Fictional Encounters with Rumi: The Presence of the Sufi Poet in the Turkish Novel, 1990-2010

Pürnur Altay

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University of York

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Abstract

The foundation of the Republic of Turkey, and the Republic's subsequent reforms, have marked an era from 1923 onwards where not only politics, but also many aspects of quotidian life have been defined according to a division of secular Left versus religious Right. Adherents of both views have since been living within these constructs whereby the other end of the spectrum is viewed as an enemy. Yet from the 1990s onwards three novels have been published, which transgressed this binary regardless of their authors' leftist alignment. These are Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* (1990), Elif Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* (2010), and Ahmet Ümit's *The Dervish Gate* (2008). In order to do so, these texts revisited the life of a thirteenth-century Sufi poet, Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi. Providing a brief history of the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey, I turn to these novels and ask why, and how, these three prominent Left-aligned novelists write about Rumi's life in their major novels. I argue that their engagement in this rewriting is a self-reflection of the camp they identify with, and that they use Rumi's life as a platform to criticise the Republican ideology and its reforms. In my close reading of the novels, I apply theories of allegory, metaphysical detective fiction, crime fiction, epistolarity, the fantastic mode, Rebecca Walkowitz's coinage of "born translated", and the concepts of conviviality and pluralism. These concepts and theories have either never been considered in depth or have been overlooked by existing criticism on the novels. Reading against the grain in this way, I not only make use of the political ideas of the novelists and the history of the Turkish Republic, but also explore the references the authors make to the *Qur'an* and to Rumi's major works and teachings.

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Introduction

Eugenio Montale (1896-1981), an Italian poet who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1975, made an interesting remark about the thirteenth century Italian poet, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), in his Nobel Lecture entitled "Is Poetry Still Possible?" He stated, "[s]trangely, Dante's *Divine Comedy* did not produce a prose of that creative height or it did so after centuries" (np.). Indeed, Dante, with his acclaimed long poem, which is an eloquent description of the poet's spiritual journey in Christian tradition, generated such interest that many volumes of commentary, as well as numerous critical works, have tried to interpret and explain this major work around the world. Of course, Dante's contemporaries did not have the opportunity to read the work of the poet widely, since mass-publication was not available during his time. Indeed, it took more than a century for this work to be published in print (Hawkins 489). Yet, Montale's notion of the widespread impact of Dante centuries after his production in 1975 is still valid in the twenty-first century as Paola Nasti and Claudia Rossignoli remark that the work's "critical fortune is the longest and the richest enjoyed by any poem written in a vernacular language" (1). This leaves one asking the question: "Why is there such an ongoing interest in this work?" Is it his literary achievements or the allegorical journey itself that creates this interest?

As unprivileged as I am unable to read this work in its original language, and having not been educated in Italian literature, I cannot and may not pose a substantial argument as to the reasons of this popularity. Yet the two points which drew my attention when I first read the poem in 2012 were the dominance of love and free will in Dante's discourse. Only after I began to read Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi's (1207-

1273) poetry did the resonances between the two become clear.[1] The ideas Dante presents in *The Divine Comedy*, such as the Unity of God and his creatures as well as the divine existence in every human being, evokes Rumi's writings. Rumi lived in Konya, Turkey under the rule of the Seljuk Empire, far from the medieval Florence Dante lived in, so any claim of Dante's being influenced by the former would be farfetched.[2] Yet the similarities between the masterworks of these two poets, *Masnavi* and *The Divine Comedy*, such as their allegorical nature, widely accessible language, and their allusions to the holy books of their authors, the *Qur'an* and the *Bible*, are so vast that it would need a separate study to undertake a comparative analysis of these works. A major influence on their works, who also made their way into these long poems, were their spiritual companions: Dante's Beatrice and Rumi's Shams-i Tabrizi. These companions had such an effect on the poets that Huston Smith views these two spiritual companionships as a model for the "love of God" (248). While Dante's work has been under analysis for centuries in the Anglophone world, the introduction of Rumi's work into the English language is relatively new. Rumi's biography has also begun to receive wider attention as much as his work, and this study will focus on three prominent Turkish novels in translation which centre around Rumi's life story and try to answer the question of why three contemporary Turkish novelists, Orhan Pamuk, Elif Shafak, and Ahmet Ümit, write about Rumi's life and what are the wider implications of their novels.

Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi was a thirteenth-century Persian Muslim scholar, a Sufi poet, and the founder of the Mevlevi Order, which is widely known in the West

[1] The name of the poet also appears as 'Jaluluddin' or 'Jalal ad-Din' in English Works, probably due to the influence of Arabic or Persian texts. In this thesis, I opt for using its Turkish version.

[2] Yet Miguel Asin in his book entitled *Islam and The Divine Comedy* (1926) boldly claimed that Dante was influenced by two Muslim Sufis, Ibn Arabi and Ibn Masarra (xii).

as the Whirling Dervishes (Michon 168). Centuries after his death, Rumi and his oeuvre have recently been cast into the spotlight, both within the geography of contemporary Turkey, where he lived most of his life, and around the world. When I was pursuing my master's degree in 2012-2013 at the University of Leeds, I was surprised to find, in major bookshops in Yorkshire, books about Sufism, Rumi's poetry in translation, and novels based on his life written by novelists of diverse ethnic and national backgrounds. Even though Rumi's work had been translated into English in 1881 by Sir James William Redhouse, and these translations were followed by the translations of notable scholars such as Reynold Alleyne Nicholson in the 1930s and Arthur John Arberry in the 1960s, the versions in the bookshops were mostly recent translations by Coleman Barks, "a popular American interpreter of Rumi" (Hermansen "Literary" 35).[3]

In contrast to Arberry and Nicholson, who translated Rumi's poems from their source language Persian, Barks, who according to Gisela Webb is "the most prolific of Rumi's new translator/interpreters [*sic*]", loosely re-interprets Rumi's poems from the English translations of Arberry and Nicholson (102 en. 36). Indeed, Barks himself regards his versions as "homemade, amateurish, loose, many-stranded thing[s], without much attention to historical context, nor much literal faithfulness to the original" (Barks *Rumi Soul* 215). His translations are rightly opposed by a number of critics (such as Lewis, Furlanetto, and El-Zein) as they do not indicate which lines they refer to in the originals and, consequently, it is difficult to evaluate their authenticity. Franklin Lewis—author of one of the most renowned books written on Rumi—criticises this "reEnglishing" and asserts that such translations misrepresent and

[3] Franklin Lewis chronicles the history of the translations of Rumi's works and notes that the first appearance of Rumi's work in English was through Sir William Jones' rendering of verses from the *Masnavi* in 1794, although this was only a partial translation (*Rumi: Past and Present* 565).

change the meaning of Rumi's poems (*Rumi* 591). Elena Furlanetto points out how Barks's translations are examples of "domestication, appropriation and Americanisation of the Rumi narrative" (204). Also, Amira El-Zein calls translations of this kind "New Sufism" translations, and argues that the works of translators such as Barks are generated as a "'Rumian' corpus" whose connotations stray far from the original works (74). She shows how the New Sufism translations combine the terminology of Sufism and the New Age to form a hybrid movement that departs from the religious tradition of Islam. In addition to these modifications, Barks uses a strategy of visibility, extending his presence within the text while translating by means of his extensive commentary and notes. Barks mentions his notes and commentary, stating that he gives himself "lots of leeway in those [annotations], much variation in tone" and also admits that he let his "personal life slip in" when it comes to his translations (*Rumi Soul* 218). Indeed, not only Barks' personal life, but also his detailed curry recipes make their way into his book, *The Essential Rumi* (1997), which is one of his numerous Rumi translations (292-96). Yet in the sheer volume and number of publications and reprints, Barks was successful. In 1997, his translations made Rumi a best-seller in America (Marks np.). Barks' renderings are the epitome of New Age thinking, a worldview to which I will turn to shortly.

Rumi's popularity at the turn of the twenty-first century cannot be attributed primarily to the introduction of Sufism to the West. According to Mark Sedgwick, Sufism was in fact introduced with the translation of *The Self-Taught Philosopher* in 1686 from Arabic into English and, in the English-speaking world, the first English account of Sufism was written by Lieutenant James Graham in 1819, which also contained a few Rumi poems (*Western* 85, 110). For Marcia Hermansen, Gisela Webb, and Franklin Lewis, the most significant introduction of Sufism to Euro-America came

with the arrival of Hazrat Inayat Khan in the US in the first quarter of the twentieth century, and of Idries Shah in the UK in the second quarter (Hermansen "Garden" 158; Webb 87; Lewis *Rumi* 515-520). While Sedgwick states that the introduction of Sufism was through publications in earlier centuries than the twentieth, he views Inayat Khan as the "single most important figure in the establishment of Western Sufism" (*Western* 157). Khan was a Muslim; however, his approach to Sufism was not solely based on Islamic grounds. Instead, Webb states, Khan's teachings were a mixture of "Indian Advaita Vedanta and Islamic *wahdat al-wujud* ('Unity of Being') philosophical perspectives, as well as the use of sacred music, to elevate and attune the soul to the unitive structures of reality at the micro- and macrocosmic levels" (87).

Idries Shah later created an awareness of Sufism in the UK through publications such as *The Sufis* (1969). Shah's approach to Sufism was similar to that of Inayat Khan, in that they both formulated a Sufi understanding, which was not only supported by classical Sufi texts and Islamic foundations, but also by a consideration of the target audience and their practices. For example, Nobel Laureate Doris Lessing, who was a disciple of Shah, stated in her review of *The Elephant in the Dark: Christianity, Islam, and the Sufis* (1974), which is a combination of Shah's lectures at Geneva University between 1972 and 1973 on the foundations of religions and their common belief system, that Shah's books make manifest the "long interaction between Christianity and Islam" while "illustrat[ing] that an approach to Sufism can be secular and materialistic" (*Time Bites* 247, 249).[4] Thus, Sufism reached Anglo-American audiences even though it had lost some of its characteristics along the way.

[4] Lessing was significantly influenced by Idries Shah's teachings both in her personal life and literary production. She wrote a number of Introductions for Shah's books such as the reprint of *Learning How to Learn: Psychology and Spirituality in the Sufi Way* in 1985, which was originally published in 1974. For an analysis of the impact and manifestation of Sufism in Lessing's Works, see Müge Galin's *Between East and West: Sufism in the Novels of Doris Lessing* (1997).

During my year in Leeds, the fiction I read for pleasure was twofold: either they were about Rumi's life and teachings, or they dealt with the issue of a Sufi's search for union with God. I will now categorise these novels according to the continent of production. In Europe, there was Nigel Watts' *The Way of Love* (UK, 1999), Roger Housden's *Chasing Rumi: A Fable about Finding the Heart's True Desire* (UK, 2002), Pico Iyer's *Abandon: A Romance* (UK, 2003), Muriel Maufroy's *Rumi's Daughter* (France, 2004), and Deja Hu's *Sufi: An Enlightening Tale* (UK, 2012). Among these novels, *The Way of Love* and *Rumi's Daughter* are the most significant, as they present Rumi as a main character, while in others Sufism is a vehicle for self-discovery. Watts' story is narrated in the third person and depicts Rumi's transformation from his early youth to a fully-fledged Sufi master. It is structured along similar lines to biographical accounts written about Rumi. Maufroy, on the other hand, focuses on Rumi's gifted foster child, Kimya. Through Kimya's focalisation in this third-person account, Rumi's impact on his family members is the major point of attention.

In North America, Irving Karchmar's *Master of the Jinn: A Sufi Novel* (US, 2004) and Connie Zweig's *A Moth to the Flame* (US, 2006) appeared early in the twenty-first century. Zweig's narrative shares much in common with Watts' novel as it deals with Rumi's becoming, yet it differs from the latter through its engagement with the political life of the time via a depiction of the Mongol threat in Konya. Meanwhile in South America, Paulo Coelho's best-selling novel *The Alchemist* (Brazil, 1988) can also be included in this inventory as it is, according to Rahnaward Zaryab, a recreation of a tale from Rumi's *Masnavi* Book VI ("Re-creation" 278). This book was such a success that, as of its publication in English translation to July 2016,

The Alchemist had been on the *New York Times* best-seller list for 405 consecutive weeks (“Paperback” np.)

In Asia, three significant novels were published by the middle of the 2010s: Nahal Tajadod’s *Rumi: The Fire of Love* (Iran, 2004), Rabisankar Bal’s *A Mirrored Life* (India, 2013), and Saideh Ghods’ *Kimya Khatun* (Iran, 2006). In *Rumi: The Fire of Love*, Tajadod presents the life of Rumi through the first-person account of his scribe, Hesam, who transcribed Rumi’s *Masnavi* over fifteen years. Compared to other novels written about Rumi’s life, this engages in a depiction of a longer time span of around forty years. In *A Mirrored Life*, Bal presents Rumi’s legacy in fourteenth-century Konya, a century after he died, through the first-person narrative of the fourteenth-century traveller Ibn Battuta. In *Kimya Khatun*, Ghods, through Rumi’s step-daughter Kimya’s first-person narration, presents the experiences of a young woman in Rumi’s house. Even though major biographical events of Rumi’s life (such as his meeting with Shams) are depicted in the novel, the primary focus is on gender issues such as inequality between the sexes, social norms that define appropriate behaviour for women, and women’s social status.

However, what is more interesting than the fact that there is an increasing number of fictional works about Rumi in the West, is that Rumi’s name is even more pronounced in Turkey. A survey of fictional works since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey shows that there have been a small number of novels that focus on Sufism in a broad sense such as Halide Edib Adivar’s *The Clown and His Daughter* (1935) and Peyami Safa’s *Matmazel Noralya’nın Koltuğu* (1949). However, novels which focus specifically on Rumi’s life are a new phenomenon of the last decade of the twentieth century onwards. Turan Güler, a critic who primarily focuses on Sufism in Turkish literature from 1980 to 2000, states that with the foundation of the Republic

of Turkey in 1923 where religion was side-lined as outmoded, religious characters in the novels were portrayed with hostility, and the novels which portray Sufism until the 1980s (such as Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's *Nur Baba* (1922) and Refik Halit Karay's *Kadınlar Tekkesi* (1956)) were critical of Sufi characters, depicting corruption and deception in the Sufi lodges (53, 88).

Among these novels that, from the 1990s onwards, focus on Rumi's life are Melahat Kıyak Ürkmez's *Gönül Bahçesinde Mevlana* (2007) and *Diyar-ı Aşk: İlahi Ulak Şems-i Tebrizi* (2010), Okay Tiryakioğlu's *Mevlana: Aşk Beni Sende Öldürür* (2011), Devrim Altay's *Şems-i Tebrizi ve Mevlana* (2009), Serdar Özkan's *Rumi'nin Bildiği Aşk* (2013), *Mevlana Çağırınca* (2014), Fatma Polat's *Gel: Aşkın Kimya'sı Mevlana ve Şems-i Tebrizi* (2011). *Gönül Bahçesinde Mevlana* centres around a Japanese businessman Tadadoşi Takadoşhi who discovers Rumi on a business trip to Istanbul and explores Islam and Rumi's teachings, eventually becoming a Muslim. In *Rumi'nin Bildiği Aşk*, Özkan traces the narrative arc of an Italian painter, Fabio, who sets off for Jerusalem but instead ends up in Konya where he discovers Rumi's poetry and teachings. Coincidentally, this novel is quite similar to Housden's *Chasing Rumi* as in both works the main character is an Italian painter who undertakes a similar journey of self-discovery. In *Mevlana Çağırınca*, on the other hand, Özkan explores a fantasy of Rumi's visit to twenty-first century Istanbul and narrates it through Rumi's first-person account. The most prominent among these novels, which are also the novels under scrutiny in this thesis, are Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* (1990), Ahmet Ümit's *The Dervish Gate* (2008), and Elif Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* (2010). What sets these novels apart from others is their authors' political views, and their use of Rumi's biography as a platform for a critique of post-Republican Turkey.

This accumulation of novels about Rumi's life and a Sufi way of life, especially from the 1990s onwards, makes one wonder why this "Rumi mania" is happening now, at a time when Islam and Muslim identity were devalued, not only by the First and Second Gulf Wars, and massacres of Muslims in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Chechnya but also by the *Satanic Verses* affair of 1989 onwards and later the terrorist attacks of al-Qaida and ISIS (Lewis *Rumi* 1).[5] A partial answer to this question can be found in the growing popularity of the New Age movement that started in the 1960s and is perhaps best described as paths "away from the old 'religions of authority' into the new 'religion of the spirit'", and as a search for individualistic spiritualities "outside the context of a formal religious organisation" (Schmidt 7; Fuller 4).[6] This movement is highly pertinent to some of the novels, such as *The Alchemist*, *A Moth to the Flame*, and *Chasing Rumi.* These texts' respective authors, Coelho, Zweig, and Housden, can be viewed as adherents of New Ageism, as evidenced by their other publications such as Coelho's *Brida* (2009), Zweig's *The Holy Longing: Spiritual Yearning and Its Shadow Side* (2008) and Housden's *Keeping the Faith without a Religion* (2014). The majority of the other novels on the list do not conform to the characteristics of the New Age movement.

As can be seen, by the time I embarked on my doctoral research in the autumn of 2014, there were numerous novels in circulation and without my supervisors' guidance to eliminate extraneous ones, this project could have taken decades and would have been voluminous, if not entirely unmanageable. My first point of attention was the diverse geographical coverage of the project. It was initially determined that a

[5] Though the appearance of al-Qaida precedes the timeframe of this study and dates back to the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, post-millennial terrorist attacks of this Jihadist organisation and the aftermath of these attacks on American soil make them relevant to mention in this chapter.

[6] See also Paul Heelas' *The New Age Movement* (1996) and Steve Bruce's *Religion in Modern Britain* (2006).

comparison of novels written in the UK, the US, and Turkey would suffice for a doctoral project, which reduced the number of novels down to nine. Then, as a supervisory team, we held intense discussions about the literariness of the novels and their availability in English translation. Eventually, considering my bilingual skills in English and Turkish, and the marginalisation of Sufi practices in the first decade of the Republic in Turkey, my supervisors and I agreed that I would narrow down my study to the Turkish context where Rumi spent most of his life. From that point on, I began to drill down into three very substantial literary texts that have become both best-sellers and award-winners. My main objective was to answer two central research questions as to why three Left-aligned novelists from Turkey, Orhan Pamuk, Ahmet Ümit, and Elif Shafak, chose to transgress the imaginary boundaries against religion which are created by the camp they are identified with and write about Rumi, an important historical figure who is lost in the politics of Empire to Republic transition, and what these novelists try to achieve through their narrations of Rumi's life?

For a person with no knowledge of Turkish history, this question might make little sense, as writers are free to choose their subject matter without necessarily having a personal affiliation with it. However, there is a peculiar case in the Turkish context which resulted from the country's transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey. This transition or, more accurately, transformation, created deep divisions between the adherents of the religion of Islam and those regarding themselves as modern and secular citizens. These divisions persist to the present. Elif Shafak eloquently evokes Turkey's peculiarly bipolar position in the following passage, wherein she likens Turkish national culture to the Bosporus bridge that not only straddles two parts of Istanbul, but also two continents, Asia and Europe:

> I sometimes tend to think the best analogy that might be of help to understand Turkey's position and the precariousness of Turkish national

> identity is the Bosporus Bridge. As you drive along the bridge in Istanbul, a city established on two different continents, on the one hand you will read the sign that says Welcome to the Asian Continent and on the other end of the bridge you will read Welcome to the European Continent. Turkey's position in turn resembles that bridge in between, never really welcome in either of these. This in-betweenness in turn might have given Turkey an unusual potential and dynamism. Unfortunately, that was not the case, instead what happened was the intensification of two mutually exclusive albeit interwoven factions—a rigidly pro-Western elite and as a backlash to them, this other conservative camp. Both gorge on each other's mistakes. (Shafak and Chancy "Migrations" 59)

What Shafak suggests here as a parallel to Turkish identity against neighbouring continents, can also be applied to the internal bifurcation of religious-secular adherents in post-Republican Turkey. In this country, where I was born and raised, and where Seljuk, Byzantium, the Ottoman Empire, and the Republic of Turkey successively formed governments, religion has always had a pendulum-like existence: either it has been at the very centre of the socio-political and cultural life, or it has swung as far as possible to the periphery. Due to the limitations of this study, however, I will primarily direct my critical gaze at the foundations and emergence of Modernisation and nationalism, which resulted in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and its displacement by the Republic of Turkey.

The History of the Secular-Religious Dichotomy in Turkey

Timothy Fitzgerald, in his study of the geneaology of religion and the secular dichotomy, states that this binary is "historically unstable" and to have an idea of what constitutes either side of the pendulum, one needs to engage in an "historiographical and ethnographic deconstruction" ("Introduction" 7,8). For this reason, in order to

present the development of this binary in the contemporary Turkish politico-history, one needs to turn back to the emergence of modernisation and Westernisation concepts. These were not new concepts for twentieth-century Turkey.There had been intermittent attempts to both modernise and Westernise the Ottoman Empire that had always been hindered by powerful religious organisations and the Janissaries (the army). Talal Asad suggests that what religion connotes in the West does not translate well or corresponds to what it means in the Islamic traditions (1). For this reason, it is necessary to mention the role of religion in the Ottoman Empire and its army. As Reşat Kasaba states, "Turkish secularism […] makes sense only in conjunction with the deep religiosity of the people of Turkey" ("Introduction" 6). Niyazi Berkeş affirms that religion was intimately linked with the Ottoman monarch in that this figure was thought to be "appointed by God" and thereby each successive sultan was "the direct representative or shadow of God in the world" (10, 13). The Ottoman Empire was traditionalist in that it "incorporated intellectual traditions established by Seljuk policies, among others, and a kind of spiritual humanism represented in Mevlevi practice and literature" (Holbrook "Diverse" 101).[7][8] Since the 1550s, each successive Ottoman sultan had held the position of Caliph, even though this role was not actively deployed until the reign of Abdülhamid II (Azak 2; Wagstaff and Beeley 6; Atabaki "Caliphate" 65). Historically, both the rulers of the Empire and the majority of their populations have been from the Sunni sect of Islam (Poulton 36). The Empire's governance consisted of a combination of Sharia law and civic laws known as *kanuns*. According to Edhem Eldem, *kanuns* were secular in nature and they were issued by

[7] Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, which reigned from 1070 to 1320, was the empire under which Rumi lived. Indeed, the name which is used particularly in the West to refer to the poet, Rumi, was derived from his being of Rum.

[8] This was most likely one of the reasons that led to the closure of the Mevlevi Order in the post-Republican era, which will be discussed below.

sultans in order to "complement, supplement, and sometimes supplant religious law" in those areas where religious edicts were insufficient, such as "taxation, administration, financial matters, or penal code" (np.).[9] At the turn of the nineteenth century, when the Empire began to decline, the sultan of the time, Selim III, turned his face to the West to modernise the Empire. These earlier modernisation attempts focused on the Janissaries, who frequently revolted against the sultan. However, such changes were not easy as the Ulema, the religious scholars of the Ottoman Empire, could "veto any measure which they regarded as contravening the sacred law" (Geoffrey Lewis *Modern* 40-41). Şeyhülislam, the highest ranking religious scholar, allowed the dethronement of Selim III in 1807, and Janissaries promptly broke up Selim III's newly founded army of *Nizam-ı Cedid*, which means the new order (Shaw and Shaw *Reform* 1; G. Lewis *Modern* 42; Ahmad *Making* 25; Zürcher *Young Turk* 154).[10] This event by itself shows that the state came up against religious resistance and powerful religious organisations intervened even in the modernisation of the army. Such events created an increasing awareness of the need to modernise Turkish institutions according to the developments in the West, and the attempt to catch up with the West was a hallmark of the Ottoman Empire's decline. Political elites tried to reverse the waning of the Empire by coming up with three different ideologies. These were Ottomanism, which was based on the collective representation of all Ottoman subjects regardless of their religion and ethnicity; pan-Islamism, which aimed to unite all Islamic populations through the Caliphate, which belonged to the Ottoman sultans;

[9] See also Umut Azak's *Islam and Secularism in Turkey: Kemalism, Religion, and the Nation State* (2010).

[10] It is important to note that the Janissaries were made up of strapping children of non-Muslims who converted to Islam. Janissaries are known to be adherents of the Bektashi Sufi order, which was "named after a Khorasani called Bektash […] and revered twelve imams of the Shi'a, especially Ali" (Sedgwick *Western* 74). Therefore, Janissaries had religious roots and structure.

and Turanism, which was "a unification of all Turkic peoples from the Balkans to China in one country called 'Turan'" (Poulton 82).[11] Even though the latter of these policies isolated ethnic identity, this was not the driving force behind Turkish nationalism, which was the governing ideology of the Republic of Turkey under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (to which I will turn to shortly).

Under the Ottoman Empire, Turkish subjects were not the first community to adopt a nationalist ideology. The Ottomans' relentless series of defeats in wars and loss of territories from 1792 onwards triggered the nationalist movements of its subjects. The impact of the French Revolution and its displacement of the monarchy in France reverberated in the Serb and Greek communities of the Ottoman Empire who gained their sovereignty in 1829 (Ahmad *Making* 24; Poulton 63). The decade of the 1870s witnessed an unprecedented increase in the independence movements and Bosnian, Herzegovinian, Montenegrin, and Bulgarian people fought for their sovereignty from the Ottoman Empire (Findley "The Tanzimat" 16). For Umut Uzer, there were three reasons for the emergence of Turkish nationalism in the late Ottoman period. These were "the independence movements of Greeks, Serbs, Albanians, and later Arabs, which discredited Ottomanism and Islamism", the discovery of the presence of a Turkish history which predated both Ottoman and Islam, and the return of well-educated Turks from "the Russian Empire, the Crimea, the Caucasus", a phenomenon which became widely known as the Young Turks in the Anglophone world (Uzer 2-3; B. Lewis *Emergence* 2). With its successive defeats, loss of vast lands, and internal independence movements, the Ottoman intelligentsia lost their trust in a revival of the Ottoman Empire's glory days. At the same time, Macedonia

[11] For a detailed account of these three policies, see Yusuf Akçura's *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (1995). See also Erik J. Zürcher's *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey* (2010).

developed into a centre of nationalism where the Committee of Union and Progress was founded by the Young Turks who were “army officers and junior officials” and removed Sultan Abdülhamit from office twice in 1908 and 1909 (Poulton 69; Fraser, Mango and McNamara 6). Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was affiliated with the Young Turks (Tongas 21; Fraser, Mango and McNamara 7). While this dethronement of the sultan was supported by people of all ethnicities, the leaders of the movement were planning to “modernise and Turkify the state” in secret (Poulton 70).

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and the first president of the Republic of Turkey, was born in 1881 in Salonika into a family where his mother, Zübeyde, was as religious and traditionalist as the Ottoman Empire, while his father, Ali Riza, who was a “junior civil servant” in the Ottoman Empire, was as secular and liberal as the Republic of Turkey (Mango 87).[12] This dichotomy of his parents is evident in one of Atatürk’s childhood memories of a quarrel regarding which type of school he should attend. His mother thought the boy should be educated in a religious school “directed by a Hodja, where the instruction was in accord[ance] with the severe traditions of Islam”, whereas his father preferred a secular, “non-religious school where the instruction was based not on the Coran [*sic*] but on modern science” (Atatürk qtd in Tongas 17; Mango *Atatürk* 103-4).[13] Although he lost his father at an early age and spent much more time with his mother, Ataturk’s worldview was closer to his father’s than his mother’s due to his attending the school his father requested after spending half a year in a religious school to please his mother (Tongas 18). He studied at “the

[12] Atatürk which means “father of Turks” was the surname Mustafa Kemal adopted with the Surname Act in 1934 (Mango 15). Until that time, Muslims had not held surnames, but they had been differentiated by signifiers such as their father’s name or by the province in which they lived. Yet in this thesis, I refer to him as Atatürk anachronistically for the purposes of consistency.

[13] Unless it is a translational problem, Atatürk’s word choice here exemplifies his view of Islam as he uses the adjective ‘severe’ to define Islam tradition.

imperial war college" and moved up to the "Staff College" of the Empire (Fraser, Mango and McNamara 7). Atatürk's anti-imperial political engagement during his military appointment was detected by local authorities and he was seized and taken to court at the sultan's command, following which he was ordered to continue his military service in Damascus (Mango *Atatürk* 161; Tongas 20). Although Atatürk continued his affiliation with the Committee of Union and Progress, this organisation did not have "a clear leadership structure, nor a clear policy" (Mango *Atatürk* 221).[14] Yet this group was highly influential and successful in that they led a revolution for constitutionalising the Empire.

Alongside its modernisation attempts, the Empire also tried changing its governance method into a constitutional monarchy between the years of 1877 and 1878, under the rule of Abdülhamit, in order to secure itself from foreign political intervention and to reverse its downward movement. Yet the Russo-Turkish war, which broke out in 1877, generated an excuse for Abdülhamit to put an end to this short-lived parliamentary system in 1878 (Findley 17). Even when the constitutional monarchy was in play, the sultan's hegemony was not at risk as he had "the authority to exile individuals without trial" and fundamental rights for a parliamentary system such as establishing a political party were not allowed (Hanioğlu "Second" 63). The Young Turk establishment revolted against the sultan for bringing constitutional governance back on track, and in 1908, the Second Constitutional period began (Zürcher *Young Turk* 99). Therefore, by the time the Grand National Assembly of Turkey was founded, the transition from a monarchy to a more representative government had already started.

[14] See also Benjamin C. Fortna's "The Reign of Abdülhamit II".

The Empire's downfall was accelerated with its engagement in the First World War with the central powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Bulgaria. The Empire struggled on several battlegrounds. Ironically, the remaining lands of the Ottoman Empire were subjugated under a wider occupation after the war, in which the Empire joined to "stave off [its] disintegration" in the first place (Storey 5). The Armistice of Mudros on 30 October 1918 paved the way for the Allies to take control of Istanbul, limiting the Ottoman Army's numbers while at the same time securing a possible intervention when minorities in the Empire were thought to be in danger (Zürcher *Young Turk* 190-91; Kayalı 115). The public lost their trust in the Committee of Union and Progress, which had played a leading role both in parliament and on the battlefield. Following the armistice, the British occupied Mosul, Batum, and the cities around Maraş. Meanwhile, the French invaded the eastern Mediterranean, Greeks took hold on the Aegean Coast, and the Italians occupied Antalya. Local, disorganised groups resisted these foreign invasions, but this was not sufficient for securing the independence of the cities.

In 1919, while the Empire was labouring under occupation by several countries, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was appointed as the "inspector of the Ninth Army in Erzurum to monitor intercommunal [*sic*] conflict and demobilisation in the Black Sea region" (Kayalı 123). He took this assignment as an opportunity not to demobilise but to reorganise the army and the individual resistance movements in various places within Ottoman cities. On 22 May 1919, Atatürk notified the Istanbul government that the Empire's subjects wanted to re-establish the integrity and independence of their homeland (Uzer 95). Yet the sultan of the time, Vahdettin, was willing to comply with the occupiers to prolong his presence on the throne (Shaw and Shaw 332; Ahmad *Making* 48). In contrast with the wishes of the Istanbul government, it was the

individual resistance movements that, through Atatürk's leadership and organisational skills, formed "an army, a *de facto* government, and a foreign policy" and fought for their independence (Davison 208).

While its subjects were struggling to maintain the integrity of the country in Anatolia by trying to foster a unified stance, the Istanbul government endorsed the Treaty of Sévres in 1920 (Ahmad *Making* 48). This treaty officially distributed the Ottoman territories that was already occupied among France, Britain and Greece (Storey 158). In order to keep his promise to the Allies and secure his ruling position, the sultan opposed the nationalist movement that had emerged in Anatolia through his political power as Caliph. By the time Ataturk led the revolutionary national resistance to put an end to Western invasions in the remainder of the Ottoman Empire, the religious institution of the Ottoman Empire was still powerful. When the capital was moved to Ankara from Istanbul in 1919 to sever the new establishment's political ties with Istanbul, Şeyhülislam of the time, Abdullah Dürrizade, accused the people of the new formulation of being "rebels" who were "in contravention of the sacred law and against high orders" and he issued a fatwa, which permitted the killings of revolutionaries in Ankara "in accordance with the religious law" (Dürrizade, qtd. in Atabaki 51). This over-politicisation of a religious institution was one of the catalysts which eventually led to the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 following the foundation of the Republic.

The Independence War, which lasted from 1919 to 1923, did not lack religious elements. Realising the religious power of the sultanate, Atatürk and his friends tried to incorporate this power into their national struggle as a means of mass mobilisation of Muslim Ottoman subjects. The Allied occupation of Istanbul gave them the opportunity to eliminate the impact of the sultan's hostility towards the nationalist

movement in the eyes of his people, and the movement presented the sultan as "the captive of Christian powers waiting to be liberated" (Ahmad *Making* 48). The European occupiers of Ottoman cities were of Christian origin and the multi-ethnic, multi-sectarian Ottoman Muslims were united against Christian subjugation. Contrary to the multiple attempts of the sultan to discredit the movement, its military accomplishments in putting an end to occupation were remarkable. This success was acknowledged with the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923, and the Republic of Turkey was founded (Mango "Atatürk" 158).

The foundation of this Republic was marked by six principles; "republicanism, nationalism, populism, secularism, statism, and reformism" (Uzer 93). Turkish nationalism or Turkishness, the concept which united the people of Anatolia against foreign occupiers, was not based on ethnic identity. Instead, it was a "supra-ethnic identity" combined with Muslim identity (Kayalı 118). Secular claims were discarded during the organisation of the Independence War and the jargon of nationalism was carefully engineered from the Ottoman idea of "*millet*, a word of Arabic origin which had come to mean a religious community in Turkish usage" (Ahmad *Making* 48). The first constitution of the Republic in 1924 defines "Turk" in Article 88 as "a political term, [which] shall be understood to include all citizens of the Turkish Republic, without distinction of, or reference to, race or religion" (Earle 98).[15] Therefore, even though Turkish nationalism brings to mind ethnic nationalism, it is based on a shared territory and thereby separates itself from the ideology of Turanism (briefly discussed above).

[15] The Constitution of 1924 was not officially published in English, but it was translated by Edward Mead Earle and published in *Political Science Quarterly* in 1925. For that reason, I use Earle's translation.

One of these principles, which is defined by several critics such as Niyazi Berkeş, Umut Uzer, and Umut Azak as "secularism", requires attention, as it connotes more than one meaning (Berkeş 4; Uzer 93; Azak 8) and is crucial for understanding this thesis's foundations. Umut Azak notes that the literature written in English about Turkish secularism uses the concepts of secularism and laicism interchangeably (8). This approach is also apparent in Turkey, partly resulting from the difficulty of situating the Turkish case within the conceptual limitations of these two slightly overlapping notions. In the first decades of the Republic of Turkey, the governing principle was not introduced as secularism but as "*laiklik*, after the French term laïcisme" and in the Turkish context this is "an ambivalent, partial, and inconsistent form of laicism" (A. Davison 337, 339; emphasis in original). The reason for this, as Andrew Davison asserts, is that conceptually laïcité, among other things, suggests a "radical separati[on] of religious and state affairs" (336). Yet in the Turkish case, Islam was not erased from the political spectrum, but was instrumentalised to "help the State propagate new values" (Dumont 38). In the wake of this new Republic, many Kemalist reforms were introduced to reformulate the place of religion in the new establishment and to organise everyday practices accordingly. These reforms were not only in conjunction with the principle of *laiklik* but also attempts to Westernise the public. As is shown above, Islam and the Caliphate occupied a powerful position in the Ottoman Empire, while Kemalists viewed them as obstacles to Westernisation. Therefore, in 1924, the government took Islam under state control and abolished the Caliphate (Tank 6; Atabaki "Caliphate" 45). From 1926 to 1930, Sharia laws were obliterated and replaced by "the Swiss civil code, the Italian penal code, and the German commercial code" (Akural 127). This replacement and the dismantling of the Caliphate signify that the Turkish government took a stand against religion. However, there were some

policies to appropriate Islam in accordance with the new form of government. For example, by the time Islam was removed from the constitution in 1937 as the official religion of the Turkish Republic, the "Department of the Affairs of Piety" had already been founded (in 1924) and there had been several official attempts to make the *Qur'an* available in the Turkish language (Berkeş 484). Yet the establishment of a Department of Pious Affairs was not as innocuous as it might seem, since this was reduced to an "administrative bureau" whereas in the Ottoman Empire it had held places in the cabinet through "The Ministries of Seriyye (Religious Affairs) and Evkaf (Pious Foundations)" (Gözaydın 1). Put simply, Islam was downgraded from its decision-making features to merely implementing policy.

The ruling class equated civilisational progress to the West and, to be Western, the public was propelled to leave their tradition and culture behind. Official discourse stated that, with its reforms, Islam was only removed from the political position which it had held in the Ottoman Empire. In its place, an authentic, non-political experience of that religion was said to have been promoted. However, in practice, the government intervened in even the most quotidian of the people's practices. In 1925, the parliament gave consent to "the abolition of religious lodges and cloisters (tekke ve zaviyeler)", considering these to be emblems of the Empire (Tekelioğlu 93). As part of this clampdown, the government banned performances and gatherings of dervishes, including Mevlevi dervishes who were followers of Rumi's teachings (Tekelioğlu 93). Kemalist elites' view of the Ottoman era as "a catastrophic period and dark age for the nation" resulted in a search for building an alternative Turkish history (Azak 18). To this end, "the Association for the Study of Turkish History [Türk Tarih Kurumu] was founded in 1931" to research the pre-Ottoman roots of the Turkish people (Uzer 102). Another reform was for the change of the alphabet and so-called purification of the

Turkish language. In the Ottoman Empire, the official language was Ottoman Turkish which is an "agglutinative language" composed of the Turkish, Persian, and Arabic languages and written in the Arabic script (Römer 322). Kemalists, "viewing the Arab and Persian influences on Turkish culture as an insidious plague" and as antinomies to the Western ideal, banned the use of Arabic script in 1928 (Akural 131).[16] To erase the impact of Persian and Arabic languages on Turkish, and to nationalise and modernise the language, most of the words of Arabic and Persian origin were removed (Ertürk 15-16).[17] For this purpose, Ataturk founded "the Turkish Society for the Study of Language" (Türk Dil Kurumu) in 1932 to facilitate the removal of Arabic and Persian borrowings and their replacement with Turkish equivalents (G Lewis *Language* 45). Limitations on Islamic dress codes, and changes to the alphabet and calendar, were among the measures taken by the newly founded Republic to modernise and Westernise the culture and people (Lewis 464). Turkish women who covered their heads for traditional or religious reasons needed to remove their headscarves if they were to participate in public ceremonies (Berkeş 474). The implementation of such measures for attaining Western civilisation through attire did not result in the widespread acceptance of Republican views. Pınar Tank rightly states that "[u]nlike the model of Anglo-Saxon secularism, which followed an evolutionary path, the French concept of laicism […] sought a break with the political, social and, cultural symbols of *ancien régime*" (6). The Turkish case was parallel to the French, as the Republic's elites were convinced that "they ha[d] a duty to guide an exodus from the

[16] See also Geoffrey Lewis' *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success* (1999).

[17] Yet this was not the first reform directed to language. In the Ottoman Empire, there were two other movements along the same lines. The first, which emerged around the 1500s, was "a movement called *türk-i basit* (Simple Turkish)" (Halman 39; emphasis in original). Three centuries later, in the Tanzimat period (1839-76), the aim was to "simplify the language in order to make it accessible to everybody and to promote literacy" (Römer 323).

Ottoman-Islamic past” (Yavuz 65). Yet they lacked the consent of the masses. Thus, attempts to secularise everyday life made the Muslim public upset, and created “a society sharply divided along secular versus Islamist sociocultural lines” (Yavuz 63). That is why, at the earliest political opportunity, Islam repeatedly resurfaced as the means for mass mobilisation.

The Kemalist regime in Ankara did not have a substantial connection with the provincial public and its top-down implementation of secular reforms did not create such an environment either. Şerif Mardin exemplifies this by stating that the ruling class “had little notion of identifying themselves with the peasantry”, which constituted the majority of the population (184). This created an ideological and intellectual barrier between urban and rural populations which are the symbols of Westernisation and Islam tradition respectively and the fear of *irtica*, which means “reactionary Islam” prevailed (Cizre 312). Religious restrictions began to ease somewhat in the 1950s under the governance of the Democratic Party, which was “more sensitive to the Islamic sympathies of the populace” (Tank 7). The Democratic Party government “mustered the support of conservative elements in society” by relaxing some of the Kemalist reforms of the 1920s and 1930s, such as the ban on dervish performances and initiated a “‘conservative turn’ in Turkish politics” (Uzer 36). The 1950s witnessed another challenge for the Kemalist urban elite, as in this decade territorial divisions between Western cities and religious rural areas diminished through immigration into cities. The accession of conservatives into the political sphere and their move to urban areas increased the visibility of the profound bifurcation in society.

Political turbulence did not diminish in the muti-party system and since the 1950s, there has been a coup or a coup attempt every ten years in Turkey.[18] George Harris notes the political alignment of the Turkish armed forces by stating its close observations of “Atatürk’s reforms” and its historical presence “as a modernising institution from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic” (204). Ümit Cizre agrees with Harris in that the Turkish military took up a “self-ordained role as guardian of the Republic” (301). For that reason, whenever the army has perceived a threat to these reforms and the foundations of the secular Republic, it has seized hold of government at the expense of democracy.[19] While there have been numerous Islam-oriented parties emerging since the 1970s, most of these parties were banned following the 1980 coup (Toprak 127). Whenever a party with roots in Islam came to power, such as the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) founded by Necmettin Erbakan, their policies diverted from the dictated Kemalist reforms that induced the 1997 Military Memorandum that led to the resignation of Erbakan who was the Prime Minister of the time. Erbakan’s political career exemplifies the struggle between the religious and secular segments of Turkish political history. He presided over the National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi), the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi), the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi), and the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi), all of whose political activities were outlawed as a result of their Islamic roots and agenda.

[18] See, for example, the coups of May 1960 and September 1980 as well as the coup attempts of March 1971, and the post-modern coup attempt of February 1997 by memorandum.

[19] There is an exception to this which is the most recent coup attempt on 15 July 2016. This coup attempt was put into effect by the infiltrated members of a formerly religious organisation of FETÖ, which is an acronym of Fetullah Gülen Terrorist Organisation in Turkish language. Even though they imitated the language of the previous coups in their coup manifesto and had a Kemalist discourse by reiterating one of Atatürk’s well-known maxims, this atrocious coup attempt which caused deaths of hundreds of civilians had a politico-religious foundation. For a comprehensive account of this coup attempt, see *July 15 Coup Attempt in Turkey: Context, Causes and Consequences* (2017), edited by Muhittin Ataman.

The domination of secularism over religiousity eased up with the September 1980 coup. Feroz Ahmad notes that this coup happened as a result of the "political violence [which] plagued Turkey throughout the 1970s" ("Politics" 252). The violence Ahmad refers to, which was also the primary condition that gave raise to the military takeover, was a "nation-wide polarisation of the left and right and the unprecedented violence between them" (Cizre 309). The military takeover, which was headed by General Kenan Evren, was different from its predecessors in that this time the military did not ignore the expectations of the religious public. Rather, the military junta "institutionalised religion so as to expand the hegemonic reach of the regime" and added courses on religion to the Turkish National Curriculum (Tuğal 40). Yet this small compromise on the Kemalist front was not enough to make peace with religious ones.

The 1990s, which also coincides with the Turkish publication of *The Black Book*, was a turbulent decade when the power of religion in politics resurfaced both in the Cold War of communism versus capitalism and at home. Fuat Keyman discusses that the war facilitated a "resurgence of religious movements […which have] varying claims to identity and politics" and how these movements had "system-transforming effects in both national and world politics" (215).[20] It was in this atmosphere that the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* in 1988 upset devout Muslims around the world, and its effects were visible at the turn of the decade.

Ayatollah Khomeini's infamous *fatwa* in 1989, and its aftermath, showed the sensitivities of religious people around the world as well as the function of Islam as a means of mass mobilisation. Khomeini called pious Muslims to arms by declaring that

[20] For example, for an analysis of the impact of the Cold War on Muslim identity in Britain, see Jessica Jacobson's *Islam in Transition: Religion and identity among British Pakistani youth* (1998).

not only the author of the book but also "all those involved in its [*The Satanic Verses*'] publication who were aware of its contents, are sentenced to death" (Khomeini qtd in Malik 39). Some people who attended demonstrations lost their lives, bookshops that sold the controversial book became targets of bombers, and Rushdie himself was forced into hiding out of fear for his life (Lee 73). Even though the book has not been translated into Turkish to date, in 1993, Aziz Nesin, an outright leftist and atheist author, began to issue unauthorised excerpts in the Turkish language in daily *Aydınlık* (Rushdie 389; Zürcher *Turkey* 290). These translations were seen as an explicit attack on Islam by fundamentalists. Although the government was aware of the offended public, it did not take any measures to terminate the circulation of the newspaper based on its "secularist principles" (Rushdie 390). On 2 July 1993, tipped off that Nesin would be in Madımak Hotel in Sivas, where a celebration of a fifteenth-century Alevi poet Pir Sultan Abdal was being held, fundamentalists burned the hotel down and caused the deaths of thirty-seven people, most of whom were Alevi singers, poets and musicians (Malik 50; Zürcher *Turkey* 290; Rushdie *Joseph* 390).[21] This deadly violence was not only directed towards Nesin in person or to the Alevi community, but also against the concept of secularism as Alevis "tended to ally themselves with secularist parties" (White 377).

Today, the dichotomy of secular-religious is still predominant in contemporary Turkey. A glance at the parliament following the election of June 2018 shows that the alliance of the ruling and opposition parties conforms to religious Right and secular Left. For example, in the Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi), which was founded in 1969 and is an advocate of Turkish nationalism, religious

[21] Alevis are a Muslim sectarial minority in Turkey composed of Turkish and Kurdish ethnicities and their belief system has characteristics of "Shiite Islam, Bektaşi sufism and Turkish shamanism" (Yükleyen 386).

alignments preponderated over its ideology of nationalism and it cooperated with the Justice and Development Party (Ak Party), which was founded in 2001 and favoured an Islamist agenda. Considering that this polarisation has been in place since the times of the Young Turks and is still active, it is not likely to falter in the near future.

The political dominance of Kemalist ideology resulted in the persecution of literary intelligentsia among which was Nazım Hikmet, who was defined by Talat Sait Halman as "communism's lyrical and proselytising voice in the Turkish Republic", as well as Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Nihat Atsız, and Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, who aligned themselves with various ideological stances (*Muse* 43). Though Rumi had lived 800 years earlier (an age that preceded both the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey), his memory, literary works, and the Mevlevi Order have experienced their fair share of Kemalist reforms in the early twentieth century. Sufism predates the Ottoman Empire in the geography of modern Turkey, and it was one of the first things to be abolished after the Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923. In 1953, the government approved Mevlevi *sama* performances, which I will discuss shortly, for the first time in thirty years (Lewis 465). There has therefore been a revival of interest in Sufi performances and Sufism since the mid-twentieth century. However, the temporal gap between the prohibition and reinstatement of such performances created generations who do not know Sufism, despite the substantial role it plays in their cultural history. Probably for this reason, most of the Turkish novels written about the life of Rumi from the 1990s onwards foreground the trope of a foreign protagonist who becomes conversant with Rumi either through a visit to Turkey (or more specifically to Rumi's city of birth, Konya), or through a translation of the poet's works. These protagonists subsequently engage themselves in learning more about this famous poet and, through these characters, the novelists encourage their readers to discover and

reclaim Rumi. This pattern gives Turkish novelists the opportunity to reintroduce Rumi's life, teachings and literary works, which were jettisoned with the Republican reforms mentioned above.

