

POLITICAL ISLAMIST: ONLY A NAME THAT WESTERNERS AND SECULARS GIVE US A New Historical Reading of *Snow*

Tri Pramesti*
Mateus Rudi Supsiadji**

ABSTRAK. Artikel ini membahas karya Orhan Pamuk berjudul *Snow* dalam perspektif *new historicism*. Yang menjadi bahan telaahan adalah kehidupan masyarakat Turki yang masuk dalam kelompok “liyan” sebagaimana tergambar dalam novel tersebut, khususnya yang menyakut hak-hak kaum perempuan. Umpamanya, memakai penutup kepala merupakan pilihan bagi perempuan untuk mengekspresikan pilihannya. Bagi mereka yang memilih untuk memakai penutup kepala atas dasar imannya, seharusnya tidaklah tepat dimasukkan sebagai kelompok liyan.

Kata kunci: *new historicism, otherness, self-positioning*

INTRODUCTION

Every citizen is equal under the law. Both men and women should be treated equally since they have the same right and duty. The state guarantees that the people are to be free from fear and free in practicing his/her religion. However, Turkish secular government seemed discriminate the role of people who are accused as Islam fundamentalist and woman wearing headscarf in public. This discrimination is portrayed by Orhan Pamuk in his novel *Snow*. *Snow* tells about people living in Kars through the eyes of Turkish exile poet, Ka abbreviated from Kerim Alakusoglu. Through Ka's experience, Orhan Pamuk describes the modern Turkish people standing between western-style democracy and Islamic fundamentalism. The lives of the people who are treated not as Turkish; living in exile, hiding, avoiding meeting people in public sphere and having no chance to continue her study because they are considered against Turkish secularism and militarism. They are the ‘other’ in Turkey. The setting of the novel takes place in Kars in 1990s and about the people considered as the state enemy.

The purpose of the study is to analyze the idea of “self-positioning” and “otherness” as portrayed in the novel *Snow*. The problem statement of the study is: How is concept of “self-positioning” and “otherness” depicted in the novel? The focus of the study is the contemporary Turkish conflict between political Islam, tradition and the national identity. For the purpose of the study, new historicism theory is adopted in the analysis.

NEW HISTORICISM

New Historicism is a theory applied to literature that suggests literature must be studied and interpreted within the context of both the history of the author and the history of the critic. The theory arose in the 1980s, and with Stephen Greenblatt as its main proponent, became quite popular in the 1990s. Unlike previous historical criticism, which limited itself to simply demonstrating how a work was reflective of its time. The new historicism developed during the 1980s, largely in reaction to the text-only approach pursued by formalist New Critics and the critics who challenged the New Criticism in the 1970s. New historicists, like formalists and their critics, acknowledge the importance of the literary text, but they also analyze the text with an eye to history. In this respect, the new historicism is not “new”; the majority of critics between 1920 and 1950 focused on a work's historical content and based their interpretations on the interplay between the text and historical contexts (such as the author's life or intentions in

* Dra. Tri Pramesti, M. S, dosen Prodi Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Sastra, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya

** Mateus Rudi Supsiadji, S. S., M. Pd., dosen Prodi Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Sastra, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya

writing the work). New historicist critics also tend to define the discipline of history more broadly than did their predecessors. They view history as a social science like anthropology and sociology, whereas older historicists tended to view history as literature's "background" and the social sciences as being properly historical.

Many new historicists have acknowledged a profound indebtedness to the writings of Michel Foucault, French philosophical historian. Foucault brought together incidents and phenomena from areas normally seen as unconnected, encouraging new historicists and new cultural historicists to redefine the boundaries of historical inquiry. Like the philosopher of the 1970s.

In other respects, however, the new historicism differs from the historical criticism of the 1930s and 1940s. It is informed by the poststructuralist and reader-response theory of the 1970s, as well as by the thinking of feminist, cultural, and Marxist critics whose work was also "new" in the 1980s. They are less fact- and event-oriented than historical critics used to be, perhaps because they have come to wonder whether the truth about what really happened can ever be purely or objectively known. They are less likely to see history as linear and progressive, as something developing toward the present, and they are also less likely to think of it in terms of specific eras, each with a definite, persistent, and consistent *zeitgeist* (spirit of the times). Hence they are unlikely to suggest that a literary text has a single or easily identifiable historical context.

