds the view that art can sublimate people, and that both art and life are inextricably linked together. He stages the coup as part of the performance of his play, and soon after successfully taking control of the city with the help of the army, he promulgates his intentions, “Long live the republic! he cried. Long live the army! Long live the Turkish people! Long live Ataturk!” (163). Sunay conducts the coup with a clear intention in mind. He wants to wipe out the anti-modernist elements in the country and thereby bring about positive changes in society. He explains by the end of the novel that his only motive behind all these deeds had been to safeguard the interest of his fatherland: “You probably detest me for having staged this coup and for opening fire on the people, just because they weren’t living like westerners. But I want you to know that I did it all for the fatherland” (411-412). In the same spirit, he effaces the difference between art and life by allowing himself to be killed as part of the performance on stage. He sacrifices his life for modernity and progress by saying, “How stupid all of this is... They know nothing about modern art. They’ll never be modern” (412).

Sunay effectively uses theatre to propagate the Ataturkian ideology and recurrently reminds readers about the power of the theatre. He is also influenced by the theories of Hegel and asserts it on the stage:

It was Hegel who first noticed that history and theatre are made of the same materials, said Sunay. Remember that, just as in theatre, history chooses those who play the leading roles. And just as actors put their courage to the test on the stage, so, too, do the chosen few on the stage of history. (202)

He is confident in his capacity to change the course of history by using his artistic materials, and firmly believes that a decisive personality like Ataturk can play crucial roles in it. He views the Islamists as the detractors of progress and threatens them after the coup with a commanding voice, “Those who seek to meddle with the republic, with freedom, with enlightenment will see their hands crushed” (158). He never deviates from his original mission despite having to face several hardships in life. He is well prepared and ready to cross over all the obstacles lurking in his way, “no matter how long I languished in the mire, no matter how much filth, wretchedness, poverty and ignorance I saw around me, I never lost my belief in my own guiding principles, never doubted that I had reached the summit” (193).

The two coups, engineered by Sunay and his associates with the performance of the two plays “My Fatherland or My Headscarf” and “A

Tragedy in Kars”, are the pivotal incidents in the novel. As John Updike argues in “Anatolian Arabesques: A modernist novel of contemporary Turkey”, the real and the unreal mingle in these coups where people are confused as to whether it is merely a theatrical event or a political action: “He (Pamuk) is attracted to the unreal reality, the false truth, of theatrical performance and *Snow*, in its political aspect, pivots on two nights of performance at the Kars National Theatre, in which illusion and reality are confoundingly entwined”.

There are some important officials to assist Sunay in the smooth conduct of the coup. Among them, Colonel Osman Nuri Colak seamlessly handles the boys of the religious high school while Sunay is conducting the coup. Likewise, the Assistant Chief of Police, Kasim Bey, appears on the stage right before the performance and warns the audience that “this time no rowdiness would be tolerated, no one would get away with shouting or hissing or making coarse comments of any sort” (373). All these officials effectively silence the dissident voices and help Sunay to meet his goal.

The novel provides a clear picture of the functioning of the Turkish authorities, especially the ways in which the administration and the army tackle the burning issues of insurgency. Apart from the army, the functioning of the Turkish intelligence agency, the MIT, also figures in the novel. It is a powerful agency which plays a crucial role to curb militant activism in the

country. Its involvement is visible especially when Blue is released from prison as part of the contract he makes with Sunay Zaim. Before Blue's release, a secret plan has been already made with the active involvement of the MIT to trace his hiding place once he is released from police custody. The joint operation by the MIT and the army kills Blue in his hiding place along with Hnade.

There is also a counter-terror operation wing headed by Z Demirkol. It is a special military team working in association with the MIT to monitor Sunay's actions after the coup. Z Demirkol is noted for his sense of responsibility, and severely criticises the ambivalent attitude of intellectuals like Ka who have made a secret alliance with Blue as per Sunay's demand. He enjoys the Mexican soap opera Marianna, and admonishes Ka by citing the example of Marianna:

Do you want me to tell you why I love Marianna? ... Because she knows what she wants. But intellectuals like you, you never have the faintest idea, and that makes me sick. You say you want democracy and then you enter into alliances with Islamic fundamentalists. You say you want human rights and then you make deals with terrorist murderers. (362)

They are sceptical of Ka's involvement in the affairs between Blue and Sunay Zaim. After capturing Ka on his way back from Blue, Ka is interrogated by

Uncle Mahmut and Z Demirkol in the chamber of a remote building. Ka is forced to undergo dreadful torture, and Z Demirkol also informs him about Ipek's passion for Blue. They, in fact, had tapped all telephone conversations between Ipek and Blue. Thus, with solid proof, Z Demirkol convinces Ka that Ipek was in fact, Blue's mistress, and that they had started their illicit relationship four years back. He proclaims it by saying that he has all of Ipek's telephone conversations in his custody, and he also convinces Ka that they had been still in contact for the last three days. The MIT involvement throws further light on the army's infringement on personal freedom and privacy. The surveillance system of the army had breached all limits to intrude into the personal affairs of people.

Through the portrayal of Ipek, Pamuk indirectly indicates the condition of women in modern Turkey. She is not figured as a daring woman like her sister Kadife. She is sentimental and eternally craves for love. All the men around her including Muhtar, Blue, Ka and her father have failed to provide her emotional solace and happiness. When Ka comes to know of Ipek's relationship with Blue, the words "we're never going to be happy" blurt out from his mouth (368). He discerns from her words that she is still living in the memory of Blue, and that she loves Ka only to forget her earlier relationship. Ka turns out to be a jealous lover who insists on knowing everything about her relationship with Blue. It follows a prolonged discussion about Blue and their relationship. She frantically tries to convince him of her sincerity and

informs him the general condition of women in Turkey, “Like most Turkish girls, I’ve not had much opportunity to get to know a lot of men” (370). Their relationship also crumbles due to the presence of uncertainty all around her throughout her life. She intimates her predicament to the narrator by the end of the novel:

“Orhan Bey”, said Ipek, “I tried hard to love Muhtar, but it didn’t work out. I loved Blue with all my heart, but it didn’t work out. I believed I would learn to love Ka, but that didn’t work out either. I longed for a child but the child never came. I don’t think I’ll ever love anyone again. I just don’t have the heart for it. (429-430)

These words convey her intense emotional state and frustration with her life. It also shows how social circumstances alienate women from realising their dreams in life.

