Islam and Literature: A New Scheme Proposal in the Light of Conceptual Discussions*

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Öz: Türkiye'nin deneyimleri söz konusu olduğunda "Batı" ve "modernite"nin birlikte anılması ve birbirinin manasını karşılayan terimler olarak kullanılmasının temel nedeni Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinin laikleşme politikaları ve Batı'yı her anlamda örnek alan inkılâp hedefleridir. Politik amaçlar ve reform kapsamındaki değişimlerin yalnız siyasî yansımaları değil; edebî, sanatsal izdüşümleri de olmuştur. Bu kapsamda konusu İslâm olan edebiyat Osmanlı'ya yani lağvedilene ait olduğu düşünülerek terk edilmiş; bu edebiyatın boşluğunu doldurmak için "yeni edebiyat" içerisinde verilen eserlerin de bahsi geçen edebî geleneğin karşısında yorumlanması kaçınılmaz hale gelmiştir. Böylelikle günümüzde roman gibi modern formların konusu İslâm olan edebiyatı şekillendirdiği düşünüldüğünde, yeni formların bütün bir kavramsal tartışmanın neresine oturtulacağı sorunu gündeme gelir. Dolayısıyla geleneksel ya da modern formlarla yazılan ve konusu İslam olan edebi eserlere ilişkin bir adlandırma problemi doğmuştur. Bu çalışmada, konusu İslam olan edebi eserlerin edebiyat tarihi içersindeki yerini tespit etmek, söz konusu edebiyatın yeni içerik ve formlarla da ilişki kurduğunun altını çizmek ve İslâmî edebiyat araştırmacılarının dikkatini 20. yüzyıldan sonra da devam eden İslâmî edebî geleneğe çekmek için ilgili dönemi içeren yeni bir isimlendirme önerilmiştir. Böylece yeni muhteva ve formlarla dönüşen İslami edebi geleneğin işaret ettiği saha belirginleştirilmiş ve önceki adlandırmalara kıyasla daha kapsayıcı bir edebi geleneğin varlığına dikkat çekilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: İslâmî Roman, Türk İslâm Edebiyatı, İslâmî Edebiyat, İslâmcı Edebiyat, Modern Edebî Türler.

Abstract: When it comes to Turkey's experience, the reasons for using *West* and *modernity* together are the secularisation policies of Republican Turkey and its reform goals, which take the West as their example in every sense. Besides these political reflections, literary and artistic changes were also part of the political aims and reforms. In this regard, all literature having an Islamic core was abandoned as "Ottoman" and therefore irrelevant. This inevitably led to works of "modern literature" being interpreted as against the former one. Thus, considering the fact that both modern forms (e.g., novels) and traditional Islamic literary forms shape literature with an Islamic core today, a certain issue has arisen: Where should the new forms be located in the conceptual discussion? Consequently, how does one "name" those works created in traditional or modern forms and having Islam as their subject? To determine the place of literary works having an Islamic subject in literary history, this article highlights that Islam is in a relationship with the new forms and that this relationship is both healthy and deserves to be examined. It also seeks to draw the attention of Islamic literature researchers to the continuing Islamic literary tradition that after the 20th century, a new naming is proposed for the cited period. In this way, the field referred to by the Islamic literary tradition as being developed with new content and forms is clarified, and the existence of a literary tradition that is more inclusive than the others developed in previous naming trials is highlighted.

Keywords: Islamic novel, Turkish Islamic Literature, Islamic Literature, Islamist Literature, Modern Literary Forms.

Introduction

The Turks' acceptance of Islam affected not only their social and cultural life, but also their traditions. The new religion changed and sometimes transformed literary works in terms of both content and form. The ensuing interaction with literary fields of other Muslim societies gradually produced a classical Islamic literature. Works that are based essentially upon the religion and have themes as such are associated with this classical literary field, which lasted until the Tanzimat reform era (1839-1876). The following intensive interaction with the West was reflected in the literature, as well as the new contents and forms that appeared. This new reality and its results led to discussions on where that literature which had an Islamic core as its subject should be positioned in the history of Turkish literature.

Literary history comes to light at the intersection point of the relationship among literary works, authors, involved groups and movements (Serdaroğlu, 2007, p. 10). Accordingly, literary historians also have different ways of determining the borders of literature that has an Islamic core, and naming and positioning trials have the same problems with the involving literary tradition. Some literary researchers and historians lay down these borders according to the author's national origin, religious view or literary or religious environment. In this regard, the fact that an author creates a Persian work although he is Turkish or that a poet writes sexual poems although he is a member of *tekke* may create problems because he does not conform to the designated borders. On the other hand, a researcher who is trying to determine these borders based on the common characteristics of the forms used may also include in that tradition a poet who wrote *kaside, masnawi, naat* or *tawhid* works. But when the forms involved lose their attractiveness, especially because of political reasons and when the new genres mention Islamic issues, these rules may be shaken again.