New historicists remind us that it is treacherous to reconstruct the past as it really was—rather than as we have been conditioned by our own place and time to believe that it was. And they know that the job is impossible for those who are unaware of that difficulty, insensitive to the bent or bias of their own historical vantage point. Thus, when new historicist critics describe a historical change, they are highly conscious of (and even likely to discuss) the theory of historical change that informs their account.

Discourse

Discourse is speech of writing seen from the point of view of the belief, values and categories which it embodies; these beliefs etc. constitutes a way of looking at the world, an organization or representation of experience " and defined by Michel Foucault as language practice: that is, language as it is used by various constituencies (the law, medicine, the church, for example) for purposes to do with power relationships between people"

Othering

Othering means does not belong to the ruling group or dominant group. The status is outside the mainstream. Discourse of otherness is also characterized by writings from non European countries/according to British norm. Other also means it is different from the west.

Self-Positioning

New historicism's claim that historical analysis is unavoidably subjective is not an attempt to legitimize a self-indulgent, 'anything goes' attitude toward the writing of history. Rather, the inevitability of personal bias makes it imperative that new historicists be aware of and as forthright as possible about their own psychological and ideological positions relative to the material they analyze so that their readers can have some idea of the human 'lens' through which they are viewing the historical issues at hand.

BRIEF HISTORY OF MODERN TURKEY

Two words, secularism and militarism, are associated with Turkey everytime people discuss the political system of this country. Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Turkey has sought recognition as a European state. After siding with the central Powers (Germany/Austro-Hungarian Empire) in World War I, the vast Islamic Ottoman Empire was

divided into many smaller countries, one of which was to have been Kurdistan, a region in southeastern Turkey, northern Iraq and northern Iran. However, before the state could be formed, Kemal Atatürk, father of modern Turkey, consolidated power and negotiated a new, more favorable agreement, the Treaty of Lausanne. Atatürk united the Turkish Republic by promoting a strident nationalism and relaxing Islamic restrictions, while persecuting non-Turks and repressing other ethnic identities, including the Kurds, who have been denied rights to their language, culture and political dissent. Despite its ties to Germany, Turkey remained neutral in World War II, until the Allied victory was clear, then declared war in 1945. Since World War II, Turkey's governmental power and control have, and still, remain vested in the military. During the Cold War era, Turkey permitted the US to build the Incirlik Air Base, now leased for over \$1 billion annually and has continually leveraged this to gain favor with Washington. Incirlik enables the US to project air power throughout the troubled Middle East and poses diplomatic challenges for Turkey's relations with Arab states.

Turkey's application to accede to the European Union was made on 14 April 1987. Turkey has been an associate member of the European Union (EU) and its predecessors since 1963. Turkey signed a Customs Union agreement with the EU in 1995 and was officially recognised as a candidate for full membership on 12 December 1999, at the Helsinki summit of the European Council. The membership bid has become a major controversy of the ongoing enlargement of the European Union.

EU member states must unanimously agree on Turkey's membership for the Turkish accession to be successful. A number of nations may oppose it; notably Austria, which historically served as a bulwark for Christian Europe against the Ottoman Empire whose armies twice laid siege to Vienna in 1529 and 1683; and France, where some are anxious at the prospect of a new wave of Muslim immigrants, given the country's already large Muslim community.

Secularism in Turkey

Secularism is the concept that government or other entities should exist separately from religion and/or religious beliefs. In one sense, secularism may assert the right to be free from religious rule and teachings, and the right to freedom from governmental imposition of religion upon the people within a state that is neutral on matters of belief. In another sense, it refers to the view that human activities and decisions, especially political ones, should be based on evidence and fact unbiased by religious influence.

Secularism in Turkey defines the relationship between religion and state in the country of Turkey. Secularism was first introduced with the 1928 amendment of the Constitution of 1924, which removed the provision declaring that the "Religion of the State is Islam", and with the later reforms of Atatürk, which set the administrative and political requirements to create a modern, democratic, secular state, aligned with Kemalist ideology consisting of: 1) "secularism, social equality, equality before law"; 2) "the Republican form of government"; 3) "the indivisibility of the Republic and of the Turkish Nation.

