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**The Relationship Between Religion and Politics in Contemporary Turkish Novel:
The Case of 'Kar' Novel***

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The Relationship between Religion and Politics in Contemporary Turkish Novel: The Case of 'Kar' Novel

Abstract: This article focuses on the relationship between religion and politics in contemporary Turkish novel, based on Orhan Pamuk's novel *Kar*. The study aims to understand and explain paradigms of religion-politics relations in *Kar*, which approaches Turkey's recent religious and political debates with a literary fiction, and reflects how religious and political cultures are reflected in Turkey in this frame. In the novel, a new development momentum after 1980, and with the right, conservative and Islamist circles that motivated politics more actively during the 1990s, the modernization that has not undergone in Turkey in a way, in fact, within the framework of the approach of the writer, the values of provincial representatives in Turkey conflicts have been brought forward. In a postmodern perspective, the *Kar* shared important photographs of religion and politics at this stage of the modernization struggle between Islamist-secular, Eastern-Western conflicts. Finally, religion in the novel was dominated ideologically by the instrumentalist of poverty and deprivation, rather than the character of preventing change according to its place. Politics is described as more Jacobean and secular, and also as provincial in relation to modernization there.

Keywords: Sociology of Religion, Contemporary Turkish Novel, Religion, Politics, Orhan Pamuk, *Kar*.

Çağdaş Türk Romanında Din ve Siyaset İlişkisi: 'Kar' Örneği

Öz: Bu makale Orhan Pamuk'un *Kar* romanından hareketle çağdaş Türk romanında din ve siyaset ilişkisine odaklanmıştır. Çalışma, Türkiye'nin yakın dönemdeki dini ve siyasi tartışmalarına edebi bir kurgu ile yaklaşan *Kar*'da din-siyaset ilişkilerinin nasıl bir paradigma üzerine oturduğunu ve bu çerçevede Türkiye'de dini ve siyasi kültürün romana nasıl yansıtıldığını anlama ve açıklama hedefini gütmüştür. Romanda 1980 sonrası yeni bir gelişim ivmesi yakalamış ve 1990'lar boyunca siyaseti daha aktif bir şekilde motive eden sağ, muhafazakar ve İslamcı çevrelerle aslında -yazarın yaklaşımı çerçevesinde- Türkiye'ye bir türlü uğramayan modernizmin Türkiye'deki jakoben ve taşralı temsilcilerinin değerleri arasındaki çatışmalar öne çıkarılmıştır. Postmodern bir bakış açısıyla yazılan *Kar* İslamcı-laik, Doğulu-Batılı çatışmaları arasında modernleşme çabalarının devam ettiği bu aşamada din ve siyaset ilişkileriyle ilgili önemli fotoğraflar paylaşmıştır. Nihayet romanda din; yoksulluk ve yoksunlukları araçsallaştırıcı, yerine göre değişimi engelleyici karakteri yanında baskın olarak ideolojik yönü ile öne çıkarılmıştır. Siyaset ise orada daha çok jakoben ve laik, modernleşme ile ilişkisi bağlamında da taşralı olarak betimlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Din Sosyolojisi, Çağdaş Türk romanı, Din, Siyaset, Orhan Pamuk, *Kar*.

SUMMARY

There is no doubt that literature in the process of transition from the empire to the republic; the novel, especially as a Western product played an important role in the consciousness level of modern Turkey. This literary influence, rather than pursuing a certain line, took place within two centuries of adventurous journey, generally in harmony with the periodical historical, social and political conditions of the Turkish society. In this context, the Turkish novel was seen as a means of producing different powers and ideologies, especially at the points reached by the modernization in the last half century, while at the beginning adopting a legitimizing attitude to make politics more intense. But with it, as an important element of the cultural system, religion has always been one of the main themes in the journey of the novel.

The article deals with the study of religion-politics relations in the contemporary Turkish novel in terms of sociology of religion. As an example of the study, Orhan Pamuk was chosen as the Snow novel, which made its first publication in 2002 and took the subject of tense religious-political relations matched by the 1980s conditions in Turkey with a broad cultural background. The aim of the study is to understand and explain the approach of the contemporary Turkish novel to religion-politics relations which always created a tension environment in Turkey. By making a historical comparison in this framework, the place of the Snow is glanced in the politics and religion perception of the Turkish novel, Orhan Pamuk was emphasized as a social personality and author, and then different levels of consciousness constructed by the social events, phenomena and processes in the novel have been evaluated from a phenomenological perspective.

In this study, the Snow was regarded as a novel whose recent religion-politics relations of modern Turkey were treated with a postmodern allegory through different sets of meanings of religious and political cultures. In this regard, the Snow has presented itself as a literary product, as well as a text that sheds light on the fundamental problems of today's religion-politics relations, which include different levels of consciousness about the religious, political and ideological knowledge of society. From here it can be said that the novel, in the context of literature-society relations, has brought wealth from the one side by organizing the events within the framework of the religious and political values of the society while offering postmodern points of view to these values from the other side. Finally, in the Snow, Pamuk realized a literary expression on the basis of society of religion and politics relations in Turkey. This expression, however, has not been independent of the religious and political accumulation that has been transferred from the Ottoman to the Republic, as well as the social personality that it shapes around an institutional baggage.

Clearly, Pamuk has put a number of meanings in religion and politics and their relationship to each other, sometimes through different characters, sometimes through irony and criticism in the Snow. Around the postmodern paradigm, the Snow has presented different meanings worlds of religion and politics and the different images of these two old social

institutions in a philosophical and sociological perspective. In other words, Pamuk deals with the novel's event pattern, social typologies, social classes and their epistemological accumulations in their natural socioeconomic, cultural, religious and political environments. *The Snow* is fictionalized around an identity struggle shaped by the Islamist-modernist thriller. Here, although the individual-compromising aspects of religion and politics "Kemalist" and "Islamist" have emphasized the imperative, populist political understandings and the exclusionary and ideological aspects of religion. Thus, the novel inspired by the military intervention on February 28, 1997, shed light on the religious and political culture of Turkey, and finally attracted significant photographs of the society, which are reflected on the meaning networks of religious and political institutions.

In *The Snow*, religion and politics are based on the meanings of concepts such as "coup", "Kemalism", "political Islam", "turban", "Islamist", "secular". In the novel, the social and political images put forward in the context of "coup" carried a number of symbols representing the last half-century of the Republic in the 2000s. As a matter of fact, the coup that was taken on the novel was made especially against the "religious" who organized and strengthened around the socioeconomic, cultural, political, religious and ethnic problems that occurred after 1980. On the other hand, in the novel "Kemalism" and his ideology have become another important theme in which politics is evaluated in Turkey. In this context, in general terms, the view of the "Kemalism" and the military bureaucracy on the public and its values have been presented in a Jacobean and elitist attitude, which restricts individual rights and freedoms to the state, with different categorical characteristics.

In addition to stressing the characteristics of being a subclass of religion, compensating for the deprivations and preventing social change in place, in the novel emphasized the fact that, with its coup, it gained a political, ideological, populist and instrumental identity. As a matter of fact, girls with headscarves have been seen as a symbolic case by political Islamists and they have made this case a political material. In *The Snow*, religion and politics are regarded as social institutions that are separate and sometimes in conflict with each other, but also the mutual relations between the two institutions in the context of the interest relations of Sheikh Efendi and some bureaucrats. Thus, the novel also points to the old relations of religion-politics relations in Turkey that find their place on the symbolic plane.

The Snow, which manifested itself as a literary attitude against all kinds of political and religious impositions have proposed for religion and politics a pluralistic view. This situation which can be regarded as new in terms of the Turkish novel has in fact provided new universes for the reader about religious and political culture. However, the proposals and perspectives are not shaped independently of their own dynamics of religious and political cultures.

INTRODUCTION

The modernization endeavors in Turkish society, which began in the 18th century for the first time in military, expanded into social and political fields in the 19th century despite all the contradictions of given social order and have come to this day in the 20th century over a motivation including politics in particular and also other social establishments such as religion, education, family, economy, law and art.¹ In this radical change and transformation process, which is read as a creation of a nation, literature has been regarded as a significant means for the formation of a new consciousness level. Foregoing sensitivity of the literature has been carried into the Republic from Ottoman Empire and from there into the present within an epistemological continuity and feculence. Thereby following a course linked to the political organizational forms seen in different decades, literature with its social and cultural aspects has occasionally become a pitch to produce governments and ideologies over social and political discrepancies and contradictions.²

There is a close relationship between the literature and sociology. The former, on one hand, finds its identity in a social and cultural environment, while in the other, it manipulates the society on a wide symbolic platform to rediscover the semantic layers belonging to themselves, to confront them and even to explore new social action areas. Literary works have been always carried out in relation with social events, phenomena and processes in society. Therefore, the literature has presented itself not only as a mere literary and aesthetic product, but also as an informative body encompassing social, political, religious and ideological aspects. Yet the literary text may be fictional and imaginary, not overlapping completely with individual, social or historical reality. Notwithstanding, carrying social reality, these fictions and perceptions are still not independent of the social-governmental relations, in which they are produced. Hence, the literature has been always seen in a content that could offer new perspectives to sociological analyses.³ As a matter of fact, the interrelation between literature and society has been a significant factor in establishment and development of a specific sociological field, namely literary sociology.

