

ELIF SHAFAK'S *THE FORTY RULES OF LOVE* BETWEEN CONSTRUCTIVE AND DISRUPTIVE COSMOPOLITANISMS

Melih KÖKCÜ
Universität Erfurt

Abstract

*In contemporary literature, cosmopolitanism has become more significant for fiction as it narrates today's crucial nonhomogeneous political, social, and cultural issues. In a cosmopolitan context, authors respond to the needs of contemporary readerships by writing beyond nation, border, and topicality. Approaching otherness, migration, and mobility with a positive attitude, cosmopolitanism allegedly offers tools to negotiate with "the other" that transcend xenophobia and parochialism. This positive approach to "the other" is presented in Elif Shafak's 2010 novel, *The Forty Rules of Love* through the binary of localism-supralocalism and particularism-universalism. The book merges the fictionalized biography of the Persian-Turkish Sufi poet known to the West as Rumi, and the story of a Jewish-American housewife seeking spiritual renaissance in her monotonous life. Shafak managed to place her novel on the Turkish, American, and global literary markets due to her weaving of particular and universal narratives in the novel, but she creates her own notion of cosmopolitanism by appropriating vernacular stories and building transnational narratives out of them. Shafak's decontextualization of Rumi's biography in the novel is problematic since it distorts indigenous stories to meet the demands of global readerships and their cosmopolitan imaginaries. In her novel, Shafak does not offer co-evolution of the global and local actors; rather, the novel revolves around inextricable cosmopolitanism. This paper focuses on cosmopolitanism in Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* not only as positive mode but also as generative of disruptive misrepresentations of Rumi.*

Keywords: Cosmopolitanism, Anglophone Literature, Turkish Literature, Elif Shafak, Rumi

1. Introduction

My paper studies Shafak's US-centric understanding of cosmopolitanism in her novel, *The Forty Rules of Love* as a Western-styled literary production revolving around Turkey's heterodox religious tradition, Mevlevi Sufism, which is practised through poetry, music and dance. Shafak prominently effaces national affiliations, enmity to 'the Other' and parochialism by stressing that cosmopolitanism and transnationalism are essential to today's globally-integrated communities. She narrates a purportedly multicultural and multireligious Anatolian society in the 13th century side by side with a twentieth-century, liberal and cosmopolitan United States. Therefore, she simulates both centuries "as times of unprecedented religious clashes, cultural misunderstandings, and a general sense of insecurity and fear of the Other" (2010: 15). By claiming an inter-tangled diffusion of both unrelated Anatolian and American societies under a cyclical chronology, Shafak claims that xenophobia and self-righteousness repeat themselves regardless of time and space. For global literary market dominated by Western publishers and canons, her best-selling novel, *The Forty Rules of Love* reforms Islam's inherent philosophy into a 'westoxicated' religion. That is why she generates an extracanonical interpretation of Islam through the misrepresentation of the notable conventional Sufi philosopher, Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi as a heretic figure of Islam. However, Safavi and Weightman write that "Rumi came from a line of pious and ascetic Muslim preachers and teachers of canonical law... he too was deeply pious and ascetic preacher and teacher" (2009: 26). Shafak distorts local narratives of Rumi by museumizing and marginalizing Turkey's Islamic culture for global readerships. While the American literary market is fascinated by cultural translations of Rumi for a spiritual salvation, she misemploys the Western fascination with an Eastern poet and distorts Sufism in order to appeal to popular currents of the American spirituality. Namely, she constructs a cosmopolitan understanding of Islam that is integrated to today's global system, while its particularist narratives are disrupted in her novel. Elif Shafak, as an award-winning British-Turkish novelist and a best-seller female author in Turkey, writes her novels in both Turkish and English. She publishes her novels in English under an anglicized spelling of her name, Elif Shafak. Her novels have been translated into more than fifty languages and she has been awarded several prizes and recognitions in the literary and political fields. Shafak spent her early life in Ankara, Amman, Madrid and Istanbul and was raised within an unconventionally non-patriarchal household. She holds a PhD in political science and she taught at universities

in Turkey, the UK and the USA. Regarding her itinerant early life as the daughter of a Turkish diplomat, Shafak's novels deal with cosmopolitanism, transnationalism and pluralism as objection to the understanding of a culturally-purged society. In an interview held by the British Council in 2014, she claimed that writing her novels in English brings her closer to home, Turkey. Shafak transgresses many borders related to nationalism, such as the identity of language and country. She shows her investment in a radically post-national world. Therefore, she enjoys "an existence beyond the bound of collectiveness, conventional practices and traditions of classifying the world" as Rapport states (2012: 101).