Nine years after its introduction, secularism was explicitly stated in the second article of the then Turkish constitution on February 5, 1937. The current Constitution of 1982 neither recognizes an official religion nor promotes any. This includes Islam, to which at least nominally more than 99% of its citizens subscribe. Issues relating to Turkey's secularism are always discussed. Turkey's preservation and maintenance of its secular identity has been a profound issue and source of tension. The constitutional rule that prohibits discrimination on religious grounds is taken very seriously. Turkey, as a secular country, prohibits by law the wearing of religious head cover and theo-political symbolic garments for both genders in government buildings, schools, and universities.

The strict application of secularism in Turkey has been credited for enabling women to have access to greater opportunities, compared to countries with a greater influence of religion

in public affairs, in matters of education, employment, wealth as well as political, social and cultural freedoms.

Turkey's secularism does not call for a strict separation of religion and the state, but describes the state's stance as one of "active neutrality." Turkey's actions related with religion are carefully analyzed and evaluated through the *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* (English: Presidency of Religious Affairs). The duties of the Presidency of Religious Affairs are "to execute the works concerning the beliefs, worship, and ethics of Islam, enlighten the public about their religion, and administer the sacred worshipping places".

Also paradoxical with the Turkish secularism is the fact that Identity document cards of Turkish citizens include the specification of the card holder's religion. This declaration was perceived for some as representing a form of the state's surveillance over its citizens' religious choices.

Headscarf Controversy

According to the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation and some sources, around 45% of women wear the headscarf in Turkey, although mostly in a rural babushkastyle. Turkey's strong secularism has resulted in what have been perceived by some as strictures on the freedom of religion; for example, the headscarf has long been prohibited in public universities, and a constitutional amendment passed in February 2008 that permitted women to wear it on university campuses sparked considerable controversy. In addition, the armed forces have maintained a vigilant watch over Turkey's political secularism, which they affirm to be a keystone among Turkey's founding principles. The military has not left the maintenance of a secular political process to chance, however, and has intervened in politics on a number of occasions.

With a policy of official secularism, the Turkish government has traditionally banned the wearing of headscarves by women who work in the public sector. The ban applies to teachers, lawyers, parliamentarians and others working on state premises. The ban on headscarves in the civil service and educational and political institutions was expanded to cover non-state institutions. Authorities began to enforce the headscarf ban among mothers accompanying their children to school events or public swimming pools, while female lawyers and journalists who refused to comply with the ban were expelled from public buildings such as courtrooms and universities. In 1999, the ban on headscarves in the public sphere hit the headlines when Merve Kavakçı, a newly elected MP for the Virtue Party was prevented from taking her oath in the National Assembly because she wore a headscarf.

The constitutional rule that prohibits discrimination on religious grounds is taken very seriously. In any truly liberal democratic country, anyone can wear nearly anything simply based on personal choice. However, in Turkey there is a ban on wearing the headscarf for women who would like to do so according to their beliefs.

The Kurds Living in Turkey

Ethnic Kurds compose a significant portion of the population in Turkey. Unlike the Turks, the Kurds speak an Indo-European language. There are Kurds living all over Turkey, but most live to the east and southeast of the country, from where they originate. The republic of Turkey's treatment of its citizens of Kurdish ethnicity has been a frequent subject of international criticism. In the 1930s, Turkish government policy aimed to forcibly assimilate local Kurds and become like the Turkey. Today's presence of Kurds is a testimony that many have resisted these measures. Since 1984, Kurdish resistance movements included both peaceful political activities for basic civil rights for Kurds within Turkey, and violent armed rebellion for a separate Kurdish state. But, according to a Turkish opinion poll, 59% of self-identified Kurds in Turkey think that Kurds in Turkey do not seek a separate state (while 71.3% of self-identified Turks think they do). Kurds have largely resisted the assimilation policies of the government.

The main strategy for assimilation has been suppression of the Kurdish language. Nevertheless, Kurdish is widely spoken.

The period immediately following the 1980 Turkish coup d'état was particularly oppressive (not just to Kurds), when use of Kurdish language in public was banned. The ban was lifted in 1991 during the presidency of Turgut Özal, who was of partial Kurdish descent. Turkish remains the only official language, and the use of any other language is not allowed in political life or public services. In 2003, the Turkish Parliament eased restrictions on Kurdish language rights in Turkey, but Kurds are largely banned from giving their children Kurdish names.

