Nostalgic Paradigm in Classical Sociology and Longing for Golden Age in Islamism*
Klasik Sosyolojide Nostaljik Paradigma ve İslamcılıkta Asr-ı Saadet Özlemi

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Makale Bilgisi / Article Information

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Abstract: This study aims to discuss the basic argument that sociology, as a science, emerged as an intellectual response to the lost sense of community during social and cultural changes. This argument carries the assumption that the dominating metaphors and perspectives of classical sociology are informed by conservatism. In sociology, this claim is supported by (both) well-known and ambivalent theoretical structures that are developed to explain the process of social change. This study aims to make a criticism of nostalgic sociology considering the idea that the fundamental assumptions of the ambivalent theoretical structure in sociology are nostalgic. In addition, this study also aims to critically read the historical development of Islamism, one of the modern ideologies, with nostalgia and utopia. The suggestion of the article is that either classical sociology or Islamism –two subjects appear differently in terms of their topics- gave similar intellectual reactions about the subject that they are unable to cope with 'the present' and produce a 'golden age' discourse as a solution to 'the present'. The argument of the study is that either the effort of idealizing 'the past' in classical sociology or the myth of coming back home in Islamism against cultural alienation and sense of loss which are lived in 'the present' are actually determined by sovereign modernity paradigm.

Keywords: Sociology of Religion, Nostalgia, Conservatism, Melancholy, Utopia, Golden Age.

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Öz: Bu makale, sosyolojinin, toplumsal değişim sürecinde, cemaat bağlarının yitirilmesine entelektüel bir tepki olarak ortaya çıktığı şeklindeki temel argümanını tartışma konusu yapmıştır. Söz konusu argüman, klasik dönem sosyolojinin hâkim metaforlarının ve bakış tarzının muhafazakârlıktan türediği iddiasını taşımaktadır. Sosyolojide bu iddia, toplumsal değişim sürecini açıklamak üzere geliştirilmiş olan bilindik, ikircikli teorik yapılarla desteklenmiştir. Makale, sosyolojideki bu ikircikli teorik yapının temel varsayımlarının nostaljik olduğundan hareketle, nostaljik sosyolojinin bir eleştirisini yapmayı amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca, modern ideolojilerden biri olarak İslamcılığın tarihsel sürecini nostalji ve ütopya

üzerinden eleştirel okumasını yapmak çalışmanın bir diğer amacı olacaktır. Makalenin önerisi, gerek klasik sosyoloji gerekse İslamcılığın -başlık itibariyle farklı görünen iki konunun- 'şimdi'yle baş edememe, 'şimdi'ye çözüm olarak ise altın çağ söylemi üretmesi noktasında benzer entelektüel tepkiler vermiş olmasıdır. Çalışmanın tezi ise, 'şimdi'de yaşanan kültürel yabancılaşma ve yitirme duygusu karşısında hem klasik sosyolojideki 'geçmiş'i idealize etme çabasının, hem de İslamcılıktaki eve dönüş mitosunun, esasında, hâkim modernite paradigması tarafından belirlendiği şeklindedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Din Sosyolojisi, Nostalji, Muhafazakârlık, Melankoli, Ütopya, Asr-ı Saadet.

SUMMARY

Behind the nostalgic paradigm, there is a rebuilt history that is shaped as a transition from feudalism to capitalism. In this history, the decline of feudalism corresponds to the loss of rural community, the loss of personal expressionism and the loss of unregulated society. In classical sociology, the heritage left by the solution of this historical reconstruction of society has become common. The anomaly of the modern world is precisely where the modern society from traditional society has emerged in the pathological state created by the loss of social ties with the passing. This pathological condition was first seen in Swiss mercenaries serving away from home, diagnosing nostalgia as a diagnosis of discomfort. We know that Johannes Hofer, who has a sense of humor, has not written any prescription for this disease, which gives some common signs with his melancholy.

Sociology, shaped by three different intellectual movements as intellectual responses to the French and Industrial revolutions that allow the transformation of the European society, has taken its place as its focal point, and in the pioneering names, this change is "a change in everything at a dizzying pace, everything that has happened has evaporated and the glory of the world has deteriorated." Modernity, which refers to the ideals of enlightenment, is blessed not to progress by nature, fluid, rational, contingent, lacking certainty. In fact, this blessing has brought with it the enemy of tradition to the 'new' with reference to its etymological origin. This sophisticated and complex structure unique to modernity only, has inspired some thinkers to conceive of an idealized past or future that is now determinative. Both of these ideas are moderators. The nostalgia becomes modern

because of the longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is coeval with modernity.

The article refers to Stauth-Turner's nostalgic paradigm, which provides the meta-phasic and meta-phase dominance of classical sociology detailed in Nietzsche's Dance. This paradigm consists of four main components. The first is that the history that we can summarize as a departure from the golden age when the world was a nest for man is seen as a decline and a loss. History is a history of sorrow and despair, as this decline will continue to exacerbate in the future. The example of such a feeling of grief in society theory is Weber's fate sociology. Because, according to Weber, whatever is waiting for us in the future is the polar night of the icy darkness, not the sunlight of summer.

The second component of the nostalgic paradigm is the sense of secularization, together with the loss of integrity and moral certainty. This nostalgic trajectory is a very powerful secularization that emphasizes that such devastating social processes as urbanization, capitalist industrialization and the rationalization of everyday life, such as the diversity and complexity of social structure, the spread of scientific knowledge, urbanization with increasing population ratio, it brings forward its theory. With the announcement of the death of God, the gate of a competing and conflicting world has been opened, from which we have been transformed into a very godlike world. It is possible to observe a similar point of view in classical sociology in Durkheim, which has a theoretical basis for the transformation of social structures through professional distinction in the form of mechanical and organic solidarity. Durkheim analyzes social change in a deliberate way, and pre-change stake favors moral coherence. Moral coherence is now lost when collective consciousness is generally weakened in the post-change phase.