According to all of the above, one can say that non-inclusive naming trials based on certain rules and borders are not healthy in terms of literary history. This study, without denying the fact that literary history is based on some rules and created due to the existence of specific political, sociological, economical and artistic conditions, tries to position the literature having an Islamic core in literary history. It takes into account the previous naming trials and discusses their relationships, as well as their problematic and healthy sides, by critiquing them. It asserts that the involving naming trials are ambivalent due to some groupings based on genre and form as well as subjective interpretations about the Islamic content of the works in question. Moreover, it argues that an Islamic literature has been going forward along with modern literary forms, especially the novel during the 20th century, and that this situation is ignored for some political and situational reasons. As a result, by naming it "Islamic Modern Turkish Literature", this study highlights the fact that the Islamic literary tradition continued to exist after the 20th century and deserves to be examined. One can regard it as a new field shaped by some political, sociological and religious concerns after the 20th century and thus encourage new research in the involving field.

After all of this, we now analyse how literature with an Islamic subject is positioned in literary history and the various naming trials.

M. Fuat Köprülü, the pioneer of studies on the history of Turkish literature, examines literature on the basis of the idea of unity. He begins with the pre-Islamic Turks and includes the Azeri and Chagatay fields together with Anatolia field in the literary research area shaped by the involving unity area (Yılmaz, 2008, p. 171-192). His new ideas lea to the re-periodization of Turkish literature and produced the well-known classifications that have gained general acceptance. According to F. Köprülü, Turkish literature has three historical categories: (1) Turkish literature before Islam, (2) Turkish literature under the influence of Islam, and (3) Turkish literature under the influence of European civilization (Köprülü, 1981, p. 5).

Such a periodisation provides the possibility of a practical listing with headlines of historical periods for literature research. But even though it pays attention to the idea of unity, as do most of the categorisation works, it ignores the *idea of continuity*. In other words, this periodisation regards the new circumstances and situations starting the latter period as emerging as soon as the circumstances of the former period lose their validity. This approach almost ignores the transition phases that exist between the processes of connecting the former period to the latter one and proving the idea of continuity among them.[1] Vildan Serdaroğlu states that Köprülü used the "genetic method", which requires one to know the history, society and emotional environment that a literary work created, rather than the work itself. Therefore, one must analyse literary works as a product created by all of these (Serdaroğlu, 2007, p. 13). The fact that Köprülü focused on the historical background in literary history led to the declining importance of the work's content and form.

Although Köprülü's involving categorisation is problematic, especially in terms of the idea of continuity, it is important because it manifests the differences that make each period specific. From this respect, one of the main factors separating the periods is *religion*. There are thematic and genre differences between the literary period and the Turks' pre-Islamic and post-Islamic works. Although the names attached to the periods imply that those differences are only related to the new religion, whereas most of the differences are associated with the new life, thought and values that Islam brought, there are also some ontological, social, political and economic factors of change as regards literature. Therefore, the name "Turkish Literature under the influence of Islam" becomes problematic. For example, Islam was not the only influence that shaped *Kutadgu Bilig*, regarded as one of the first written works in this period. Among the other factors, the Turks' becoming/founding a state and their cultural transactions with new civilisations has also an important effect on it.[2] As a result, although Köprülü's periodisation of Turkish literature into specific periods and the names that he gave to them fulfil some main concerns, his effort is somewhat problematic.

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1   For example, Dede Korkut's stories are considered "transition works" between Turkish literature before Islam and Turkish literature under the influence of Islam. For additional information, see Akalın 1969.

2   *Kutadgu Bilig* is famous for being one of the first works by Turks after they accepted Islam and for its format and content, which resembled those of a political treatise. The Turks' establishment of a state ensured that the information on state governance would gain importance. For additional information on *Kutadgu Bilig*, an allegorical work that contains a detailed analysis of political philosophy and providing information, see İnalcık 2012: 1-21.

Among the factors supporting this assertion, conceptualization and naming efforts are of primary importance as regards any discussions of Islam and literature. Literary historians who are trying to understand what and which period Köprülü meant by *Turkish Literature under the influence of Islam* search for a more comprehensive and understandable name for the period, as well as one that includes the literature developed by Muslim Turks and the works created within this literary scope. Various concepts have emerged to bring Islam and literature together. In his *The History of Turkish Literature* (which includes his above-mentioned categorization), Fuat Köprülü analyses "Turkish Literature under the influence of Islam" in a chapter by specifying it as "Islamic Turkish Literature". Bilal Kemikli states that he uses this name to refer to the discipline that examines the works created by Muslim Turkish scholars (Kemikli, 2012, p. 19), and that Abdullah Tansel used "Turkish Islam Literature" in the title of his book: *Turkish Islam Literature: Turkish Religious Texts*.[3] In this context, he draws attention to the closeness of these two namings and stresses that both referred to our whole literary life after Islamization.