The Plot of the Novel

Orhan Pamuk's novel *Snow* is set in the early 1990s in Kars, a remote and dilapidated city in eastern Anatolia famed less for its mournful relics of Armenian civilization and Russian imperial rule than for its spectacularly awful weather.

In this novel, the city is cut off from the world and also, to an extent, from normal literary reality by three days of unremitting snow. Written, the reader is told, between 1999 and 2001, *Snow* deals with some of the large themes of Turkey and the Middle East: the conflict between a secular state and Islamic government, poverty, unemployment, the veil, the role of a modernising army, suicide and yet more suicide.

The hero is a dried-up poet named Kerim Alakusoglu, conveniently abbreviated to Ka. After many years in political exile in Frankfurt, Ka returns to Istanbul to attend his mother's funeral. He is then commissioned by an Istanbul newspaper to write an article about the municipal elections in Kars as well as on a disturbing series of suicides by women who have been forbidden by the secular government to wear their head scarves at school. He arrives in Kars in the midst of a snowstorm that lasts for three days, cutting the town off from the greater world, and is quickly drawn into an intricate set of circumstances. He meets Ipek, a beautiful university fellow, who has recently separated from her husband, and quickly falls in love with her. In a café, the pair witness a shooting of the local director of the Institute of Education by a Muslim extremist from out of town who blames the director for the death of a young woman named Teslime, claiming she killed herself because of the director's ban on head-scarves in school. After the incident, Ka visits Muhtar, who tells him about his experience of finding Islam, which relates to a blizzard and meeting a charismatic sheikh named Saadett in Efendi. The police pick up Ka and Muhtar due to the killing of the minister. Ka is questioned and Muhtar is beaten.

Though he has suffered from writer's block for a number of years, Ka suddenly feels inspired and composes a poem called "Snow", which describes a mystic experience. Other poems follow. Then, Ka meets Sheikh Saadett in and confesses that he almost knows nothing about religion and that he does not want himself or Turkey to fall into. But he feels a sense of comfort with the sheikh and begins to accept his new poems as gifts from God.

Other significant characters Ka encounters include a wanted Muslim radical named Blue and Kadife, Ipek's younger sister, who has joined and become the leader of the "head-scarf girls", those who insist upon being "covered." Through Kadife, he meets another head-scarf girl, Hande, who suggested suicide to Teslime but insists she did not intend for the girl to follow through. Ka refers to them as "Islamic Feminists". Ka is impressed by Necip, a student at the religious high school, who, like many of the young Muslims at the school, is quite taken by Kadife.

Growing tensions between secularists and Islamists explode during a televised event at the National Theater, during which one secular group puts on a classic play condemning head scarves. When Muslims protest, three nationalists take the stage and start firing. Necip is among those killed. The police and military establish martial law, and Ka is taken in for questioning

because he has been seen with Islamists. He is shattered to find Necip's body in the morgue and identifies him as the one who led him to Blue.

Ka is then taken by Kadife to speak with Blue, who is Kadife's lover. Ka convinces Blue that he has a contact at a newspaper in Germany who will be willing to print a statement denouncing the coup if Blue can get support from non-Islamists. To further this fiction, Ka returns to his hotel to convince Kadife and Ipek's leftist father Turgut Bey to collaborate on the statement. After the father and Kadife leave, Ka's longing for Ipek is fulfilled when the two make love.

Turgut Bey attends a meeting at which representatives from the various factions opposed to the coup, including Islamists, leftists, and Kurds, attempt comically to produce a coherent statement to the European press denouncing the action. After Blue is arrested and held by the nationalists, Ka negotiates a deal with Sunay Zaim that will result in Blue's release but only if Kadife agrees to play a role in Zaim's production of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and remove her head-scarf on live television during the course of the play. Both Kadife and Blue agree.