The third trajectory we encounter in the nostalgic paradigm is the loss of individual autonomy and the decline of genuine social relations. With the loss of the moral unity, the individual has been caught under the domination of the bureaucratic state, in macro-social processes and institutions. It is inevitable that the individual who lost his autonomy is subject to the denial. The increasing exposure of the individual to social bureaucratic associations has been conceptualized by the iron cage metaphor in Weberian sociology. The enlightenment is the result of the panoptic collection of prison. So, there is a nostalgic stance in this compound

of the nostalgic paradigm that autonomy-ben lost because of the fall of the bureaucratic world under the domination of the modern state.

In the nostalgic paradigm, the ultimate component is the feeling of laxity, spontaneity and loss of naturalness. Here, the individual is subject to not only macro-social processes but also micro-ethics. That is, it is understood that Adorno's "managed society" or Foucault's notion of closure prevents the individual's true emotions and enthusiasm, and that the consumer culture is preoccupied with certain preconceived ways of doing in a world dominated. To sum up, the metaphor of nostalgia that we are living in a world where we have been seized by administrative rules of a central state in a way that has lost the moral certainty and autonomy of the individual.

The return to home, which is found in a significant part of the texts and practices put forward in the name of Islamism, has reached a deterministic attitude just as it was in classical sociology. In the nostalgic imagination where those who cannot cope with it are thought of as a safe harbor, there is a certain attitude towards deterministic ideologists that simplify, sanctify, and therefore falsify. Indeed, the imagination of a supra-historical, supra-community model for a time like the Golden Age discourse and for all time is itself history from the very beginning to the end. Therefore, it is a manifestation of a major historical process and the ideological design of sociality. The rhetoric discourse presented as a remedy in the present is possible with an anachronistic point of view which idealizes the past, and therefore the reality is distorted. The authentic one is extremely informal. This kind of discourse of authenticity, which is produced as opposed to the modernity that all that is solid melts into air, eventually has to make iron cages around it. As a result, the nostalgic rhetoric, which aims to be a modern chivalrous remedy that everything changes at a dizzying pace, has been determined by the paradigm of modernity, thanks to its self-reflexive nature which contains the opposite.

INTRODUCTION

This study, which aims to determine that sociologic analyses and ideologies developed to explain social change process were shaped around *modernity* paradigm, uses critical discourse analysis as a research method in parallel with its aim. Anti-positivist discourse analysis, which positions itself against explanatory and

descriptive content analysis, which expresses itself with natural sciences and which claims to feature universality, objectivity and generalizability, indicates how discourse is shaped by power and ideology and how influential it is on social identity, social relations and belief systems. As a matter of fact, nostalgic expressions like golden age which are used both in Islamism and sociology are to large extent a manifestation of the ideological discourse of a certain historical process and sense of community. Therefore, the study is significant with the warnings it makes against the risk that anti-modernists, who position themselves against modern thinking, can become a part of modernity and even get orientalised.

It can be argued that nostalgia as a problem has a very long history and a comprehensive literature in the Western ideology and in the history of medicine. The first 'homesickness' was started with the story of *genesis* in Jewish-Christian theology which affected the Western thinking profoundly. In this story, Adam and Eve are expelled from paradise to the world. Thus, the first sin committed by Adam and Eve formed a foundation for ontological nostalgia.[1] The earth they were expelled represents alienation and being rootless. It is propounded that the root of Karl Marx's theory of *estrangement* is based on Jewish-Christian tradition.[2] According to this theory, the estrangement from self and the world that modern people experience is actually a manifestation of their "being away from home" and "homeless".[3] In a similar way, in ontology Heidegger deals with the loss sense of authenticity and frequently refers to such themes as turning back, going back and exploring our home again. In this case of ontological homelessness, there is an ontological longing for the past.[4]

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[1]   R.A. Fox, *The Tangled Chain: The Structure of Disorder in the Anatomy of Melancholy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 17.

[2]   Bryan S. Turner, *Oryantalizm, Postmodernizm ve Globalizm* (Istanbul: Anka Publishing, 2002), 161.

[3]   Georg Stauth-Bryan S. Turner, *Nietzsche'nin Dansı, Toplumsal Hayatta Hınç, Karşılıklılık ve Direnç,* trans. Mehmet Küçük (Ankara: Science and Art Publishing, 2005), 76.

[4]   Robert J. Holton and Bryan S. Turner, *Talcott Parsons on Economy and Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 1986), 139.

In an article, he wrote in the mid-1960s R. Nisbet emphasizes that modern sociology still experiences a late period of modern sociology, but when we consider that modern sociology started with Parsons[5], we can define 'classical sociology' period as the period between 1890 and 1920[6]. It must also be noted here that the establishment of sociology corresponds to *fin-de-siecle*[7] period. This period, which corresponds to the years when sociology became an independent field of study, was also a period when theories are developed and when uncertainty, suspicion and fear were prevalent. Towards the turn of the century, a strong wave of nostalgia was seen.[8] Classical sociology was born from a feeling of crisis in such an environment. This crisis, which is theorized as functional shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschat*, forced sociologists of the classical time to create such concepts as community, authority, status, estrangement and sacred. In this respect, we can analyze the equivocal structure of the sociology and sociological theories of the classical period as a nostalgic discourse of liberation, reaching safety and a quest caused by the feelings of hopelessness, loneliness, melancholy, homelessness and loss right in the middle of the social change. This equivocal structure exerts itself as *static* and *dynamic* in Comte, *mechanic and organic cooperation* in Durkheim, *Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft* in Tönnies, *traditional-rational* in Weber, *feudal-capital* in Marx, *rural-urban* in Simmel. In this sense, it would not be inaccurate to seeing sociology as an intellectual respond to the loss of connections in community.[9]

In *fin-de-siecle* period of the past century, intellectuals witnessed a series of discouraging global disasters like AIDS epidemic, climate change, rise of fundamentalism in the religions, social violence in religious-ethnical conflicts all over

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[5]   Holton and Turner, *Talcott Parsons on Economy and Society,* 141.