The term *Turkish* is stressed, along with Islam, in both of these namings. Kemikli states that the involving term of *Turkish* more likely refers to a *cultural geography* rather than a specific race (2012, p. 20). According to him, a work can be considered a part of "Turkish Islam Literature" even if it was not created by a Turkish author as a race, because cultural geography involves a rich/diverse linguistic asset comprised of Arabic and Persian besides Turkish. As the word *Turkish* is considered to include a linguistic emphasis rather than racist concerns, its use is problematic in non-Arabic or non-Persian namings. Accordingly, the problem of whether *Turkish*, along with the meanings of unity and integrity reflected by *Islam*, is used to degrade the involving unity by eliminating some elements or to refer only to a specific category in the same unity that needs to be explained. Kemikli asserts that the main determinant in this regard is that the involving work was created within the Turkish-Arabic-Persian linguistic variety and in line with "Turkish cultural values" (2012, p. 20). Although one can describe it as the reflection of a racist view, the involving main determinant indicates that the translation or adaptation into Turkish of some works written originally in Arabic or Persian were naturally shaped by those cultures' traditional codes, not only the language itself but also the traditional values should be adapted/adjusted to Turkish culture – a sort of *selective adaptation* in "Turkish Islam Literature." In sum, this phrase includes all of the literary works by authors from different racial routes based on the linguistic asset of a specific cultural geography with their Muslim identity and created in line with Turkish culture and tradition.

3   The naming trials mentioned in this paper also create a confusion of meaning and context in Turkish. In order to avoid this in the English translations of these namings, some changes are adapted to their English versions when applied by some institutions in Turkey. Although *Turkish Islam Literature* is used together with a possessive suffix of *–ic* combined to the word *Islam* on the online English web pages of the Divinity faculties in Turkey, such a possessive suffix is not applied in the Turkish version (although Turkish is very suitable for applying suffixes to the names). Therefore, I prefer to call the involving naming as Turkish Islam Literature in order to make it closer to its Turkish version. By doing so, I also tried to manifest the naming differences in Turkish forms, such as *Islam* and *Islamic* (*İslam* and *İslami* in Turkish).

Another approach of categorization that seeks to unify Islam and literature belongs to Agah Sırrı Levend who, in the preface of his *Ummah Age Turkish Literature*, states that the Turkish community has experienced two major periods: (1) when Turks live as tribes until they emerged on the stage of history due to their acceptance of Islam (Levend, 1962), which reminds one of Köprülü's "Turkish Literature before the influence of Islam" and (2) the Ummah Age, which lasted from their acceptance of Islam to the end of 19th century (approximately 900 years). According to him, this period's main characteristic is the religious life that dominated both the society and its literature. He adds that this literature was based on the ancient sciences, beliefs, traditions and customs.

Levend's periodisation is not very different from those proposed by Köprülü and Tansel. However, one can say that his use of *ummah* puts a special emphasis on the involving period than do those of other literary historians. He explains the Turks' acceptance of Islam starting in the mid-9th century as dispersed groups and after that as a state by the Karakhanids, as their transition from the *state of tribe* to the *state of ummah* (1962, p. 1). In this context, the Islamization of their literature is related to the institutionalisation of them as a state. On the other hand, according to *Büyük Türkçe Sözlük*,[4] *ummah* is defined as "a. Religion. b. All the Muslims gathered around Prophet Muhammad practicing what he does and tells. c. the name given to those belonging to the religion of Muslim."

This definition explains why Levend describes the period when literature and Islam became intertwined as "the ummah age." That is to say, along with the process of the Turks becoming a state, beginning with the Karakhanids and continuing until the fall of the Ottomans, not only those having a racial identity as Turk but all Muslims regardless of their race lived under the authority of involving states and developed a rooted literature to which the religion was central. When one remembers that Arabian and Persian territories were also annexed to the Ottoman Empire, the literature created by the elements coming from different racial backgrounds (e.g., Persian, Arabic, Bosnian, Albanian and Circassian) while belonging to the same religion created, as Levend calls it, "the literature created by ummah". Although his naming implies the unifying and homogenized aspect of religion rather than any racist emphasis, this categorization did not find favour with literary historians.

Necla Pekolcay made another naming trial related to the historical period when the Islam was centered in the literary texts. On the back-cover of her *Islamic Turkish Literature,* she writes:

> "The concept of Islamic Turkish Literature involves a large field of literature works starting with the first written and oral works of its type and continuing up to date. Either the works that are created within the religious-mystical environment or the works having a religious content despite belonging to the school of divan literature are included in the concept of Islamic Turkish Literature." (Pekolcay, 2002)

The point here is her assertion that the involving literature has continued *up to date*. Other periodization trials claim that Islamic literature was certainly and superficially over in the 19th century, when the Ottomans turned toward the West for both their culture and their

4   A comprehensive Turkish dictionary published online by the Turkish Language Association, which is a public institution.

literary models. On the other hand, Pekolcay's implication that this literature has continued to exist emphasises the ideas of *continuity* and *unity*, which makes it possible for one to devise a new periodisation for the definitions of the unity of Islam and literature. Besides the assertion that the literature of which Islam is the subject also continued in Republican Turkey, one can infer that it defends the involving literature's continued existence at least up to 1967 when the book was first published, as the words *up to date* prove.