Rumi, His Works, and His Legacy

The biographical information of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi's life is crucial for an analysis of the novels under scrutiny in this thesis; therefore, it will be outlined in detail in this section. Rumi was born on 30 September 1207 in Balkh, which is located on the border of modern-day Afghanistan (Schimmel *Rumi* 2; Nicholson "Introduction" 17).[22] His father, Baha'uddin Walad, was a theologian in Balkh and regarded "as a man of deep learning and bore the title of King of Scholars (Sultan-ul Ulema)" (Igbal *Life 55*; see also Sipehsâlâr 23). The family departed from Balkh and travelled through Samarkand, Nishapur, Mecca, and Syria until finally settling in Konya (Gooch 15-44; Schimmel *Rumi* 2-3). Biographers offer several reasons for this departure. Some of them, such as Afzal Iqbal, suggest that it was due to the approaching Mongol threat (59). Two of his earliest biographers, Feridun bin Ahmed-i Sipehsâlâr and Ahmed Eflâkî, agreed that it was following a dispute with the ruler of Balkh, Alâeddin Khwarazmshah (Sipehsâlâr 27; Eflâkî 70-1). Yet, his son Sultan Veled maintained that it was a result of a disagreement with the locals of Balkh (Veled 251). Whatever the reason was, the city where Baha'uddin Walad's family took up permanent residence, Konya, was under the rule of "Seljuk sultan Alauddin Kaikobad", where Rumi's father took a position as a professor (Schimmel *Rumi* 3).

[22] Brad Gooch disagrees with this in his biography of Rumi and claims that before coming to Konya, the family lived in Vakhsh which is not in Afghanistan but in Tajikistan (13). Yet most of the sources about the life of poet, including the account of his eldest son Sultan Veled's *Ibtidâ-nâme* and one of Rumi's earliest biographers Ahmed Eflâkî's *Ariflerin Menkıbeleri*, refutes Gooch's claim (Veled 251; Eflâkî 67).

Rumi was fourteen years old when this resettlement took place (Sipehsâlâr 29). Baha'uddin Walad, following work experience of "royal patronage and popular esteem as a preacher and teacher", passed away in 1230 and left his place for Rumi to take (Arberry "Introduction" 27). Rumi continued the legacy of his father in his new post and, by the time of Shams Tabriz-i's arrival in 1244, he taught at a *madrasa*, an institution which equates to a university in the contemporary sense (Schimmel *Rumi's World* 13). William Chittick states that Rumi was not only well-versed in major subjects such as "jurisprudence, theology, and Arabic and Persian literature" but also, he had a good knowledge of "the Sufi ethical teachings" from Baha'uddin Walad's writings ("Rumi" 106).[23] It is true that Rumi's meeting with Shams was a crucial stage in his life. Yet this was not due to his introduction to Sufism but the Sufi way of life through Shams. Sultan Veled hints at the beginning of Rumi's spiritual journey with Seyyid Burhâneddin-i Muhakkık, who was one of Baha'uddin Walad's students, by reporting that Muhakkık, observing Rumi's extensive knowledge in the worldly sciences, guided the latter to the skills of learning God's terrestrial attributes (255-57; Schimmel *As Through a Veil* 84). This period ended with the death of Rumi's spiritual master in 1240 (Nicholson "Introduction" 18). Rumi needed to wait for four years before he found his spiritual companion Shams-i Tabrizi and resumed the journey that he started with Muhakkık.[24]

Within the two short periods of time they spent together from 1244 to 1247, which were disrupted by Shams' first departure from Konya under the influence of

[23] This is an important point as Rumi's transformation into a Sufi is widely based on his encounter with Shams by several novelists mentioned above. This is highly criticised by Ahmet Ümit in the third chapter of this thesis entitled **'Beyond Detective Fiction and the Fantastic Mode: Capitalism and Nationalism in Ahmet Ümit's *The Dervish Gate*'.**

[24] The full name of the dervish is Shams-ud-din, which means "[s]un of [r]eligion" and it is widely used by Rumi and his biographers as Shams, which means sun in Arabic (Schimmel *As Through A Veil* 84). Shams name and its meaning is frequently invoked in Rumi narratives.

locals' malevolence, Shams not only diverted Rumi's attention from orthodoxy as the sole view of Islam but also from the writings of earlier mystics. Franklin Lewis notes that Shams was disappointed with Rumi's fondness for and dependence on "the works of others for guidance and inspiration", which hindered his becoming a Sufi (162).[25] For Shams, knowledge of the divine cannot be reached through reading others' accounts of it. Rather, Rumi needed to experience it in his life, as learning and living are not the same thing in Shams' view. To transform Rumi into a fully-fledged Sufi, Shams needed to curb his *nafs*, his ego, and his methods were harsh. Shams, in his *Makâlât*, stated that "whenever I like someone, from the beginning I show him only severity so that I may belong to him completely—skin and flesh, severity and gentleness" (Shams *Me & Rumi* 14).[26][27] To rid Rumi of his *nafs*, Shams challenged his scholarly career and communal respect, and ordered him to undertake arduous tasks such as buying wine, which was, considering the occupation of Rumi as a respected theologian, humiliating (Eflâkî 474). In Sufi principles there is no room for one's individual existence. Javad Nurbakhsh illustrates this by likening the Unity of Being, that is God, to the light and its creatures to its shadow (xvi). By requesting a challenging task from Rumi, Shams makes him aware of his sense of pride and guides Rumi to unite with God by removing him from his own existence.

The personality differences between Shams and Rumi were evident. Shams comments on their differences by stating that Mevlana "has good beauty, and I

[25] This is also present in the earlier accounts on Rumi's life. For example, Eflâkî states that Shams banned Rumi's reading of his father's works (475).

[26] Shams' only written account about his life and his relationship with Rumi is his *Maqalat*, or *Makâlât* in Turkish, which means discourses in Persian and written in a combination of Persian and Arabic languages (F Lewis *Rumi* 155). This book was translated into English by William Chittick as *Me &Rumi: The Autobiography of Shams-i Tabrizi* in 2004.

[27] Since Shams and his contemporaries do not have a last name, his and his conteporaries' works will be presented by their first names in the alphabetical order of the '**Works Cited**' with an exception for Rumi.

[Shams] have beauty and ugliness" (189). Shams was a "wandering" dervish who did not pay attention to others' admiration (F Lewis *Rumi* 147; Arberry "Introduction" 28). His personality was marked by his "exceedingly aggressive and domineering manner" (Redhouse qtd in Iqbal 111). Indeed, Shams noted that "[w]hen something needs to be said, I'll say it even if the whole world grabs me by the beard and tells me not to" (Shams *Me & Rumi* 192). This unfiltered honesty seems to cause problems for the dervish even in the times that he had before meeting with Rumi. He reports in the section "My Years without Mevlana" that "[t]he more I make myself apparent, the more trouble I have" (Shams *Me & Rumi* 34). Rumi was, on the other hand, moulded in conventions long before he succeeded his father since their heritage "raised scholars for many generations" (Okuyucu 6). Rumi had not been familiar with the public who had different living conditions from him until he met Shams. As a son of a highly esteemed scholar, he had been used to aristocratic company. Yet, Shams took several jobs such as tutoring or building in order to maintain his life modestly but independently (F Lewis 146-47). It was Shams who bridged the gap in this cultural divide. Therefore, Sultan Veled accurately draws a Qur'anic analogy beween Rumi and Moses and Shams and Khidr, and hints at the sura al-Kahf (The Cave) (50). According to the exegesis of this sura, there is a juxtaposition of "formal and exoteric knowledge" of Moses and Khidr (*The Study Quran* 18:60c 748).[28] Rumi, like Moses, studied and practised the scholarly aspect of religion and he needed Shams to take him beyond, to unity with God. Differences in their nature, therefore, did not make them grow distant. Instead, Rumi found in Shams what he lacked in himself.

[28] In this sura, there is a reference to "the junction of two seas", which in Arabic means "Merej el-bahrain" (*The Study Quran* 18:60 748). This is an analogy used for Rumi's initial meeting with Shams and in the third chapter of this thesis, it will be analysed with reference to both *Qur'an* and the novel.

In their spiritual journey together, Rumi and Shams secluded themselves for months directing their attention to their hearts, which is viewed as the organ of divine knowledge (Gooch 118). The more time Rumi spent time with Shams, the more distanced he became from his scholarly duties. Rumi's commitment to Shams and his retirement from his duties, such as preaching and teaching, created discontent among his followers (F Lewis 175). The hostility of the locals drove Shams away from Konya. It was the loss of his spiritual axis that unleashed Rumi's poetic production (Schimmel *Rumi* 6). Although they were briefly reunited, Shams vanished again around 1247, never to return.

Rumi acquired two more companions following Shams' disappearance. These were Salahuddin Zarkub, a goldsmith, and Husamuddin, one of Rumi's followers, the scribe of Rumi's *Masnavi*, and the man who followed him as the leader of the Mevlevi order (Schimmel *Rumi's World* 23-26, 32). With Muhakkık and Shams, the number of influential figures in Rumi's life rose to four. However, neither the influence of Muhakkık, which predates the arrival of Shams nor the impact of Zarkub and Husamuddin, make their way into literary representations of Rumi's life. The particulars of Shams' disappearance are not clear. Some biographers, including his son Sultan Veled and his disciple-biographer Sepahsâlâr, state that Shams travelled to another place without informing Rumi or the locals (Sepahsâlâr 155; Veled 68). Meanwhile others, among them Eflâkî and Schimmel, argue that Shams did not go anywhere but became a victim of a murder committed by the orthodox locals of Konya (Eflâkî 524-5; Schimmel *As Through A Veil* 86). Whatever the reason behind this disappearance, the possibility of Shams' death is preferred by several novelists alluded

to in the earlier sections of this thesis due to its vast narrative possibilities.[29] Indeed, Pamuk, Shafak, and Ümit entertained the idea of Shams' murder in their novels *The Black Book*, *The Forty Rules of Love*, and *The Dervish Gate* and included this in their narrative arcs. Hence, crime fiction emerges as a key generic mode when it comes to Rumi's depiction in Pamuk and Ümit's novels under scrutiny. By contrast, Shafak agrees with the camp which believes that Shams was murdered, but she does not elaborate on this in her novel.

As stated earlier, Rumi is best known for his masterpiece, the *Masnavi*, which according to Franklin D. Lewis is "an elaborate though somewhat disguised commentary on the Koran and the theological discourse which Muslim thinkers and gnostics developed on that scriptural basis" (396). The book is composed of 25,700 verses and six volumes and its composition took around twelve years from 1261 to the poet's death in 1273 (Nicholson "Introduction" 22; Iqbal 180). The title of the book signals the form of its content as *masnavi* or *mathnavi* means a "long poem in rhyming couplets" (Schimmel *Rumi* 4). Rumi's literary production is not limited to this long poem. There is another poetic work entitled *Divan-i Shams-i Tabriz*, which is also known as *Divan-ı Kebir* whose composition preceded the *Masnavi* and it is made up of around 2,500 "mystical odes" (Nicholson "Introduction" 22). The title of the work signifies the absorption of the poet in the image of his spiritual companion. Indeed, most of the couplets are signed under the name of Shams rather than Rumi while a small number of them were written under the names of Rumi's companions of later years (Schimmel *As Through A Veil* 86-92). There are also other Rumi writings

[29] Among the novels which consider this possibility are Connie Zweig's *A Moth to the Flame* and Nigel Watts' *The Way of Love*.

survived to this date such as *Fihi Ma Fihi* which means "what's in it is in it", *Maktubât* which consists of the letters written by Rumi, and *Mecalis-i Seba*, which as *Fihi Ma Fihi* is a transcription of speeches (F Lewis 292-94).[30] However, the point of attention of this thesis will be on the *Masnavi* as it is the only cited work in the three novels which will be analysed in this study.

Rumi was, and still is, widely known and respected in Muslim countries for the quality of his poetry and his knowledge—with the exception of Turkey where, as discussed, his literary and cultural impact was interrupted in the early years of the Republic with the closure of the Mevlevi lodges. Since the reopening of these lodges in the 1950s, interest in Rumi's writings and the Mevlevi Order has increased. However, from the 1990s onwards, Rumi's life attracted the attention of fiction writers who incorporated his teachings and life story into their novels' subject matter. While literary interest at home increased in this decade, it was followed by global interest in Rumi.

There are a few dominating doctrines in Rumi's poetry in the *Masnavi* which also made their way into the novels under scrutiny. Among these are dying before death, seclusion, and most importantly, Love. Here, I specifically use the word with a capital letter in order to separate it from the lowercase version of the word, which has worldly connotations for the twenty-first-century reader. Chittick states that the importance of Love for Sufis was derived from a *hadith qudsī*, a non-Qur'anic saying attributed to God, which narrates the reason for the creation of humankind as "I was a hidden treasure, I loved to be recognised; so [*sic*] I created the creatures so that I would

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[30] *Fihi Ma Fihi* was translated into English by A. J. Arberry as *Discourses of Rumi* for the first time in 1947.

be recognised" ("The Quran" 1746). Acknowledging the cause of their existence in human form, Sufis try to perform their duties to God by showing their Love to Him and all His manifestations in the created universe. Chittick's definition of the meaning of Love for Rumi elsewhere runs parallel to this interpretation since the author reads Rumi's utterances about Love as "a divine power that brings the universe into existence, motivates the activity of every creature, and wells up in the human heart to establish a unity in the midst of multiplicity" ("Rumi" 120-21). The source of this notion is the idea of the Unity of Being (discussed above). God is both the object and the subject of the Love in Rumi's belief system. By planting the power of Love into His creatures' hearts, God directs them to turn and unite with Him. The doctrine of Love is not specific to Rumi. In his article on the subject, Leonard Lewisohn traces the development of this theme from Rābi'a Adawiyya, a ninth century Sufi to Ibn 'Arabī, a contemporary of Rumi who is also referenced in the latter's *Masnavi* (151). Adawiyya eloquently expressed the meaning of Love in the Sufi sense by uttering "I have not worshipped Him from the fear of His fire, nor for the love of His garden, so that I should be like a lowly hireling; rather, I have worshipped Him for the love of Him and longing for Him" (Adawiyya qtd in Lewisohn 152). Here Adawiyya presents the feeling as being governed by the equally self-serving motives of reward and the fear of punishment and locates her Love for God beyond these reasons as an end itself. Similarly, Schimmel observes that the concepts of "Love" and "Beloved" transposes into Rumi's poetry which rules out any affiliation with love in the worldly sense (*As Through A Veil* 101). The association of Rumi's poetry with Love and its connotations except for God is condemned by Rumi in verse 1528 of the *Masnavi*'s sixth book, as he states, "Our *Mathnawi* is the shop for Unity: anything that you see / (there) except

the One (God) is (only) an idol" (1299). Hence, Rumi's numerous verses on the subject of Love are elaborations of the path of divine unity sought by Sufis.

Another prevalent theme in Rumi's writing, which is intricately relevant to his view of Love and the Unity of Being, is the Sufi concept of *fana*, which is also known as *faqr* and *mahw*, or more simply, dying before death. For Rumi, the union with God can only be achieved by loosening the ties of the soul to the ego, and thereby returning to the primordial unity with God before creation. Lewis defines this concept as "the great jihad, [which] includes learning to accede to God's will, putting out the fires of ego, training the carnal self and concupiscent soul" (*Rumi* 417). In Rumi's poetry this notion is evoked in several verses. In one verse, in *Masnavi* Book I, Rumi compares Sufis to the ordinary man:

> Death, of which all these (others) are so afraid, this people
> (the perfect Sufis) are holding in derision.
> None gains the victory over their hearts: the hurt falls on
> the oyster-shell, not on the pearl.
> Though they never let go of grammar (*nahw*) and jurisprudence
> (*fiqh*), yet they have taken up (instead) mystical self-effacement
> (*mahw*) and spiritual poverty (*faqr*). (Rumi 210)

Here, the poet not only clarifies the placement of Sufism within the formal boundaries of Islam, through his reference to *fiqh*, Quranic law, but also, and more importantly, explains the differences between bodily death and spiritual death. For him, the death of the body, which signals the end of existence for an average human being, is not regarded so by the Sufis as they believe that their body, 'the oyster-shell', is only temporal and their soul is eternal. For this reason, Sufis do not fear bodily death, and to reach the eternal promise of uniting with their Creator in this world, they willingly distance themselves from the lures of their body and their ego. This negation of the

self to eliminate the presence of a duality between oneself and the Creator stands for dying before death, in Rumi's words. This concept is revisited in all of the three novels discussed in this study not only due to the complicated axiom of dying before death, but also because of the narrative possibilities it generates, since the concept puzzles the uninitiated reader. For example, Pamuk, as I will argue in the next chapter, secularises this concept and uses it with reference to his protagonist Galip's taking up the identity of another character, Celal, which is, I contend, an allegorical story of the Republic's takeover of the Ottoman Empire.

Seclusion, which is also known as *chelle*, *khalvat* or *i'tikāf*, though not a doctrine, is a Sufi practice through which dervishes suspend their daily activities and take refuge in a room for attaining a closer relationship with God. This practice was emulated from the *sunna*, the practices, of the Prophet Mohammed, as it is reported in the introduction of sura al-Qadr in *The Study Quran* that "The Prophet himself would usually practice spiritual retreat (*i'tikāf*) during the last ten days of Ramadan, abstaining from conjugal relations, fasting, and praying throughout the night" (Nasr, et al. 1539). As has been briefly mentioned in Rumi's life story above, Rumi and Shams practised this in the early stages of Rumi's development into a practicing Sufi. This exercise is incorporated in two of the novels discussed in this thesis, *The Black Book* and *The Forty Rules of Love*. While Shafak only eludes to this practice, Pamuk explores the concept in great detail. Yet his treatment of the concept is not within the boundaries of Sufi practice. Rather the novelist appropriates this concept in his political critique of the Republic for the latter's censorship of freedom of expression as well as a commentary on the politically motivated murders of the post-Republican era.

One of the important characteristics of the Mevlevi Order is the performance of *sama*, which is not present in all Sufi orders. This practice is defined by the orientalist, Annemarie Schimmel, as a form of mystical dance practised by some Sufi orders in order to reach an ecstatic state (*Mystical* 179). It is important to set *sama* apart from the common current understanding of dance as a form of entertainment. There are several requirements of *sama*. First of all, it is not accessible to everyone who wishes to participate, since it demands the avowal of the doctrines and "strict observance of ritual practices particular to the order, as well as those of the *Sharīa*" (Michon 163). Also, apart from an espousal of Islam, the spiritual ritual of *sama* necessitates *faqr* as its fundamental prerequisite which is the emptiness of the soul from its worldly needs (Michon 170). H. A. R. Gibb explains the insignificance of worldly life for Sufis as a precondition of *sama* in the following words:

> This world is but a temporary habitation, and every gift it has to offer, power, riches, pleasure, learning, the joy of parenthood, is vanity and temptation – not indeed to be rejected or avoided, but to be used with a deep sense of the awful responsibilities which they entail. (Gibb 88)

Here Gibb emphasises the transitory nature of life and the need for Sufis to carefully conduct their lives without becoming lost in its lures. Indeed, Sufis aim to observe and emulate the life of the Prophet Mohammad and his *sunna* (behaviour). Nearly all of the novels under scrutiny in this thesis devote space to this practice and its symbolism, and this will be discussed in the forthcoming chapters.

Before proceeding to a sketch of the novelists included in this thesis, an overview of the conventions of post-Republican literature is necessary in order to analyse the relationship of the style of these novelists with the canon. Berna Moran notes that the novel as a genre in Turkish literature emerged during the decline of the

Ottoman Empire "as a part of Westernisation through translations of foreign novels and their imitations" (Moran *Türk 1* 9). Even though pre-Republican literature had its "pastoral and epic traditions", in the Republican era these forms were equated with backwardness of the Ottoman worldview and realism, which goes hand in hand with the Republican fondness of positive sciences, prevailed as the dominant technique of literary production (Seyhan 20). This new literature was assigned with the task of directing to "good, right, [and] reality" (Aslan Ayar 65). Erdağ Göknar observes that from 1922 to 1949, the Turkish novel was a conveyor of Republican ideas and ideals, often presenting "new 'men' and new societies with a socialist, nationalist and/or Turkist colouring" ("The Novel" 485). Considering the policies of the Republic mentioned in a previous section of this chapter, its value systems needed to penetrate into and be immersed by the public which was itself undertaking a transition from the Empire to Republic. For that reason, literature was instrumentalised to cement a collective consciousness with a didactic tone in readers. For example, the fantastic mode, which was common in the epics of the previous (Ottoman) era, was overruled and, when it was used occasionally, it was to promote nationalism.[31] This point will be analysed further in the third chapter of this thesis, which expands on Ahmet Ümit's use of the mode in his critique of reason-based Turkish nationalism.

An Overview of the Authors

All the three novelists studied in this thesis belong to the leftist, "pro-Western" category within the politico-cultural division of secular and religious. Orhan Pamuk

[31] Among the novelists who produce novels in the fantastic mode in order to refute it with reason, Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar was prominent.

was born in 1952 into a "middle-class Westernised Istanbul family" (Pamuk *Other* 230). He sketches the environment he grew up in with an anecdote about his first encounter with *The Thousand and One Nights* in the following words:

> I saw nothing of my world in their stories; perhaps life was like this in the most remote villages of Anatolia but not in modern Istanbul. So, the first time I read the Thousand and One Nights, I read it as a Western child would, amazed at the marvels of the East. (Pamuk *Other* 119)

Here, the novelist not only draws attention to the 1950s Westernised Istanbul he lived in and its societal differences from provincial areas of the time, but also exemplifies the detachment of the upper-middle classes from the once dominant influence of eastern cultures through his personal experience. Even though the novelist defines himself as a "Westerniser", as the first chapter of this thesis, '**Empire to Republic: *The Black Book* as an Allegory of Turkish Westernisation and Modernisation**', will scrutinise, he harshly criticises Republican Westernisation in his *The Black Book* (1994, 2006) (Pamuk and Gurría-Quintana np.).

Elif Shafak, who was born in 1971 in Strasbourg, France to Turkish parents, had an experience of both modern and traditional in her life.[32] Two generations of her maternal family members present the juxtaposition of the stages of the divided society in Turkey into traditionally religious and Westernising camps. In her comparison of her mother and grandmother, Shafak describes the former as "an educated working woman, very cultured and modern" while for the depiction of the latter, she uses the

[32] There are three different surnames of this author referenced in this thesis as Bilgin, Şafak, and Shafak. The first one of these, Bilgin, was her father Nuri Bilgin's surname which she used until her completion of her doctoral studies in 2004, even though she began to ponder on changing it fifteen years earlier (Shafak *Black Milk* 98). Rather than choosing a completely different name altogether, she decided to use her mother's first name Şafak and published all of her literary work under this name in Turkish to this date (Shafak *Black Milk* 106). Shafak is practically an anglicised, phonetically transcribed version of the novelist's newly-adopted surname and she began to use it when she was globalised through the publication of her literary work in English.

adjectives of “traditional, superstitious, [and] religious” (Shafak qtd in Abrams np.; Shafak *Black Milk* 127-8). Shafak’s oeuvre is an amalgamation of these two conflicting worldviews; therefore, her novels are regarded by some critics as a melting pot of East and West (Dayekh 1719). Shafak did not grow up in a traditional family, which was the norm in the 1970s, due to her parents’ separation (Şafak *Sanma* 211). The absence of her father through her childhood and youth created a gap, which was filled by two women, her grandmother and mother. The difficulties the latter, Şafak Atayman, experienced in a patriarchal society as a divorcee and a single mother also gave shape to Shafak’s ideas about women’s rights and gender equality in her literary and journalistic writings.[33] Both Shafak and Pamuk live abroad, in the UK and in the USA respectively, and they frequently engage in a critique of Turkish politics in their interviews and journalism as well as in their novels.

Ahmet Ümit was born in 1960 in Gaziantep, a city in southeast Turkey, into a traditional, extended, and religious family (Ümit *İnsan* 27). Compared to the two novelists mentioned above, whose political dissidence followed their literary establishment, Ümit’s political position has been consistent and it has never been limited to his fiction and his interviews. [34] Rather, he was a supporter of Marxism throughout his youth. The novelist traces his politicisation back to his reading of Yaşar Kemal’s *İnce Memed* (1955), which was translated into English as *Memed, My Hawk* in 1961, which tells the story of a village through the protagonist Memed and his struggle against the cruel landowner Abdi, as well as the influence of his five elder,

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[33] This topic will be revisited in the second chapter of this thesis, entitled ‘**From Orthodoxy to Heterodoxy: Rumi and Women in *The Forty Rules of Love***’.

[34] Indeed, especially Pamuk’s writing was evolved from his conforming to “the secular modernity” in his first and the single untranslated novel *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* (1996), which narrates a family of three generations from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic, to his challenge of it in *The Black Book* (Göknar *Orhan* 50).

Leftists brothers (Ümit *İnsan* 38). In one of his interviews, Umit stated that his writing journey started with a short story which was published in a journal and translated into forty languages (Ümit and Özdemir 49). This story which is entitled "Annals of Courage: It Was Not the Last Test" was published in *World Marxist Review* in June 1985 under the pseudonym of "K. Yalçın".[35] It narrates the real story of an anonymous Turkish communist who was imprisoned and tortured by police forces in the 1980s.

One common point among these three novelists, which also positions them as dissidents, is their arguments about the Armenian incidents of 1915.[36] In an interview conducted by Peer Tauwsen, which appeared in 2005 in a Swiss newspaper, Pamuk stated that "30,000 Kurds were killed here. And a million Armenians. And almost nobody dares to talk about it. So I do" (Pamuk qtd in Göknar 4).[37] Following this statement, Pamuk experienced a similar case to the Rushdie Affair; he was vilified, and his novels were "burned" (Zaptcioglu np.). As a result of his expression, the novelist was taken to court and tried "under Article 301-1 of the penal code of 'insulting Turkishness'", yet the case was abandoned around the same time that he was awarded as a Nobel Laureate in 2006 (Göknar 5).

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[35] Critics of Ümit's works failed to track Ümit's first literary publication down probably because of his use of a pen name. However, in his *Çıplak Ayaklıydı Gece* (1992), which is a collection of short stories about his Marxist comrades in Turkey, Ümit republished this story in Turkish.

[36] Whether the suffering of Armenians in 1915 was a consciously implemented genocide or a mis-monitored deportation has been discussed by historians over the past century. There are two camps both in Turkey and in the West, who support one of these theories and there has not been a conclusive agreement between them. For those historians who support the genocide theory, see Richard Hovannisian's *Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918* (1967) and Taner Akçam's *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (2012).For the argument of those who argue against this claim see Justin McCarthy's *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821-1922* (1996), and volume II of Stanford J.Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw's *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, 1808-1975* (1977). As any argument of this size is beyond the scope of this thesis and to maintain a neutral position, I refer to this unfortunate event as "incident".

[37] There is not an English translation of this article. However, this statement also appears in two newspaper articles Maureen Freely's "I stand by my words. And even more, I stand by my right to say them…" and Dilek Zaptcioglu's "The Lost Son: Nobel Prise Winner Pamuk Divides Turkey".

For Shafak, the situation was different as it was not her public comments but the utterances of one of her characters, Armanoush, in the novel entitled *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2006) that made her face trial under the same article (Shafak *Black* 5). This case is a clear illustration of how fictional belief systems cannot be distinguished from those of their authors in the Turkish context. As seen here, the role of the author is expected to promote the dominant ideology rather than challenge it. Among these three novelists, Ümit is the only one who has not been tried under article 301, contrary to his creation of fictional characters who argue for the deliberate killings of Armenians during the Armenian incidents of 1915. In several passages of his *Patasana* (2000), the novelist invokes this event as "Armenian genocide" through the assertions of two foreign characters, Timothy and Bernd (202, 266). Even though he engages in the same practice as Shafak by producing fictional characters who discuss the subject, according to Zeynep Tüfekçioğlu, it is the detective genre Umit writes in that gives him the opportunity to write openly about "controversial topics" (7). Considering the fact that detective fiction is an underdeveloped genre in Turkey and the criticism of novels which belong to this genre is scarce, Ümit's statements may have gone unnoticed.

The scarcity of secondary sources on Ümit's oeuvre created a limitation and an opportunity in the discussion of Ümit's novel. In order to bridge this gap, I contacted the novelist through his agent, Kalem Agency, to arrange an interview in 2018. Since the novelist was working on his latest novel *Kırlangıç Çığlığı*, the interview was arranged for 28 April 2018. The design of the interview was semi-structured, and the questions were mostly based on *The Dervish Gate*, Ümit's essays, detective fiction, and his involvement with Marxism. The setting of the interview was a well-known patisserie, Pelit Pastanesi, in the Şişli district of Istanbul. Since the interview took place

at 11:00 am, the venue was quiet. As I did not send the questions to the novelist prior to our meeting his answers did not have a clear line of argument but were spontaneous and revealing. Due to Ümit's limited knowledge of English, the interview was conducted in Turkish. A translation of the full interview is placed at the end of this thesis as Appendix 1.

The Arrangement of Chapters

The order of the chapters in this thesis is not formulated chronologically; that is, they are not placed sequentially according to the date of novels' publication (even though the first chapter coincidentally conforms to such a formulation). Instead, these chapters are ordered according to the novelists' worldviews. If one uses the Bosporus imagery that I presented earlier, Orhan Pamuk stands at the western side of the bridge with his embrace of a profoundly Western outlook through his playful and postmodern writing style. His novels are written with a primary consideration of international readers and translation and he is "accused of writing for non-Turkish (Euro-American) audiences" by Turkish critics (Göknar *Orhan* 1). For example, in one of his recent novels, *Kafamda Bir Tuhaflık* (2014), his main character is named Mevlut.[38] Yet there is no such Turkish name as Mevlut. Rather, this is a translation-friendly version of the Turkish male name Mevlüt, which means the Prophet Mohammad's birthday. Pamuk most probably named his character as such out of consideration for the international typesetters of his translations and his international audiences.

[38] This novel is translated into English as *A Strangeness in My Mind* in 2015 and published by Faber&Faber.

Elif Shafak stands for the bridge itself, creating a state of in-betweenness with her attempts to belong to both sides; for example, incorporating Western views alongside her fondness for Ottoman vocabulary. Her attention is divided between both international and Turkish readers and cross-cultural subject matters. For example, in *Three Daughters of Eve* (2016), the novelist writes about a Turkish female character, Peri, presenting her memories of the time she spent in the multicultural atmosphere of the University of Oxford. In this novel, Shafak structures a triangulated belief system with three characters who are ardently religious, cynical, and unbelieving respectively. Even though Shafak now writes most of her novels in English (until *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* (2004), she wrote all her novels in Turkish) and then has them translated into Turkish, she rewrites the English to Turkish translated text in Turkish in order to convey its meaning more eloquently. Ahmet Ümit, on the other hand, stands for the eastern side of the bridge. This is not to say that his literary achievements do not venture beyond the geography of Turkey. In fact, like the other novelists under scrutiny, Ümit's novels are also translated into many languages (if to a lesser degree). However, Umit's writing is primarily targeted at a Turkish audience and his prose is notably didactic. That is, he is more concerned than the other two authors with tackling the cultural and political problems of Turkey through literature, focusing particularly on the educational aspect of fiction.

In the remainder of this thesis, which is divided into individual chapters on the three novels mentioned above, I will try to answer why and how Pamuk, Shafak, and Ümit write about Rumi despite their taking sides with the secularist camp in the historical division between secular and religious ideologies. In the first chapter, I offer a close reading of Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* as an allegory of the Turkish Republic's relationship with its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire. I argue that in this

novel, Pamuk instrumentalises the Sufi concepts of *fana, baqa,* seclusion and dying before death by denuding them of their religious significations and using them as a means to criticise the Westernisation and modernisation attempts of the Republic. To achieve this, the novelist makes use of postmodern techniques as well as the metaphysical detective genre.

In the second chapter, which focuses on Elif Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love*, I trace the novelist's engagement with Sufism back to her graduate studies at the Middle East Technical University, and how her treatment of Rumi's life is intertwined with her feminist ideas. I argue that Shafak undertakes the duty of presenting an alternative living experience of Islam through Rumi's life to the West while at the same time reintroducing a tradition which was lost in the Empire-to-Republic transition, to her Turkish audience. Through Rumi's life and his view of other characters, the novelist promotes the concepts of conviviality and pluralism as a means to harmonious society for her twenty-first-century readers. The feminist disposition of the novelist is evinced in her representation of three female characters in Rumi's life. The chapter tries to contribute to Shafak scholarship through its discussion of the novelist's implementation of the epistolary mode into the novel as well as analysing both Turkish and English versions of the novel and its translation process by pointing out its "born-translated" nature. This term is coined by critic Rebecca Walkowitz for the books which are produced with a consideration of translation process from the onset (3).

In the third chapter, which engages in a close reading of Ümit's *The Dervish Gate*, I start my analysis of the novel by positioning the author as a Marxist political activist and how his participation and disillusionment with the party politics led to his literary career. I assert that Ümit's political views are informative in his treatment of

Rumi's life in the novel. The novelist, through his protagonist Karen Kimya and Rumi's life story, engages in a critique of governmental policies of the Republic and explores the notions of identity and ethnicity against Turkish nationalism through his use of the fantastic mode and detective fiction.

Returning back to the parallels in the writings of Rumi and Dante, it is interesting to note that despite the numerous volumes of commentary on his works, Dante's life story has not been widely fictionalised. Even though his life was marked by political tensions and exile, it has not been placed widely under the spotlight in fictional narratives except for Marco Santagata's works such as *Come donna innamorata* (2015). In that respect, Rumi's influence has surpassed that of Dante. While Dante's impact on world letters has been well-established from his age onwards, Rumi's influence increases day by day. It is yet to be seen whether Rumi scholarship will reach the heights of that on Dante or the fictionalised accounts of Rumi's life inspire novelists to engage in the act of writing about Dante in fiction.

Chapter 1 Empire to Republic: *The Black Book* as an Allegory of Turkish Westernisation and Modernisation

> Novelists write without thinking. It is afterward, when literary critics and scholars weigh writers' every sentence that theories are applied. And then when people read those theories, they get the impression that novelists were purposefully creating their stories in such a way—which is not true.
>
> Elif Shafak, *Black Milk*

> Compared to other novelists I know, I see myself as someone who is more interested in theory and who enjoys reading about theories of the novel.
>
> Orhan Pamuk, *Naïve and Sentimental Novelist*

In her semi-autographical fiction *Black Milk* (2013), the Turkish novelist Elif Shafak (b. 1971) makes the often-repeated point that writers do not consider literary or cultural theories when they compose their works. Orhan Pamuk (b. 1952), who is of an older generation to Shafak, is the only Nobel Laureate for literature that Turkey has so far produced. Contrary to Shafak, Pamuk is aware of and often dramatises literary theories and trends in his novels. In a handwritten note published in the twenty-fifth anniversary edition of *Kara Kitap* (2016), Pamuk sketches out his aims for writing his fourth novel, *Kara Kitap* (1990) or *The Black Book* (1994, 2006) and challenges himself to compose "a contribution to literary language" wherein he "write[s] the book of [his] life" (Pamuk *Kara* 6; my translation).[39] Pamuk did write this book of his life, and in doing so increased his readership and critical interest in his work both at home and abroad. Leonard Stone notes that the novelist is "generally credited as a postmodern author"

[39] There are two English translations of *The Black Book*. Güneli Gün translated the novel in 1994 for the first time. Maureen Freely retranslated it in 2006 since the former translation was harshly criticised. Unless otherwise stated, all excerpts from the novel in this chapter are quoted from Maureen Freely's translation published in 2006.

(191). For critics of Turkish literature (for example Jale Parla, Orhan Koçak, Sibel Irzık, and Hülya Adak), on the other hand, this attribute reaches such a high level that Pamuk is viewed as a pioneer of the postmodern movement, especially since the publication *The Black Book*, which marks a "rupture from the traditional narrative" of the Republic (Çeçen 192; my translation). In parallel to Çeçen's point, this novel, according to Zekiye Antakyalıoğlu, "rises at the heart of Orhan Pamuk's oeuvre as the Tower of Babel with its complexity, extraordinary plot structure, political motifs, historicity, inter-textual stance, and playfulness" (665). Compared to his first novel *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* (1982), which translates into English as *Cevdet Bey and His Sons* and was a realist account of a family of three generations, Pamuk severed his connection with Turkish literature's realist tradition in *The Black Book*, instead experimenting with a style of storytelling influenced by Western postmodernist authors such as Jorge Luis Borges and Italo Calvino.[40] Similarly, Ian Almond views the novel as a "clear break from a tradition of Turkish social realism à la Kemal" ("Islam" 76). This disengagement from mainstream Turkish literature comes partly because of Pamuk's move to the US in 1985 when his then wife, Aylin Türegün, started her PhD studies at Columbia University and Pamuk attended the Iowa Writer's Workshop, which inspired the novel's conception (McGaha 29; Pamuk *Other* 358; Pamuk and Gurría-Quintana np.).[41] His time in the US not only introduced him to the writings of the postmodernists, but also to his Eastern roots. In his interview with Horace Engdahl, Pamuk supports this point by mentioning his belated encounter with Sufism under the influence of Borges and Calvino. Through the works of these authors,

[40] Pamuk discusses the influence of Borges and Calvino on his writing in his interview with Horace Engdahl. See Pamuk, Orhan. Interview. "Interview with Orhan Pamuk." By Horace Engdahl.

[41] See the website of the International Writers Programme:
https://iwp.uiowa.edu/residency/participants-by-year/1985

Pamuk became aware of the possibility of "delet[ing] the heavy religious way of classical Islamic texts" and instead viewing them as "structures which has [*sic*] metaphysical qualities" (np.). This is exactly what Pamuk does in *The Black Book*; he extracts themes of Sufism out of their context and interprets them in a new light. In a question and answer session with journalists following the announcement of Orhan Pamuk as the Nobel Laureate for Literature on 12 October 2006, Horace Engdahl, Permanent Secretary of the Swedish Academy, underlined Pamuk's achievement of writing a masterwork by stating that Pamuk "has stolen the novel, we can say, from us Westerners and transformed it into something partly different from what we [*sic*] ever seen before" (np.). This indicates that Pamuk not only managed to write a masterpiece as he set out to do but also, as Engdahl suggests in his interview with freelance journalist Ola Larsmo, that the author "renewed the contemporary novel in a remarkable way [… with his] masterpiece of them all being *The Black Book*" (np.). By using the literary theories and trends of Western literature, Pamuk positions himself at the European side of the Bosphorus Bridge where he was born into a family which resembles the "godless bourgeois families of Europe" (*Istanbul* 7, 163). Therefore, his analyses of not only Turkish history and culture, but particularly religion, are under the heavy influence of his "Westernised bourgeoise" milieu (166). For that reason, he is occasionally identified as an orientalist.[42]

In *The Black Book*, Pamuk presents a thirty-three-year-old lawyer, Galip, who sets off on a quest following his wife Rüya's disappearance. Observing the almost simultaneous disappearance of his cousin and his wife, Galip suspects that Rüya and Celâl are hiding together in Istanbul and that to find them he needs to think and act

[42] See Ian Almond's *The New Orientalists: Postmodern Representations of Islam from Foucault to Baudrillard* (2007), where the critic discusses *The Black Book*, its Islamic sources and the concept of melancholy (110-28).

like Celâl. Although the novelist initially offers Rüya's disappearance as the motive for Galip's quest, this pursuit takes a new direction with the protagonist's obsession with Celâl's columns as an ardent reader. Rather than focusing primarily on discovering his wife's whereabouts, Galip ardently engages in the act of reading Celâl's columns, pointing out their hidden meaning. A third-person account of Galip's quest narrative is interspersed with Celâl's newspaper columns, which are thematically linked to the former. By combining Galip's life with Celâl's columns, the novelist creates textual hybridity, challenges the conventions of the novel form, and disrupts its linear structure.

In his collection of essays *Other Colours*, Pamuk describes his view of Sufism, Islamic mysticism, as follows:

> I am interested in Sufism as a literary source. As a discipline comprising positions and actions that train the soul, I cannot engage with it, but I look at the literature of Sufism as a literary treasure. As I sit at my table, the child of a republican family, I live like a man committed to Western Cartesian rationalism to the nth degree. Reason sits at the center of my existence. But at the same time, I try to open myself as much as I can to other books, other texts. I do not look at those texts as material, I take pleasure in reading them—they bring me joy. This joy lifts my spirit. Whatever it touches, it will have to reckon with the rationalist in me. Perhaps my books rise out of these two poles, attracting and repelling each other. (261)

Here Pamuk argues that Sufism is not merely literary 'material' for him, but also expands his rationalist scope to include other world views. However, he often materialises Sufi practices and concepts in his fiction and alludes to Sufism by

referencing its prominent figures and literary production.[43] In his fourth novel *The Black Book*, Pamuk engages in onomastic play in a postmodernist fashion and names his two protagonists after Mevlana Celâleddin Rumi and Şeyh Galip (1757-1796). The latter was an eighteenth-century poet and the religious leader of one of Rumi's Mevlevi lodges (Taşkesenlioğlu 323). His major work was an allegorical, Sufi account of a quest in the form of a masnavi[44] entitled *Hüsn-ü Aşk*.[45] This allegorical story represents a dervish's journey on the Sufi path. The handwritten notes both in a special publication of *Kara Kitap* in its twenty-fifth anniversary edition and in *Kara Kitap'ın Sırları* (2013), which roughly translates into English as *The Secrets of The Black Book*, reveal that during the novel's early composition, Pamuk was not planning to name his main characters after these two long-deceased poets. Rather, the novelist initially intended for Galip to be called Ömer and Celâl was named Mehmet (Pamuk *Kara* 260; Pamuk and Hadzibegoviç 99-100). These name changes provide clues as to which direction the novelist wants his readers to go in their interpretation of the novel.

A related point to consider emerges from Güneli Gün's translation of the novel in 1994 which, according to Sevinç Türkkan, "received harsh criticism, especially from British reviewers" (160). In this initial translation, Gün transliterated Celâl as Jelal. Türkkan holds the translator responsible for this change and, following Marilyn

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[43] Nearly all Pamuk's fiction has Sufi elements in varying degrees (the exceptions are his first two untranslated novels). *The Black Book*, *Snow* (2005), and *The New Life* (1997) are the most prominent ones with a Sufi theme.

[44] Talat Sait Halman defined masnavi (in Turkish mesnevi) as "long narratives composed in rhymed couplets" and Pamuk explains the form as "tales told in rhyming couplets, in Turkish, Persian, Arabic, or Urdu" (Halman 56; Pamuk, *Naive* 60).

[45] This work was translated by Victoria Rowe Holbrook from Ottoman Turkish into English as *Beauty and Love* in 2005. It tells the tale of Love and Beauty. These archetypal characters belong to the tribe of the Sons of Love and fall in love with each other (243-399). Love goes to the elders of their tribe and asks for her hand in marriage (1272-75). The elders give their consent to the nuptials on the condition that Love endures an arduous test (1276). Despite many difficulties, he passes the test with the help of poetry and realises that he does not need to be united with Beauty since they are not separate beings (2059).

Booth, writes dısparagingly about this familiarising strategy of the translator (164-66). However, Maureen Freely notes on two occasions that Pamuk goes through the translations of his works diligently and compares them to the meaning he intended in the original novels ("Afterword" 464; "Misreading" 20). Considered in this light, the transliteration of Celâl in Gün's translation was probably made with the novelist's approval. This suggests Pamuk's eagerness to show the link between the poet and the novelistic Celâl named after him. In Turkish, the letter c is articulated as "*j*, as in 'Jane'" (Ertürk xvii). In the original version of the novel, there is a higher possibility of evoking the Sufi poet as both are pronounced in the same way. However, in English translation this possibility is close to nil, since Rumi's name was introduced to the West as Jalal, probably under the influence of Arabic or Persian languages. As such, Pamuk's and Gün's choice to transliterate the name of the character fits well with the intention of the author. In her re-translation of the novel in 2006, it is not only Freely's loyalty to the original text that leads her to use the name Celâl, but also a wider acknowledgement of Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī—Mevlana Celâleddin Rumi in Turkish—as a timeless poet in the years that preceded the publication of this second translation.

Between these two translations, there was a growing familiarity of the Western reader to the persona and poetry of Rumi through popular translations by Coleman Barks.[46] Indeed in 2007, a year after the publication of Freely's translation, UNESCO organised a ceremony to celebrate the 800th anniversary of Rumi's birth.[47] To

[46] Though Coleman Barks has published several translations of Rumi's poetry since the late 1980s, his readership vastly increased at the turn of the millennium.

[47] See the website of UNESCO for the details of this event: http://webarchive.unesco.org/20161022074558/http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=34694&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

strengthen the novel's connection with Sufism, Pamuk intentionally gives the surname "Salik" to these characters, which in English means "one who sets off on the path of Sufism" (Sipehsâlâr 80; Schimmel *Mystical* 98; Bahmany 116; Türkkan 166; Şimşek 228). Pamuk's clarification about the meaning of the surname is evident in *Kara Kitap'ın Sırları* (2013), which roughly translates into English as *The Mysteries of* The Black Book and sheds light on various fuzzy aspects of the novel, including its literary and autobiographical sources (Pamuk and Hadzibegovic 67). This explanation suggests that not only does he try to create a link between Sufism and the novel, but he also wants this connection to be visible and comprehensible. Yet this novel is not a straightforward story of Rumi, Seyh Galip, or of a Sufi disciple. This generates two questions: why and for what purposes does Pamuk put so much effort into linking centuries-old Islamic mysticism with his novel set in 1980s Istanbul? Especially when his rationalism makes him reject the sacred status of the man whom Muslims believe to be God's final prophet by calling him simply by name, "Muhammed", which is the transliteration of Mohammad into Turkish, without acknowledging his prophet status (*Kara* 19).[48]

I want to suggest that the novelist directs his readers to Sufism as a point of reference for his political allegory. In the novel's epigraph, Pamuk presents a fictional entry on Ibn Arabi in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* which reads:

> *Ibn' Arabi writes of a friend and dervish saint who, after his soul was elevated to the heavens, arrived on Mount Kaf, the magic mountain that encircles the world; gazing around him, he saw that the mountain itself was encircled by a serpent. Now, it is a well-known fact that no such*

[48] In the original, Pamuk refers to the Prophet by using his name only which is not a common practice among Muslims who always mention him as Prophet Muhammed and greet him by saying "peace be upon him". This preference is not observed in the English translation of Freely, since it might confuse the Anglophone reader while Gün stays loyal to the original in her translation.

