LOSS: AN ALL-PERVASIVE TROPE

IN SELECTED WORKS OF ORHAN PAMUK

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis titled *Loss: An-All Pervasive Trope in Selected Works of Orhan Pamuk* submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is a work of bona fide research carried out by Ms. Najila T.Y. under our supervision and guidance and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship or any other similar title or recognition.

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DECLARATION

I, Najila T.Y., hereby declare that the thesis titled *Loss: An-All Pervasive Trope in Selected Works of Orhan Pamuk* is a work of bona fide research carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Anila Joseph, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship or any other similar title or recognition.

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List of Abbreviations in the Thesis

S.No.	Abbreviation	Reference/Title of Book	Name of Author/Editor
1.	*TBB*	*The Black Book*	Orhan Pamuk
2.	*TWC*	*The White Castle*	Orhan Pamuk

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

To say that the novels of Turkey's Nobel Laureate, Orhan Pamuk is steeped in a ubiquitous sense of loss, would not be an overstatement. Although his novels explore various themes, the texture of his novels weaves through unabating attempts to accommodate loss. The trope is integral to the characterisation in the novels and the development of plot and so is the recognition of the lack and the response to it. The novels of Pamuk invariably contain lost objects and a quest to retrieve them. *The Black Book* is a convoluted detective novel in which the protagonist Galip embarks on a quest to find his lost wife, Ruya. Enishte Effendi's lost painting in *My Name is Red*, Ka's green notebook in *Snow* and Kemal's lost love in *The Museum of Innocence* extend the repertoire of lost objects. The protagonists in his fiction deal with their loss by acting out their desires, perfect Lacanian responses to the lack they experience. Apart from the tangible objects that are lost, the novel is also replete with the abstract underlying losses that manifest in various avatars in the novels. This thesis is an in-depth critical analysis to investigate the trope of loss and its manifestation as lack and the accompanying desire that runs through the novels of Orhan Pamuk.

Born in 1952 in Istanbul in Turkey, Orhan Pamuk won the Nobel Prize way back in 2006, fairly early in his career according to some. A trained architect who did not want to practice, he wanted to become an artist. In most of his works, he deliberates at length on the beauty of art. His drawing has been used on the cover of his recent novel *A Strangeness in My Mind*. As a writer, he is basically Turkish who

writes in his native tongue. The earliest of his works Cevdet Bey and His Sons (1982) and The Silent House (1984) fetched him prestigious literary accolades even before being translated into English. It was not until the translation of his novel *The White Castle* (1985) that he gained international recognition. He won the Independent Award for Foreign Fiction in 1990 and The New York Times reported that Pamuk's was the rise of a new star in the east.

Though his early novels were in the tradition of strict naturalism, he started to experiment with post-modern techniques. *The Black Book* (1990) with all its complexity and richness brought to its author popular success. Pamuk has collaborated in film with the scripting of *Secret Face*. His *My Name is Red* won the coveted IMPAC Dublin Award in 2003. Pamuk�still s next novel ―*Snow* (2002) explores the conflict between Islamism and Westernism set in the remote city of Kars. His output of non-fiction includes his memoir *Istanbul - Memories and the City*, *Other Colours*, *The Naïve and The Sentimental Novelist* and *My Father's Suitcase.* His novel *The Museum of Innocence* was published in 2009. It describes the obsessive longing of the hero for his lost love. His work of non-fiction (2010) explores the workings of the novelist‘s mind. The Silent House was translated to English in 2012. *A Strangeness in My Mind* and *The Red-Haired Woman* are his latest fictional outings.

As a contemporary writer, the works of Orhan Pamuk have only recently begun receiving prolific critical attention. Ian Almond has examined the representation of Islam in his book *The Orientalists: Postmodern representations of Islam from Foucault to Baudrillard*. Ian Almond associates the sadness in Pamuk's writing with Islam. He feels that Pamuk uses Islam in

the same way as Christianity was used by western metaphysics to prove the logocentrism of all forms of thought. In Turkey, a country outside the boundaries of the Christian European tradition, Islam provides the local version, the Turkish manifestation of a universal metaphysical delusion. Almond delves into the earlier works of Pamuk as part of his wider objective to deconstruct Islam and end the quest of identity in Pamuk's works with a 'death of identity' in keeping with the tradition of post structuralism. But Almond himself discovers "that Pamuk resolves to find neither a beauty nor a courage in his rejection of metaphysics". The absence of any such Nietzschean joy in any of his characters proves the insufficiency of postmodernism to give a plausible explanation for the melancholy in Pamuk's works.

Orhan Pamuk, Secularism and Blasphemy: The Politics of the Turkish Novel by Erdag Göknar draws on Pamuk's oeuvre and other Turkish writings to study "Pamuk's literary technique as a mode of political engagement" (Apter). The book finds Pamuk's dissident writing to be of three modes: the historiographic, archival and political parody. Progressing on this line, the book is concerned with Pamuk's depiction of the secular and the sacred. It explores how Pamuk fuses Ottoman and Islamic memories with contemporary modernities to bring out modern literary texts.

Global Perspectives on Orhan Pamuk: Existentialism and Politics edited by Afridi, M. and Buyze, D. studies Orhan Pamuk from an interdisciplinary perspective. The relevance of the novels in a globalized world especially with the novels insights on religion and politics is examined. This is significant as Islam and democracy are often viewed to be mutually exclusive.

Orhan Pamuk and the Good of World Literature by Gloria Fisk attempts to locate the works of Orhan Pamuk in the world literature scenario. Fisk reads Pamuk's novels as cultural ambassadors that reach out to world readers in the post 9/11 world. The book speaks on what good a Turkish novel can offer to the world literary scenario and readers who have little access to such far off lands and cultures.

Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novel by Michael D. McGaha offers a biographical sketch of the writer and the background to read his novels. The book explores the themes in seven of Orhan Pamuk's novels, both the Turkish issues and those of universal relevance.

Historicizing Fiction/Fictionalizing History: Representation in Select Novels of Umberto Eco and Orhan Pamuk by Nishevita J. Murthy compares the works of the two seminal writers Umberto Eco and Orhan Pamuk. This book makes use of other contemporary writing of the period to examine how the text-external reality is represented in the novels of these writers. It looks into how reality as discourse bears on the autonomy of the fictional space. Two novels each from both Eco and Pamuk are studied as postmodernist historical novels.

Pamuk's autobiographical work *Istanbul Memories of a City* has been examined by Verena Laschinger in her paper "Worldliness in Orhan Pamuk's Istanbul: Memories of a City". "Reading Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* as Parody: Difference as Sameness" by Sibel Erol starts at the Nobel Academy's choice of words in commending Pamuk for discovering new symbols for the 'clash and interlacing of cultures'. Erol studies the trope of East –West in the novel *Snow* but arrives at a conclusion that Pamuk's novels are more a study of the sameness in

difference in the very Derridean sense of the relation. The present study also examines this aspect in a part of the thesis.

Other than these, full-fledged research of his works to scrutinize the common thread of loss and understand it, independent of its political and historical contexts has not been undertaken as yet. In the present thesis, the translations of Orhan Pamuk's three novels – *The Black Book, The White Castle* and *Snow* are taken up to analyse the recurrence of loss in its multitudinous manifestations. The three novels are distinct: *The Black Book* is a convoluted detective novel that turns the conventions of the genre on its head; *The White Castle* is a postmodern experiment set in Ottoman Turkey; while *Snow* is the most overtly political of Pamuk's novels.

The White Castle is a doppelganger drama that delves deeper below the similarities in outward appearance. It records the experiences of a Venetian who is captured by Turkish pirates and taken to Istanbul while on a voyage from Venice to Naples. This story is recounted while still living in Istanbul almost fifty years later. The narrator who is learned and fond of books get preferential treatment from the pasha. He is called for occasionally to treat the pasha when ill. But that doesn‘t exempt him from the requirement of converting to Islam if he wanted to stay alive. He soon ends up at the guillotine, from where he is rescued by his look-alike who is known only by the moniker Hoja, literally master. It adds to the question of identity in the novel that neither the Venetian nor the Turkish master is named in the novel.

The narrator and Hoja have a symbiotic relationship where the narrator is kept alive by Hoja's thirst for knowledge. Hoja is ecstatic that he gets to extract the secrets of Western enlightenment first hand from an Italian. Hoja and the narrator involve themselves in an array of scientific projects that exalt them in the eyes of the sultan.