Pamuk also shows the conflict between individual choices and social realities in the character of Turgut Bey, Ipek’s father, who is driven by Marxist ideologies throughout his life. He is a communist-turned-new democrat. His leftist orientation is revealed when he offers his observation on Marianna. He praises Marianna for her unyielding resistance against capitalism, and sometimes addresses her on screen, “Be strong, my girl, help is on its way from Kars” (245). He sympathises with the suffering poor in

Kars, and observes that “people give themselves to religion because they were poor” (245). Even if he is an ardent secularist, he does not support the military coup, “It is wrong to say this in public, but I am against military coup” (246). He is unable to put any of his ideas into practice because of the social circumstances around him, and that is why his mind oscillates between polarised emotions. He attends the meeting in the Hotel Asia to sign the joint statement against the coup owing to his allegiance to the causes of the suffering poor in Kars. The secular democrat within Turgut Bey does not prevent him from going against the military coup. Moreover, he upholds the values of democracy, “I have come to this meeting because I wish to prove to the Europeans that in Turkey, too, we have people who believe in common sense and democracy” (279). He is presented as a conflict-ridden character whose destiny is to seek solace in the tormented atmosphere of Kars.

The Echoes of Ottoman Life in *The White Castle*

The socio-cultural life in the Ottoman Empire has always been an irresistible subject for Pamuk, and he has creatively used many historical materials to provide a new aesthetic experience of Ottoman life to his readers. Among his novels with Ottoman themes, *The White Castle* is known for its distinctive and apt use of historical materials to provide a realistic experience of visiting seventeenth century Istanbul, the grand capital of the empire. Pamuk never dismisses the Western writers’ depiction of Istanbul as mere

racially charged fantasy and imagination on Oriental life and culture. Instead, he endorses the Western perceptions and imaginations of his city and uses them as platforms for further investigation. In his autobiographical work *Istanbul Memories and the City*, he mentions a dream cherished by Flaubert to write a book on the harmonious fusion and identity substitution between an educated Westerner and an Eastern barbarian. Even if Flaubert could not fulfil his wish, Pamuk realistically verbalises the vision through *The White Castle*, and thereby provides a vista of the socio-cultural life of the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century.

The White Castle exposes at large, the cultural condition of the Ottoman society when the empire was at its zenith of power. The novel contains wide references of the varied life-styles in the seventeenth century Istanbul ranging from the issues in the Ottoman palace to the open markets and the lives of ordinary people. Through the lives of two identical figures and their subsequent change of identity, the novel systematically explores the general life in Istanbul and the ways in which the administration functioned at that time. Moreover, it also demonstrates the scientific and technological advancement of the empire, especially equipments of war and the use of sophisticated ammunitions and weapons.

The central character in the novel, Hoja, is keen on scientific inventions and his association with the Venetian slave reinforces his spirit of

enquiry. The monologues of the slave reveal the ardent enthusiasm of Hoja in manufacturing new devices not only for military purposes but also for domestic use: “In those days he was thinking about how to develop a larger geared mechanism for a clock which would require setting and adjusting only once a month rather than once a week” (36). Hoja’s thirst and keenness for knowledge is further ratified by the slave with a detailed description of the swiftness of his learning: “With his phenomenal diligence and quickness of mind, in six months he’d acquired a basic grasp of Italian which he’d improve upon later, read all of my books, and by the time he’d made me repeat to him everything I remembered, there was no longer any way in which I was superior to him” (33).

Moreover, the Sultan also encourages Hoja and his spirit of enquiry and scientific temper. The Sultan’s determination to manufacture the grand weapon is an example here. He is resolved to materialise this dream, and insists that Hoja should complete it within the stipulated time so that he can conquer his enemies easily. The plot of the novel largely rests on the production of this mighty weapon, and as the Venetian slave reflects, Hoja also believes that the weapon is a crucial factor in the future of the empire, “I was still lost in the details of what Hoja had told me in the past about how the weapon would triumph in the future” (120). However, the Ottoman society, the Grand Vizier, and the army disapprove of Hoja’s scientific spirit. People, in fact, undermined and cursed his grand plan. The description of this

incredible weapon reflects the attitude and even the fright of the people towards it:

Freak, insect, Satan, turtle archer, walking tower, iron heap, red rooster, kettle on wheels, giant, Cyclops, monster, swine, gypsy, blue-eyed weirdie, which took to the road very slowly with a bizarre uproar of frightening screeches and groans, striking all who saw it with exactly the terror that Hoja intended. (126)

Even the army does not accept the sophisticated weapon. On the contrary, they consider it to be an ill omen which can be a potential impediment to their victory. The Pashas also share the sentiments of the army and turn their backs on it, which is reflected in the words of the slave, “the pashas listening to him in the sovereign’s tent were even more firmly convinced that we were charlatans and our weapon would bring bad luck” (138).

The Sultan, the high ranking officials and the common public are presented in the novel as superstitious, and who depend largely on astrology and horoscope to meet the demands of everyday life. The royal court even keeps the post of the Imperial Astrologer, which is a powerful and influential one. The astrologers are also involved in the palace intrigues and conspiracies, for the fate of the Sultan largely depends on the signs indicated by the astrologer. The astrologer Huseyn Efendi is executed at the beginning of the novel simply because he had offended the powerful Pasha. Soon after,

Sitki Efendi takes over the charge. Nevertheless, Hoja begins to refute Sitki's interpretation of signs. When a rabbit is wounded as part of a game, the Sultan seeks an interpretation of the event. To the surprise of all, Hoja offers a favourable prediction regarding the incident: "After everyone else had spoken and Hoja's turn came, he said it meant that enemies would emerge from quarters the Sultan least expected, but he would survive the threat unscathed" (50). The Sultan is greatly impressed by the ways in which Hoja offers his interpretation for all the subtle aspects of the incidents.

Thus, predictions and interpretations of dreams and stars became decisive factors in the general rule and administration of the empire. The Venetian slave is baffled by the ways in which the Ottomans adore astrological predictions, for the practice is alien to his own scientific temper and understanding. He has even fallen prey to the whimsical imagination of the common people who brand him as an ill-omen. It puts him in an alienated and estranged position in the warfront by the end of the novel, "Since the rumours that I was accursed and a spy, I no longer went to the Sovereign's tent" (140). Possessing a rational mind right from the beginning, Hoja too is frustrated by the state of affairs around him and desperately seeks a way out to embrace new scientific spirit and innovations. He also feels mentally superior to others, and plays with the sentimental approach of the Sultan and the people. When the plague erupts across the empire, he concocts the story of a devil and convinces the Sultan about the possible outcome. The public also

believe his interpretation and it even affects the everyday activities in the town:

If business stopped, life also stopped, news of a plague wandering in the form of a man would terrify those who heard it, they would believe the Day of Judgement has come and would grab the bit between their teeth; no one wanted to be imprisoned in a neighbourhood where the plague devil roamed, they would raise a rebellion. (93)

The episode emphatically exposes the popular culture of the time. The Ottoman society at large nestled many misconceptions and delusions at that time, and Pamuk seems to suggest that these fallacious perceptions recurrently landed them in trouble.