The relationship between literature and society can also be remarked within the frame of the tripartite interaction between author, work and society. Apart from the fact that the work, on a large scale, would reflect the characteristics of the class which the author hail from and lived in, it would also present itself as a representation of society. In this regard, a literary

¹ See: Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*, ed. Ahmet Kuyaş (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Publications, 2004); Şerif Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi* (Istanbul: İletişim Publications, 2000), 9-19; Kemal H. Karpat, *Kısa Türkiye Tarihi 1800-2012*, ed. Güneş Ayas (Istanbul: Timaş Publications, 2012), 13-107.

² Türkan Erdoğan, "Türkiye'de Edebiyat Sosyolojisinin Gelişimi Üzerine Düşünceler", *Edebiyat Sosyolojisi*, ed. Köksal Alver (Ankara: Hece Publications, 2006), 212-214.

³ Köksal Alver, "Edebiyatın Sosyolojik İmkani", *Edebiyat Sosyolojisi*, ed. Köksal Alver (Ankara: Hece Publications, 2006), 15-17; Ömer Solak, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Romanında Merkez-Taşra Çatışması* (Istanbul: Hikmetevi Publications, 2014), 22.

production could be either “ordered” by a greatly or slightly conscious/unconscious social or political life as seen in a part of Nazi and Soviet literatures or could be molded into “constructive” in accordance with the author’s changing attitude in an egalitarian, libertarian, democratic and pluralistic society or even take genuine and imaginative form in a universe pertaining to author. Different religious tendencies, political thoughts and social classes thereby can be easily literature’s focus of attention on a horizontal platform with their distinct attitudes and worlds.⁴ Hereupon, it is not very difficult to expect the literary works to discover new sociopolitical stations aside from new forms, contents and subjects in parallel with the individual and social developments that have been taking place during modern period and the level of consciousness determined by them and to assume that the connection between literature and sociology will endure on a new plane.

Human’s relation with culture along with the forms it structures constitutes one of the important fields of study of systematic sociology.⁵ As a western literary genre and a cultural production, novel is a narrative art which can easily thematize everything related to human and society. This article focuses on the novel’s relation to religion and politics. Orhan Pamuk’s only political novel so far, *Snow*,⁶ whose first edition was published in 2002, is picked out as an example to scrutinize the relationship between religion and politics in contemporary Turkish novel. The decisive factors for foregoing selection were, alongside Pamuk’s catching the attention of a broad audience in the country, his feature of being the Turkish author with the most well-known and read works worldwide, who has been granted numerous national and international awards, Nobel above all, and his becoming the focus of severe internal political disputes subsequent to *Snow*, inciting a number of sociopolitical polarizations. Furthermore, *Snow* was a literary manifestation of certain political arguments reflecting the society’s disagreements. Inspired by political ruptures and interregnums in Turkey’s late political history, the book picked its social characters out of the figures from daily life. The story of the book, on the other hand, is fictionalized through imam hatip high schools, headscarfs, various ideological tensions, appearances and a language and approach developed over these. The article, from this point of view, has problematized the epistemological accumulation through which *Snow*, whose first edition was published in a period when the dynamics and impacts of 28 February -similar to 1980 coup with regard to following military intervention on politics yet different as to its political and social consequences- were still felt in the society, approached to religious-political relationship and social considerations of this approach. The article is grounded on the hypothesis suggesting that *Snow* possesses the feature of representing the

⁴ Guy Michaud, “Bir Disiplin Olarak Edebiyat Sosyolojisinin Kurulması”, trans. Hilmi Uçan, *Edebiyat Sosyolojisi*, ed. Köksal Alver (Ankara: Hece Publications, 2006), 55-56.

⁵ See. Joseph H. Fichter, *Sosyoloji Nedir*, trans. Nilgün Çelebi (Ankara: Anı Publications, 2012), 97-243; Philip Smith, *Kültürel Kuram*, trans. Selime Güzelsarı and İbrahim Gündoğdu (Istanbul: Babil Publications, 2005).

⁶ Orhan Pamuk, *Kar* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Publications, 2016).

Turkish society's political culture. The aim of the study is to comprehend and expound religious, political and social grounds, which Turkish novel's attitude towards religious-political relationship is laid on, through the sample of *Snow*. Therefore, at first, as a political novel, *Snow*'s outbreak dynamics were determined pursuant to historical-comparative method⁷ and then the social events, phenomena and processes in the novel along with the semantic layers they created were sought to be examined over a phenomenological perspective. The results thusly obtained are limited to the accumulation constructed by the author's institutional framework. In addition, excluding the features belonging to the novel such as literary fiction, art, language and narrative⁸ from the scope of the article, it is focused on data related to the phenomenon which were interpreted with a comprehensive approach⁹. Consequently, with regard to methodology employed, *Snow* was not merely considered as a fictional text, but as a composition produced by Turkey's social and political history and even as a work contributing to his political accumulation.

Regarding today's departments within the faculties of literature, particularly the department of Turkish Language and Literature, Turkish novel has achieved a decent theoretical and practical interest and even regardless of the informational prosperity it has created, has not yet received due consideration in a sociological sense. Within mentioned studies, the religion theme in Turkish novel is occasionally examined directly as a subject.¹⁰ The novel as a genre has started to attract attention on the sociology of religion has begun to manifest itself barely in the recent times with a number of studies. Özbolat, has dwelled on the representation of the men of the cloth in early Republic novel.¹¹ Okutan, on the other hand, has highlighted hypothetic representation of sexual typologies put forward with their religious identity, seen in *Snow* and questioned the verisimilitude of these social types.¹² A post-graduate study has covered the reflections of postmodernist suppositions on religion on

⁷ See. Ünver Günay, *Din Sosyolojisi* (Istanbul: İnsan Publications, 1998), 75.

⁸ See. Fethi Demir, "Orhan Pamuk'un Romancılık Serüveninde Yeni Bir Durak: Tematik Romanlar", *Turkish Studies* 6/1 (Winter 2011): 935-936.

⁹ See. Adil Çiftçi, *Anlayıcı Yaklaşım ve Din Sosyolojisi için Uzanımları* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Publications, 2016), 116-120.

¹⁰ See. Kemal Timur, "Tanzimat Dönemi Türk Romanında Din Duygusu ve İnançlar", *Turkish Studies* 4/1-2 (Winter 2009): 2089- 2125; Alâattin Karaca, "Çağdaş Türk Romanında Dinî-Tasavvufî İçerik", *VI. Dinî Yayınlar Kongresi* (Istanbul: DİB Publications, 2013), 275-287; Gürkan Yavaş, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Romanında Din ve Din Adanı" (PhD diss., Kocaeli University, 2014); M. Halil Sağlam, "Türk Romanında Din ve İnanç Algısı (1934-1938)" (PhD diss., Dicle University, 2016).

¹¹ See. Abdullah Özbolat, "Bir Ulus Yaratmak: Erken Dönem Cumhuriyet Romanında Din Adamının Temsili", *Kültür ve Din*, ed. M. Ali Kirman and Abdullah Özbolat (Adana: Karahan, 2014), 289-306.

¹² See. B. Banu Okutan, "Din Sosyolojisi ve Toplumsal Metin: Cinsiyet Tipolojilerinin Çözümlemesi (Kar Örneği)", *Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi* 7/14 (2013): 119-146.

Turkish novel subsequent to 1990,¹³ while another study has dealt with the religious-social relationship in Turkish novel.¹⁴ As it lays stress on the author who, alongside its contribution to Turkish novel with regard to sociological approach, has been one of the most controversial figures of Turkish novel and the novel which is undoubtedly among the most discussed works recently, this article may be regarded valuable in terms of its deliberation on the religious-political relations in Turkey. Especially post 1980 Turkish novel has begun to break down the field of discourse based on the concepts such as the West, Westernism and Westernization seen in its classical congeners into a different meaning by a postmodernist influence.¹⁵ Therefore, the article is likely to offer a set of opportunities through the *Snow* for readers to observe the new forms the Westernization ideology, as the central objective of the Turkish modernization, has lately reached or evolved into.