Ka is soon picked up and beaten by two policemen who are trying to keep tabs on Blue. He is also given the devastating news that Ipek was Blue's mistress during her marriage to Muhtar and still keeps in contact with him. Ipek confesses the affair and further indicates that Kadife only got involved with Blue out of envy. Ka's jealousy is intense and the two fall asleep after weeping together. She still believes that they can go to Frankfurt and be happy, and he eventually comes around to believing it again too. However, before they can leave he must convince Kadife to not take her head-scarf off during the play as both Ipek and Turgut Bey have become very concerned at the possible reaction of the students from the religious school. Despite Ka's urging, Kadife insists upon uncovering herself during the performance.

Kadife and Zaim have an on-stage discussion about suicide and the different reasons why men and women kill themselves. A garret and noose are set up, and Zaim hands Kadife a gun after he demonstrates that it is not loaded. When Kadife shoots Zaim much of the audience assumes his death is staged, and even Kadife appears to be surprised that the gun is in fact loaded. Zaim had clearly prepared and orchestrated his own death on stage, "pushing art to its farthest limits" and preferring to die at the peak of his theatrical and political career. Soon after words, as the snow has subsided, Ka's train departs and local authorities enter the town to stifle the coup and restore order.

Years later, the narrator goes to Kars to uncover details on Ka's story. He meets with many of the principals, including Kadife, who served very little time for what was ruled an accidental homicide and is now married to a student from the religious school.

In the end it is disclosed that a new group of Islamic militants was formed by younger followers of Blue who had been forced into exile in Germany and based themselves in Berlin, vowing to take revenge for the death of their admired leader. It is assumed that one of them had assassinated Ka and taken away the only extant copy of the poems he had written in Kars. Thus, while much is told about the names of these poems, their themes and the circumstances under which each was written, the poems themselves are lost.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article adopts the new historical approach. In New Historicism point of view, literature must be studied and interpreted within the context of both the history of the author and the history of the critic. It means that New Historicism evaluates how the work is influenced by the time in which it was produced. It also examines the social sphere in which the author moved, the psychological background of the author, the books and theories that may have influenced the author, and any other factors which influenced the work of art. As Lois Tyson states literary texts are cultural artifacts that can tell us something about the interplay of

discourses, the web of social meanings, operating in the time and place in which the text was written (p. 291). So all works are biased.

ANALISIS AND DISCUSSION

Snow was published in 2002 at a time when Turkey faces conflict between the forces of secularism (westernization) and militarism against the islamists, kurds and communists. These two forces are captured by Orhan Pamuk and become his theme in *Snow*. The lives of the people under Turkey's secularism are described in such a way that make the novel is interesting to discuss. There are many characters representing " the oppressed and misinterpreted people": Kurdish, communists, Islam fundamentalist and headscarves women. They are considered as " others" because they are being accused against the state ideology. What does *Snow* suggest about the experience of groups of people (Political islamist and Headscarf women) who have been misinterpreted? Through the characterization of Muhtar, Blue, Kadife and Turgut Bey, Orhan Pamuk portrayed the life of people who do not belong to the ruling group or dominant group. Their status is outside the mainstream.

Muhtar is a Kurd, a former leftwing student and atheist, Ipek's ex-husband, Ka's university fellow and leader of Prosperity Party, an islamic party . He has no child with Ipek and had an unhappy marriage with her . His dream is to be a poet shattered by his own friend ,Fahir, westernized Istanbul Borguious, fight for inequallitybut treated differently by the police officer. His meeting with Sheikh Saadatin Efendi opened his eyes that religion is a way to escape from his real problem.Asaparty leader, Muhtar is running formayor ofKarsin theelectionthat willtake place.

A shadowy "insurgent" leader, incongruously named "Blue," is a man of bravery and charm, who may or may not have played a heroic role in the fighting in Chechnya and Bosnia. Blue is not only known as terrorist and Islam Fundamentalist, but he is also considered as hero for Necip, Fasil and most young people in Kars. Hide himself from the public, his notoriety is celebrated by his speechless, never come up to the public to give statement. He enjoys being notorious. He is threatened to put in prison by the government for threatening TV host. The main reason Blue threatened the life of a TV host because he has insulted the poor participants who joined the show. His physical appearance does not show that he is an Islam Fundamentalist. His face is clean, has no beard, does not wear turban. He is called Blue because unlike Turks, he has blue eyes. He is more European than a Turk. His room is decorated with the picture of Venice, the renaissance city in Europe. Though he has a relationship with Kadife, he also had an affair with Ipek who at that time she was still Muhtar's wife. In Germany he was rumored killed a Turk so he hide himself.