[6]   Here it would be appropriate to point out that T. Parson's was optimistic and anti-nostalgic as opposed to pessimistic and nostalgic attitudes of classical sociologists see. Holton and Turner, 141. This difference necessitates that the tradition of sociological thought should be considered together with the process that moved it from Continental Europe to beyond the oceans.

[7]   For *Fin-de-siecle* period and conscious crisis see. Allan Megill, *Aşırılığın Peygamberleri-Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida-* (Ankara: Science and Art Publishing, 1998), 178-184.

[8]   In the first chapter of her book *The Future of Nostalgia*, titled "*Hypochondrıa of the Heart: Nostalgia, History and Memory*", Stevlana Boym, goes after transformation of history of nostalgia from a treatable ailment into a untreatable ailment, from *maladie du pays* (homesickness) into *mal du siecle* (ailment of the century) see. Stevlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 23.

[9]   Stauth-Turner, *Nietzsche'nin Dansı,* 61.

the world. In the 1990s, Martin Jay aimed to save the century with his/her work titled *Fin-de-siecle Socialism*, which gave way to *fin-de-siecle* publication series. Lash and Urry also contributed to this trend with a study related to "towards the end of organized capitalism".[10] The prefix post- used in naming the movements of the last century (post-modernism, post-Marxism, post-capitalism) can be considered to suggest an ongoing anxiety state. The century, which started with utopias, ended with nostalgia.[11]

In *Sociological Thinking Tradition*, R. Nisbet asserts a different approach by propounding that sociology was developed by three different intellectual movements (Liberalism, Radicalism and Conservatism) as a respond to two main turning points in the European social structure, i.e. French Revolution and Industrial Revolution. Among these three intellectual movements conservatism was the strongest power in the development of sociology. The unique aspect of Nisbet's assertion was that dominant metaphors and treatment styles in sociology were derived from conservatism because the central themes of sociological theories of the classical period were determined based on the problem of order, which corresponded the loss of community.[12] The key unit-ideas like 'authority', 'sacred', 'community' and 'organic integrity' are the fundamental elements of conservative legacy.[13] Therefore, sociology was a respond to the perception of a loss society, loss of holy as a source of values, loneliness in the crowd and beyond all an intellectual respond to crisis of meaning. In this sense, sociology emerges as a nostalgic reaction to authenticity, individual spontaneity and loss of community.

The crisis Nietzsche caused when he declared "the death of God" in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in 1883 has had a great influence on the nostalgic reaction of sociology in social change analyses. The scream of Nietzsche was anti-nihilist in that it suggests that all values should be assessed de novo in absence of God.[14] Contrary to widespread understanding, Nietzsche's criticism was against nihilism. He viewed this as a historical opportunity and estimated that what is to be done is not

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[10] Turner, *Oryantalizm, Postmodernizm ve Globalizm,* 213.
[11] Boym, *Nostaljinin Geleceği,* 14.
[12] Robert Nisbet, *Sosyolojik Düşünce Geleneği,* trans. Yusuf Kaplan (Istanbul: Paradigma Publishing, 2013), 12.
[13] Nisbet, *Sosyolojik Düşünce Geleneği,* 24.
[14] For the argument that Nietzsche is against nihilism see. Stauth-Turner, *Nietzsche'nin Dansı,* 29.

to replace a new absolute position as in classical sociology but to reach a new philosophical autonomy by assessing values again.[15] It seems that sociology, which was still developing, was called upon to fill in the gap resulting from "God's death". Henceforth, the arguments with regard to social analyses are to aim at overcoming the crisis of "God's death".

1. NOSTALGIA AND MELANCHOLY AS AILMENTS

To be able to grasp sociology's discourse based on nostalgia, it is necessary to refer to two different traditions which have played a decisive role in Western understanding of nostalgia. The first one is nostalgia based on medical tradition[16], which is called as black gall-melancholy which is one of the four secretion and temperament theory. This nostalgic melancholy style emerged among intellectuals and clergymen with the symptoms of "constantly being mournful' or 'unwillingness/indifference' (*acedia*), which is caused by vocational infertility and introversion. This nostalgic condition, which is depicted with emotional deficiency and giving up activities, has been perceived as a European ailment since the 17th century. This caused nations that emerged in the following centuries and that want to keep a distance with the old Europe to develop their identity based on an anti-nostalgic premise.[17]

The fact that nostalgia as a medical condition meant 'homesickness" was known very well in the middle age. The term gained its modern meaning in 1688 when Swedish physician Johannes Hofer used it in his medical analysis of Swedish mercenary who fought far away from their homeland.[18] The name of this ailment accompanied by sorrow, melancholy, anorexia and suicide attempts was derived from the combination of the Greek words *nostos* (returning home) and *algia* (longing). Today, moving away from its medical root, this word has found a place in the cultural reaction shown to pathological condition caused by the loss of social attachments.

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15   Stauth-Turner, *Nietzsche'nin Dansı*, 69.
16   In Classical thinking nostalgia is traditionally related with melancholy and the four moods theory, see. Bryan S. Turner, "A note on Nostalgia", *Theory, Culture & Society* (London: Sage, 1987), 147.
17   Boym, *Nostaljinin Geleceği*, 45.
18   Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (NY: The Free P, 1979), 1-5.