The fireworks and the treatises impress the sultan and the pasha; who are all the while curious about the striking resemblance between the two. The sultan and the pasha are certain that whatever scientific feats they accomplish is all the work of the Venetian. This misperception frustrates Hoja who at first seems to ignore their likeness. But soon, the novel turns into an ordeal in introspection where the two are engaged in various exercises that aim to unravel the mystery of the self. It begins with the question, "Why I am what I am?" – a question that has piqued the interest of many a philosopher and scientist.

The narrator and Hoja later succeed in building a war machine which the sultan permits to be taken along for an expedition against the Poles. The contraption however proves ineffectual at the siege of the Doppio, the 'White Castle'; the failure following which Hoja disappears ostensibly to escape to Venice where he would take up the life of the Venetian sailor from where he left off. This is not known for a certainty as a number of other explanations of his later life is also offered in the novel. The narrator however lives out his life as Hoja. He resigns his post at court and settles with his wife and four children at Gebze.

The novel doesn't let go at that. The story complicates itself with a constant shift in narratorial voice. At times the narrator is the Venetian scholar and at others, it is Hoja who has been imagining the whole episode. This muddled up narrative and the elaborate action in the plot that involves interchange of identities between the Venetian and Hoja examines the nature of identity.

While *The White Castle* is primarily concerned with the two questions- the existential crisis and the East-West dichotomy, the explicitly political novel *Snow* examines modern Turkish national identity and its complicated relation to Western

culture. Snow was first published as *Kar* in Turkish in 2002 and then translated to English in 2004. Set in the Anatolian town of Kars in eastern Turkey, the novel relates the experiences of Ka, a minor poet who has just returned from exile in Frankfurt. Ka had returned to Istanbul to attend his mother‘s funeral when a friend persuades him to take up a journalistic assignment of a local newspaper Cumhuriyet (Republican). This is how he ends up travelling to Kars to write an article on the municipal election there and to investigate a succession of suicides of girls in the city. Ka goes about talking to the families of the girls and discovers that the girls were under pressure at their universities to remove their headscarves.

But it soon turns out that Ka‘s primary purpose in taking up the project was with the larger motive of meeting up with his past love interest, Ipek. He had learned earlier that she had separated from her husband, Muhtar and was harbouring hopes of convincing her to travel back with him to Frankfurt. But things spin out of control for him as the town, in a volatile situation, is cut off from the outer world in a blizzard. There is lot going on and a host of interesting characters are introduced. Ipek‘s equally beautiful sister, Kadiffe wears the headscarf and is involved with an Islamist terrorist, Blue. Kadiffe is the leader of the head-scarf girls and Blue supports them too. He is, however troubled by their suicides which is a religious sin in Islam.

Necip and Fazil are two students of the religious high school in Kars. Ka forms a brief bond with Necip who interrogate him on the mind-set of the secular or atheists. Ka also meets Sheikh Saadettin in a bout of drunken despondency. He reveals his confusion regarding religious belief and how he associates religion with backwardness. The Theatre Company playing at the National Theatre in Kars headed by Sunay Zaim overdoes its Brechtian aspect. The first play ‘My Fatherland or My

Headscarf' ends with a military coup in Kars. Armed soldiers take to the stage and fire live rounds into the audience killing Necip and other clueless spectators. Blue and other believers soon get arrested.

The Theatre troupe forces Kadiffe to play a part in their next play entitled 'The Tragedy of Kars' and convinces her to remove her headscarf as a political statement on stage in return for releasing Blue. It is Ka who arbitrates this deal. Blue is released but ends up getting killed. During an interrogation, Ka is informed that Ipek was in love with Blue. Ka is furious and rushes to Ipek for her reaction. She acknowledges her love for him as a thing of the past.

The play is staged and Kadiffe plays her role in which she removes her scarf and also shoots Sunay Zaim. The incident was a rehearsed part, but now the gun was loaded and Sunay is genuinely shot on stage in tandem with the macabre strain that events seemed to follow there. We do not get to know if Kadiffe knew the gun was loaded. After the blizzard lifts, Ka embarks on his journey out of Kars. He invites Ipek to join him, but she refuses as she held Ka responsible for the death of Blue. Ka goes back to Germany dejected and lives there lonely for four more years after which he is assassinated by a Turkish Islamist group that holds Ka responsible for Blue's death.

The Black Book is a mystery novel like no other. It traces the quest of Galip, an Istanbul lawyer in search of his missing wife and cousin, Ruya. A true postmodern novel, it is stuffed with metaphysical experiments, symbolic tales, dream-like situations and nested stories. Ruya, who is forever immersed in Detective novels, leaves so abruptly leaving an ambiguous note that Galip is caught unaware. He hides the fact from his family and embarks on a solo quest to find her. The plot is

complicated by the realisation that their older cousin Celal, the celebrated columnist is also missing.

Galip does not take the regular path of unearthing clues followed in popular detective novels like the ones Ruya reads. He instead rakes through Celal's columns to find a hint to their whereabouts. The columns form a sizeable part of the novel. They alternate with the chapters that take the narrative of Galip's search forward. Galip obsessively roams the streets of Istanbul to locate Celal's secret den. Galip eventually finds his secret apartment and smoothly assumes Celal's identity. He rummages through Celal's possessions and finds numerous material that suggested his interest occult philosophies. Ruya's photographs in Celal's drawer remind Galip of his fragile relationship with Ruya and how it was bound to end.

Galip ends up impersonating Celal. He writes his columns for the newspaper and even gives an interview for the BBC assuming Celal's identity. Celal and Ruya are finally killed outside Alaaddin's store which formed an integral part of their lives in childhood and after. "This bizarre, dazzling novel turns the detective novel on its head, dislodging murder from its iconic status as the final mystery, and establishes Orhan Pamuk as one of the freshest, most original voices in contemporary fiction" (Joan Smith).

Turkey has had a very turbulent recent past with coups, violence and political turmoils leaving deep scars in the minds of its people. The Ottoman Empire that preceded the Republic was one of the largest in the world with territory encompassing much of West Asia, North Africa and Southeast Europe. Monarchy was abolished and Turkey became a republic in 1923 under its first President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The subsequent phase in the history of the country was that of radical

reforms. Atatürk envisaged sweeping fundamental changes in Turkish society to 'modernise' Turkey on a large scale. These policies known as Atatürk's reforms aimed at converting Turkey into a secular modern nation-state. A modern state was taken to be Western by default and the policy to imbibe all things Western became the norm. More than the political changes, the abrupt interventional cultural reforms severed the people's tie with their pasts creating uprooted identities. For instance, the Alphabet reform of 1928 adopted the Latin script in place of the Arabo-Persian script making the literature of the past inaccessible to the Turks born afterwards. The obliteration of the nation's past emerge as immediate causes to the sense of loss that infuses the novel of Orhan Pamuk.

Methodology

The objective of this thesis will be to analyse the losses that form the core experience in these novels. This loss is what shapes the identity of the characters infusing in them a pervading sense of lack, insecurity or nostalgia. The loss at times is felt in the form of tangible objects like Galip's lost wife, Ruya, Ka's green notebook and at other times as deeper abstract losses like that of the culture, the history or the political self. It may be argued that the former kind are the novels' echo of the inner lacunae created by the latter more profound ones. The ramifications of the loss on identity will be analysed to uncover its manifestation in the irremediable Lacanian lack at the centre of the subject. The thesis will also examine the various embodiments of desire like the desire to narrativize their experience through some form of art, the desire to forget or deny that experience and the impossible desire to return to the era preceding the loss. Delineating the various desires does not imply that they are exclusive and distinct responses to loss. They can be seen to mingle and interpenetrate in myriad unpredictable combinations as varied as life itself.

Tracing the trajectory of loss, *The Black Book, The White Castle* and *Snow* will be analysed conceptually to demonstrate the mechanism in progress. Some of the most relevant theories and concepts of loss which form the basis of my inquiry will be surveyed here in the introduction. Beginning with Sigmund Freud's complex conceptualisation of real or imaginary loss, it is proposed to trace the developments and revisions of the concepts in later theorists like Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida. Besides these theorists, each chapter will contain pertinent ideas and concepts. For instance, the second chapter that explores lack will evoke the theories

of exile to explain the condition of Ka in *Snow* and in the next Lacanian desire will form the basis of inquiry.

The thesis has five chapters. The first chapter introduces the background to the study with a review of the literature. A preliminary reading of the selected novels form part of this introduction. The methodology of the research work is detailed. The core theories that form the basis of the study is explained in the section 'Theorising Loss' in the introduction.