2. The Enthusiasm for Sufism in America

As a compelling philosophical figure who lived in Asia Minor, the ascetic poet Rumi has been present in the American literary market since 1995. His poems have been recently sold in thousands of copies (El-Zein, 2000: 73). Furlanetto remarks a significant coincidence about the outbreak of Rumi's poetry in the US during the nineties, while Pascal Casanova sees "a vogue for exoticism so great that publishers moved quickly to manufacture bestsellers for an international public (Furlanetto, 2013: 202). This surprising enthusiasm for Rumi's work in the United States is neither a new circumstance nor a short-winded whim. Before Sufism arrives in the New World, it has the English romantic background as a wellspring of inspiration for American transcendentalists. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman developed a significant interest towards Eastern religious traditions and showed "[their] appreciation of literary possibilities afforded by Asian cultures and so-called oriental tales, of which the Arabian Nights and Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* are notable examples" (Hodder, 2010: 29). Emerson was impressed with Plotinus and by his effect on Eastern spiritualities. He wrote about Persian poetry and admired Zoroastrianism (Ekhtiyar, 2014: 57). In spite of his vocal infatuation with Eastern traditions and Sufism, Emerson's approach to them reveals Orientalist biases. According to him, the Orient has its untainted nature and its piety was preserved from the ancient times till today. He asserted during his speech at Harvard's Divinity School that the fragrance and originality of the Eastern thought "dwelled always deepest in the minds of men in the devout and contemplative East, not alone in Palestine, where it reached its purest expression, but in Egypt, in Persia, in India, in China" (Hodder, 2010: 29). Emerson read the Eastern philosophers and had a grasp of the Sufi tradition. He had "a wide range of non-Western sources as well, including Joseph von Hammer's German

translations of the Sufi poets” (Hodder, 2010: 30). In his further reading of the Sufi literature, he studied “*Akhlaq-i Jalali* (Jalalian Ethics), a mystical handbook translated into English in early 1839” (Ekhtiyar, 2014: 58). This handbook of Jalalian ethics is “a reference which shows the way in which the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle were introduced to Persian mysticism” (Ekhtiyar, 2014: 58). He was not only aware of the Persian mystic writers, but also their Arabic counterparts. He “showed his antagonism toward the Islamic concept of fate, which he found among Arabian and Persian poets” (Ekhtiyar, 2014: 59). Emerson knew such principal Islamic concepts as fate (*qadar*) and free-will well. He was aware of the basic doctrines of Islamic tradition, especially those of Sufism. He admired Hafiz’s philosophy in his Sufi poetry. Ekhtiyar writes about Emerson’s interest in Sufism that “very late in 1841, for the first time in his Journals, Emerson shared the appreciation of Hafiz’s thought, his divine ecstasy, his eternal pride, and his boundless joy and in a journal entry for 1842, he writes of Sa’di that he celebrates the omnipotence of a virtuous soul” (Ekhtiyar, 2014: 59). Later on, Emerson wrote his “*Bacchus*”, which also bears traces of Sufism as well as those of Plato. W. R. Alger suggested that “while Emerson was composing *Bacchus*, he was inspired by a *ghazal* of Hafiz entitled *Bring Me Wine*” (Ekhtiyar, 2014: 64). Undoubtedly, Hafiz and Emerson celebrate intoxication and admire nature in the same manner. Emerson sees nature as the source of his literary aesthetics as Hafiz does while speaking of divine love.

Walt Whitman as a disciple of Emerson, although to a lesser extent, showed enthusiasm towards Eastern spiritualities and philosophies as well. He was abundantly fascinated by the issue of universal love and tolerance in Sufism. Mahnaz Ahmad writes that this issue “unites the mystical poetry of the fourteenth-century Persian Sufi poet, [Hafiz] and the visionary outpourings of nineteenth-century American poet, [Whitman]” (Ahmad, 2014: 153). Walt Whitman, one of the transcendentalist proponents of the unity of being or, as in Sufi understanding, *wahdat al-wujud*, always believed that individuals could find self and unity of being in the universe. Massud Farzan (2014) argues for accurate similarities of Whitman’s and Rumi’s mystical experiences and reflection of Sufism in “*Song of Myself*” and “*A Persian Lesson*” in “*Whitman and Sufism: Towards ‘A Persian Lesson’*”. Sufi poets influenced the American transcendentalists and brought American transcendentalism a new understanding of issues that are generally perceived as negative in Christian faith and Western cultures, such as death and dissolution. For example, Whitman celebrates his dissolution whilst Rumi calls his own death a wedding day since he believes that he meets his beloved, Shams and God. These concepts of dissolution and death became positive unifying