The novel colourfully portrays the functioning of the palace and the power enjoyed by the Sultan. Even if the Sultan is young and inexperienced, the entire administration depends on the will of His Excellency. He is also surrounded by convoluted palace intrigues and treacherous people. The palace occasionally witnesses mass violence and bloodshed, and it was customary for the Ottomans to silence the dissident voices within the royal court. One of the most compelling conspiracies mentioned in the novel is the one hatched by the Sultan's grandmother, and the Sultan's reaction to it:

Only much later did we hear of the mischief at the palace, the Sultan's grandmother, Kosem Sultana, had conspired with the janissary aghas in a plot to murder him and his mother, and have prince Suleiman put on the throne in his place, but the plot failed. They strangled her till the blood flowed from her mouth and nose. (51)

The extravagant life-style of the Sultan and the royal court is also emphasised in the novel. The Sovereign celebrated all events with great flamboyance and elegance. In the same way, all the privileged officials, the Viziers and the Pashas in the royal administration always conducted large-scale celebrations as part of the rituals and ceremonies in their personal life:

Those who saw that the sovereign esteemed me as he did Hoja, soon invited me to the ceremonies and celebrations which were the daily palace fare. One day a Vizier's daughter was getting married, the next day one more child was born to the Sovereign, his sons' circumcisions were marked by festival, another day they celebrated the recapture of a castle from Hungarians, then ceremonies were arranged to mark the prince's first day at school, while Ramadan and other holiday festivities began. (117)

The Venetian slave reflects that all celebrations are marked by banquets and delicious feasts. He informs the readers that he has grown increasingly fat by participating in those festivals, “I quickly grew fat from stuffing myself with rich meats and pilaus and gobbling down sugar lions, ostriches, mermaids and nuts at these festivities, most of which lasted for days” (117). Along with these celebrations, the Ottomans also conducted many entertainment activities and demonstrations, and the Venetian here gets an opportunity to understand and enjoy the cultural and artistic forms of the Orient:

The greater part of my time was spent watching spectacles: wrestlers, their skin glistening with oil, struggling till they fainted, or tightrope-walkers on high-wires stretched between the minarets of mosques who juggled with the clubs they carried on their backs, crushed horse shoe nails with their teeth, and stabbed themselves with knives and skewers or conjurors who produced snakes, doves and monkeys from their robes, making the coffee cups in our hands and the money in our pockets disappear in the twinkling of an eye or the shadow-plays of Karagoz and Hajivat whose obscenities I adored. (117)

Corruption was rampant in the royal administration, and the novel hints many instances in which huge amounts would be given to the officials as bribes. Thus, when Hoja obtains the Imperial Astrologer’s books and papers by

bribing the officials, he ends up having “spent all his savings on bribes” (48). The Venetian slave, after being captured and imprisoned, is forced to bribe the officials around him in order to get better treatment from them. He distributes to the guards the money he had earned from treating people, “I was not just looking after the slaves in the prison, but others as well. I had to give a large part of the fees I earned for doctoring to the guards who smuggled me outside. With the money I was able to hide from them, I paid for lessons in Turkish (17).

The White Castle thus offers, in many ways, a panorama of the Ottoman popular culture and imagination. Pamuk has in fact made a fictional journey across the seventeenth century Ottoman Turkey in general and Istanbul city in particular. It posits several burning socio-cultural issues and dilemmas prevalent at that time and critically comments on the people’s reaction to them. As Erdag Goknar states, the legibility of the text is further reinforced by the initial assertion in the frame tale that the text has been translated by Faruk Darvinoglu into the Latin alphabet from the Ottoman script: “Faruk’s translation makes the Ottoman context legible again, and it unearths a buried Ottoman Islamic cosmopolitan culture centred in Istanbul” (128). Rather than merely playing with creative perceptions, Pamuk has made the problems and concerns discussed in the fictional space consistent with actual historical events in the novel.

Modernity, Morality and Modesty in *The Museum of Innocence*

Orhan Pamuk sets the novel *The Museum of Innocence* in the 1970s and the 1980s, the period that had witnessed broad cultural and social changes across Turkey. It was also a crucial phase in which “the economic and social structure of the country was solidified” (Ertuna 106). Even if the novel largely highlights the Turkish bourgeois life-style and its upper class taste and temper, it also accommodates the marginalised voices in the social sphere and their concerns. Above all, the work systematically records and critically analyses the gradual emergence of Turkey as a capitalist force. With a wide range of references about the growth of industries, trade and commerce, Pamuk touches upon all the features that became visible as part of the gradual transformation of the country into a global market. As Irmak Ertuna observes, the novel is,

Defined by particular rituals involving foreign objects, such as Jenny Colon bags, new Turkish sodas, Chevrolet cars, and of course, the Hilton hotel. The inevitable integration of Turkey into the western capitalist world is depicted alongside the rise of commodity fetishism. Integral to this socio-economic history is Pamuk’s depiction of the predicament of women in modern capitalist patriarchy. By virtue of this keen social analysis, Pamuk’s novel establishes a subject-object relationship. (107)

Pamuk offers a fascinating world of objects in the novel, which range from ordinary domestic items to highly sophisticated western imports. These objects directly or indirectly connect the tradition and modernity in Turkey.

Among the popular objects that Pamuk describes, Western imports such as the Meltem soda finds special space in the book. The product is extensively advertised in the newspapers, and even film actors and Western models are hired to promote it, “They say the German model in the Meltem campaign is going to be here” (34). However, some characters in the novel find the advertisements to be vulgar and inappropriate for Turkey. Sibel finds it quite unbecoming for the troubled Turkey, “In a poor and troubled country like Turkey with young leftists rightists busy killing each other, it was, she felt, ugly” (43).

Pamuk has problematized and critically examined some of the burning issues in Turkey. Thus, the questions of sex, marriage, and premarital relations are discussed at large in the novel. The protagonist Kemal is obsessed with the thought that he has taken Fuzun’s virginity, and this is also the reason for his tormented and love-sick life even after he is deserted by her. It also demonstrates the general attitude of the Turkish society even after it wholeheartedly embraced modernity. With a sarcastic tone, the traditionalist perspective of the Oriental culture comes under a critical scanner here:

One thousand nine hundred and seventy five solar years after the birth of Christ, in the Balkans, the Middle East and the western and southern shores of the Mediterranean, as in Istanbul, the city that was the capital of this region, virginity was still regarded as a treasure that young girls should protect until the day they married. (82)

Even the wealthy upper class circles in Istanbul society are wary of this popular notion, and even if they sleep together before marriage, it would be done only under the surety of marriage bond. It means that they should be “serious either by formal engagement or another demonstration that they were destined for marriage” (83). If there is any violation of this unwritten moral code under some peculiar circumstances, the tradition dictates that the man should go for atonement and would legally wed the girl, as “the traditional code required that any man wishing to protect the girl’s honour should marry her” (83). It is exemplified in the affair between Kemal and Sibel. They share their bed before having a matrimonial bond due to their mutual conviction and belief that their relationship would culminate in marriage. When Kemal deserts her because of his intense passion for Fuzun, Sibel is worried about her ignominy before the public. She accuses Kemal of spoiling her honour. Kemal too feels helpless and knows the consequences of deserting Sibel: “It would become the story of a woman whose honour had been stained” (285).