The second chapter traces the various tropes of losses that Pamuk employs in the construction of the narrative. All the three novels selected in the present study have symbolisms or analogies that point to the deeper losses. This chapter examines the novels to enumerate the tropes of loss that form the texture of the narrative. The explicit objects that have been lost like Ka's green poetry notebook and Galip's wife Ruya are obvious examples. Apart from the concrete objects of loss, the trope of loss is symbolized by gaps or absences in the world of the characters. The loss of memory and past are other tropes of loss studied in the first chapter.

The third chapter will look into the way loss embeds into the characterisation in the novels as lack in the characters. The essentially lacking subjectivity of the characters are depicted by Pamuk using varied textual strategies. The construction of characters in doubles is one such trope. In the absence of an essentialist core the characters do not confine themselves to the boundaries of well-defined self, often resulting in fluidity in the characterisation. The exchange of identities between characters, a repeated trope in Pamuk will be examined. Other than characterisation, the self-reflexivity of characters, in a metafictional strain, produces long tracts in the

novel on the question of the contents of the self. These elaborate discourses, offering alternative explanations to the question of 'being', will be discussed here.

The third chapter will examine the embodiments of desire in the novels. The lack at the heart of the being cannot but recur. The nature of desire always being in excess of the need is insatiable. Desire thus shifts constantly from one object to the other. According to Lacan, cultural objects allude to loss. They name and indicate the lack which characterize the human condition enlisting desire (Belsey, "Poststructuralism" 50). This chapter will look at the objects of desire that are intentional attempts of the characters to address the lack as well as the unconscious desires addressed. The desire to come to terms with lived experience by narrating in the form of stories is a recurrent trope in Pamuk. The pleasures of enumeration is another embodiment of desire.

The fifth chapter contains the conclusions of the study. The chapters consolidates the findings that have been elaborated in the previous chapters. The thesis concludes with suggestions for further research that can be undertaken.

Theorising Loss

> (T)he notion of loss forms the core of the theory of psychoanalysis, since, in its varying shapes, it constitutes a formative experience in the development of the subject. Whether the childhood losses are real or imaginary (as is the case with the castration complex), they determine the process of identification and the choice of desired objects. (Drąg 16)

Freud's essays on psychoanalytic treatment explore the various instances of loss and the individual's responses to them. The inadequate accommodation of loss is

the root of most psychic disorders. The essays explore the consequences of such responses and how psychoanalytic techniques work to reproduce mental processes and discharge them consciously to circumvent resistance. In “Remembering, Repeating and Working Through”, Freud examines the potential of therapy to deal with the compulsion to repeat by bringing the loss into remembrance to acknowledge the resistance, thereby processing and removing it.

In “Mourning and Melancholia”, the relationship between mourning and melancholia, the two responses to loss is examined. “Mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one such as one’s country, liberty, an ideal, and so on” (243). When the object-cathexis is deranged by a loss of the object itself, ‘hallucinatory wishful psychosis’ prolongs the detachment. But eventually, the libido is retracted and invested in another object. Successful completion of mourning involves a gradual painful reordering of libidinal position to free the ego to become uninhibited again.

But in melancholia, the process is impaired by the very nature of the loss, which may be of a more abstract kind. Here, the loss cannot be consciously perceived in that “he knows *whom* he has lost but not *what* he has lost in him” (Freud, “Mourning” 245). Melancholia is distinguished from mourning by a marked lowering of self-regard apart from the common features of dejection and inhibition delineating the former as a pathological condition. In mourning, there is a loss of interest in the world and capacity to love, while in melancholia the ego itself is impoverished. It ensconces the patient in a shell of self-criticism at the expense of sleep and food. Freud concludes that with mourning “he had suffered a loss in regard to an object”, while melancholia “points to a loss in regard to his ego” (Freud, “Mourning” 247).

The free libido is not displaced but drawn into the ego establishing a narcissistic identification of the ego with the abandoned object, ultimately leading to “a fixation on the lost object and a regression to narcissism” (Drąg 18).

Freud introduces Thanatos, the death drive and posttraumatic disorders in “Beyond the Pleasure Principle”, a work discussing certain ideas that are more of a speculative nature. He posits the presence of a reality drive that curbs the id’s indiscriminate pursuit of pleasure making more sense of human behaviour. In this work, Freud tries to explain why traumatic symptoms persist in even the civilian population. Freud had earlier posited that dreams were the solution of the conflict between one’s desire and the restrictions of society. But, the traumatic experience is revisited in dreams when the best strategy while awake would be to avoid the memories at all costs. This he explains with the fort-da game he observes his grandson engage in.

When his daughter is away, Freud observes his eighteen month old grandson throw away his toy and exclaim “o-o-o-o” representing “fort”, meaning ‘gone’. Later he sees that the child after throwing away a toy with a string attached, retrieves it and exclaims ‘da’. Undoubtedly, the departure of the mother is not a pleasurable experience, but it is compensated by repeatedly enacting the distressing experience through the play. This experience is used to explain the repetition of traumatic memories in dreams. The earlier passive experience is now repeated to accommodate the loss with a more controlled response. “This mechanism, which he eventually terms repetition compulsion, is defined by Gard Bonnet as ‘an inherent, primordial tendency in the unconscious that impels the individual to repeat certain actions, in particular, the most painful or destructive ones’” (Drąg 20). The compulsion to repeat

is observed in the case of materials that were not effectively dealt with in the past. It is in opposition to remembering. The destructive and often self-damaging repetitive patterns return in the case of repressed material that are forgotten. “He is obliged to repeat the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of, as the physician would prefer to see, remembering it as something belonging to the past” (Freud, “Beyond” 616).

The later works of Freud do away with the neat distinction of responses to loss delineated in “Mourning and Melancholia”. Mourning as sundering all bonds with the love-object to facilitate healing is reconsidered. Melancholia as a pathological condition at the other side of the spectrum is also abandoned. Drąg in *Revisiting Loss* quotes Tammy Clewell’s deconstruction of Freud’s conceptualisation of mourning and melancholia.

> In this revised understanding, Clewell notes, melancholia emerges as “fundamental to the primary formation and subsequent development of the ego.” By discarding the notion of a “consolatory substitution,” Freud redefines successful mourning as an act of establishing “a figure for the lost object and taking this object into the structure of one’s own identity” rather than radically distancing oneself from it. (Drąg 18)

Thus mourning does not entail a closure as envisaged earlier but a continuous working through the loss. Likewise, melancholia crosses over to the realm of the “normal” as an integral part of ego formation.

Freud’s models of loss and mourning were later developed and subsumed by subsequent scholars. Jacques Lacan in his rereading of Freud formulated his own

notions of loss and lack. For Freud, the ego was constituted by the inventory of abandoned object-cathexes, that is, “the losses the ego has sustained”; but for Lacan, subjectivity is structured around a lack, an idea that takes its root from the Freudian term Spaltung (splitting). “The Lacanian subject “first comes to understand itself in terms of what it does not have”, rather than in terms of what it has lost” (Drąg 20). Since the concept of lack precludes the notion of specific historical losses, the need for mourning and working through loss is rendered superfluous. Instead, a transcendental condition of desire is engendered that warrant endless attempts at reconstitution of identity.

Lacan’s theory shares the concepts of a sign from structural linguistics. The signifier and the signified were united in Saussure’s idea of a sign. But for Lacan, the signified is relegated to a ‘real’ that is rendered inaccessible to the subject as soon as it enters the symbolic order which is incomplete unlike the structured realm of Saussure. The emergence into language does not unify subjectivity but effects a rupture. The gap between the speaking subject and what is spoken divides subjectivity. Lacan’s structure of the subject is always lacking and incomplete. This revised conception of loss undermines the Freudian notion of the lost object which in Lacan’s view, is “an object that was never there in the first place to be lost” (Drąg 21).

This lack which is an irremediable condition of the human condition enlists desire for the Other. This big Other is the “absolute otherness that we cannot assimilate to our subjectivity” (Homer 70). It is the symbolic order or the language that pre-exists the subject. It is thus through language that desire emerges. Desire is for the Other but the Other is also lacking. So desire is supposed to be for what the

Other desires, that is what it lacks. All quests are, thus, doomed to disappoint as the other that is sought is lacking in itself.