1. TURKISH NOVEL: POLITICS AND RELIGION

Turkish novel is a part of the Westernization efforts. Novel in Turkey is not thus a genre that has flourished under historical, social, economical and political circumstances as in Europe. On the contrary, it has been regarded by Turkish intellectuals as a product of advanced civilization, perfecting the West's industrial and technical development and has been imitated from the West as a part of a widespread old-new contrast.¹⁶ Western novel engaged in Turkish literature as of the 1860s first with the translations from French novels and thereafter numerous translations as well as original works emerged until the ends of the century.¹⁷ In this period, two different tracks were followed: the conciliation of Western novel by the narratives from divan and folk literatures as Ahmet Mithat intended to do and writing novels through completely Western techniques, which is exercised by Namık Kemal.¹⁸ During the period stretching out from Ottoman Empire to modern Turkey, one party, with respect to discrepancies and conflicts as East-West dichotomy, stucked to the Eastern identity in the face of the West's influence that urged a change, while other wing adopted an attitude favouring the West, brushing aside the Eastern identity under the influence of modernization. Particularly the novels of Tanzimât, Edebiyat-ı Cedide and Second Constitutional Era bore all the traces of aforementioned social-political conflict caused by the Westernization

¹³ See. Eda Kıran, "Postmodernizmin Dini Varsayımlarının 1990 Sonrası Postmodern Türk Romanındaki Yansımaları" (PhD diss., Marmara University, 2011).

¹⁴ See. Zeynep Dağlar, "Modern Türk Romanında Din ve Toplum İlişkileri -Orhan Pamuk Örneği-" (PhD diss., Cumhuriyet University, 2015).

¹⁵ Ömer Köroğlu, "Türk Romanında Batıcılığın Yeri: Gecikmişlik Bataklığında Utanç Duymayı Öğrenmek", *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce* 3 (Istanbul: İletişim Publications, 2004), 509-510.

¹⁶ Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış I* (Istanbul: İletişim Publications, 1998), 9-10.

¹⁷ A. Hamdi Tanpınar, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, ed. Abdullah Uçman (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Publications, 2006), 263-264.

¹⁸ Olcay ÖnerToy, *Türk Roman ve Öyküsü* (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Publications, 1984), 1-2.

tendencies.¹⁹ In any case, Turkish novel was born as a totally different product from conventional literary genres under certain social and political conditions and has advanced around the concerns of embracing the Western values, spreading the ideas of elites to large masses and attracting the people's attention to actual issues.²⁰ Therefore, the Turkish novel has become a means for a plenty of authors to impose social and political notions from the very beginning.²¹

Beginning from the early 20th century, Turkish novel gradually increased in number and gained a developmental momentum from a technical aspect. The agonizing change the country went through, chaotic political ambiance and conflicts and polarizations produced by identity issues were reflected on novel's topic and content along with the ideational life. As a matter of fact, a good part of the novels from mentioned period were built on the events of the epochs of Abdul Hamid II, Second Constitutional Era, the Committee of Union and Progress, Balkan Wars, later the destruction brought by World War I and finally the thoughts of creating a new political order and society.²² The path taken by the novel in the dynamics of the Republic's first years was not independent of political and social change of the period. The history of Turkish Republic shows parallelism with the birth of contemporary Turkish novel. When the Republic embarked on reshaping the Turkish culture, it chose literature as the main instrument of epistemological transformation. The reforms carried out between 1923 and 1945, on one hand, laid out a translation program from the Western classics under the guidance of the state within the frame of the new societal model, while on the other hand, they exalted nationalism and modernism, rejecting all the symbols of political and theocratic tradition.²³ New ideologies, rapid social alterations, youth problems, search for freedom, common anomic conditions, which emerged encompassing the post World War II Turkey, apart from causing the emergence of new political attitudes in East-West dichotomy,²⁴ also gave rise to the birth of new perspectives within novel's view of individual and society. The foregoing interval as well started a period in which political center-periphery conflict developed in favor of the periphery, which is also reflected in novel.

At the beginnings of the 20th century, where new policies towards the state and society increased and the political issues swelled, the Committee of Union and Progress, inspired by the principle of "order and progress" contained in Auguste Comte's (d. 1857) positive philosophy system, regarded positivism equal to the goal of Westernization and at the

¹⁹ Solak, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Romanında Merkez-Taşra Çatışması*, 14.

²⁰ Ahmet Ö. Evin, *Türk Romanın Kökenleri ve Gelişimi*, trans. Osman Akınhay (Istanbul: Agora Publications, 2004), 12-14.

²¹ Kemal H. Karpat, *Çağdaş Türk Edebiyatında Sosyal Konular* (Istanbul: Varlık Publications, 1962), 22-41.

²² See. Alemdar Yalçın, *Siyasal ve Sosyal Değişmeler Açısından Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Romanı 1920-1946* (Ankara: Akçağ Publications, 2006), 25-158.

²³ Kemal H. Karpat, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Edebiyat ve Toplum* (Istanbul: Timaş, 2009), 129-130.

²⁴ See. Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış I*, 244-250.

beginning gave sociology a mission to be a guide for politics. However, after politics disentangled from uncertainty and the society made a choice in the first quarter of the century, the role politics casted to sociology was not anymore to guide the politics, but to teach current political attitude.²⁵ Some situational similarities can also be mentioned for novel. One of the significant paradigms which initially designated the role and direction of the art and literature in Turkey was represented by a universalistic, evolutionist, progressive and determinist point of view which could be expressed in the framework of Westernization. According to this approach, which Niyazi Berkes and Behice Boran adopted, art and literature is supposed to commit themselves to infuse occidentalist ideals into the masses and guide the community around the Western values. Another paradigm concerning Turkish art and literature is that literaray works have been approached as a means for dominant values of the society and social classes to be recognized. Together with the former, this approach which has been represented by intellectuals who concentrated on social, political and literary subjects such as Cahit Tanyol, Nurettin Ş. Kösemihal, Fuat Köprülü, Erol Güngör ve Cemil Meriç²⁶ have been remarkable dynamics that would also shape subsequent literary, society and political relations. In this regard, the unpleasant process, which was globally experienced in the transition from industrial society into information society and which also included Turkey to a large extent, not only revived the questioning of mere secular, progressive and interventionist perspectives sociologically, but also influenced the novel via newly-emerging paradigms to acquire a hypothetical, methodological and technical expansion and to lodge on a comprehensible ground. In fact, after the 1970s, the social and political character of novel has differed regarding the relationship between city and intellectual. Unlike the first generation, who witnessed the downfall of an empire, saw plots, went through wars and observed all political, sociocultural and economic problems encountered during the establishment of a young Republic and hence involved in ceaseless quarrels and ideologies, the second generation novelists also had various ideologies but occasionally kept a level head against the circumstances and followed more universalistic, pacifistic and libertarian paths.²⁷

The Turkish novel focused on colorful topics throughout its centuries-old adventure. It is clear that the politics has always played a dominant role in this adventure. Given that everything is somewhat political, as Maurice Duverger said,²⁸ the Turkish novel should be remarked to have always had a function of directing the community through designs associated with, for example, the “country” and “patriotism” and also through some political purposes in a certain political culture. Those who introduced Turkish society to a Western

²⁵ İsmail Coşkun, “Türkiye’de Siyaset Sosyolojisinin Gelişimi Üzerine”, 75. *Yılında Türkiye’de Sosyoloji*, ed. İsmail Coşkun (Istanbul: Bağlam Publications, 1991), 156.

²⁶ Erdoğan, “Türkiye’de Edebiyat Sosyolojisinin Gelişimi Üzerine Düşünceler”, 224-228.

²⁷ See. Alemdar Yalçın, *Siyasal ve Sosyal Değişmeler Açısından Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Romanı 1946-2000* (Ankara: Akçağ Publications, 2003), 316-332.

²⁸ Maurice Duverger, *Siyaset Sosyolojisi*, trans. Şirin Tekeli (Istanbul: Varlık Publications, 2014), 18.

novel at the beginning, were, at the same time, the figures who mobilized the politics in compliance with the general opinion about Europe and the Ottoman Empire through different ideological currents emerging with constitutional demands such as Neo-Ottomanism²⁹ and Unionism³⁰. This political character of Turkish novel and novelist continued with new political movements and ideologies in the following years in line with changing sociopolitical circumstances.