> *mountain encircles the world, nor is there a serpent.* (viii; emphasis in original)

The story of Ibn Arabi has both a religious and a fantastical nature. The mystic refers to religious terminology such as 'heaven' and 'serpent'. His tale has spiritual connotations for Sufis (for example, it implies that deception is everywhere, and it is the duty of Sufis to fight against it). For the imaginary encyclopaedist, however, such a reading is far from possible, and the story is represented as outmoded and fictional. His usage of the word "fact" suggests that the encyclopaedist, like Pamuk, is driven by scientific rationalism as opposed to religious belief. This stark contrast between reason and religion, and the encyclopaedist's attempt to lessen Ibn Arabi's credibility, is similar to what happened to the Ottoman legacy when the Republic of Turkey was founded. The secular and Westernised outlook of the republican elite reduced the centuries-old imperial success of the Ottoman Empire to nothing, equating it with irrational religiosity. However, since the times of Mehmet the Conqueror, Ottoman emperors had been well-educated in the language, politics, and histories of the countries surrounding their territory.[49] This initial juxtaposition of religion and reason informs the reader that this novel is about the tension between Islam and Turkish secularism. Erdağ Göknar proposes a similar interpretation and reads Ibn Arabi as representing "mysticism" and the "literary imagination", while he views the encyclopaedist as a representative of "positivism" (*Orhan* 213). He claims that Pamuk's purpose is to obscure the boundaries of mysticism and reason and "arrive at a secular-sacred narrative space" (Göknar *Orhan* 213). I want to argue against

[49] Cevdet Kırpık, in his account of Ottoman princes' education, highlights that princes, who began to engage in formal education early in their childhood, were educated by the best scholars in the Empire. These teachers were multinational, and they taught princes both the subject matters of their expertise and as well as foreign languages (Ch. 1). He asserts that princes "became competent not only in managemental and religious topics, but also in foreign languages, and literature" (Kırpık Ch. 1; my translation).

Göknar's statement in that religious and Sufi elements are not used by Pamuk to create a 'secular-sacred'. Instead, Pamuk secularises these concepts as part of his critique of the Republican implementation of Westernisation and Modernisation.

The Black in *The Black Book*

The Black Book is not the first title that Pamuk thought of during his almost "five-year-long" composition of the novel (Pamuk *Other* 253; *Kara* 495). Two of these earlier names were documented in his handwritten notes and published in *Kara Kitabın Sırları* (2013). The first one of these is "Alâaddin'in Dükkânı"; that is, 'Aladdin's Shop' in English (Pamuk and Hadzibegovic 95). It appears that Pamuk thought of this title as the final name of the book (Pamuk and Hadzibegovic 95). However, in his later notes it is evident that Pamuk did not cease looking for a more effective title, as he came up with "Alâaddin'in Rüyası", 'Aladdin's Dream' in English, when he was in New York in 1986 (Pamuk and Hadzibegovic 96). However, the published title of the novel does not bear any resemblance to these earlier draft titles. While in these earlier versions the novelist clearly refers to one of the novel's minor characters (Alâaddin), in his final choice for publication, Pamuk opts for an opaque and mysterious title. Initially, the paratextual apparatus of the title, which according to Gérard Genette is "not so much a true element as a fairly complex system", does not inform the reader about content even though it is designed to evoke a reaction in readers and provide them with an opinion of the book ("Structure" 692-93). In the text, the novelist frequently uses "black" as an adjective to define objects and gadgets. Through his references to technological instruments such as "black Cadillac" and "black phone" the novelist suggests a linkage between technological innovation and the colour (18, 22). The name

of the book, in that regard, is an implicit expression of the author's self-awareness about his innovation in Turkish literature in terms of content and style.

At the same time, the title has religious and exegetical connotations. Yazidis, who according to Christine Allison are "a heterodox Kurdish religious minority living predominantly in northern Iraq, Syria, and southeast Turkey", call one of their two sacred books "*Meṣḥefa reš*", which translates as 'Black Book' in English.[50] In relation to this connotation, Pamuk attributes to his novel a parodic sacred status. However, the title also has juridical connotations because Sharia jurists (*qadis*) in the Ottoman Empire consulted their black book before they adjudicated for or against a subject.[51] This practice led to the expression "kara kitaba yazmak", which roughly translates as "to write someone's name in the black book". A similar meaning accreted to English, where a black book stands for "[a] book containing a list of secret contacts, or of the names of people liable to be punished" (OED). Considering these undertones, the name of the novel is a proleptic reference to the death of the one of the main characters, Celâl, towards the end of the book, carrying with it the additional suggestion that Celâl's death is a punishment. To return to the religious connotations of the name, in the Islamic tradition the *Qur'an* states that every individual has a book in which their good and bad actions are written, and that this book will be revealed to them on Doomsday (Schimmel *Mystical* 414). Schimmel notes that this book "blacken[s]" as a result of "a man's sinful deeds" (*Mystical* 414). Following Schimmel, Güney Şimşek interprets this concept with reference to the novel's portrayal of Hurufism (230).

[50] For a brief account of Yazidis, see Christine Allison's entry, "Yazidis i. General" in *Encyclopædia Iranica* at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/yazidis-i-general-1. For information about Yazidis' sacred books, see Philip Kreyenbroek's entry "Jelwa, Ketāb Al-" in *Encyclopædia Iranica* at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jelwa-ketab-al

[51] Wael Hallaq defines qadi as a "magistrate or judge of the Shariʿa court who also exercised extra-judicial functions, such as mediation, guardianship over orphans and minors, and supervision and auditing of public works" (175).

Hurufis are a Shia Sufi group who "count [...] the words on the page of the Koran and comput[e] their numerical value" to read hidden meanings in the manner of mystic traditions of Abrahamic religions, especially the Jewish belief system of Kabbalah (Schimmel *Mystical* 412).[52] In "The Mystery of the Letters and the Loss of Mystery" chapter of the novel, Galip tries to read the hidden letters on his face in the mirror (293-306). Şimşek finds this narrative event analogous to Schimmel's discussion of the book of deeds in the *Qur'an* (230). However, it is also possible that through his choice of name for the novel Pamuk apocalyptically suggests the arrival of Doomsday, since his readers are holding *The Black Book* in their hands.

Pamuk played so many lexical, syntactic, and structural games in the novel that his Turkish readers found themselves somewhat baffled.[53] Pamuk notes that the "Turkish media so overused the term postmodernism to define *The Black Book* that his readers thought it an excuse for the complexity, difficulties and the long sentences prevalent in the novel" (*Manzaradan* 344; my translation). The novel has received much critical attention both in Turkey and abroad, and many critics have attempted to solve the text's riddles. Walter Andrews views the novel as a "black box", and comments on its playfulness by suggesting that "[t]he lure of mystery and the need to find answers are [so] compelling" in the novel that it is "a trap for critics, scholars, and all manner of interpreters" (106). Despite many articles written on the novel around

[52] For an account of Jewish Kabbalah and its counterparts in other Abrahamic religions see Daniel Hale Feldman's *Qabalah: The Mystical Heritage of the Children of Abraham* (2001).

[53] The publication year of the novel precedes the internalisation of World Wide Web in all aspects of life (for example journalism). This digitisation did not happen until 2008 when major newspapers and journals started creating online archives. For that reason, most newspaper columns written on *The Black Book* following its publication have not been digitised and remain unavailable to the researcher. Yet, Nükhet Esen notes in her introduction to *Kara Kitap Üzerine Yazılar* that the book created a huge debate among both intellectuals and readers (7-8). Göknar remarks in a similar manner that in the Anglophone world the author "received very mixed reviews for his first three novels that appeared in English" (*Orhan* 250).

the world, as well as a book of collected essays devoted solely to the analysis of the novel, twenty-three years after first publication, the novelist still felt a need to reveal *The Black Book*'s mysteries by publishing *Kara Kitap'ın Sırları. The Mysteries of* The Black Book also offers information on the publication history of the novel, as well as on the process and difficulty of its composition by means of Pamuk's handwritten notes during that time. For example, the following image from the book shows one of the notes where Pamuk designed Celâl's newspaper columns and their thematic content (Figure 1).

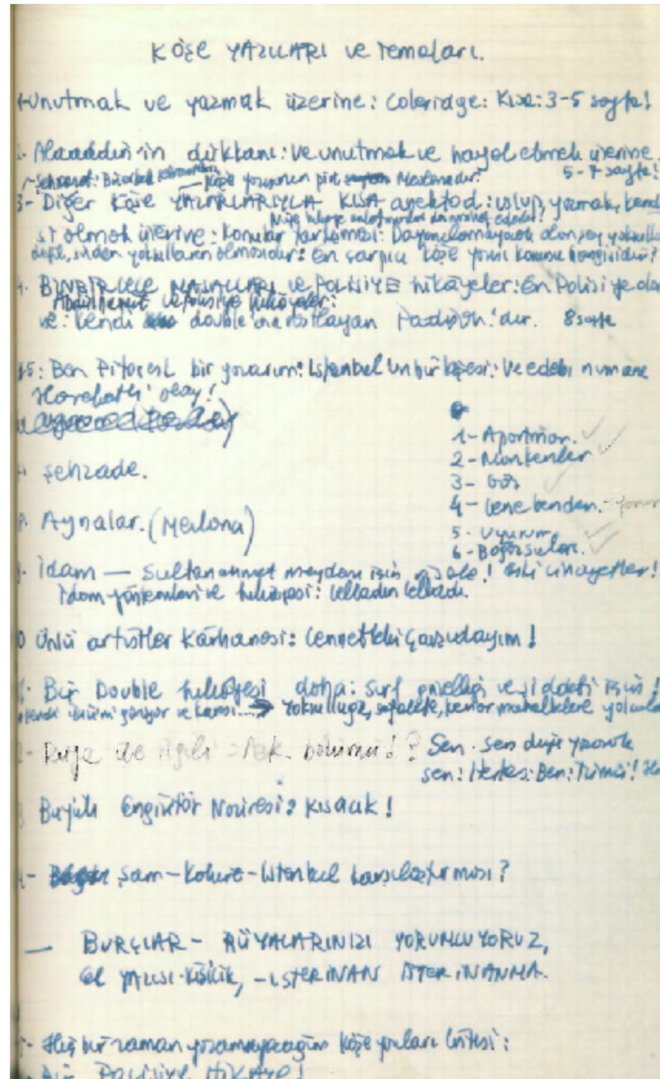

Figure 1. Orhan Pamuk, *Kara Kitap'ın Sırları* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2013; print; 89).

Even though this book clarifies and explains several details about *The Black Book*, it does not address or explore the allegorical mode of the novel. I argue that, in the following excerpt from the novel, the novelist self-referentially hints at the allegorical nature of the novel:

> A black book that the first artist had slyly placed in the hands of a blind beggar became in the mirror a book of two parts, two meanings and two stories; but when you returned to the first wall, you saw that it still held together as a single book, and that its mystery was lost somewhere inside it. (401)

Concealing the story of the Turkish history of Modernisation and Westernisation, Pamuk places *The Black Book* in the hands of his "blind", imperceptive readers and challenges them to find the hidden second story, which is "lost somewhere inside it". Literary analyses of the novel centre on its autobiographical, postmodern, encyclopaedic, intertextual, metafictional, and allegorical qualities.[54] Although the novel has been analysed from several different perspectives, allegorical interpretations are thin on the ground. For that reason, this chapter aims to fill the critical gap by analysing the novel as an allegorical account of the republican view of the West as a prototype for the Republic's modernisation and Westernisation processes.

Becoming Someone Else: *Fana* and *Baqa*

> As long as the clam's shell has not been cleaved
> The pearl of desire will not be achieved.
>
> Şeyh Galip, *Beauty and Love*

[54] For autobiographical characteristics, see Nükhet Esen, Bedri Baykam, Berna Moran, and Michael McGaha; for postmodern interpretations, refer to Kemal Atakay, Tahsin Yücel, Fatma Erkman Ekerson, Süheylâ Bayrav, Berna Moran, and Jale Parla; for its encyclopaedic characteristics, see Tahsin Yücel, Hülya Adak, and Orhan Koçak; for the novel's intertextuality, see Berna Moran's *Türk*, Fatma Erkman Ekerson, Hilmi Yavuz, Jale Baysal, Mustafa Ever, and Orhan Koçak; for interpretations of *The Black Book* as metafiction, see Nükhet Esen, Berna Moran's *Türk*, Kemal Atakay, and Jale Parla, and lastly, for the novel's allegorical qualities, see Mustafa Ever.

Rumi warns humans not to give rein to their terrestrial bodies and feelings, writing: "Take heed, never be wedded to self" (Rumi 899). The Persian poet advises on the limitations of worldly attachments and underlines the necessity of transcending boundaries to better oneself by eliminating *nafs* (desires) and, hence, to reach a fuller consciousness of Allah. Indeed, this is not a one-time declaration, but Rumi makes similar points in several sections of his *Masnavi*. Rumi's statement above is intrinsically linked with the Sufi ideal of the Unity of Being, as well as two concepts in the Sufi path: "self-disintegration (*fana*) and self-integration (*baqa*)" (Kim 23-8). Sooyong Kim argues that Pamuk presents being "oneself" and becoming "someone else" as leitmotifs of *The Black Book*, and states that these ideas are closely linked with the Sufi concepts of *fana* and *baqa* (23-8). The critic conceptualises these Sufi terms within the context of psychology and reads Celâl as Galip's "alter ego" and "second self" (Kim 23).[55] Indeed, this dichotomy of being oneself and becoming another is highly relevant to Pamuk's novel, but it is not limited to Sufism as Kim claims. Pamuk pushes these concepts outside their religious meaning and through these demystified concepts he discusses the cultural and political history of contemporary Turkey. Ian Almond also notices the parallels between the Sufi concepts and their "reappropriat[ion] by Pamuk with a […] secular aim in mind" (*Orientalists* 120). However, he claims that Pamuk makes use of these concepts to demonstrate "the illusions of the self" ("Islam" 83). By contrast, it is my contention that this opposition between being oneself and becoming someone else reveals a tightly interwoven discussion of the secular-religious division in Turkey, which came into being with the

[55] Çalışaneller also agrees with Kim on this reading that Celâl symbolises Galip's "second self". However, following Jeffrey Berman, she interprets Celâl not as an independent character but as Galip's "doppelgäanger" (2).

foundation of the Turkish Republic and has continued to the present day. In this section, I agree with Almond that Pamuk explores Sufi concepts but interprets them in a secular light. That is, rather than presenting *fana* and *baqa* in a Sufi context, the novelist appropriates them to the secular setting of 1980s Istanbul. However, my argument differs from Almond's in that he does not consider 1980s Istanbul and the political and cultural history of Turkey in his analysis in detail. Instead, he proposes a text-based argument about Galip's soul-searching, which he views as illusory. In contrast, I assert that, by means of these Sufi concepts, the novelist creates a political allegory around Westernisation and Modernisation in the geographical construct of Turkey from the reign of Mahmut II (1808-1839) onwards.

Rumi's advice against privileging an overweening self is not peculiar to him. In Sufi discourse, the self is viewed as a danger, which ties individuals to their worldly environment and makes them forget their quest for God. William Chittick highlights this by suggesting that "[t]he individual self [i]s a prison which keeps man separated from God" (72). In their suspicion of the individual ego, Sufis are influenced by the first pillar of Islam, the *shahada*, which states: "I testify that there is no deity save God and that Muhammad is the messenger of God" (Schimmel *Islam* 34). In this way, the *shahada* declares the negation of any god apart from Allah. Though this declaration of faith is important for all Muslims and is frequently narrated in the *Qur'an* (for example, sura *al-Isra* 17:22), Sufis attach another, deeper importance to it. Chittick explains that for Sufis "'There is no god,' the negative half of the *Shahddah (nafy),* implies the non-existence of all that is other than God" (82). To make this declaration, Sufis find it necessary to obliterate any form of being in order not to overshadow the Unity of Being, *tawhid*, and this includes the nullification of the self. Along their path towards faith, *fana* is one of the states Sufis are supposed to achieve. Schimmel defines

this as "'annihilation', a state that leads one to lose everything in God's unfathomable wealth" (*Rumi's World* 153). Chittick clarifies the concept further by saying that "[m]an's self-existence is not real, since he is not God; therefore the illusion that it is real must be annihilated" (71). As such, for Sufis *fana* is one of the most crucial stages to reach to elevate their understanding of God. In the *Masnavi*, Rumi frequently advises his followers to practise this annihilation, but the rate of such exhortations increases, especially in Book IV. One example comes in the following lines: "Such a non-existent one who hath gone from himself (become selfless) is the best of beings, and the great (one among them)" (Rumi 744). In this excerpt, Rumi uses the oxymoron of "non-existent" to define "being" and thereby causes a confusion that the reader is implicitly invited to ponder. However, what he refers to as "non-existent" is not a physical disappearance but the metaphysical obliteration of the self. By holding selflessness in high esteem, Rumi encourages his followers to engage in the mystical practice of self-abnegation.

Pamuk similarly depicts the ideal relation of Sufis with their Creator and transforms this into an interpersonal relationship at the novel's surface level, via Galip's endeavour to leave his identity behind and become someone else, namely Celâl. It seems that the novelist models Galip's life on Sufi *maqām*s (stages) on the spiritual path, for example "repentance", "renunciation", and "abstinence" (Schimmel *Mystical* 210-11).[56] Pamuk does not refer to such *maqām*s in the novel, and nor does he mention the stages that I will introduce shortly. Yet the novelist's depiction of narrative moments at which Galip's actions and thinking are gradually developed precipitates my contribution to Pamuk scholarship, which is to divide into four phases

[56] For a discussion of these stages on the Sufi path, see Éric Geoffroy's chapter "Approaching Sufism" in *Sufism: Love and Wisdom* (2006), and the third chapter of Annemarie Schimmel's *Mystical Dimension of Islam* (1975).

Galip's various stages in becoming Celâl. The stations that Galip passes through can be defined respectively as admiration, imitation, impersonation and, finally, total identification with Celâl. These stages correspond well with Westernisation and Modernisation in Turkey as the nation moved from an Empire to a Republic.

In the first part of the novel, Galip's admiration is revealed by his following Celâl's columns closely like a "newspaper addict" (15). However, after Rüya's disappearance and in his attempt to discover her whereabouts, Galip moves to the second stage that the novelist envisages for him and begins imitating Celâl. He does this by talking to their aunt Hale on the phone and inadvertently mimicking Celâl's voice (25). The third and longest stage of Galip's journey is impersonation, which starts with his moving into Celâl's apartment, answering phones as if he were Celâl and living a similar life in the older man's home (235-45). Here, the accidental identification with Celâl in the previous phase becomes a deliberate move since Galip does not clarify his identity to one caller, Mehmet, who assumes that he is talking to Celâl. This phase continues until Galip totally identifies with Celâl following the latter's death.

The novelist sets out to distinguish the personality differences between Galip and Celâl early in the narrative, through Celâl's father, Uncle Melih, who discloses to the family his "long[ing] for a son like Galip, not Celâl, someone with a head on his shoulders, like Galip, someone mature and well-behaved" (37). Melih pronounces Galip to be more rational and sensible than Celâl; however, his statement does not specify the criteria behind this judgement. To substantiate this idea, there are several hints in the novel, which propose that the judgement is of a political nature. Pamuk implies the political stance of the family by stating the location of the apartment block they live in as "Nişantaşi" (27). This district is located on the European side of Istanbul

and it is relatively more "Westernised" than the historical and traditional districts on the city's "Asian" half (Esen 214; my translation). For Pamuk, Nişantaşi has been where "distinguished Ottomans and Republican elite resided since the times of Abdülmecit [the thirty-first Ottoman Sultan who lived in the nineteenth century]" (*Manzaradan* 153; my translation). This juxtaposition of two characters highlights that Galip is favoured by his republican family members for being more rational and compatible with cultural conventions than Celâl. This early comparison of the two men and Melih's preferal of Galip not only hint at the political overtones of the setting whereby Pamuk personifies longstanding Republican and Imperial political ideologies in contemporary Turkey, but also indicate Galip's political alignment as a Republican.

In the novel, Celâl is not a character in the traditional sense. That is, his presence in the novel is limited to his columns (Kim 24; Pamuk and Hadzibegovic 27). Many of these columns, especially "When the Bosphorus Dries Up", "Bedii Usta's Children" and "I Must Be Myself", share a thematic concern of forgotten history and the imitation of the West. They also underline Celâl's belief in the necessity to be oneself by any means possible. In the first of these columns, Celâl imagines an apocalyptic near future when the Bosphorus will be a "pitch-black bog" (16). In his pages-long inventory of what has been hidden for centuries in the river, he envisions the "wrecks of old City Line ferries", "American transatlantic liners", "skeletons of Celts and Ligurians", "Byzantine treasures", "knives, daggers, bullets, and rusting scimitars", "skeletons of Orthodox priests", "the rusting anchor from a warship that once belonged to Kaiser Wilhelm", "Genoese treasure", and "armored Crusaders" (17-20). In this passage, the narrator refers to the historical presence of several European and Asian civilisations in Istanbul as sedimentary layers of history, as well as alluding to contemporary unawareness of the city's historic richness. Rather than narrating the

past, the novelist, via his narrator Celâl, evokes the past by its remnants. While "Celts and Ligurians" is used as a synecdoche for European people, "scimitar" is a metaphor for Eastern people. The narrator calls attention to the imperial past of the city by referring to the Byzantium Empire and the preachers of orthodox Christianity. His timeframe spans several centuries, given the mention of a ship, which was in possession of the German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm, who stood for German expansion, colonialism, and jingoism during the First World War. Pamuk presents Celâl as an "imperial ruin gazer", a coinage of Julia Hell (170). Hell defines the notion of imperial ruin gazing as narrative moments where "the imperial subject contemplates the metropole of a mighty empire in ruins while thinking about the future of his own" (170). That is, what Celâl tries to achieve in writing this column on a drying Bosphorus is to remind his readers of the 'mighty' empires, which have ruled in this land and how history has been oversimplified in the republican era. He warns them to work towards a sustainable country as he is worried by the political atmosphere of the 1980s.

In an interview with Ángel Gurría-Quintana, which was published in *The Paris Review* (2005), *Prospect Magazine* (2006), and in *Manzaradan Parçalar* (2010), Pamuk enunciates his view of Republican Westernisation:

> I'm not mourning the Ottoman empire. I'm a Westerniser. I'm pleased that Westernisation took place. I'm just criticising the limited way in which the ruling elite—meaning both the bureaucracy and the new rich—had conceived of Westernisation. They lacked the confidence necessary to create a national culture rich in its own symbols and rituals. They did not strive to create an Istanbul culture that would be an organic combination of east and west. (Pamuk and Gurría-Quintana np.)

Read in this light, Celâl's view of a collective history existing under the waters of the Bosphorus is a critique of the republican government's failure to balance the Eastern and Western cultures. Thus, Celâl hints that all these historical remnants present in the

passage are sunk in Turkish cultural memory due to the republican view of pre-Republican history. Through his Bosphorus imagery, Celâl criticises the Republicans' denial of the country's Ottoman roots and their acknowledgement of the 1920s as the dawn of Turkish history. This positions Celâl's political views in opposition both to Galip and the novel's cultural setting. Moreover, in the 1980s setting of the novel, Celâl anachronistically bases this imaginary waterless state of the Bosphorus on climate change which had already become a hot topic by the time the Turkish original was published in 1990 (16).[57] This climate change refers symbolically to the changing political climate of 1980s Istanbul which the character describes as a "frenzied killing spree" (16). Indeed, 1980 was a time of social upheaval between Leftist and Rightist groups when several murders of a political nature were perpetrated by both sides. Though this will be discussed in detail from various perspectives in the '**Detective Novel'** section of this chapter, for now it is worth mentioning that one of these assassinations was the murder in 1979 of journalist and then chief-editor of *Milliyet* Abdi İpekçi, who was known for his moderate political views.

Galip's wish to take Celâl's place is introduced for the first time in "Send Rüya Our Love" (21-39) as a Freudian family romance.[58] In this chapter, Galip remembers that twenty-two years earlier he had a fantasy of becoming Celâl's parents' child and

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[57] The debates on atmospheric and climatic changes were accelerated between the years of 1950 and 1980s and there were several individual studies on greenhouse gasses such as CO2 and methane as well as on acid rains and ozone depletion. Following the findings of such studies which link the atmospheric changes to human involvement, several governmental organisations published reports. For example, National Research Council published "Carbon Dioxide and Climate: A Scientific Assessment" in 1979. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was founded in 1988 and United States Environment Protection agency published an extensive report on climatic change which is entitled "The Potential Effects of Global Climate Change on the United States" in 1989.

[58] Sigmund Freud asserted that it is a stage of "neurotic estrangement" where "the child's imagination becomes engaged in the task of getting free from the parents of whom he now has a low opinion and of replacing them by others, who, as a rule, are of higher social standing" (238-39). What is more relevant to my discussion of Galip's diligent attempts to become Celâl is Freud's statement that this estrangement develops into a "greater or less [*sic*] effort to obtain verisimilitude" as a result of "the child's envy" (239). In the novel, Galip turns his envy of Celâl for having ideal parents into the sheer purpose of becoming Celâl.

living "a life in which he'd be able to eat every night with Uncle Melih, Aunt Suzan, and Rüya" (37). It is clear from the passage that Galip does not only want to join the family, but dreams of replacing Celâl. That is, he refers to all family members but Celâl, and this suggests that he planned to supersede Celâl rather than being accepted as the third child of the family. In a similar manner, the pro-Western and pro-constitutionalist people of the Ottoman Empire, who were known as the Young Turks, tried very hard to overthrow the old regime and replace it with a new order that would align well with developments in the West. Eric J. Zürcher views the Young Turks as forerunners of the Kemalists and states that they were as engaged as the latter in "political, economic and cultural nationalism and modernising and secularising reforms" (*Turkey* 4). Under the rule of the thirty-fourth Sultan Abdülhamit II (1842-1918), the first attempt to constitutionalise the monarchy took place in 1877 (Zürcher *Turkey* 76). However, the delegates in the parliament criticised the monarchy and this eventually led to the abolition of the constitution by the Sultan (Zürcher *Turkey* 76) Therefore, the Young Turks initiated a movement to unseat "the autocratic Sultan Abdülhamit II and establish a constitutional, parliamentary regime" (Zürcher *Young* 214). This bears parallels with Pamuk's statement in his *Other Colours*, that the "Young Turks", who were the early founders of nationalism in the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century, "were dazzled by the superiority of the West, so they embarked on a program of Westernising reforms" (230).

Galip's immature wish to become Celâl resurfaces when he begins to speculate on the possibility that Rüya is now together with Celâl (107). Neşati, an older columnist from Celâl's newspaper, advises Galip to "study [Celâl's] columns" to discover the latter's whereabouts (102). Following this advice, Galip rereads Celâl's journalism in a new light, so as to "extract the hidden 'secret' meaning" of their hiding

place (211). Here, the novelist sets the ground for Galip's work as an amateur detective. The more Galip reads, the more he becomes immersed in Celâl's thoughts, to the point that he "launche[s] himself into a literary career that would continue for many years, in Celâl's space, under Celâl's name" (445).

Galip engages in close textual analysis of Celal's columns. In his preparation to reach Celâl's outlook, Galip reads Celâl's columns as sacred texts, in a manner that evokes a disciple's study of his sheikh's literary production. This is a common practice among Sufis. To give just one example, Şeyh Galip is known to have studied Rumi's works intensively. The eighteenth-century poet explicitly described Rumi's influence on him in a section which is dedicated to a eulogy of Rumi, entitled "In Praise of Hazret-i Hudavengâr", in his allegorical Sufi tale *Beauty and Love*:[59]

> He surpassed the learned in excellence
> Worthy to be called prophet of the West
> His discourse has Jesus's spirit for soul
> And like the Messiah revives the Law
> No book but his *Masnavi* has been named
> Gist of the Koran—behold now its fame. (16)

In these lucidly written couplets numbered 143 to 145, Şeyh Galip underlined and praised Rumi's knowledge of rhetoric and the Sharia. Here the poet probably also refers to Jami's (d. 1492) well-known verses wherein the latter declared: "The mystic *Masnavi* of our Rumi: Koran incarnate in the Persian tongue!" (Jami, qtd. in Lewis 467). When writing a secular interpretation of a disciple's study of his master's words, Pamuk directs Galip to Celâl's newspaper columns in order to reach enlightenment. This leads to Galip's arduous attempts to provide an exegesis of Celâl's journalism whereby the protagonist tries to find a trajectory for his quest. In his youth, Galip's

[59]Moran also notes the influence of Rumi on Şeyh Galip's literary production by stating that "Şeyh Galip was indebted to *Mesnevi* in his creation of *Hüsn-ü Aşk*" (85; my translation).

motivation in reading Celâl's columns was that "if he ever solved the puzzle, if he ever uncovered the secret hiding behind the visible world, the truth would be simple—a secret recipe offering liberation to those who found the key" (194). In this excerpt, Galip accepts Celâl's authority and turns to him for guidance. He is an optimist in that he believes that Celâl has the resources he is looking for and if Galip can unpack them, he will reach liberation through Celâl's "secret recipe". This chimes with the Modernisation efforts of the Ottoman Empire around the mid-nineteenth century when the monarchy accepted Western 'superiority' and instructed the army to keep up to date with Western development (Shaw and Shaw 1). However, a crucial obstacle was the cultural differences between the Ottoman Empire and its Western influences, and many in the Empire felt that what was needed was to crack the underlying principles of progress rather than slavishly copying what was then current in the West. Bernard Lewis argues that, in improving the army and making use of Western discoveries, the motto of the Ottoman Empire was: "borrow, imitate, adapt" (41). The last step of Lewis's formulation is also noted by Shaw and Shaw as a "modifi[cation] to satisfy Ottoman needs" (vii). For both the Empire and Galip, their primary source and key referent is inaccessible and they are a mystery for their pursuers. For the former, the West was a rival and, for the latter, Celâl was absent; therefore, both are limited to secondary sources in consulting and gathering information. This creates another difficulty. In terms of language, the young Galip notes the cryptic nature of Celâl's columns and views these writings as a "puzzle" (194). Here, the novelist creates a parallel between Galip and the Republic. Neither Western languages nor Ottoman Turkish have been available to the majority of the Turkish population since the 1928 replacement of the Persio-Arabic alphabet used by the Ottoman Empire, with the Latin alphabet as well as the so-called purification efforts started with the Turkish Language

Institution.[60] Just as Galip is bewildered by Celâl's columns, which require a linguistic key to be decoded, the multinational heritage of the Ottoman Empire became illegible to Turkish people.

Galip's anxiety about stepping out of his self and becoming someone else in many ways represents the Republican policy of Westernisation in Turkey, and the novel may be read as an allegorical satire of the post-Republican denial of Ottoman identity and culture. The novelist, via Galip, hints at the difficulty of undertaking this change—*fana* in Sufi discourse—by stating that turning into another person requires one to "use all [one's] strength" (222). Following this, Galip pushes himself to his limit in the hope of gaining Celâl's mindset:

> I was not quite convinced I was Celâl yet! he told himself, and as he rummaged through the old columns, notebooks, and newspaper clippings that illuminated the entirety of Celâl's past, he added, I'd not yet stopped being myself! (Pamuk, *Black* 223)

In this excerpt, the narrator intersperses Galip's interior monologue with a third-person account to display that the protagonist distresses himself as he witnesses his own inability to surpass his own self. The protagonist chooses to use "yet" in an affirmative predicate to highlight his unfulfilled expectation. The two exclamation marks convey Galip's anger and pain and the intense power of his urge to move beyond his identity. On the other hand, the narrator uses the word "rummage" to describe Galip's activity of searching secondary sources on Celâl's history. This verb signals the narrator's criticism of Galip for being unsystematic and unprepared for his task. By presenting these contradictory points of view, the novelist implicitly criticises the initial Westernisation policies of the Republic and accuses it of a premature rupture with the

[60] For a detailed account of language reform in Turkish, see Geoffrey Lewis's *The Turkish Language Reform* (2002).

Ottoman past and overly hasty acceptance of Western values. Pamuk often declares his resentment with the mode of the republican implementation of Westernisation in his non-fictional works and interviews. Pamuk compares Atatürk to André Gide (referring to the latter's infamous comments on Turkish people), and states that Atatürk "identifie[d] Europe with civilisation" and found anything that is not "European […] humiliatingly uncivilised" (*Other* 211-12).[61] In his interview with Michael Skafidas, Pamuk interprets Atatürk's interest in Westernisation as a "radical will" (Pamuk "Divided" 21). This timeframe is also frequently mentioned in accounts of the political history of the country. Between the years of 1925 and 1929, according to Zürcher, Turkey witnessed "the most famous Westernising and secularising measures that together constitute the Kemalist 'revolution'" (*Young* 252). In his nonfictional works, Feroz Ahmad notes that Mustafa Kemal and his followers "tried totally to reject the entire legacy [of the Ottoman Empire], abolished the monarchy, banished the dynasty, and set up a secular republic" (15). In Galip's interior monologue quoted above, the objects that Galip uses for his research (namely, notebooks, columns and newspapers) are processed from Celâl's perspective. Hence, these sources may not shed light on or be applicable to Galip's endeavour. In other words, it is possible for Galip to fail to reach Celâl's mindset no matter how focused he is on Celâl's writings. This was also the case with the republican administration of Westernisation as a means of cultural engineering. One such example is the ban on Turkish music in the 1930s. Meral Özbek notes that from 1934 to 1935 "all Turkish music was banned on private radio" in order to "structure a national identity fixed on a Western model" (225). In the later year, the German composer Paul Hindemith was called on to inaugurate the constitution of the Ankara Music School for

[61] For Gide's comments on Turks, see Victoria Reid's *André Gide and Curiosity* (2009), 104-5.

"Western[ising] musical education and performance" (Değirmenci 58). As such, and similarly to Galip, Kemalists did not consider societal, cultural, and political differences between the countries they admired and the post-imperial Republic they founded. Instead, they viewed the West as their ideal, and thought that what was present in the West was a prerequisite in the Westernisation of Turkey itself.

In Sufi discourse, the *fana* stage is followed by *baqa*, "subsistence in God" (Chittick 71). In the *Masnavi*, Rumi explains this phenomenon as "living through Him, that (which thou | hast become) is in sooth He: it is absolute Unity (875). Franklin Lewis defines this concept as "the effacement or dissolution of the concupiscent or selfish self in the ocean of God's attributes" (24). Following the idea of this unification with God in Sufism, Kim views the novelistic Celâl as "the figure of the 'Beloved,' the ultimate object of Galip's love" (28). However, the novelist does not conform to Sufi teachings in his implementation of this concept, and the outcome of Galip's secular *baqa* is not a unified being with the Creator. Instead, Pamuk reads this concept literally and proposes impersonation as a substitute for it. Hence, he makes Galip *selectively* live through Celâl's life. This is not a transformation of Galip, and nor is he absorbed by Celâl's personality. In the chapter entitled "The Ghost House" (235-245), Galip sneaks into the older man's flat and even wears "Celâl's pajamas" (245). Galip informs the reader of his practice of Celâl's profession, journalism, and gives the first lines of his three forthcoming articles. The second one of these is "*I dreamed that I had at last become the person I've always longed to become*" (326; emphasis in original). Here the novelist presents the anxiety of Galip, who would try anything to become Celâl, as well as underscoring his obsession with the impersonation. Following this scene, in which Galip engages in the act of writing and produces three articles, he "put[s] on" Celâl's glasses (327). This is a symbolic act to view the world

as Celâl does. Galip chooses to write about history, which is Celâl's most frequently-used topic; however, his political alignment leads him to write on Republican history rather than the imperial past.

When Galip takes over Celâl's columns, he continues to play with Sufi teachings. In one of his columns, the protagonist retells one of Rumi's stories. In *Masnavi* Book I, Rumi narrates a competition which takes place between Chinese and Greek painters and which is organised by a Sultan (209). The Sultan allocates the two teams of painters in rooms, which face each other and are only separated by a curtain. While the Chinese painters request many colours, the Greeks state that "[n]o tints and colours are proper for [their] work, (nothing is needed) except to remove the rust" (209). The former artisans create a beautiful image using their brushes and paints, whereas the latter only clean the wall to such a state of perfection that it can reflect any image. The poet uses the mirror metaphor as do other Persian Sufi poets "to explicate, as well as to prescribe, the nature of man's relationship with his Ultimate Beloved" (Bahmany 115). Though Rumi does not state who wins the competition, his praise for the Greeks figures for their success (Ever 124). The nationality of the painters Rumi favours is noteworthy, as Greece has had mystical traditions since its ancient history.[62] In this story, the Greeks, who "remove the rust" from the wall and polish it, stand for the Sufis who "burnish their breast […] from greed and cupidity and avarice and hatred" (Rumi 209). Rumi comments that for those who succeed in polishing their hearts, "every new image that falls on it (the heart) is appearing therein without any imperfection" (209-10). Rumi narrates this allegorical story of painters to

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[62] For a brief analysis of mystics in Greece, see Adela Marion Adam's article "The Mysticism of Greece".

highlight the importance of determination and hard work on the Sufi path. He favours Greek painters since they symbolise Sufis who clear their heart of everything but God.

In his third newspaper column published under Celâl's name, Galip writes about this painting competition in a restructured way. Here, he adapts the story for a contemporary setting and narrates it as his first-person account. His announcement of a previously-told story as his first-hand experience signifies that Galip, as a personification of the Republican, denies the centuries-long literary history which preceded the Republic. In this version, the competition took place in the summer of 1952 and was organised by a "Beyoğlu gangster", who wanted his "den of iniquity" to be painted with "scenes of the city" of Istanbul and stated that "the one who did the better painting of Istanbul would win a large cash prize" (397-98). It is telling that Galip changes the organiser from a sultan in Rumi's story to a hoodlum in his own narrative, thereby hinting at the violence of imperial rule by equating monarchy to gangsterism. Galip informs his readers that, following hard work over a six-month period, the gangster owner unveiled the works of art in the opening ceremony of his "den of iniquity" (397). This "palace of sin" is decorated with "portraits of Atatürk" and is listed as "the Society for the Preservation of Classical Turkish Art" (398). The novelist, through his columnist-narrator Galip, presents an opulent image of Atatürk and transforms the imperial setting of Rumi's story into a republican one. Hence, Pamuk hints at the Republican erasure of the imperial past from its version of cultural and political history. Pamuk criticises Republican nationalism and its promotion of Turkish identity formation through his creation of a fictive society which alludes to the Republican institutions founded in 1930s (for example, Türk Dil Kurumu (1932; TDK or the Turkish Language Institution) and Türk Tarih Kurumu (1930; TTK or the Turkish History Institution). Following the foundation of the Republic, there emerged

the pressing need to override Ottoman history by creating "a Kemalist historiography as a national mythology [in which] Ottoman history, culture and literature were rejected and replaced with a new myth of Central Asia and Anatolia to form a 'civilized' Turkish culture and identity" (Çolak 590). These two institutions, the TDK and TTK, performed a significant role in the nationalisation of history and language according to the republican agenda. While the former worked on the purification of Turkish language from other languages by cleansing it of foreign vocabulary, the latter immersed itself in the creation of new Turkish historiography, as Yılmaz Çolak notes (590). Rather than focusing on the geographical history of the country where there were several empires (for example Byzantium, Seljuk, and the Ottoman Empire) preceding the Republic, the TTK, in a nationalistic manner, narrowed its subject merely to the history of Turks who were one of the nations of the multinational Ottoman Empire.

The protagonist reveals that the artist who simply covers the wall with a mirror wins the competition even though the other artist covers the other side of entrance with a beautiful and detailed painting of the city. In that regard, in Galip's appropriation the placement of a mirror on the wall appears to be a parody of annihilation of the self on the Sufi path. Thus, the competition is won by the painter who does not exert himself to reach the ideal image, and whose cunning use of a mirror underestimates Sufi discipleship and the hardship it bears. As a result, the Republican Galip secularises Rumi's story and obliterates any religious and spiritual connotations and replaces them with republican iconography (in the form of the portrait of Atatürk).

Galip meticulously compares the content of both pictures and implicitly alludes to one of Pamuk's recurring themes, *hüzün* (melancholy):[63]

> The gloomy, wretched stray dog in the painting looked just as gloomy in the reflection, but he also had an air of cunning; when you went back to the painting, you saw that this dog, too, had something cunning about him, and you could not help feeling a certain disquiet, for now the dog looked as if he were about to spring into action; crossing the room yet again to reexamine [*sic*] the dog's reflection, you noticed other strange stirrings; by now your head would be spinning, but still you could hardly stop yourself from returning to the painting on the first wall. (398-9)

The author, via the narrator-writer Galip, uses the image of the dog to shed light on the qualities of the painting and its reflection. The connection of four long independent clauses with semicolons within a single sentence implies the complexity of the image. Pamuk uses the adjectives "gloomy" and "wretched" to define the depressive mood of a dog living on the streets of Istanbul. This selection of adjectives and the phrase "a certain disquiet" accord well with the *hüzün* of Istanbul. Considering the temporal setting of this scene (1952), the sadness of the dog in the picture may refer to the rapid urbanisation of the city, which happened in the early 1950s. The time of the narrative event also coincides with the construction of the Pamuk Apartments where Pamuk and his family members lived (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 9). In his autobiographical account, *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2005), the novelist defines Istanbul as a "city of ruins and of end-of-empire melancholy" since he frequently witnessed the destruction of, and fire at, Ottoman mansions "to make way for apartment buildings" (6, 24). Also, the sadness of the dog can be interpreted as the city's loss of status as a capital since it

[63] For Pamuk's perception of the distinctive sadness of Istanbul, see his autobiographical account of *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2005), Hande Gürses' chapter "Mirroring Istanbul", and Erdağ Göknar's *Orhan Pamuk, Secularism and Blasphemy* (2013).

was the capital of both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires for centuries, but was then sidelined with the foundation of the Republic.[64]

While Pamuk, via his third-person narrator, reinterprets the concept of *fana* in secular terms, he also demystifies Rumi's philosophy by means of Celâl's columns. One such example is Celâl's assumption of why Rumi needed a figure like Shams in his life:

> All his life, Rumi had been searching for his "other", the double who might move him and light up his heart, the mirror who might reflect his face and his very soul […] to endure this suffocating thirteenth-century Anatolian town and the devotion of his brainless disciples (whom he just couldn't bring himself to give up), Rumi needed to be able to draw from a storehouse of alternative identities. (Pamuk, *Black* 255-56)

In the first half of this excerpt, Celâl uses the metaphor of the mirror in his discussion of Shams' importance for Rumi.[65] This metaphor is frequently used in Sufi poetry as "a threshold through which the *this-worldly* can gain access to the *other-worldly*" (Bahmany 113; emphasis in original). This usage gives the impression that the columnist is familiar with Sufi poetry and the peculiar homosocial relationship between Shams and Rumi. However, in the second part of the passage, Celâl interprets Rumi's search for a spiritual friend as a pragmatic move out of the latter's boredom with his immediate circle. This is a cynical and anachronistic interpretation wherein Celâl brings together a Republican fondness of scientific rationalism and secularism. By contrast, the poet, as many other Sufi poets have done, advocates "the supremacy of the experience of divine receptivity over reason" (Bahmany 115). The columnist

[64] The imperial city of Istanbul was replaced by the republican Ankara as capital of the Republic on 13 October 1923 (Ahmad 53; B. Lewis 260; Zürcher 14; Shaw and Shaw 368; Çınar 31).

[65] Kim discusses the implementation of this metaphor elsewhere in "The Discovery of Mystery" chapter of the novel where Galip, following his readings of Hurufis, unveils the letters written on his face and writes his first column. The critic argues that Pamuk's use of this metaphor parallels "the Sufi mystic's use of the image, as a metaphor for the true nature of the viewer" (Kim 36). Koçak additionally reads the mirror as a reference to the Lacanian concept of the mirror stage (173).

applies contemporary psychological knowledge about the possibility of having multiple identities to his analysis of the thirteenth-century poet who lived at a time of intense scholasticism. Celâl regards Rumi's followers as "brainless disciples", which echoes the Kemalist dislike of religion. However, this is not consistent with the internal evidence of Celâl's world view. Rather, the novelist uses this narrative instance as an opportunity to bring the secular-religious divisions in Turkish society into play. Galip notes that "secularist republicans" praised this column, while religious factions responded with death threats for its composer (256). This is both an explicit reference to the political dynamics of the novel and an allusion to *The Satanic Verses* and the subsequent *fatwa* issued by the Ayatollah Khomeini while Pamuk was composing this novel.

Seclusion

> He had hidden himself in some unknown corner of the city and cut himself off from all humanity.
>
> Orhan Pamuk, *The Black Book*

'Seclusion' is one of the Sufi concepts with which Pamuk plays through the novel's elusive central character Celâl. As a columnist, Celâl is in hiding throughout the narrative, until he dies near the end of the novel. Employing a religious, mystical concept and reinterpreting it in the Republican setting of the novel, the novelist rips the practice away from its religious sources and attaches a political dimension to the concept. Seclusion or retreat, which is called *chelle* in Sufi discourse, is an important Sufi practice to reach a better consciousness of God. It stands for "the completion of a forty-day trial in sealed isolation from the world" (Gooch 104). Schimmel and Lewis also highlight the presence of this exercise in Sufi initiation ceremonies (Schimmel *Mystical* 94; Lewis 231). One of Rumi's biographers, Feridun bin Ahmed-i Sipehsâlâr,

who spent forty years in Rumi's circle as a disciple, stated that Rumi and Shams spent six months in such a state of near-isolation (57). Afzal Igbal confirmed this by comparing several biographical accounts (such as those by Aflaki and Jami) of Rumi (112-13). Aflaki, on the other hand, detailed that Rumi's periods of seclusion did not start with Shams' arrival, and dated them back to an earlier time when Rumi initiated a programme of study under Seyyid Burhanneddin's supervision (123). Considered in this light, at least in Rumi's case, *chelle* was not a one-off occurrence. Instead, as Schimmel states, Sufis engage in this practice frequently and they are "praised if, at the time of their death, they ha[ve] completed thirty or forty *chilla*" (*Mystical* 105). Brad Gooch views this practice as an "inward *hajj*", thereby underlining its religious foundations (104; emphasis in original). In this section, I assert that Pamuk politicises the Sufi concept of seclusion and through this politicisation he discusses contemporary issues of freedom of speech, censorship, and political assassinations.

Pamuk emphasises Celâl's clandestine behaviour throughout the novel. Though several characters try to reach him, his phone number, residential address, and several other private details are unknown even to those who are very close to him (103). Even though they are cousins, Galip discovers while searching for Rüya that Celâl has furtively moved into the apartment block where they spent their childhood, thereby highlighting Celâl's fondness for secrecy (225-8). When a zealous follower of Celâl's columns calls his home, the caller gestures towards how much time and effort he has expended in trying to reach Celâl: "There's no one in the [phone] directory by the name of Celâl Salik. But there's an entry for Celâlettin Rumi, which has to be an alias" (Pamuk, *Black* 236). Discussing the secrecy of the character and alluding to the thirteenth-century poet, Pamuk hints at the parallels between Celâl's hidings and Rumi's practice of *chelle*.