elements for Emerson and Whitman to break down extremism in American society. More to this point, American transcendentalist writers adopted a universal understanding of Sufism into their religiosity within an inclusive approach. This adoption of Sufism was followed by other American literary masters and also fascinates today's American writers and artists. As Azadeh Moaveni (2017) writes in *The New York Times* about Rumi's posthumous reputation in the United States, Sufism became easily admissible as opposed to fundamentalist Islam due to its spiritual love in the mode of romantic love poetry. Also, Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* today appeals to many readerships due to her assimilable Sufi understanding that pledges universal beatitude. Therefore, Alev Adil (2010) writes in *Independent* that "[Shafak's] engaging vision of a non-judgemental Sufi path to Islam that rejects religious fundamentalism and is accessible to all has made the novel a Turkish best-seller". Besides American transcendentalists, Coleman Barks also contributed to American literary market with his translations of Rumi's poetry, so that Rumi's popularity grew steadily throughout America since then. Barks' versions of Rumi created a new image of Islam within the American literary market. Considering the popularity of Rumi in the US, it is legitimate to hypothesize that Shafak also intended to benefit from Sufism in the same manner as Emerson and Whitman incorporated it into their society. Her discussion of Sufism universalizes and anti-radicalizes equation between Islam and fundamentalism. That is why, in the American literary tradition, Sufism became ornamental and catered to the needs of societies. In *The Forty Rules of Love*, Shafak created the character of Rumi to be a conspicuous example of moderation in order to make him palatable to both conservative and secular fringe elements in Turkey as well as in the US.

3. The Americanization of Rumi through 'Cosmopolitanism'

In Delanty's article "The Cosmopolitan Imagination: Critical Cosmopolitanism and Social Theory" (2006), cosmopolitanism as a term is classified under three titles: as moral, political and cultural cosmopolitanism.. In this paper, cultural cosmopolitanism is taken into consideration in order to analyze the constructive and disruptive cultural examples of Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love*. Delanty writes that cultural cosmopolitanism deals with "a less dualistic view of the relation between the particular and the universal" (Delanty, 2006: 28). Shafak endeavours in her novel to transcend the cultural differences between particular and universal narratives. Her characters are marginal personalities that live beyond their time

and space. The novel depicts a romance of a Jewish-American housewife, Ella, and her novelist correspondent, Aziz, that parallels with the thirteenth-century story of the Persian-Turkish Sufi poet, Rumi, and his religious muse, Shams. She writes a cosmopolitan fiction beyond times and spaces on the transnational convergence of the story of the medieval Persian poet, Rumi and a contemporary American protagonist, Ella. Rumi's biography and his vernacular Islamic stories are appropriated by Shafak with the goal of building transnational narratives out of them around a US-centric notion of cosmopolitanism, rather than around the co-evolution of global and local elements.

Rumi was born in Balkh, Khorasan in 1207 and he had to flee with his family from his hometown to Konya, in present-day Turkey, because of the impending invasions of the Mongols. Chittick writes about his religious profession that "following in his father's footsteps, Rumi became attracted to Sufism early in life and became the disciple of a number of spiritual masters" (Chittick, 2005: 3). Before his title as a religious head in Konya, he studied religion in Aleppo. He had before long a cosmopolitan life ante litteram that stretched beyond borders. After he met Shamsi Tabriz, he dedicated himself to the intoxication with divine love. Chittick asserts also about Rumi that "Western orientalisks have called him without doubt the most eminent Sufi poet and the greatest mystical poet of Islam" (Chittick, 2005: 4). Therefore, Rumi is today renowned not only among Muslim communities, but also by global fanbases. His reputation about love and clemency leads him to be read and written about universally. Having been inspired by Rumi's biography and his universal reputation, Shafak composes her novel about his drastic transformation from a Muslim clergyman into a Sufi mystic. Shafak's Rumi is a creation of a moderate Islamic discourse that ensues from religious clashes, cultural conflicts, and a sense of distrustfulness (Shafak, 2010: 15). Rumi is a heterodox Islamic character, who lives in a tolerant society that is threatened by the Mongols. Shafak's thirteenth-century Anatolian community is a pluralistic society beyond nation-state and topicality. Shams is highly impressed by this heterogeneous society, where many languages are spoken and he, therefore, defines the whole city as "Tower of Babel" (Shafak, 2010: 109).