The novel, in the first quarter of the Republic Period, strived for the adoption of a new Westernized Turkish identity, for the success of the reforms in social matters and for the establishment of laicism in a society still with a powerful religious tradition.³¹ In the 1960s, different ideological understandings appeared more prominently in Turkish novel. The intentions of socialist, nationalist and Islamist ideologies to exploit the art and novel on top of a hostile and conflictive relation was an increasing tendency until the 1980s. In some novels in this period, ideological fiction and approach constituted the most prominent feature of the novel. Emine İşinsu and Mehmet Niyazi Özdemir were among the authors who reflected the nationalist bloc's spiritual and ideological world amidst intense student upheavals using the events they picked out of early and late history of Turkey and Turkish communities outside the country, also employing the Islamic symbols and motifs. On the other hand, Mehmet Eroğlu, Fıruzan Savaş and Melih Cevdet Anday ranked among the authors, representing the Turkish novel's accentuation of "activist left" around political occurrences of the same period. A lot of novels that present the practice of socialist movement with a bloody revolution metaphor regardless of dialectic of scientific socialism, of whether it complies with the history, also mostly ruling out the characters' identities, feelings and thoughts have been contained in this ecocole. Vedat Türkalı's considerably voluminous novel named *Güven*, which covers a conflictive environment of opposite ideologies, tortures and detentions beginning from the most gruesome periods of the World War II, is one of the most salient examples of the foregoing fact.³²

Another dominant tone in the last half century of the Turkish novel was the perspective of Islamic ideology, which followed a more traditional line. Such novels were often been processed in the context of rapid social change and reaction to modernization, but have also developed Islamic political discourse. Şule Yüksel Şenler's *Huzur Sokağı*, whose 81st edition was published in 2002 when the first edition of Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* was published, is an example of the novels fictionalized within this ideology. In *Huzur Sokağı*, confrontations

²⁹ See. Şerif Mardin, *Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesinin Doğuşu* (Istanbul: İletişim Publications, 1996); Fazlı Arabacı, "Osmanlı Modernleşmesinde 'Yeni Osmanlılar'ın Din ve Siyaset Anlayışları", *Dini Araştırmalar* 2/5 (1999), 51-90.

³⁰ See. Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri* (Istanbul: İletişim Publications, 1994).

³¹ Azade Seyhan, *Dünya Edebiyatı Bağlamında Modern Türk Romanı*, trans. Erkan İrmak (Istanbul: İletişim Publications, 2014), 20.

³² Yalçın, *Siyasal ve Sosyal Değişmeler Açısından Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Romanı 1946-2000*, 567-594.

between poor yet simple, peaceful lifestyles in a street with communitarian attitudes such as cooperation and solidarity, with Islamic identities and modern lifestyle based on money and sexuality are covered. The novel, which is understood to prioritize “the message” in any case, occasionally mentions Said Nursî’s thoughts as Islamic reference. Again, Hekimoğlu İsmail’s *Minyeli Abdullah*, together with Ahmet Günbay Yıldız’s novels created their own reader masses out of the middle classes and middle subclasses around the same ideology.³³

On the other hand, it is clearly seen that in Turkey, religion and modernity or Jacobinic and elitist policies have conducted to an intense conflictive ambient, which also is observed to be reflected in the novel incrementally as a social product. As a matter of fact, beginning with Tanzimât, two opposite characters in Turkish novel with regard to their perception of religion have come into being: reconciliatory and contentious sides, with the former touching people through Islamic values along with the injection of the ideals of enlightenment to society, and the latter ignoring the people’s values from a positivist perspective and turning a blind eye to enchanting impact of religion.³⁴ Regardless of which perspective is adopted, the readers are eventually exposed to ideological approaches rather than descriptive and comprehensible outlooks.

Religion in Tanzimât novel has shown a clear deviation from classic literature’s perception of perfect universe to a flawed one within the framework of common old-new antagonism. *İntibah*, *Sergüzeşt* and *Araba Sevdası* are just a few of the novels where this flawness culminates. In this context, the god in the Tanzimat novel is sometimes depicted as omnipotent, benevolent and merciful; while at other times it is portrayed as a sadistic character whose justice would be questioned. Undoubtedly, under the influence of the Enlightenment and, of course, in the rush of Westernization, the first period Turkish novel has entered into a break from the tradition with regard to religious concept.³⁵ Nevertheless, novels of this period abundantly used symbols related to religious aspects as belief, prayers and society, and portrayed a dominant religious *folk* character sometimes in an apologetic manner and sometimes with a critical voice, as a reflection of a confusion caused by the East-West relationship. Relations between primitive religions, universal religions, popular beliefs, religious mysticism, Islam and Christianity, especially comparisons between the latter two have been among the themes treated in religious context.³⁶

The Turkish novel progressed by embracing new approaches towards religion parallel to the efforts of modernization, which extended from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic with

³³ Yalçın, *Siyasal ve Sosyal Değişmeler Açısından Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Romanı 1946-2000*, 567-605. Karaca, “Çağdaş Türk Romanında Dinî-Tasavvufî İçerik”, 280.

³⁴ Seyhan, *Dünya Edebiyatı Bağlamında Modern Türk Romanı*, 54.

³⁵ Gökşen Yıldırım, “Tanzimat Dönemi Türk Romanında Tanrı ve Kötülük”, *Journal of Turkish Language and Literature* 2/1 (Winter 2016), 545-558.

³⁶ See. Timur, “Tanzimat Dönemi Türk Romanında Din Duygusu ve İnançlar”, 2089-2125; C. Öktemgil Turgut, “Türk Romanında İslami Öğeler -1872-1896-” (PhD diss., Hacettepe University, 2011).

secular and laic objectives. The distance covered by the Tanzimât novel in this sense has vastly encouraged the novel of the Republic period. As is seen in Reşat Nuri Güntekin's *Damga*, *Değirmen* and *Miskinler Tekkesi*; Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's *Ankara* and *Yaban*; Early Republican novel was an important instrument of an elitist and jacobinic attitude which idealizes the new life, such as compensation of religion and the symbols produced by it with different secular mechanisms. However, apart from the fact that this situation was a dominant attitude of the novel of this period, there were also some novels approaching towards religion which was at the center of the old world with a cultural, aesthetic and integrative perspective. In this context, religion is regarded as an instrumental force to defend the Muslim society in the face of Christian West and the pure Islamic motifs of downtrodden Turkish woman have been occasionally idealized, which can be seen in the case of *Ayşe of Ateşten Gömlek*. Therefore, the Islamic symbols and motifs driven forward with a strong aesthetic emphasis by the authors such as Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar and Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar, were presented as an indication of ignorance and bigotry by the novelists with preponderant enlightened attitude such as Hüseyin Rahmi. In the meantime, as is seen in Peyami Safa's novels and particularly in Halide Edip's *Sinekli Bakkal*, the synthesist approaches which show that the religious symbols and motifs could live in the new world should also be mentioned as a characteristic of novel of this period.³⁷

These different religious notions of Republican period novels have been designed within a wide scope engulfing perceptions of religion ranging from belief, prayer, moral and mental structure to other social facets, in just the same way as the novel of Tanzimât.³⁸ Religion has been transformed into a means that is sometimes used by fictitious characters for some personal interests. Religious characters are depicted as fatalistic and submissive characters rather than as figures with initiative spirit. Semantic crises caused by modern values that were sought to be established instead of the tradition were reflected on the novels as a belief depression by correlating them with religion.³⁹ As a symbolic figure, teacher is generally given the role of carrier and conveyor of Republican ideology in order to create a nation amidst an "old" vs. "new" conflict, of course, alongside with some religious ironies, and religious elements and clerics are shown as the reasons of backwardness in the identity of the new nation.⁴⁰

Religion has continued to be one of the most important themes of contemporary Turkish novel as well. Having been reshaped in accordance with the progressive specialization of religion, the slipperiness of values, transformation of perception of "reality" and propagation of pluralist ideas in the modern period, Turkish novel repositioned its relation

³⁷ See. Yavaş, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Romanında Din ve Din Adamı", 524-534.

³⁸ See. Sağlam, "Türk Romanında Din ve İnanç Algısı", 792-810.

³⁹ See. Yavaş, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Romanında Din ve Din Adamı", 534-538.

⁴⁰ Özbolat, "Bir ulus Yaratmak: Erken Dönem Cumhuriyet Romanında Din Adamının Temsili", 305; Yavaş, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Romanında Din ve Din Adamı", 538-545.

with religion in a change and continuity. Of course, the contemporary Turkish novel has not completely exempted its relation with religion from its historical course. Mystical notion, religious freedom, identities, individual and social equalizations which have been ignored by the influence of official ideology of Republican period in spite of their special place in tradition, have been thematized differently around today's peculiar accumulations and problems. Orhan Pamuk, Elif Şafak, İhsan Oktay Anar, Ahmet Ümit, Nazan Bekiroğlu, Emine İşinsu and Sadık Yalsızuçanlar have hereupon fictionalized their novels so as to remind the key concepts of Sufic thought and the texts of tradition metaphorically and biographically.⁴¹ Yet some of these novels have been written with religious and aesthetic sensitivities and some with postmodern concerns to enrich the text.⁴²

Turkish novel in Turkey, from the very beginning, has followed a line of development in the framework of mutual relations of religion and politics and of course, to be more comprehensive, under the changing conditions ranging from the reality of modernity to postmodern demands⁴³. Classified as a postmodern novel by literary circles, *Snow*⁴⁴ surely bears the traces of the influence exerted by mentioned historical accumulation and emerges as a political novel with elements representing sociopolitic, philosophical and religious gains of modern period.