It is clear that Pamuk is aware of the seclusion in the Sufi sense. In the chapter "Who Killed Shams of Tabriz?", the novelist, through Galip's reading of the column, provides historical information about Rumi and his relationship with Shams. Here, Pamuk mentions that Rumi and Shams "retreated to a cell" after they met (255). Providing this information alongside Celâl's physical absence in the narrative, Pamuk tries to achieve a parallel to seclusion in the Sufi sense. To create a clearer link with the seclusion concept in the novel and its religious roots, the novelist (via the figure of the reader Galip) notes Celâl's reference to the "Twelfth Imam" in his column (271). A belief of Twelver Shias, who comprise the most popular religious sect within Shia Islam, the Twelfth Imam stands for the hidden Imam who went into seclusion in the year 874 CE and who "would return at the end of time to bring an end to corruption and tyranny and to initiate a reign of justice and righteousness" (Esposito 85). Here, the novelist refers to the temporal period of the novel, whose events mostly take place during the winter of 1980. This is implicitly revealed by frequent references to snowy weather and by Galip's expression that a military coup happens at "the end of th[at] summer" (123, 449). The only military intervention which coincides with this timeframe in Turkish political history was in 12 September 1980, while the other interventions preceding this one happened in March 1971 and May 1960 (Ahmad 1). This was a time of anarchy and, as William Hale notes, 2,812 people fell victim to political killings between September 1979 and September 1980 (224). By referring to the Twelfth Imam the novelist, through his columnist Celâl, hints at the despotism of the ruling class and the chaos that governance brings to the society in the late 1970s and early 1980s Turkey. Pamuk refers to this timeframe and states that between the years of 1975 to 1982 "murder and political violence, state oppression, torture, and prohibition were at their height" (*Other* 297). Similarly, Ahmad defines the 1970s as

the decade where "[p]olitical violence had become a fact of life in Turkey" (169). Around the end of that decade, political violence increased, and several individuals were assassinated including journalists, politicians, and leaders of trade unions. Then Prime Minister of Turkey, Bülent Ecevit, declared that 800 people felt victim to political assassinations and 1,999 people who were a mixture of Rightist and Leftist groups were arrested in 1979 (Ahmad 172). On 12 September 1980 at 3 am, the military took over the civilian government under the leadership of General Kenan Evren. In his speech announcing the takeover, Evren stated that the army acted "with the aim of safeguarding the unity of the country and the nation and the rights and freedoms of the people" (Kenan, qtd. in Ahmad 181). However, the Turkish Grand National Assembly (the Turkish Parliament) Investigation Committee of the Military Coups in Turkey provided a report in 2012 on the devastating outcomes of the military coup of 12 September 1980. The report revealed that "hundreds of citizens were severely tortured, thousands of them became disabled, hundreds were killed, a hundred thousand were imprisoned, thousands were forced to seek asylum abroad, political parties and democratic mass organisations were closed down" (TBMM iv; my translation).[66] Hence, Pamuk's reference to the Twelfth Imam suggests that the political atmosphere was so problematic during the narrative's timescale that only a prophetic saviour could hope to calm it. Also, Celâl's remark about the Imam and his

[66] The reports states that 650,000 people were arrested, 1,683,000 people were blacklisted, 230,000 people were put on trial in 210,000 different trials (TBMM xiv). Among these seven thousand citizens faced death penalty, 517 of them received the death penalty, and 50 of these 517 death penalties were executed immediately (TBMM xiv). 98,404 Turkish citizens were accused of being involved in illegal organisations, 30,000 people were dismissed from their positions, and the military junta stripped 14,000 Turkish of their citizenship (TBMM xiv). In addition to all these, 30,000 Turkish citizens had to leave the country and became political refugees (TBMM xiv). The military regime was so oppressive that even the newspapers could not be published for 300 days, and when the junta allowed the press to publish the newspapers again almost after one year, 400 journalists had already faced a total of 4,000 years of jail (xv). The oppression, and censorship was so harsh that even theatres and films were banned when they were tagged as inconvenient (TBMM xv).

being in hiding prepares the way for the reader to draw parallels between seclusion as a religious act and as a novelistic concept.

Celâl's non-presence in the novel creates a narrative lacuna for this character's point of view. The novelist uses knowledge deriving from his degree in journalism from Istanbul University to fill this gap by producing fictional newspaper columns, thereby giving the novel a metafictional quality. The distribution of journalistic material within the main narrative of Galip and third-person signalling of Galip's reading practice of these columns create the impression of reading the journalism over Galip's shoulder. Indeed, Galip is the primary source of information through whose eyes the reader learns about the absent Celâl and fills the gaps in the latter's columns. Although Celâl's physical absence becomes visible only when Galip considers the possibility of Rüya's being with him, earlier in the narrative the reader is informed that Galip is "used to Celâl disappearing for days at a time, hiding out in other parts of the city at unknown addresses with unlisted phones" (Pamuk, *Black* 24-5). This information initially appears not to furnish readers with any reasons for Celâl's disappearances. However, both Celâl's embedded journalism and sections focalised through Galip clarify that Celâl is in hiding due to his political stance in "a country where Communist activity of any sort is banned" (78-9). Özgür Mutlu Ulus notes that Kenan Evren's "takeover plans were drawn up to combat the working-class unions with their 15-20,000 militant members and the extreme leftist groups" (2). In one of his columns entitled "Bedii Usta's Children", Celâl writes that he "opened [his] column to the fearless examination of the things we human beings really care about, no matter who they are or where they're from" (Pamuk, *Black* 59). Here, Celâl reveals his inclusionary perspective, which rejects a categorisation of people due to their ethnicity and nationality. This is against the Republican construction of Turkish

nationalism, “a national identity based on the Turkish race” (Akçura 17; my translation). This practice, according to Adem İnce, created “the necessity to assimilate other people coming from different ethnic backgrounds and thus the risk of tensions between Turks and non-Turk[ish] Muslims alike” (61). In the excerpt, Pamuk, through his fictional columnist Celâl, engages in social criticism of the time when the “economic and social situation deteriorated almost to the point of total collapse” (Hale 222). Celâl uses “fearless examination” to state that there exist political tensions in society which limit freedom of speech. As a dissident, he underlines the fact that some sections of society are neglected by the ruling elite, and that his column is a platform to make their voices heard. Yet Celâl’s political view is not limited to his sympathy for communism. He not only “us[es] coarse language against the prime minister”, but also writes on politically provocative topics (29). By doing so, he positions himself as straddling a thin line between secular and religious citizens and frequently getting one side’s approval and the other side’s death threats.

Galip, referring to the column “Who Killed Shams of Tabriz?”, informs the reader about this piece of writing’s public reception:

> This column had earned Celâl death threats from a number of religious readers and letters of congratulation from the readers who saw themselves as secularist republicans; though the editor of the newspaper had asked him never to touch on the subject again. (Pamuk, *Black* 256)

By listing the opposing reactions of the bifurcated citizens as well as the editor’s opinion in a dense single sentence, the novelist presents the intense polarisation that exists in Turkish society. Galip not only sheds light on the country’s stark division between two political groups, but also the jeopardising consequences this has on freedom of expression. Yet Galip politically distances himself from Celâl by using the verb ‘earn’. That is, Galip is of the opinion that Celâl deserves the death threats. Also,

it is Celâl's religious readers who threaten him, and not his secular ones. In a similar example, Galip remembers that at the corner of Celal's office "a group of youths from a religious high school had once burned a newspaper containing a column in which Celâl had, in their view, made a slur against religion" (105). Here, Galip uses commas to pause and stress that the view of a religious slur is only the children's understanding, and not his. The protagonist's insensitivity and distance to the religious group is evident in both excerpts. By providing these examples, Galip demonises religious readers and suggests their narrow-mindedness. Another important point about the second excerpt is its function as a microcosm of the Rushdie affair and the symbolic burning of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* in Bradford, England, and other cities. Thus, Galip establishes that Celâl's hiding is not due to religious or spiritual reasons but due to his provocative columns.

As discussed earlier, Pamuk sets his novel amidst a westward looking, secular society through the metonym of residents in the City-of-Hearts Apartments in Nişantaşı. Though Celâl's columns on Rumi's relationship with Shams are approved by this society, there are also other columns where Celal, in "baroque fits of anger", targets seculars and outwardly criticises their imitation of the West (33). The following excerpt, in which Galip relays one of the arguments that Celâl makes against Western imitation, exemplifies this well:

> The subconscious, the 'dark spot' lurking in the depths of our minds, did not really exist, at least not in Turkey—it was a Western invention that we'd borrowed from those pompous western novels, those affected film heroes we tried so hard and failed so miserably to imitate. (33)

The novelist does not provide the complete column to his reader. Instead, it is presented in a fragmented form through Galip's memories. This excerpt has different connotations in English as the novelist does not include the word 'subconscious' or its

Turkish equivalent in the passage in the Turkish version. Freely's addition of this word gives the impression that it is not possible for Celâl to rip himself away from Western influences even when arguing against them. That is, he uses the terminology of a concept, which originated from the West's psychoanalytic tradition so as to express his position against it. The expression 'dark spot' yields twofold interpretation. On the one hand it suggests the inaccessibility of past experiences to the consciousness yet their determining function in the everyday life of an individual. On the other hand, it hints at a wrongdoing as in a black mark. In the latter reading, Celâl views imitation of the West as a discreditable act on the part of his fellow-citizens. Celâl writes about collective experience by using the plural pronoun of 'we'. The use of the word 'borrow' to refer to the concept of the 'subconscious' signifies that Celâl thinks this borrowing should be returned or renounced rather than kept, since it does not belong to Turkish culture. However, he distances himself from the act by explicitly criticising the imitation of the Western attitudes and concepts. His reference to 'pompous' prose and cinema suggests that Turkish people are influenced by popular culture rather than history, philosophy, and psychology (in the case of the 'subconscious') of the West.

Pamuk structures Celâl's journalism as an intermediate point between two ideological poles, yet the columnist is not committed to either of them. This in-betweenness and the death threats Celâl receives force him to go into hiding and become much more secretive. To borrow Anshuman Mondal's coinage, Celâl is a "cryptic figure [which] is not visible on the discursive surface but is occluded — rendered cryptic, as it were — deep within the rhetorical structure, at the level of precept and presupposition" (32). That is, it is not possible for both the fictional readers of Celâl's columns and Pamuk's readers to determine which pole of ideology Celâl

belongs to. Also, Celâl's secrecy not only manifests itself in his physical absences and hidden apartments, but also in his journalistic production.

There are multiple occasions in the novel where Pamuk recursively refers to "hidden", "secret", and "secondary" meanings as well as "mysteries" when Galip, as a reader of Celâl's columns, tries to uncover Celâl's intentions in writing his journalism (*Black* 210-17). This is especially visible in the Turkish original of the novel where "esrar", which means 'enigma' in English, is so frequently used that even in the first hundred pages this word appears sixty-seven times.[67] Tahsin Yücel claims that Pamuk tries to reach profundity by frequently deploying this word but fails to do so, since it does not add depth to the overall interpretation of the novel (54). Ramazan Çeçen agrees with Yücel that by using words of "mystery, secrecy, [and] conspiracy" the novelist attempts to create a narrative of "mystique" (196; my translation). However, I submit that Pamuk aims to draw attention to the textual mysteries of his narrative by presenting his reader/protagonist Galip on the diegetic level and making him look for disguised meanings that Celâl's text might produce in the embedded narrative.

Contrary to his practice of journalism, which is supposed to reach as wide a readership as possible, Celâl uses implicit and hinted language and produces "cryptic text[s] that resists interpretation" (Black 77).[68] At various moments, the narrative reveals that Celâl is restricted by censorship and that "writ[ing] about anything except municipal matters" is not permitted (99). To free himself from this political curb, Celâl turns to "letter games he'd used to get past the censors and the press prosecutor, the

[67] Here, I only translate the word as enigma, but it is noteworthy that there is also a homonym of this word which translates as marijuana in English.

[68] Joel Black, in his chapter in *Detecting Texts*, views this kind of undecipherable messages as a characteristic of metaphysical detective fiction, which I will adopt in my analysis in the following '**Pamuk's Detective Novel**' section.

chains he'd constructed from all the capital letters, and the word games he'd invented" (102). This information not only directs the reader to seek lexical 'games' in Celâl's journalism, but it also provides Galip with textual resources to become an amateur detective in his quest for his wife and cousin.[69] However, Neşati, addressing Galip, interprets this mode of writing as an act of conspiracy. According to him, "[i]nside the letters [there] are secret messages—not for the likes of [him] and [Galip] but for the dervish disciples who have in their hands the wherewithal to crack the codes" (104-5). By referring to the 'dervish disciples', the character portrays the columnist as a cryptic figure who uses his journalism to convey his massage to his followers. Neşati distances himself and Galip from the target audience of Celâl by stating it is not 'for the likes of' them, positioning Celâl as a leader of a religious organisation by referring to Celâl as dervishes' "beloved sheikh" (105). At the same time, the allusions to dervishes and to a high spiritual station in Sufism, seals the parallelism of *chelle* and political seclusion Pamuk tries to achieve in the novel.

Pamuk's Detective Novel

> In the literary novel, the enigma is not about guessing the murderer, but about working out just what the true subject of the novel is.
>
> Orhan Pamuk, *The Naive and Sentimental Novelist*

[69] For example, several critics and the novelist note that in the Turkish original, the column entitled "The Kiss" acrostically reveals "TEŞVİKİYECADYÜZOTUZBEŞ" which is the address of both Celâl's apartment in the novel and of Pamuk Apartments where the novelist lived for a long time (Esen 211; Pamuk and Hadzibegovic 27; Antakyalıoğlu 678 en. 48). This is conveyed in Gün's translation as "HEARTOFTHECITYAPARTMENTS", while in Freely's version, it is lost in translation (*Black Book* 115-120).

In this epigraph, which was presented as a part of the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures in 2009, the novelist discusses what he names “the center” of a novel (153-78). For him, in complicated and intricate novels it is “the form of the narrative, not its subject” that is the point of interest (*Naive* 170). The novelist belittles one of the primary assets of the detective novel and despises novels belonging to this genre as “cheap” (*Naive* 20). In the earlier section, ‘**Becoming Someone Else: *Fana* and *Baqa*’**, I discussed how Galip goes through several stages of development which are modelled on the spiritual stations of Sufism. However, I intentionally left Galip’s final stage on the path of becoming Celâl out, in order to discuss it in the present section. The primary reason for this is that Galip reaches the final stage of his development to becoming Celâl only when Celâl is murdered (439). Several critics, and the novelist himself, also note that *The Black Book* falls, however loosely, under the category of detective novel (Irzık 267; Parla 104; Ever 122; Koçak 149; Baykam 59; Erkman Ekerson 66; Bayrav 75; Gün 59; Kim 40; Pamuk and Hadzibegovic 7). However, the novel defies the conventions of the classic detective novel by rejecting the tripartite order of murder-investigation-solution and the “[m]urder occur[ring] at the end” (Chibka 56). Göknar, the only critic who distinguishes the novel from classic detective novels, argues that in *The Black Book*, Pamuk produces “a metaphysical detective story” for the first time in Turkish history and thereby “makes a political argument through form” (*Orhan* 216-17). However, Pamuk’s political opinions are not limited to form. Instead, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the content of the novel is as political as the form since it is an allegorical account of Republican-Ottoman tensions by implementing Sufi concepts.

In his analysis of *The Black Book*, Enis Batur views the theme of “quest as the skeleton” of the novel (Batur 17; my translation). Indeed, from the opening pages of the novel this theme manifests itself. Through this theme, Pamuk emulates another

dimension of Sufism, the spiritual quest, in the infrastructure of the novel. Şimsek states that “road and travel is present in every religion and it is a symbol for spiritual development” (227; my translation). Even though Göknar claims that the novel follows “the form of the Sufi quest”, he does not develop this point further (*Orhan,* 211). The literary productions of Sufi movements use this trope quite often and the words of travel, path, and guide are frequently used by Rumi in his *Masnavi*. In the third book, Rumi utters “I will show (you) the way, I will be your kind fellow-traveler, / I am the guide (for you) on this intricate path” (466). The first column Galip publishes under Celal’s name entitled ‘It Seems I Was the Hero’ is a clear example of Pamuk’s use of Sufi tropes (334). This column presents a self-referential passage, which not only hints at the theme of the quest, but also the novel’s placement in the detective genre in an unconventional way:

> For I was the sad resourceful hero of the book you are reading; I was the traveller who, with his guide, went slipping around the marble stones, giant columns, and black rocks among the fretful souls banished to the underground, who climbed the staircase to the skies to visit the seven starry heavens, who gazed at his love at the far end of the bridge leading over the chasm and cried, ‘I am you!’ I was the hard-boiled detective who, led on by his kindly author, found traces of poison in the ashtray and knew what they signified ... while you impatiently—wordlessly—turned the pages. (Pamuk, *Black* 335)

Referring to the existence of a “guide”, the columnist Galip likens the metaphorical journey he undertakes to that of a dervish by evoking and parodying the master-disciple relationship in Sufism. The complexity of the first long sentence, coupled with its legendary tone, reminds one of the allegorical style of Sufi poets, such as Şeyh Galip. The span of journey Galip narrates from the beneath of the surface to the sky is an allegorical representation of the transformation of a human being from self-

absorption to their dissolution in God's presence and it alludes to the arduous journey Beauty takes to reach his beloved Love. The statement "I am you" is a manifestation of Unity of Being, the latest stage in a Sufi's spiritual journey, where the individuals completely annihilates themselves and become absorbed in God. Compared to Rumi's verse quoted above, the evocation of travel in Pamuk's work parallels to Rumi's use of the trope. Through Galip, Pamuk "borrow[s] specific metaphors" of Sufi literature and delinks their spiritual connotations in accordance with the metaphysical detective genre (Sirvent 167). The transition between the two sentences of this excerpt is very sharp and the epic tone of the former sentence is completely shattered in the latter, where the fictionality of not only the column itself but also Galip's quest is surfaced. Galip underlines that he is a construct and he can perform as a detective only to the extent that is designated by the novelist.

Galip's physical and textual pursuit of Celal and his overwhelming desire to be Celal have another dimension, which is his search for identity. The resemblance of Galip's physical and intellectual search for Celal and his attempts to reach the latter's mindset in order to take up his column, reminds one the anonymous narrator and his quest for Fanshawe in Paul Auster's *The Locked Room* (1986), which is the third book of his *The New York Trilogy* (1987). Pamuk is aware of Auster as he refers to the latter, together with J. M. Coetzee and Gabriel García Márquez, in his discussions of how the novel genre has had a new turn in the last three decades in terms of transgressing their national boundaries (*Manzaradan* 207). The cities where Auster and Pamuk's novels are set are not traditional settings. Instead, Istanbul where Galip undertakes his quest, is very similar to Auster's New York in the trilogy as it is constructed as a "labyrinth" in accordance with a characteristic of metaphysical detective novels (Merivale and Sweeney 8). Ilana Shiloh underlines one of the motives of a quest in fiction as "self-

creation [… and] self-definition" and adds that this type of quest "grows out of the self's incompleteness and its desire to possess the object" (6). In the novel, the narrator describes Galip as a "luckless[] soul who wakes up to find [himself] in someone else's bed" (374). The bed is a metaphor, which stands for the lands of the Ottoman Empire the Republic proclaimed. This reading is strengthened by the novelist through the narrator's comments on Celal's possession of "assorted sultan's turbans, and caftans, […] fezzes, […] Janissary medals" (374). These items clearly link Celal and the Ottoman Empire he represents in the text. While talking on the phone with the Celal impersonator Galip, Mehmet reprimands Celal's column on the possibility of being oneself and exclaims that "[n]o one in this country can ever be himself" (390). This is an allusion to the quotidian effects of Kemalist reforms, which intervened in public life by introducing Western-style dress codes and several other measures to Westernise and modernise their life. The novelist, through this reader of Celal's columns, hints at the disappointment of Turkish citizens and their in-betweenness of traditional and religious identities against secular and modern ones. Therefore Galip, and the Kemalist idealism of the West he represents, is in an identity crisis since he can neither be himself through his elimination of his personal past (by leaving the flat he lives in and moving to Celal's) and nor can he become Celal.

The narrator reveals Galip's negative stance towards detective novels, which he "couldn't bear" (50). The character criticises the conventions of the genre and parallel to Vladimir Nabokov's Hermann in *Despair* (1965), fantasises over the ideal murder story by uttering "the only detective book he'd ever want to read would be the one in which not even the author knew the murderer's identity" (50). By referring to the detective novels, the narrator self-referentially hints at the generic qualities of the novel itself. In contrast to Galip's dislike for this genre, the narrator signals Rüya's

affection for these novels several times in the novel (22, 50). Her love for detective novels is emphasised when the narrator states, “there were hundreds of these [detective novels] lying all over the house” (49). These novels epitomise the imaginative nature of literary productions where fictional detectives solve crimes that other police officers are incapable of by means of their extraordinarily presented deduction skills. To recuperate his creativity and imagination, that is his lost wife Rüya, Galip needs to go over Celâl’s newspaper columns, which are a combination of fictional and non-fictional accounts of Celâl. Galip engages in the act of textual analysis in order to gather information about Celâl and Rüya’s hiding place. His attitude to the columns as sources of cryptic messages resembles “Sufi approaches to *tafsir*, Qur’anic commentary, [which] tend to offer ways of unlocking the secrets of the Book” (Leaman and Ali 135). As it will be discussed in further detail in the following chapter on *The Forty Rules of Love*, Sufis engage in a close reading *the Qur’an*, believing that it has multi-layered meanings to be discovered along the lines of the reader’s spiritual maturity. In *The Black Book*, Galip’s reading of a secular text with an aim to unlock its hidden meanings evokes such interpretation.

Contrary to the expectations of a detective novel, there is no denouement wherein the murder is solved, the motive is explained, and the murderer is revealed. Therefore, the novel is a metaphysical detective novel as it “parodies and subverts traditional detective-story conventions—such as narrative closure and the detective’s role as surrogate reader—with the intention, or at least the effect of, asking questions about mysteries of being and knowing which transcend the mere machinations of the mystery plot” (Merivale and Sweeney 2). Considering Pamuk’s fondness for writing “stor[ies] with allegories, obscurities, silences, and never-heard sounds”, and his statement in the epigraph, as well as the allegorical undertones discussed in the last

two sections, it is possible preliminarily to argue that the crime of Celâl’s murder is not simply about the death of the columnist (*Other* 297).

Pamuk presents his readers with textual clues but “does not include a solution to the mystery”, thereby inviting them to actively participate in the act of detection (Merivale and Sweeney 15). Such an omission, according to Patricia Merivale and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney, is one of the characteristics of metaphysical detective fiction (15). The novelist structures the relationship of Galip and Rüya around the number nineteen. There are two occurrences where this number appears. The first instance is Galip’s calculation of the time between his meeting with Rüya and their marriage. According to him, they were married “exactly nineteen years, nineteen months, and nineteen days” after they met (13). The repetitive and syntactically parallel structure of these adjective phrases draws readers’ attention for two reasons: it has an unrealistic, perfectly calculated exactness and the tripartite existence of the number nineteen signals its symbolic importance. Annemarie Schimmel, in her account of the religious and cultural importance of numbers, states that the number nineteen in Islam “corresponds to the numerical value of the word *wahid*, ‘One,’ which is one of the most important names of God” (*Mystery* 224). This word signifies the uniqueness of God. The other narrative instance that connects Rüya to this number, is when Galip realises that his wife has left him with a “nineteen-word goodbye letter” (48). The content of the letter is not revealed within the course of the novel; it is a “missing” text which is a common feature of the metaphysical detective genre (Merivale and Sweeney 9). The number of the words in the missing text reiterates the previously mentioned importance of the number for analysis of Rüya’s significance as a character. In Turkish, Rüya literally means dream, but metaphorically it stands for

the impossibility of an occurrence. Like Celâl, Rüya is physically absent throughout the narrative. The author does not characterise this female character and nor does he let Galip reach her before she dies. Considering the number nineteen, its Islamic connotations as well as Rüya's literal and figurative meaning, the novelist offers twofold interpretation. One of them is the negation of God, and the impossibility of His truth in a postmodernist manner. The other interpretation suggests that Galip's endeavour is impossible to achieve and he will not be able to reach his dream which is literally taking Celâl's place and metaphorically his being Westernised and modernised.

The novelist, through Galip's first-person narration, reveals that one of Celâl's columns, "I Must Be Myself", is regarded as the motive behind Celâl's assassination (457). Even though Galip believes that "there [is] nothing political about this murder", the title of the column implies otherwise (455). While Galip strives to become someone else, Celâl wishes to be himself. Considered in this way, the title has the connotation of turning to one's roots. In the Westernising nationalist setting of the novel, this implies and alludes to the neo-Ottoman tendencies of the Turgut Özal government, which lasted between 1983 to 1989, which also corresponds to the time Pamuk undertook the writing of the novel from 1985 to 1990 (B. Özkan 128). This period was marked with a consideration of "the Ottoman *millet* system" as a solution to the co-existence of various ethnicities (White 371). Also, Celâl in a column entitled 'A Very Long Chess Game', refers to a "dark moment" in post-Republican Turkish history which is called "the road to democracy" and reveals a letter written by "the dictator who once presided over us" (307). From the internal evidence of the column, this fictional letter is written by Ismet İnönü (1884-1973) and addressed to his son Erdal İnönü who was at that time a PhD student in the US at California Institute of

Technology. Ismet Inonu was the second President of the Turkish Republic following Atatürk, and during the Independence War he served as a commander. That is, he is one of the respected figures of Kemalist nationalism and Celâl's view of him as a 'dictator' is a possible motive for the supporters of that camp. The murder weapon is very telling in that regard. It is "a Kirikkale gun of the sort issued to the military personnel" (446). Considering Celâl's negative view of imitating the West and his calling one of the first presidents of Turkey a dictator, he becomes the target of the ultra-nationalists.

Pamuk presents Celal as a victim of ideology and alludes to the political upheaval in the early 1980s, which as I mentioned in a previous section, resulted in assassinations of several public figures. Celal's newspaper, "*Milliyet*" gives the reader a clue about the novelist's intentions of the recreation of a real-life political murder (4). In 1979, a year before the timeframe of the novel, the editor of this newspaper, Abdi İpekçi, was murdered (Ahmad *Making* 171). After being caught, Mehmet Ali Ağca, who in April 1981 becomes globally infamous for his assassination attempt to Pope John Paul II's, accepted that he murdered İpekçi (Ahmad *Turkey* 144). Ağca was an "ultranationalist" and he was aided in his escape from the prison before he was convicted for this murder (Sayari 204). In an interview with journalist Mehmet Ali Birand in 1989, which was conducted when Ağca was in an Italian prison for his crime against the Pope, Ağca denied his involvement in the İpekçi incident and claimed that he was forced to claim the crime (np.). Ağca stated later on that he broke out of prison in a "military uniform" with the help of two military personel (Ağca qtd. in Öztürk 59). Twenty years after the publication of his novel, Pamuk clarifies the link between Celal and İpekçi and how he modelled the former on the latter (*Manzaradan* 151). Drawing a parallel between two unsolved murders in the real life and the fictional

world through the newspaper, the novelist both touches a political reality through his implementation of a political assassination in the novel and presents another characteristic of metaphysical detective fiction, which is the lack or "falseness […] of closure" (Merivale and Sweeney 8). In a postmodernist fashion, the novelist resists the idea of closure. Although it is revealed in the novel that a "barber" is punished for the death of Celâl, the narrative does not account for Galip's dubious knowledge about the identity of the dead body before he sees it (439). Given this, it seems plausible to consider the probability of Galip being the killer. The narrator encourages this suspicion, stating that on the night of the murder Galip appears "[a]s innocent as a child—and as guilty—[…] crawl[s] into Celâl's bed [and] hop[es] for blameless dreams" (441).

Galip's noxious obsession with becoming Celâl brings to mind Homi Bhabha's discussion of mimicry. Bhabha, in his article "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse", views the colonised subject's mimicry of the colonizer as both "resemblance and menace" (127). For him, the colonised's imitation of the coloniser "disrupts [the latter's] authority" (Bhabha 129). Even though the novel in question is beyond the borders of postcolonial literature, since Turkey was never colonised, Bhabha's concept of mimicry is also illuminating outside the history of colonial discourse. Mondal, for example, uses Bhabha's concept of mimicry to discuss diasporic Muslims who mimic the dominant culture in the country they reside in. This, Mondal asserts, leads to crypto-Islamists who are said to be indistinguishable in their dress codes and daily practices from mainstream society, "destabiliz[ing] the distinction between self and other" (40). In *The Black Book*, the novelist, through one of Celâl's columns, provides another significant clue about Celâl's murder and makes him proleptically anticipate his own death. Following a lengthy story concerning Rumi

and Shams' relationship, Celâl suggests that, "the man who wanted Shams of Tabriz murdered and thrown into the well was none other than Rumi himself" (261). For Celâl, Rumi no longer needed his spiritual friend, as he had become the person he had long wished to be. In a similar manner, Galip struggles for a long time to identify totally with Celâl, observing his everyday routines. However, he is unable to be Celâl until the minute Celâl is killed. Returning to Bhabha's notion of mimicry, Galip's impersonation of Celâl eliminates the latter's authority which stems from his being a unique ideal. Galip's mimicry of Celâl is, therefore, a menace for the latter as it results in his death.

The narrator gives a glimpse of Galip's first appearance following the murder. Celal, whose columns brought him death threats, was ironically covered by "newsprint" following his death (439). The immediate reaction of Galip is to question Rüya's whereabouts before he has a chance to identify the deceased as if he is the murderer, and he expects that they should be lying dead side by side in the same way Galip left them (439). The narrator, in a manner of an armchair detective, questions "[h]ow had [Galip] known that this was Celal's corpse before he'd even seen it" (439). The guilty conscience of Galip due to his unfinished attempt to kill Rüya becomes evident when the omniscient narrator conveys Galip's thoughts: "The game goes on, Galip told himself, but even as he assured himself that this was just a joke, a wave of regret came over him" (439). This regret, the narrator implies, is the possibility of Rüya's being alive, which positions her not only as the single witness of the crime but also as the loose-end of Galip's homicide where, in accordance with metaphysical detective fiction, "[t]he investigator and the criminal end up identifying with each other" (Sirvent 166). Parla, in her analysis of the novel, interprets Galip's reading of Celâl's columns as an allegory of the writing process and suggests that Galip stands

for a writer-apprentice, Rüya for creativity, and Celâl for a writing-master (103; my translation). I agree with Parla's reading in her interpretation of Rüya as inventiveness, and yet this has wider implications than Parla posits when the Galip-Celal relationship is considered as an allegory of the Republic and the Ottoman Empire. That is, through their murder, the novelist criticises Republican literature's break with the Empire's literary tradition, which was marked by its inclusion of fantastic and epic stories.

The questions the narrator asks about the murder hint at Galip's identification as the culprit. Yet Celal's death also represents a twisted reinterpretation of a Sufi concept, dying before death. As I analysed in detail in the '**Becoming Someone Else: *Fana* and *Baqa***' section of this chapter, in order to reach unity with God, to be God in the Sufi sense, the dervishes undertake an annihilation of their individual selves. Yet in Galip's case, the character fails to achieve a total identification with Celal, without the demise of the latter. Therefore, Galip kills Celâl and takes his place in order to take over the columnist's job. This replacement allegorically alludes to how the Republic took the place of the Empire by eliminating its strong assets (the Caliphate) a year after the country was founded. Pamuk bases the problematic of the Atatürk reforms on Kemalists' "conviction that Turkey's weakness and poverty stem from its traditions, its old culture, and the various ways it has socially organised religion" (*Other* 230). Hence, the novelist hints at the harm that the Republican present has done to its historical predecessor and deems the Republican present to be the murderer of the Ottoman past and thereby the latter's potential presence in contemporary Turkey.

Conclusion

Following Celal's death, the narrator states that, "Celal had never forgiven his family for kicking him out of the City-of-Hearts Apartments" (449). The close reading of Pamuk's *The Black Book*, which is considered in this chapter as an allegory of the Turkish Republic and the Ottoman Empire, reveals that regardless of the novelist's Western upbringing and disposition, Pamuk, like Celal, does not forgive the Republic who "kicked" the Ottoman Empire out of the cultural consciousness of the residents of the "City-of Hearts Apartments" (the society), by erasing and replacing it. In this chapter, by stating the similarities between Galip's various attempts to become Celal and the novelist's borrowing of Sufi concepts such as *fana*, *baqa*, seclusion, and dying before death, I asserted that Pamuk engages in a critique of the Republic and its emulation of the West as the ideal in his novel. For him, this sharp turning away from one's roots and attempting to reach the consciousness of another culture is an act of imitation. The metaphysical detective genre and postmodern writing style that the novelist brings into play with the content of the novel is equally telling, as Pamuk implies that the Republican imitation of the West and its abrupt rupture with the Ottoman cultural, literary, and historical roots was a murder of a culture which was multicultural, multilingual, and multinational.

Chapter 2 From Orthodoxy to Heterodoxy: Rumi and Women in *The Forty Rules of Love*

> Four thousand, fourteen thousand years, might give us pause, but four hundred years is nothing in the life of our race, and does not allow room for any measurable change.
>
> E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*

Questioning "whether human mind alters from generation to generation", E. M. Forster compared Thomas Deloney, a sixteenth-century prose writer, to the nineteenth-century prose writers Neil Lyons and William Pett Ridge, arguing that the passing of centuries does not necessarily furnish much difference in how people live, think, and behave, even though one expects it to be the otherwise (37). Elif Shafak appears to agree with Forster as she brings together two centuries, the thirteenth and the twenty-first, side by side in *The Forty Rules of Love* (2010).[70] This was her seventh novel, the third one written in English, and it asks her readers to acknowledge similarities between the two periods. Elif Shafak (b. 1971), in Turkish Şafak, is an essayist, columnist, political scientist, and most importantly a prominent contemporary novelist of world literature who writes in both Turkish and English. She has published seventeen books of which eleven are novels, one is semi-autobiographical, one is a collection of excerpts from her publications, three are collections of essays, and one a children's novel. Shafak's encounter with Sufism dates back to the last decade of the twentieth century when she was a postgraduate student. Born Elif Bilgin,[71] she completed her master's degree thesis, entitled "*Destructuring 'Woman in Islam' within the Context of Bektashi and*

[70] This novel, which was written in English and translated into Turkish, was published in Turkish translation first as *Aşk* in 2009, and it was printed in English language a year later.

[71] Shafak writes about this choice of nomenclature in her semi-autobiographical account *Black Milk*. As she was raised by a single mother from an early age without any financial or emotional support from her father, she elected to sever her connection altogether, stating: "Instead of carrying my father's surname, I decided to adopt my mother's surname as my last name" (Shafak, *Black* 106).

Mawlawi Thought", at the Department of Women's Studies in the Middle East Technical University, Ankara, in 1996 and she completed her PhD thesis entitled "*An Analysis of Turkish Modernity Through Discourses of Masculinities*" in 2004. [72] Bektashi and Mevlevi are two centuries-old Sufi organisations in Anatolia and they are inspired by and named after Haji Bektash Veli and Mevlana Jelaleddin Rumi, respectively. Annemarie Schimmel explains: "while the Mevleviyya in the Ottoman Empire attracted primarily numbers of court circles and artists, […] Bektashiyya […] adopted a good number of Shiite elements and was the religious mainstay of the Janissaries, the elite troops of the Ottomans" (*Islam* 114). Shafak's research for this thesis on two Sufi orders paved the way for her enduring interest in Sufism, particularly in Rumi and in Mevlevi thought. She published her first novel *Pinhan* (1997) just a year after the completion of her master's degree and it narrates the story of a hermaphrodite Sufi novice. In a question-and-answer dialogue in which she discussed the process of composition at the end of *Pinhan*, Shafak stated that she did not intend to write a novel about the life of a Sufi character but admitted that her imagination and writing were intensely influenced by her readings of Sufism at that time (Şafak, *Pinhan* 233).

Shafak's command of Sufi themes and terminology in her novels has received interesting commentary.[73] Notable among the critics who have remarked on the Sufi aspect of Shafak's writing are Béatrice Hendrich, who contends that Shafak's interest in, and her publications on, Sufism are a result of the "Mevlevi background in her family" (21). Yet Shafak states that Sufism is not a culture in which she grew up and

[72] See the Council of Higher Education Thesis Centre for her MA and PhD thesis: https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tezSorguSonucYeni.jsp.

[73] Among these critics are Syed Umar Shah, Elena Furlanetto, Nilgün Anadolu-Okur, Rasha Dayekh, Anjum Fatima, and Muhammad Ramzan.

that this version of Islam has little relevance to her friends and milieu (Şafak, *Pinhan* 233). Hendrich appears to be unaware of the linkage between Elif Bilgin who wrote her master's degree thesis on Sufism, and the novelist who changed her surname shortly before she started her career as a novelist. Though inaccurate, Hendrich's claim inadvertently functions as high praise for Shafak's mastery of Sufism as Shafak only learned about it from her twenties onwards.

Since *Pinhan*, which was awarded the Great Rumi Prize in 1998, Shafak's novels have had varying degrees of Sufi elements.[74] This trend reached its peak when the novelist wrote a fictional account of Rumi's life in her *The Forty Rules of Love* (2010), where Sufism is present explicitly and implicitly in its narrative organisation, themes, and structure. In précis, the novel tells the intertwined stories of a twenty-first-century Jewish American housewife, Ella Rubinstein, and the thirteenth-century Sufi poet, Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi. *The Forty Rules of Love* contains a frame narrative, and may be viewed as a novel within a novel. The diegetic narrative is linear in structure and it covers a sixteen-month period between 17 May 2008 and 7 September 2009. It introduces Ella; her two-decade-old, failing marriage to David; and their three children. As a forty-year-old woman who suspended her career due to motherhood and marriage, Ella returns to the job market as a subordinate to an assistant editor in a publishing firm. As part of this work she has to read Aziz Z. Zahara's novel *Sweet Blasphemy,* which narrates the life of Rumi, his spiritual companionship with Shams, and his spiritual transformation. This assignment not only leads to her correspondence with Aziz but it also precipitates her transformation from a middle-class housewife

[74] In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Kombassan Foundation, located in Konya, awarded this prize annually to journalist, authors, actors, and musicians for their outstanding achievements. Chancy notes that for literature this prize is "a recognition given to the best works in mystical/transcendental literature" (Shafak and Chancy "Migrations" 55; Anadolu-Okur 136).

living in luxury without happiness to a self-sufficient woman and a literary critic. Aziz's embedded novel is a mixture of polyphonic epistolary, historical fiction, and the *bildungsroman* where Rumi's gradual change from a theologian to a poet is narrated through the accounts of several narrator characters. The plot of Aziz's novel spans from March 1242 to 31 October 1260. The plot line of this narrative is fragmented and it starts with Shams' murderer's proleptic account in November 1252 as he expresses contrition for killing Shams four years ago in 1248, after which he has never found peace.

The titles of the English original *The Forty Rules of Love* and the Turkish translation *Aşk*, are carefully chosen. While the first editions in the UK and the USA have a subtitle of "a novel of Rumi", in the reprinted versions this subtitle is removed altogether. Similarly, the initial print has a whirling dervish on its cover, while in successive editions this figure is replaced with a wandering woman at the seaside. The simplified title of the reprinted Anglophone novel chimes with the recent trend of self-help literature, "an enduring, highly fashionable non-fiction genre" (Rimke 62). Publications of this genre generally follow up a list of rules, dos and don'ts, and supposedly serve as a guide for those who want to improve an aspect of their lives. The title suggests that the book is about love, while it does not provide any information about the nature of this love. In the same manner, the title of the Turkish translation has a generic title *Aşk*, which means 'love' in Turkish. Printed on a bright pink cover with a heart-shaped leaf, the title does not suggest any specific reference to Rumi or Sufism. Anticipating that the colour of the cover would suggest a gender-specific audience, the publishers printed the same novel with two alternative cover colours, grey and white, in order to appeal to male readers as well.

Though voluminous, the existing criticism on Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love*, produced both in Turkey and abroad, mostly underlines a failure to locate the novelist and her novel globally and locally at the same time. Turkish critics limit their analysis to the scrutiny of Shafak's work within the borders of Turkey while foreign critics prefer to ignore the novelist's Turkish origin and its effect on her literary production. I argue against these tendencies, which give only a partial account of her career as a novelist of world literature. Instead, as already mentioned in the "**Introduction**" chapter of this thesis, I liken her to the Bosphorus Bridge, a metaphor she frequently uses to refer to Turkey's divided identity between east and west, standing as the bridge does between the continents of Asia and Europe (Shafak and Chancy "Migrations" 59). She carefully reads both Western and Turkish cultures and merges them in *The Forty Rules of Love*. I believe that Shafak's selection of Rumi as a character for her novel is not arbitrary. In a similar vein to Paul Gilroy's view of history as "a store of unlikely connections and complex interpretative resources", Shafak approaches Rumi's personal history as a resource through which to shed light on our present age (2).

In my analysis of this novel, I propose two simple but intertwined questions which, I believe, help to place the novelist and her novel firmly in the literary histories of both Turkish and world literature. *Why* and *how* does Shafak write about Rumi? To answer the first question, I will focus on the broader linkages between the novel and its context, suggesting three reasons for Rumi's appearance in this twenty-first-century work. These three reasons are influenced by Shafak's feminist disposition, her controversial Leftist ideology, and her criticism of the secular-religious division within contemporary Turkish society and within post-1923 nationalist reformations of the Republic of Turkey. First, I argue that Shafak evokes Sufism, a half-forgotten heritage

of Turkey, to her Turkish audience, while simultaneously introducing it to her international readers. Second, the novelist attempts to break monolithic understandings of Islam both in the West and in Turkey by means of presenting Rumi's gradual transformation from orthodoxy to heterodoxy. Finally, I will bring into my analysis the concepts of conviviality and pluralism, exploring how Shafak propounds these interrelated concepts as solutions for humanity regardless of national, ethnic, and religious differences. Each of these propositions also holds within it clues as to how the novelist writes about Rumi. Shafak creates a layered narrative to merge a distant past with the present, creating two contemporary characters, Ella and Aziz, who echo Rumi's relationship with Shams and the former's spiritual growth. To this end, the novelist makes use of two genres: the epistolary novel and the *bildungsroman*. Shafak also deploys circularity and multi-perspectival narratives; Shams's fictional rules; numerous references to Abrahamic religions, their holy books, and numerologies; and various degrees of Sufi terminology in the Turkish and English versions of the novel.

Much of Turkish society, which Shafak accuses of "cultural amnesia", has already forgotten the cultural and literary richness of Sufism in its history along with its Ottoman heritage ("Turkey" 25: "Being" np.). This amnesia is not solely a result of the ignorance of Turkish people about their past. Rather, as part of the newly-founded Republic's reforms, swingeing change to the Turkish alphabet in 1928 as well as the closure of Mevlevi lodges in 1925 created an abrupt disjuncture between Ottoman history and culture and those of the present-day Republic. There were political and ideological overtones in these reforms, especially around the tampering with the alphabet. For Ataturk, the Latin alphabet was a means to "increase literacy […] [and] facilitate the study of European languages", but it was also designed to "cut off the younger generations from the legacy of the Ottoman past" and from the Arabic script

which is "considered [to be] sacrosanct as Koranic orthography and used by the Turks for a millennium" (Halman 81). Newly unable to read their history due to the change in orthography and the closure of Sufi lodges, Turkish people were unable to access many of their cultural resources and they lost much of their contact with their past.

I have already posited in the '**Introduction**' chapter that Kemalist Turkish nationalism adapted a version of French laicism in an attempt to secularise and Westernise the country. However, this adaptation was not fruitful in that rather than separating state and religion it complicated the matter by "turn[ing] religion into the state's exclusive political instrument" (Kadioğlu 493). The powerful antipathy towards religion created a sharp binary division in society, consisting of, on the one hand, advocates of the modern Republic and, on the other, proponents of the old Ottoman Empire. This led to the emergence of two mutually exclusive ideologies: the secular Left and the religious Right. 'Secularity', according to Charles Taylor, does not have a single consistent meaning and refers broadly to everyday life, wherein "the norms and principles we follow, the deliberations we engage in, generally don't refer us to God or to any religious beliefs; the considerations we act on are internal to the "rationality" of each sphere" (2). However, secularism in the Turkish context does not fit well into Taylor's definition, as it aggressively positions itself against religion. Instead, secularism in the Turkish context is interpreted narrowly as "turning away from God" (Taylor 2). Shafak notes this generally accepted view in her interviews, suggesting that Turkish intellectuals with a Leftist alignment support the idea that "a secularist […] should have no contact whatsoever with religion" ("Linguistic" 24; Shafak and Chancy "Migrations" 60). Though Shafak is a "leftist", she challenges this view by positioning herself in between these two ideologies and intimating that it is possible to be both Left-wing and take an interest in religion (*Black* 219). In her semi-

autobiographical account of a postnatal breakdown, she refers to one of her divided personalities as "Dame Dervish" (*Black* 49). Rather than completely turning away from religion and rejecting a religiously rich past, she embraces it as a central part of her cultural history.

I view Shafak's writing of Sufism in *The Forty Rules of Love* as an attempt to remind her Turkish readers of Rumi's cultural legacy which was interrupted by the abolition of dergahs (Sufi lodges) and the relative inaccessibility of historical sources due to the change in orthography. I believe this is one of the reasons that made the novel very popular in Turkey. As Safa Kaplan notes it sold 200,000 copies in the year of its publication in Turkey, breaking the previous sales record of Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk's *The New Life* (1997), which sold 120,000 copies. Since its publication, *The Forty Rules of Love* "became a record best seller in Turkey", and by November 2014 had been reprinted an astonishing 420 times (Shafak, *Black* 269; Tüfekçioğlu en. 2).[75] Özer Turan states that Shafak is the top-earning author in Turkey and between January and August 2009, for example, she earned 1.5 million Turkish liras – 1.2 millions of this total coming from the sales of *The Forty Rules of Love* alone. These figures suggest not only the novelist's creative talent but also the attention her subject matter elicits from Turkish readers. It is noteworthy that *Pinhan*, which was also a Sufi-themed novel and was originally published in 1997, was reprinted in 2009, twelve years after its initial publication (Şafak, *Pinhan* 234). The year 2009 corresponds to the publication date of *Aşk* in Turkish and *Pinhan* was then reprinted 32 times between 2009 and 2013.[76] *Pinhan* did not appear in reprint between 1997 and 2008, but only after the publication of *Aşk*. Yet the novelist's other works did not benefit from a

[75] See the copyright page of Şafak's Aşk [Love].

[76] See the copyright page of Şafak's *Pinhan*.

reprint following *Aşk*. These two points hint at the unfamiliarity of Turkish people with Sufism and suggest that once they read on the topic it held their attention. The novelist characterises Rumi, who spent more than half of his life in Turkey, both as a historically important Sufi poet and as an ordinary man. She presents Rumi as a friend, father, and husband as well as a religious scholar who impresses the masses with his sermons. Shafak has a keen eye for detail and she meticulously pays attention to historicity, dating important events in Rumi's personal history, and recreating her fictional account of Rumi's public and private lives. Thus, the novelist introduces the reader to the basic elements and concepts of Sufism by means of Rumi's personal journey and thereby achieves a huge success.