Nostalgia, which is regarded as a negative condition caused by professional conditions of the monks and intellectuals[19], in the modern age started to represent a second tradition which ascribed intellectuals, who were uneasy with the social damage, a positive moral value. Nostalgia within this tradition is regarded as a special form of melancholy, which is a more general problem.[20] Melancholy, which is defined as "a lifestyle, state of mind, and a type of personality seen especially in insecure social environments in periods when social unrest increase"[21], was long used in European history for describing intelligent and clever people with foresight. For example, what Theophrastus/Aristotle wrote in the melancholy section of his book *Problemata Physica* XXX. "*Why is it that those who have become eminent in philosophy or politics or poetry are melancholic?*" is a reflection of a belief that all geniuses are melancholic.[22] Ultimately positive descriptions of melancholy led to views that melancholy was a prerequisite for being talented. Cicero, who considered this as an irony, couldn't help but said "*As I have no melancholic side, I cannot be counted as an eminent person*".[23] Later on, when Erasmus argued that real wisdom can only be peculiar to melancholic insaneness in *Praise of Folly*, this tradition changed its direction and reached its most comprehensive dimension in *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life* by Friedrich Nietzsche, who expressed the opinion that human beings are to be melancholic as human beings are the only creatures who spontaneously become aware of the fact that time is passing away because according to him, just like Heidegger argues human beings are creatures who feel discomfort from *existing*.[24] Therefore, for sociological assessment of these traditions, which represent estrangement of people to society as a result of becoming aware of their own limits and ends, it is argued that nostalgia as a mood of melancholy is an ontological problem.[25]

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[19]   Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy* (Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1979), 75.

[20]   Turner, *Oryantalizm, Postmodernizm ve Globalizm,* 181.

[21]   Serol Teber, *Melankoli,* (Istanbul: Say Publishing, 2013), 9.

[22]   Teber, *Melankoli*, 10.

[23]   Teber, *Melankoli*, 10.

[24]   Megill, *Aşırılığın Peygamberleri,* 186.

[25]   Turner, *Oryantalizm, Postmodernizm ve Globalizm*, 181.

The close relation between nostalgia and melancholy is based on Boym. In her book titled as *the Future of Nostalgia,* while she limits melancholy with individual consciousness plane, she bases nostalgia on the relation between individual biography and nation's or group's biography or between individual memory and collective memory. According to this theory, in melancholy as an ailment and emotion unique to intellectuals, as a Hamlet like doubt, and as a by-product of critical wisdom, feelings and ideas, soul and matter, spirit and body are always in conflict. On the contrary, nostalgia is a more 'democratized' ailment as it involves the threat of afflicting soldiers and sailors who are dragged far away from their homes and also peasants who immigrated to cities.[26]

The most famous example of the notion of nostalgia in literature is Hamlet of Shakespeare. Apart from the evidences that the Hamlet character of Shakespeare is based on a medical article -*A Treatise of Melancholie* by Timothy Bright in 1586, it has been closely related with modernity problems.[27] Hamlet's melancholy stems actually from his being forced to assume various roles and duties that take him away from sense of reality. This hidden character of melancholy and its habit of disguising under other identities reached its peak in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* written by Robert Burton in 1621.[28] As a melancholic patient, who contracted nostalgia in the final stage, s/he can no longer feel comfortable as s/he experiences reality as an illusion that cannot be dealt with language or practice. This discomfort has allowed sociology to base equivocal theoretical structure, which it has produced when analyzing social change process modern human beings experience (from traditional to modern, from rural to urban, from feudalism to capitalism, from status to engagement) on a nostalgic paradigm.

2. EQUIVOCAL THEORETICAL STRUCTURES IN CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGY

The dominant themes in sociology- community, authority, holy and estrangement-and their opposites- society, power, class, profane and progression, respectively- were coined to analyze social change process which was theorized as shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*. Besides, the fact that the age when classical

[26] Boym, *Nostaljinin Geleceği*, 28.
[27] Stauth-Turner, *Nietzsche'nin Dansı*, 64.
[28] Vieda Skultans, *English Madness, Ideas on Insanity 1580-1890*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), 32, cited in Stauth-Turner, 64.

sociologists lived (for example, n Georg Simmel 1858-1918, Tönnies 1855-1936, Durkheim 1858-1917, Weber 1864-1920 etc.) and *fin-de-siecle* crisis (1890-1920) overlaps is important to note as it supports the idea that equivocal theoretical structure in sociological thought rely on a nostalgic argument. It is seen that this tradition in sociology continued till Nisbet's argument in 1966.

The disruptive and oppressive nature of revolutions –as in the case of the French Revolution and Industrial Revolution- unavoidably created conservative reactions like withdrawal and returning to self in those who were engaged in the sociology of this issue. However, it must be noted that the nostalgic paradigm does not have to be conservative. In addition, modernity inherently brings forth the 'new' and the 'now', thereby problematizing the past indirectly; whereas its piece-wise and variable or in the words of Baudelaire 'the ephemeral and the fugitive' nature results in the quest for certainty in mankind; or in short there is an action-reaction relation between modernity and nostalgia; while modernity is the 'creator', and nostalgia is the 'created'.[29]

Durkheim's sociology is based on the notion of cooperation, which it proposed as a solution for the lack of moral integrity which is lost as a result of fragile and inconstant structure of modern life.[30] Durkheim explains social change process as a mechanic and organic cooperation by making a dual distinction just like many social scientists of that time. The basic decisive element in this distinction has always been the description of the 'past' based on 'the present' by attributing the 'past' such structural features like complete, absolute, collective as opposed to partial, contingent, transient and individual nature of 'the present'. In other words, thanks to modernity, the partial world of 'the present' provided 'the past' with a consistent and integral design of world. In Durkheim's sociology, increasing social division of labor and differentiation, which is one of the decisive elements

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[29] In *The Geography of Nostalgia,* Alastair Bonnett argues that there is a tentative and conceptual hierarchy between nostalgia and modernity see. Alastair Bonnett, *The Geography of Nostalgia-Global Local Perspectives on Modernity and Loss,* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 6. Besides, for similar approaches see Boym, xvi., Peter Fritzsche, "How Nostalgia narrates Modernity", in *The Work of Memory*, eds. P. Fritzsche and A. Confino, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illınois Press, 2002), 62-85., Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 76.