... I roamed the streets, amazed at the mixture of religions, customs, and languages permeating the air. I ran into Gypsy musicians, Arab travellers, Christian pilgrims, Jewish merchants, Buddhist priests, Frankish troubadours, Persian artists, Chinese acrobats, Indian snake charmers, Zoroastrian magicians, and Greek philosophers... I

heard people speak Venetian, Frankish, Saxon, Greek, Persian, Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian, Hebrew, and several other dialects I couldn't even distinguish... Amid this chaos I stood in a place of unperturbed silence and serenity (Shafak, 2010: 109).

In the passage above, Shams praises the peaceful co-existence of different ethnic groups in Anatolia. Shafak's Anatolia is radically different from the mass cultural homogenization of modern societies that are based on nation-states. Her magical-realist novel antagonizes an intensely spiritual society. She writes her novel in favor of a society model consisting of different beliefs, ethnicities and cultures by re-centralizing Islamic spiritualism. Shams' spirituality does not externalize the different and contradictory ones; it rather unifies all existence in the universe. Thus, Shafak considers otherness, migration and mobility with a positive attitude in the novel. In the following pages, Shams speaks of people's interconnection in the universe beyond the dividedness.

“If we can embrace the universe as a whole, with all its differences and contradictions, everything will melt into One... The universe is one being. Everything and everyone is interconnected through an invisible web of stories... One man's pain will hurt us all. One man's joy will make everyone smile” (Shafak, 2010: 207, 208).

In *The Forty Rules of Love*, Shafak abundantly draws from *The Sufi Path of Love* by Chittick and excerpts from Barks' translations of Rumi. An important point about Barks' translations is the fact that it popularized Rumi in the United States. These popular translations created an alternative version of Rumi, widely different from the Persian originals. Thus, Barks expunged Koranic and doctrinal references of Rumi's poems. Furlanetto assesses Barks' translations as “more accessible forms suitable for the tastes and sensitivities of the contemporary American readership” (Furlanetto, 2013: 203). On a more critical note, El-Zein claims that the impact of Rumi's work on the American public is mostly related to an imitative concept that is designed for American spiritual canvass and Barks' Rumi disfigures the Muslim Sufi tradition “into an elusive spiritual movement” (El-Zein, 2000: 72). She terms this new understanding of Rumi and Sufism in the United States as “New Sufism”, regarded as “treatment for depression and sell products” in a commercial way (El-Zein, 2000: 72). Those assumptions show that Sufism lost its original religious spirituality through Americanization. Rumi became phenomenal in the United States as a version of another

Islam, 'sanitized' from Koranic references and doctrinal intricacies. That is why Shafak offers a pseudo-cosmopolitan understanding of Sufism that is assimilated to her own US-centric notion, rather than to today's cosmopolitan world, formed with both "relativist and universalist [narratives] on the possibility of knowledge that transcends cultural boundaries" (Cheah, 1997: 158, 159). Cheah contends that "cosmopolitanism is a necessary response to our continuing integration into a global system since ideational and affective content of cosmopolitanism fosters universally communicable values and pleasures" (Cheah, 1997: 158, 159). Shafak attempts to offer 'a communicable Islam' that is adapted to today's global order, and provides global readers with tools to negotiate with "the other". In her novel, Rumi becomes a phenomenal cosmopolitan figure who speaks of universalism. He is a "great scholar of East and West" (Shafak, 2010: 155) who claims that "there is a perfect harmony and subtle balance in all that is and was in the universe" (Shafak, 2010: 343). He is a very significant figure for Shafak as he symbolizes a universal divine existence in Islam. Therefore, Shafak celebrates "a dispersed polycentric globe" aloof from fundamentalism that is related to transnational and cosmopolitan experiences "on how culture is produced through travel relations and local/global historical encounters" (Cheah, 1997: 165). Yet, while Rumi's panoptic Islamic philosophy welcomes each particle of the universe without excluding other religious stances and other cultural differences, she adjusts his universal view of Islam into a biased cosmopolitan understanding. Having allowed a cosmopolitan figure, but conventionally trained Muslim to be based on spirituality, Shafak represents a universal Islam that is appealing to both local and global readerships. However, she narrates Rumi as an authentic self-representation that talks about Islam from Anglo-American perspective and this resulted in destruction of local Muslim narratives.