Through her fictional male novelist Aziz, Shafak defines the cultural setting of his novel *Sweet Blasphemy*, which is dominated by "*religious clashes, cultural misunderstanding, and a general sense of insecurity and fear of the Other*" (12; emphasis in original). This excerpt indicates from the novel's outset that Turkish society is a melting pot where there are at least two religions and cultures whose adherents live in the same place but resist harmonious co-existence. In order to elucidate this further, I will now bring into focus the concepts of conviviality and pluralism and discuss how Shafak implicitly argues for the necessity of embracing these views in the novel.

Pluralism and Conviviality

Shafak's locale for this novel is thirteenth-century Konya, a city in central Turkey which was culturally and religiously diverse, but with a majority of Muslim citizens. This is similar to the situation in present-day Turkey where there is a multitude of different ethnicities and religions, although piety is largely defined in Islamic terms

while multiple nationalities are squeezed into Turkishness. As there is a host dominant culture and minorities in both, it might be contested that cosmopolitanism is a better concept than pluralism to explain the issues evaluated in this study. However, the novelist prefers the concept of pluralism to define the ideal society she imagines Turkey to be. She asserts the danger of cultural uniformity, stating: "We in Turkey are experiencing a loss of pluralism. Nobody talks about cosmopolitanism or diversity anymore [… and] [t]he ideology of sameness is the motto of the day" (Shafak, "Turkey" 24). I agree with Madalina Nowicka and Steven Vertovec that "cosmopolitanism arrives from a situation of unequal positions", and it can be a means to maintain "relations between subjects that occupy fixed and unequal positions" (345). Here, cosmopolitanism suggests inequality and the attempt to analyse Shafak's novel within this paradigm might unjustly result in a hierarchical interpretation that the host Muslims in the novel's fictional society are superior to those who are adherents of other religions. Therefore, the concepts of pluralism and conviviality are better suited to Shafak's ideal society of Turkey and the novel as they do not offer a host-minority relationship between subjects.

Pluralism is the "acknowledgement of multiplicity and difference across and within particular social fields or discourses" (McLennan ix). Though the term also has several methodological dimensions and multiple definitions, in this chapter I adopt a part of Gregor McLennan's definition and assert that the term refers to a "humble and relativistic acceptance that there is a range of cultural values" and involves "endorsement of different ways of knowing and being; […] enshrinement of the principle of 'equal but different'" (McLennan 2-3). Shafak, through Shams, introduces precepts and rules, which comprise "The Forty Rules of the Religion of Love" (40). Shafak suggests 'love' as a system of belief and establishes it as common ground for

people regardless of their differences. Interspersed throughout the two narrative levels, these rules have informative, didactic, and explanatory functions. At a pivotal moment when Aladdin, Rumi's younger son, revolts against the idea that Kimya, the woman he loves, marries Shams out of love, Sultan Walad, Aladdin's elder brother, tries to draw Aladdin's attention to his own shallow and narrow-minded view. In doing so, he recites Shams's rule number thirty-five: "*In this world, it is not similarities or regularities that take us a step forward, but blunt opposites*" (309; emphasis in original). Here, the main idea is placed at the end of the sentence to create a contrasting impression. The placement of "similarities" and "opposites" at the sentence's distant ends shows that Aladdin values the former and expects his brother to agree with him. Sultan Walad grabs Aladdin's attention by starting with what he wants to hear and then moving to the statement he wants to make. Hence, he points out the importance of plurality and differences as the source of progress and hints at the necessity of accepting the existence of heterogeneous ideas and world views.

Earlier in the narrative, readers are given a glimpse of Shams's itinerant wandering with a view to getting to know the locals of Konya prior to his meeting with Rumi. As part of these peregrinations he goes to "the seamy side of the town", where he encounters a hermaphrodite brothel-owner who exclaims about the area's moral filth and argues that a dervish has no business going there (110). Upon hearing this, Shams recites his seventeenth rule as follows:

> *Real filth is the one inside. The rest simply washes off. There is only one type of dirt that cannot be cleansed with pure waters, and that is the stain of hatred and bigotry contaminating the soul. You can purify your body through abstinence and fasting, but only love will purify your heart.* (111; emphasis in original)

In this excerpt, Shams excoriates those who hold the residents of this side of the town in disregard due to the differences in their lifestyles. Two short declarative sentences

grasp the attention, and they are followed by longer and more complicated sentence structures. This complexity runs parallel to the subject matter, namely the difficulty of ridding oneself of the toxins of intolerance towards the other. He hints at the normativity of intolerance and how it is difficult to diminish in their society, compared to a possible change in prostitutes' lifestyle. Put differently, it is easier for these women to cleanse themselves of their immorality and choose a better way of living than it is to change society's dominant mindset of "hatred and bigotry".

The promotion of plurality and disparagement of homogeneity are not limited to Shams's fictional rules. Shafak creates a bold statement of pluralism through her extensive references to the Abrahamic religions and their prophets, thereby signalling the importance of their cumulative tradition. Indeed, the *Qur'an* contains several references to the pre-Islamic prophets Moses and Jesus.[77] Similarly, there are several allusions to Moses in the novel and one of these is exceptionally telling. In this narrative instance, Shams is in a dialogue with a sharia scholar who accuses Shams of "blasphemy" due to his assertion that sharia scholars have a limited knowledge of the *Qur'an* (50). In answer to this charge, Shams relates the story of Moses and a devoted shepherd who prays intuitively without reciting the prescribed prayers in the holy book (51). This tale also gives the embedded narrative its title *Sweet Blasphemy*. Hearing the shepherd's improper prayer, Moses cuts in and severely reprimands him and tells him how to pray by the book. That same night, Moses hears God's voice:

> *Oh, Moses, what have you done? You scolded that poor shepherd and failed to realize how dear he was to Me. He might not be saying the right things in the right way, but he was sincere. His heart was pure and his*

[77] For references to Jesus, see *The Study Qur'an*, especially suras of The House of Imran (3: 44-47, 3:52, 3:55), Women (4:171), The Table Spread (5:110-15), Mary (19: 29-34); for Moses see The Cow (2:53), The Cattle (6:91), Hūd (11:17), Mary (19: 51-53) and many others.

> *intentions good.* […] *His words might have been blasphemy to your ears, but to Me they were sweet blasphemy.* (52; emphasis in original)

This excerpt has a tone of disappointment and allows Shafak to assert that there is no single path to right conduct and that it is inappropriate even for the most righteous person to judge others by their appearance. The novelist repeats the word 'right' to create an authoritative mood. This story not only stresses the possibility of variations in method but also advises not to judge people by their differences in orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Shafak establishes an intertextual relation with Rumi's masterpiece, *Masnavi* (c. 1262), where the story is originally found.[78] By making use of a "relationship of copresence [*sic*] between two texts" (Genette 1), Shafak implies that the same story can be deployed in various literary forms (Rumi's poetry and her own prose) and can appeal to different audiences, without its meaning undergoing change. In the same manner, a heterogeneous culture and the co-presence of diverse elements implies a similarity in essence regardless of outer appearance.

In her Turkish translation of the novel, the novelist ends the narrative with seven religious symbols in the following image (Figure 2):

Figure 2. Elif Şafak, *Aşk* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2014; print; 415).

These images are, from left to right, the Islamic crescent, a sun symbol which probably belongs to Pagan traditions, the Star of David in Judaism, Om of the Hindu religion, the Christian/Western cross, the Celtic/Coptic Christian or Eastern cross, and the

[78] It is located in the second book of *Masnavi*, and narrated between the lines of 1720 and 1815.

Taijitu of Taoism. By including these in her novel, the novelist espouses religious plurality, “multiplicity [,] and difference across and within” religious discourse (McLennan ix). Yet the concept of pluralism is not sufficient by itself as it only proposes the recognition of differences in cultures and world views without initiating a process for bridging the gap in between. This demands the inclusion of the concept of conviviality as a continuum of the pluralist project of the novel.

The term ‘conviviality’ emerged as a concept from Paul Gilroy’s lectures in 2002 at the Critical Theory Institute, University of California and it was later developed in *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (2004). Gilroy uses this term to “refer to the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of social life” (*Postcolonial* xv; *After* xi). He suggests that it is possible to realise the “twentieth-century utopia of tolerance, peace, and mutual regard” if “the strangeness of strangers goes out of focus and other dimensions of a basic sameness can be acknowledged and made significant” (Gilroy 2, 4). Following Gilroy’s conceptualisation of the term, various other scholars have turned their attention to it. Nowicka and Vertovec reason that the prominence of conviviality is due to its being “an alternative to ‘autonomy’” which necessitates “considering individuals through the meanings of their interrelatedness” (342). Eva Morawska, on the other hand, offers a much more progressive definition for the term which indicates “situations ranging from groups or individuals coexisting side by side with each other without much contact; living together and interrelating; and interrelating and drawing fun, wisdom, and emotional enrichment from this exchange” (358). This tripartite structure signifies that Morawska does not view conviviality as a one-off occurrence, but rather draws attention to its gradual development and multitude of forms as a kind of “becoming” (360). Out of these three theoretical evaluations, conviviality can be

summarised as a harmonious co-existence of people from various cultural, religious, national ethnic and racial origins, which is only made possible by acknowledgement of and respect for the other's difference. The ideal outcome, if people focus on their commonalities rather than being repelled by differences, is that the imaginary boundaries between them will evaporate. In the frame narrative of the novel, Ella encounters Aziz's novel as her first project for her literary agency employer. Since *Sweet Blasphemy* is a historical novel, the narrator in free indirect discourse voices Ella's unfamiliarity and uneasiness with her debut assignment, as well as describing the chasm that appears to exist between her era and that of Rumi:

> It had felt thrilling to be the first one to read an unpublished novel by an unknown author and to play however small role in his fate. But now she wasn't sure if she could concentrate on a subject as irrelevant to her life as Sufism and a time as distant as the thirteenth century. (12)

The narrator draws readers' attention to an apparent disconnect between the thirteenth-century setting of the framed narrative and Ella's story in the twenty-first century. By highlighting this discrepancy from the outset, the novelist pre-empts readers' possible objections to the disjuncture between the time periods, and then attunes them to her fictional author Aziz's perspective. Shortly after the narrator reveals Ella's thoughts, she starts reading Aziz's manuscript. In the first page of the embedded novel, where the author of *Sweet Blasphemy* is introduced, Ella reads:

> *In many ways the twenty-first century is not that different from the thirteenth century. Both will be recorded in history as times of unprecedented religious clashes, cultural misunderstandings, and a general sense of insecurity and fear of the Other. At times like these, the need for love is greater than ever.* (15; emphasis in original)

This excerpt does not belong to the fictional world created in Aziz's novel. Instead, Aziz addresses his reader directly and compares the two centuries, highlighting their similarities despite surface divergence. This is important for two reasons. Firstly,

Aziz's statement is antithetical to Ella's initial prejudice about the thirteenth century's inapplicability to her own age. This opposition is striking as it swiftly establishes differences between Aziz's and Ella's world views, and hints at a tension between these characters. Also, the contrary opinion has a significant impact on Ella as the reader of the manuscript, in that she is puzzled by Aziz's ideas, which seem to engage in tacit dialogue with Ella's thoughts. The passage indicates that Aziz's novel is yet to be published and that as an editorial professional, Ella is the only person with access to this manuscript. As the sole reader of this written work, together with the congruence between their ideas, Ella is impressed by the writer's consciousness of his readers. She maintains that Aziz "had her in mind as his reader" and becomes "as bowled over as if she had read there, '*Love hits everybody, even a middle-aged housewife in Northampton named Ella Rubinstein*'" (15; emphasis in original). Ella's preliminary resistance to reading the manuscript suggests that she is not open to new ideas and world views. In the prologue to the novel, the narrator foreshadows some of the changes Ella will go through and stresses the vast differences separating the housewife and the male author:

> The two of them were not only miles apart but also as different as day and night. Their lifestyles were so dissimilar that it seemed impossible for them to bear each other's presence, never mind fall in love. (3)

The narrator refers to the spatial distance between the characters and parallels it with a binary opposition of "night" and "day", referring to the distance of their personalities in a rather hackneyed phrase. This simile positions the two parties as each other's 'Other'. With this information, the narrator intimates that if Ella met Aziz face to face, she probably would not have engaged him in dialogue. Yet the manuscript performs the function of a mediator between the writer and the reader. In a 2010 TED talk, Shafak avers that "[s]tories cannot demolish frontiers, but they can punch holes in our

mental walls. And through these holes, we can get a glimpse of the other, and sometimes even like what we see" (np.). After Shafak, through Ella's narrative, establishes the binary oppositions of the cultures present in the text, she proceeds to reveal and highlight the similarities between these cultures.

One of the techniques she uses for this purpose is to bring in numerologies, which have a common ground in every Abrahamic tradition. Shafak presents a few numbers, which recur throughout the novel. The most frequent among these numbers is forty, as in the title of the novel's English version. The title refers to Shams's list of "The Basic Principles of the Itinerant Mystics of Islam", which establishes "The Forty Rules of the Religion of Love" (40). Schimmel, in her analysis of the significance of numbers in various traditions and sciences including Abrahamic religions, biology, and astronomy, notes that forty is "the number of completion" and it is "widely used throughout the Middle East and especially in the Persian and Turkish areas" (*Mystery* 248, 245). Referring to St Augustine's interpretation of the number, she concludes that this number "teaches to live according to knowledge during our lifetime" (*Mystery* 247). The importance of forty is not limited to hypodiegetic narrative. The extradiegetic narrator informs the reader that Ella is "[t]wo weeks shy of her fortieth birthday" (6). She announces this to Aziz in an email, shares her anxiety and questions about her way of life and whether this is "the way [she has] lived [her] life the way [she] want[s] to continue from now on" (114). Indeed, Ella's transformation from an unhappy housewife who no longer remembers the meaning of love to a fully-fledged lover happens when she is at this age; she also gets her first job and becomes divorced. At this age, she gains knowledge and experience and reaches perfection.

Similar to Schimmel's analysis, Aziz replies optimistically to Ella's email about her anxiety over her age in the following way, which deserves to be quoted at length:

> Forty is the most beautiful age for both men and women. Did you know that in mystic thought forty symbolises the ascent from one level to a higher one and spiritual awakening? ... The Flood of Noah lasted forty days, … [i]n Islamic mysticism there are forty degrees between man and God. … Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days and nights. Muhammad was forty years old when he received the call to become a prophet. Buddha meditated under a linden tree for forty days. Not to mention the forty rules of Shams. (115)

In this self-referential passage, Aziz's correspondence invites the reader to scrutinise the numeric details in the novel. By referencing a historic flood, which is present in the Holy Books of the Abrahamic religions (i.e Genesis and the *Qur'an*), the novelist suggests an inclusionary approach for all world religions and highlights their shared cultural heritage and their peaceful coexistence. Shafak mentions these common numbers in order to close the imaginary gap, which she presupposes that her readers believe to exist between cultures. Similarly, the fictional literary work bridges the gap between the geographical distance of its writer and reader, and stirs up emotions so that Ella decides to research the author and get into digital, "e-epistolary" (Jolly 157) contact with Aziz.

Epistolarity

Polyphonic epistolarity in Shafak's novel has not been theorised by critics even though the form dominates the frame narrative of the work. This study corrects this by bringing epistolarity into its analysis. The novelist adopts this digital epistolary form

in the frame narrative so as to connect her distant and different characters through correspondence. Sanae Tokizane views emails as “a symbol of border crossing” (143). Ella goes beyond her cultural prejudices which shaped her inter-religious marriage, and reaches for her antithesis, Aziz. Not only does epistolarity provide a “dynamic relational connectedness” between these correspondents but it is also a window through which Shafak’s readers come to witness Ella’s gradual “self-making” right away (Cardell and Haggis 130). In each pair of email exchanges between Ella and Aziz, the reader and the characters learn about the differences of each personality as the “stories told through letters have a built-in emphasis on the revelation and expression of personal feelings” (Perry 94). By means of digital writing, from the first email onwards, Ella reveals her inner world to a total stranger and adds apologetically that she is “sorry to pour [her] personal problems out” to Aziz (45). As the frame story is narrated mainly by a third-person narrator, these email exchanges are the only instances where the reader hears Ella’s own desperate voice, her “cry for help” (45). Jacques Derrida stated in 1995 that “electronic mail today […] is on the way to transforming the entire public and private space of humanity, and first of all the limit between the private, the secret (private or public), and the public or the phenomenal” (17). In Ella’s case, the electronic correspondence transforms and reverses her ideas of private and public in that rather than sharing her problems with her husband and children, Ella prefers to disclose them to Aziz. Thus, what is private and secret is shared by a stranger and becomes public, while her friendship with Aziz enters the private domain since it is hidden from other members of her family. Ella’s initiation of a correspondence with Aziz broadens her view of love, life, and other people. While she was unwilling to read Rumi at the beginning, she becomes a lover of Rumi when she moves out of her cultural comfort zone.

In the embedded narrative, there are various narrative moments where conviviality is evoked through Shams's rules. The master of the lodge where Shams stays recalls one of Shams's rules that "*[m]ost of the problems of the world stem from linguistic mistakes and simple misunderstandings*" (66; emphasis in original). Here, Shafak does not refer to the inability to speak a language properly. Rather, she implies that the ways people use language and understand others are filtered through prejudices and assumptions. Also, this rule has a proleptic element as it signals the misunderstandings Shams experiences in Konya as both an outsider and an unconventional dervish. Though Rumi is also a foreigner and immigrant to Konya, the fact that he conforms to the rules of the society until Shams's arrival results in his acceptance and the high esteem in which Konyan society holds him.

Shafak presents two sharia scholars, Rumi and the zealot, and presents convivial views of Rumi by positioning him against the narrow-minded religiosity of the zealot. While the former is progressive and open to new cultures and values, the latter is tightly leashed to the dominant homogeneous culture. The zealot, who fanatically resists heterogeneity in the society, complains that Rumi "has a Christian wife […] [and] being notoriously soft toward minorities, Rumi was already an undependable man in [his] eyes, but when Shams of Tabriz started living under his roof, [Rumi] totally deviated from the right path" (253). The tone of the passage is accusatory. The zealot defines Rumi's approach towards minorities as "notoriously soft" and both adverb and adjective highlight its excessiveness. Stating Rumi's departure from the "right path", the zealot reveals his bigotry not only against adherents of other religions but also against segments within Islam.

Although Kerra, Rumi's wife, converts to Islam prior to their marriage, the zealot does not acknowledge this and believes that Christianity is "in her blood" (253).

He rejects the idea of conversion, which reveals how religion in his mind is rigid. He discloses that there are other Muslim people who are not uncomfortable with their cohabitation with Christians:

> Unfortunately, the townspeople don't take the threat of Christianity as seriously as they should, and they assume that we can live side by side. To those who are naïve enough to believe that, I always say, "Can water and oil ever mix? This is the extent to which Muslim and Christians can!" (253)

This excerpt clearly exemplifies the orthodox mindset Shafak criticises in the novel. Both Islam and Christianity are successive traditions based on the oneness of God, so it is problematic that the zealot aggressively refers to the presence of the adherents of another Abrahamic religion as a "threat" since his understanding of religion is limited to Islam. He is afraid of the demolition of societal religious homogeneity because getting into touch with people of another religion may result in sympathising with them. Narrow-mindedly he rejects the possibility of coexistence and uses substances of water and oil as a metaphor for Muslims and Christians. In the passage, the location of the water substance parallels the position of "Muslims" in the previous sentence. This suggests that the zealot identifies Islam with the purity of water. By referring to the density of these two fluids and their inability to dissolve into each other, he argues the impossibility of a harmonious whole of their coexistence.

The concept of conviviality corresponds to the *bildungsroman* genre of the embedded novel since both indicate and consist of growth. Throughout his spiritual transformation, Rumi not only comes closer to heterodoxy, but also reaches a broader awareness of other people, which I will discuss in the next section.

Rumi's Spiritual Transformation and His Attitude Toward Women

In an interview with Myriam J. A. Chancy in 2003, Shafak lamented the simplistic view of Islam in the West as a uniform religion and the failure to recognise its manifold nature replete with orthodox-heterodox dichotomies:

> In the Western world there is a tendency to see the world of Islam as a monolithic whole. It is not. It was not. You can trace the paths of the heterodoxies, mystics, within Islam back through centuries. It is particularly significant for women because in the mystical movements and formation women found a voice—a voice they could not raise in orthodox platforms. (Shafak and Chancy "Migrations" 78-9)

Here, Shafak argues against a frequently oversimplified and essentialist view of Islam in the West. To justify her claim, Shafak refers to the complex internal dynamics of this religion and points out the presence of various dimensions within it. At the same time, notably in the second half of the excerpt, she focuses on the differences between orthodox Islam and, although this is never explicitly stated, Sufism, as well as the view of women in both traditions which is relevant to her master's thesis on the same topic. Indeed, her utterance in the interview that "in mystical movements and formation women found a voice" knowingly echoes a statement Shafak quoted in her thesis by J. Spencer Trimingham: "mysticism was the only religious sphere where women could find a place" (Trimingham, qtd. in Bilgin 250). In his analysis of the depiction of Muslim women characters in the novel, Syed U. Shah celebrates that Shafak "produce[s] egalitarian teachings on gender and subjectivities within Islamic thought", in contrast to the dominant Western view of "Islam as a misogynist religion" (285, 284). However, Shafak does not aim to present Islam as a feminist belief system. Certainly, Shah's claim contradicts Shafak's view of Islam as a tradition made up of plural voices rather than representing a "monolithic whole" (Shafak and Chancy "Migrations" 78). While Shah asserts a binary division of good/bad representation of

gender in Islam, Shafak goes beyond that claim and points out the variegation that exists within Islam, portraying orthodox Islam as androcentric and patriarchal while holding mysticism to be more liberating for women. This juxtaposition is a central theme in *The Forty Rules of Love*, which was published half a decade after the interview. Shafak presents the diversity of Islam and rejects a singular definition of the religion by juxtaposing orthodox and heterodox characters, and giving voice to three female characters, who witness the gradual evolution of Rumi's views on women. Initially locating Rumi within a patriarchal orthodox belief system and gradually leading the reader to see the change Rumi goes through, not only towards heterodoxy but also in terms of his positive approach to women, the novelist presents a novel of the *bildungsroman* genre with feminist touches.

"Time is needed for the crescent moon to become full" is one of the fictional rules of Shams, and the novelist implies that progress will take place and readers need patience to watch this unfold (74; emphasis in original). Indeed, two transformations take place within the novel and two characters, Ella and Rumi, gradually tear down their cocoons and emerge as completely different people. For Rumi, his transformation begins with his encounter with Shams, while for Ella it is a novel she needs to read that causes her self-scrutiny. Shafak attributes a transformative power to Aziz's novel by which Ella "grow[s] up […] as [she] double[s] the hero's apprenticeship" (Jeffers 9). Ella reads a *bildungsroman* novel as Shafak's readers do. Yet their line of development differs. In Ella's case, an unhappy middle-class woman turns into a self-sufficient literary critic, while in Rumi's case the transformation is from an orthodox scholar to a heterodox Sufi. Even though Rumi appears as one of the narrators, Shafak does give her readers Rumi's development through his focalisation. She provides three female witnesses, divides Rumi's approach to women from sexism to a gender-neutral

stance, and tracks Rumi's transformation by these female characters. Though Nilgun Anadolu-Okur and Rasha Dayekh each point out the journey motif in the novel, it has not been analysed as a *bildungsroman* (Anadolu Okur 135; Dayekh 1721). In the remainder of this section, I analyse *The Forty Rules of Love* as a *bildungsroman.* In the framed layer of the novel, Shafak represents a male-dominated Konyan society, where fewer than half of the members are female. Though they are small in number, Shafak privileges each of the female characters, Kerra, Kimya, and Desert Rose the Harlot, by providing them with a voice to express themselves as first-person narrators and thereby shed light on Rumi's transformation. This is evident in their narration of how Rumi treats them.

Shafak narrates Rumi's spiritual growth as a movement from religious orthodoxy to heterodoxy through his gradually changing attitude towards women. At the novel's outset, Shafak presents Rumi as an orthodox scholar who bans his wife accessing his library and does not want to accept a student due to her gender. Following Sham's arrival in Konya and Rumi's initiation to Sufism, he is so liberated from orthodox conventions that he accepts a prostitute as a novice. Considering this line of development, Shafak's portrayal of Rumi is parallel to Wilhelm Dilthey's definition of the *bildungsroman*:

> A regulated development within the life of the individual is observed, each of its stages has its own intrinsic value and is at the same time the basis for a higher stage. The dissonances and conflicts of life appear as the necessary growth points through which the individual must pass on his way to maturity and harmony. (qtd. in Swales 3)

Rumi's treatment of these women varies considerably as each of their encounters with Rumi corresponds to various phases in Rumi's life, before Shams's arrival and its aftermath. Kerra, Rumi's second wife, symbolises Rumi's orthodoxy; Kimya signifies

his transition from orthodoxy to heterodoxy; and Desert Rose the Harlot represents his final phase, that is, heterodoxy. Bringing discussions of women and spiritual improvement together, Shafak achieves the quality which Martin Swales attributes to the best examples of the *bildungsroman* genre, which "sustain the dialectic of practical social reality on the one hand and the complex inwardness of the individual on the other" (*German* 6). The novelist juxtaposes two female characters in Rumi's household, Kerra and Kimya, who belong to two successive generations of women in the embedded level of the novel and have different experiences of how their gender affects their everyday life. Kerra's narrative is from the time when Rumi was an orthodox scholar. In contrast to Kerra, Kimya,[79] Rumi's stepdaughter, adopts a tone throughout the novel that challenges social norms. Shafak evinces anachronistic treatment of Kimya when compared to that of Kerra. Kimya can be more outspoken than Kerra because she is privileged in not being confined to the margins as Kerra is. Kerra is a housewife and she is mainly busy with chores, while Kimya pursues her religious study under Rumi's guidance (172-195).

In the following excerpt, dated 18 December, 1244, Kerra explains her disappointment with her assigned gender role:

> Bemoaning my fate does me no good, I know. Yet I cannot help but wish that I were more knowledgeable in religion, history, and philosophy and all the things Rumi and Shams must be talking about day and night. There are times that I want to rebel against having been created a woman. When you are born a girl, you are taught how to cook and clean, wash dirty clothes, mend old socks, make butter and cheese, and feed babies. Some

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[79] This name is of Arabic origins and literally means alchemy. Also, according to Türk Dil Kurumu (Turkish Language Association), it denotes a very valuable object with extraordinary features. See: http://www.tdk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com_gts&arama=gts&guid=TDK.GTS.5894d055505c57.08166279

women are also taught the art of love and making themselves attractive to men. But that's about it. Nobody gives women books to open their eyes. (167)

By stating her urge to resist the constraints imposed on her by her gender, Kerra underlines that she views attitudes towards womanhood as a shortcoming and a limitation. Inferring from her own experience, she uses 'you' as a synonym for 'one' and generalises her practice to reach a formal and broader statement about women in general. This mode of address is directed toward the collective memory of women and creates a conversational effect, as well as an immediate attachment. The narrator uses juxtaposition in structuring "wash dirty clothes, mend old socks". This adds a rhythmic, rhetorical flourish and it is reminiscent of the repetitive pattern with which these chores are carried out during a housewife's daily routine. Within the same sentence, womanhood and motherhood merge with housekeeping and childcare. In the next sentence, however, Kerra reveals women's sexual objectification. These are duties expected of women in serving men. By stating responsibilities that are expected of women, Kerra, in this narrative instant, establishes Konya's societal norms. She desires to attain knowledge as an indicator of gender equality with her husband, and to share common ground with him through engaging in religious, historical, and philosophical discussion. However, knowledge is presented as an inviolable male space. She resents that Shams has these privileges of sharing and discussing knowledge with Rumi. While Rumi and Shams spend long hours in the library, Kerra is excluded from this sacred space of learning. At the same time, she views books as a means of breaking free from the confinement of gender inequality by "open[ing] their [women's] eyes" (167). She believes that men consciously hinder women's access to

books and education since these are the sources of enlightenment on the socially constructed nature of their gender roles.

In a flashback to their first year of marriage, Kerra recalls "sneak[ing] into" Rumi's library to dust his books and furtively undergoing a daily course of reading (167).[80] One day Rumi caught her reading in his library. Kerra meticulously remembers the long-ago details:

> It was Rumi, or someone who resembled him — the voice was harsher in tone, sterner in expression. In all our eight years of marriage, that was the only time he'd spoken to me like that. (168)

Here, Kerra defines Rumi's voice as 'harsh' and 'stern' to show its dissimilarity with his ordinary speech. Asking her not to "touch [his] books again […and] enter" his library, Rumi symbolically bans Kerra's only means of reaching education (168). He displays his male authority, declaring the sanctity of the library, and consecrates it as a male space. Viewing his books as "a priceless legacy from [his] ancestors" to be transferred to his sons in a male lineage and sharing this information with his wife, Rumi signifies his androcentric position with regard to the education of women (167). Kerra acknowledges his authority and "stay[s] away from the library […] [accepting] that the world of books [is] not and never ha[s] been, nor ever [will] be" for her (168). This memory Kerra refers to positions Rumi as a patriarchal husband conforming to gender roles and social expectations. It also presents the extent of Rumi's strictness when it comes to the values he holds dearly.

[80] For this narrative event, Shafak is influenced by the relationship of the eighteen-century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau with his partner, Thérèse Le Vasseur, as the novelist refers to the disparity in their intellectual levels by stating that while "Rousseau was writing books, Thérèse was dusting them" (*Firarperest* 130).

Kimya's narratives mark a transition point for Rumi's encounter with Shams and they are located both slightly before and after Rumi's initial meeting with Shams. The character recounts her first meeting with Rumi in 1236 when her father took her to Rumi to be adopted and educated. Kimya recalls a conversation in which she explained her eagerness to study the *Qur'an* with Rumi, and describes how he "paused as if he had just remembered a nasty detail", remarking: "But you are a girl. Even if we study hard and make good progress, you'll soon get married and have children. Years of education will be no use" (171). Rumi believes that Kimya's gender is an obstacle to her education since learning is reserved primarily for men. This shows that at this stage of his career Rumi still has orthodox views. However, Shafak privileges Kimya and imbues her with a supernatural power, that of talking to ghosts. Communicating with her husband through Kimya, Gevher, Rumi's long-dead first wife, persuades him to adopt and educate Kimya by reminding him how she "wanted to have a little girl and now she would be happy to see him educate one" (172). This spiritual power, and the solidarity with Gevher that accompanies it, serves to empower Kimya. The clairvoyance allows her to be partially set free from the patriarchal norms of thirteenth-century Konyan society, have the right to be educated, and hence claim gender equality. In historical reality, the claim for gender equality was posited much later under the influence of the first-wave feminist movement.[81]

Of the three female characters in the framed narrative of the novel, Desert Rose the Harlot is the least lucky and the most marginalised woman, as signalled by the fact

[81] In this geography, women became aware of their rights through the First-wave Feminist Movement in the West during the Second Constitution period of the Ottoman Empire in 1908 and this period saw the emergence of women rights organisations such as "Nisvan-ı Osmaniye (Ottoman Womanhood) and Müdufaa-i Hukuk-u Nisvan (The Defence of the Rights of Women)" (Berkeş 387). The latter organisation also initiated the publication of a periodical, *Kadınlar Dünyası* (Women's World), and disseminated articles penned by women about their rights and complaints about the inequality within the society. For more information about the content of this periodical, see Serpil Çakır's *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (2010).

that she does not even have a proper name. Her epithet, 'desert', is bestowed by the patron of the brothel she works at as a reference to her reproductive "barrenness" due to several abortions (121). The word 'desert' evokes the harsh conditions of her life as a prostitute, as a desert is an uninhabitable place where there is next to no water supply and unbearable weather. It corresponds to the brothel in that both places create difficulties and harsh conditions for their inhabitants, sharing the same inhospitality towards their denizens. Michael Ferber points out the conflicting symbolism of 'Rose' for sexuality and states that it is both a connotation of "the hymen or female genitalia" and biblical chastity of the Virgin Mary (174-5). While it evokes feminine beauty, this flower also has thorns, connoting toughness, an ability to cope with hard conditions, and a kind of defence mechanism. Considered in this light, 'desert' stands for the unbearable experiences the young woman has faced, and 'rose' is suggestive of her moral qualities. 'Rose' also has a proleptic quality. The blossoming of a bud and its vertical growth suggests a spatial detachment from its infertile roots and hints at her escape from the brothel.

Though a minor character, Desert Rose is one of the first locals from Konya to get to know Shams, even before Rumi. The event of her encounter with Shams is noteworthy in that Shams protects her from a lynching attempt due to her trespassing into the mosque in disguise to listen to a Rumi sermon (121). When she approaches the mosque, she notes that "even the place in the back that would normally be reserved for women" is occupied (121). This is an image of male dominance in a society where women are dispossessed of a right bestowed on them by God. Moments before her identity is revealed by a young boy who "accidentally stepped on the ends of [her] scarf", she feels "a cloud of tranquillity descend[s] over [her], as delightful and soothing as the sight of [her] mother baking bread" (132, 121). Here, the novelist

momentarily zooms in on Desert Rose's inner world and the sudden calmness which the character equates to the peace and warmth of her childhood home. Considering the connotations of her nickname, this moment is an oasis for the character as she catches a glimpse of an inner peace she longs for. This creates a stark contrast with the following scene, in which she is beaten by the people with whom she has just listened to Rumi's sermon. When her identity is revealed, it is Baybars, "one of those pesky customers" of hers, who recognises her and exclaims: "What is a harlot doing here? Don't you have any shame?" (133). These questions voiced in an aggressive tone by one of her clients, as well as the word "harlot", stand for the demonisation and commodification of a woman whose body is exploited in exchange for money. In an attempt to recover the numinous from the hegemony of orthodox and misogynist elites, the novelist problematises "the view that the sacred is exclusively the territory of the religious group or that hallowed times and places are only those which are conventionally associated with the sacred" (Shah 287). Shams's presence in this scene furnishes a juxtaposition of orthodoxy and heterodoxy as he saves Desert Rose from being beaten. By placing the assaulter and the rescuer alongside one another, the novelist directs the reader's attention to two diametrically opposed world views. Also, their different attitude to Desert Rose suggests different stages that these characters belong to in spiritual development. While Shams is a fully-fledged heterodox with liberal views of the equality of women with men, others support sexism, which according to the novel is a poor stage in terms of the development of gender perception. As Rumi is in a leading position in this community, the narrative holds out the possibility that he shares the community's aggression towards Desert Rose.

Nine years after her initial meeting with Rumi, Kimya narrates the events of a particular day: 17 August 1245. The author's choice of date hints at the 1999 Marmara

earthquake[82] at which she was present (Shafak, *Black* ix). By dating a chapter which contraposes domestic violence with a natural disaster that killed thousands of people and injured many more, the author highlights the devastation of such violence for women, pointing out the seriousness of this phenomenon, and, contrary to an earthquake, its avoidable nature. There is an implied parallel between the earthquake and domestic violence; that is, their disastrous fallout for the people affected. Also, this implicit reference to the earthquake hints at a sudden change and a disruption to the ordinary course of events.

Narrated by Kimya, this section of the novel is four and a half pages long. This is longer than any of the other sections that Shams and Rumi narrate, which tend to be around two pages in length. This detail implies the importance that the author places on this incident. It is in the third out of five parts of the novel, and is entitled "Wind: the things that shift, evolve, challenge" (147). The events that unfold in this section head in fluctuating directions, undergo continuous development, or take a challenging position against norms. In the opening paragraph of the section, Kimya as first-person narrator discloses:

> Breathlessly, I wait for a summons, but Rumi doesn't have time to study with me anymore. As much as I miss our lessons and feel neglected, I am not upset with him. Maybe it's because I love Rumi too much to get cross with him. Or maybe it's because I can understand better than anyone else how he feels, for deep inside I, too, am swept up by the bewildering current that is Shams of Tabriz. (195)

[82] This magnitude 7.4 earthquake happened in the Marmara Region, killing around 17,000 people. The affected cities were Istanbul, Gölcük, Izmit, Yalova, Düzce, Kocaeli, Sakarya, Bolu, Bursa, Eskişehir and Zonguldak. See https://www.britannica.com/event/Izmit-earthquake-of-1999

Beginning her declarative compound sentence with an adverb, the narrator uses inverted syntax to accentuate her anxiety due to Rumi's lack of attention. The word "summons" with its legal undertones underscores Kimya's respect for Rumi's authority and her internalisation of the hierarchy between Rumi and herself. In addition, Kimya's use of contractions such as "doesn't" and "it's" signals informality and positions the reader as a confidant of the narrator's feelings. Her tone is sad, but empathetic. She speculates on the reasons for her empathy with Rumi and intimates the resentment she feels towards the other members of Rumi's household, as she "understands better than anyone else". The narrator uses the poetic expression, "bewildering current". The ambivalent word 'current' is indicative of a torrent, illustrating Shams's strong influence and the destabilising flood of emotion he brings with him. By using a metaphor of current in water, Kimya refers to Shams's influence on Rumi and herself. The power of Shams's influence is so "bewildering" that it puzzles Rumi and her. Similar to a current, which moves anything in its way, Rumi's ordered and stable life is challenged by Shams's progressiveness. At the same time, this metaphor signifies the idle, unprogressive norms of Konyan society and proleptically signals Shams's lack of acceptance in that society. Currents necessitate a slack water that does not meet their speed and direction to appear and the stillness of the water is disturbed by the streams in it. If Shams were similar to that society, he would be unnoticed by them in the flow. However, as he is different from the rest of the body of water, he is noticed and not appreciated. The absence of Rumi stands for his training in seclusion with Shams. As the chapter title "Wind" suggests, Rumi is undergoing a transformation in terms of both his religious and gendered views.

At another moment, Kimya-as-narrator turns her attention to the close bond between Rumi and Shams, describing the atmosphere of the house and observing how

Aladdin, Rumi's younger and orthodox son, as well as Kerra, Rumi's wife, feel nearly a year after Shams's arrival:

> Not everyone in the house can tolerate this, starting with Aladdin. So many times I've caught him looking daggers at Shams. Kerra, too, is ill at ease, but she never says anything and I never ask. We are all sitting on a powder keg. (195)

Here, the narrator positions "not" and "so many times" at the beginning of the first two sentences to intensify the uncomfortable mood prevailing in the house. She resorts to idiomatic language, with the use of metaphors of sharp or explosive objects such as "daggers" and "a powder keg". These images foreshadow the disagreements and volatile changes in the household that ensue, as well as Aladdin's betrayal of his father by participating in the organisation of Shams's murder towards the end of the novel (334). Kimya courageously voices what the silence and stares of other characters imply. While trying to emphasise Aladdin's hostility towards Shams, Kimya uses the idiom "to look daggers at". The word "dagger" has the effect of evoking the martial image of hand-to-hand combat, hinting at Shams's imminent death. The statement about Aladdin's unhappiness with his father's new spiritual companion hints at the former's orthodox viewpoint. Aladdin is hostile towards Shams, avoiding any communication with him. Yet, he tries to justify his ideological position with his unreliable narration. Contrary to the sections narrated by Aladdin, Kimya informs the reader about her interactions with Shams and his peculiar views of orthodoxy. In this way, Shafak leads readers to form their own judgement.

There is one specific moment when Kimya challenges patriarchal readings of the *Qur'an*. Previously guided by Rumi in her readings of the holy book but having lost this guidance due to Shams's arrival several months earlier, Kimya decides to study the *Qur'an* herself. Rather than following the order with which the verses had

been "handed down", as Rumi teaches, she "haphazardly" starts reading the first sura on the open page and is "troubled" by one of its verses, 4:34, from the sura al-Nisa (Women) (196). This sura is composed of 176 verses, which deal with several topics including ethical guidance on female-male relations, the responsibility of both parties in marriage, and the rights of quasi-legal inheritance. As Peter Barry idiomatically expresses it in another context: "the devil, as always in literary studies, is in the detail" (10). This apparently haphazard reading by Kimya is in fact not a coincidence since the Qur'anic narrative event establishes a tension between orthodox and heterodox readings of the *Qur'an*.

Kimya vents her frustration at traditional, androcentric exegeses of the verse, while also lamenting "its unpromising teachings on women, [which make] the Nisa hard to understand and harder to accept" (196). Her unwillingness to accept the verse's dogma and her questioning attitude call into question the validity of the verse's argument. However, when Shams offers guidance, her diction softens and she merely says, "Well, there is this verse in the *Qur'an* that I find a bit hard to understand" (196). This statement contains the qualifiers 'well' and 'a bit' to indicate her hesitation about how to verbalise her doubts, and to what extent to reveal these ideas. In his response, Shams combines the devices of simile and personification when he avers: "The Qur'an is like a shy bride. She'll open her veil only if she sees the onlooker is soft and compassionate at heart" (196). By likening the *Qur'an* to an inhibited maiden, Shams refers to the book's purity. In the same way that a veil conceals what is underneath to all but a woman's closest companions, the *Qur'an* only reveals its meaning depending on the degree of its reader's compassion.

After this initial exchange, Kimya takes courage and explains why she finds the verse incomprehensible: "there are some parts in it where men are said to be

superior to women. It even says men can beat their wives" (196). Here, Kimya chooses to use "are said to be" instead of "are" and this preference implies her disagreement with the utterance, with the notion of male superiority, and with sexual inequality. Her use of the adverb 'even' in the next sentence suggests her view that the counsel that paves the way for violence against women is extreme. Shams recites two translations of the verse by M. H. Shakir and Ahmed Ali. Fazlur Rahman noted of the Pakistani translator of the *Qur'an*, Ahmed Ali, that although he was not a native speaker of Arabic, "he consulted the traditional Islamic scholars, the Ulama, in Pakistan and, in fact, the translation has been certified as accurate by the Department of Auqaf (Pious Endowments) of the government of Pakistan" (26). Moreover, Neal Robinson states that Shakir and Ali are "two well-known translations of the Qur'an by twelver Shï'ites" (261), and for verse 4:34 both of them "adhere closely to the literal meaning of the Arabic" (274)[83].

In the novel, on the other hand, Shafak via her character Shams, provides two slightly different versions of verse 4:34. The following two readings belong to Shakir and Ali respectively:

> *Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel* [*sic*] *others and because they spend out of their property; the good women are therefore obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded; and (as to) those on whose part you fear desertion, admonish them, and leave them alone in the sleeping-places and beat them; then if they obey you do not seek a way against them; surely Allah is High, Great.* (Shakir, qtd. in Shafak, *Forty Rules* 196; emphasis in original)

[83] Shortly after the death of the Prophet Mohammad in 632, the Muslim community was divided into two, Sunni and Shia, due to their different ideas as to who should succeed the Prophet. Twelver Shï'ite is one division of this latter group and Iran's "state religion" (Momen xii). See Momen's *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam.*

> *Men are the support of women as God gives some more means than others, and because they spend of their wealth (to provide for them). So women who are virtuous are obedient to God and guard the hidden as God has guarded it. As for women you feel are adverse, talk to them suasively* [*sic*]*; then leave them alone in their bed (without molesting them) and go to bed with them (when they are willing). If they open out to you, do not seek an excuse for blaming them. Surely God is sublime and great.* (Ali, qtd. in Shafak, *Forty Rules* 196-7; emphasis in original)

In the first translation "to excel", suggests superiority on the part of men as they financially provide for women, whereas in the second there are no such hierarchical implications. Shakir's translation is ambiguous, in that it leaves the reader to ponder over to whom a woman needs to be "obedient": God or her husband. Ali, on the other hand, specifies the recipient of obedience (God) and produces a more restricted, singular meaning. These translators have different ideas concerning what constitutes an undesirable act because of the differences between Shakir's traditional and Ali's reformist exegeses. While Shakir interprets this obnoxiousness as "desertion" which signals disloyalty on the woman's part, Ali, whose translation "echoes the views of Islamic feminists" (Shah 287), prefers a more indulgent and ambivalent word, 'aversion'. Another point of contention between the two translators emerges around which set of actions men should take following an undesirable act by their wives. In Shakir's version, a lack of punctuation leads to ambiguity as to whether men should enact a bipartite or tripartite retribution. If one assumes the punishment to come in two stages, the first resort is to firmly reprimand wives, while the second is to 'leave them alone in the sleeping-places and beat them'. If there were a comma immediately after "sleeping-places", this ambiguity would be resolved since such punctuation would

create a succession of three events rather than two. Ali, on the other hand, clearly stages the tripartite solution; that is, first talking to women persuasively, then respectively not sharing their bed, and going to bed with them. Shams, a heterodox believer and Sufi, and Kimya with her feminist approach, both favour Ali's rendering due to its moderate and less volatile language.

To elaborate further, Shams resorts to an extended metaphor through which he compares the *Qur'an* to "a gushing river":

> Those who look at [the river] from a distance see only one river. But for those swimming in it, there are four currents. Like different types of fish, some of us swim closer to the surface while some others swim in deep waters down below. […] Those who like to swim close to the surface are content with the outer meaning of the Qur'an. Many people are like that. They take the verses too literally. No wonder when they read a verse like the Nisa, they arrive at a conclusion that men are held superior to women. Because that is exactly what they want to see. (Shafak *Forty Rules* 197)

Just as a river has multiple layers of currents, so too are there four different readings of the *Qur'an*. Readers of the *Qur'an* are likened to different kinds of fish, which have varied capacities to swim in different depths of water, in that a reader can only read and understand depending on their level of comprehension. Here, Shams not only hints at the profound change in Rumi's gender politics following his deepened knowledge of the *Qur'an* but also remarks on Arabic language and its multi-layered meaning. Moreover, non-Muslim perspectives are said to be illusory since they fail to account for Islam's diversity in the same way that a casual observer fails to recognise the underlying currents in a river. In this manner, the novelist argues that "every text is open to different interpretations" (Shafak and Chancy "Migrations" 57). Via her Sufi character Shams, she attacks reductivist Western views of Islam by positioning herself

as a “half East[erner]” (Shafak, *Black* 94); Islamic orthodoxy as an “agnostic”; and those “Muslim” men who justify their violence against women with their shallow readings of the *Qur’an* as an ardent “feminist” (Shafak and Chancy “Migrations” 81). In an earlier interview with Chancy, Shafak summarised the implications of her inclusion of extended discussion on a Qur’anic verse in the novel. Correcting misperceptions of Islam as monolithic, Shafak invited readers to consider the religion’s diversity (78-9).

In the previous sections, Rumi’s spiritual transformation was analysed through his view and behaviour towards Kerra and Kimya. In the present analysis, Desert Rose stands for the third phase, Rumi’s spiritual maturity. After her initial narration of the lynching attempt on her in front of the mosque in 1244, she is frequently visited by Shams. These visits are the motivational sources during which Shams encourages her to “walk out of that brothel” (136). She is introduced to Rumi in 1246 following her escape from the brothel “to find God” and after taking refuge in Rumi’s home (266). Kerra announces her arrival at their home as a “[b]aptism of fire” (265). This illustrative expression, now a wellknown cliché, reminds the reader of Kerra’s pre-marital Christian background. She uses this phrase to show the difficulties Shams brings into their lives, and it encapsulates her uneasiness at a prostitute’s visit to the home of a religious scholar. Kerra views Desert Rose as a source of distress for the reputation of her family due to her indecent living and worries about the unpleasant things the neighbours will think once they find out that they “have a girl of ill-repute under [their] roof” (266). This suggests how Kerra’s judgement is clouded by dominant social attitudes. Though Kerra is merciful enough not to “shoo her away”, she refuses to let Desert Rose into the house either and “let[s] her wait in the courtyard” (265). Her choice of the word “shoo” signals that she equates Desert Rose with an

animal. As an answer to Kerra's fears, Shams replies indicating the sky: "Aren't we living under the same roof anyhow? […] Kings and beggars, virgins and harlots, all under the same sky" (266). Here, Shams uses the sky as a synecdoche to allude to the Earth, the home God has created for His creatures, implying that God does not judge His people as people do each other. In this way, Shams states that people's perceptions of each other do not stem from religious origins but are a human construct. By keeping silent about their visitor, Rumi proves that he is no longer worried about his reputation. Yet Aladdin laments the changes Shams brings to Rumi's life: "After Shams came into [Rumi's] life, his circle of love became so vast it included even the most fallen of society—prostitutes, drunks, and beggars" (338).