Likewise, feminine sexuality is a central issue in the novel. Fuzun's crucial decision to sleep with Kemal without any marriage prospect can be seen as part of her assertion of individuality. "Fuzun's decision to 'go all the way' with Kemal is not only daring, but also decisive for her newly found pursuit of independence" (Ertuna 109). Her sexual excitement and curiosity are focused principally on her own body rather than on the opposite sex. Her carnal exploration and enjoyment makes Kemal impossible to possess her completely, which, it can be argued, puts him in a frustrated state of being. It is this unrequited love and sense of frustration that urges him to pursue her even after he is abandoned by her.

There are several references in the novel that indicate the social restrictions for women in the Turkish society. Normally, the society would not accept a woman who appears in beauty contests or even in advertisements. Fuzun's appearance in a beauty contest is generally perceived as a disgrace that the common public, including Kemal's mother, cannot possibly accept as something normal. During the early years of the republic, beauty contests were quite popular among the Turkish elites. It was mainly because Ataturk had perpetuated the westernisation drive across Turkey. But, by the 1970s, there came a reversal of the situation. Beauty contests and acting in movies or advertisements became a derogatory affair, and was regarded as popular only among the uncultured. "But by the seventies, the contests had become the practices of girls with no culture or manners and

coarse hopes of becoming singers and models, and so the significance of beauty contests became something else altogether” (413). This is why even Fuzun’s father Tarik Bey is irritated by her appearance in beauty contests.

Similarly, Fuzun’s friend Ceyda has completed her professional modelling course. But she is not permitted to appear in any advertisement due to her fiancé’s protest. He is one who shares the prevalent conservative value system of the time, “so he is forbidding her to appear in a commercial for a covered swing set built for two- forget about wearing a miniskirt, he won’t even let her do it if she wears a dress that shows nothing” (114). The general social tendency indicates that the Turks are reluctant to change the value system and the moral codes embedded in Islam, even after the establishment of a secular republic. It is reflected even in public appearances: “Forty-five years after Atatürk’s revolution and the founding of the Republic, the Turkish people had still not worked out how to go to the beach in bathing suits without embarrassment, and at times like this, it would occur to me how much Fuzun’s fragility reflected the bashfulness of the Turkish people” (230).

In the same way, as Kemal’s brother points out, the Turks cannot publicly demonstrate their love. Society does not even provide space for couples to rejoice and flirt. He says: “Do you people know why boys in this country never learn how to flirt with girls? ... There’s nowhere to flirt. We don’t even have our own word for flirt” (171). This is why Kemal’s family

does not approve of his love for Fuzun. His mother rules out the possibility of real love between them and considers their intimacy to be the result of their infatuation. In her view, it is only the physical attraction that a man would have towards the opposite sex. She admonishes Kemal for ruining his life for the sake of his fantasy:

In a country where men and women can't be together socially, where they can't see each other or even have a conversation, there's no such thing as love ... because the moment men see a woman showing some interest, they don't even bother themselves with whether she's good or wicked, beautiful or ugly- they just pounce on her like starving animals. (617)

The words convey the general atmosphere in Turkey where men and women are denied a space to meet, to interact and to fall in love.

Nevertheless, Pamuk also hints that some of the wealthy and westernised quarters of Istanbul society had transcended these social restrictions and impositions. For example, the Hilton Hotel, where the engagement of Kemal and Sibel takes place, accommodates people with non-conformist temperaments. "The Hilton had been, since the day it opened, one of the few civilized establishments in Turkey where a well-heeled gentleman and a courageous lady could obtain a room without being asked for a marriage certificate" (142). It is also the place where people drink and dance.

Kemal's regular visits to Fuzun's household in Cukurcuma for eight years records the gradual cultural changes that happened in Istanbul in the 1980s. Kemal reflects on the impacts of the military coup in 1980, which prevented him from having a normal life, "martial law was imposed and with it ten o'clock curfew. These obliged me to leave the house at a quarter to ten, long before my heart had satisfied its hunger" (405). All information about the coup is provided to them by the only TV channel in Turkey at that time. The TV also records the cultural changes that are happening across Turkey. Readers come to know of the social transformations through the discussions on various telecasts. The Television informs the readers about the changes that are happening in the social lives of men and women, and even the changes in dress codes. For example, it informs that, by this time, it has become a regular practice among women to wear headscarves or veils in Turkey.

Kemal's visit to Cukurcuma involves, among other things, long conversations about films in Turkey. Feridun provides all the information about the growth of the film industry in the country and the subtle features associated with it. He is also critical of the Turkish censor board for unnecessarily banning films on the grounds of insulting Turkishness and its cultural tradition. It makes Kemal aware of "their power in the film business" (451). The discussions on films also expose the relative merits of the Oriental artistic culture and the imported Western notions of art.

Pamuk presents Fuzun as a bold and non-conformist woman who is ready to fight to protect her honour at any cost. She is not ready to act as per the societal norms and refuses wear a headscarf. When she attempts to get her driver's licence, people are surprised that she arrives without a headscarf, resulting in great confusion and "disruption on account of a beautiful woman appearing without a headscarf in the office of a state bureaucracy, sowing momentary alarm, even panic" (590). This episode also indicates that corruption was rampant in the administrative offices of Turkey. The bureaucrats demand bribe from Fuzun to provide her the licence, which infuriates her and she promptly protests against this tendency. She blurts out to Kemal:

How can they be so vile?

They want money. So let's pay them.

Do you believe women can never be good drivers?

It's not what I think, but it is what they think.

It is what everyone thinks. (596)

Fuzun resolves not to pay a single penny to the corrupt officials even if the prospect of securing a valid driver's license would be ruined due to this. She dreams of becoming a movie actress and accuses Kemal of preventing her from achieving her wishes. She expresses her anger at the end of the novel, "I

couldn't live my life because of you Kemal, Fuzun says. I really wanted to be an actress" (537). His casual apology further enrages her, and she reasons that Kemal fails to accommodate her innate yearnings. The repressed emotions and passions ultimately prompt her to end her life.