For Lacan, "separation involves the coincidence, or overlapping, of the two lacks: the lack in the subject and the Other. The interaction between these two lacks will determine the constitution of the subject" (Homer 73). The Other's lack becomes the object- cause of desire for the subject designated by the expression objet petit a. It is not the object that the Other lacks which is represented by objet a but the lack itself. The gap between the desire of the subject and that of the Other cannot be closed as the desire is for something missing and thus the futile search continues endlessly on a chain of desires.

Desire is not related to a particular object but to a lack and Lacan posits that cultural objects indicate this lack. They therefore imply a loss. The various objects of desire that is sought by the subject to fill this gap but it will fail to deliver as the loss cannot be replaced.

> We long to fill the gap made by the lack of access to the real with something that would reunite us directly with the world, seeking a succession of objects of desire… None of our conscious objects of desire, including the sexual objects, will fully deliver the complete satisfaction they promise, since they cannot by definition replace what has been lost. (Belsey, "Poststructuralism" 51)

Jacques Derrida's later works on mortality is the basis of the recent studies on his theories of mourning. *The Work of Mourning* (2001) and some prior works reflect on the deaths of contemporary thinkers and on death in general. Wojciech Drąg in his

introduction to *Revisiting Loss* traces resistance in Derrida to Freud privileging idea of "introjection", a defense mechanism where the subject introjects the attributes of the other into one's own psyche, thus "negating their otherness"; over melancholic "incorporation" where the other is retained as the other. Thus for Derrida, mourning is fraught with aporia where "one at the same time must and must not absorb the other into oneself for interiorisation." Fidelity to the other is worked out at the necessity and impossibility of interiorisation for mourning to be successful. To reconcile the contradiction, Derrida introduces the concept of semi-mourning where he accommodates the dead or the lost object within the living; a notion that echoes Freud's conception of the ego as the precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes.

Building on these theories, there has been a sudden proliferation of studies dealing with the reconciliation of loss and mourning during the turn of the century. Jahan Ramazani in his introduction to *Poetry of Mourning: The modern Elegy from Hardy to Heaney* introduces the term melancholic mourning "to distinguish mourning that is unresolved, violent, and ambivalent" (Ramazani 4). He examines modern elegy to find the art form to be a genre where the poet does not rise above the loss by displacing or transcending it in its practice, but immersing himself or herself farther in it. It thus ends up resisting consolation rather than achieving it. Patricia Rae develops the themes and strategies identified by Ramazani in her work *Modernism and Mourning*. Her concept of "resistant mourning" subsumes Derrida's "insistence on the ethical obligation towards the dead to preserve them within and his opposition to "reconciliation to loss" (Drąg 22).

In the present thesis however, the model that will be reverted to often will be the Lacanian concept of "the transcendental condition of lack." Pamuk's novels

contain instances of direct tangible losses that will be explored intensively in the course of my thesis. The concrete instances of losses suffered in the novel as well as the abstract losses permeate the characters and the landscape as melancholy- the 'huzun' that Pamuk has acknowledged in his writing. The historical contexts of the loss have been outlined above. But oftentimes the tropes of loss in the novel can be demonstrated to be referring back to the underlying permanent irremediable metaphysical Lacanian lack rather than material physical or historical losses.

This thesis does not attempt to suggest a cure for melancholia and attempt a consolatory closure. Rather, the objective of this study is to trace the inscription of loss in the prose fiction of Orhan Pamuk that manifests in the various tropes across his oeuvre. The melancholy or stated condition of huzun affects the layers of life and identity construction. This thesis proposes to trace the tropes of loss and resultant mechanism of desire in the novels rather than a thematic exposition of the loss and its supposed causes.

CHAPTER 2

Revisiting Loss: Dreams, Signs and Gaps

The modern period is predicated by a sense of loss weighing down on the populace manifested in the melancholy of the times. The poststructuralist breach of the signifier and the signified rendered open a gap that let meaning slip into a constant deferral along an endless chain. Signification became more "a matter of social convention" ripping it from the "realm of individual subjectivity" (Belsey, "Poststructuralism" 45). For Lacan, language belongs to other people. It exists before the individual. He cannot modify it without social ratification. He thus calls it 'the Other'.

The signifier, as Derrida argues, constantly defers meaning and is ever elusive. It cannot be encountered in essence, but only in its materiality which offers only a representative which in turn implies absence. There is no pure concept independent of the signifier. (It helps to remember that Western culture is considered logocentric, which is, assuming ideas to exist before words when the reverse is most often the case.) The real is always interposed by the signifier that supplants it. This relegates the real to an inaccessible realm that can never be encountered directly. Hence, the postmodern preoccupation with textuality. Everything is the text. There is no outside the text which can proclaim itself to be the ultimate truth.

According to Lacan, before initiation into language, there is no distinction for the child between itself and the world surrounding it. Language cuts off the child from this direct relationship effecting both a loss and a gain.

> The signifier, which differentiates and divides, offers a way to specify our wishes, but at the same time its advent divorces us from a direct apprehension of what Lacan calls 'the real'. The real is unnamed, unnameable, concealed in the shadows cast by the light language throws on the entities it denominates. The signifier names the referent in its absence; it thus relegates the real, obscures it, renders it missing from consciousness by taking its place. (Belsey, "Poststructuralism" 50-51)

This loss enlists unconscious desire that longs for satisfaction by filling the gap. The succession of objects of desire however can only offer temporary respite as they can only serve to acknowledge the loss at the heart of the subject and not eliminate it.

It is this ineluctable loss apart from the political and cultural loss delineated earlier in the introduction that Orhan Pamuk alludes to in a variety of tropes scattered in his remarkable oeuvre. In the present analysis of the novels, the texts in their very postmodern existence is demonstrated to engender a reflexivity that points to the hollow at the centre of the thinking being. The desire arising from the impossibility of ever attaining knowledge or understanding is the origin of all postmodern art. The novels as such are labyrinthine exercises for the critic to lose herself in an attempt to attribute meaning or assign referents to.

The Black Book, Pamuk's digressive novel can be a textbook example of the kind of detective novel which Geoffrey Hartman humorously describes as a "whodonut with a hole in it" rather than a "whodunit" (Hartman, "Mystery Story" 166). Hartman in the essay "Literature High and Low: The Case of the Mystery Story" analyses Wordsworth's ballad "The Thorn" to expose the periphrastic

narrative that conjures up an uncertain scene of crime that may in itself be illusory. The two points of uncertainty- the scene of the crime and the crime itself- afford contexts for the poet to undertake his "repetitive, quasi-ritual stepping from one object to another" (Hartman, "Mystery Story" 166). Hartman senses in the poem a "pseudonarrative which converge(s) obsessively on an ocular center of uncertain interest" (166). Wordsworth's objective of immortalising the thorn bush that had caught his attention in a storm is realised in the poem that paints a painstakingly precise description of the scene. The climactic event that should hold central concern is reduced to an illusion or cipher, while the site is privileged. "The center they scan is an absence; the darkness they illumine has no heart" (Hartman, "Mystery Story" 166).

This is precisely what transpires in *TBB* where the narrative unfolds as an outing in Istanbul which appears to be more than just a setting for the novel. The missing wife and columnist appear to constitute a ruse for Galip to rove the streets of Istanbul revealing the exotic locale in all its idiosyncrasies. Galip's unreliable trail to the missing persons, together with Celal's widely popular columns reproduced in alternating chapters with the quest for Ruya afford occasions for exploring the city as well as ruminating on weighty existential questions. The very first of Celal's columns introduced in the novel moots the terrifying possibility of the Bosphorus drying up and speculates on the baring of a hoard of mossy remains accumulated during a lifetime under it. A veritable wasteland of rancid residue would replace the glistening waters teeming with life.

> As we sit on the balconies from which we once watched the moon glitter silver on the silken waters of the Bosphorus, we'll watch instead the blue

> smoke rising from the corpses we've had to burn in a hurry—leisurely burials having become a thing of the past. As we sit along what once was the shore, at tables where once we drank *raki* amid the perfume of Judas and honeysuckle blossoms, we will struggle to accustom ourselves to the acrid stink of rotten flesh.(Pamuk, *TBB* 17)

The iconic shop for knickknacks, Alaadin's shop is a colourful memory tied to the lives of the city's inhabitants. The unlimited treasure trove on sale reiterates Pamuk's obsession with sundries that unfold tales of a multi-hued culture as well as universal human habits. The clinical precision with which the 'dark air shaft' and the apartment buildings in Nisantasi are rendered creates a sepia-tinted image of the street with its affluent residents steeped in nostalgia. The steamy underbelly of Istanbul with its brothels and a nightlife comparable to those of the West represent an evolving city accommodating the changes of the times with its one foot placed precariously in tradition. Amid all the sights of the city and the reflexivity, the quest for Ruya maunders rudderless. Her absence rings throughout the whole novel; but is it her or is it just absence? The ubiquitous loss that pervades all Pamuk's novels. The centre he seeks is absence.