After Shams's death in 1248, there is a twelve-year narrative interval. In 1260, Rumi, in this last section of Zahara's novel, summarises retrospectively what happened in these years and reflects on his changing attitude towards women:

> In time my elder son married Saladin's daughter, Fatima. Bright and inquisitive, she reminded me of Kimya. I taught her the Qur'an. That is one thing dear Kimya proved to me long ago: that girls are just as good students as boys, if not even better. I arrange *sema* sessions for women and advise Sufi sisters to continue this tradition. (342)

Here, Rumi indicates the metamorphosis his attitude towards women has undergone following his encounter with Shams, and his gradual inclination towards Sufism. Before Shams's arrival, Rumi is so sufficiently conservative that he bans his wife from his library and is unwilling to accept Kimya as a student due to her gender. Later, due to Shams's influence, he is so progressive that he takes Desert Rose as a novice a year after she leaves the brothel, and allows her refuge in his house (313). Though the novelist states in her thesis that she "ha[s] deliberately refrained from asserting that the extoltation [*sic*] of femininity in Islamic heterodox thought implied an automatic

improvement of women per se" (Bilgin 241), in the novel she keeps her finger on the pulse of Rumi's spiritual transformation by means of the improvement of his behaviour toward women.

Ella starts to read Aziz's novel at a time when she feels "a surge of despair rise in her" (36). While Rumi's spiritual development is triggered by Shams, Ella is first impressed by her reading of the novel, then by both Rumi's transformation and her correspondence with Aziz. Combined, this makes her realise that there are multiple possibilities for life other than the one she currently leads. Thus, doubling Rumi's relationship with Shams, the novelist supports Ella's self-actualisation via a mentor-novice relationship with Aziz. This relationship turns into a romance (263). Out of a 350-page novel, Ella can only leave her old life behind on page 336 by uttering one of Shams's rules numbered thirty-eight:

> *"It is never too late to ask yourself, 'Am I ready to change the life I am living? Am I ready to change within?' Even if a single day in your life is the same as the day before, it surely is a pity. At every moment and with each new breath, one should be renewed and renewed again. There is only one way to be born into a new life: to die before death."* (338; emphasis in original).

Even when leaving her familial home, Ella's tone is not calm and bold but concerned. She not only questions her decision, but also seeks comfort in the rules of a fictional Sufi character. Though the rule she recites is suggestive of the Sufi's continuous self-scrutiny and disciplining of the *nafs* (ego) by "d[ying] before death" and the journey she embarks on does not have such an intention, Ella adapts it to her peculiar condition and leaves her old life both literally and metaphorically behind. Elena Furlanetto comments that "[t]he healing effect of Rumi's poetry on Ella's depression is particularly important, as it is a clear reference to the contemporary American

discourse surrounding Rumi, especially the therapeutic function attributed to his works" (Furlanetto 205). Though there is no explicit reference to Ella's depression in the novel, Furlanetto is right to locate the book in self-help culture as it is mentioned earlier in this chapter that the English title resembles the titles of self-help literature. However, the reason for the similarity between the novel and the self-help literature is not due to its references to Rumi's poetry but "the concept of bildung, of the self-realisation of the individual in h[er] wholeness" (Swales, German 15). Shafak models Ella's encounter with Aziz on the Rumi-Shams relationship. Aziz reflects on this by stating "I know you're not a Sufi [… a]nd you don't have to be one [… j]ust be Rumi" (326). By reading a product of the *bildungsroman* genre, Ella imitates the fictional journey and transforms her life by means of her love and enhanced understanding and encounter with Sufism.

Translation and Writing Process

Shafak's choice of language for her writing is not definite, with some of her works written in Turkish and others in English. In her article entitled "But Why Do You Write Your books in English and Turkish?", Shafak explains the process of translation for her novels which are originally written in English such as *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* (2004), *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2006), and *The Forty Rules of Love* (2010):

> I write my novels in English first. Then they are translated into Turkish by professional translators, whose works I admire and respect. Next I take the Turkish translations and rewrite them, giving them my rhythm, my energy, my vocabulary, which is full of old Ottoman words. (np.)

In this tripartite process of writing, translation, and rewriting, Shafak's involvement may appear as a crosscheck, a verification on the part of the author for her intended message. Yet her rewriting is not limited to adjusting vocabulary with "old" words as

Shafak claims. Even the most perfunctory consideration of the two editions of *The Forty Rules of Love* in English and Turkish reveals that their lengths, tone, and diction differ, and the amount of Islamic terminology shrinks in the former version. Though these two narratives follow the same plot lines, the Turkish translation is an adaptation of the source text. It may confuse a bilingual audience to read the same section of these texts, as the English and Turkish versions contain great variation as to the details of the same narrative event. This gives rise to a question that cannot be explained by the process of translation: why are there differences between the English and Turkish versions of the novel in their length, diction, and the amount of Qur'anic and Sufi terminology they use? To answer these questions, I start by discussing the motivations that dominate Shafak's choice of writing in English first, and then rewriting in Turkish. Then, following Rebecca Walkowitz's coinage of "*born translated*", I continue with an argument about in what ways *The Forty Rules of Love* belongs to this category (3; emphasis in original). Next, I proceed to analyse *The Forty Rules of Love* and *Aşk* through the lens of comparative literature.

It is easy to imagine that Shafak feels at the crossroads in choosing a language to convey her message, torn as she is between two simultaneously different but dear languages to her: English and Turkish. One of them is the language she was born into while the other has been the language of education since she was eleven years old.[84] Elif Öztabak-Avcı summarises the dichotomously oppositional reaction to Shafak's writing in English:

> [O]n the one hand, she was severely criticised by those who view her writing in English as being co-opted by cultural imperialism; and, on the other, she was highly praised and appreciated by those who consider her

[84] Shafak was educated in the English language at a British College in Madrid (Şafak, Med-Cezir 14).

"success" (being published in the United States) a success for her country. (84)

Öztabak-Avcı also claims that "writing in English is linked to [Shafak's] desire to escape the tendency of "living within flocks"" (89). I believe what she proposes here is that Shafak calls for her readers to notice her difference and unbelonging to the traditional customs and roles assigned by nationalist viewpoints, which are articulated by many other novelists. Instead, I suggest that there are several reasons that motivate Shafak to choose to write in English. For example, *The Bastard of Istanbul*, *Baba ve Piç* in Turkish, is an exceptional case for discussing the writer's choice of writing in that language.[85] This novel presents the contemporary story of Armanoush, an American character of Armenian origin, who refers in the narrative to the Armenian incidents which took place in 1915 as "genocide" (Shafak *Bastard* 53). Shafak was indicted "[f]or invoking the 'g-word,' [through her fictional character Armanoush] and therefore 'insulting Turkishness,' [and] she was prosecuted under Article 301 of the Turkish penal code" (Ermelino 29: *Black* 5). Shafak reflects at length on the process of writing this novel in English:

> Writing in English, putting an existential distance between me and the culture where I come from, strangely and paradoxically, enables me to take a closer look at Turkey and Turkishness. [H]ad I written *The Bastard of Istanbul* […] in Turkish, it would have been a different book. I might have been more cautious, more apprehensive even. But writing the story in English first set me at liberty; it freed me from all cultural and psychological constraints, many of which I might have internalized without even being aware of it. The same goes for all my novels written

[85] This novel was longlisted for Orange Fiction Prize in 2008. See Maureen Freely's, "The Orange longlist confirms the prize's relevance".

> in English first. Sometimes, the presence of absence strengthens a bond and distance brings you closer. ("But why" np.)

The fact that Shafak was brought before a court for the words of one of her characters and her reference to "cultural and psychological constraints" which come into play while writing in her mother tongue, signify that writing in English is a political decision she makes in order to have freedom of expression rather than a "desire to escape the tendency of 'living within flocks'" as Öztabak-Avcı suggests (89). Shafak, in her *Desert Island Discs* interview with Kirsty Young and in her article "But Why Do You Write Your Books in English and Turkish?", also refers to semantic motives at play in her choice of language. She states that she prefers to, and finds it easier to, write humorous, ironic, and satirical works in English, while she reserves her mother tongue for writing "sorrow and melancholy" (np.).

I have already mentioned that Shafak's writing in English is both criticised and praised in Turkey. However, writing in Turkish does not prevent Shafak from being criticised either. This time, Shafak observes, her novels are "targeted by some rigidly Kemalist intellectuals who have accused [her] of betraying the nationalist project because [she] do[es] like 'old' words" (Shafak and Chancy "Migrations" 59). In her analysis of the Turkish and English versions of another of Shafak's novels, *The Saint of the Incipient Sanities* which follows the above-mentioned tripartite production progression, Öztabak-Avcı notes that it is "the notion of the reader's 'familiarity' with the language used in the text [that] has obviously informed the writing as well as the translation process" (96). However, I do not agree with her in her statement that Shafak takes the reader's language knowledge into consideration both in the process of writing and re-writing following the translation of the text. On the contrary, I assert that Shafak challenges her readers, especially in the Turkish editions of her novels, with a rich

vocabulary of Arabic and Persian origin words of the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, Shafak states that she "not only tr[ies] to unearth the stories that have been buried under the ground by the Kemalists [… but] also tr[ies] to unearth the words that have been kicked out of Turkish language" ("Linguistic" 22). This integration of imperial words into the contemporary language of her novels is a reaction to "the Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti (Society for the Study of Turkish Language) [which was] founded to manage a program of linguistic modernisation including the elimination (*tasfiye*) of Arabic and Persian borrowings" (Ertürk 16-7). In the following excerpt, Shafak underlines the driving force between the simplification of the Turkish language and links it to Turkish nationalism:

> The fabrication of a purely Turkish language was of crucial importance for the fabrication of a homogeneous national identity. Making language more monolithic was part of the project of making the nation more homogenous. (Shafak and Chancy "Migrations" 59)

Shafak defines this as "linguistic cleansing" and criticises the majority of Turkish novelists for conforming to it ("Linguistic" 19). Differently to many other novelists, she is against lexical homogeneity, in addition to her reaction to religious homogeneity discussed earlier. To challenge this reductivist nationalist approach to etymology of Turkish language and to reconnect Turkish readers with the rich reservoir of pre-nationalist language, Shafak uses as many Arabic and Persian originated words as possible. Some of these old words in *The Forty Rules of Love*, such as "mebzul" (very), "iştiyak" (to miss), "münezzeh" (clean), "nişan" (sign), and "nümayiş" (pageant), do not have a wide circulation in the contemporary Turkish language (Şafak, *Aşk* 16-39). Therefore, rather than paying attention to her reader's "familiarity" with language as Öztabak-Avcı claims, Shafak focuses on raising an awareness of a disconnectedness with the imperial past.

Edith Grossman underlines the importance of translation in literary studies by stating that "the very concept of world literature as a discipline fit for academic study depends on the availability of translations" and suggests that there is not enough "critical vocabulary" to analyse translations. As a result, translations "tend to be overlooked or even disparaged by reviewers, critics, and editors because they simply do not know what to make of them, in theory and in actuality" (13-47). Walkowitz contributes to the vocabulary on translation analysis by coining "born-translated" a term she uses for works "written for translation from the start" (3). She proposes a useful checklist for identifying books belonging to this category and purports that this kind of novel published "simultaneously or nearly simultaneously in multiple languages […] start[s] as world literature" and such texts "often focus on geographies in which English is not the principal tongue [… and thereby] purposefully break with the unique assignment of languages, geographies, and states in which one place is imagined to correspond to one language and one people, who are the users of that language" (Walkowitz 1, 22). Though Walkowitz briefly mentions Shafak in her book and states that Shafak does "preemptive translation" by producing both in her mother tongue and in English, she does not analyse the born-translated qualities of any Shafak novel (12). For that reason, following the characteristics of Walkowitz's born-translated fiction, in the remainder of this section I analyse the ways in which Shafak's novel, *The Forty Rules of Love*, belongs to this category.

The Forty Rules of Love was published a few months after the publication of *Aşk* in Turkey, though Shafak wrote them in reverse order. For example, *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* was published six months after the publication of its Turkish translation *Araf* (Öztabak-Avcı 84). Considering this, both novels fit with Walkowitz's primary definition of born-translated literature which "approaches translation as a

medium or origin rather than as afterthought" (3-4). Though Shafak has published a few novels in English, all of these novels also appeared as Turkish translations. However, some of her novels published in Turkish, such as her first novel, *Pinhan*, do not have an English translation. Thus, it is obvious that the novelist considers translation of the novels written in English while she composes them rather than the common practice of publishing in the original language first, and only later thinking about the possibilities of translating into other languages.

The closely successive appearance of *The Forty Rules of Love* and *Aşk* in different continents complicates the conventional categorisation of which literary history owns these novels and "rather than expand[ing] belonging, [these novels] strive to keep belonging in play" (Walkowitz 25). The fact that the structure of the novel parallels two storylines in distant geographies where at least two languages are used, means that the content of the novel also rejects an identification with any national culture. In this regard, *The Forty Rules of Love* belongs to the category of "world-shaped" novels which "distribute narrative action across several continents, regions, or national territories"; are "multistranded: their chapters move back and forth among several points of view"; bring together "materials drawn from disparate geographies"; and "incorporate migration into setting and scene" (Walkowitz 121-2). The frame narrative of the novel mainly takes place in the US, particularly in Boston and Northampton, while the embedded narrative is located in Konya, with several shifts to other cities in the Middle East such as Baghdad (82) and Damascus (292). Thus the novel covers multiple geographies. The novel is multistranded in that every successive section is narrated by another character, fragmenting the narrative times of frame narrative and embedded novel.

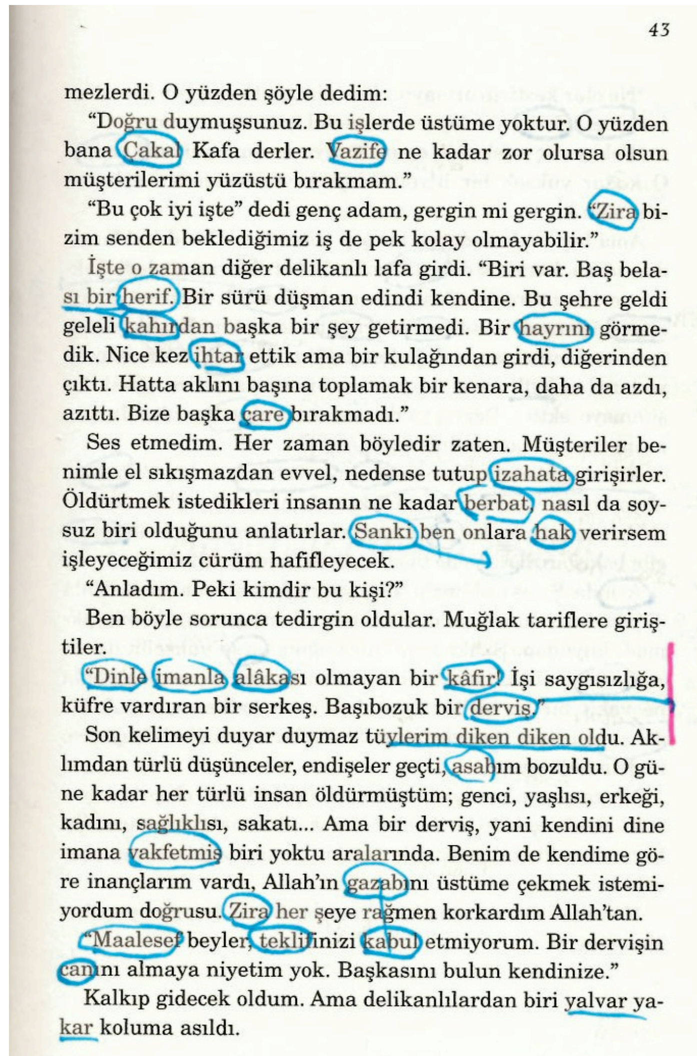
Walkowitz contends that in the contemporary age, when translation has become more important than previous centuries, readers and critics need to modify their perception of translation and "[i]nstead of asking about fidelity, whether the subsequent editions match the original, [they] might ask about innovation and about the various institutional and aesthetic frameworks that shape the work's ongoing production" (45). However, in the case of *The Forty Rules of Love* and its Turkish translation there are several disparities in terms of book length, diction, and the amount of Sufi and Islamic terminology.

The English version of the novel is 350 pages long, while the Turkish translation is seventy-five pages longer than the original. A small amount of this difference may be attributed to the variance in their fonts as the Turkish version has bigger characters. Yet the rest comprises narrative details which are absent in the original. In the English, the novelist resorts to linguistic economy and uses a concise language.[86] When she discusses religious details, she chooses to use Judeo-Christian words rather than their Islamic counterpart. For example, Aziz talks about "submission" and defines the word as "a form of peaceful acceptance of the terms of the universe, including the things we are currently unable to change and comprehend" (55). This definition and usage do not state the addressee of the submission as God. However, in the Turkish novel, Shafak uses "tevekkül" in the same narrative event. Tevekkül is the Turkish version of the Arabic Word *tawakkul* and it stands for the state of the believer who "has such trust in God that he confides in Him wholly, [*sic*] and leaves all his affairs in God's hands" (Arberry *Sufism 27*). In another example, Shams states that "[t]he Qur'an tells us each and every one of us was made in the best of the

[86] I randomly selected sections which narrate the same event in both languages and counted the number of words they consist of. I noted that there is an average of five to ten more words in the Turkish.

molds" (*Forty* 101). In the Turkish translation this reads: "Delikanli, Kuran-ı Kerim der ki, Biz insanı engüzel biçimde yarattık. Uludur insan. Kıymetlidir. Ne eziktir, ne aciz. Zaten Allah'ın doksan dokuz sıfatının arasında acz yoktur." (Şafak *Aşk* 135). While both versions mention the *Qur'an*, in English the content is very brief. On the other hand, in Turkish, Shafak talks about the God-given attributes of humankind, such as nobility and preciousness, and alludes to the ninety-nine names of God. Thus, the Turkish translation is much more detailed, precise, and elaborate than the original.

The following figure belongs to one of the earlier pages of the embedded novel within *Aşk* and the encircled words (Figure 3) are either of Arabic and Persian origins or a mixture of morphemes from both:



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mezlerdi. O yüzden şöyle dedim:

"Doğru duymuşsunuz. Bu işlerde üstüme yoktur. O yüzden bana Çakal Kafa derler. Vazife ne kadar zor olursa olsun müşterilerimi yüzüstü bırakmam."

"Bu çok iyi işte" dedi genç adam, gergin mi gergin. "Zira bizim senden beklediğimiz iş de pek kolay olmayabilir."

İşte o zaman diğer delikanlı lafa girdi. "Biri var. Baş belası bir herif. Bir sürü düşman edindi kendine. Bu şehre geldi geleli kahırdan başka bir şey getirmedi. Bir hayrını görmedik. Nice kez ihtar ettik ama bir kulağından girdi, diğerinden çıktı. Hatta aklını başına toplamak bir kenara, daha da azdı, azıttı. Bize başka çare bırakmadı."

Ses etmedim. Her zaman böyledir zaten. Müşteriler benimle el sıkışmazdan evvel, nedense tutup izahata girişirler. Öldürtmek istedikleri insanın ne kadar berbat, nasıl da soysuz biri olduğunu anlatırlar. Sanki ben onlara hak verirsem işleyeceğimiz cürüm hafifleyecek.

"Anladım. Peki kimdir bu kişi?"

Ben böyle sorunca tedirgin oldular. Muğlak tariflere giriştiler.

"Dinle imanla alâkası olmayan bir kâfir. İşi saygısızlığa, küfre vardıran bir serkeş. Başıbozuk bir derviş."

Son kelimeyi duyar duymaz tüylerim diken diken oldu. Aklımdan türlü düşünceler, endişeler geçti, asabım bozuldu. O güne kadar her türlü insan öldürmüştüm; genci, yaşlısı, erkeği, kadını, sağlıklısı, sakatı... Ama bir derviş, yani kendini dine imana vakfetmiş biri yoktu aralarında. Benim de kendime göre inançlarım vardı, Allah'ın gazabını üstüme çekmek istemiyordum doğrusu. Zira her şeye rağmen korkardım Allah'tan.

"Maalesef beyler, teklifinizi kabul etmiyorum. Bir dervişin canını almaya niyetim yok. Başkasını bulun kendinize."

Kalkıp gidecek oldum. Ama delikanlılardan biri yalvar yakar koluma asıldı.

Figure 3. Elif Şafak, *Aşk* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2014; print; 43).

It is obvious from Figure 3 that there is a density of borrowed words which still have wide or relatively lesser circulation in contemporary everyday Turkish. This example has twofold importance: it clearly exemplifies how the Turkish language is inextricably intertwined with the languages used within the borders of the Ottoman Empire, and at the same time it highlights that the novelist and the translator try very hard to present a Turkish language which is both historically accurate and understandable by contemporary readers.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* and asserted that in fictionalising Rumi's life, the novelist's aim is twofold: while she presents a heterodox experience of Islam as an alternative to the Western view of Islam as a unidimentional belief system, she also brings a long-forgotten poet forth and reminds her Turkish readers of Rumi's life, his legacy, and his world views. In the initial passages, the development of the novelist's interest in Rumi is traced back to her critically overlooked graduate studies in the Mevlevi belief system, which was developed from Rumi's discourses and practices. Following a brief analysis of the novel's reception and sales, I focused on the modelling of Ella and Aziz's contemporary experiences to that of Rumi and Shams, and discussed the wider arguments of this juxtaposition. For this, I turned to the concepts of conviviality and pluralism and how in her narrative of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, Shafak promotes these concepts in the novel through her use of the writing modes of epistolary, historical fiction and the *bildungsroman*. Due to the lack of criticism which engages in an analysis of the novel in two languages, I

adopted the notion of "born-translated" and compared the contents of Turkish and English versions of text in terms of their religious terminology. Observing the importance the novelist places on female characters, I argued that Rumi's spiritual development is presented via his treatment of three female characters which helped the novelist to instrumentalise the stages of Rumi's development as a mirror to shed light on the possibility of interpreting religion without gender discrimination. For this purpose, the dialogue of Kimya and Shams was crucial in that the questions she posed about a misogynist interpretation of the *Qur'an* and Shams' interpretations of it means the novel sheds light on the power play in the Qur'anic exegesis. Through these characters, Shafak suggests an unprejudiced exegesis of the holy book. Considered in this light, in her novel *The Forty Rules of Love*, Shafak, following her research on the place of women in the Mevlevi (Mawlawi) thought and discourses of masculinity, sets out to challenge misogynous interpretations of the *Qur'an* and Islam.

Chapter 3 Beyond Detective Fiction and the Fantastic Mode: Capitalism and Nationalism in Ahmet Ümit's *The Dervish Gate*

Of the three novelists who are scrutinised in this thesis, Ahmet Ümit is the only one who has had substantial political involvement. "The life an author lives determines their tone", asserts Ümit, as he invites readers to pay attention to his life in the interpretation of his works (Ümit, qtd. in Kula 331; my translation). The author is a political activist and he was an active member of the Turkish Communist Party between 1974 and 1989. Ümit explains that in the mid-1970s he decided to participate in a political organisation alongside some friends, and he explains the reasons for their involvement as follows:

> We wanted that magnificent world where everybody can work according to their abilities, where assets are distributed according to their needs, where people can rightly and freely live without segregation of language, religion, and race, without killing or humiliating each other. (Ümit *İnsan* 44; my translation)

During his active political years, he fled the country on a counterfeit passport and spent a year at the Institute of Scientific Information on Social Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow.[87] In an interview with Veyis Ates, Ümit reveals that his time in Moscow was an intellectual and ideological turning point, where he realised that the Russian city was far from perfect, and indeed that it had several significant unresolved problems (np.). When questioned about this by the researcher, the novelist

[87] Though the novelist refers to his time in Moscow in various sources, only three sources state his engagement with the academy. See the newspaper article which provides a brief bibliography of the author: http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/kelebek/hayat/ahmet-ÜmitÜmit-kimdir-biyografisi-40076797 . Also, see the publisher's webpage http://www.everestyayinlari.com/yazar-detay.php?w=1782. See also British Council Literature, *The London Book Fair Turkey Market Focus* (2013), <https://issuu.com/bcliterature/docs/turkey-market-focus> p. 42 [accessed 25 February 2018].

explains: "[w]hen I went there, I saw that it was not the system that I imagined as Socialism. It was not the society that I imagined, as I had imagined a much more ideal society, a much better one" (Ümit on 200; my translation).[88] In the same manner, he became disillusioned with the practices of the communist organisation in Turkey, which according to the author "sacrificed a pluralist democratic culture and creation of new ethics for the sake of a charismatic leader and a well-functioning party apparatus" (Ümit *İnsan* 52; my translation). As such, Ümit's disappointment becomes the primary reason for his engagement in a writing career through which Ümit channels his disillusionment into productivity and tries to reach the 'magnificent' world he desires through his literary works. Writing mainly in the genre of detective fiction (which is probably shaped by his first-person experiences of escaping from Turkey, impersonation, and fakery through his adopting a false identity to flee the country), the novelist critically engages in a criticism of Turkish governmental policies, legal practices, and social problems. The destruction of historical buildings, and discussions of identity and ethnicity are among the common themes of his oeuvre.

Having started his politically influenced writing career, Ümit became "the second best-selling author in 2010, after Elif Şafak" in Turkey (Tüfekçioğlu 15 en. 2). As well as novels, he has also published works of poetry, short stories, and fairytales.[89] However, this chapter particularly focuses on Ümit's ninth novel, entitled *Bab-i Esrar* (2008). The Turkish title *Bab-i Esrar* means 'the door of secrets' in Ottoman Turkish and it was translated into English by Elke Dixon under the title *The Dervish Gate* in 2011. Compared with Shafak's fondness for Ottoman vocabulary, Ümit does not share

[88] For the translation of the full interview, see '**Appendix 1: The Interview with Ahmet Ümit**' at the end of this thesis which runs from the pages of 198 to 215.

[89] He wrote two collection of short stories *Masal Masal İçinde* (1995) and *Şeytan Ayrıntıda Gizlidir* (2002). His only production of children's literature is *Olmayan Ülke* (2014) and, with his last novel *Kırlangıç Çığlıgı*, which was published in 2018, he has published fourteen novels.

the same sentiment since he does not use this language throughout the novel. Instead, his choice of a title in Ottoman Turkish suggests that he attempts to create curiosity in the reader as Ottoman Turkish is not understood by the vast majority of modern Turkish users. The novel tells the story of the protagonist Karen Kimya Greenwood, a British-Turkish insurance expert. Karen comes to the city of Konya in Turkey on a work assignment to investigate a fire at the Yakut Hotel. The fire is infamous in the world of the novel since it caused the deaths of two workers. Karen's first-person account opens and closes on an aeroplane journey. The narrator immediately reveals her anxieties about coming to Konya, the hometown of her Turkish father, Sufi Poyraz Efendi, who left her family in order to seek spiritual union with God following the guidance of his sheikh, Shah Nesim. During her short time in Konya, she works as a private investigator to discover whether the hotel fire was an accident or arson and thereby determine whether the hotel owner is entitled to receive "three million pound[s]" compensation from the insurance company (3). Also, more personally, her time in Konya provides Karen with the opportunity to understand Sufism, and specifically her father's practice of it, thereby helping her to reconcile herself to her father's abandonment. To develop this strand, the novelist uses the fantastic mode in order to bring Karen into contact with Shams and her father through dream sequences where she talks to and transforms into the thirteenth-century mystic Shams.

The communist background of the novelist resurfaces in *The Dervish Gate* where through Shams the author confronts the attitude of the Konyans, who stand for the racist and class-prejudiced politicians whose treatments differ with regards to the social classes. For Ümit:

> What is important is to find a common denominator of being human without leaving one's ethnic identity. However, as was the case when nation-states were founded, there are still people who prefer

> homogeneity to heterogeneity. While economy, art, and science are globalised, unfortunately in politics there are those who advocate, "The greatest race is ours" […] even now. (Ümit in Kula 370; my translation)

What Ümit observes and criticises in politics is, in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' terms, an ongoing "class antagonism" wherein categorisations of racial, ethnic, and economic means dominate (220).

Ümit's statement about the impact of the writer's life on his literary production is also an indicator of why he chose to portray Rumi in *The Dervish Gate*. While Rumi's contemporaries had a rigid understanding of religion and were hostile towards Shams and his many outlandish characteristics, Rumi approached Shams with "love and a sincere interest" (Eflâki 490). Afsal Iqbal notes that Rumi was "no bigot" and that "[p]etty differences of creed did not upset him" (2). In a similar vein to Iqbal, Franklin Lewis adumbrates Rumi's "constructive ecumenical attitude towards various creeds" (*Rumi* 406). Even though the poet was an aristocrat by birth, and his family settled in Konya following "the invitation of the 'Ala-ud-Din Kaiqubad", his students were composed not only of members of the royal family but also of peasants (Iqbal 64, 3). In his poetry, Rumi maintains this attitude and encourages the integration of people from various religious, social, and intellectual backgrounds. In *Masnavi* Book II, the poet asserts that "[t]he religion of Love is apart from all religions: for lovers, the (only) religion and creed is − God" (332). Hence, the poet implies that regardless of differences in the deities and the books people believe in, the end result is love for God. These examples clearly show how Rumi's world view was different from that of his fellow Konyans. Ümit asserts that Rumi was "attentive not to intervene with the government, presented an alternative life in his works [… and] adopted a contrarian attitude to quotidian life" (Ümit *İnsan* 45; my translation). Therefore, Rumi's

inclusionary approach to other people as well as his adversarial stance towards strict ideas around religion and ways of living appear to be among the reasons that Ümit chooses to portray Rumi in his novel.

The novel was published a year after UNESCO's celebration of the 800th anniversary of Rumi's birth, and is therefore chronologically located between the publications of *The Black Book* and *The Forty Rules of Love*. *Bab-i Esrar* was "still on the bestseller list of many mainstream bookstores" in Turkey by the time its English translation was published in 2011 (Tüfekçioğlu 15 en. 2). Establishing Karen's quasi-familiarity with Sufism through her father, the novelist fictionalises fragments of Rumi's and Shams' lives and relationship. Karen's lack of knowledge about Sufism allows Ümit to create a platform for the elucidation of information about several aspects of Sufi life, including Sufi clothing as well as the Sufi concepts of dying before death and spiritual love. What is more important, however, are Ümit's wider arguments about Turkish history, Turkish nationalism, and capitalism, as well as his criticism of contemporary life in Turkey.

Although a decade has passed since the publication of the novel in 2008, there exist only a small number of critical works on it. Berna Akyüz Sizgen focuses on the novel's postmodern and fantastic elements (101). Fethi Demir reads the novel as a work of postmodern detective fiction and focuses on the postmodernist techniques the novelist uses in his composition of the novel. These techniques include intertextuality, and the creation of a palimpsestic or collage form, even though these techniques are not exclusive to postmodern fiction (249). While Hasan Yürek compares the Turkish texts of *The Forty Rules of Love* and *The Dervish Gate* in terms of their plot, themes, and narrative structures, Zeynep Tüfekçioğlu is the only critic who works with the English translation of the novel. She analyses its portrayal of Sufi teachings and its

literary form, which she regards as an example of the *bildungsroman* (10). To varying degrees, these critics comment on the fantastic nature of the novel (Akyüz Sizgen 97; Tüfekçioğlu 1; Demir 250; Yürek 1633). Tüfekçioğlu interprets the mode as signalling the protagonist's unreliability since Karen wavers between her dreams and reality (9). Akyüz Sizgen accepts the fantastic elements of the novel but claims that it "is not a fantastic novel" (101; my translation). These critical works are mostly descriptive in nature and do not engage in close textual analysis. More importantly, the existing criticism does not scrutinise the novel as a product of the fantastic genre even though, as I demonstrate below, it exhibits all the characteristics of the genre as designated by Tzvetan Todorov. This chapter is only the second study to have been undertaken in relation to the English translation of the novel. To the best of my knowledge, this chapter is also the only study undertaken with a consideration of both the Turkish original of the novel and its English translation. Having the chance of comparing the work in both languages makes it possible to locate the text in its local and global context and how it is perceived in different literary traditions.

Todorov describes the fantastic mode as being typified by characters' "hesitation" when encountering an "uncanny phenomenon" as to whether they should interpret this according to "natural causes" or opt for the explanation of "supernatural causes" (24-26). In other words, the fantastic mode sits at the point of maximum ambiguity between two poles such as "reality or dream" and "truth or illusion" (Todorov 25). In *The Dervish Gate*, there are a number of passages where Karen converses with the thirteenth-century mystic Shams and physically transforms into him (23-24, 118-130). Neither the narrative nor Karen offer an explanation as to whether the events of the novel are actual experiences, or dreams and hallucinations borne out of Karen's anxiety. Instead, Ümit leaves interpretations up to the reader,

while offering a few fragmentary clues over the course of the narrative arc. However, current criticism of the novel does not unpack the novel's significance as a frame narrative with two layers of oneiric embedded narratives, even though the novelist presents both paratextual and in-text inferences which encourage such a reading.

Before engaging in an in-depth analysis of the novel, its narrative layers, and their implications in *The Dervish Gate*, I would like to give a brief account of these complex layers and their contents. The novelist structures his story as composed of three main levels: ground, mimetic, and fantastic. These layers can be visualised as three encompassing circles. The opening and closing scenes of the novel, where Karen is on a flight from Istanbul to Konya, constitute the narrative's ground level (3-9, 404-405). In this frame, there is a narrative layer of a dream which consists of Karen's time in Konya (10-403). Within this dream narrative, there are twelve episodes of secondary dream layers (23-24, 38-41, 41-43, 103-104, 118-30, 151-64, 196-202, 293-98, 309-18, 344-49, 382-87, 387-98). Thus, in total, there are fourteen narratives in this novel. Each of the embedded narratives respectively returns to a previous narrative they interrupt. Ümit mostly omits "boundary-signalling expressions" for these narrative layers (Ryan 379). Through the extensive number of narrative layers, and the lack of information about where these layers begin and end, the novelist turns the act of reading into a detective novel (in which the novel generically locates itself), and therefore into a textual investigation. He invites his readers actively to engage in armchair detection of the novel's structure by providing clues.

The first clue about the importance of narrative layers is that the novel contains an epigraph which reads, "The world is a dream within a dream" (Ümit *Dervish* np.). This epigraph which is introduced as an Indian proverb invites a two-fold interpretation. On the one hand, this epigraph hints at Rumi's ideas about form and the

external appearance of things (Chittick *The Sufi* 19; Tüfekçioğlu 2). As is richly stated in the *Masnavi* Book VI, "[f]orm is shadow, reality is the sun: the shadowless light is (only to be found) in the ruin" (Rumi 1476). In a footnote accompanying his translation, Reynold A. Nicholson explains that by ruin, Rumi refers to the time "when material forms are eliminated" (Reynold in Rumi 1476 fn.1). In a similar vein, reality refers to meaning as opposed to form. For Rumi, the terrestrial realm is "a dream, a prison, a trap, foam thrown up from the ocean" (Chittick *The Sufi* 19). Thus, the terrestrial realm stands for form. The metaphors such as the ocean foam underline the finitude of form since the foam produced by the ocean waves is transient. Considered in this regard, the epigraph indicates that neither the world nor the fictional world of the novel is the ultimate reality. At the same time, the epigraph alludes to "A Dream within a Dream", a poem of Edgar Allan Poe. Poe was of course the pioneer of the detective genre with his "The Murders in the Rue Morque" in 1841 (Mason 8). The poem reads "All that we see or seem | Is but a dream within a dream" (Poe 97). Similarly to Rumi's verse, Poe's poetic persona asserts his double distance from reality and warns the reader of his fictionality. On the other hand, the epigraph signals that the world described in the ensuing pages is fictional, a dream of the narrator's. That is, it foreshadows the ending in which Karen Kimya Greenwood wakes up on an aeroplane to find that her surroundings and interior monologues are nothing more than echoes of the opening scene of the novel.

A close reading of the opening and closing scenes of the novel reveals that the novelist exactly replicates Karen's surroundings in the latter. Both sections start with the same sentence "[t]he plane was only half an hour from starting its descent" (3, 404). In the first two chapters of the novel, Karen is on an aeroplane from Istanbul to Konya as the second part of her journey from London to the southern Turkish city (8).

Karen observes her surroundings and fellow passengers including the "middle-aged woman […who is] dying to talk" to her and "the young girl and her boyfriend" who sit in front of her (4, 5). In her journey at the end of the novel, Karen briefly mentions the young couple and states that the woman "no longer pay[s] [her] attention" (404). These allusions to the passengers create the effect of a continuum between the two journeys and suggest that all the narrative in between is a dream. However, during her second journey Karen is puzzled as she is unsure whether "the plane [is] going to land in the sunny city of Konya, or perpetually foggy London" (404). Contrary to the protagonist's "ambiguous" state of mind which, according to Tzvetan Todorov, is a key feature of the fantastic mode, Karen's references to passengers who are identical to the ones on the first flight she takes at the beginning of the novel suggests that she is still onboard the same flight (31). These allusions to the passengers suggest that all the narrative in between is a dream. In both scenes, Ümit presents the reader with topographical clues concerning the Konya plain, which is a land of drought, "a dark brown expanse of earth" (4, 404). In the novel, Mennan Fidan, who is the Konyan representative of the insurance company that Karen works for, compares London to Konya stating "[i]t's such a green city, not like here" (Ümit *Dervish* 17). Thus, the novelist hints at the barrenness of Konya. Therefore, the landscape Karen sees during the flight is that of Konya rather than London, since if she were on her way to London in the novel's final pages, she would have seen greener scenery. Another internal piece of evidence which strengthens this reading of the novel as a dream, is the absence of time. Karen does not specify when she sets off to Konya, and nor does she reveal any temporal markers which might help the reader place the novel in a temporally specific background. Yet it is evident in the first flight scene of the novel that the protagonist's time in Konya is expected to be brief, as the character states that "[t]his would be a

short trip, a few days at most" (Ümit *Dervish* 8)). Considering the 400-page length of the novel, the duration of the events is parallel to dream time in that people feel that the duration of their dream can span years, whereas an actual dream may take only around five to thirty minutes (Krippner, Bogzaran and de Carvalho 2). All these clues, when combined with the epigraph, highlight that the novel under scrutiny is made up of dream sequences.

The Fantastic and Dreams

> You're on the wrong side of the curtain, my girl. When you look from there, the story seems to illustrate a lack of conscience, but if you come to this side of the curtain, you'll see a profound story of arcane wisdom. (262)
>
> Ahmet Ümit, *The Dervish Gate*

While the continuous ambiguity of a character is an important signifier of a novel's fantastic mode in Todorov's structuralist analysis, the theorist proposed only three functions of the implementation of the fantastic in a work of art. These are respectively "pragmatic", "semantic", and "syntactic" (Todorov 162). In the first, "the supernatural disturbs, alarms, or simply keeps the reader in suspense"; in the second it has a "manifestation" of its own; and in the third, the supernatural helps the improvement of the narrative (Todorov 162). Later critics, such as Rosemary Jackson and Lucie Armitt, find Todorov's structuralist approach limiting and the functions he designated for the mode to be shallow (Armitt *Theorising* 30). Jackson views the fantastic mode as being intrinsically linked with ideology and suggests that by "[p]resenting that which cannot be, but *is*, fantasy exposes a culture's definition of that which can be" (23; emphasis in original). What Jackson suggests is that the fantastic introduces the possibility of alternatives with its engagement with the impossible, thereby opening a horizon for questioning current belief systems, taboos, and what is considered to be impossible in a society. For Jackson, the fantastic "points to or suggests the basis upon which cultural orders rests" as it goes beyond the boundaries of the "dominant value systems" (4). Similarly, Armitt views the fantastic as an "endlessly open and thus non-containable text" which "pose[s] a dangerous threat to established notions of fixity and conformity" (Armitt *Theorising* 33). Through its non-containment, she argues, the

fantastic becomes an "appealing form for the exploration of socio-political marginality and ex-centricity" (Armitt *Theorising* 33). Therefore, it is not surprising that the novelist resorts to this mode in his social critique.

In the novel, Ümit introduces the fantastic through Karen's numerous dream sequences where she can go beyond the limitations of her body and experience a different era. By employing the fantastic mode in *The Dervish Gate*, Ümit challenges the nationalist, reason-based, realist, and didactic characteristics of the post-Republican novel. In parallel with changes in political culture that came with the foundation of the Republic, the Turkish novel became a "literature without literariness", a mere transmitter of nationalist and rationalist teachings (Ertürk 73). Berna Moran states that in this era "authors targeted the fantastic mode and viewed it as the enemy of the novel which should narrate 'what is possible'" (Moran *Türk* 64; my translation). This is true to such a degree that, according to Moran, by the time his critical work on Turkish literature was published in 1997, no work of the fantastic (in the Todorovian sense of the term) had yet been published in Turkish literature (*Türk* 60). This is partly the result of the presence of the fantastic oral and written literatures in the Ottoman era under the influence of Islam and the Republican commitment to break away from anything relevant to the Ottoman past. Put differently, while in the literature of the pre-Republican era it is possible to find the alternative and celestial world of otherworldly beings such as djinns and spirits, in the Republican period, "rationalism which is confined to positivism" dominates the scene (Aslan 241; my translation). Pelin Aslan Ayar is more flexible than Moran in her definition of the fantastic, in that she does not require the mode to pursue its ambiguity right through to the novel's end. Even if such authors as Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpinar used the fantastic mode in novels including *Efsuncu Baba* (1924), this was mainly to juxtapose reason

with spirituality to the former's benefit (Ayar 179). Noting the underdevelopment of the mode in Turkish literature, Aslan Ayar argues that amongst the rare instances of fantastic novels, the fantastic was used as "a tool for raising awareness of and intensifying Turkishness" (137). By writing in a mode which is both ignored and instrumentalised for nationalist propaganda in Turkish literary history, Ümit objects to the rigid values of the Turkish novel, transgressing those values in favour of a heterogeneity in content and style, and overturns the function of the fantastic by using it for the purposes of criticising Turkish nationalism and identity.

Ümit's challenge to the nationalist conventions of the Turkish novel is presented in the novel through the frame narratives touched on earlier. Creating intricate strata in his narrative, the novelist establishes these conventions in the mimetic first layer, which narrates Karen's time in Konya, and then contests these conventions in the fantastic second layer where Karen converses with and metamorphoses into Shams. At the mimetic level, the novelist introduces two nationalities: English and Turkish. Karen's ethnic identity is presented through her name, Karen Kimya Greenwood (Ümit *Dervish* 27). As the combination of her first and second names suggests, she is of dual ethnic heritage. The location of her Turkish name suggests that her Turkish identity is squeezed in between her English origins and the culture she lives in within London. Her father, Poyraz Efendi, is a Turkish Sufi who for a while left his dervish lodge and country to live with Karen's English mother, Susan. Karen's name as a marker of identity is evoked through several narrative references. When Karen is addressed by her father's spiritual friend and mentor as Kimya, her mother interposes and rebukes him, exclaiming: "Her name is Karen, not Kimya!" (Ümit *Dervish* 7). Upon Poyraz's departure, however, Karen ceases to use her middle name as a protest against being left behind, and in her aeroplane journey to

Konya she remarks that "[t]he only ones to ever call [her] Kimya were [her] father and his spiritual friend Shah Nesim" (Ümit *Dervish* 6).

Yet naming as an indicator of ethnicity surfaces again when Karen checks in to her hotel, where the receptionist inquiries about her second name by saying "[t]he English don't really use the name so… I'm guessing you have some Turkish in you" (Ümit *Dervish* 27). She briskly reacts to the receptionist's comment and rebukes him with her answer "[n]o, I'm English" (Ümit *Dervish* 27). Her uncompromising stance against being identified as Turkish leads to her positioning and categorising Turkish people as the other. Supporting these feelings, Daniel Vitkus, in his book *Turning Turk*, states that English subjects' increasing encounter with peoples of other cultures in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries intensified their fear of "turning Turk", or becoming like the subjects of the other cultures, thereby strengthening "notions of racial identity" (9). In a conversation with Izzet Efendi, a practising Sufi friend of her father, Karen refers to Turkish customs as *his* customs and states that it will take a while for her to become accustomed to them (Ümit *Dervish* 366). To this, Izzet Efendi replies that "[t]hey are your customs, too" and asserts that she should not forget that she is Poyraz's daughter (Ümit *Dervish* 360). Regardless of her dual heritage as a Turkish-English person living in London, Karen's disownment of her Turkish ancestry is a tacit example of Viktus's concept of the fear of turning Turk which strengthens the character's cleaving to her Englishness. Even though her father is a Konyan and she had been to Konya with him several years earlier, Karen expresses the "loneliness of being a stranger in a strange country" and views Turkey as "a foreign country" (Ümit *Dervish* 23, 30). Here, 'loneliness' suggests the isolation and low mood of the protagonist due to her father's departure. To cope with this, Karen projects her anger on to Turkish people. She uses the adjectives of 'strange' and 'foreign' to distance

herself even more from the country with which she is unfamiliar (Ümit *Dervish* 23, 30). Karen's negative view of Turkishness and her denial of her Turkish ancestry suggest that on the novel's mimetic level the concept of identity is static rather than fluid. The character does not have authorial approval for her approach as Ümit sets his critical tone by adverbs like "curtly", "irritably" in his depiction of Karen's temper in her conversations with locals (*Dervish* 27, 11). Yet the novelist establishes this universe in order to overturn it in the fantastic layer of the novel.

Karen's view of her Englishness and her stigmatisation of Turkish ethnicity alludes to the nationalist policies of Republican Turkey whereby Turkishness has been officially regarded as a superior, collective identity. Her contempt for local people manifests itself in several narrative moments. Ümit shows the reader some small dialogues of locals with Karen where the former tries very hard to engage in a conversation with the latter to make her feel welcomed. Yet Karen reflects on this in an interior monologue by stating "I knew all about this Turkish habit of becoming over-friendly with foreigners" (Ümit *Dervish* 17). In this moment as in many others Karen's heightened idea of Englishness is juxtaposed with her scornful approach to Turkish identity without having a clearer idea about the ethnic origins of the interlocutor. This kind of elevation of a national identity was in practice until very recently in Turkey. For example, on every school day until October 2013, it was compulsory at primary schools to recite the Student Oath which reads "I am a Turk, I am honest, I am hardworking [… h]ow happy is one who says, 'I am a Turk!'" (Mason 20-21). Especially from the perspectives of the several ethnic minorities the Republic inherited from the Ottoman Empire, these remarks (which were in use when Ümit published the Turkish original of the novel) are discriminatory and exclusive. Similarly, the Republic did not allow minorities to watch television or to be educated

in their own languages until 2002 (Ertürk 184). Such policies are among the causes of the ongoing Turkish-Kurdish conflict which began in 1978.