Another important point in the novel is the fact that Ella, the novel's co-protagonist, converts herself into Rumi after her spiritual journey. Shafak replicates Rumi as Ella seeking spiritual renaissance in her monotonous life to enable American readership to understand the Islamic context.

"I know you're not a Sufi." Aziz smiled. "And you don't have to be one. Just be Rumi. That's all I am asking of you... you can be Rumi. If you let love take hold of you and change you, at first through its presence, then through its absence... we're all subject to change. It is a journey from here to there" (Shafak, 2010: 326 - 327).

Shafak decontextualized Rumi's biography and religious personality because she plays with its indigenous context to meet the demands of American and global readerships and their cosmopolitan imaginaries. She interiorized an American viewpoint due to her appropriation of the Islamic heterodox tradition. Meantime, Shafak's assumption of the fact that Ella becomes Rumi without being a Muslim also reminds the quintessence of Barks' sanitized Sufism. According to Delanty, cosmopolitanism is "more than simply co-existence"; this commonality leads to "co-evolution of societal levels in a transformation of self-understanding (Delanty, 2006: 41)... to re-define [the self] from the perspective of the periphery" (Delanty, 2006: 42). While de-constructing the self - meaning Shafak's both topical and universal identities here - as a purported outsider, she deploys Americanizing and also self-orientalizing approaches that originate from an Anglo-American perspective. By doing so, she attests her cosmopolitan attitude to resist Islamization or Muslim fundamentalism. Shafak's Americanization includes the rigorous misrepresentation of Rumi and US-centric design of Islam for the Western readers and consumers. Due to her American perspective in *The Forty Rules of Love*, Shafak approaches Sufism from the periphery. Whilst cosmopolitanism impresses on a "thinking compelling to favour a universalistic orientation" (Chernilo, 2012: 47), her peripheral perspective splays towards a manner that accords of the American domestication of Rumi by depriving local stories from their originality into a self-(mis)representation. At the same time, Shafak revolts against Islamic radicality and impositions with her American-styled cosmopolitan perspective that is expansive to a wider world. Delanty also considers cosmopolitanism as "the revolt of the individual" (Delanty, 2006: 26). Shafak's revolt resulted in a certain repudiation of conventional Islam. This repudiation is evidently sensed in the novel. Her American character, Ella, who is of Jewish origin, thinks that religion causes fanaticism, but Islam tends to be more violent.

Ella saw herself as a liberal, opinionated Democrat, a nonpracticing Jew... [She] believed that the major problem consuming the world today, just as in the past, was religion. With their unparalleled arrogance and self-proclaimed belief in the supremacy of their ways, religious people got on her nerves. Fanatics of all persuasions were unbearable, but deep inside she thought that fanatics of Islam were the worst. (Shafak, 2010: 159).

Ella is averse to religion by not differentiating amongst moderate believers and radicals, yet

claiming that the Muslim fanatics have more tendency to create social conflicts. However, Shafak opposes Aziz's modest religious spirituality to Ella's harshly-generalizing opinions in the novel. He is a "spiritual man who took matters of religion and faith seriously, stayed away from all contemporary politics" (Shafak, 2010: 159). Also, his spiritual transformation into a Sufi that "shared bread with hundreds of mystics from every country and religion" (Shafak, 2010: 159) refers to a significant difference between spirituality and religion in the novel. Shafak emphasizes that Sufism has more unifying elements than Islam. Aziz's non-possessive Sufi belief resembles the pristine spirituality of Shams without its doctrinal complexity. He, as a wandering dervish, utters that "I roam east and west, searching for God high and low. I hunt everywhere for a life worth living and a knowledge worth knowing. Having roots nowhere, I have everywhere to go" (Shafak, 2010: 39) and he adds later on that "Sufis don't go extremes. A Sufi always remains mild and moderate" (Shafak, 2010: 153). Shams symbolizes a unique universalism abstaining from extreme behaviours. According to Shafak, Sufism, as a popular Islam, is considered as an only moderated religious cult urging to compliance to her inextricable cosmopolitanism. Morgan remarks in his article that "a large percentage of Americans identify themselves as 'spiritual' but decidedly not 'religious'" (Shafak, 2010: 31). Apart from Turkey's religious identity, Shafak attempts to create an American understanding of spirituality as freed from allegiance to institutional religion beyond religious traditions and cultural boundaries. Hence, Shafak's perception of cosmopolitanism is problematic and disruptive in her novel in regard to the religious context of Rumi's poetry in Islam and her contemporary perspective of Sufism. Delanty refers to cosmopolitanism as "the multiplicity of ways in which the social world is constructed in different modernities [and] a cultural medium of societal transformation that is based on the principle of world openness, which is associated with the notion of global publics" (Delanty, 2006: 27). Domesticating Islam into a version that enables American readerships to identify themselves with Muslim characters, Shafak re-presents a US-centric cosmopolitanism in the novel. She inclines to have a monopolistic approach, rather than pluralistic, to the concept of cosmopolitanism.