[30] Stauth and Turner argue that there are four main components of nostalgic paradigm in classical sociology: a sense of historical decline, sense of absence of moral integrity, loss of wholeness and loss of authenticity see Stauth-Turner, *Nietzsche'nin Dansı*, 65-68.

of modern life, are the two basic elements that shape the equivocal theoretical structure expressed as mechanic-organic cooperation. Moral consistency attributed to mechanic cooperation left its place to daily life of complexity and uncertainty where collective conscience weakens and scatters along social plane. Following from materialization process in which "Every solid vaporizes", sociology functioned like a science of ethics for Durkheim because religion, which is deprived of its potential to reorganize the society, could not be a rescuing ideology in a setting where "God died". By weakening the across-the-board dome of religious and sacred values, Secularism opened the doors for a world consisting of competing and conflicting values.

The conceptualization *anomy* Durkheim uses in the process of shift from mechanic cooperation to organic cooperation allows us to consider it as the nostalgic manifestation of the lack of trust in the process experienced. Similarly, the motive that forced Durkheim to write his work titled *Suicide* is basically the melancholic mood caused by the chaos and confusion in the society.

According to Stauth and Turner, one of the basic components of nostalgic paradigm that provides classical sociology with its principal metaphors and metaphysical aspect is the sense of history as decline and loss; the idea that we are getting away from a golden age when the world was home for human beings. It is considered that, with deviation from social teleology, modern institutions started to move in reverse direction to the previous advancements and developments. As this pessimistic element of nostalgia suggests that future is not just a continuation of decline but also intensification of this decline, history becomes a history of sorrow and hopelessness.[31] This hopelessness is a manifestation of *Kulturpessimissus* environment in Germany in the 19th century. Although this pessimism about culture that resulted from social change is reflected in the works of Tönnies, Troeltsch, Simmel and Lukacs, it is most significantly present in Weber's destiny sociology. Weber argued that what awaits us in the future is not the brightness of the summer but polar night of icy darkness.

As Weber considers that modern world has become a place of unresolveable and constant conflicts between philosophical circles with the loss of moral integrity which is the assurance of social unity, he depicted the world as a polytheistic

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[31]   Stauth-Turner, *Nietzsche'nin Dansı,* 65.

place. The world he depicts is now a place where it is difficult for an individual to lean himself on a moral life scheme or on social reality because of extreme relativity in moral doctrine and the general perspective problem in philosophy.

Weber makes a dual distinction in this world and defines it both as the loss of charisma and tradition and as overwhelming spread of rational bureaucracy. One of the key concepts in his nostalgic sociology is rationalism. When he talks about rationalism, he does his analysis by making use of depictions and metaphors from Torah, especially from *Creation* story. He argues that we ate the fruit from the tree of knowledge and realized out nakedness which cannot be covered with the institutions of science. Weber's rationalism argues that modern society has lost its innocence upon being exposed to scientific knowledge.[32] He points out that supremacy of science liberates from one aspect and also enslaves us in certain aspects. The metaphor that individuals have become only cogwheels of modern social process is expressed most succinctly in Weber's iron cage metaphor[33]. Manifestation of Nietzsche's "Death of God" notion is apparent in Weber's works and in 19th century social thinking in general.

The most striking expressions with regard to the nostalgic theme that modernity leads to a kind of regression and decline is found in Weber's well-known article titled *Science as a Vocation*:

"The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the 'disenchantment of the world.' Precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations."[34]

According to Weber, decline is experienced in every aspect of life: "Human beings will regress in the face of worldly chores eve in the routine plane of daily life".[35] This tragedy and destiny theme caused Weber to be melancholic most of the time.

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[32] Max Weber, *Sosyoloji Yazıları*, trans. Taha Parla (Istanbul: İletişim Publishing, 2002), 214.
[33] According to Weber, while rationalism and bureaucratization, which dominate modern society, are expected to liberate individual, they imprison him into the 'iron cage' rationalized institutions, organizations and activities by subjecting him/her to the rules within modern bureaucracies like slaves.
[34] Weber, *Sosyoloji Yazıları*, 235.
[35] Weber, *Sosyoloji Yazıları*, 198.

The sharp distinction between traditional community and modern society, which is rooted in sociology, is the result of *Kulturpessimissus* environment, which leads individuals to hopelessness about the course of history. Accordingly, the true roots of the concept society are not in *societas* (society) but in *communitas* (community). This distinction, which relies on ethical dilemmas, tends to idealize the integrity, privacy and transcendental world view of the society.[36] Because of this tension between traditional and modern values, the mainstream figures of German society theory were pessimistic and nostalgic in their views of society and history. This argument is especially valid for Tönnies, Simmel and Weber.