On the other hand, the book's heading "Works of Islamic Turkish Literature and Other Works in the 20th Century" takes only Mehmet Akif Ersoy[5] (1873-1936) into account as the representative of this literature in the 20th century (Pekolcay, 2002, p. 348-349). Since the book is mainly based on explaining the lives of those who dominated Islamic literature of the involving century and their literary characteristics under each section in which a different century is addressed, discussing only Akif may be regarded as the poet's being accepted as a qualified representative of the 20th century. In fact, the author states:

> "(…) [in this century] the primary representative of pan-Islamism in literature is Mehmet Akif. Those who had accepted these three flows be together, [she means Ottomanism, Turkism and Islamism strands] also became those regarding Turkism (Turkism should not be regarded as an ideology because Akif is both Muslim and nationalist) and Islamism together later. However, it would not be wrong if I said that the poet who adopted both Turkism and Islamism equally and managed to reflect this adoption to his poems was Mehmet Akif." (Pekolcay, 2002, p. 348)[6]

The reason for describing Mehmet Akif as the *representative* of Islamic Turkish Literature in the involving century is that he adopted Turkism and Islamism equally and managed to transfer this skill to his poems. Therefore, not only the Islamic content but also the racial values should be adopted and reflected in the work if it is to be included in the involving literature. Although Pekolcay underlines the fact that she did not imply Turkism as an ideology, she finds herself stressing that Akif was a *nationalist Muslim*. In other words, while she does not indicate any opinion, one cannot include some writers who have works in the same century, such as Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, in the category of "Islamic Turkish Literature". For example, Tanpınar did not build both himself and his art on nationalist principles, even though he did present some Islamic values in his works and even if some of his works are centred on these values.

Another issue that Pekolcay changes by her book is her bringing together of *Islam* and *literature* in a different title. Although her title "Islamic Turkish Literature" includes *Turkish, Islam* and *literature*, as do the other namings, the possessive suffix (-ic ; "-î" in Turkish) attached to *Islam* and the changed position of *Turkish* in the phrase makes her naming different. In sum, the naming no longer addresses a historical period (like ummah age literature) or a cultural or geographical territory (like Turkish-Islam literature), but stresses the concept of *Turkish literature*. In this way, *unity* is meant. That is, the concept of Turkish literature, which involves

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5   Mehmet Akif Ersoy is a nationally known Turkish writer and poet who composed the country's national anthem.

6   The explanations made by square brackets belongs me.

many different works in terms of content or form, becomes the main part of the naming. On the other hand, *Islamic* degrades the involving idea of unity and means those works that are Islamic in terms of form and content among all the works Turkish literature involves. To sum up, he phrase is functional in order to imply a specific area within a large literary field.

The Challenge of the Formal Elements and Content of Islamic Literature

After all of these attempts to bind the concepts of Islam and literature, and especially the discussions on content, another issue needs to be examined: Does the literature having Islam as its subject have specific formal principles or are some genres typical of it? There are departments named "Islamic Turkish Literature" or "Turkish Islamic Literature" or some determined forms that books are based on today. One can say that involving forms or – with a more special expression – literary genres and verse forms mainly overlap the literature, namely, *Divan Literature,* which involves classical Ottoman literature and forms.[7] On the other hand, some particular genres and literary forms of the literature having an Islamic core as its subject are also developed. For example, the reference book *Turkish Islam Literature: Hand Book* categorized the works to be analysed under the head of "Turkish Islam Literature" according to primarily their topics and then to the literary genres dealing with involving topics (Yılmaz, 2012).

In this book, works of Turkish-Islam literature have four main categories: literary genres related to God, literary genres related to Prophet Muhammad, literary genres based on the Qur'an and those related to other religious topics.[8] Some genres under these categories are *tawhid*, *munacat*, *na'at*, *mawlid*, *hicret-name*, *Yusuf and Zulayha*, *Suleyman-name* and *Halil-name*, all of which are genres that classical literature involves. Some others are *akaid-name*, poetical *ilmihal*, *salah-name*, translations of the Qur'an and exegeses of God's beautiful names (*esmaü'l hüsna*), all of which are related only to Islam.[9] On the other hand, the genres

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7   On the other hand, the paper are also contains different naming trials and discussions for describing the literary field called "Classical Literature". In a contemporary study on this issue, besides the names of "Old Turkish Literature", "Classical Turkish Literature", "Ottoman Literature", "Divan Literature", the use of "Turkish Islam Literature" for describing the involving period also contributes to the naming confusion examined in this paper. For the involving study, see Dağlar 2016.