Ümit states that some of his novels have a "thesis" and that *The Dervish Gate* is one of these novels (Ümit on 202; my translation). What he means by 'thesis' is not a well-defended long argument in the sense of the word in English. Instead, he uses this word to underline that he did extensive historical reading on each topic his novels require. The specific intertextual references to current scholarship on Rumi, and the bibliography Ümit provides at the end of the Turkish original of *The Dervish Gate*, supports his statement (393-94). However, the novel has a thesis in the other sense of the word since through the techniques and devices Ümit uses in this work, the novelist suggests significant political arguments which are made manifest at regular intervals throughout the narrative. Ümit's use of metamorphosis is no exception in that it provides the author with a platform to discuss the notion of identity.

Ümit does not directly write a novel about Rumi set in the age he lived. Instead, he creates a contemporary story and embeds the historical figure in dream sequences through the focalisation of Shams. The narrative possibility of Karen's transformation into Rumi would be much more informative about the life of the timeless poet than her transformation into Shams, as Shams only spent two years with Rumi. Yet, the novelist opts for a literary transformation of Karen into Shams. Even though these episodes are narrated through Karen-as-Shams and provide the reader with important moments and tiny glimpses of Rumi's life, they do not dwell on Rumi's feelings, his experiences, and the struggle he went through during his time as Shams' disciple. Why, then, does the novelist transform his main character into a historic figure, Shams, who was so

ostracised in real life that even after their deaths Rumi and he were not placed in the same mausoleum?[90] The remainder of this section aims to answer this question.

While in the mimetic stratum the novelist conforms to the nationalist conventions of the Republic by presenting a fictional word driven by national identities, at the fantastic level he juxtaposes Karen's views with those of Shams. In one narrative instance, Karen watches a documentary on television about the Rumi-Shams relationship in a dream state, whereupon Shams appears on the television and addresses her with the purpose of correcting the presenter's remarks about how "overjoyed" the Konyan locals were at Shams' arrival (Ümit *Dervish* 151). Following Karen's enquiry about the reason behind the Konyans' hostility toward him, Shams explains:

> They didn't understand. What they didn't understand, they deemed wicked. […] They were committing crimes against humanity, […w]hat they thought was morality was intolerance. (Ümit *Dervish* 152-53)

In this excerpt, Shams complains that the locals did not pay attention to getting to know him, and he thereby criticises their denigration of the unknown. The novelist, via Shams, uses the third-person plural pronoun 'they' as a signifier for the locals of Konya. Compared to Shams' singularity, the number of people this pronoun refers to bespeaks that Shams is a minority in the city. Through the documentary reportage which contradicts Shams' explanation, Ümit criticises populist pseudohistory which, according to Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman, is "*the rewriting of the past for present personal and political purposes*" (2; emphasis in original). When I asked him

[90] Franklin Lewis states that there are around fifty cenotaphs in Rumi's mausoleum ranging from Rumi's family members to his closest followers as well as Selâhaddin Zerkûb and Çelebi Hüsameddin who were succerssors of Shams in Rumi's transformation into a timeless poet. However, Lewis does not list Shams' name among the occupants of these cenotaphs (428-29). Instead, Lewis mentions a "Shrine of Shams" where Shams is allegedly buried (190). This site, which is still open to visitors, is located one kilometre away from Rumi's mausoleum.

about this narrative event in our interview, the novelist stated that "[h]istory is generally written by the victors. Shams's murderers were fundamentalists of the thirteenth-century Konya. They killed him then, but now they reclaim him." (Ümit on 215; my translation). By narrating this pseudohistory of Shams's acceptance by locals in the novel, the novelist draws attention to the importance of changing the mindset there and then rather than correcting the past by rewriting history. What the novelist implies is that mistakes in cultural memory cannot be erased by rewriting history as one pleases and that even though Shams is seen through new eyes in today's Turkey, the view of the other in the contemporary setting of the novel has not changed. That is, Shams' statements about thirteenth-century Konyans are also applicable to Karen since she approaches the locals of contemporary Konya in a similar manner to that with which the thirteenth-century Konyans approached Shams. By voicing the feelings of a migrant and member of a minority group, the novelist also alludes to the contemporary ethnic conflicts between Turkish and Kurdish people in Turkey. Through the negation of the noun 'tolerance' with the use of prefix of 'in-' to criticise the Konyans' view of Shams, the novelist offers tolerance as a solution. In his interview with Onur Bilge Kula, Ümit expresses that "the side art takes is clear: to advocate for those helpless people who are under the state's relentless attack" (Ümit in Kula 368; my translation). Considering this statement and Shams' utterances in the novel, the novelist criticises the nation-state ideology of Turkey through Karen and Konyans' approaches to the other.

To elaborate on the discussion of national identity, the novelist resorts to the concept of metamorphosis. Before Karen's first transformation happens, the novelist both signals it and explains this choice through Shams's statement: "What words cannot explain, life will. To learn the truth, one needs not words, but experiences"

(121). Even though Karen dreams of Shams in several episodes within the narrative, her physical identification with him occurs only after her bag is snatched by a thief and her passport is stolen (135). Her British passport is a symbol of her strong commitment to her national identity and the loss of it creates an opportunity for the novelist to disturb Karen's strict sense of identity. Critics such as Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, Lucie Armitt, Irving Massey, and Bruce Clarke state that metamorphosis (which is frequently used in fantastic literature) is closely linked with identity (Tymieiecka xii; Massey 17; Clarke 1-2, Armitt *Theorising* 150). Massey states that "we get to know ourselves only through knowing that which is not ourselves" (19). Metamorphosis, by "sever[ing] the mental and the physical identity of the metamorph" makes stepping out of one's self possible (Clarke 56). By separating Karen's consciousness from her body and placing it into Shams' body, the novelist uses metamorphosis as a medium to make Karen understand Shams whom she has criticised severely.

Karen's transformation takes place in "Merej el-Bahrain" (134). Here, the choice of place deserves attention. It alludes to two suras al-Furkan ('The Criterion') and al-Rahman ('The Compassionate') in the *Qur'an* (55:19-20; 25: 53).[91] Muhammed Hamdi Yazir's translation of the *Qur'an* is illuminating as it consists of both a translation and a transliteration.[92] The 53rd verse of sura al-Furqan is translated into English as follows "And He it is Who mixed the two seas, one sweet, satisfying, the

[91] One cannot find this expression in a translation of the *Qur'an*. Although this expression is present in the original *Qur'an*, it is lost in translation into other languages. For example, in the English and the Turkish translations of the *Qur'an*, Merej el-bahrain is not written, as this phrasing is translated rather than transliterated into these two languages. Therefore, it does not appear in the same way it does in the novel. Instead, it is translated into English as "mixed two seas" (*The Study Quran* 25:53 899).

[92] In this work, the transliteration of the 53rd verse of sura Al-Furqan reads as "veĥüve *merace lleźi lbehrain* ĥâźấ aźbün fürâtünv veĥâźâ milhun ücâc vecèale beyneĥüma berzehanv vehicrânmmehcûrâ" (*Kur'ân-ı Kerìm* 363; emphasis added).

other salty, bitter, and set between them a divide and a barrier, forbidden" (*The Study Qu'ran* 25:53 899-900). Here, the verse refers to the creation of a geographic event of the meeting of the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea at the Straits of Gibraltar or the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific Ocean. In the *Qur'an*, this verse stands for God's power in the creation of matter and His bringing together but not merging these two bodies of water.

The location of Merej el-Bahrain in the novel also evokes the historical meeting of Rumi and Shams, as the place where they met was named in this way. Franklin Lewis in his biography on Rumi confirms that Rumi and Shams' initial meeting place is retrospectively called "Marj al-bahrayn (the plain wherein two seas surge together)" and states that it refers to the *Qur'an* (155). The allusion to the Qur'anic verse is a metaphor for the characteristic differences of Rumi and Shams. While Rumi, as in the verse, is soft and sweet, Shams stands for the bitter and salty sea. Through re-enacting this historical meeting as a meeting of two consciousnesses in a single body, the novelist underlines the differences of Karen's and Shams' personalities. Whereas in Rumi's and Shams' relationship, Shams stands for hostility and harshness, in its re-enactment in centuries later, it is Karen who behaves in such a way. Through this juxtaposition, the novelist implies that the age Karen lives in is less tolerant than the age of Shams and that humanity is regressing in terms of benevolence and tolerance. At the same time, the novelist, through his allusion to Merej el-Bahrain and his bringing together of Karen and Shams in the fantastic mode, implies that people of different nature can come together without compromising their own natures.

When Karen realises that she has gone back to an earlier era, all she thinks about is "what these people [of the Seljuq Empire] from centuries ago" would think of her in her contemporary dress (124). Her judgement is clouded with appearances rather

than reality. Karen hears Shams' answer, and when she looks at a "copper tray" she realises that she is in his body and the lips of the host body are synchronised with Shams' answers (124). From the reflection Shams utters the following words:

> Let this city, now seven hundred years less spoiled, fill you with a new soul and teach you what took place here. Karen or Shams, what does it matter? Aren't we all from the same mould? Didn't we all enter life with the same breath? (124)

Here the novelist uses Shams to point out the latter's inclusive approach to humanity and how human beings are the same in essence. Conversely, as discussed earlier, Karen's separatist approaches to Turkish people and Turkishness as well as her own national identity deny her the opportunity to understand not only the other but also herself. Therefore, the novelist places these two characters' consciousnesses in a single body, urging Karen on in her attempt to understand Shams, for she is given no chance to escape the borders of his body. By transforming his main character into another character who is not liked by his contemporaries, Ümit uses metamorphosis, in Jackson's terms, as a "desire to lose a separative human consciousness" (82). He literally puts Karen in Shams' shoes and lets her see through his eyes, thereby highlighting the importance of giving people a chance before forming judgements about their personalities.

Karen's metamorphosis into another body from an earlier time period provides the novelist with the opportunity to compare thirteenth-century Konya to the present city, and Ümit views the former as "less spoiled" (124). I intentionally state that it is Ümit's view rather than his fictional character, Shams', as Ümit's disappointment with rapid urbanisation is ever-present in nearly all of his novels. For example, in *İstanbul Hatırası* (2010), there is an "Association of Defending Istanbul" and in the building of this association, there is a photograph of a five-star hotel which replaces the historic

Great Byzantium Palace (35). Similarly, in *Kırlangıç Çığlıgı* (2018), the novelist through his protagonist, Chief Inspector Nevzat, frequently criticises rapid urbanisation and unsightly skyscrapers (256). In *The Dervish Gate*, rapid and unguided urbanisation is one of the small-scale criticisms of the contemporary setting. Such criticism also resurfaces when Karen talks to her mother Susan on the phone, the latter having visited the city around thirty years earlier. Susan, Karen's activist mother, asks about the appearance of the city and when Karen talks about "tall buildings", Susan exclaims that "[t]hey're ruining the place [… d]estroying all the beauty of it" (144). In these two narrative moments, the novelist, juxtaposing the same city in two centuries, criticises unplanned urbanisation.

Ümit's Detective Fiction

In an interview with Erdem Öztop, Ümit states that writers should be oppositional and dissident, and that detective fiction is the most suitable genre for social criticism (np.). In each of his novels, Ümit presents a wide range of crimes which capture the zeitgeist of the time they were written, and these novels can be compared to the newspapers of the time in terms of their subject matter. For example, his most recent novel *Kırlangıç Çığlığı* (2018) centres around Syrian refugees, the problem of missing children, and the resultant increase of paedophilia in Turkey over the last few years. According to a report of Şiddeti Önleme ve Rehabilitasyon Derneği (Association of Prevention of Violence and Rehabilitation) and Acıbadem Üniversity published in 2018, that the number of paedophilia victims was 74,064 in 2014 while this number increased to 83,552 in 2016 (Polat, et al. 1). Mary Evans notes that the "imagination of crime offers highly pertinent but often largely ignored insights into social life" (9). Similarly, for Ümit, humans' tendency to commit crime runs in their blood; therefore, crime

performs the function of "a litmus paper providing an insight into the human nature and society" (*İnsan* 23-24). In the various narrative levels of *The Dervish Gate*, there are multiple crimes including murder, arson, kidnapping, amputation, stoning, and theft. Some of these crimes are committed for financial, religious, and familial reasons while others are a manifestation of power. This section is dedicated particularly to the novel's discussion of financially and religiously motivated crimes.

Writing about American crime novelist Raymond Chandler's *The High Window* (1942), Ümit suggests that "[i]f you come across a complex murder, follow the money" (Ümit *İnsan* 173; my translation). This statement implies that Ümit considers monetary gain as a likely motivation for committing crime. Similarly, according to Marxist Ernest Mandel, "[c]rime becomes a means by which to climb the social ladder, or to remain a capitalist despite financial disasters" (Mandel 47). Mandel argues that the simultaneity of "the rise of the capitalist mode of production" with "the origin and the early development of the detective story" is not arbitrary (Mandel 17). Ümit agrees with Mandel, stating that both Marxism and the detective novel are products of capitalism (Ümit *İnsan* 201). Their statements imply that capitalism increased the crime rates. Sociologist Frank Pearce, in his influential book *Crimes of the Powerful* (1976), posits a similar idea by stating "[r]uling class crime and illegal business activities […] are endemic in capitalist societies" (15). Don Wallace and Drew Humphries draw a related conclusion in their observation that while there was an increase in the crime rates in the US and Western countries after the mid-1940s, this increase was not paralleled in the Socialist regimes of the same era, thereby concluding "capitalism may have causally significant effects on the crime rate" (194). Ümit, highly influenced by his readings of Mandel and his personal Marxist ideology,

presents capitalism and the voracious accumulation it promotes as supplying ample potential for committing crimes.[93]

In the novel's opening scene, Ümit establishes a material universe motivated by an insurance claim of three million pounds. The narrator immediately informs the reader that the journey Karen undertakes is to decide whether the Yakut Hotel fire arose from natural or accidental causes or was the result of arson. The experienced insurance expert Karen is of the conviction that this fire might be a crime with a financial motivation as there is a standing insurance agreement between the company Karen works for and the hotel owner, Ziya Kuyumcuzade. Alfred Manes states that the emergence of insurance as a global sector stemmed from "[t]he spirit of gain" and that "[t]he substitution of capitalist economy for the old economic structure and the progressive division of labour were the essential premises of insurance proper" (Manes 35). Ümit's choice of Karen's occupation as an insurance expert is, therefore, crucial for establishing this materially governed universe, for this job provides necessary information about the operation of a corrupt Capitalist enterprise.

Ziya's surname, Kuyumcuzade, is informative for formulating a first impression of the character. This surname is a portmanteau noun which is formed by the combination of Turkish 'kuyumcu' and Persian 'zade' and it means the son of a goldsmith. Here, both as precious metal and as a connotation of wealth, gold suggests that this character is rapacious. His view of material gain is clarified when Ziya talks about his father Izzet Efendi's Sufi way of living with the least materialism; in an annoyed tone, he remarks that "[i]f it weren't for [his] Grandfather Osman, [they] would be wallowing in abject poverty" (76). This sarcastic pronouncement on his

[93] The novelist frequently refers to the Marxist critic in his work *İnsan Ruhunun Haritası* and devotes a chapter to Mandel's above-cited book (199-205).

father's minimalist way of living suggests that there is a tension between the two characters, as well as the Capitalist and Sufi worldviews these characters espouse. The juxtaposition of these two characters helps Ümit to make a bold statement about the worst of capitalism's excesses. When Izzet Efendi talks to Karen about the reason behind her father's departure, he explains the meaning of the Sufi concept dying before death:

> The meaning is this − you are to give up everything of your personal identity, everything that binds you to this world, to attain spiritual death. But it is not only your property, possessions, loved ones, love and happiness you must let go of. Equally important is your hunger, anguish, bereavement, and sorrow. (263)

Here, Izzet Efendi suggests that belongings of this world feed one's ego. To obtain spiritual wealth is to fight against unnecessary consumption. In other words, if a human being is striving to reach the consciousness of God, they should not be absorbed in this world. By listing 'property' and 'possessions' in the above quotation, the novelist tries to attract attention to Ziya's attempts to accumulate as much capital as possible. While his son's actions are guided by the accumulation of power through material gain, Izzet Efendi is more than content with what he already has and "donate[s] his house to the [Mevlana] museum" rather than bequeathing it to his greedy son in his will (356). The excerpt suggests that one need not only rid oneself of the burden of the material goods, but also excesses of emotion are dangerous in this way of life and they need to be avoided in order to reach the Sufi consciousness in this world.

Karen's job as an insurance expert engages her in a detective-like investigation and involves her in procedures such as researching, crime-scene visits, interviewing witnesses, and writing a report. When she leafs through newspaper articles about the hotel fire, she notices one headline: "On the Job Deaths No Accident" (34). Karen reports that the newspaper article accuses the hotel administration on the grounds that

"their failure to take precautions against fire made them guilty of manslaughter" (Ümit *Dervish* 34). This suggests that the novelist, through a quotation from a fictional newspaper, accuses Capitalists of neglect in ensuring workers' basic rights of occupational safety. Accidents at the workplace are a common problem in Turkey. In his comparison of occupational accidents in developed countries and Turkey, Huseyin Ceylan highlights that, considering the population of the countries listed in the study (such as Finland, the USA, Holland, and Germany), death, incapacity, and injury rates in Turkey are very high (23).[94] By the time the novel was published, Turkey had not yet put a comprehensible occupational safety law into effect that was compatible with European Union standards.[95] In the novel, Ümit not only conveys his Marxist view of Capitalist exploitation of workers through no safe working environment being guaranteed for the latter, but he also attacks the irresponsible entrepreneurs who caused the deaths and incapacitation of thousands of workers. Karen meticulously reads the fire brigade report which states that the fire was accidental (35). The insurance expert, while considering whether or not the conflagration was the intentional work of someone with ill intent, declares that she "would try to do [her] job to the best of [her] abilities, but not at the expense of the truth" (35). This character's statement corresponds to Dennis Porter's formulation of the private eye detective which, according to him, possesses a "secular humanistic ethic […] one that embodies and idea of duty and of a professional code of conduct" ("Private" 97). Karen's utterance about her work ethic and her refusal to compromise on truth not only positions her as a quasi-private eye, but it also conveys the author's Marxist-humanist ideology, which

[94] This article was published in 2011 and it covers the statistics of occupational accidents from 1997 to 2011.

[95] The first of the occupational safety laws compatible with EU was put into practice in 2003 (Çiçek and Öçal 127). The most recent regulation before that was in 1973 (Çiçek and Öçal 126).

according to Ümit is underpinned by a humanist "conscience" (Ümit on 215; my translation).

As Karen progresses in her investigation, she realises that one of the workers, Kadir Gemelek, who is among the survivors of the fire, has been made "redundant" by the hotel owner (224). The reason for his dismissal is Kadir's conviction that "aliens had started the fire" (141). It is revealed later in the narrative that what Kadir means by aliens is his traumatised view of a man in fireproof suit (226). When she interviews this character, she not only discovers the fact that the company has not paid Kadir compensation for his dismissal, but also that the company is going through financial difficulties (224). The novelist juxtaposes Ziya's expensive insurance claim with Kadir's reimbursement. This implies that Ziya, as a boss, is a "*homo economicus*, the man who pursues his rational self-interest to the exclusion of all other considerations" (Cantor 94; emphasis in original). Even though Ziya insures his company with a very expensive policy, the fact that he does not cover his workers' lives shows the cruelty of Capitalist enterprise. Karen suspects that Ziya organised the arson, because the hotel manager and his assistant were sent on holiday by the owner and an ex-criminal Serhat took their place (224). In Ziya's office she meets two of the hotel workers, Serhat and Cavit, who are implicated in this organised crime, and when she questions them and they fail to give the planned answers, Ziya intervenes. Below is a description of the atmosphere of the room from Karen's perspective immediately after Ziya's outburst:

> A deep silence fell over the room, which Ziya presiding [*sic*] over with an absolute authority from in front of the mosaic of Perseus. The respectful young businessman of the previous day was gone, and in his place was a tyrant who caused even the security guards to quake with fear. (252)

In this excerpt, the novelist alludes to the myth that Medusa was beheaded by Perseus. In this story Medusa was a threat to humanity as she turned people into stone while Ziya makes two hotel workers burn to ashes for material gain. The placement of the Perseus mosaic behind the character hints at the forthcoming decapitation of Ziya in a car accident (384). By referring to Ziya as a 'tyrant', Karen highlights the hierarchy between the characters. The scene reveals the power play between the characters and how Ziya's finances help him to establish authority over others.

Ziya is not afraid to flout social rules and conventions, yet he is not directly involved in the arson. Instead, he uses two ex-criminals to do his dirty work. Ümit's choice of these two ex-offenders' engagement in the crime is noteworthy as it is reminiscent of the Conditional Release Law enacted in 1999 which is commonly known as the "Rahşan Pardon" (Yildirim and Kuyucu 883 fn. 24). In that year, thousands of criminals who included "convicted murderers, sex offenders, robbers and others committed for felonies" were pardoned by the government and released ("Buildup" np.). İrem Yıldırım and Tuna Kuyucu explain that such pardons have been quite common in Turkish history and that since the foundation of the Republic 157 amnesties have been issued, of which 11 were general amnesties (860). According to Yıldırım and Kuyucu, these periodical general pardons aim to relieve the overloading of the criminal justice system and resolve its longstanding problems (859-60). However, these pardons create societal problems due to the early release of unrehabilitated prisoners. That is why the Rahşan Pardon was severely criticised for months at the time (Yildirim and Kuyucu 883 fn. 24). In the novel, the police inspector Zeynep notes that "[m]ost of these prisoners who were pardoned went on to commit more crimes and wound up back in prison" (209). Ümit, through Zeynep, highlights how the release of criminals damages social welfare. This looks like one of the novel's

small-scale criticisms of uncoordinated government policies; however, it also serves directly to articulate the novelist's conceptualisation of justice. When Ziya learns that two of his men have been captured by the police, he calls Karen to arrange an appointment. Karen meets Ziya in his car and she is then kidnapped by him as a means of intimidating her into writing the insurance report according to his wishes (383). William Stowe views kidnapping as "an elaborate power game, in which the criminal's power to extort money depends on their overpowering the victim" (579). Ümit takes a moment to portray the intensity of the scene where Karen begs to Ziya to leave her be. However, the novelist does not allow this personification of capitalism to get away with the crimes he instigates. After the jeep they are riding in crashes and rolls over, Karen describes the scene thus: "Then I saw Ziya, or more accurately, Ziya's head. While his hair had become menacingly twisting snakes, his eyes, reduced to pools of blood, were gushing with horror" (384). Enacting the scene of Perseus's beheading of Medusa with a gender twist, Ümit decapitates the metaphoric head of capitalism. Rather than bringing the character to the justice of the judicial authorities, he punishes him for good.

Apart from the financially motivated crimes, there are several crimes of a religious nature. After Karen's bag is stolen, two police officers pay her a visit and inform her that the thief was found dead with "his left hand cut off at the wrist" (172). Karen is unable to comprehend the connection between the theft and the amputation of the thief's hand, due to her unfamiliarity with the pre-Republican laws of the country she is in. Inspector Zeynep explains that this is "shari'a law, [… o]f course there's nothing like that here anymore" (172). It is common knowledge that before the foundation of the Republic, the Ottoman Empire was governed with Islamic law, Shari'a. Maurits H. Van Den Boogert states that the "[a]mputation of the hand as a

fixed penalty for stealing is […] a Koranic injunction". However, the application of this regulation was very limited in the Ottoman Empire, for Hanafi law required at least "two male eyewitnesses, or one man and two women" (263-64). Even this limited application of the punishment was replaced with the introduction in 1926 of the Turkish Penal Code (Türk Ceza Kanunu in Turkish) whose articles numbered 141 to 147 specifically apply theft. In this modern penal code, the crime of theft can be punished by up to ten years' imprisonment according to the severity and the circumstances of the crime. When the novelist is asked about the appearance of this old practice in the novel, he states that it is worrying to see the increase of violence and atrocities and avers: "[I]f you promote nationalism, racism, and religious radicalism, this will inevitably turn into hatred because what you support is this; those who are like me are valuable, those who are not like me are valueless" (Ümit on 209; my translation). The re-enactment of an earlier penal code in the contemporary setting suggests that the novelist is trying to draw attention to the Islamisation and radicalisation that is spreading in Turkey.

It is interesting that Ümit uses the crime fiction genre which, throughout its history in the region in which Ümit writes, has been closely linked with the ideology of the government. Tüfekçioğlu states that "crime fiction has been directly linked to politics" and makes a passing remark that Ümit's depiction of Shams represents resistance to Turkish nationalism, even though she does not develop this argument (4, 5). In a similar manner, David Mason sheds light on this aspect by stating that "[p]ropaganda was at the heart of the development of the genre" of Turkish detective fiction and that it "play[ed] an important role in the spread of Kemalist concepts of Turkishness" (24). In a similar way to his use of the fantastic mode discussed earlier, Ümit uses the detective genre to criticise the values it stands for in Turkish literary

history. Though this section has focused primarily on financially and religiously motivated crimes presented in the novel, detective fiction, and more broadly crime literature, necessitate crimes which provide both the novelists and their readers a complication to ponder. While there are forms of crimes which are committed against the self (such as suicide), the majority of the crimes are those which are committed against others. These latter kinds of crimes are generally committed by human beings against the integrity of another entity whether it be a governmental body, another human being, an animal, or the environment. Considering this, such crimes demand for a consciousness which is binary in nature and divides the criminal self from the victim. In a novel which problematises the idea of Turkish nationalism, the novelist's choice of the detective genre is telling, as it implies that this ideology is also a crime committed against others (namely, members of minority groups). The remainder of this chapter will elaborate on Ümit's treatment of minorities in *The Dervish Gate.*

Minorities in *The Dervish Gate*

Almost every novel written by Ümit has at least one character of non-Turkish ethnic origins such as Armenian, Jewish, Kurdish, or Greek.[96] Ümit has a soft spot for these communities which are ethnic minorities in Turkey, and in terms of representing such communities *The Dervish Gate* is no exception. Although Ümit agrees that he portrays a marginalised, alienated, and suppressed character through Shams, he claims that he does not "have this idea [of minorities in mind] specifically for this novel" (Ümit on 198; my translation). However, I argue that through his characterisation of Shams and

[96] To name a few, in *Kavim* Kadir is Kurdish, Can Nusayr Türkgil is Arab, and Evgenia is Greek. In *Patasana*, Varturi and Timothy are Armenian, Reşit is Kurdish, and Halaf is a Kurdish-Turkish. In *Kar Kokusu*, Can and Beşir are of Kurdish origin, and in *Kukla* Rıza Arslan is of Kurdish origin. In his most recent novel *Kırlangıç Çığlığı*, the novelist presents Celile of Bosnian origin.

focalisation of the narrative around this character in the novel's secondary dream layer, the author is mindful of Shams' otherness as an Iranian in thirteenth-century Konya.

In the two Rumi novels analysed so far in this thesis, *The Black Book* and *The Forty Rules of Love*, Rumi, his life, and his works are the major points for attention. In Ümit's work, however, there is a visible shift of attention to Shams. Through his protagonist Karen, the novelist develops a protest against the sidelining of Shams in such narratives, despite the older man's foundational influence on Rumi:

> Hadn't Ziya said of Shams that he was the one responsible for making Rumi who he was? Yet it was always Rumi who was the focal point of articles I found on Shams. Everyone showered Rumi with praise, while Shams always seemed to linger in the background like his sidekick. (*Dervish* 109)

Therefore, in a contrasting manner to Pamuk and Shafak with their interest in Rumi, Ümit places Shams in the spotlight. In *The Dervish Gate*, it is frequently stated that Rumi's transformation into a globally loved poet comes as a result of his companionship with Shams. In a conversation with Karen, Ziya states that Shams-i Tabriz is "[n]ot just any dervish, a very important one. The man who made Rumi Rumi" (74). However, in hagiographic and biographical accounts of Rumi, it is evident that following Shams' departure Rumi developed spiritual bonds of a similar kind with Selâhaddin Zerkûb, who was a goldsmith and Çelebi Hüsameddin, who was one of Rumi's devout followers (Eflâkî 531, 555; Sipehsâlâr 156, 164; Schimmel *Rumi* 8,10; Sultan Veled 87, 151; Lewis 205, 225). [97] Even though at the end of his novel Ümit

[97] This reference covers both the oldest and contemporary accounts on Rumi's life. Of these accounts three are important as they are the oldest and, possibly, the most accurate accounts since they were written within a hundred years of Rumi's death. One of these accounts is *Iptidâ-nâme* (c. 1291). Written by Rumi's eldest son Sultan Veled, this book provides readers with first-hand bibliographical information about Rumi's life and practices. The second of these accounts is Feridun bin Ahmed-i Sipehsâlâr's *Mevlânâ ve Etrafındakiler* (c. 1312). Sipehsâlâr was one of Rumi's disciples and he spent forty years in the latter's circle. Therefore, this account is also high in the hierarchy of accuracy. The last book in this regard is Ahmed Eflâkî's *Ariflerin Menkıbeleri* (c. 1318). One of Rumi's grandsons,

references some of the historical works on Rumi, such as Ahmed Eflâkî's *Ariflerin Menkıbeleri* and Sultan Veled's *Iptidâ-nâme*, the fact that Rumi continued his spiritual development with Selâhaddin Zerkûb and Çelebi Hüsameddin is omitted from Ümit's representation, and Shams is given full credit for Rumi's transformation (393-94). This expungement suggests that the novelist, singling Shams out from amongst Rumi's spiritual friends, ascribes a profound meaning to Shams' impact on Rumi.

The author introduces Shams-i Tabriz as a character in the fantastic secondary realm of the narrative. Ümit uses Shams' name according to the rules of Persian grammar as "Şems-i Tebrizi" in the Turkish original and "Shams-i Tabrizi" in the English translation of the novel (*Bab-ı Esrar* 87, *Dervish* 25). Here 'Tabrizi' is not Shams' surname but functions instead as a signifier of his Iranian roots since Tabriz is a city in Iran. In Ottoman Turkish, the Persian suffix '-i' is used in order to create a noun phrase (Demir and Kaya Erbatur 76). This suffix conveys the meaning of belonging − in a similar way to 'of' in English − to the name to which it is added. Anticipating that the reader might overlook the character's origins, Ümit provides more detailed textual evidence about it on two occasions. In the first, Karen searches for Shams on the internet and comes up with the information that he was "born in Tabriz, in modern day Iran" (106). At the second moment, in a metamorphic episode in the fantastical substratum of the novel in which Karen becomes Shams, she questions herself as to whether she is "Karen of London or Shams of Tabriz" (156). These instances clarify that the novelist tries to highlight the Iranian origins of the dervish and encourages an interpretation of Shams as a member of a minority group. Shams' Iranian origin gives information not only about his ethnicity, but also his

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Ulu Árif Çelebi, assigned his folower Eflâkî to write an account of Rumi's life with an eye on the accounts written by then.

religious identity since Shia, or Shiism, was and still is the dominating Islamic sect in this geography. The minority status of the Shia sect in the Muslim world is evident in their numbers: as Vali Nasr notes, they only constitute "10 or 15 percent" of it (34). Therefore, Ümit's frequent reference to Shams' origin is an attempt to position him as a minority in the text as the Turkish setting of the novel has been a majority Sunni land throughout its history.

The setting of the metamorphic episodes in the oneiric level of the novel is thirteenth-century Konya, as Karen experiences at first hand (in Shams' body) the initial meeting of Shams and Rumi, which according to the historical record took place on 29 November 1244 (Lewis 155). In the timeframe under discussion, Konya was ruled by the Seljuk Sultanate of Rûm and its population, since the eleventh century, had been composed largely of Turks, as well as Normans and Armenians (Cahen 8). Even though the writer does not outline this historical background in the novel, Karen's statement that Shams was from Iran, which is "hundreds of kilometres from Konya", indicates that Ümit is interested in Shams as an outsider who migrates to Konya with a weight of cultural baggage (106).

At several moments within the narrative, the reader is informed that Shams was not well favoured by the locals of Konya in the thirteenth century. In one of these instances, Angelina, a guide to British tourists, sketches a brief account of Rumi's life before Shams' arrival and his subsequent transformation:

> It is a fact that Shams-i Tabriz was not well-loved by the people of Konya in those days. […] How could he be? Some crazy man from Tabriz just pops up one day and steals away their great theologian, their sheikh and veritable saint, their Mevlana. You know, before meeting Shams, Jelaleddin Rumi had been a sufi of some calibre. He performed the prayer rituals, he fasted, he preached at the mosque and taught at the madrasah… But when he met Shams, he gave all that up. He took up

> reading poetry, talking of love, and reflecting on matters which the people of the city weren't ready to hear. (239-40)

Here, the tour guide narrates for British trippers a story in which the mindset of the people of Konya is both timely and intellectually antiquated for her intended audience since their world view is driven by reason rather than religion (237). In the third sentence, she shifts the perspective by presenting the event from the locals' point of view. By centring her analysis on the presence or absence of Rumi's religious observances, Angelina presents a world where religion is the main determinant of human relationships and where orthopraxy is the norm. By stating that Rumi deviated from his society's understanding of religiosity when he read poetry and changed his discourse to one of love following his encounter with Shams, Angelina shows how locals blamed this divergence from orthodoxy on the negative influence Shams had on Rumi. While locals interpreted Rumi's changing attitude negatively at the time of its occurrence, the fact that Angelina addresses her speech to British tourists suggests that what was considered wrong by thirteenth-century locals may actually have been a positive change brought about by an outsider to Konya. As discussed earlier, by highlighting Shams' Iranian origins and his impact on Rumi's transmutation into a widely recognised poet, the novelist presents a microcosm of minority groups through Shams and thereby affirms that minorities influence the host culture in the most positive ways. This implies that Ümit, as in many of his novels, had minorities of Turkey in mind while creating this figure.

The author puts much effort into juxtaposing Rumi and his younger son, Alaaddin, as regards their attitudes towards Shams. The novelist presents Rumi and Shams' initial meeting through Karen's metamorphosis into Shams and her travel back

in time while dreaming (123-130). When Karen transforms back into her own body, she reflects on their first sight as a moment of joy:

> When Shams set his eyes on Rumi, his heart was filled with such great love, such immense happiness, such unrestrained fervour. […] I remembered the shining eyes of the man [Rumi] on the mare. He seemed in a worse state than Shams, overcome with some kind of ecstasy, as though he were intoxicated. What kind of love was this? (149)

The first-hand experience of Karen at this meeting is instructive. Her use of the adjectives "great", "immense", and "unrestrained" accentuates the intensity of Shams' happiness. As Todorov notes, metamorphosis opens up the possibility of understanding the other by means of "becom[ing]" them (117). By putting Karen in Shams' shoes in the novel, Ümit gives her the privilege of empathising with this controversial figure. This experience gives the narrator easy insight into Shams' emotional state, as Karen focuses on the feelings of "love" and "happiness" she experiences in Shams' body. When she directs her attention to Rumi, however, her perception becomes limited to visual clues concerning Rumi's appearance, such as his "shining eyes". Her move from experiencing to witnessing results in an incomplete understanding, and towards the end of the excerpt the narrator uses the qualifiers "seem" and "as though" to signal her hesitancy around making a judgement. Nevertheless, the passage demonstrates that Rumi is pleased to meet Shams. In another narrative instance, Angelina talks about Rumi's fondness for Shams and claims that he was not afraid to proclaim at the royal feast given by the Seljuk Vezir Jelaleddin Karatay that "the seat of honour" was rightfully Shams' (240). Karen compares the Rumi from Angelina's anecdote with the one in her dream and concludes that Rumi "was […] passionate about Shams", thereby underlining Shams' value and importance to Rumi (240).

In contrast to his father's affection for Shams, Ümit presents Alaaddin as harbouring hostility towards Shams. When Karen, in the old dervish's body, nearly runs into Alaaddin, she notices that the boy "shot [Shams] a look like a wild animal" and that "[t]he spark of hostility in his eyes hadn't waned since the day [Shams] first arrived" (157). In bibliographical and hagiographic sources, there is no consensus as to whether Shams left Rumi for the second time or he was murdered in Konya. Indeed, Eflâkî suggests that both outcomes are possible at once (524). The scholar recorded from a conversation with Sultan Veled's son Árif Çelebi that Shams, following his murder, appeared to Sultan Veled in a dream stating the place where his body was buried and claiming that Sultan Veled recovered his dead body (524-25). Lewis notes that speculative claims about the nature of Shams' death are made in the account of Dowlatshâh of Samarkand, who extensively researched the poets of Iran in the fifteenth century (267). Two of the speculations recorded in Dowlatshâh's account infer that Shams was murdered and one specifies that "one of the sons of Rumi knocked a wall over onto Shams al-Din to kill him" (Lewis 267). Establishing Alaaddin's hostility to Shams early on in the narrative, the novelist opts for the possibility of Shams' murder and dramatises it further by the involvement of Alaaddin in the act.

In his narrative of Shams' death, Mennan, who has graduated from an Islamic divinity school but later became a businessman, reminds the reader that "Shams had Mevlana's […] utmost respect" and goes on to reveal Alaaddin's involvement in this hateful act with his passing comment on "the pack of seven killers, of which Alaeddin was one" (329). By having Mennan reiterate Rumi's fondness and Alaaddin's antagonism to Shams side by side, the novelist stresses the importance of these different approaches in literary interpretation. Here, Rumi stands for the Ottoman

Empire and its approach towards the various ethnic communities it governed. In the Ottoman Empire, which expanded as far as Vienna in the northwest, Circassia in the northeast, Libya in Africa, and Afghanistan in the southeast, the public was "polyethnic, polyglot, and multireligious" (Braude 177). Apart from their being divided into two groups − Muslims and non-Muslims − as a form of "religious classification", non-Muslim members of the Empire did not have lesser status than Muslims except for the taxes they paid (Akgonul 13; Lewis *Emergence* 331). What distinguishes the Ottomans from the other empires of their time was their tolerance towards minorities and policies of non-assimilation. With its *devshirme* system, the Ottoman Empire allowed people of various ethnic origins to work in administrative and in armed forces in the Empire, on the condition that they convert to Islam.[98] The Empire did not sever the minorities' connections with their communities and families, thereby "reduc[ing] somewhat the alienation and subjugation that a subject population might normally feel toward an alien hegemon" (Braude 181). Benjamin Braude compares the possibility of progression in the Ottoman Empire and in the Orthodox Church hierarchy of the same era:

> The Balkan non-Greek Orthodox could not advance socially and economically above their own rural status without undergoing one or another form of deracination and self-abnegation. If they wanted to seek advancement in the church hierarchy, they had to abandon their native culture and become Hellenized. They also had to become monks, at least nominally celibate. However, they did retain and enhance their religious beliefs. On the other hand, if they wanted to advance in the Ottoman Empire, the terms were significantly easier. They could retain much of their native culture. (181)

[98] Devshirme, or devşirme in Turkish, was the mode of the Ottoman Empire's enlistment of Christian subjects. This practice which came in place in the fourteenth century lasted until the early seventieth century and continued partially until the eighteenth century. See Gábor Ágoston's Encyclopedia entry "devşirme" in *Encyclopedia of The Ottoman Empire* (2009).

Thus, Braude stresses that even within the same belief system, ethnicity was a determinant of, and a hindrance to, social status for non-Greek Christians' advancement. Meanwhile, in the Ottoman Empire, which was governed according to Islamic rules, ethnicity did not play a major role in employment.

In the novel, contrary to the locals' hostility, Rumi's kindness to Shams symbolises the delicacy with which the Ottoman Empire governed its subjects of various ethnic origins. While the practices Shams introduces to Rumi, such as *sama*, the mystical performance of the dervishes, and reading poetry, seem outlandish to Rumi's fellow Konyans and these exercises are both criticised and condemned by them, Rumi absorbs these practices and "turn[s] out poetry" with great industry (240). In his characterisation of Shams and affirmation that the dervish of Tabriz "lift[s] the ordinary theologian known as Muhammed Jalaluddin out of the *ulema* and mould[s] him into the miraculous Mevlana whose words would be kept alive for hundreds of years", Ümit argues for the value of Turkey's minorities and points out how they enrich Turkish people's lives (362). At the same time, Alaaddin stands for the Republic of Turkey in its treatment of minorities. Just as Alaaddin is Rumi's son, the Republic of Turkey is the descendant of the Ottoman Empire, and it inherited her population.

According to Benedict Anderson, nationalist ideology is an artefact of print-capitalism and its forms of production such as novels and newspapers. When nationalism began to pervade the Ottoman world, it also affected the non-Muslim public of the Empire (44). The impact of this ideology initially led to armed repression and eventually to two Balkan Wars (Lewis *Emergence* 334). When the Republic was founded in 1923, it was under the same nationalistic influence. A majority of non-Turkish subjects inherited from the Ottoman Empire were restricted in terms of their rights, which included education in their mother tongue, conservation of their customs,

and a full protection of their places of worship. An exception was made for Greek, Armenian, and Jewish communities, who were given minority rights through the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.[99] During his interview with me, Ümit, commenting on the changing treatment of minorities in Turkey after Empire, states that "unfortunately, we have not been nice to them, we exiled and excluded them. We ill-treated these people − the Armenians, the Jews, the Greek-originated, and sometimes even the Kurds" (Ümit on 198; my translation). Therefore, Alaaddin's treatment of Shams is reminiscent of the Republican approach to minorities. In the novel, Shah Nesim discusses the coexistence within God of both punitive and rewarding qualities: "[t]o be one means to amass the many into one single aspect, without forsaking the diversity of each, without making them uniform or assimilating them" (20). However, these references to "unity in diversity" and to assimilation evoke the immigration model of multiculturalism. Therefore, the novelist articulates a formula for successful societal unity by underlining the value of difference.

The interpretation of Shams in the novel as a minority that I propose here might be opposed on the grounds that Rumi was himself a migrant to Konya, yet he was treated differently from Shams both in the historical accounts and in the narrative. Indeed, in the novel, Izzet Efendi, a Sufi character, refers to Rumi as a "holy man from Belh" signifying the migrant status of the poet (362). Belh, which is also known in the Anglophone world as Balkh, is in Afghanistan and it is true that Rumi's family was from Balkh. When Rumi was a child, his family left the Afghan city, settling in several urban centres on the way, and finally his family came to reside in Konya in Rumi's early youth. Schimmel and Lewis note that since the city was captured by

[99] In the Treaty of Lausanne, see Article 41 for the right of education in native languages, Article 42 for customs, and Article 42 for the protection of sanctuaries. https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Lausanne

Khwarizmshah around 1210, Rumi's father Baha'uddin Walad left the city for Samarkand when Rumi was around five years old (Schimmel *Rumi's World* 11; Lewis *Rumi* 55-56). When Samarkand was seized by the same ruler, the family were once again uprooted in 1212 and arrived at Konya around 1229 (Lewis 56-63). However, there are two factors which affect the approach of the thirteenth-century Konyans to Rumi. First and foremost, Rumi's father, Baha'uddin Walad, is referred to as "the Sultan of the Ulema", which is a high rank in religious scholarship (Lewis 46). Ümit includes this information in the narrative when Shams appears on a television screen in Karen's dream, speaking of "[h]is father, Belhli Muhammed Bahaeedin Veled, who was himself known as Sultanü'l-Ulema, or 'the Sultan of Muslim scholars'" (152).[100] Schimmel defines the Konyan sultan of the time as a "lover of art and scholarship" who welcomed Baha'uddin Walad's family and assigned him to a *madrasa*, an institution of higher education, as a teacher (*Rumi's World* 13). The ruler's supportive attitude is indicated when Karen (as Shams) states that the house Rumi's family live in "was a gift presented by Sultan Keykubat with the hand of Allah to Khüdavendigar's family for them to use as long as they should live, not only as a home to stay in, but also as a madrasah to teach in" (156). Here, the novelist underlines both Rumi's belonging within the aristocratic class and the sultan's respect for him and his family. Another factor which contributes to the continuation of the public's respect for Rumi while they denigrate Shams is Rumi's position as a theologian. The practice of the same religion with the host culture helps Rumi to blend in to society while Shams, according to the locals, not only has outlandish practices but also introduces them to

[100] In this sentence, the word "Belhli" is a translation mistake. The suffix of -li is used to make nouns out of nouns in Turkish and Ümit in the Turkish original refers to the character's origin of Belh which corresponds to Karen of London. The unfamiliarity of the translator with Turkish grammar must have mistaken her to think that it is a title.

Rumi, diverting the latter from his religious path. In *The Dervish Gate*, as within his other novels, the novelist does not put aside his sympathy for the ethnic minorities in Turkey. Locating a contemporary problem in a historical setting, Ümit investigates reasons behind this unjust treatment and how it affects the minorities in this geography through the treatment and murder of Shams by the locals.

Conclusion

This chapter has centred around Ümit's *The Dervish Gate* and how the novelist engages in a social critique of contemporary Turkey through his treatment of the Rumi-Shams relationship and Sufi practices. I argued that the novelist's political involvement with communism left its mark on his literary production. In advancing this line of enquiry, I provided a brief account of Ümit's engagement with politics in his youth, his disillusionment with the party and his turning to a writing career to create an awareness of societal problems making use of his first-person experiences. I speculated on the reasons for the novelist's choice to write a novel about Rumi, such as the latter's dissidence and teaching of tolerance. The chapter tried to fill the critical gap by reading *The Dervish Gate* as a fantastic novel and as a frame narrative. Using the conventions of the detective genre, the novelist structures his novel around narrative clues in order to transform his readers' experience into something akin to reading a detective novel. In '**The Fantastic and Dreams'** section, I focused mainly on the political functions of the fantastic, following a brief outline of the generic definitions constructed by Todorov, Jackson and Armitt. I then set out to locate the function of the fantastic mode in Turkish literature, explaining how this mode is limited and governed by nationalist ideology. I exemplified Ümit's use of the mode with its narrative techniques such as metamorphosis, and how the novelist uses the

latter to dissect a strict idea of identity and suggest the importance of understanding one another. I pointed out the Qur'anic references of the novel and how metaphorical connotations suggest a solution for solving ethnic divisions. In the **'Detective Fiction'** section, I outlined what Ümit thinks about crime fiction, and why he adapts this genre in his novel. In this section in which I specifically focused on financially motivated crimes, I showed how the novelist's Marxist ideology came into play in his creation of crimes and how he punishes neoliberal mores in his literary creation by decapitating the character who stands for Capitalist values. I continued my argument by signalling the juxtaposition Ümit makes in his positioning a father and son who respectively stand for capitalism and Sufism and how the Sufi concept of dying before death is presented in the novel. Lastly, in the '**Minorities'** section, I gave a brief account of Ümit's longstanding characterisation of minorities in Turkey in his oeuvre. I underlined how this novel differs from other novels scrutinised in this thesis by taking Shams to the forefront in order to highlight and criticise the impact of Turkish nationalism on minorities in the geography in the persona of Shams. I compared Rumi's treatment of Shams to the Ottoman Empire's treatment of its subjects and explored how the Republic of Turkey as an inheritor of the Empire treated its minorities and how this resembles Alaaddin's (Rumi's son's) treatment of Shams. This section also briefly touched on the subject of rapid urbanisation, which is among the social problems Ümit revisits in his novels. I asserted that Ümit's main line of critique centres around national identity and the treatment of minorities in Turkey. His longstanding antipathy to capitalism manifests itself in his subject matter of investigation of an insurance fraud. To this end, I argued, Ümit uses detective fiction and the fantastic mode which are either suppressed or used to convey the nationalistic messages of the governing ideology in Turkish literary history. Hence, the novelist, as a Turkish saying goes,

shoots Turkish nationalism with its own gun by using the genre of detective fiction and the fantastic mode against their conventionally designated purpose.