With the contrast Tönnies made between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, he was the first sociologist to lay the foundation of this sociological nostalgia.[37] In Tönniesian sociology, while *Gemeinschaft* is linked with organic willpower, *Gesellschaft* results from reflexive willpower. Tönnies, who argues that community always meets the needs of authentic, organic life, and society is a form of social relations that correspond to artificial and mechanic designs of reflexive willpower, defines community and society as follows:

"We explore that all intimate, private and exclusive living together, so we discover, is understood as life in *Gemeinschaft*. *Gesellschaft* is public life, the world itself. In *Gemeinschaft*, since his birth, one lives with his family and dependent on his family in his good days and bad days. One enters *Gesellschaft* like entering a foreign country."[38]

Tönnies's definition of relations between individuals as getting increasingly artificial and external rather than being natural and sincere with shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, can be seen as a reflection of a fundamental nostalgia for the stability of society in German social theory.

The rise of city, the endless flow of modernity and corruption of community caused many social theorists to make melancholic interpretations of 'the present' and have nostalgic view of the 'past'. Among these theorists, Simmel has strong nostalgic themes in his sociological point of view, though he is generally known to

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[36] Boym, *Nostaljinin Geleceği*, 45.
[37] Stauth-Turner, *Nietzsche'nin Dansı*, 70.
[38] Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Association* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955), 38.

be sociologist of community. The nostalgia of Simmel is closely related with modern metropolitan life. The main objective of his sociology is to capture the tentative and fragile nature of modernity in which the urban humankind is subject to a bombardment by the signs and metas of the city. As a result, individuals develop a harried attitude towards urbanization to be able to deal with depressing abundance of experiences in modern city.[39] In Simmel, the object of nostalgia is the subjectivity of "creative sense of collectivism', which is in the essence of modern life which suffers from the lack of objective safety and certainty.

Simmel's *Philosophy of Money* corresponds to Marx's *estrangement*, Tönnies's *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft* and Weber's *rationalization* themes. According to Simmel, the development of money with modern society in a sense corresponds to annihilation of innocence, and in Weber's words, to the annihilation of compassion in moral and religious discourse with charisma falling out of favor. With his argument that man-made objective culture has started to dominate subjective culture, Simmel gets closer to Nietzsche's theme of decline. The 'tragedy of culture' as a phenomenon unique to modern era accelerates the reifying power of money and tends to devastate everything.

3. LONGING for GOLDEN AGE as a MODERN MELANCOLY

The definition of nostalgia as 'longing for home not existing anymore' is made with reference to human beings' "homelessness" as a result of rapid geographical mobility in modern world. In Marx's words, modernity's 'unprecedented pace in changing everything' creates a feeling of displacement. This trauma is expressed in two different ways. The first position against modernity is nostalgic longing, which argues that the anxiety can be soothed by embracing an idealized past. This can actually be regarded as 'fleeing from the present'. The other one is utopian approach, which also alludes to turning back to an experience in the past and which is actually understood to be postponing the anxiety. It seems that this place longed for remained to be a home that can never be reached. The global fractions, which was first expressed by Daniel Bell as 'the end of ideologies' followed by such themes like "the end of humankind', 'end of history', have decreased the possibility that mankind return home, making melancholy the dominant mood in

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[39] Anthony Elliott- Bryan S. Turner, "Debating "The Social": Towards a Critique of Sociological Nostalgia", *Societies* 2, no. 1 (March 2012): 16.

life by clinching the melancholy and by making the difference between what is dreamed and realized more profound. This modern mood of melancholy was also experienced in Islamism and it was considered that the problems of this age can be solved by taking the Golden Age as a model.

In the above discussion, we have emphasized that arguments developed to understand social change process were formed with dual conceptualizations, and that founder sociologists of that period developed sociologies that had nostalgic traces in parallel with the *Geist* of the time with the hope of overcoming crisis and *decadence* because they were experiencing the *fin desiecle* period (late 19th century). We can also say that Islamist movement, which emerged in the same period, that is in the second half of the 19th century, was shaped around the spirit of the time. The Ottoman State, which was like the political body of Islam, entered the disintegration process in this century. Islamism emerged in this period as an anti-colonialist discourse, which required the preservation of Islam's integrity despite some problems. Compared to the Islamist in the republican period, the pre-republican Islamists were not ordinary people but high state officials.[40]

The melancholic oscillation of modern man between nostalgia expressed as 'longing for a place which does no longer exist" and utopian design of 'a place which does not actually exist' involves exoneration of real world, assumption of disenchantment of the world as transient and characterization of evil as accidental. Suspension of today and here; assuming today as absent-time, and here as absent-place, perception of it as diaspora, spending all time within life, dominating lives are because considered as an exceptional state with its anomic characteristic.[41] Thus, cultural and moral gap become tolerable with zion or arz-ı mev'ud

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[40] Yasin Aktay, "Sunuş", *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, İslamcılık,* vol. 6, (Istanbul: İletişim Publishing, 2011), 14. Our aim in writing this article is to make a criticism of Islamism based on nostalgia. Therefore, for more information on Islamism, you can refer to: İsmail Kara, *Türkiye'de İslamcılık Düşüncesi 1and 2* (Istanbul: Dergah Publishing, 2014).

[41] We consider that theodicy has a role to play in the development of such an understanding. The theodicy of Messiah and millenarian movements suggests other worldly solution to injustice by clinching the fatalism in the face of this world's problems. Besides, mankind has tendency to be conservative in the search for a social order for the protection of social stability. Thus, the theory proposed by Berger and Luckmann suggests that sociologically speaking chaos is not viable concept. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (England: Penguin Books, 1991), 121. Ayrıca Peter L. Berger, *Dinin Sosyal Gerçekliği* (Istanbul: İnsan Publishing, 1993), 95.