8   Abdurrahman Güzel's "Handbook of Religious-Sufi Turkish Literature" examines the same genres and the authors having works in these genres. He states that the categorization used by Fuad Köprülü in 1914, mentioned at the beginning of this study, was superficial and missed some terms, although researchers found it very convenient and useful. Based on this statement, he adds "Religious-Sufi Turkish Literature" to this categorization. For detailed information, see Güzel 2014: 41-45.

9   *Tawhid*: an Islamic poetical literary genre that involves the unity and oneness of God. *Munacat*: an Islamic poetical literary genre that involves asking for God's forgiveness. *Na'at*: an Islamic poetical literary genre that involves Prophet Muhammad and praising him. *Mawlid*: an Islamic poetic or prosaic literary genre that mentions the Prophet's birth. *Hicret-name*: an Islamic poetical literary genre that involves the Prophet's holy journey from Mekka to Medina in 622. Yusuf and Zulayha: an Islamic poetical love story that includes the Qur'anic characters Yusuf (Prophet Joseph) and his wife Zulayha. *Suleyman-name*: an Islamic literary genre that includes life story of Prophet Suleiman (Solomon) and his miracles. *Halil-name*: an Islamic literary genre that includes the life story of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham). *Akaid-name*: a prosaic or poetic Islamic literary genre that deals with the religious principles that are obvious and inevitable for every Muslim. *İlmihal*: a book that involves the aspects that every Muslim has to learn and apply to his/her daily life. *Salah-name*: a poetical Islamic literary genre that involves *salah*, the ritual worship of Muslims.

of *şatahat*, Qur'anic fortune-telling, *tawbah-name* and *tac-name* are included in here under the title of "Some Genres Rarely Known" in the book composed of papers presented at the First Islamic Turkish Literature Symposium.[10] According to the literature review of this research, the above-mentioned genres are also analysed in the other book with the same name.[11] Consequently, one can say that the main factor determining the involving literary field is the content, rather than the formal elements.

Orhan Okay states that Islamic literature is accepted and taught as "literary works involving religious-sufi topics" in the faculties of divinity (Okay, 2012, p. 11). Also, Kemikli asserts that a literary work should deal with religious sense and thought, religious institutions and rituals, religious experiences and visions as topics, regardless of its form in order to be regarded as Islamic (2012, p. 22). Okay, on the other hand, examines the place of those works that are both considered to belong to *divan* poem and use contextual and formal characteristics of Islamic literature since the Tanzimat era and thereafter. In this way, he makes the classifying of the involving literary works rather problematic. He draws attention to the inappropriateness of such titles as *non-Islamic literature* or *profane literature* and proposes the "Art of Islam" as the solution. Instead of the concept of *Islamic literature*, which excludes literary persons like Abdülhak Hamit, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar and has a narrow scope in this context, his proposed the concept refers not only to the religion or the religious one, but also to the entire culture that is affected by the involving religion. This solves the periodical/historical, geographical/national and formal/genre-based problems.

Despite being too general, this new naming, which emphasizes that Islamic literature should be inclusive, holistic and perpetual, is theoretically pretty useful in terms of re-thinking the concept confusion about the literature having an Islamic core as its subject. As mentioned above, when it comes to the issue of Islamic literature generally being considered as having ended in the 19th century – except for Pekolcay's limited definition – still existing in the 21st century, joining *the continuity and unity of ideas* thought with the concept *art of Islam* necessitates a new naming solution. For instance, can one talk about a *new* or *modern* Islamic literature that involves the new western forms and literary aesthetics for those Ottomans who were standing to the West in the 19th century? Is there any way to continue the new forms, especially the genre of novel, and the involving literature in Republican Turkey and modern times? Or, is it even correct to use *modern* or *new* together with *Islam*?

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10 *Şatahat*: Mystical poems that address God with a humorist language. These poems can be seen nonsense at first sight; however, they have deep and esoteric meanings. *Tawbah-name*: An Islamic literary genre that deals with seeking God's forgiveness. *Tac-name*: An Islamic literary genre that includes the religious and ethical principles of Islamic religious orders.