Conclusion

Rumi states that "[l]ike a compass I stand firm with one leg on my faith / And roam with the other leg all over the seventy-two nations" (Rumi, qtd. in Halman *Rapture* 295). Rumi evokes this compass metaphor in order to show his open-minded approach to humankind regardless of their ethnic, religious, and cultural differences. Yet this statement also proleptically accounts for the global influence of the poet in this century. Indeed, in the last thirty years, Rumi has had dramatic impact on popular culture, both in Turkey and the rest of the world, through his poetry and the practices he introduced. As presented in the '**Introduction**', he has become the topic of many novels in four continents. Yet his messages and teachings are often misunderstood. For instance, in the award ceremony of the Bilişim Zirvesi (the Information Technologies Summit) of 2018 in Turkey, there was a *sama* performance accompanied with reed music, which severed *sama* from its religious context and presented it as a visually appealing stage performance.[101] Rumi's name appears in the branding of a loose tea product from the German company Goran-tee as "Mevlana", whose packaging is also embellished with a drawing of a dervish performing *sama*. Robin Givhan reports that at a Donna Karan fashion show in 1998, readings from Rumi's poetry were used as a soundtrack for the runway models to walk to, and that Madonna and Demi Moore were among the performers (np.). Givhan refers to the album of *A Gift of Love: Deepak & Friends Present Music Inspired by the Love Poems of Rumi*, which is a recording of celebrities reciting Rumi's poems in 1998. Ironically, Donna Karan presents luxurious designer clothes, while the poet who accompanied her fashion show via his poems is known for his modest life and clothing– as, indeed, are Sufis more generally. More

[101] See the program of events which took place on 21 November in Beyazıt Hall in the website of https://bilisimzirvesi.com.tr/tr/etkinlikler/program/bilisim-zirvesi-18

recently, in 2017, Beyoncé even named one of her twins 'Rumi' after the poet (Millward np.).

Alongside the interest of these celebrities, Rumi's poetry, or more accurately the imprimateur of his poetry, has had a massive circulation on social media websites. Most of these quotes were not in fact penned by the poet. For example, in 2014, Brad Pitt displayed his new tattoo which reads "There exists a field, beyond all notions of right and wrong. I will meet you there" (Moult np.). Although these lines were attributed to Rumi in newspapers, they are twice distorted version of Rumi's quatrain numbered 395 in his *Divan-i Shams-i Tabriz*. On a Website entitled *Dar-Al-Masnavi*, which is regulated by the American Institute of *Masnavi* Studies and dedicated to translations and elaborations of Rumi's *Masnavi* as well as his other works, the quatrain is literally translated by Ibrahim Gamard as "[b]eyond Islam and unbelief there is a 'desert plain', […] there is neither Islam nor unbelief, nor any 'where' (in) that place" (np.).[102] In his *The Essential Rumi* (1997), Coleman Barks interprets or, more accurately, rewrites this quatrain as "[o]ut beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing [*sic*], there is a field. I'll meet you there" and removes the original's reference to religion (36). Jonathan Curiel cites the literal translation of the quatrain and Barks' statement of how he "took the [*sic*] Islam out of it [this quatrain]" (Barks qtd in "Poet" np.). Therefore, from Rumi's pen to Pitt's arm, the quatrain transforms from a poem of belief and religion into a secular maxim.

The overarching theme of love in Rumi's poetry has also had its fair share of decontextualisation. Even though quotations from Rumi's poetry about divine love circulate frequently around social media sites, the meaning behind his verses is not

[102] See also the endnote numbered thirty-one on the same webpage which provides the Persian original of the quatrain mentioned above.

accessible to everyone. As evidenced in the several passages mentioned above, in his verses on love, Rumi signals an alternative consciousness where the passions of humanity's temporal selves have no meaning, suggesting an immersive absorption in God's Being. However, his references to love are often misinterpreted as the expressions of a romantic, interpersonal love. In a similar manner, Rumi's verses which underline the necessity of dying before death seems to be misunderstood even by some people who study his teachings. For example, Andrew Harvey, who is a mystic and has undertaken discipleship in several belief systems such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sufism, makes an interesting remark about Rumi in his book *The Way of Passion: A Celebration of Rumi* (1994), a collection of his lectures delivered at a California educational institution. Harvey praises Rumi as "a stern, gentle awakener and doctor of souls trying to help us recover the vision of the enlightened heart before it is too late and we destroy ourselves" (2). Although Harvey tries to acknowledge Rumi's importance, the sentence he utters is contradictory to the essence of Rumi's theosophy and writings in that the poet not only performed the annihilation of self in his personal life, but also encouraged his followers to do the same. That is, Harvey contemplates Rumi as a saviour of 'selves' while the poet argued for their nullification.

While these examples clarifiy the extent of the popularisation which Rumi's name and his verses have undergone in recent years, the research process of this thesis has exposed an interesting point about the fictionalisation of the poet: his being politicised. That is, these three well-known leftist-socialist novelists, Orhan Pamuk, Elif Shafak, and Ahmet Ümit, utilise Rumi's life story and teachings both to cast light on the socio-political history of Turkey and to critique it. While narrating extant fragments from the poet's life and work, the novelists' attention is directed not at Rumi

as a devout Muslim and at his importance as a theologian who has a great command of the Quran, but at his exemplary life and views of tolerance and egalitarianism.

In *The Black Book*, this emerges as an allegorical presentation of Republican Westernisation and Modernisation through Pamuk's modelling of his two main characters after two important Sufi figures, Şeyh Galip and Rumi, as well as exploring the latter's relationship with Shams. Even though there have been numerous works of criticism on the novel, it has not been read as an allegory of Republican policies in contemporary Turkey. As such, the first chapter of this thesis tried to fill that critical gap. To achieve his allegorical aim, I argued, the novelist provides a number of Sufi maqams, doctrines, and tropes of Sufi poetry as points of reference and then politicises them to engage in a critique of Republican reforms. Pamuk's bending of the characteristics of metaphysical detective fiction, which has not been elaborated to this date, is also informative of the connection the novelist tries to establish between Sufi tropes and Turkish political history.

In the second chapter of the thesis, which specifically focuses on *The Forty Rules of Love*, Shafak's starting point is a comparison of the thirteenth century with the first decade of the twenty-first century, which, for her, do not differ very much despite the centuries that divide them. Her criticism is mainly of the erasure of Rumi and Sufism from the cultural memory of Turkish society, and her narrative of Rumi's life is an attempt to reintroduce the poet not only to her Turkish readers but also global ones. However, the importance Shafak attaches to the gradual transformation of a theologian to a heterodox Sufi, as well as the juxtaposition of the hostile contemporaries of Rumi with the poet, provides her with the opportunity to criticise rigid understandings of religion and ethnicity in Rumi's egalitarianism and tolerance with the concepts of pluralism and conviviality. Even though the novel has been

analysed from various perspectives by many scholars, the epistolary form Shafak implements in the text has not been discussed in detail. This form, which suits Shafak's wider claims about the harmonious coexistence of diverse ethnicities and religiosities, creates a channel to know the Other and challenge the stratification of the unknown. It is through this form that the novelist brings two ethnically and culturally diverse, and spatially distant, contemporary characters, Ella and Aziz, closer together. Apart from Shafak's engagement with politico-cultural criticism, her re-enactment of Rumi's transformation from an orthodox to a heterodox figure contains another critical strand. Shafak embeds her feminist critique of a patriarchal society into the novel by means of giving voice to three female characters who experience different phases of Rumi's *bildung*. Hence the novelist presents Rumi as a model for humanity through the change he undergoes from rigidity to flexibility. Contrary to the other novelists in this thesis who write in the Turkish language, Shafak's production of her novels in English and the implications of this choice has gone unnoticed by the critics of her works. In an attempt to fill this gap, I engaged in a comparative analysis of the Turkish and English versions of her novel and theorised her language choice and the variations between two versions of the text by borrowing Rebecca Walkowitz's coinage "born translated".

Like Shafak, ethnic divisions within contemporary Turkey haunt Ümit, so his utilisation of Rumi's live centres around discussions of ethnic identity. Yet his narrative is marked by his Marxist ideology. I sketched the reasons for Ümit's involvement in the Turkish Communist Party, as well as tracing this history of his first publication. Critics of Ümit's work have so far overlooked this material, but its scrutiny reveals Ümit's painstaking literary engagement with Rumi's life story in *The Dervish Gate*. The novelist views Rumi as a revolutionary figure who stood against the norms of his age, which makes the poet an ideal vehicle for Ümit's critique of

Turkish history and nationalism and his ideological stance against capitalism. In order to fulfil his writerly ambitions, I asserted, the novelist makes use of two underdeveloped genres in Turkish novel, namely the fantastic and detective fiction. I stated that even when these two genres are used in a small number of works, they are mostly made to side with and promote the governing ideology. Yet in Ümit's usage, these two genres become a channel through which to examine the strictly nationalist foundations of the Republican novel and to transgress and shatter them via Rumi's egalitarianism. This analysis, only the second work of criticism to scrutinise the English translation of the novel, demonstrated that the juxtaposition of the ways of life of Rumi and more generally the Sufis—those who resisted the temptations of a material life—allowed the novelist to engage in a critique of capitalism and its deadly consequences.

This thesis has shown that the re-enactment of various aspects of Rumi's life and teachings in *The Black Book*, *The Forty Rules of Love*, and *The Dervish Gate*, are driven by their writers' political impulses. However, regardless of their Leftist alignments in a strictly polarised society split along secular and religious lines, these novelists engaged in a critique of the pole they identified with through their figurations of Rumi's life and teachings. As I discussed in the **Introduction**, the practice of secular intellectuals against religion and religious figures has marked the appearance of such characters in secular, Left-aligned Turkish literature as a representation of hostility and backwardness, as in the case of Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's *Nur Baba* and Refik Halit Karay's *Kadınlar Tekkesi*. Yet, this study has shown that in the three novels discussed in this thesis, the novelists transgressed this divide. That is, the novelists under scrutiny defied the Turkish political norms of the last century in its secular-religious dichotomy as they sought to represent Rumi's life. Rather than taking sides

with the religious camp or blithely refuting the teachings of the poet in the standard secular manner, they mostly eliminate the religious background of the poet and underline his universally unifying practices and teachings.

Appendix 1: The Interview with Ahmet Ümit

This conversation took place on 28 April 2018, shortly after the publication of Ümit's latest novel, *Kırlangıç Çığlığı*. The setting of the interview was a public place, a patisserie, in Şişli district of Istanbul, called Pelit Pastanesi. It took a little longer than an hour, and the novelist's approach was friendly and accessible. Since the author does not know English, this interview was conducted in Turkish and then I translated it into English.

Pürnur Altay: I would like to start with the time around *Bab-ı Esrar*'s publication. When the book was published, more precisely a year before it, Hrant Dink[103] was murdered. In this novel, you present Shams as an alienated, stigmatised, and suppressed character.
Ahmet Ümit: Yes, that is correct.
PA: While portraying Shams, did you think about Hrant Dink or minorities in Turkey?
AÜ: No, I did not have this idea specifically for this novel, but the minorities in Turkey have always been a significant issue in my novels. I have empathy, and sympathy for the minorities, but more importantly I believe that they are invaluable for our culture. However, we have not been nice to them, we exiled and excluded them. We ill-treated these people—the Armenians, the Jews, the Greek-origins, and sometimes even the Kurds. These lands are, indeed, multicultural and multi-ethnic lands that dominate many civilisations. Almost 3000 years ago, there was a Hittite State in the middle of the Anatolia in Hattusa, the Hittite State was multi-ethnic and multicultural. Hittites were a very interesting people. We called them 'people with a thousand gods' because they adopted local deities of the places they visited. In other words, if there was a tree god or water god, they embraced these. The Roman Empire was in Anatolia after the

[103] Hrant Dink was an Armenian-Turkish journalist who advocated minority rights in Turkey. He was assassinated in 2007 by a nationalist.

Hittites, and they were also multi-ethnic and multicultural. Peoples of various religions, languages, and races were living together. Then, the Ottoman Empire ruled the region and they were also like the Hittites and the Romans, because the Ottoman Empire was the continuation of the Roman Empire though it is not accepted widely. However, the establishment of the Republic in 1923 changed many things in the country, and though the Republic was a much more modern and democratic regime, the nation building process in Turkey was not kind towards the minorities who were different colours on these lands. The regime was in a kind of paranoia or fear. This was the fear that these minorities might have posed a threat to the national security if they had the intention of declaring independence and attempt to establish their own national states. This fear caused the exile of many minorities, excluding the Kurds since they are Muslims. To severe the ties with Armenian and Greek civilisations, there was an intentionally state-operated… I do not believe that the public shared this view. I grew up in Gaziantep. There we had Greek and Jewish and very few Armenian neighbours. I currently live in Sisli, I lived in Kurtulus. In these districts, I lived with Greeks, Jews and Armenians. The new regime followed these minority policies, though Turkish people did not want it. As an author, I always choose to be with the ones who are in need of help or suffer. That's why the minorities have always been in my novels widely. Yet, in *The Dervish Gate*, I told the story of a dervish, who was in intellectual solitude, in intellectual distinction, or in other words the story of an anarchist dervish. A dervish (Shams) but indeed an anarchist. On the other hand, Mevlana was very well educated, among the ulema class [ulema means a class in that era for the well-educated ones who were generally very influential on the state policies] and had a good relationship with the State. Mevlana, before coming to Konya, had been to Afghanistan, Damascus, Baghdad that were very important in that era, had the chance of meeting with the most important Islamic scholars in his time, but it was Shams that made the revolutionary and radical changes in his ideas. Because Shams was a dervish who rose through the ranks and he was a Qalandar. What we call Qalandar is esoteric, Islamic mysticism. Among Qalandars, Shams was outstanding because he believed that God is within him. In other words, he did not believe in a terrestrial God. Instead, he believed that God is within humans and every human and object is a manifestation of God. For that reason, his views were disturbing and striking. According to what I read, his personality was also provocative and blunt. He was harsh even against Mevlana, and he regarded his contemporaries as illiterate.

Shams was an outstanding man, and it would be interesting to write on this extraordinary man, so I wrote.

PA: Talking about anarchy, you have a short story written in 1985, *Annals of Courage: It Was Not the Last Test*. In this story you write about what happened to a friend of yours, that he was continuously tortured. What happened to that person?

AÜ: This story I wrote about, if we are talking about the same story, was just after 12 September [by this date he refers to military coup of 1980]. In 1982, there was a referendum for a constitution. During this time, we were placing placards illegally. There was military dictatorship back then and a friend of mine was tortured for five years and imprisoned. He was released afterwards. He is fine since then. However, like him, hundreds of thousands of people were tortured, imprisoned, and even died around that time. This is still the same, it does not change.

PA: But this was the story that led you to a career in writing, wasn't it?
AÜ: Yes, it was this story. It was a true story and I narrated it.

PA: During that time there was a period when you lived in Moscow which also appeared in *Kar Kokusu*.
AÜ: Yes. In the same period [after the coup] there were police operations and arrests. Police forces did not know my name, but they knew my appearance. Following the arrests of several party members, the party [Turkish Communist Party] sent me to Moscow both for educational purposes and for staying away from all this for a little while like Nazim Hikmet. It is Moscow where I decided to be a novelist. When I went there, I saw that it was not the system that I imagined as Socialism. It was not the society that I imagined, as I had imagined a much more ideal society, a much better one. However, Soviet socialism that I saw did not conform to this (the ideal society he imagines). Yet there, I observed that Soviet socialism holds authors like Pushkin, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Chehov, and our Nazim Hikmet in high esteem. Nazım Hikmet's home was also in Moscov and from time to time I visited him there. Since my time in Moscow surprised me in terms of my belief in socialism and made me believe that it was not the society that I fought for, I told myself that you should be an author, and tell your own ideas rather than others' ideas. It was like Shams' question

to Mevlana that "until when you will read others' books rather than writing your own"? Of course, I was unaware of Shams at that time. I told myself that rather than conveying others' ideas, I can tell my own. At least, I would write what I know to be true. In Moscow I saw some people [the politburo] make some decisions, and others try to put these decisions into practice. I said that this was not logical and started writing, and then I realised that I really like writing.

PA: They sacrificed ideals for leaders.

AÜ: Exactly. Of course, there is another thing you see there. There are, of course, differences between politics and art. Politics views life from its own point of view, I mean it evaluates, criticises, interprets, and then decides whether it is right or wrong. Art is not so straightforward, art approaches issues from a much broader perspective, and it is like a mirror showing all details. Of course, everything will be filtered through the author's perspective, but artists do not limit themselves with politics. Politics limits life, just like science, but art represents everything including science, politics, ethics, and daily life. Of course, there is a subjective side of this, too, but this is necessary.

PA: But through literature you also depict what you are not by imagining this other and the lives they live.

AÜ: You can develop empathy. If you have empathy, you begin understanding the ones who are not like you. For example, I wrote about an MIT [National Intelligence Organisation in Turkey] agent in *Sis ve* Gece. That is the point, to write about someone you are not. Readers liked it to the extent that they assumed that I was an agent myself. This is what art means to me. There is no point in writing about yourself. If you create someone from scratch, this is invaluable. Why is Shakespeare great? He created hundreds of characters, he narrated human soul incredibly. That is why he is perpetual.

PA: Actually, everyone produces thousands of narratives in a day about what they live through. What differs authors from others is this; to write about who they are not. The rest only narrate from their subjective perspective. My other question is about the temporality of the novel. The appearance of the novel coincides with Mevlana's 800th birthday anniversary. In other words, it is a time where Mevlana rose into prominence. Historically, what was pressurised in the post-Republican era with closures of dergahs was released in the 1950s and with the change of government in the 2000s Mevlana became a centre of attention. Is this one of the factors of your writing a novel about

Mevlana? I know that nearly in all of your novels such as in *Patasana* and *Istanbul Hatırası*, history is present in the background. However, the appearance of the novel at that particular time makes me wonder whether Mevlana's popularity is one of the reasons for writing about it.

AÜ: No, let me put it this way. In 2005 before Mevlana's 800th birthday, I went to Konya. There was a book fair and in that book fair I began thinking about Mevlana and what it was all about. Quite interestingly, I did not know that Shams was killed in Konya until I went there, and I also did not know that the younger son of Mevlana, Alaaddin, was also involved in this murder. It made an impression on me and when I came back, I started researching. This novel is among the novels which have a thesis, an immense reading of historical sources. I really liked Rumi's life and began thinking about it. Almost in all my novels, history plays a major role as it was in *Patasana*, *Bir Ses Böler Geceyi*, *Bab-ı Esrar*, *İstanbul Hatırası*, *Elveda Güzel Vatanım*, and *Sultanı Öldürmek*. In *Sultanı Öldürmek*, for example, I wrote about Fatih Sultan Mehmet; in *İstanbul Hatırası*, I wrote about the history of Istanbul or in *Beyoglu Rapsodisi* I wrote about the history of Beyoglu. This topic (Mevlana's life) was always interesting to me and I was wondering about its details. Of course, the discussions of the time might have an impact on my subconscious to write about it. However, what I wanted to tell was this: We have Dante in Christianity. Dante who lived in the same century with Rumi is the person who improved mystic Humanism in Christianity, and the founder of the Italian language. When I started reading again, I understood that if there is something that will save Islam, it is this kind of heterodox Islam. I mean pluralist, humanist, inclusive, involving everyone, and not with very strictly rules. We have this in Mevlana or in Anatolian Alawism. This caught my attention, and indeed I wanted to discuss this. After I wrote the book, Elif Shafak wrote *Aşk*. It is a very similar novel to mine. Very similar. My friends suggested me to sue her. In my novel there is Karen Kimya from England. In her novel there is a woman who is from Boston. Both of these characters reach Mevlana through Shams. Is this really possible? If it were a movie, they would have sued it. Shafak published this novel six months later. Then, many people started writing about Mevlana. After my novel, people turned to Mevlana. Also, there was a tourist boom in Konya. Mevlana was not known that much until then. After I wrote about him there has been a much greater interest in him. *The Dervish Gate* is

not a best-seller, it is long-seller book. It still has a circulation of new publications between 50,000 and 100,000 every year.

PA: When you published the English translation of the novel in 2011, it was still on the best seller list.
AÜ: It attracts a lot of attention and I am very happy about this. Why? Because I am a novelist and I don't know Sufism. I don't dictate people about dos and don'ts about Sufism. I am not arguing about what is right and what is wrong. The novel does not make such claims. But it created a discussion and sensitivity about the topic and this is what matters. I aimed to achieve this, and I did. I find this really important.

PA: We can see different voices in the novel. In an interview with Onur Bilge Kula you mentioned that you try to summarise each of your novels in a single sentence. What is the sentence that summarises Bab-ı Esrar?
AÜ: It is already in the novel: the world is a dream within a dream.

PA: This sentence which you present in the novel as an epigraph reminded me of Edgar Allan Poe's poem "dream within a dream". At the same time, in an interview you mentioned that you don't play chess with your readers. Therefore, this epigraph, World is a dream within a dream, gives significant clues about the structure of the novel. However, literary critics have not picked up this point. That is, critics do not read the novel as a dream. For me, on the other hand, the planes that Karen takes off and lands in are the same flight. What is in between is her dreams, her imagination. Would you like to talk about this?
AÜ: Of course, I do. There are also a good number of readers who read this novel as a real story. What I wanted to do is exactly this, because novel is a democratic art. In other words, when a novelist finishes writing about something it is out of their hands. For example, reading Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, we draw different conclusions and offer various interpretations. This is what we need to do as readers as a novel becomes valuable only when it reaches to readers and it is interpreted by them. That's why novels, which are alive, are constantly reinterpreted. It is necessary to provide this therefore it is what I aimed to do at the end of the novel. I wanted to authorise my readers for ample possibilities. Was it a dream or reality? I want my readers to discuss this. On the other hand, if it is a dream, we discuss in this dream

several things. Today in the milky way galaxy there is a blue planet. In this planet there are living forms and intelligent creatures. I know that, we know that, there had been creatures living on this planet such as dinosaurs. They lived much longer than us but then they became extinct. There is a possibility that one day humans as a species will also be gone. It is definite that we all will die one day, but what will happen when humans became extinct? The world is a dream within a dream in a way corresponds to this. In this dream there is a big adventure which has started with Homo Sapiens who dressed stones to today's humans who drive planes if we forget about Karen Kimya for a moment. There is a possibility that all this might be a dream.

PA: If we go back to Mevlana, in your book entitled *İnsan Ruhunun Haritası*, you state that Mevlana who "was attentive not to intervene with the government, presented an alternative life in his works [… and] adopted a contrarian attitude to the quotidian life" (Ümit *İnsan* 45; my translation). Is Mevlana's oppositional attitudes to the rulers of the time one of the reasons that draw you to write about him since you are also a dissident?

AÜ: Of course, I see in Mevlana that there is an aesthetics to his contrarian attitude. It is also possible to see this in Ghandi, they perform civil disobedience. If we look at Mevlana's poetry, we see that he does not care about worldly gains, he opts for a different kind of life, suggests a different version of Islam. There is an anecdote about this: Mevlana and his friends are listening to music. At that moment, there is a call for prayer and a religious Muslim comes in and scolds them for listening to music. This man asks them to stop the music immediately. Mevlana interrupts him and says that he might reach God with a call for prayer and in mosque, but they are reaching him through music. What he tries to say is that he views God as beauty and kindness. But Shams' interpretation is different. He views God not only as beauty but also as ugliness, as goodness and as evil. Because he interprets living as divine.

PA: I believe we are approaching to the same topic, Mevlana's tolerance, his willingness to understand others around him, his adoption of multiculturalism and his willingness to be with people from all walks of life are among your reasons to write a book about him.

AÜ: Of course, they are. Also, it is different. That is what I meant to say. Today, when we look at it, the Islamic World is in a crisis. On the one hand, there is ISIS and other

malignant organisations. On the other hand, Islam is increasingly equated with radicalism and terrorism. This is terrible. My father was a devout Muslim and he was very kind to others without harming anyone. However, there are people who slaughter others in the name of this religion. I think Muslim people need to consider the essence of this religion. I believe Mevlana and other Humanist thinkers have invaluable suggestions about this. Their writings are invaluable guides. Not only Mevlana but also other local figures like Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli and Yunus Emre could contribute a lot to this Islamic Humanism. This was what I wanted to discuss, what I wanted to bring forward: Islam might have another face, a humanist face which takes its starting point from kindness. In the novel I state something: most of the time it is not important what God sees in us. What we see in Him is what matters. Those who are good and honest see honesty and goodness in Him, bad people see only badness. That is the point, we are how we envision Him. Think of an immoral man, a child abuser for example, he engages in all kinds of bad acts, but asks for forgiveness in holy nights. This is not religion, this is dishonesty. You need to be good; without being a good person, you will not find redemption. Religious service summons you to goodness. Therefore, what Mevlana told was true: one can go to goodness through music, through art, or something else. This mindset is important, this tolerance.

PA: Indeed, are not all holy books trying to teach us humanity? The *Bible*, the *Torah*, and the *Qur'an*, they try to teach us how to interact and live together both in private and in social life.

AÜ: Yes, this is their starting point.

PA: I would like to talk a little bit about this cycle, which marks both the opening and the closing pages of the novel. It is called ouroborous structure, a snake which eats its tail. Would you like to talk about this technique?

AÜ: This snake which eats its tail is a symbol of eternity. We, as readers, start with an aeroplane journey. The reader takes off with this aeroplane, with Karen Kimya, learning bits of information about this main character such as her Sufi father from Konya and her activist English mother. This is interesting as the reader opens up the book and is immersed in an unfamiliar life, they enter in this eternity. When the story comes to an end, they close the book and get out of this realm. This is eternity. There is a catharsis, Karen Kimya decides to give birth, and forgives her father. In other

words, there is a transformation happening there. What is stable is the fact that the reader's life continues outside of the book while Karen Kimya stays within the book. After this the eternity comes into play, through their reading, readers come up with some conclusions. They might or might not like the book, agree or disagree with the character or with the novelist and offer their interpretation. Maybe they will read the same novel years later and those who hated will love and those who loved will hate it. This will continue endlessly. I wrote a story, it began and ended. Yet there is a possibility that it ended where it started. At the same time, I am trying to imply this to the reader: This is a novel. Though many readers confuse facts with fiction, this is novel. You are face to face with a piece of art. Therefore, there is a something Brechtian in play here, an alienating approach.

PA: In the same manner, Karen's transformation as a character has some parallels with becoming a Sufi.

AÜ: Exactly. She discusses Sufism, creates an awareness in it. She affirms that she does not know what is right or wrong. People need to be good and for being good they do not need the promise of heaven, or to avoid bad they don't need the fear of hell. If they do, then the problem begins. The human psyche is driven by the reward and punishment. We need to go beyond this and reach maturity.

PA: I would like to talk a little about the translation of the novel. The Turkish and English titles of the novel are different. What is the reason behind this?

AÜ: The translator [Elke Dixon] told me that if translated literally like *Gate of Spirits*, the title will make the novel look like a commercially driven, best seller. She suggested me to change it and I accepted the English title as *The Dervish Gate.*

PA: At the same time, The Dervish Gate's English publication is timely as there has been a growing interest in Rumi, his life, and translations of his works.

AÜ: In Germany, *İstanbul Hatırası* was published and there has been a good interest it the translation. When I suggested to the German publishers my most recent novel *Kirlangic Cigligi*, they told me that they want to publish *Bab-ı Esrar* instead. I guess it was the right choice then.

PA: It is similar to Susan's quest in the novel, of which the reader is briefly informed. There is a disillusionment with the Western way of life and the reader is told that she

set off for India and then to Konya in Turkey. There are people in the West who are driven by their disillusionment and to overcome this feeling they seek for a meaningful life in Eastern religions. I guess that is the reason why Mevlana is more popular now than at all times.

AÜ: Its true. In the West, life is too materialist, and they have lost the meaning of life. When the meaning is lost in everyday practices, there emerges alternatives to fill this void. It is also possible to see this in the novel, which became a synthesis of East and West. Because Karen symbolises this synthesis exactly. Eastern father, Western mother and there is this girl who is squeezed between these two. The novel touches this issue, too. In the West, there are technological advancements and reason while here there is the dominance of the soul and emotions.

PA: You create two layers (mimetic and fantastic) in the novel. One of them is the world as we know it. Karen comes to Konya and until her meeting with the thirteenth century Sufi Shams, everything seems normal and expected. With Shams' appearance, the fantastic mode of the novel becomes evident.

AÜ: But Mevlana's life story itself is fantastic, I did not formulate it specifically. For example, in one of Rumi's biographies, it is narrated that Mevlana's father passes by a graveyard, he stops and prays for the deceased. The account reports that the deceased people held up their hands while Bahauddin was praying. This anecdote is incredible, like a Stephen King story and it was written centuries ago. That is, Rumi's life has always been narrated fantastically. In these accounts, it is told that Shams appeared in different locations at the same time. Therefore, Rumi's story is a pot where fantastic, mythological, and factual merge together.

PA: While writing these two layers, you are also creating a tension. On the one hand there is a materially driven world, three-million-pound insurance policy, Mercedes cars, where people can kill for material gain… On the other hand, you create a spiritual life where believers try their very best to reach their Beloved. What are you trying to achieve through this?

AÜ: Human beings are in a limbo, squeezed between material and spiritual. This causes the problem. If we don't meet the needs of our body and soul, we will be unhappy. Yet if we meet only the bodily and material needs, what matters for the soul, such as empathising with others and being nice towards them will vanish. Therefore,

one needs to feed both their souls and their body. Mostly we kill our souls while trying to meet the needs of the body. For example, food is beneficial for our bodies, however, when we eat a lot, we lose the means of understanding people who do not have access to food as we do. Between the body and soul, there needs to be a balance and a harmony. Mostly, one of them dominates our thinking. In the West, it is more material, in the East it is more spiritual, but not in a good way. Things don't improve as eastern people focus mainly on religion. The balance between material and spiritual, the body and the soul would make people happy. If we were consisting only of reason, the problem would be solved. Yet, this would also make us unhappy. What makes us happy is the struggle between these two. We only feel alive through our choices. This is also Karen Kimya's dilemma, what should she do? She was left by her father, should she forgive him? Should she give birth? Should she be like her mother or her father? Our lives are like this, too. There should always be a tension. If there weren't, we would be bored to death. Human beings are not intrinsically good or bad, we just have the potential for the two. The problem is to decide which one of these we will focus and contribute. We are in the limbo for this reason.

PA: There are two themes that surface in the novel which are nationality and identity. Karen is in between, she is both English and Turkish in origin yet the country she visits has a strong hold of Turkish identity. Here the Turkish identity is emphasised, she is frequently identified as being Turk through her name, her paternal national origins. This creates a tension, too. Creating such a world where national identity is overrated, are you trying to show its meaninglessness?
AÜ: Exactly. On the one hand, Mevlana and Shams are introduced in the narrative who discuss the ways of union with the Creator. On the other hand, contemporary characters tag each other according to their national and religious identities. There are bigger issues to discuss but this divisive mindset does not change. I wrote this book in 2008. Back then, such segregations were not as much as they are today. Both in Turkey and abroad, national identity and Muslim identity at the very forefront. German identity, being a European, in the UK there is Scottish and Irish identities, in Spain there are Catalans. It is as if the world is turning around identities. If you are Turkish, you were born as a Turk; if you are French, you were born as French. Even religions are pre-given, they are not chosen by individuals themselves. Whatever religion one is born into in the family, defines their religion. The number of people who choose their

religion is very low. Unfortunately, marginalisation become very easy and people define themselves confined in these narrow identities. Being Turkish, Muslim, Kurdish, Armenian, or French … People take refuge in these identities and this is not something good for humanity. Yet I am hopeful that this will be temporary. From time to time such ideas emerge and after a period human beings realise the stupidity of such ideas and turn towards a collective human project.

PA: The years following the foundation of the Republic of Turkey had a very big impact on this. With the policies of the Republic, such as purification of language, Turkish people lost their contact with the multicultural past. While trying to purify the language, we got rid of Arabic and Persian borrowings. However, we turned to French and English languages to fill the void of these borrowings. This uprooted us. That is, it is impossible for me to read a literary work produced in the Ottoman era. I cannot even read Ataturk's *Nutuk* in its original language. This latter work was three-times republished in a simplified language. Therefore, Turkey is a good example to see how nationalist identity has damaged one's sense of self and you are presenting this beautifully in the novel. In *The Dervish Gate*, there are passages where Sharia laws, such as stoning prostitutes to death, amputating the hand of a thief, are applied in the contemporary setting of the novel even though these laws were no longer in use in the Republican era. Placing these instances in the narrative, are you showing your concern of today's world? Do you think things are going backwards?

AÜ: It is worrying of course. Things were going bad but there is a turn of events. The most solid example to this is ISIS. ISIS did all these things and they did them not far from where we are now. Human beings implement their violence, and then they camouflage it. This can be religion, ideology, racism, sexism, or governments' expedience. İn terms of sexism, for example, honour killings of women in Turkey protect patriarchal values. While humanity is going forward with all the advancements, it is also going backwards through the increased amounts of violence and loss of mercy. I don't know how it is in the UK, but in Turkey the number of murders committed has increased a great deal. But this is inevitable as long as you promote nationalism, racism, and religious radicalism, these will inevitably turn into hatred against others because what you support is this: those who are like me are valuable, those who are not like me are valueless. The governing idea behind all these mindsets is people are valuable as long as they are like me. Hitler was a radical example of this

view. It is possible to see this view everywhere where nationalism, religious fundamentalism and sexism exist.

PA: Well, do you think Turkey is undergoing an Islamisation?
AÜ: This is an interesting question. The government tries to achieve this, but it does not have its roots in the public. For example, the Ministry of Education has recently published a study and it shows that deism has increased in Turkey. They published it on their website but then withdrew it probably due to a governmental intervention. But this is quite natural as religious governments are always oppressive and they produce their anti-thesis. When Marx was writing *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848, he stated that capitalism has produced its own grave-diggers. This is also applicable here. If you increase oppression, there emerges a reaction to it. The Soviet Union banned religion, there was not a single political party apart from the Communist Party, which fell into pieces. We also had bad experiences like military junta (he is referring to 1980) but this did not impose a particular lifestyle upon us. It abolished the parliament, discarded the elections and closed down political parties establishing a dictatorship. Yet it did not prescribe a life style. Today, the regime in Turkey interferes in its citizens' lives and gets reactions. Earlier on they claimed that women were not allowed to wear headscarves. However, now, women who don't wear headscarves and adopt a secular lifestyle are marginalised. The world is progressing towards the West regardless of its mistakes. The Western way of life is not perfect, there are big problems. Does Turkish youth emulate Saudi Arabia which aspires to the West? Iranians imitate the West, why should Turkish youth imitate the East? If you as the political power put this under pressure, I tell you what happens. In three, five, or ten years these people (Turkish public) will tell you to leave. Therefore, it cannot be argued that religion is on the rise in Turkey, but it is true that there is a religious program and its results are not good, at least for them.

PA: In the novel, Karen frequently refers to her "unconscious" which directly brings Freud's statements on dream interpretation to mind. At the same time, Karen has some prophetic (i.e. predictive) dreams which are quite valued in Islam. By merging these two dream interpretations, do you suggest that reason and belief complete each other?
AÜ: Of course, in Psychoanalysis and in Freud's theory, dreams are very important as vehicles to discover the unconscious mind. There is a close similarity between

psychoanalysis and literature, indeed before psychoanalytic theory was developed there had been literature. Hence, if we look at Freud's outstanding productions—I say Freud specifically even though there have been other significant contributors to psychoanalysis since he is considered as the father of psychoanalytic theory—he refers to the words of Dostoyevsky, Sophocles and Shakespeare because all good novels and novelists are psychoanalysts. We talk about the human psyche. In *The Dervish Gate* I tried to convey not only what is visible and reasonable but also the unconscious which becomes apparent in dreams. That is, I wanted to present not only my protagonist Karen Kimya's quotidian life in her tensions, attitudes, and rights and wrongs, but also what is imbedded in her unconscious such as her confusion and profundity of her soul. I wanted to trace the things she heard from her father and her mother and their impact on her and narrate them.

PA: As I alluded to a few moments ago, Shams' appearance and the introduction of the bleeding ring to the reader in the narrative destroys the reader's perception of a familiar world. Could you please tell me more about the reasons of choosing the Fantastic mode for the narration of this novel?
AÜ: Because this novel is essentially about Rumi and Shams and about what happened in the thirteenth century. That is, we are talking about a mystic world. It was not possible for me to narrate this in a plain, simple, and realist mode. Therefore, the narrative need to ply between realism and dream narratives as well as realism and the fantastic. One of Rumi's verses is very relevant to this as he utters "Love is a miracle and to comprehend a miracle one needs to be mad". What he means here is to see reality as an illusion. For this reason, plain reality was not enough to narrate this novel while miracles, dreams, and the fantastic created narrative possibilities.

PA: Also, during the reign of the Ottoman Empire and pre-Republican period, the fantastic mode was very common and popular in our oral literary tradition. Yet this tradition, with the intervention of the role given to the Republican literature, which is to educate and narrate what is plausible, was side-lined. Considering this, is the implementation of dreams in the novel a rebellion against the nationalist and realist tradition of Turkish literature?
AÜ: Maybe, in terms of technique. People usually criticised postmodernism when it first appeared. Postmodernism is against literary realism and it twists reality. I have

never thought of it like this. *The Dervish Gate* is essentially a very realist novel, but I used postmodernist techniques in it such as the fantastic. Because, novelists use whichever technique is necessary for their narratives. When Picasso was drawing Cubic pictures and replacing a woman's eye with her mouth, other people thought that this was wrong and unacceptable. You cannot evaluate his creativity by comparing his drawings to human anatomy. This is what I tried to do in this novel. I think an artist, regardless of their field, should be able to use all narrative techniques and choose their techniques according to the content of their production.
PA: If I remember right, in *İnsan Ruhunun Haritası* you made a similar remark by saying "I wait for finding the right style before starting to write a novel". While writing about the Fantastic, Rosemary Jackson states that through the Fantastic mode authors present what is impossible in order to reveal what can be possible in that cultural setting. It seems like it is possible to observe this in *The Dervish Date*, isn't it?
AÜ: Of course, the fantastic gives novelists such a narrative possibility.

PA: Let's talk about Marxism and the Detective novel. You refer to Ernest Mandel frequently in *İnsan Ruhunun Haritası*. Mandel suggests that the detective novel is a by-product of capitalism. Do you agree?
AÜ: He is right, and I agree with him. Technically speaking, there are two kinds of sources in crime fiction. One of them is the classical sources. If we look closely, we realise that the first crime story is in Torah, long before capitalism, where Cain kills Abel. Sophocles' Oedipus tragedy follows it. But if we talk about contemporary detective fiction, its first product was Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders at the Rue Morgue" in 1841. How did this story emerge? There was a flow from rural to the urban areas and cities like Paris and London became centres of attraction. People came there but this created a huge problem: overabundance of workers. This led to theft, robbery, hijacking, and murders, and these stories published in tabloids. This created crime fiction, or more specifically detective fiction. "The Murders at the Rue Morgue" is one of those stories. Much later in his Sherlock Holmes stories Arthur Conan Doyle narrated these crimes and murders. Of course, one of these stories was set in Paris, while the other focuses on fictional crimes in London. The fact that these two are big cities, which were subject to mass mobility, is not coincidental. Naturally, London's foggy weather was very effective or Robert Louis Stevenson's stories, which were set in Edinburgh. For that reason, I agree with Mandel. That is, unemployment,

overabundance of labour increased poverty. In the rural areas people managed to survive through agriculture. Yet in the cities people depended on finding a job to survive and to meet their basic needs. Hence, hunger and poverty skyrocketed crimes. If we look at primeval times, the drive to kill is inherent in humanity, as in the case of Cain and Abel.

PA: Let's talk about detective fiction in Turkey. When you talk about the genre, you divide it into two: literary and popular. You try to defend the literariness of your novels because there is a misconception of detective novels. At the same time, Zeynep Tüfekçioğlu declares in one of her articles about crime fiction that both Orhan Pamuk and Elif Shafak were sued for their arguments about the Armenian incidents of 1915 but the comments of your two characters, Timothy and Bernd, in *Patasana* were unnoticed. Zeynep Tüfekçioğlu states that, what saves you from such accusations is the genre you write in since giving voice to crime is one of the central characteristics of crime fiction.
AÜ: This is right. There is also another point. I am a novelist now but before that I was an activist and between the ages of fifteen and twenty-nine, I was actively engaged in this. But what I do now is within the boundaries of literature. My political views, or more broadly worldview, are clear and I express them quite often in various platforms. However, I would like to be regarded first and foremost as a novelist both in Turkey and abroad. Unfortunately, there is a double standard in the West. They would like to see a Turkish novelist primarily as a political figure who resists oppression rather than a producer of literary Works. I think this is unacceptable. I have spent my life as a political figure and currently I am one of the opponents in the country now. Yet if I am to be known in the West, I prefer it to be through my works rather than my political engagement. I witnessed this first hand when my novels appeared in translation. In these two examples (refers to Pamuk and Shafak) the motive is different. Western interest increases when they see some form of political ideas in play. When we observe these two people, they are not committed to politics throughout their lives at all, this is a problem. Both are very valuable, I do not want to be misunderstood, I just want to clarify my stance. But what Zeynep suggests is right, I deal with these issues in my novels and it is the characters that utter these words.

PA: In the novel, Shams states that "What words cannot explain, life will. To learn the truth, one needs not words, but experiences" (121). Hence you bring metamorphosis forth in the narrative and Karen becomes Shams. Is your intention here to mirror the unity you present through the single body and create an awareness and empathy both in Karen and the reader?
AÜ: Of course it is. Usually, when we are reading novels, we identify with the protagonist and we look at ourselves in a new light through their experiences. You might notice that you experienced something similar to them, or hurt someone else's feelings just like the characters. Goethe has a maxim: "Theory is grey, but life is green". This is what Shams tries to show in the novel. We can narrate an experience but the actual feeling which emerges through this experience is more complicated. The novelist (he refers to himself) tries to achieve this but to what extent he is successful is beyond my knowledge. For that reason, any novel completely embraces life and those which come close to this direct experience become classics and those which do not just get forgotten in time.

PA: We can state that the events you present in *The Dervish Gate* are still relevant to today's Turkey. For example, the instances where you briefly engage in a critique of child brides and murders of women—as in the case of young Kimya's marriage to Shams and how Kimya is murdered by her husband—as well as urban sprawl. I found this very interesting and timely since these are ongoing social and residential problems in Turkey now.
AÜ: All of my novels deal with urban sprawl.

PA: Yes, the same pattern can be observed in *Istanbul Hatırası* and *Kırlangıç Çığlığı*, too. I would like to inquire about Rumi's class. In the novel, you allude that Rumi has servants in the household and thereby hint at his social class. In real life, Rumi's family was respected by the Seljuk Sultan. Do you think that the two different social classes Rumi and Shams belong to have an impact on the life experiences of Rumi and Shams?
AÜ: Of course, this affects them daily. Rumi belonged to the class of *ulema* and he had a close relationship with the Palace. In principle, he denied to be sided with the Sultan since in Sufism the sultan is someone who commits murders and Sufis find it necessary to stand clear of the rulers. One of the teachers of Mehmed the Conqueror, Molla Gürani, daringly accuses the Sultan as "sinner and murderer". Hence committed

Sufis stay away from the government because they try to have a strong hold of their ego. This is what I told in the novel, too: power is the organised version of the ego whereas in Sufism it needs to be annihilated. What damages one's moral code more than material gains and sexual engagement is power. Therefore, Sufis try to stay clear of the ruling class but Rumi's relationship to the Sultan is not completely severed. Rumi visits the sultan of the time and get into conversations with him. Hence, we are talking about a higher social rank which has ties to the palace. Shams, on the other hand, is a man who does not have anything but just enough to keep his soul and body together. He is not invited to the palaces in the cities he visits, and he is not favoured due to his sharp-tongued utterances.

PA: This is also present in the novel where Shams only eats broth without any meat in it and when he is offered meat, he becomes agitated.
AÜ: That's right. He is trying to discipline his ego or to achieve, in Prophet Muhammed's words, "dying before death". However, when we observe the living experience of Muslims in Saudi Arabia, Iran or in Turkey, the ruling class do not have such intentions. This creates a problem. Shams' living experience is quite close to dying before death but Rumi's is not. Shams is a man of the streets and the ugly majority murders this extraordinary man just because he is different. They cannot tolerate him.

PA: In the novel, there is a documentary about Rumi and Shams on the television Karen watches. There the speaker states that people of Konya were rejoiced with Shams arrival. Do you criticise the distortion of history here?
AÜ: Certainly. History is generally written by winners. Those who killed Shams were the fundamentalists of the time. They killed him then, but now they reclaim him. They do this because Rumi's son protects Shams in his account. If he didn't, they would view him as a lunatic or a deviant. But Rumi's poetry about Shams proved the latter's worth. Now, they reclaim the person they killed in the past but there are still some religious groups who have a dim view of Rumi and Shams. Rumi has become so popular that they no longer voice their disapproval loudly because they are hypocrites. I think, if I were a Muslim scholar, I would revisit the writings of people like Rumi. His ideas are illuminating and can be very helpful for Islam as they can help Islam to regain the dignity it lost around the world and its humanist essence can be revived.

Islam introduced compassion, Judaism brought about religious laws and Christianity focussed on love. This compassion can be regained.

PA: After you were twenty-nine, you grew distant from your active political engagement. Yet it seems you never gave up your ties of affection for communism. This is apparent in your novels through the representation of a humanist world view.
AÜ: This is right. The issue here is this: being a Leftist for me is humanist conscience. Blood, revolution, upheaval, murdering people … these are terrible things. I found a way in literature which I cannot find in politics. Through my works I narrate Humanism and that is the reason why people of different ideologies read my works. Conservatives, Grey Wolves, communists, anarchists, social democrats, Islamists, in other words people of all political backgrounds as well as people of all genders including homosexuals read my novels. When they read one of my books, they see humanity and a part of themselves in it. In none of my novels, I make a claim of right or wrong, I don't think that this is my right. I cannot impose a certain way of life because I do not even know myself whichever way is the best to live. Rather, I learn by living and I am glad that this is the case, otherwise life would be really boring.

PA: And in this way you punish the Capitalist character, Ziya, by decapitating him, like poetic justice, isn't it?
AÜ: Yes, that's right.

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