Both Muhtar and Blue fight for the equality. Mohtar wants to be accepted as a Kurd living Turkey and having the right as the turk and Blue wants to be a turk having Turkish identity not as a person who only imitate the lives of Europeans, as he said to Ka "You're just a typical little European from Nişantaşı: not only were you brought up to look down on your own traditions, you think you live on a higher plane than ordinary people. According to your kind, the road to a good, moral life is not through God or religion, or taking part in the life of the common people. No, it's just a matter of imitating the West." Blue emphasizes the importance of being turk that not imitate from western. For Blue identity should not imitate others. So Muhtar and Blue don't fight for religion, they want to to be accepted as they are. Muhtar wants to defend the Kurdish people in order to have a better life and Blue wants to defend people who insulted by people who consider themselves better because they are educated like the westerners. They are misinterpreted by young Muslims, secularists and westernized Turks.

Like Mohtar and Blue, Turgut Bey, Ipek and Kadife's father, is described as an idealistic communist fight for inequality and injustice. As a father of two daughters who have a different outlook on life, he supported both. For Turgut Bey everyone should be treated equally, whether it is male or female, whether he is a Muslim fundamentalist, communist, westernized Turk or

Kurdish. Therefore he does not mind to Ipek who imitates western life style and at the same time he also supports Kadife's involvement in the Islamic movement. Even he has showed disagreement when Kadife was asked to open her headscarf. After Blue is arrested and held by the nationalists, Ka negotiates a deal with Sunay Zaim that will result in Blue's release but only if Kadife agrees to play a role in Zaim's production of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and remove her head-scarf on live television during the course of the play. Both Kadife and Blue agree. Turgut Bey has become very concerned at the possible reaction of the students from the religious school because Kadife is the role model.

In *Snow*, there are two strong female characters, the emotionally battered Ipek and her sister, the stubborn actress Kadife. In addition, there's a chorus: the headscarf girls. Those scrapping for power on both sides use these dead girls as symbols, having put unbearable pressure on them while they were alive.

Through the character of Kadife, Pamuk tries to portray how the headscarf women are treated and how they react in secular Turkey in which most of the inhabitants are muslim. At the beginning pamuk tells the readers the reason Ka, political exile, to travel to the remote Anatolian town of Kars to investigate the recent suicide of a number of headscarf young women in the area. Kadife who represents the headscarf woman is described as a strong and smart woman and also modern in appearance 'wearing futuristic dark glasses'.

Under the western eye, the headscarf for muslim woman symbolizes sex segregation, oppression and subjugation of women under a patriarchal system that ostracises them from public participation. Commonly for many West the headscarf is immediately correlated with "seclusion" and "politically charged with connotations of the inferior "other". As Goles writes "islamic veiling is a political issue in both Muslim and Western European countries" functioning as "a challenge to Western modernity" confronting the opposing realm "between religion and secularism, the private and public spheres, (and) particularism and universalism, ...self and society, Western and Islamist" (p.3-4). In turkey the issue of headscarf is always a debate since this country proclaims itself as a secular country.

Kadife is far from being associated with traditionalism in her way of thinking. She likes discussing philosophy as she said "how beautiful and short life is and how, in spite of all their enmities, people have so very much in common; mesured against eternity and the greatness of creation, the world in which they lived was narrow" (119) She believes that there are two kinds of communists: pragmatist and idealist. The pragmatist is the person using power for his own benefit while idealist is the person believing in equality and justice. As a student, her reason wearing headscarf for the first time is showing her sympathy to those who treated injustice by the secular government.

Wearing headscarf is "a political statement" a kind of liberation from the oppression. Students/young people should pursue idealism because it is a kind of experience that they will remember in their old days. It is not an act against the government but as a matter of political education. For Kadife it turns to be frightening since her father is considered as state enemy. Her conversation with Ka shows her belief that everyone should be treated equally by the state, whether he/she is communist or not, atheist or not, religious or not. Every citizen has the same right "equality before law" it is not necessary to see who is his/her family background; if his/her father is communist, it does not mean he/she is also a communist automatically.