(Promised lands). A nostalgia literature, which is based on humiliation of the present time and then exaltation of the past, inevitably leads to raising expectations as it is not ontologically possible to return to the past. This also leads to melancholic mood in case of failure. This melancholic mood caused by the tension between "Retuning Home" or "not returning home" is especially unique to modern human being and modern ideologies has had such crises. As a matter of fact, a life, which is set to go back to a home, native land, returning to a model experience and experiencing what has already been experienced, is bound to lead to such melancholy. However, no experience in life can be repeated in the same way with its all elements.[42]

It can be said that most of the texts and practices about Islamism involve the myth of *returning home*. Revival of such a myth is clearly construction of retrospective history. As Foucault points out by saying "history is always being written again", history is something related to today. Most of what is depicted in the texts- "Islamic social structure", "Islamic state system"- and presented to the modern world like the respond of Islam were not practiced even by the Prophet as they would be too much. The model depicted here is presented under an Islamic model by combining positive sides of Islam that are compatible with the current values of today with the aim of attaining verisimilitude in an extremely in inaccurate way. However, authenticity is experienced with its all plainness and contingency. Therefore, the Golden Age lived by the Muslims in that period cannot be returned and repeated. Developing a model using an eclectic approach and politically presenting it as an ultimate social order can lead to tragic results. It does not cause a problem as long as it is known that it is just a model. But when it is sanctified, it breaks off from the current issue and starts to produce a kind of anachronism.[43] While pronouncing the need for an Islamic state, political Islam does not clearly define the characteristics of an Islamic political system. It suffices stating that Allah is the only law-maker. There is only a rough vitalism: Social order will spontaneously come up from the doctrine, it will become the current and effective reality of the group.[44] However, Islamic policy is something that can emerge and that can

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[42] Yasin Aktay, "İslamcılık ve Bir Modern Melankoli: Eve Dön (eme)mek", *Milel ve Nihal* 5, no. 3: 22.

[43] Aktay, "İslamcılık ve Bir Modern Melankoli: Eve Dön (eme)mek", 19.

[44] Aziz Al-Azmeh, *İslamlar ve Moderniteler* (Istanbul: İletişim Publishing, 2014), 107.

be reached at the basic ontological level for each Muslim. The basic attitudes that are to be adopted being a Muslim –loving for Allah, hating for Allah, abandoning being a slave to other human beings- indicate that Islamic policy already exists. It also shows that Islam was indeed performed in a period when Mecca did not have a mosque, administrative and social institutions of Islam. Islam is actually performed by the Prophet and his companions in their struggle to advertise religion. Islam was there when the Prophet protected the rights of orphans, earned the title trusty and took side with the oppressed.[45]

The aim of this article is to criticize Islamism based the concept of nostalgia. It is possible to continue this criticism against the determinist and ideological approach Islamism shows when offering *verisimilitude* in the face modern problem of 'the present'. As a matter of fact, envision of a meta-historical and meta-societal model like Golden Age is itself historical. Therefore, it is largely a manifestation of an ideological design of a historical process and collectivism. In other words, reality is distorted. As a matter of fact, ideology reverses reality and functions like a *camera obscura* in Marx's words. It answers the question of 'What is a human being?' not from inside (not upon personality) but from outside (from identity). It refers to the identity. In Cemil Meriç's words ideology is a straitjacket put on thought. It approaches facts with Aristotelian point of view, it fixes them and it is stable. It is essentialist and thus minimalist and patronizing. Each ideology views the world it creates as the heavens and regards others' worlds as hell. As in the case of perspective, the world is tamed and turns into a space which can be seen and checked. Besides the minimalist approach, Aristotelian logic and perspective, positivism can also be added to the list of such ideologies. The most basic characteristic of positivism, which has a determinist point of view, is the search for origin in religions. In his book titled *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life,* Durkheim tried to exhibit the original, pure, uncorrupted origins of religion following from the assumption that religion has corrupted due to various factors in time. He aimed to reach universality based the result he would draw from his endeavor. However, objectivity is just a myth when history is the matter; and myth is universal when social sciences are considered. Rootism and foundationalism are secular. The common point that brings the mentioned approaches together is the common aim of

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stigmatizing Entity with the quality of Existence in Nietzsche's words. If our approach to the Golden Age is like in our traditional or linear history writing (based on the assumption that the most excellent moment of a thing is its origin or the truth of a thing lies in its origins), it means that we have an essentialist approach and take Golden Age from its historical context and mummify it. These are all possible with retrospective point of view. Nostalgia is the sanctuary for those who cannot face with 'the present'. What afflicts is the denial of the present. The search for *verisimilitude* starts here. However, *verisimilitude* is a für-andere (for other) under the disguise of *an-sich* (oneself), which Adorno defines in another context.

Muslimism experience, practice or envision exhibited in each Islamic society is unique. It cannot be repeated in another place or time with its all elements. Of course, the impossibility of repetition does not rule out inspiration from the same principle, value or origins.[46] An ideal Muslimism is possible in every environment. However, its shape and content can change according to environment and time. Each Muslim is being tested based on his/her unique conditions.[47] In this sense, arguing that ideal Muslimism can only be performed only when all institutionalized and organized structure of Islam is established would mean having inept expectations because Islam does not simply consist of institutions.[48]

It is also possible to consider the golden age arguments developed to find solutions to *modern* problems of the age as utopian. The problem with utopian envisagement is that the place to be reached 'does not actually exist'. Eventually, giving directions entails that the place to be arrived is always reachable. However, human beings bitterly experienced that modern utopian society envisagement do not have correspondence in practice. The passion of the enlightenment period to create homogenous, equalitarian society gave birth to practical *dystopias* like National Socialism and Stalinism. Nonetheless, the verse 97 of Surah An-Nisa suggests

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[46]   Aktay, "İslamcılık ve Bir Modern Melankoli: Eve Dön (eme)mek",24.