2. ORHAN PAMUK AS A SOCIAL PERSONALITY AND A NOVEL AUTHOR

Pamuk was born in 1952 to an Istanbulite family who featured behavioral patterns of upper social classes from a socioeconomic and cultural perspective. His great-grandfather had migrated to Anatolia during Ottoman-Russian war in 1877-78, then settled in İzmir and later came to Istanbul as his son studied civil engineering in there. The family earned great deal of money from railway constructions carried out in the first years of the Republic and at the same time, obtained a considerable fortune with the inheritance of the grandfather who handed down a large factory. As both his father's and mother's family were educated people, Pamuk has grown in environment of educated people. One of Pamuk's uncles studied medicine and the other studied engineering like his father. His aunt's husband, who resided in the same apartment block with Pamuk's family in Nişantaşı, is a legist.⁴⁵ Pamuk's first encounter with the society was in an extended and wealthy family, including a grandmother, uncles, aunts-in-law along with paternal aunts, who tried to overcome the tradition-modernity conflict by

⁴¹ See. Cumhuriyet Taş, "Çağdaş Türk Romanında Din ve Tasavvuf (1980 Sonrası)" (PhD diss., Dicle University, 2009), 172-178.

⁴² See. Karaca, "Çağdaş Türk Romanında Dinî-Tasavvufî İçerik", 281-286.

⁴³ See. Erkan Perşembe, "Modernlik gerçeğinden Postmodernlik Söylemine Din Sorunu", *Ekev Akademi Dergisi* 6/13 (Güz 2002), 1-16.

⁴⁴ See. Tahsin Yaprak, "Postmodernizmin Orhan Pamuk'un Romanlarındaki Yansımaları" (PhD diss., Adıyaman University, 2012).

⁴⁵ Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul Hatıralar ve Şehir* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Publications, 2015), 11-24.

adopting a secular and formalist European lifestyle, who had constant ties with Europe, who witnessed the latest periods of Ottoman Empire and the first quarter of the Republic, and in their social environment. Religion in the family represented a typology of *indifference* in terms of lifestyle, while it reflects a *laic* type⁴⁶ as to form. Noting that he can hardly hold the conception of Allah except his childhood impressions, Pamuk has drawn attention to the influence of his family which he cited in his remark saying “...they were living like French bourgeois who rather distanced themselves from religion but feared to pitch into a final settlement against it”. Pamuk also stated this situation, which he described to seem likely as a sort of “unbelief” denominating it as “spiritual laziness”, was transformed into an idealism that is proudly driven forward with the image of Westernization thrill and with a reverse modernity produced by Republic’s secular ardour.⁴⁷

Pamuk has found an opportunity by the influence of new socialization environments to evaluate this imitative and sham Europeaness more critically. In the subsequent period, Robert College, which Pamuk mentioned saying “I enjoyed to get lost and leaf through for hours in low ceilinged labyrinths of its library founded by secular American masters, with the pleasant smell of a worm paper” and said to have led him to discover the frailty in his beliefs and the different colours of the world and the new sociocultural environment he got into have become the new areas of socialization that have shaped Pamuk’s personality. This period, at the same time, is the interval during which he stayed with his older brother, who would study at Yale afterwards, and his paternal grandmother due to the new job his father found in Geneva. The city with its streets, people, animals, ferry quays, surrounding fish cafes, cinemas together with its all other colours presented him sounds richer than those he had experienced when he was staying with his mother as a little child. Of course, new webs of socialization, dissappointments caused by some “rich” entourages, different intellectual worlds of Turkish and American academics, intolerably unnatural Western style of wealthy environments and psychological breakdowns occurring in adolescence were the most important instruments of his personality formation in this period. Pamuk received education at highly prestigious colleges and studied architecture at Istanbul Technical University yet dropped out due to economical comfort and his path crossed with authorship amidst some domestic disputes regarding choice of profession.⁴⁸ Family structure in the first place, a proper economic condition, education, culture, art and social ambient, which secured his complete devotion to literature, have also undoubtedly affected his literary accumulation and point of view and consequently all of these have provided Pamuk with a complete social personality and attitude towards life. Pamuk made the below assessment on the literary environment which influenced his literary identity:

⁴⁶ See. Ünver Günay, *Erzurum ve Çevre Köylerinde Dini Hayat* (Istanbul: Erzurum Kitaplığı, 1999), 262-264.

⁴⁷ See. Pamuk, *Istanbul Hatıralar ve Şehir*, 172-188.

⁴⁸ See. Pamuk, *Istanbul Hatıralar ve Şehir*, 282-296, 332-345.

Those who I owe to, as I have felt keenly, are the ones who are confused about Republic, modernization and tradition as I am; the ones who constantly suffers a pain in the neck as a result of holding this confusion without a precise formula and solution as a consciousness issue... and even those who say “I approve whoever I read in the West, modernity and the past” the same as I also sometimes sense!⁴⁹

In addition, Pamuk has described Yahya Kemal, who he thinks used his own will towards his confusion; Tanpınar, who overcome this confusion regarding it as a melancholy to be enjoyed; Oğuz Atay, who can approach to this confusion with humour more than sorrow, and Kemal Tahir, who tries to comprehend the indecision between the West and East over a positivistic method, as his heroes. Moreover, along with the other native authors such as Orhan Kemal, Aziz Nesin, Yaşar Kemal, Fethi Naci and Kemalettin Tuğcu, the authors of world literature such as Tristram Shandy, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Jorge Luis Borges, Thomas Bernhard, Philip Larkin, Milan Kundera and Cabrera Infante are the figures who have had influence on his literary identity.⁵⁰

In *Öteki Renkler*, Pamuk⁵¹ has clearly specified the fundamental literary and ideational ambient of novelism by saying “I have learned a lot form Turkish novelists, though not on novel technique, novel language or formal possibilities; but I have learnt what I may call “author perspective” or “author attitude” ... What I have learned have nothing to do with the authorship itself or the essence of the realms in my novels. I have learned them from Western novel...”. As also understood from his remark, “I am an Istanbulite novelist”⁵², Istanbul has not only been a city he resided in, but also a special window for him, opening to novel with its all genuine experiences and happenings pertaining to his spiritual and experimental worlds.⁵³ Thus two voices have shown in Pamuk’s literary personality; native, universal and yet alongside “third voice” in which the two formers complements each other. In this very regard, novel to him is an instrument which allows person, without imposing an identity and ideology, to form his own identity, to narrate his own story and to become free.⁵⁴

Pamuk has not spent long time outside his country, except for the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa and his short time guest lectureship at Columbia University.⁵⁵ Therefore, the novels he wrote have springed from Istanbul, in which he built a considerable part of his social personality and other than which, in a sense, he has not dared to stay away, in fact, with his own words, because of his character. His first novel named *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* (1982), covering the story of an Istanbulite family spanning several generations,

⁴⁹ Pamuk, *Öteki Renkler*, 161.

⁵⁰ See. Orhan Pamuk, *Öteki Renkler* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Publications, 2016), 161-244.

⁵¹ Pamuk, *Öteki Renkler*, 111.

⁵² Pamuk, *Öteki Renkler*, 282.

⁵³ See. Pamuk, *Istanbul Hatıralar ve Şehir*.

⁵⁴ Pamuk, *Öteki Renkler*, 323-324.

⁵⁵ Seyhan, *Dünya Edebiyatı Bağlamında Modern Türk Romanı*, 145-146.

is as well Pamuk's first major success that has brought him many awards in Turkey.⁵⁶ Apart from his novels *Sessiz Ev* (1983), *Beyaz Kale* (1985), which brought him international recognition, *Kara Kitap* (1990), *Yeni Hayat* (1994), *Benim Adım Kırmızı* (1998); his works *Öteki Renkler* (1999), which is composed of the interviews he gave and the articles he wrote for many domestic and foreign newspapers and magazines and in which he shares episodes from his life, expresses some of his feelings, describes the environment he was surrounded by and criticizes Turkish politics around the topics such as civil liberties and freedom of thought, together with *Kar* (2002), which expounds the tensions between secularists, military, Turkish nationalists, Kurds and political Islamists, not only have brought Pamuk umpteen international awards but also granted him a universal fame no Turkish author had achieved until that day. Ranked among the top 10 books of 2004 by *New York Times Book Review*, *Snow* received the best foreign fiction award in France in 2005. *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2003), which contains Pamuk's memories from his youth and enriched with photographs, is not only a memoir that conveys his years of youth, but also has characteristics of a work providing the reader with information about his unique experiences, his cultural environment and universal values. Orhan Pamuk was named among top 100 intellectuals in the world by *Prospect* magazine in 2005 and as well listed among the 100 most influential people by *Time* magazine in 2006. Finally the Nobel Literary Prize which he received in 2006, 4 years after *Snow*, became a significant milestone for his novelism and international prominence. Pamuk kept writing novels after this special award and has always been a person discussed by both literary and political circles.⁵⁷

3. THE SYMPHONY OF RELIGION AND POLITICS IN TURKEY: RELIGION AND POLITICS IN SNOW

It can be said that there is a close thematic relation between Pamuk's novels and the early Turkish novel since they both focus on the subjects related to cultural rupture. Nevertheless, a number of contemporary authors, including Pamuk, introduced a different attitude and hence displayed a different cultural image in novel by criticizing modernization and reforms on the grounds that they disrupted Ottoman-Turkish cultural heritage. These criticisms have been ranged from nostalgic and romantic approaches towards the Ottoman Empire and Islam to extreme intellectualist and elitist government policies repressing ethnic and religious identity.⁵⁸ Regarding politics as tedious, Pamuk made statements that caused disturbance among the large part of the society and that argue the responsibility of Turkish political and military bureaucracy, which he at times said is motivated by provincialism and intense populism, for Armenian question carried to this day from World War I and for policies

⁵⁶ See. Pamuk, *Öteki Renkler*, 127.