Pamuk has designed Fuzun's character in such a way as to project the rising feminine voice of resistance against female objectification. The novel, in this way, exposes the gender dynamics of Turkish patriarchy. Even if Fuzun attempts to articulate herself, she struggles to fulfil her desires. Her tragic death also indicates the fate of the modern Turkish women's inability to cope with the system. She is subjected to the male gaze right from the beginning of her maturing years, and her physical beauty only serves to exacerbate it. She also undergoes physical harassment since her puberty. After marrying Feridun, she manages to avert Kemal's gaze, "like all the Turkish women who became skilful in managing the harassing and restive gaze of men" (388). But when she imitates Kemal's gaze, he is infuriated and shouts at her, "Don't look at me like that!" (389). The narrator indicates here that the intense male gaze is a common phenomenon in Turkey, which is shared collectively in both urban and rural areas, "provincial men who come to Istanbul to look fiercely and admiringly at all the beautiful women without head-scarves who wear lipstick and make-up" (388). It indicates that the male gaze does not have any class distinctions. Kemal also inflicts both mental and physical harassment on Fuzun in the final analysis. It is also because their

relationship involves power and politics- the class status puts Kemal in a privileged position, and Fuzun, despite having a strong temperament, remains weak in this power equation.

Agony and Displacement of the Working Class in *A Strangeness in My Mind*

Pamuk offers a comprehensive view of the socio-cultural and political life of the marginalised sections of the Turkish society in his recent novel *A Strangeness in My Mind*. If *The Museum of Innocence* reflects the subtleties of Istanbul bourgeois life, this novel focuses on the life of the working class and their struggles for survival in the fast-growing city of Istanbul. It also records the impacts of large-scale migration and the displacement of people from their rural surroundings to a cosmopolitan one. The work exposes the gradual process of industrialisation in Turkey and the economic impacts it has created, not only among the middle class, but also among the relegated segments of society like the street vendors and the daily wage labourers. It therefore reflects the diversity and integration of the socio-economic sphere of Turkey in general, and Istanbul in particular.

The novel offers an extensive discussion on the relative merits of rural and city life. Mevlut's father Mustafa Karatas had migrated from a provincial area to Istanbul city in 1960, when the city was gradually embracing modernity and sophisticated life-styles. Pamuk has set the tone of the novel in

the beginning itself by indicating the rural origin and subsequent dislocation of the protagonist:

This is the story of the life and daydreams of Mevlut Karatas, a seller of boza and yogurt. Born in 1957 on the western edge of Asia, in a poor village overlooking a hazy lake in central Anatolia, he came to Istanbul at the age of twelve, living there, in the capital of the world, for the rest of his life (3).

The novel also chronicles all the changes that have taken place in the material as well as the cultural life of Istanbul in the second half of the twentieth century. Since the book is about the life and dreams of a street vendor, it systematically registers the condition of the working class people and their life in Istanbul.

There are many references in the novel which reveal that the presence of street vendors were quite common in Istanbul even during the Ottoman period. When Turkey became a republic in the early part of the twentieth century under the leadership of Ataturk, there were attempts from many quarters to ban street vendors from the streets of Istanbul as part of the modernisation process. But Ataturk himself objected to the idea and promoted their presence across Turkey. Mevlut quotes Ataturk as saying, “Street vendors are the songbirds of the streets, they are the life and soul of Istanbul, he said. Under no circumstances must they ever be banned. From that day on,

street vendors were free to roam the streets of Istanbul” (28). Since Mevlut continues to be a *boza* seller even in the twenty first century when the novel ends, and roams across Istanbul streets in search of his customers, the novel underscores the presence and significance of street vendors in the city and their lives.

The rural life of Turkey and the fast growth of an industrial based economy also find special mention in the novel. Mevlut observes these changes in his village Aksehir and the neighbouring villages like Alayrt and Ulukoy, while he elopes with Rayiha. He “saw transmission towers, trucks on the asphalt roads, and new concrete bridges and read them as signs that the country was growing and developing” (13). His early life in Istanbul witnesses mass changes and infrastructural development in all areas of life. As he gets older, the highly sophisticated life style and the metropolitan culture in the city suffocate him.

Being a *boza* seller who roams around the city selling the traditional beverage, Mevlut has to face several hardships. The conservative sects in the city believe that consuming alcohol is an affront to their cultural tradition since many Ottoman Sultans had banned alcohol in Turkey. One of his clients expresses that “Boza was the drink of choice under the Ottomans, when alcohol and wine were banned. When Murad the Fourth went around in disguise at night, he didn’t have just the taverns and coffee shops shut down

but the boza shops too” (26). However, Mevlut considers *boza* to be a vital part of Turkish tradition. He recurrently asserts this belief to all his clients in Istanbul.

Many characters in the novel including the protagonist, share the experience of undergoing compulsory military service. Right after the formation of the Republic, it became obligatory for the citizens to serve in the army for a few years. Many people found it very hard to endure the army training and the successive military service. Abdurrahman Efendi occasionally reflects on his complicated army years, “I kept getting caught trying to run away, I got beaten up a lot and spent a great deal of time in jail, but let it be known that no one loves our army and our honourable officers more than I do” (39). When Mevlut is forced to undergo military training and subsequent service, the remembrance of these terrible stories baffle him. The eternal strangeness in his mind and his tender disposition are incompatible with the military regimentation. He is also afraid of the behaviour of the army officers: “before reporting for military service, Mevlut had long imagined the beatings doled out by officers, but after just three days on the army base, they’d become a routine, unremarkable sight” (182). Likewise, many reforms implemented by Ataturk in the republic find special references in the novel. For example, Ataturk insisted that people should have surnames with their first name. It is reflected in the words of Suleiman, when he describes the ways in which his family had acquired a surname, “When Ataturk decreed

that everyone should take a surname, the census officer from Beysehir came to our village... to write down the surnames everyone had chosen for themselves” (43).

The recurrent military coup and the army’s involvement in the socio-political affairs in Turkey is also critically deliberated in the novel. The stability in the lives of the working class people like Mevlut is severely affected by the army’s interventions in their everyday life. Mevlut’s father narrates the hardships he had to endure as a street vendor during the 1971 coup, and he accuses “those who have created this anarchy” (80). The military coup created a chaotic atmosphere across Turkey:

Revolutionary groups were robbing banks and kidnapping foreign diplomats for ransom; the government kept declaring martial law and imposing curfews; the military police were searching people’s homes. Every wall in the city was plastered with photos of the most wanted; book sellers were banned from the streets. (81)

The army conducted cleaning drives across the streets and banned all illegal vendors and traders. Freedom of expression was restricted, and with the Turkish press in tow, journalists were effectively silenced. They oppressed all the anti-social elements in the country: “the police targeted famous gangsters, raiding their semi-secret gambling dens and brothels and disrupting their trade

in cigarettes and liquor smuggled in from Europe” (80). In those days Mevlut was in school, and he remembers his history teacher vigorously instilling patriotism among all students by “teaching that the colour of the Turkish flag represented the colour of blood and that the blood of the Turkish people was no ordinary blood” (81). The 1980 coup was more severe for Mevlut and his family, for the officials prohibited street vendors: “the political slogans had been wiped off the walls again, street vendors had been driven off the main roads and squares...” This rendered him jobless, and, above all, he felt himself alienated in the strange state of affairs (195).