In Search of his Dream

Galip's lost wife's name is Ruya meaning 'dream'. This cannot be coincidental. For Freud, dreams are the fault lines that allow the unconscious to sneak through. The unconscious is for him the "true psychic reality" (Freud, *Dreams* 613). The inexplicable ways of the psyche often question the control that a person has on his thoughts. Freud's topography of the mind seeks to offer explanations that attribute the source of all actions and deliberations to the unconscious- the repository of all

repressions and unfulfilled desires. Ruya may be taken to symbolise Galip's desires in the novel. She is presented through the length of the whole book in the various memories and dreams of Galip. He holds onto the memories obsessively and gropes in the dark, all the while suspecting the impossibility of actually retaining it. That is the very nature of the unconscious, it offers no direct access except through the aberrations and manifestations it precipitates on the personality. The root cause for behaviour, the unconscious is the repository of all events that the conscious mind finds too overwhelming. It may be that the pain has pushed it there for fear of facing the undesirable.

The very fact that Ruya has left is indicative of some unnamed lack in the relationship- a lack that the narrator Galip's consciousness refuses to acknowledge and by corollary he has relegated to the inaccessible depths. (Towards the end of the novel, when the mind's defences are slightly let down and he lets his thoughts flow, he momentarily ponders on his ineptitude in story-telling as the possible cause. But of course, no certainty there.) As such the outcome of the quest is decided from the very beginning. The unconscious is by definition inaccessible and it is only expected that Galip's investigations are futile.

Derrida understands Freud's postulation of the unconscious to

> …mean that the unconscious is a kind of underlying presence, hidden from consciousness but able to be 'unveiled' by psychoanalytic treatment, or it can mean, more radically, that the unconscious is effectively untranslatable. In this latter sense the unconscious is a form of what Derrida calls differance, a non-originary origin. (Lucy, *Derrida Dictionary* 39)

Thus for Derrida, the unconscious is the ungraspable centre. He recognizes how Freud has dismissed "the idea of any unified agency for the psyche" which has no access to "the workings of the psychic apparatus". The impressions from the external environment on the psyche are inscribed as "memory-traces" in the unconscious which in time will "constitute the play of the psyche"(Derrida, *Of Grammatology* xl). This play of traces is what effects meaning for the individual; the basis on which all experience is made sense of.

This is why finding Ruya (dream) is imperative to Galip as the access to his unconscious, if cut off from which he loses his anchor to meaning and being. The pursuit of Ruya in *TBB* thus scales to an existential crisis whereby the hero like those of other existentialist texts embark on a journey to seek meaning- variably God, self, truth or sublimity- which in the postmodern context is bound to fail.

Signs, Clues, Mystery

On the Galata Bridge, Galip scans the crowd for clues to Ruya's whereabouts. He views them as residing in the mystery he is about to solve. Their faces, the logos on their plastic covers and even the pictures on them seem to carry a veiled secret. The men out fishing, the soldiers on leave, and the mother-daughter duo in their headscarves were all part of the mystery for him. If only he had the key to the mystery… then they would know what "had shaped their lives" (Pamuk, *TBB* 213). The ultimate referent, the transcendental signified which ordered the universe from beyond. That would be the moment of truth when all mysteries would be solved and the world illumined with meaning.

Galip runs wild on the bridge in a frenzy to capture the meanings that glistened only fleetingly on their faces. He tries to penetrate the secret through their

eyes and get past their masks. Their worn-out jackets and lives affirmed their worldliness, yet he could see that "they were not at home in this world" (Pamuk, *TBB* 214). He studies the logos on the plastic bags they carried, the letters and even the pictures on them. Pamuk's fondness for lists is again exemplified here where he embarks on another spree of his endless lists.

> (T)hey were all signs crying out to be deciphered…(H)e was surrounded by other signs that refused to divulge their meanings: telephone wires, traffic signs, detergent boxes, shovels without handles, a sign advertising circumcisions, illegible political slogans, numbered electric service designations, shards of ice, traffic arrows, blank sheets of paper…(Pamuk, *TBB* 216)

Overwhelmed by the flood of signs waiting to be deciphered, Galip envies the fictional world of Ruya's detective novels where the hero is never burdened with more clues than he needs at that exact moment. How neat and linear was their pre-determined trail of clues when compared to the abundance of signs the world threw at him. A detective novel usually has a series of clues lined up for the inquisitor to uncover, a trail leading to a secret second world that illuminates not just the motive to the murder but the murderer, the scene of the crime and the exact course of action. In *TBB*, this tidy exposition is done away with. The novel concludes in the presumed Pamukian manner uncertain about not just the murderer but also the motive.

Galip is bombarded by these signs that pop up everywhere and he is forever conscious of the potential of these letters, faces or images to lead him to 'the other world'. He is frustrated that the common people he passed did not seem to notice the swarm of signs around them. For Galip, each person he saw seemed to have a bubble

with a question mark above their heads. The world was swamped by secrets masked by senseless reality, but no one seemed to mind. This frustrated him further. Walter G. Andrews finds that what motivates *TBB* and even

> … our perception of the "postmodern condition" itself – is not so much the void of meaninglessness,… but the sense that our perceptible world teems with potential meaning. We are inundated by connections, links, relations that must be "meaningful"; yet we know at some level that to make a link, to assert the meaningfulness of a connection, to discern a history of influences, are all creative and terribly dangerous acts (108).

This plenitude of potential signs is inaccessible due to what Freud terms overdetermination and Derrida undecidability. Overdetermination shunned the oversimplification of objects effected by neatly attributing finite causes to them. Meaning can never be determined singularly. This concept was essential in the Freudian exercise of psychoanalysis which is fraught with indeterminacies. The indomitable nature of the psyche does not permit a final analysis. Hence, the concept of overdetermination which has rendered impossible the certainty in assigning a meaning as well as asserting that a meaning is certain. Meaning, cause or purpose is forever set at play along an infinite chain of differing and deferring. Galip's task of uncovering the secret meaning will remain unfulfilled because there is an abundance of signs on the one hand and infinite play on the other.

He even vocalises this concern fairly at the beginning of the novel when he tries to recall the name of his Aunt Hale's suitor. Galip's grandfather had expressed his reservations about the match citing his ethnicity and wondering if they had met by chance. Galip tries to remember the man's name but couldn't bring his name to mind.

He decides to take the exercise seriously as a means to sharpen his mind. He ignores his constantly ringing phone till he can remember the name. He finally recalls the name when he peruses the file of a client who wanted his name changed. Galip asserts the inevitable undecidablity ironically in stating that "whatever meaning a person ever found in the world, he found by chance" (Pamuk, *TBB* 26). It could not be otherwise because the world was overdetermined. It "was too large a place to fit into one man's head" (26).

Finding Meaning in Religion

Pamuk's heroes often linger on the verge of affirming meaning without going all the way. The abundance of signs points to ostensible connections. The very perception of these as signs itself precludes an inner secret; that in turn becomes inevitable to seek. Hence, the loop; the quest for 'presence'. Galip in the chapter 'Signs of the City' and elsewhere senses the presence of an "invisible and almighty hand that arranged the world and was now pointing him toward the heart of the mystery" (Pamuk, *TBB* 215). It is this invisible hand that points out these signs for him. It is intolerable to deny this presence; to acknowledge that the core is empty. In *Snow*, Ka wants miserably to give in to the faith of the people there. But his association of religion with poverty and backwardness cuts off all threads.

Pamuk speaks of his views on religion in *Istanbul.* He begins with his first impressions of religion. Hailing from a rich bourgeois family that prides its European stance in all things that matter, Pamuk was never given formal instruction in religion. Pamuk all through the chapter equates being modern with being European and Western. The family's Eurocentric inclinations reject all forms of piety. Interestingly, Pamuk's image of God since very young is that of a highly respectable woman,

phantom-like draped in white scarves. He notes that the spectre which has appeared floating before him before ascending into the clouds has never invoked in him fear. It was always “a powerful, sublime and exalted presence” (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 160). The spirituality was a calming experience that he secretly treasured. He concludes later that it is not God that he fears but those who were excess in their devotion to her.