Shafak identifies Sufism with a 'whitened' philosophy in the novel by ignoring its structural tenets. She construes it within the boundaries of her own notion of cosmopolitanism. In other words, Sufism becomes ornamental for her as adapted to the American understanding of spirituality. This Americanizing approach longing to identify the self with the 'Western' discourses disrupts the notion of the local. Shafak, therefore, demonstrates a 'Western'

literary behavior superseded by transnational narratives. But, Nigel Rapport states that “the individuals have the capacity to author their own world-views, to construe their own life-projects, and they should have the right to fulfill this capacity as they see fit and insofar as they do not infringe the rights of others” (Rapport, 2012: 101). Shafak’s cosmopolitan status ensures an independent authorship emancipated from the local narratives to earn a personal space in the global literary market. This personal liberation leads her to an American-styled writing. However, Furlanetto points out Shafak’s assimilation to American hegemonic narratives to develop a transatlantic relationship between the United States and Turkey by writing about ‘a popular Islam’ (Furlanetto, 2013: 208).

4. Conclusion

Delanty states that “cosmopolitanism is linked with the universalism of modern western thought... and reflected the revolt of the individual against the social world, for to be a ‘citizen of the world’ was to reject the immediately given and closed world of particularistic attachments” (Delanty, 2006: 26). During her speech at Intelligence Squared, Shafak claims herself as a citizen of the world who embodies the cosmopolitan spirit as she considers herself to belong to nowhere. In her statement made for Pen America, she declares that modernization and secularization of Turkey occurred from above and she regards it as “the state’s project to build another culture out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire”. Her novel *The Forty Rules of Love* reverberates a nostalgic multicultural and spiritual structure of the Anatolian society which is based on a pure past that is not touched by societal elites. That is why she criticizes homogenization of societies and claims that Turkey failed to understand the importance of cosmopolitanism, diversity and co-existence due to its forcible expunging of multicultural and spiritualist past. Whilst Shafak succeeded to present a nostalgic Anatolia that celebrates its pluralism and polychromy, she failed to represent a verisimilar Islamic tradition in her novel since she expounds a popular Sufism that is easily assimilable to today’s global world order under the American hegemony. Namely, her cosmopolitan understanding of Sufism tends to be Americanized spiritualism by dissociating principles of Islam. As a Turkish novelist living abroad who is willing not to return home, her novel revolves around “restorative nostalgia [that] stresses *nostos* [homecoming] and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home” (Boym, 2001: xviii). Fictionalized thirteenth-century Anatolia becomes ‘her lost home’ that is reconstructed by her transhistorical and

transnational readings as opposed to culturally-purged societies. But, the English version of the novel creates a huge cultural ambiguity between its Sufi concept and Shafak's Turkish readership. This obscurity results from Shafak's Americanizing approach to Mevlevi Sufism. Shafak liberated herself from accusations of fundamentalism by creating her own realm of authorship that is based on cosmopolitanism, of which are Islamic unorthodoxy and literary consumerism. Her vigorous cosmopolitanism in the novel offers 'liberated' Sufism as a pursuit of spirituality for both 'fundamentalist' Islamic orient and 'consumerist' Judeo-Christian occident (Adil, 2010). Edward Said writes in *Culture and Imperialism* that "liberation as an intellectual mission has now shifted from the settled, established, and domesticated dynamics of culture to its unhoused, decentred, and exilic energies" (Said, 1994: 403). At this liberation, as Said states, the author "is purely not one thing. Labels like [Turkish], or woman, or Muslim, or American are no more than starting points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind" (Said, 1994: 407).

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