Pamuk provides sufficient indication of sectarian violence in Turkey in the novel. The groups such as the Alevis, the Kurds, the Hanefis, the leftists and others find special mention here. Ferhat and Ali are Alevis and they constantly indulge in numerous protests against the Turkish administration to protect the rights of the Alevi community. When an Alevi activist Huseyin Alkan is killed in police firing, Ferhat and others protest with posters and banners. Mevlut is baffled by their way of protest, and also understands that the “Alevis preferred to be called leftists” (115). The protesting Alevis are massacred in Kultepe, and as Ferhat points out, the police control everything including the press: “Tomorrow the newspapers won’t talk about the massacre of Alevis in Kultepe, said Ferhat. They will write that the political uprisings were quashed and that the Communists set themselves on fire and committed suicide out of spite” (131).

Mevlut's father, however, attempts to keep him away from all the sectarian violence. He tells him: "But, son, these people will never stop fighting, they'll never tire of hacking away at each other- politics is just an excuse... please don't get involved. Stay away from the Alevis, the leftists, the Kurds and that Ferhat" (129). He understands that the ultimate victims of mass violence always would be the marginalised lower class people like him, who, largely ignorant of political motives, desperately try to make both ends meet.

Ironically, Ferhat's later life turns out to be against his own idealism, and he meets a tragic death at the end of the novel. His revolutionary spirit withers as he enters into the realm of marital and material life. After marrying Samiha, he turns his attention on making money at first. But very soon, he is drawn towards the pleasurable and flamboyant life in Istanbul. Freshly animated with money and other material comforts, he goes after wine and *raki*, and spends most of his time in night clubs and dance parties. By the time he goes gallivanting around the city, leaving his wife back home alone, Istanbul is already "crawling with Ukrainian women smuggling contraband in their suitcases... the city had become a hotbed of corruption and bribery" (395). While holding one of his night parties, Ferhat is brutally killed by unknown assailants.

The predicament of the working class women is also depicted in the novel. Women from rural areas were denied the basic right of education in the 1970s. Vediha expresses her despair over the lack of her education: “If I’d gone to Istanbul, I would have graduated from high school by now, but there’s no middle school in our village, so no girl has ever gone that far” (141). Moreover, numerous references indicate the widespread domestic violence in the lower class households. When Rayiha informs that Mevlut has never physically abused her, her friend Reyhan is surprised. “Reyhan would feign disbelief that men like Mevlut- men who never hit their wives- existed and she would argue that it must have had something to do with me” (313). Men collectively share patriarchal prejudices, and as Vediha explains in the concluding part of the novel, women are subjected to extreme mental and physical violence. Her interior monologue reflects her traumatic temperament due to the confinement within the four walls of the household. She feels that she has been objectified and restricted by the fallacy of male preconceptions, and expresses her anger not only at her husband, but on other members in the family as well, “Is it fair that my poor little sister and I shouldn’t be allowed to go to the cinema in Sisli? Or that Korkut should categorically forbid me to go out, or to leave the neighbourhood if he does happen to let me leave the house? (467). Her long monologue realistically echoes the predicament of women in Turkish society.

However, Pamuk also indicates the prevalence of the custom of “bride-price” in Turkey, where as part of the marriage agreement, grooms have to pay a considerable sum of money to the bride’s father to get the marriage solemnised. When Korkut wishes to marry VEDIHA, he is not in a position to pay the amount desired by her father Abdurrahman Efendi. When Korkut and Suleiman approach Hadji Hamid Vural to solve the crisis, Hadji reminds them of the importance of fixing an amount before falling in love with a girl, “At least wait until the bride price has been decided. But if you fall in love before all that, like your brother, and you sit down to discuss the price with the girl’s father, then those cunning, crafty fathers will ask you for the moon” (144). Since such a custom is prevalent in society, as Hadji perceives, one should start love only after marriage or a formal engagement. It will help men to avert a hard bargain and put grooms in a safer position. When Mevlut’s daughter Fevziye elopes with her lover without his consent, he is reluctant to call back them and accept their relationship because of the popularity of such a practice. He is afraid of a possible scandal where people would think that, “he’d taken a significant sum of money to allow his daughter to get married to the man” (499).

Pamuk offers a colourful picture of the changing scenario in Turkey in the twenty-first century by the end of the novel. Istanbul has acquired the status of a highly industrialised metropolitan city by the time Mevlut gets old.

He ponders over the initial changes that happened in his poor neighbourhood as part of the government initiatives:

When news first spread in 2006 that Duttepe and Kultepe, along with many other neighbourhoods in Istanbul, had been selected for a large-scale urban development initiative, and that the government was encouraging high-rise construction in the area, local residents were thrilled. Previously, the law had only allowed three- and four-story buildings on these hills. Now you could build up to twelve floors. People felt as if they were being given bundles of cash. (544)

Mevlut has been living in Istanbul for forty-three years, and over the years, he had developed an innate intimacy with the city. But now, in the changing circumstances, he feels himself increasingly alienated, and while groping for the reasons for this estrangement, he wonders, “Was it because of that unstoppable, swelling flood, the millions of new people coming to Istanbul and bringing new houses, skyscrapers, and shopping malls with them?” (573). His reflections convey the traumatic experience of all working class people, whose lives will possibly be crushed due to the process of modernisation and development. He could not make out how he could survive in the fast-growing corporate world around him. “What really struck him was the sea of

skyscrapers and tall buildings rising even farther beyond those limits” (579).

Even then, he is resolved to lead the life of a *boza* seller.

Clashes between Tradition and Modernity in *Istanbul: Memories and the City*

Pamuk’s semi-autobiographical work, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, is a fragmented narrative of the socio-cultural lineage of Turkey. Rather than making a nostalgic journey across the lost Turkish culture, he attempts to reinvent the beauty of its landscape, which is characterised by the presence of *huzun* or melancholy. In this way, he endeavours to create an “other” Istanbul in which the past and the present constantly collide. This blurry and fragmented portrayal would help the readers to have a better understanding of the refined characteristics of the city from the viewpoint of a passionate observer. Both thematically and structurally, the work goes beyond all the conventional definitions of literary forms. Along with personal memories, individual anecdotes, writings by other artists, historical references and newspaper clips, the work encompasses many illustrations and photographs, which convey the rich diversity and harmonious integration of Turkish culture intensely. The thirty-seven chapters in the book appear to be independent stories which are non-linear and hinder a chronological development of events.