Pamuk’s first tryst with religion was watching the house maid offer her prayers on the rug. Esma Hanim, the maid who makes an appearance in *TBB* puts her forehead to the ground in obeisance to the almighty, seems to be the origin of Pamuk’s inspired vision of the phantom God. The maids and the cooks who were regular in their prayers and memories of God in their daily chores piqued his curiosity in the supernatural presence; but it also led him to equate piety with poverty. He sometimes felt that the rituals associated with the practice of religion was just that—rituals that were empty, a ‘game’, rather than an all immersive connection with the Creator.

Though like everyone else in his family, he too tried to keep aloof from all assertions of faith, he was well aware of the uneasiness surrounding the topic. Whenever religion was derided or dismissed as insignificant, the subject was quickly changed, possibly to avoid foraying into blasphemy. It was kind of a secret understanding with Pamuk that he carried a benevolent presence in his heart that he doesn’t find the least threatening; the ‘essence’ which he found comforting even. It was actually the absence that he found unbearable—the void.

Pamuk recollects the episode with one of his ultra-rich classmates who did not nurture any such secret understanding in the case of religion. He shocked Pamuk with his open challenge to God. It was like an inversely proportional relationship between

wealth and piety. The richer one was, the less one had to do with religion. With the Ataturk revolution, the widespread perception that religion was what impedes the progress of the nation had struck deep roots. The wealthy Istanbulites, the messiahs of modernism, were the ushers of the modern era integral to the Westernization of the nation and they could not openly embrace or less practice faith. This loss, is a recurrent idea that we find in Pamuk's books like when he reiterates how he associates religion with backwardness. His grandmother's contempt of the working class obsession with frequent prayers which she finds regressive, echoes in the confession that Ka in the novel *Snow* makes to Sheikh Saadettin about how he cannot bring himself to believe—how he equates religion to backwardness.

In spite of the absolute rejection of theism in his family, he had his exposure to deeply religious people in the guise of his loving maid and other helps around the household. His visit to the Tesvikye Mosque was a learning experience. The community there was subaltern- all maids, cooks and janitors—gathered for a break, for socialising rather than just a congregation of worshippers. It was this experience that convinced Pamuk that faith was not all that bad. His social circumstance prevented him from openly defending the faithful but the uneasiness without faith was intolerable. The smugness of the rich in the new Ataturk regime with its consolation in idealism was only for public display. "…(I)n private life, nothing came to fill the spiritual void. Cleansed of religion, home became as empty as the city's ruined *yalis* and as gloomy as the fern-darkened gardens surrounding them" (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 163).

Postmodern Anguish

Pamuk's owning up of the postmodern anguish is redolent in Walter G. Andrews' article "The Black Book and Black Boxes". He interprets the overwhelming perception of signs or clues in *TBB* and the indication of the story itself as a meta-clue indicate possible referents, accessible or not. Andrews finds that the fact "that we see it as a clue at all (meta- or otherwise) is an indication that the emptiness is intolerable, and impenetrability only a bit less so, because possibly it can be raised to the level of theistic metaphysics" (107). This is what happens in Pamuk where the metaphysics of presence is not altogether abandoned for fear of the void.

In *TBB,* there is an affirmation and later an outright negation of the "dark spot" in a column attributed to Celal. Galip remembers how Celal had in a fit of anger rejected the presence of any dark spot in the "depths of our minds" (Pamuk, *TBB* 33). He accused it to be a Western invention that had arrived in Turkey through the Western novel. Galip suspects that the thought must have its origin in the movie *Suddenly Last Summer* in which Elizabeth Taylor attempts unsuccessfully to locate the dark spot in the mind of Montgomery Clift. Celal had however done a thorough research on the subject leading to a lengthy tract that "traced every misery known to man back to that dark, menacing spot lurking in the depth of our minds" (Pamuk, *TBB* 33). But in one of his more widely read columns, he had however denied its existence in Turkey and claimed it to be nothing more than a Western invention.

The postmodern anguish of being surrounded by signs with potential meaning is returned to repeatedly in the novel. In the tale of 'The Executioner and the Weeping Face', the executioner is plagued by a relentless pang of guilt. He is returning after an assassination that had been commissioned by the Sultan. He carries

the tearful severed head back as proof. The sobbing head in his mohair sack intensifies his distress and the whole landscape reflects his mindscape. The plants, the animals and everything else he saw, took on new meanings. In keeping with the trend in the book, it is succinctly encapsulated in the trope that while "travelling westward, the lengthening shadows took new meanings, the executioner saw signs and clues oozing from every new vista, like blood seeping through the cracks of an earthenware bowl, but still he could not fathom their mystery" (Pamuk, *TBB* 288). Like the many instances in the novel where the world around exudes mystery, the executioner is weighed down by the mystery to which the trees, shadows and stones around him point. He felt that the world was trying to tell him something but had lost its voice.

In another column, Celal had even ventured on to say that the dark spot in the subconscious was the police station. Eventually, Celal and Ruya are murdered in front of the police station. Did they fall into the whirlpool of the dark spot, the mincing void? This is where "the voice of Derrida that speaks our uneasiness will not let us forget that it is facile to announce the death of God when the role has been quite adequately assumed by such as Sublimity or Truth or, most essentially, by Meaning" (Andrews 107).

Pamuk's oeuvre is littered with characters at unease with themselves. Even in the underground museum, where a coffeehouse scene has been recreated, the mannequins stare into infinity musing on the reason for their existence. People can supposedly be happy only if they stop imitating others. But this can never happen because of the lack they are trying to address. This concern on identity will be examined further in another chapter.

Loss of Memory

The underground mannequin museum is a whole new manifestation of loss. The various questions it raises is spread out in the descriptions of the museum in *TBB.* Celal in a column elaborates on “the fearsome secret history of Turkey’s mannequins” while Galip retraces these steps through the museum looking for Ruya (Pamuk, *TBB* 59). The mannequins were the handiwork of the first master mannequin maker of Turkey, Bedii Usta. Commissioned by Abdulhamit to make mannequins for Turkey’s first naval museum, Bedii Usta recreated Turkey’s history in full glory through mannequins created “from wood, plaster, wax, the skin of does, camels, and sheep, and hair plucked from human heads and beards” (Pamuk, *TBB* 60). The mannequins were such a true to life replication that it irked the Islamists who saw the creations as a challenge to God. That was how the mannequins lost out on the opportunity to hog the limelight as objects of art in themselves as well as for its creator to accrue rightful praise.

Bedii Usta was crushed by the unexpected rejection and strived to convince the authorities to grant his mannequins a space for display in vain. After a long wait of around twenty years, Bedii Usta felt his moment of glory had finally arrived when he first saw mannequins in the display windows of the finest department stores along the Beyoglu Avenue. He approached the stores with samples of his work only to be turned down repeatedly. The fault they found was that the mannequins mirrored the Turks so faithfully that the customers would be intimidated by them. The mannequins in the windows were European models for the Turks to aspire to. The coats they wore were bridges that would connect their Turkish selves to Europe. The attire on Western models would attribute to the wearer its modernity.

Bedii Usta had not seen this coming. He had modelled his mannequins faithfully on the Turks around him. Passing on the wisdom to his son, he pointed out the gestures that made them unique—how a cab driver might light a cigarette or how a gangster would walk with his arms away from his body. But with time, he noticed that these gestures were losing their innocence—the way they laughed, wiped their noses, walked, washed their hands or even opened bottles. The stock of their everyday gestures was being contaminated by the films from the West. Imitating the gestures of the West was resulting in a dissipation of their authentic gestures.

Pamuk, The essence that the Turks were soon losing in their race to Westernise. Celal was terrified by the vitality in the mannequins of the underground museum. He sensed a stronger life force in them than he could feel in the crowds above the ground. What made the mannequins so painful was their originality. The trouble was that they were more genuine than the people they were modelled on—that is before they lost their innocence. Bedii Usta abandoned his practice of observing the hybrid mannerisms of the people for fear of their 'fake gestures' infecting his 'children'.