11 By subject, some research examined was conducted by Öztekin, 1993, Kemikli, 2014, Şener and Yıldız, 2003.

Modernism and Islamic Literature

The secularization policies of Republican Turkey and its reform goals, which take the West as an example in every sense, are the main reasons for referring to the West and modernity together. Their use is mutually complementary. Besides sociological, economic, cultural and political reflections, literary and artistic reflections of these changes were part of the political aims and reform. Hence, the political elite of that period considered it necessary to use literary works to strengthen its own legitimacy and ensure that the public become aware of this. The idea of using literary works as a kind of *ideological tool* [12] and propagating political views in this way can be considered a main principle of the Republican regime. Thus, when studies made on the literary agenda of that period are examined, one can say that those literary works and their authors confirm both the state's reforms and its political authority. For example, government-organized contests awarded those who cast the Ottoman Empire in a negative light and caused their works to be taught in schools. Some authors are (s)elected as members of Parliament due to the support of the Republican People's Party (CHF) (Çıkla, 2007, p. 52). Selçuk Çıkla states that it tried to create a reform canon[13] that would determine both thematic and formal limits. This effort concentrated on the literary activities of the Republic's 10th anniversary (Çıkla, 2006, p. 45-63). He mentions that the involving activities are based on making the public forget the old one, even sometimes discrediting it, and explains how the created literary canon is used to legitimize the regime:

> "(1933) Among 20 dramas, 3 novels and 2 poetry books that are published by the state, those which prioritize the reforms, the republic, Atatürk (Founding leader of republic of Turkey) and his principles are 11; the number of the works mentioning the Turkish identity, Turkish War of Independence or the problematic legal-social operations of the Ottoman period is 14." (Çıkla, 2006, p. 56)

In order to get the public to adopt the Republic's new principles, revealing the old order's problems and even denying Ottoman values became an important part of getting the state to publish one's work. The term *the old one* is generally understood as being *related to the Ottomans*. Therefore, the relation of coding western values or being profane, as being against the religious values of the Ottoman Empire, which was based upon Islam, needs to be examined. The phenomenon of religion is the main determinant both in implementing each effective organ in the government and in the progress of social life. Although the communities living under the state authority have very different racial identities, terms like *nationality, race, ethnic origin* had not been much effective until the 18th-19th centuries yet, when the state's authority is weakened. Until then, communities had been governed according to religious principles.[14] On the other hand, the main factor shaping the cultural values and, accordingly, the traditions is also religion. When one takes into account that the literary works are integral to the involving values and traditions, one inevitably thinks

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12   For additional information on Althusser's term *ideological tool*, see Althusser 2003.

13   For additional information on the concept of canon in Turkish literature and exemplary canonical works and artists, see Aydın Satar 2014.

14   For a comprehensive study about religious life and the influence of religious principles on social life during the Ottoman era, see Faroqhi, 1997.

that the phenomenon of religion is also the main axis. Almost all of the Ottomans' classical poetry and prosaic literary works that are not examined in detail in this study include religious themes.[15] In sum, it would not be a mistake to say that Ottoman literature represents the classic type of literature that has Islam as its subject.

The subject of this study does not allow one to ideologically probe into a topic of which there are many actuators and political insights and explanations, like the consideration of laicism and being an opponent of religion as an accompaniment. However, one can say that the early Republic set aside the above-mentioned literary accumulation and the classics created by this accumulation, that it even totally ignored them.[16] Both the nationalist policy and the reformist tendencies of that period prefer to deny the involving accumulation. Nationalist policy interprets the Ottoman poetry tradition as a mixed-language, mixed-meaning, mixed-literature, whereas reformist tendencies require one to regard everything "old" as a menace to the internalization of the new order (Kahraman, 2003). This fact leads to the emergence of a literary hierarchy in Republican literature, and the authors of works based on the involving policies and tendencies are ranged theoretically as exemplary.[17] Thus, while some authors such as Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Halide Edip Adıvar and Reşat Nuri Güntekin have exclusive positions in the involving hierarchy, the *Great Speech* by Atatürk is located at its top. Islamic literary works cannot be included, for the state was doing its best to eradicate any literature centred on the factor of religion. Although it is rather problematic, one can explain the reason for the attitude behind coding laic/reformist Republican literary works as irreligious or against religion.

This attitude can be seen in the appraisal made by Ahmet Kabaklı in his "New Islamist Movement," which appears in his encyclopaedic *Turkish Literature*.[18] The initial sentence of his appraisal begins with a striking truth: "Besides a nation, its literature also cannot escape too long from itself, from the resources of its own culture. " (Kabaklı, 2004, p. 668). By using this statement, the author seeks to emphasise that the literary tradition to which he feels he belongs has changed, but that this change is groundless. Indeed, further in the text he indicates that "Turkish Literature under the influence of West," which started to create its first works in the 1860s, was created to generate a totally new literature *similar to Europe's* by moving away from its own routes and cores. He also indicates that the reason for this is that such people were aping the West and, accordingly, derogating and even hating themselves. Kabaklı adds that most of the Republican intelligentsia believes that the Turks fell behind because of Islam. According to the author, classical literature is dead for the same reason:

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15 For analyses of the influence of religion on Ottoman classical poetry, as well as *divan* poetry being highly affected by the mystic tradition (*tasawwuf*), see Andrews, 2012 and Üstüner, 2007.