Pamuk connects the lineage of his own family with the heritage of Turkey. The family of his grandparents was known as Pamuk, which means cotton, “because of their pale skin and white hair” (11). The cultural pluralism of Ottoman Turkey is visible in his pedigree also. His paternal grandmother hailed from a widely accepted group known as the Circassian and, “Circassian girls, famous for being tall and beautiful, were very popular in Ottoman harems” (11). The reference of Pamuk’s family ancestry is indicative of the cross-cultural aspects of Turkey. The transformation of the country into a republic also changed the fortunes of Pamuk family. New models of development attracted his grandfather, who earned huge wealth through investments. “Having made a great deal of money during the early 1930s, when the new Turkish Republic was investing heavily in railroad building, he built a large factory that made everything from rope to a sort of twine to dry tobacco” (11).

The chapter “The Destruction of the Pashas’ Mansions: A Sad Tour of the Streets” provides many remnants of Ottoman Culture. Here, Pamuk describes the rise and fall of powerful Pashas in the empire, and their contributions towards the smooth functioning of the Ottoman administration. The mansion of Hayrettin Pasha, who was brought to Istanbul as a Circassian slave and later became the Grand Vizier of the empire, reminds the readers of the receptivity of Ottoman culture. Even if he was not a Turk, with his sharp wit and meticulous foreign education, he became the most influential official in the entire administration. He was also instrumental in solving many of the

financial difficulties the empire was facing in the nineteenth century, “The Pasha thus became one of the first in a long line of foreign educated financial experts who, given the mandate to pull Turkey from a sea of debts, went beyond dreaming... of national reforms along western lines” (25). His eminence indicates that, unlike the situation in Western countries, where one had to be born into an aristocratic family to become an influential official, the Ottomans focussed on the merits and skills of people to place them in high ranking positions.

The fragmented memories of the dissolved culture recurrently appear in the work, through which Pamuk makes an imaginary journey across the majestic bygone era. Pamuk describes the composure of his family members when they look at the debris of the magnificent mansions. They also carry many stories about the dissipated greatness and glory of the empire: “... much as we had done in the face of all those stories about crazy princes, opium addicts in the palace harem, children locked in attics, treacherous sultans’ daughters and exiled or murdered pashas- and ultimately the decline and fall of the Empire itself” (27).

Pamuk describes how the entire family feels the deep melancholy embedded in the ambience of this fast-disappearing Ottoman culture. The westernisation drive of the republic erases tradition, and people, including the Pamuk family, turn their attention on the setting up of museums in the households to retain those grand memories.

The collapse of the empire was gradual, and was the result of a series of military defeats in the nineteenth century. As a result of this political shut down, the socio-economic life underwent many hardships at that time, and Istanbul city could never escape from the melancholy it had caused. “The Old City was swamped by immigrants and even the grandest imperial buildings began to show marks of poverty and ruin” (47). The influential Pashas sought refuge in their respective mansions and led a secluded life cut off from the outer world. *Huzun* indicates the deep melancholy rooted in the Turkish psyche, and Pamuk feels that this melancholy is present in every nook and corner of Istanbul, for the city carries the memories of its past in different forms. “Istanbul does not carry its *huzun* as an illness for which there is a cure or an unbidden pain from which we need to be delivered; it carries its *huzun* by choice” (93). This sense of loss, as Esra Akcan argues, is not merely a subjective impression, but also a collective feeling:

Melancholy is no longer something internal to the subject but something connected to the object. It is not a single individual who is melancholic, rather, the city’s landscape (*manzara*), the beautiful objects, elicits the feeling of melancholy as a collective emotion. Melancholy thus leaves the isolated individual and infiltrates the city itself. (41)

Pamuk points out that his creativity is largely driven by this *huzun* and it is felt not only in the city but in other areas also. “In the last one hundred and

fifty years (1850-2000) I have no doubt that not only has huzun ruled over Istanbul, but it has spread to its surrounding areas” (210).

Pamuk’s description of Istanbul clearly conveys the rich cultural pluralism of the Turkish past. The remnants of the empire are present all over the city, and “the difference lies in the fact that in Istanbul, the remains of a glorious past and civilization are everywhere visible” (91). Those relics may not have been kept well-preserved and most of those monuments are largely neglected. Nonetheless, some of those monuments are intact and they narrate many tales of the diversity of the bygone culture, including “the great mosques and other monuments of the city” (91). Pamuk points out four great Turkish writers who could imbibe and articulate this ever-present melancholy in Istanbul. The poet Yahya Kemal, the memoirist Abdulkhak Sinasi Hisar, the journalist-historian Resat Ekrem Kocu, and the novelist Ahmet Hamdi Tanpinar internalised the spirit of the Turkish past and present, and “all four of our melancholic writers lived alone all their lives, never marrying, dying alone”(103).

Among those four great writers, Ekrem Kocu systematically analysed the darker sides of the empire, its methods of tortures and executions. His analysis also offers an appalling view of the system of prosecution and punishment prevalent in the empire, “there was some pleasure in thinking of the history of Istanbul as a gallery of death, torture and horror, illustrated in shadowy black and white” (140). Kocu’s brilliant work, *Istanbul*

Encyclopaedia, functions as a black and white museum through which the rich cultural heritage of Turkey is passed on from generation to generation. The work realistically portrays the clashes and inherent conflicts of a society which is characterised by the convergence of many people from different sections and communities all across the Anatolian region. Therefore, Pamuk asserts, the book truly endorses the Turkish psyche: "... the secret pride we take in seeing a book from Istanbul caught between modernity and Ottoman culture, one that refuses to classify or in any way discipline the anarchic strangeness" (152).

Pamuk illustrates the decline of the Ottoman state and its various cultural forms systematically in the work. The dissolution of the glorious culture took place over different periods and due to different reasons. The Janissaries, the greatest attraction of Ottoman culture, were dissolved by the middle part of the nineteenth century. Moreover, with the disappearance of slave markets, the flow of foreign human resources came to an abrupt end. Westernisation and modernisation of life-style were responsible for this change. In the twentieth century, with the foundation of the Republic, different ethnic groups and religious sects like the Rukai dervishes vanished, and many Mevlevi dervish lodges were also shut down. The production of Ottoman clothing, one of the attractions of the empire, met with an unexpected cessation. The Royal harem was also dissolved due to many unprecedented situations in the nineteenth century. Among these things, what Pamuk finds unbearable is the loss of the numerous testimonials of the

bygone era. He writes: “of all these losses, I think the hardest for Istanbul has been the removal of graves and cemeteries from the gardens and squares of our everyday lives to terrifying high-walled lots, bereft of cypress or view” (218-219).