Watching the assortment of people out in the streets on a Sunday afternoon, Galip was more than aware of

> …their sad dreams and sadder memories were fast fading from their minds; the line of dark bare trees running down the centre of the avenue told him that they would grow darker still as evening fell, to signify the sorrow of an entire nation. Dear God, what is there to do at a time like this, on an avenue this dreary, in a city this lost? (Pamuk, *TBB* 223)

This subtle process of acculturation that is gradually eliminating the traditional culture is visible only to the extra vigilant. Galip's search for Ruya leads him to her ex-husband's apartment where Ruya's ex-husband lectures Galip on the unobtrusive ways in which the Turks are being ripped of their Turkishness. The collective memory that binds the community and roots them is being eroded unnoticed. It is interesting how he uses the term collective memory, roping in the idea of memory as not something individual but something social. It partakes of Maurice Halbwachs' theory of collective memory that reclaims the function from the individual to a group. Memory is formed in a specific social context and is exterior unlike dreams which are interior. Halbwachs concludes "that even memory, our most personal, immediate, mental operation, has no substance outside its social context…" (Gedi 36)

Theories of memory have formed a part of philosophical inquiry since ages as exemplified by the models of memory offered by Plato and Aristotle. But the twentieth and the twenty-first century has witnessed a beehive of activity in the field. French Historian Pierre Nora proclaimed in 1984, the advent of an era of memory and commemoration (Drąg 3). The nature, mechanisms and purpose of memory have been part of interdisciplinary studies with contributions from scholars as diverse as psychologists, neuroscientists, historians, sociologists and the like. The scope of the process that was studied in a largely individual context has widened to encompass even the idea of nationhood and issues of international politics. Today the recognition of the essential reconstructive nature of memory has cast memory as more to do with the present than the past.

Here, I look at the loaded proposition mooted by Halbwachs of memory as a social phenomenon. He argued that memory is not just a matter of the subjective mind but reflective of the social context. It is the group dynamics that dictated what and how an event was remembered. "Groups can even produce memories in individuals of events that they never experienced in any direct sense" (Olick 7). The spotlight on collective memory experiencing the past as organic and living as opposed to history which is dead. The relevance of the past on the present is emphasised with the concept of collective memory. "History is the remembered past to which we no longer have an "organic" relation—the past that is no longer an important part of our lives—while collective memory is the active past that forms our identities" (Olick 7). The collective memory forms the root of a society which is why the authorities in the novel have rightly targeted it.

The loss of memory, the malady that has affected the nation as a whole is particularised in the case of Celal losing his memory. Losing memory is akin to losing all your past life. Especially when Celal's profession as a columnist entails reflecting on the issues and observations he has amassed during a lifetime in the city. It is disastrous to his career and his person. Admitting to it in his columns, it invites unsolicited offers of assistance from dubious readers, one of whom could possibly be Celal's murderer in the end. The magnitude of this event can only be fathomed by recognizing this to be the immediate spur for Ruya to take flight. She had probably decided to help her half-brother around the Garden of Memory. It is this collective memory that Celal drains from to strike a chord with his readers. This is a timeless principle in writing that he attributed to Rumi: "A columnist wishing to win a wide readership over to an idea must dive down to salvage it from the very dregs of their

memories, for it was there, dozing away, like the wrecked galleons that have lain for centuries at the bottom of the Black Sea!" (Pamuk, *TBB* 271)

For Ruya's former husband, it may be argued that memory seems to have attained a sort of status that Kerwin Lee Klein terms "cultural religion". This iconic status glorifies the past for use in political contexts. The shared heritage is invoked to legitimise the struggle for a return to the 'authentic' identity, that being eroded. Ruya's former husband speaks mystically of how the children in shadowy missionary schools were administered a lilac-coloured liquid, probably alluding to the magical properties of water from the Lethe to induce forgetfulness. He quickly notes more realistically how "the Western bloc's "humanitarian wing" … switched to a gentler approach that promised longer-lasting results: the plan was to erode our collective memory with music" (Pamuk, *TBB* 127). It was indeed more effective and the masses drawn into it, emerged blindfolded. The rare few who sensed the plot were handled by means of the police and mad doctors. They lost their eyes and their old memories, entranced by the content on the silver screen. Unable to replace the old images with anything worthwhile, they were left more wretched than ever before.

Now, would they have been better off left to their own devices? Galip cynically observes the peculiarities of his host's house that position him as a petit bourgeois. He describes the middle class props in the house—the old easy chairs, the synthetic curtains, the enamelled plates, the shabby brown faded carpets and the ugly buffet with the candy dish used only on holidays. His wife too was plain and simple, so unlike the sophisticated and glamorous Ruya. His host took pride in having recognized the conspiracy "that dated back two thousand years" and resisted it. He had remained a 'traditional citizen' true to himself. Galip describes the cluttered

cramped living space of his host to offset his lofty thoughts. Galip ironically concludes that if living the way he wished to was happiness, then this man was 'happy'.

It is only human to want to replace one essence for another, only to be convinced of the futility of the exercise again and again. Neither religion nor tradition prove to be worthy replacements for the lack that instigates the postmodern anguish. But the quest is never renounced, as to rummage about for it is to nurture the possibility of finding meaning. Postmodernism denies any positive essence to meaning. It resides in difference. The gap between reality and representation which permits play and precipitates the 'effects' that are perceived to be meaningful. The attempt to call an 'effect' the 'essence'- that is dangerous and misguided.

The Gap, the Void

One of Celal's columns describes the Dark Air Shaft formed by the building that housed his childhood home with the neighbouring ones as the avenue developed. He speaks of how the ominous pit later became a gap. The arrival of the botttomless pit is portentous- maybe parodying existentialism. The pit is a creation of the modern era. Celal likens the pit to those described by Sheikh Galip and Jalaluddin Rumi in their works. Rumi in Mathnawi mentions that those who deny the existence of God need to lift their heads out of the pits to see the beauty of the sunlight and moonlight proclaiming the glory of God. The self-constructed veil of darkness is what restricts their vision and knowledge. This reflects Pamuk's views on religion and existentialism.

Celal revisits his childhood imagination of the contents of the relentless pit. The postmodern anguish is recreated symbolically in its contents. The huge void is a

receptacle of mythic proportions inhabited by menacing nocturnal animals like bats, rats, scorpions and poisonous snakes. The childhood fantasy even created ogres and witches in it. The pit is for Celal the unknowable impenetrable void; the secret of which was buried in the minds of the inhabitants of the apartment. It is symbolic of the unconscious which houses repressed memories. Celal suggests that the shameful contents of the pit were covered up like the way animals cover up anything that causes them shame. The secret of past sins contained in the pit is depicted to be swirling inside the pit with the creatures there. The menacing picture is redolent with the postmodern vertigo.

The pit is covered up and the depression on the landscape soon inverts itself in the opposite direction. A high rise building takes its place but the threat is far from gone. The pit is replaced by a gap, the eponymous dark air shaft. The deconstruction of the centre created an intolerable emptiness. It is the absence of a controlling centre that set off the infinite chain of deferral. Differance is the gap that permits play. Celal's dark air shaft is also not categorically defined. It is variously perceived as expedient to the ventilation of the apartments and as offering recesses for filth to accumulate. The residents of the apartments were ashamed of the articles the janitor fished out of the air shaft and would deny their ownership.

> They uttered the word *there* as if it were a fear they were desperate to escape and forget forevermore, even as they resigned themselves to its eternal grip; they spoke of the air shaft as one might speak of an ugly and contagious disease; the void was a cesspool into which they too might fall if they didn't watch their step; it was the crucible of evil, insinuated by sly unknown hands into the very heart of their lives. (Pamuk, *TBB* 208)

It was like the past should remain *there* in the past. All the lost objects, the endless lists of them, were the past. The residents denying them is an analogy of the people who deny their pasts. The denial of the past is a recurrent theme in the novels. Covering up the pit is denial. It is but a futile exercise as the traces remain and haunt the present, like how the pit is succeeded by the gap or the dark air shaft.

As Porthoghesi is quoted in Zekiya Antakyalioglu's paper "it is the loss of memory, not the cult of memory, that will make us the prisoners of the past" (671). Freud is not in favour of denial of the past either. The loss should be accommodated by acknowledging it and "working through" it to avoid the lost object from persisting in the psyche to the point of instigating psychosis. This theory has been discussed in detail in the introduction. Pamuk's narrators, be it Celal or Galip make it a point to painfully list out the lost objects. Pamuk's predilection for lists is well-known, be it lost objects or other trivia that he observes. By revisiting these objects, Pamuk makes a wilful attempt to accommodate loss in order to complete the process of mourning successfully. (A mechanism that will be explored in detail in the fourth chapter)

Traces

Apart from the metanarrative of loss, that of history and culture lamented in the tropes of loss in the novel *TBB,* the event is particularised in another synecdoche—the loss of the intellectual class. Walter G. Andrews quotes from Suha Oguzertem about the "previous age's intellectuals … (who were criticised) for being too 'socially activist' and 'political'" (113). The bourgeoisie and the more importantly the contemporary intellectual class are smug in their privileges and assume an air of condescension towards the political and social life of the masses.