16 For detailed information about cultural changes in Turkey's history and their influence on Turkish identity, see Kahraman, 1996, Turhan, 2010, Gencer, 2009 and Tanrıkorur, 1998.

17 Although the involving range is not supported by any concrete data, the authors of the period mentally have a tendency to regard such a ranging, as can be seen by the fact that the literary works of the period have similar and common themes and forms.

18 Although Kabaklı examines new Islamic poetry under the involving title, it should be noted that his ideas on Islam and modernization are important in terms of Islamic novels as well.

> "Our old literature which is based on mostly the Islam and Ottoman culture (containing Mevlana, Yunus Emre, Fuzuli, Hacı Bayram, Şeyh Galib, Karacaoğlan, too) is regarded to be totally dead. Our old literature is not considered even to be the basis, the past and the tradition of the new Turkish literature." (Kabaklı, 2004, p. 669)

Literature having Islam as its subject is considered as belonging to the Ottomans, the nullified one, and is categorized as "old literature." Works categorized as *new literature,* designed to fill the void left by the involving Islamic literature, are inevitably interpreted as being against the involving literary tradition.[19]

Kabaklı's thesis, based on the assumption that Islam is regarded as *the guilty(!) leaving us behind the West* (2004, p. 669), of course produced an antithesis. According to this, some blame Islam and others, namely, the Islamic community, blame the laypeople and the Westernists who caused the rupture with culture, tradition and moral values. The main concern of the latter group is, just like Kenan Çayır indicates, the thought that Turkey (and the Islamic world) will lose its Islamic core because of westernization and secularization. Moreover, the involving side believes that Islam degrades in Turkey because modernization, understood and applied as westernization, created a range of problems from corruption to sexual abuse (Çayır, 2008, p. 6). In sum, the phenomenon of religion has become a matter of ideological debate, mentioning about it together with *laicism* caused public to deal with religious values and political issues together. Consequently, politicizing that literature which has Islam as its subject becomes inevitable due to its position against Westernist/laic tendencies.

In fact, there are interrelations between the politicization of Islamic literature and the political content of that literature. However, the involving content is presented especially through the genre of the novel instead of the classical Islamic literary forms. In this context, a paradoxical, even an ironic situation occurs: Given that the novel is a modern kind of genre with Western ancestors, it is remarkable that the Islamic community, which positions itself against Western values, has adopted it.[20] On the other hand, one can say that this genre, which met the Ottoman literary world during the Tanzimat period, has been used for propagation purposes for a long time in Turkish literature. The involving genre is used to defend local/Eastern values instead of Western ones (e.g., novels by Ahmet Mithat), to embrace the national and traditional ones (e.g., novels by Namık Kemal) in Tanzimat litera-

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19   This situation can be exemplified even by the use of *old* to define the literary era of the Ottomans until the 19th century and the use of *new* for defining the literary era of the process involving the 19th century and thereafter, starting with the "turn to the West" and continuing with Republic of Turkey.

20   Of course, the modern Islamic community does not only write novels. For example, Ahmet Kabaklı draws attention to its poems by the title "New Islamist Movement". Although shape and form do not have a particular importance in terms of presenting their thoughts to the masses, since the community's relation with the tradition cannot be denied, they had continued the tradition especially through the genre of poetry. Indeed, poetry is more connected with tradition than the genre of novel, for the former was used by the Ottomans for centuries to express their religious senses and values. Also, the argument that the genre of *masnawi* (poetical storytelling) was the ancestor of the novel genre in the Ottoman era does not change the fact that the *masnawi* genre has a poetic aspect. Therefore, although local genres that might be the ancestors of the novel genre can be associated with the novel in some aspects, these aspects are not enough to match them with the novel in the Western sense. In this context, rather than a traditional genre, the novel is a Western genre that does not completely belong to our literary tradition.

ture. It is also used to support Western/modern and new ones and to dictate the realized reforms of the Republican period. When all of these functional backgrounds are considered, using the novel to propagate Islamic values seems natural.

However, it should be noted that a group inside the Islamic community opposes the presentation of Islamic literature in this form based on its members' idea of the deep relationship between the novel and the modern. Kenan Çayır states that the involving Islamic environment genre of novel was not adopted and much used until the 1970s, when the Islamic movement began to rise; on the contrary, it was criticized for disclosing the individual's private life (Çayır, 2008, p. 7). But this changed after the 1970s when, according to Çayır, the novel begins to be used as an instrument for Islamic propaganda.[21]

Conclusion and a New Naming Proposal

Bringing traditional Islamic forms together with modern forms like the novel shapes the literature that has an Islamic core raises a specific problem: Where should the new forms be located within the conceptual discussion?[22] Even though Okay's *art of Islam* concept can be accepted theoretically as unifying, emphasizing continuity and accurate in this context, it is so extensive that *modern* and *Islam* need to be brought together by a more reductive and, accordingly, practical name. This study proposes a new naming for the involving period in order to highlight that Islam is in a relationship with the new, that this relationship is healthy and deserves to be examined, and to draw Islamic literature researchers' attention to the continuing post-20th-century Islamic literary tradition: "Islamic Modern Turkish Literature." This reflects my contention that Islamic literature has not been changed, especially by the new contents and forms, but rather transformed and expanded.