⁵⁷ See. Pamuk, *Kar*.

⁵⁸ See. Pamuk, *Öteki Renkler*, 107-109, 246-250; Seyhan, *Dünya Edebiyatı Bağlamında Modern Türk Romanı*, 20-22.

pursued concerning other ethnic-religious matters.⁵⁹ On the other hand, through a design structured by his own institutional baggage, he has regarded religion as an epiphenomenon veiling the reality. In this context, religion to him, of course apart from being related to people from all social classes, thus carries a functional significance representing the desperations of the lower classes and forming ideologies and identities. Therefore, from his perspective, religion's being an activity addressing to the world affairs and conscience through the agency of the prophets represents a denominational relativism. In conclusion, religion is formed in the author's mind, in compliance with the set of meanings of the upper classes, around a god concept with eminent and superior features which does not interfere with individual and society, yet rather showed itself as a lower classes reality instrumentalized by poverty and deprivation. Here, from Pamuk's theoretical perspective, it should also be stated that religion is not worrisome as long as it does not become a force to impose upon those who does not embrace it and remind them their neediness.⁶⁰

As some readers opine within this general political-religious outlook, an approach that justifies the thoughts suggesting the author plays the role of "a provocator against Republican and Kemalist regime" in Snow or that he seeks to create a perception of "modern Islam" is not even a matter of discussion. Pamuk, unlike many Turkish novelists, conceal the aforementioned political subjects and disputes under a philosophical and sociological point of view.⁶¹ As a matter of fact, he has considered itself a Westernizationist regarding the values rooted in the West such as equality, several aspects of modernity, human rights and freedom of thought. Furthermore, he expressed that he feels at home with the stories of the East. Pamuk, with his foregoing remark, described his position as voicing the grievance of the people and community. He stated that he adopts neither a prohibitive formula, nor a dictatory attitude in his books on this matter, except for conveying the enthusiasm, emotion and lament. However, he pointed out that the politics have a rustic and populist character as a strange and evident result of modern Republic and Atatürk's reforms.⁶² Pamuk argues this problem to be entrenched, regardless of whether political authority plays a role as Kemalist Turkey's guarantor or it holds an Islamic posture. Hence, according to him, this rustic policy has prohibited Western critical thinking while trying to Westernize, has ruled out the traditional culture while trying to lay emphasis on the Turkish identity; and consequently these contradictory political and cultural demeanors have transformed Turkey's efforts of modernization into a delusional and authoritarian structure.⁶³ In *Snow*, Pamuk grounds all these fundamental political, religious and ideological dissensions of Turkey on an identity struggle carried out over the East-West and Islamist-modernist tension, as well on an

⁵⁹ See. See. Pamuk, *Öteki Renkler*, 381-397.

⁶⁰ See. Pamuk, *Istanbul Hatıralar ve Şehir*, 169-178.

⁶¹ Seyhan, *Dünya Edebiyatı Bağlamında Modern Türk Romanı*, 144-161.

⁶² See. Pamuk, *Öteki Renkler*, 322-323.

⁶³ Pamuk, *Öteki Renkler*, 247-248.

individual-conciliatory attitude. Heroes with different identities and ideologies thus are often drawn together in the novel over other common human experiences.

Snow is a postmodern parable written within the framework of liberation and demilitarization problems, which Turkish modernization faced at all stages since Tanzimat, in an environment where September 11 attacks took place and where religion-related civil-military tensions of 28 February process deepened, which was shaped with sociopolitical circumstances fermented by the 1980 coup. In this sense, *Snow* is fictionalized through a postmodern paradigm around the reality of Turkey and an approach coordinated by universal values and global politics.

This era was a period during which religious fanaticism in the world once again took on new appearances within the frame of dynamics of global and domestic policies and political Islam was on the rise; while in Turkey, the relation between religion and public arena became the subject of deep discussions around the axis of social, economic, political and cultural disputes and the ethnic political discourse, which created an atmosphere of a civil war through the 1990s, acquired new dimensions. Therefore, in the modern period, the comprehension of religion-politics correlation *Snow* presents depends on a decent evaluation of Pamuk's relative environment with original, cultural and universal aspects that matured his viewpoint⁶⁴, alongside the consideration of accentuated historical, political, social and religious accumulation in a global and domestic context. The latter represents a social background, which is associated with the author's institutional environment that blossomed his abovementioned social personality and also steers his attitudes and behaviors. In this respect, *Snow's* hypothetical perspective was fostered by the accumulation around these two environments.

No doubt that this liberal, egalitarian, libertarian and pluralist conviction referring to a political culture which, one way or another, has a social reflection in Turkey has asserted itself in a broad context ranging from *Snow's* story line and themes to its social characters carrying political identities. Fiction of the novel is based on the drama named *Vatan Yahut Çarşaf*, which was staged on National Theatre in Kars by Sunay Zaim and his theatre group, hinting at the secret military intervention carried out in 28 February 1997, which is denominated as "postmodern coup" by sociologists and political scientists of the period. In *Snow*, religion and politics are given primarily around the themes of "coup d'état", "political Islam" and "Kemalism", and secondly under "turban" and "political Islamist-secularist conflict". The novel hence is a literary journey to the 28 February process. Thus, the novel presents a stance on religion-politics context either by means of heroes or irony and criticisms and meanwhile reflects significant images depicting religious and political symbolism of the period with a pluralist perspective.

⁶⁴ See. Fichter, *Sosyoloji Nedir*, 28-29.

The fire opened by the soldiers when Vatan Yahut Çarşaf was being played was at first perceived by the audience as “a harmless intimidation” and as “a part of the world presented in the stage”⁶⁵. Later they understood the truth when Sunay Zaim said: “This is not a play, but a beginning revolt...We will do everything for our homeland. Trust the glorious Turkish army! Soldiers, seize them”⁶⁶. Having entered the stage at that time, with Z. Demirkol’s slogans saying “Long live the Republic! Long live the army! Long live the Turkish Nation! Long live Atatürk!”⁶⁷, the coup that would last three days turned into an act. Then a series of social and political events took place such as declaration of curfew, raids, tortures, murders, compelled Muhtar formerly atheist, new Islamist candidate of Welfare Party’s to withdraw from candidature for mayorship. In the meantime, Sunay says on a local television that the Kurdistans and Islamists provoked by our external enemies and corrupt politicians who would do anything to get the people’s vote have brought Kars to the edge of a cliff;⁶⁸ while Z. Demirkol and his companions were on a quest to find “a strong voiced epical folk singer singing songs about frontiers” embracing the view suggesting “heroic songs about the frontiers should be sung on radio and televisions so that a revolution would be a true revolution”.⁶⁹

Mentioned social and political images, emerging before and during the coup, represent a number of symbols demonstrating modern Turkey’s last half-century religion-politics relations beginning from the early 2000s.⁷⁰ The novel argues that the coup was launched against religionists. It also argues that this political ambient was organized and grew stronger after 1980 by the impact of a set of economic, cultural, political, religious and ethnic social problems. These religionist circles, traveled from door to door in groups, visited poor people and distributed help explaining to the public that the poverty and misery has increased because of the secession from the path of Allah.⁷¹ Serdar Bey, a local journalist, thinks that the reputation of the Welfare Party’s members, whom he considers as “more hardworking, honest and humble than anyone”⁷², is growing thanks to the space left by the divided rightist and leftist republican parties that have entered into a destructive rivalry with each other over the old feuds, nationalism and ethnic discriminations in Kars. He takes it for granted that the Welfare Party’s Kurdish candidate for mayor, Muhtar would win in the local elections which would be held five days later.⁷³ However, “doing something that even he himself would have

⁶⁵ Pamuk, *Kar*, 147-149.

⁶⁶ Pamuk, *Kar*, 149.

⁶⁷ Pamuk, *Kar*, 150.

⁶⁸ Pamuk, *Kar*, 191.

⁶⁹ Pamuk, *Kar*, 159-160.

⁷⁰ See. Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye’de Din ve Siyaset* (Istanbul: İletişim Publications, 1998), 213-237; Necdet Subaşı, *Ara Dönem Din Politikaları* (Istanbul: Küre Publications, 2005); Ali Çarkoğlu and Binnaz Toprak, *Değişen Türkiye’de Din Toplum ve Siyaset* (Istanbul: Tesev Publications, 2006); Karpaz, *Kısa Türkiye Tarihi*, 179-301.