Woman should not be judged from what she wears/ from her physical appearance, but from what she is as human being "feels so guilty about the suffering of the poor, and are so keen to share it". Wearing headscarf for Kadife does not mean that she is a religious woman, it is a kind of awareness for the role of woman in society. Kadife learns the meaning of struggle and she begins to question the social role and responsibilities expected of women. Furthermore, she starts to participate in public life. The struggle of women wearing headscarf open her eyes and she moves from merely a domestic role to public engagement, becoming aware at the same time of her changing state of consciousness, reflecting her understanding of herself and her

situation as related to her social biological condition. Kadife focuses on positively constructing her own system in order to make meaning of her own life choices.

She is in dilemma whether she has to open her headscarf or not in order to save 'Blue'. For Kadife both (headscarves women and islam fundamentalist) are group that she has to support because they are treated injustice by the state. Blue is not only her boyfriend, he symbolizes the "otherness", just like the headscarves women. She learns to be critically aware of any injustice surrounding her. Her decision to open her headscarf during her performance on stage to save Blue gives a picture what a woman, human being, should be. Her engagement with Blue's struggle marks her attempt to root an identification emerging from rejection against injustice. Kadife has developed an awareness of how her identity is constructed. Kadife decision's to open her headscarf is her effort to ensure that she can create a new identity, which will accomodate her strategies to challenge the old system. She believes that her choices and actions are valuable not only for herself, but for other as well, and that her struggles will be continued by the younger generations. Indeed, Kadife has taken her struggle to the higher level. For her, her actions are levelled to highly-valued norms. Proclaims herself as an atheist at the beginning, she believes that any action she execute is framed within the conviction that she is a vice-regent whose action necessitate God's sanction.

Being a moslem woman is not always identified with cloth or what you are wearing. She insists that equality before Allah (God) is also followed by equality before the law for both male and female. She believes every woman is entitled a gaze of her own , of situating her subject position according to her own vision and revision. She represents an ideal turkish woman indicating her being modern but not westernized, mature, believe in herself, knows what she should do. And at the same time believe in marriage, having children and lead a normal life. It is Kadife inspiring Ka to write more poems about "friendship and legacy". His conversation with her is an enlightenment about human being. It is Kadife who open his mind that human being cannot live alone. Every body needs someone else like a star "every star has a friend, and for every person carrying a star there is someone else who reflects it, and everyone carries this reflection like a secret confidante in the heart." Kadife's character is contrasted with Ipek and Hande.

Unlike Kadife, Ipek and Hande are portrayed differently. Ipek is Kadife's older sister. She is described as a modern and westernized woman; smoking, infidelity, having affair during her marriage, making love with a man she hardly knows about, no child, unhappy and extremely beautiful. She leads a life that she thinks according to western values. Woman is free to express her desire, it is Ipek coming to Ka's room not vice-versa. She is not wearing headscarf, because her belief in God is not indicated by clothing but she supports her sister and takes good care of her father. Hande is portrayed as a woman searching the meaning of religion and God existence. Her confusion in choosing whether wearing headscarf or banning from school shows woman's dilemma in God's law or human law. Her awareness that woman is only seen as the sexual object for man makes her unesay not wearing headscarf. Her stylish headscarf shows her own way to negotiate religious observance, tradition, modernity, globalisation, consumerism and fashion and to mark an identity for herself all at the same time.

Wearing headscarf or not for woman is an act of choice. For such choice is her attempt to show her charge of her own body and mark her adherence to Islam however she may choose. Implicitly Orhan Pamuk states that both man and woman have the equal right in front of God's law and human's law. What women wear is not state's regulation. Both women and men, the Qur'an says are asked to lower their gaze and they keep their modesty.

Snow reveals the systemic oppression to the believers in Turkey. A suicide plague happens in Kars. The interesting thing is that all girls who committed suicide wearing headscarf, a symbol of honor (to the believers) yet also a symbol of repression (to the atheist). If these girls truly believe in God, why did they commit suicide, a great sin according to the religion. This clash between the believers and the atheists (represented by the Republican)

finally erupts in Kars. A stage drama turns into a massacre, and wearing head scarf becomes a symbol of rebellion. What happened in Kars represents what is happening in modern day Turkey, and Kars is the microcosm of the country. The town is full of radical Islamists, radical republicans, radical Marxists, and radical lovers. But they all seem to understand the need for each other and the fact that everything is political. The Islamic Students realize that they need atheists to run the state, the political showman need the Islamists to be "moved" by their work, Ka realizes that Ipek needs him to get over Blue, etc. In this world, Islam is political and atheism is a religious statement.