[47]   Aktay, "İslamcılık ve Bir Modern Melankoli: Eve Dön (eme)mek",23.

[48]   For the modern image that Islamist seeks to make when turning back to roots and for the examples of evidences they bring with regard to Quran verses and hadiths see. Kara, *Türkiye'de İslamcılık Düşüncesi 1*, 53, 54. One example of this is the attempt by Muhammed Abduh to explain what is recounted in surah al-Fil with small pox microbe and disease. Besides, the study in which the conservative thinking, which refers to 'the past' as the source of 'essence', is examined can be seen. Tanıl Bora- Burak Onaran, Nostalji ve Muhafazakârlık "Mazi Cenneti", *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Muhafazakârlık*, vol. 5 (Istanbul: Iletişim Publishing, 2013), 235.

that human being is not helpless in the face of certain social, historical and even personal conditions that are thought to render human beings helpless: "Indeed, those whom the angels take [in death] while wronging themselves - [the angels] will say, "In what [condition] were you?" They will say, "We were oppressed in the land." The angels will say, "Was not the earth of Allah spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?".[49] The spacious earth Allah has created allows people to overcome the challenges s/he faces. The recommendation of emigration, which we can also be interpreted as a discourse and which has a place in our Prophet's sunnah, was corresponded by Mehmet Akif, the author of our national anthem, who moved to Egypt in the diasporic environment after the abolition of the caliphate and foundation of the Republic, which is expressed in the lines of another poet: '*You are a stranger in your home, a pariah in your land!*". Emigration has been both a historical and faith related experience of Islamic ontology as long as one does not attribute himself a metaphysical fixedness.[50]

4. CONCLUSION and EVAULATION

This study attempted to show that social analyses were shaped around the notion of nostalgia in the classical period of sociology, and thus they were under the dominance of nostalgic memory. The main aim of the study is to make a criticism of dominant nostalgic point of view in sociology and bring it to a different tract or at least to show that it is on the wrong tract.

In sociology, equivocal theoretical structures that were developed to explain social change process, which corresponds to foundation process, is loaded with metaphysical concepts because of its effort to idealize 'the past' in the face of the cultural estrangement and feeling of loss caused by modernity experienced at 'the present'. The main arguments of nostalgic paradigm dominant in classical sociology (decline, loss of integrity, loss of expressivity and individual autonomy) are metaphysical as they are meta-historical and meta-societal and thus they are far from being tested. As a matter of fact, as meta-theoretical assumptions will be beyond theoretical examination, they can be opposed with another meta-theoretical assumption.

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[49] Surah al-Nisā 4/97.
[50] Aktay, "İslamcılık ve Bir Modern Melankoli: Eve Dön (eme)mek", 17 ve 25.

Although meta-theoretical assumptions are experimentally problematic, they involve testable arguments. The fact that the first two arguments of nostalgic paradigm are based on the assumption that a golden age with religious integrity, moral consistency and absoluteness was lived evokes an anachronic point of view, which is both experimentally problematic and lacks historical ground. Within the scope of this conclusion section, we can argue that the studies by French social historians have shown that pre-modern European society had both an official and an unofficial culture; in spite of being a traditional society there were significant cultural differences between its rural and urban areas, there were classes or various statuses based divisions in social structure, and thus there was a heterogeneous cultural structure. Such studies have shown that there was moral variation in pre-modern society, and falsified the nostalgic point of view that attributes social integrity to pre-modern society by arguing the existence of substantial cultural homogeneity or religious integrity. Thus, studies like these are significant. Exploration of the fact there was not a significant moral and religious homogeneity in traditional societies verifies Boym's definition of nostalgia as a "longing for a home which does no longer exist or has never existed". As a matter of fact, fantasies of the past are determined by the needs of today. Sociologists, who we argued to have nostalgic themes in their sociologies, are not against modernity but what they do with nostalgic return is actually not a respond to modernity but an escape. One needs to allow for puritanism of Edmund Burke's England in this escape, which was seen mostly after French Revolution. The 'homeland', 'golden age' which nostalgia sought by assuming its existence all the while strengthening its illusion is in a more general sense the fundamental drive to the 'puritan' thought, making it possible for modernity that melts all that is solid into air to enable an open and dazzling social activity. As a matter of fact, this contingent, uncertain and fragile nature of modernity obliges sociology to create social analyses in the form of equivocal theoretical structure which in essence involves a longing for the past externalized by 'the present' in *fin de siècle* crisis.

Nostalgia can be functional when making ideological criticism of modern society and modernity, and the perception of hope it infixes when anchoring to the past can be carried to the future. As Boym pointed out people do not only yearn for the past; nostalgia can be forward just as it can be backward. By conceptualizing nostalgia free from its ailments and clashes, nostalgia's opposition to or at least

unwillingness towards the present can be used in establishing utopias. In Boym's words, fantasies about the past determined by the needs of today will have direct effect on the realities of the future.

The Golden Age, which is almost a wishful thinking for almost every Muslim, is perceived as the holiest and the most divine time and space. Therefore, what is before and after it becomes meaningless, which leads to distortion of the sacred, which in turn leads to its mitigation. embraces the sacred by simplifying it distorting it by imprisoning, petrifying and idolizing it in order to decrease the sorrow of 'the present'. The Muslim it tries to resemble himself/herself to it when there is no chance to survive in an era which creates divided spaces just as in the case of salafis. Therefore, one needs to be cautious against the danger of becoming salafi while trying to be anti-modernist, a case which is widely seen in anti-modernists. From another perspective, it is like one's building *iron* cages around oneself as a reaction to today's modern life where 'everything solid vaporizes'.

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