⁷¹ Pamuk, *Kar*, 30.

⁷² Pamuk, *Kar*, 30.

⁷³ Pamuk, *Kar*, 30-31.

despised, being a candidate from a religious-shariatist party”⁷⁴, Muhtar was worried that the state will plot against them as the elections approached and his victory was clearly seen.⁷⁵ On the other hand, Lacivert,⁷⁶ who regards himself “among the most prominent Islamists of Turkey and Middle East”, believes that the former mayor and director of training institute was shot with the state’s incitement in an attempt to defame the Muslims and pave the way for the coup.⁷⁷ Five days before the election, the intervention was finally staged and Muhtar, who stood for a moderate liberal wing among Islamists, was forced to withdraw from his candidature. Regardless of the fact that he handed a signed paper pronouncing his withdrawal from the candidature for mayor to the first soldier knocking his door,⁷⁸ he was still taken into custody and exposed to violence.⁷⁹ Islamist yet uncompromising Lacivert, who did not like this conciliatory attitude of Muhtar’s, argued that Muhtar entered to politics in an effort to have his back to the wall and even that he is a person “likely to swallow the beat-ups he gets from the state to take office” or “even a man who might be pleased with these beat-ups”.⁸⁰ Likewise, Ka believes that Muhtar would not make a matter of honor out of these maltreatments and shovings and as well carries the frustration and calmness of man who has got used to considering the cruelty of the police and government as natural phenomena just like electricity blackout or the roads with mud.⁸¹ As a matter of fact, Muhtar is also hopeful that he would be elected as mayor in following mayoral elections from an Islamist party to be formed after dissolution of the Welfare Party.⁸²

In *Snow*, the problem of women with headscarf is dealt with as one of the symbolic matters of political Islamists from different social perspectives. In the novel, secular director of the institute holds the banning of headscarved girls from schools as an order of the secular state⁸³ adopting the idea that women would gain a more respectful and peaceful place in society only if they took out their headscarf. On the other hand, the Islamist militant who kills the director believes that women wearing headscarf would be protected from abuse, rape and humiliation and go out in public more freely. To exemplify, “if famous actress Elizabeth Taylor had worn burqa in last twenty years, she wouldn’t have been put into mental hospitals after ashamed of her fatness, she would have been happy”.⁸⁴ The novel, alongside mentioned

⁷⁴ Pamuk, *Kar*, 52.

⁷⁵ Pamuk, *Kar*, 51.

⁷⁶ Pamuk, *Kar*, 209.

⁷⁷ Pamuk, *Kar*, 75, 208.

⁷⁸ Pamuk, *Kar*, 185.

⁷⁹ Pamuk, *Kar*, 62-65.

⁸⁰ Pamuk, *Kar*, 74.

⁸¹ Pamuk, *Kar*, 62-63.

⁸² Pamuk, *Kar*, 378.

⁸³ Pamuk, *Kar*, 44.

⁸⁴ Pamuk, *Kar*, 47.

different ideologic approaches, also sets forth some social pictures depicting another aspect of headscarf which has not been infected with a sharp ideology and which mainly prioritizes the class representation: "...A woman wearing headscarf in Istanbul's Westernized environments either was a woman who got there to sell grapes coming from the vicinity of Istanbul, perhaps from the orchards of Kartal, or was a milkman's wife or someone from lower classes of the society".⁸⁵ Observation on family of a turbaned girl who committed suicide is grounded on the same functionality and symbolism: "Her family was the least impoverished among the families Ka talked to. While drinking a Coca-Cola, which mournful father opened and handed to him after getting it from the refrigerator of a little grocery store he owned, Ka found out that the girl had told her thoughts of suicide both to her family and her friends before she hanged herself".⁸⁶ Furthermore, the novel lays emphasis on the connection between repressive mindset in politization of headscarf and political Islamists' using the issue as a shield to their ideology and as well on naïve communal knowledge as a product of the same symbolic codes:

The girl might have seen wearing a headscarf from her mother, from her family; but learned to embrace it as a symbol of political Islam from despotic principals and her resisting friends in school. She was soon to be thrown out due to absence from the training institute at whose door she had been sent back by policemen as she had refused to take off her headscarf despite the pressures from her parents. After seeing some of her friends giving up resistance and taking off their turbans or even wearing a wig, she started to tell his father that "everything is meaningless in life", that "she doesn't want to live". Seeing that both Directorate of Religious Affairs and Islamists were persistently propagating in those days in Kars that the suicide is one of the greatest sins, no one could have thought that this religious girl might have killed herself.⁸⁷

Another political theme focused in *Snow* is Kemalism. *Snow* highlights the Jacobinic character of Kemalism and thereby describes the restriction of individual rights and freedoms around this ideology for the benefit of the government. Sunay Zaim orders the soldiers: "don't be cruel... but make everyone see the power of the revolution and state, and that state is not going to be frightened off by anyone".⁸⁸ He speaks to Ka: "Everyone who is Westernized to a degree, especially conceited intellectuals who belittle the people need a secular army in order to be able to breathe... Do you really believe anyone would remember the tears shed by a clement liberal like you for imam-hatip students when they turn this place into Iran".⁸⁹ He also gives message to the people by saying: "Nobody can turn you away from that great and noble journey of enlightenment you have embarked on... These reactionaries, scumbags and stick-in-the-muds can never throw a monkey wrench into the history. The hands that try to harm

⁸⁵ Pamuk, *Kar*, 26.

⁸⁶ Pamuk, *Kar*, 21.

⁸⁷ Pamuk, *Kar*, 21-22, 112.

⁸⁸ Pamuk, *Kar*, 182.

⁸⁹ Pamuk, *Kar*, 186-187.

the Republic, freedom and enlightenment will be broken.”⁹⁰ The novel make references to the general attitude of military bureaucracy over Sunay’s words on the people: “Look how stupid they all are! ...they don’t even understand the modern art, they can’t be modern”,⁹¹ “if we find and hang someone, maybe the one who shot the director of training institute and show this live on television, entire Kars will thence show the white feather”.⁹² Likewise, the secular intellectual’s looking at the abundance of headscarved women in the street and making political deductions,⁹³ the consideration of Western actors instead of Turkish actors for the role of Atatürk in national movies which have been always sought to be made yet never could have been shot⁹⁴ or Sunay’s words to Ka “even your friends in Cumhuriyet newspaper would believe the soldiers but you” although he has been charged by the newspaper⁹⁵ present both contradictions of the military bureaucracy and the ironies and symbols demonstrating its authority on society. After all, the novel also contains descriptions about the differentiated structure of the secularists:

We can explain this with Westernizationist secularists’ fear of the results of even their own ideas. In fact, as they were afraid of the political Islamists, they would be already content with everything in Kars should remain just as they are before. They did not even think about forcing them to take out their burqas by force of the state anymore as in the first years of republic, they were only saying that “it would be enough that the women without burqa would not wear it because of the pressure and threats from Islamists as it was in Iran” ... All Kemalists in the front row are not in fact Kemalists, but cowards!⁹⁶

Snow overall offers a liberal and democratic view around criticism towards absolutist and standardizing approach of modernism. Each manifestation that emerged in the context of both politics and religion is sought to be considered within its own sociological environment. It can be therefore said that even though the religion is regarded as a property of lower classes, as an *epiphenomenon*, this image is not held as a sign of lowness or supremacy within the broad approach of the novel, but a class character.

Snow has created certain diversity on typological aspects of religion in Turkey.⁹⁷ In this framework, aside from the traditional image of religion that mostly the lower classes give, its ideological character, powerful enough to promote some murders, is also largely presented under definitions of “religionist” or “Islamist” in the novel. Similarly, a conciliatory position that religion generates among different social environments can also be seen in the novel: “Of

⁹⁰ Pamuk, *Kar*, 145.

⁹¹ Pamuk, *Kar*, 371.

⁹² Pamuk, *Kar*, 186.

⁹³ Pamuk, *Kar*, 26.

⁹⁴ Pamuk, *Kar*, 176.

⁹⁵ Pamuk, *Kar*, 187.

⁹⁶ Pamuk, *Kar*, 138.