The setting is Kars, a border city that seems to be perpetually swathed in swirling snow, where Islamists, army-backed secularists, Kurdish militants and leftists have been grimly battling for supremacy since Ataturk's times. The readers follow Ka, an exiled poet who is sent to Kars to write an article about suicides among headscarf wearing girls, who are forbidden to attend state schools and universities unless they unveil themselves. Ka, however, sees them as suffering human beings under a secular state. He is shocked and frightened not because of the constant beatings to which these girls were subjected, the insensitivity of fathers who wouldn't even let them go outside, the constant surveillance of jealous husbands but the way these girls had killed themselves: abruptly, without ritual or warning, in the midst of their everyday routines."

In a short time, Ka witnesses a military coup, an assassination, a play that ends up in a massacre, and meets the individuals who represent the main opposing factions: Blue the charismatic Islamist and terrorist, and Sunay Zaim the actor/politician/staunch secularist. We may suppose that the westernized Ka's sympathy naturally lies with the secularists, but no; he is apolitical; his real reason for coming to Kars is to see Ipek, a woman whom he has hopes for. Ipek, who recently divorced Muhtar, the leader of a local Islamist party, lives with her father and younger sister, Kadife. Kadife, to her secularist father's consternation, is known as the leader of the headscarf girls --- and also secretly Blue's lover. Soon, Ka is drawn into a vortex of torture and murderous violence, and political as well as personal reasons eventually compel him to choose sides.

CONCLUSION

The heart of the discussion on wearing headscarf is the question of choice. Women wearing headscarves carry the right to be respected for their choice in the manner by which they mark their religiosity and so do women without headscarves. Women themselves have their right to decide whether wearing headscarves or not. They should not be considered as "other". They adopted a different outerwear suitable for city living, they preferred a covering style that is more compatible with Islamic rules (i.e. not showing any hair), their choices could not be reflected in public life.

The girls who immolate themselves for the right to wear head-covering are shown as if they had been pushed by the pitiless state, or by their gruesome menfolk, to the limits of endurance. They are, in other words, veiled quasi-feminists.

Human beings are essentially the same, if not exactly identical. However, somehow this evolutionary fact does not prevent clashes of varying intensity from being the norm rather than the exception. *Snow* discusses the contemporary Turkish conflict between political Islam, tradition and the national identity, this conflict was presented from both sides producing a complete chaos, with the poverty and unemployment as the main feeder for its continuity.

References

- Ayman, Zehra; Knickmeyer, Ellen. Ban on Head Scarves Voted Out in Turkey: Parliament Lifts 80-Year-Old Restriction on University Attire. *The Washington Post*. 2008-02-10. Page A17.
- Atwood, Margaret . "Headscarves To Die For" *New York Times* August 15, 2004.

- Buchan, James. Frozen Assets. *The Guardian*, Saturday 29 May 2004.
- Foucault, Michel. 1984. *The Foucault Reader*. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon.
- Gallagher, Catherine and Stephen Greenblatt. 2000. *Practicing New Historicism*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press.
- Gole, N. 1996. *The Forbidden Modern : Civilization and Veiling*. The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.
- Kosmin, Barry A and Keysar, Ariela. 2007. *Secularism & Secularity: Contemporary International Perspectives*. Hartford, CT: Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture (ISSSC).
- Pamuk, Orhan. 2004. *Snow*. New York : Vintage International.
- Pope, Hugh and Pope, Nicole. *Turkey Unveiled : A History of Modern Turkey*. Overlook TP; Rev Upd edition December 6, 2011.
- Selden, Raman(editor). 1997. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. Essex: Prentice Hall.
- Tyson, Lois. 2006. *Critical Theory Today*. New York: Routledge.
- Yavuz, Hakan M. and John L. Esposio (2003) "Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gulen Movement". Syracuse University, pg. xv–xvii. ISBN 0-8156-3040-9.

Electronic sources:

The New Historicism in Literary Study - D. G. Myers.

Definition of New Historicism - Bedford-St. Martin's Press.