Among the unique features of Turkish tradition, Pamuk gives utmost emphasis to miniature painting. The effects of this Ottoman art and its significance in catering an objective world-view have never been assessed, and in Pamuk’s view, it is impossible to be evaluated using Western standards. It was an integral part of the Persian tradition. “Ottoman miniaturists took their inspiration from Persians; like the Divan poets who praised and loved the city not as a real place but as a word” (40). Similarly calligraphy was also one of the most attractive aspects of Turkish art. The collapse of the Ottoman state also resulted in the complete disappearance of the miniature painting tradition and calligraphy, which was popularised mainly by the Ottoman miniature painters in the sixteenth century. With the birth of the modern republic, Turkey also abandoned its Persian script and adopted the western Latin alphabet for Turkish language, which was the ultimate nail on the coffin of the rich art form of manuscript illumination and calligraphy.

Conclusion

In an interview given to the *RT Television* in 2009, Orhan Pamuk articulated his primary motives for pursuing the career of a writer: “I’m not trying to explain Turkey to others. In fact, I’m first trying to explain Turkey to Turks and I was just trying to understand and address the Turkish nation”. It emphatically explicates Pamuk’s intention to visualize the problematic cultural vibes of Turkey with its hybrid and synthesized form. He accomplishes this goal to a great extent by following an ingenious style for the fictional representations of his own diverse culture. To achieve this end, he has successfully employed different metafictional strategies in almost all of his novels which can also be categorized as semi-autobiographical ones. He follows divergent and hybrid literary representations in both form and content. This experimentation in form equips him to represent the complex cultural terrains of Turkey in different ways. Erdag Goknar offers his observation in this regard in the essay “Secular Blasphemies: Orhan Pamuk and the Turkish Novel”:

He experiments with fictional forms from social realism to modernism and from traditional narratives to postmodernism that synthesize internal and external influences. These transformations in literary form make Turkishness contingent on various unrecoiled contexts, including secular nationalism,

European orientalism (or Turkology), Islamic mysticism (or Sufism), and the historical legacy of the Ottoman Empire. (305)

An attempt has been made in the dissertation to connect the literary output of Orhan Pamuk, and the cultural plurality and hybridity of Turkey within a critical perspective, and it unequivocally underpins the fact that, as a creative genius, Orhan Pamuk's sensibility has consistently been modified by the influence of Turkish tradition and culture. A close scrutiny of all his novels conveys that he has imbibed the rich cultural legacy of the Ottoman Empire as well as the diversity of the modern Turkish society. His works are the reflections of the features of a nation that is deeply polarised in terms of its existence and viewpoints. The works demonstrate at large the transformations that have occurred in the Turkish culture over the first and second half of the twentieth century. Since Turkey is known for its wholehearted acceptance of foreign culture, it has also undergone several cultural changes. Further, the study has stressed the geographical position of Turkey, which has been primarily responsible for the gradual alterations in the Turkish society known for its cross-cultural interactions with Western societies. The novels touch upon the subtle features and nuances of the Istanbul aristocratic life-style and its gradually changing outlook, the process of westernisation in the domestic and the public spheres, and the enigma of being caught in between tradition and modernity. The fictional discourse of Pamuk also emphasise the majestic

lineage of Ottoman art, especially miniature painting and, being primarily a painter, he has illustrated its unique style and characteristics.

The study has also scrutinized Pamuk's literary representation of the complex formation of religious identity in Turkey. He asserts his religious identity and the significance of representing the belief system in the country in an interview with Dieter Bednarz and Volker Hag:

I consider myself a person who comes from a Muslim culture.

In any case, I would not say that I'm an atheist. So I'm a Muslim who associates historical and cultural identification with this religion. I do not believe in a personal connection to God; that's where it gets transcendental. I identify with my culture, but I am happy to be living on a tolerant, intellectual island where I can deal with Dostoyevsky and Sartre, both great influences for me.

The dissertation has also focused on how far Pamuk has projected the process of re-Islamisation in Turkey after the formation of the Republic in the twentieth century. It has stressed the presence of several radical groups and their attempt to capitalise on the negative perceptions of Kemalist ideology in modern Turkey. Pamuk is, thus, successful in highlighting the deep cultural polarity, with its inherent conflicts and uncompromising attitudes, between the traditional Islamic world and the secular modern world. His novels critically examine the value system, moral codes and political unrest deeply

embedded in the recent history of Turkey. Moreover, they touch upon the global issues of war, terror and the ensuing war on terror, and provide a platform for debating political, religious, ethnic and communal issues prevalent in the modern era. As Merve Kavakci observes, the awkward political unrest in Turkey reverberates in Pamuk's literary discourses:

With *Snow*, Orhan Pamuk walks a fine line between reality and fiction. With a novelist's acuteness, he presents some of the dire political and social realities of Turkey, illuminating the underlying themes of the domestic threats to the state edifice in Turkey, namely, Islam and Kurdish nationalism. (163)

Pamuk's works are also critical about the westernisation project of the Turkish republic and its failure to adopt a suitable solution for the crisis which was brought about by the process. As Pamuk states in *Other Colours*, Turkey faces the same setback in the modern era also in its failure to be a part of the European Union: "Turkey is still knocking on Europe's door, asking to come in, full of high hopes and good intentions but also feeling rather anxious and fearing rejection... Watching the negotiation with the European Union, seeing that for all our efforts to be Western, they still don't want us" (370).

Pamuk has brilliantly articulated this Turkish dilemma in his novels. In *My Name is Red*, the brutal murder of Enishte Effendi can actually be a

critique on the modern project of radical secularization in the Turkish Republic. Uner Daglier points out this fact:

In *My Name is Red*, the westernizing modernizer Enishte Effendi suffers violent death at the hands of a guilt-ridden Islamic disciple and his reformist project withers away. Thus Pamuk mimics a prevalent conservative criticism against full-fledged secular modernisation, or westernisation, in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic: that the rootless project, along with its authors, is bound to be rejected by the people of the land. (156)

The hybrid and plural nature of Turkish culture is intensely portrayed in all the works, both fictional and non-fictional, of Orhan Pamuk. Even though Pamuk was born in the post-1950 era of Turkey, he has reflected and remarkably critiqued the diversity and plurality of the rich heritage of Turkey as well as the contemporary life in his creative endeavours. The novels vividly offer philosophical reflections of the social and cultural life of the background to which the author belongs. Moreover, his works are deeply rooted in the traumatic life of the complex characters who are caught between many polarized attitudes and tendencies in society. They can often be categorized as real-life characters who are forced to undergo several individual complexities and personal transformations.

Thus, the novels selected for the study have common themes, motives and significance. In fact, in his works, Pamuk provides a stunning figurative space of Istanbul as an imaginary realm in which several factors like the Ottoman legacy, the Cultural Revolution, the coups, Islam, Sufism, Turkism and others coexist in their varying forms. He dismisses the notion of Kemalist secularism as the teleology of the Cultural Revolution in Turkey, and attempts to accommodate and highlight through his many artistic representations, the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural fabrics of Turkey. At the same time, the works also exhibit the harmonious fusion of all these variegated elements in the Turkish cultural terrain.

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