"Islamic Modern Turkish Literature" involves not only the reproduction of literature having an Islamic core by new forms and themes, as well as religious elements or orientations, but also reflects modern problems, primarily political ones but also cultural, social and economic concerns. According to this, with respect to the inevitable effect of modernization on the Islamic community, which uses it as a synonym for *Westernization* and losing the Islamic core, the new problems that are now brought together concern the involving community as well. The mentioning community must survive without moving away from religion and

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21 Novels having an Islamic content were written before the 1970s. However, there are not enough of them to justify gathering them under a particular title. Moreover, they were exposed to a great deal of criticism because of the facts mentioned in the paragraph. Hekimoğlu İsmail's novel *Minyeli Abdullah* (1967) is considered the first example of a popular Islamic novel. Researchers like Adem Çalışkan categorize Islamic novels as "Preaching Islamic Novels" and "Intellectual Islamic Novels". İsmail's involving novel has been placed in, and is considered a pioneer of, the first category. Therefore, it is meaningless to argue that there are no "Islamic" novels or novels written by Islamist authors before 1967. *Minyeli Abdullah* is the first example of using the genre of novel as an instrument to fulfill the mission of inviting others to Islam. For detailed information, see Çalışkan, 2002.

22 Some poets use the *aruz* prosody style, a kind of traditional poetic rhythm, and gather them under title of "Divan." Such works have the potential of being located in the involving namings in terms of both their form and theme; however, they stay out of those namings because they are contemporary. This fact makes it necessary to create a new naming. For the involving kind of modern divans and poems written in the *aruz* prosody style during the Republican period and having the subject of the love of God, see Seyhan, 2005 and Güneren, 1966.

the traditional codes centred around the religion and toward the Republican-leaning community.[23] The involving community needs instruments to address the collective conscious. Indeed, one must tell and familiarize the young generations with the traditions, moral values and religious orientations. According to Çayır, "criticizing the modernization process centered around the West" (2008, p. 7) and producing acceptable answers to controversial topics related to the concepts of Islam and the modern. Literature is one of the instruments that presents the involving critics and answers to the Islamic collective conscious.[24] Islamic modern literature, by the way, can be considered a title of literary works, especially novels, at the narrowest level and reflecting Islamic modern perspective.[25]

This naming draws attentions to a literary field that is ignored by various groups, especially for the political, sociological and religious reasons found in literary history. The fact that Islamic literature, against which Republican Turkey positioned itself and which is based on the traditional and religious values, is certainly finished at the end of 19th century in the literary histories deprived of inclusiveness, unity and continuity, all of which are requirements of literary historiography. The name "Islamic Modern Turkish Literature" is important because it brings forward the involving literary field and its matters both by comparing it with previous ones and by considering the cultural and sociological background. As a result, it functions as a source for academic and popular research and draws attention to an ignored literary field that, accordingly, would contribute to the critical and methodical approaches to this naming trial.

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23 "Republican-leaning" refers to is those who adopt, in a Westernist and modernist manner, the ideology of one-party government (CHF at that time) and regarding the *traditional* as contrary to the *new* and therefore an obstacle to spreading the *new*. Accordingly, they seek to abandon the traditional, which is shaped by religion.

24 For example, in her novel *Müslüman Kadının Adı Var* (*Muslim Woman do Exist*) Şerife Katırcı Turhal writes about her anxiety of moving away from the traditional examples in the following terms: "We should rather model ourselves on the ladies of *Asr-ı Saadet* (the era of Prophet Muhammad), not on the prostitutes of Europe, because one of our greatest wishes is to be in heaven next to our mothers who have left their mark on history and been blessed by God. We should try to be worthy of them." On the other hand, in her novel Şule Şule Yüksel Şenler praises *Huzur Sokağı* (*Peace Street*), which strives to survive without degenerating under the effect of Western values. By presenting the behavior of young and elderly people in this street as exemplary, she guides the reader to be a good Muslim like those in Asr-ı Saadet era. For detailed information on how the novel genre functions in "Islamic Modern Turkish Literature", see Aydın Satar, 2015.

25 It should be said that the use of *Islamic* instead of *Islamist* in this naming is due to the same concern as those shared by Kenan Çayır: *Islamist* implies a more political and radical discourse. Of course, a group within the conservative community has adopted such an implication. Although its members were effective especially during the 1970s and 1980s, they cannot be viewed as the entire conservative community. Therefore, *Islamic* seems more suitable for presenting the conservative community as a heterogeneous group of different elements, rather than as a homogenous or monotype formation.

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