⁹⁷ See. Necdet Subaşı, *Gündelik Hayat ve Dinsellik*, (Istanbul: İz Publications, 2004), 93-128.

course, it does not mean that our religion has nothing to be discussed... I am not one of those lickspittle Islamists who try to convince secularists that Islam is a secular religion".⁹⁸

One of the dominant motifs on the basic aspects of religion in Turkey the novel puts forward is its form which has been rather functionalized for the conservative policies in Turkey. Here, religion is presented as a useful means for conservatives, who mobilize the politics, to manipulate the people for their own interests:

Ka knew from the beginning that to believe in Allah in Turkey does not only mean to encounter with the most supreme notion, the greatest creator, but, above all, to get involved in a congregation, in an environment; but he was still dissapointed seeing Muhtar talking about the benefit of congregations without making any mention of Allah and belief of an individual.⁹⁹

Religionists go from door to door, visit us in groups, give out dishes, pots and pans, orange juicers, boxes of soap, bulgur and detergent to women, they instantly form friendships and connection with women, pin gold coins with hooked needle on children's shoulders. They canvass votes for Welfare Party which they call the party of Allah, saying this poverty and misery we are going through is because we have drifted apart from the path of Allah. Men speak to men, women speak to women. They gain the confidence of abased and angry jobless people, cheer up their wives who don't know what to boil in pot for dinner and then, promising new presents, they make them swear that they will vote for the party. They earn the respect of not only the poorest and unemployed people who are humiliated day and night, but also the university students who can barely eat a bowl of soup a day, the workers and even the shopkeepers; for the reason that they are hardworking, honest and humble than anyone.¹⁰⁰

Moreover, in the novel, religion is also seen at times to be designed as a system that is functionalized by educated higher classes from time to time around their existencial problems or their relative exiguities. For instance, the director of training institute, who is described as a person that "believes in destiny as much as a proper religious man does"¹⁰¹, rejects the protection he is offered despite the threats he had received for not letting headscarved girls in university and lessons. Having grown up in a posh environment in Nişantaşı, Istanbul, Ka said in a conversation with Şeyh Efendi: "I don't believe in Allah for I am alone, and I can't escape from this loneliness for I cannot believe in Allah. What shall I do?"¹⁰² Regardless of whether a religion functionalized by poverty or by deprivation is mentioned, in the end, with regard to religion a peasant character oriented to evade an individual and social threat or to cope with it grabs attention.¹⁰³ In this dominant functional religious design which has been conditionally

⁹⁸ Pamuk, *Kar*, 106.

⁹⁹ Pamuk, *Kar*, 64.

¹⁰⁰ Pamuk, *Kar*, 30.

¹⁰¹ Pamuk, *Kar*, 42.

¹⁰² Pamuk, *Kar*, 93-94.

¹⁰³ See. Max Weber, *Din Sosyolojisi*, trans. Latif Boyacı (Istanbul: Yarı Publications, 2012), 183; Eric R. Wolf, *Köylüler*, trans. Abdülkerim Sönmez (Ankara: İmge Publishing, 2000), 155-170.

characterized by an ascetic discipline, formalism and dense ritualism, its essential discipline is also taken into consideration from time to time. Another fundamental image about religion Snow sets forth is its power to produce ideology through its common marginalizing tone. For example, as mentioned above, the religious approach that appears around Lacivert's religious personality reflects that kind of typology.¹⁰⁴

The novel also argues that religion has a characteristic of obstructing the change in society. Throughout the novel, Ka is seen to be an atheist character sometimes engrossed in existential questions. In a visit to Kars's famous sheikh Saadettin, he says: "I have always wanted my country to advance, to modernize, freedom of its people. ...But our religion has always seemed to me as if it stands against these. Maybe I was wrong"¹⁰⁵. He also made following confession to the sheikh:

As I have realized that I could not believe at once in being European and in Allah who puts women in burqa and covers their faces, my life has passed free from religion... I wish for an Allah that I wouldn't have to take off my shoes or kneel after kissing someone's hand to get his presence.¹⁰⁶

Religion is occasionally given in the novel with its conflict-causing character beside its prohibitive role. Ka in fact makes below assessment on religion:

I have felt guilty all my life for not believing in the Allah of indigents in whom uneducated people, headscarved old women and men holding rosary in hand believe. There was a haughty part in my disbelief. But now I want to believe in Allah who rains that beautiful snow outside... There is an Allah that will render human more civilized and elegant... I wish to believe in Allah you believe and to be simple citizens as you are but the Westerner inside of me confuses me.¹⁰⁷

In addition to these religion conceptions, politics in Turkey are clearly presented within a dominant Jacobinic and elitist attitude in *Snow*. Ka's words addressed to Islamist Lacivert, "this obsequious people are attached to their religion but eventually do what government ordains", Kadife's criticism on Ka, "you remind me of secularists planning to bring unwesternized people to heel with a beating, seeing them as a primitive, immoral and lower class"¹⁰⁸ and İpek's following words to Ka "... then you believe in Islam that they made you forget, which is not a bad thing as is seen from Germany and as claimed by intellectual secularists"¹⁰⁹ are some of the examples demonstrating mentioned point of view. The tone, attitude and acts that reveal themselves during the coup process in the novel give significant

¹⁰⁴ See. Pamuk, *Kar*, 294-295.

¹⁰⁵ Pamuk, *Kar*, 93.

¹⁰⁶ Pamuk, *Kar*, 93.

¹⁰⁷ Pamuk, *Kar*, 94-95.

¹⁰⁸ Pamuk, *Kar*, 289.

¹⁰⁹ Pamuk, *Kar*, 89-90.

hints highlighting mentioned authoritarian character of politics. Religion and politics in *Snow* are therefore brought together on a common platform in terms of their formalistic, introversive and imposing characters caused by deep social ruptures that manifest themselves with rapid social change.

Snow, apart from the position of religion and politics as separate institutions, also presents a number of pictures in the context of their mutual affinity. Besides the exoticness of the significant symbols these literary frames present, it is also blazing with regard to observing ongoing adventure of the chronic problems of religion and politics. The novel touches on the close relationship between religion and politics over Şeyh Efendi, some bureaucrats and soldiers:

Many people visit him in the city, secularists as well. The wives of the division commander and governor are also said to visit him, as well as some wealthy people and soldiers. He is pro-government person. When he told veiled university girls to unveil during lectures, Welfare Party members could not say anything. In a place like Kars, you can not reject when a man this powerful summons you.¹¹⁰

Again, Muhtar's words addressing to Ka, "Looking after our turbaned sisters is the policy of our party all around Turkey", display aforementioned relation.¹¹¹

Snow, which is understood to approach religion and politics in Turkey over the assumption that reality could have different aspects, has come to light as a literary posture towards standardizing and ideological approach of modernism. Therefore, approaching to religion and politics in Turkey from a pluralist perspective reorganized by postmodern paradigm¹¹² can be regarded as a new condition for Turkish novel. By this, the novel implied a new religious and political culture to the reader. Apparently, religion-politics relations in Turkey will move on a wider cultural stage that would include new religious and political schemas in coming years. However, it is obvious that this conversion will make progress around discrepancies brought by two different value systems and lifestyles between less developed and well developed societal systems. Within this frame, *Snow* both offers us a number of allegories about currently failing parts of the religious and political system and as well implicates that different cultural environments creating these conflicts are fed by separate disciplines of life.

CONCLUSION

Reflecting the religious and political cultures to a literary product, *Snow* exhibits a close relationship with its roots within a centennial experience and it offers a new perspective

¹¹⁰ Pamuk, *Kar*, 88-89.

¹¹¹ Pamuk, *Kar*, 51.

¹¹² See. Kiran, "Postmodernizmin Dini Varsayımlarının 1990 Sonrası Postmodern Türk Romanındaki Yansımaları", 94-117.

regarding its approach towards religion-politics relationship. Of course, having a special place in the cultural system structured by Turkey's religious and political accumulation, the novel as a literary text offers an analysis on society over mentioned culture around religious and political identities. This approach is grounded on two bases, which are universal values and the cultural environment the author socialized in.

The novel approaches to religion and politics and the social processes generated by their correlation with a postmodern paradigm. *Snow*, in this sense, presents a provocatively pluralist perspective to the society, which has been immensely disintegrated in a conflictual climate spread by a cultural hegemony, where differentiated identities fight against each other. Notwithstanding being related surely with all classes, religion is treated in *Snow*, as a social function reminding lower classes of their poverty, justifying their misery and providing identities mostly over ideologies. Clientelistic relations, which are formed particularly on an ideological-religious ground, are in a paradoxical relation with a pluralist and civil conception –because of the violence it contains- that even justifies their existence.

Furthermore, *Snow* attempts to describe the unlikelihood of the sustainability in a social field, of a Jacobinic and imposing relation style which ignores identities in all areas, as it does in religion problematic, with some allegories and ironies. According to the novel, this awry type of politics, as old as the Republic and engaged with its approach of modernization, portrays a “rustic” character within the framework of universal values and the achievements of global society.

In conclusion, *Snow* certainly is of great importance regarding its presentation of a dramatic story of recent religion-politics relations which have been formed around a very significant accumulation that has glided through Turkish religious and political history to this day. Yet what is more important here is the fact that the novel fictionally sheds light on a certain religious and political culture in society and at the same time, points the conciliatory character of religion and politics by means of its own dynamics. Therefore, according to the novel, political power's imposition of its own epistemological accumulation and pleasures as “policy” onto wide societal circles and theological intolerance are two social reflexes, belonging to different social circles yet feeding each other.

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