"The infatuation with the artificial and decorative instead of the natural and simple," is a discerning characteristic of the class that has evolved (Andrews 113).

The attitude of Galip's family is evocative of this model. The family dinner flaunts their decorative finesse on display. The table manners and food are anything but simple. The family members sit around the elaborate spread and labour to ignore Celal's writing, but not for long. A phone call inquiring for Celal turns the conversation to the topic of Celal's columns and the hurt of the family spills over. Aunt Hale berates him for having flaunted their "dirty linen in paper for all the world to see" (Pamuk, *TBB* 34).The column that described the stinking stairwells of dilapidated back-street apartments, might well have been theirs; a reminder of their ruins.

His involvement in politics is certainly not appreciated and he is derided as 'Communist'. The discussion also hints at how Ruya was attracted to his ideas and almost became an anarchist. (This discussion is significant as a clue to Ruya's whereabouts as it offers a glimpse into the relationship between Celal and Ruya). Celal was, as far as the family was concerned, an embodiment of the benevolent intellectual class of the past. Celal's political and social concerns do not find favour with the 'modern' members of his family. Callousness among the bourgeoisie replacing any concern for the less fortunate is evident.

All through the novel, Galip, Celal and his readers are forever trying to read faces- on bridges, on streets, in the underground museum. It is not just them, the characters in the columns attempt to do the same too. On the night Galip spends touring the city after listening to and narrating stories at the night club, he visits the Mars Mannequin Atelier. He looks around the underground museum that Celal

speaks of earlier in a column. This place is described to be the repository of "the malcontents, our history, the things that make us who we are" (Pamuk, *TBB* 187). This same essence that Celal too had glimpsed earlier was shoved below clearly out of sight with the surface ceded over to the West. The guide points out to them the passages that the Byzantines had dug to escape Attila. It seemed that all the preceding civilizations had taken refuge underground during the various incarnations of the city waiting in the wings for the perfect time to strike back at the overground city.

Here on the foreheads of some mannequins, Galip saw mysterious letters inscribed. And then there were other sages who could read these signs. It is this practice of reading letters on faces that is hinted at very explicitly all through only to be explained towards the end of the novel. The guide explains that Celal was introduced to the mystery of the letters by his father, the knowledge which he had abused for cheap victories. Celal's mannequin stood with a framed copy of his column around his neck like an execution order.

The guide claimed this to be the only place their history could survive written succinctly on their faces. The earlier reference to the museum had discussed how the mannequins were modelled on the Turks after observing them deeply and how it was this process that had made them notice the change in their gestures. In this encounter the guide explains the secret letters he had engraved into the foreheads of the mannequins, those that he had collected on his Anatolian journeys. It was these that, he said, gave them meaning. And unlike his attempt with real faces overground, Galip felt he could read these faces and the misery in them. It was the same despair he held inside himself. He even felt that he read all of the meaning on the face of Celal's mannequin.

Paralleling similar instances elsewhere, Galip senses the propinquity of a key to “the secret hiding behind the visible world” (Pamuk, *TBB* 194). But like how his memory failed him whenever he was close to solving the mystery, he felt the significance and the meaning of the letters on the mannequins’ faces slipping away from him. And the loss of meaning was proportional to his ascent to the surface, away from the mannequins laden with meaning. “The higher he climbed, the closer they came to the surface, the harder it was for Galip to recall the secret underworld he had just witnessed…” (Pamuk, *TBB* 194). Considering that the West has dominated the surface driving the East underground, the loss of meaning is evidently purported to be the backwash of Westernization. An echo of the concern raised in Celal’s column (and discussed earlier) that the dark spot is a Western invention.

The existentialist patch here in *TBB* laments the loss of meaning that ensued from their lost memories resulting in losing themselves irretrievably in a bottomless well of their memories; enumerating the losses that caused it. “… they got lost; as they wandered about the blind alleys of their minds, searching in vain for a way back, …they felt the helpless pain known only by those who have lost their homes, their countries, their past, their history” (Pamuk, *TBB* 194). Here again, *TBB* reiterates the intolerable distress of denying meaning. The invisible hand that points to the imminent secret is named here. The only hope in the face of this despair was to stop hunting for the secret, hand themselves over to God and wait for eternity.

This is again an assertion of the concern which ensues the realization of the dark spot to be a foreign construct infecting the ‘East’ through their novels and movies. Andrews in his article hints that *TBB* posits this to be a clear plot by the

'West' to take from the 'East' "a unity of self-presence it once had" (Andrews 111). This is a reflection of the Turkish reception of the postmodern condition.

> The two-sidedness of the program(me) stems from a readiness to accept the existence of a "postmodern condition" and "the West's" deconstruction of its own foundational narratives, on the one hand, and, on the other, from a desire to situate themselves outside postmodernity and avoid scepticism with regard to their own narratives. (Andrews 112)

He quotes Kafadar to show how the postmodern is portrayed as a Western malady for which an "Eastern" cure is offered- Islam.

The meaning in faces is a prominent motif that is frequented in the novel. The faces on the streets, the faces of mannequins, the faces in Celal's pictures. The culmination of the mystery is the exposition of the practice of Hurufism. The loss of the mystery of the letters in the faces is a by-product of the loss of History and the past. Hurufism founded by Fazalallah sees letters in the faces of people which proclaim the meaning of life and existence in the world. This clear access to meaning was rendered opaque by the processes of history that formed a part of the larger programme of modernization or Westernization.

In the Alphabet revolution of 1928 in the country, the Arabic script was abandoned and the Latin letters embraced. The *alifs* and *lams* that could be read in the faces were now rendered meaningless and thus the faces were divested of any mystery that it had possessed of yore. This loss of mystery is what plagues Galip, Celal and scores of his readers in the novel throughout. Celal's interest in Hurufism is emphasized by the finding of the various clippings and photos in his den. He even

had some manuscripts that attempted to regain this lost mystery partially by painfully reading Latin alphabets on faces and ascribing meaning to them.

Celal's loss of memory is the ultimate trope of loss in *TBB*. It is a literal synecdoche of the larger loss of memory afflicting Turkey as a nation. Being a columnist, memory and the associated mental faculties of unity of thought is indispensable to Celal in perceiving the ordinary realities of existence in Turkey contextually. He is more than aware of the perils of being locked out of his garden of memories. Some of his concerned (and at times dubious) readers claim to want to assist him in his effort to reconstruct his memories. The gravity of the issue is only emphasized by the realization that Ruya's disappearance, the central pursuit in the novel is a response to this loss of memory. Ruya takes off to keep her half-brother company and support him in his attempt to salvage what is left of his memory. This loss is a trope for the loss of all memories- that of history, stories, meaning, mystery and self, leaving behind only a "salty trace of the mystery behind it".

Loss as Silence

In *Snow*, though the explicit lost object is Ka's collection of poetry, loss runs throughout the novel as the postmodern anguish of Ka, a poet who returns home to Turkey after a long stint as an exile in Germany. The silences that are mentioned throughout the novel, *Snow* echo the loss that permeates the novel: the silence of the snow, the silence that Ka felt inside his self in Germany, the silence from which emanated Ka's poems.

The first chapter of the novel is titled "The Silence of the Snow". The poetic silence that Ka sensed within himself is what he preferred to describe as the silence of the snow. Snow is a character in itself in the novel. The extraordinary beauty of the

snow on his journey to Kars reminds him of what he had once written in poem, "It only snows once in our dreams" (Pamuk, *Snow* 4). The whirling snowflakes that were portents of the blizzard that would strand Ka in Kars appeared to him ironically at the time to be signs pointing to the purity he had known as a child. Snow settles like a blanket over his memories and interposes as a magical veil before all the harsh realities that Ka witnesses in Kars, be it poverty or violence. The poverty that Ka sees in the frozen windows of shops and the snow-covered squares speak more of loneliness. "It was as if he were in a place that the whole world had forgotten, as if it were snowing at the end of the world" (Pamuk, *Snow* 10).

Ka's official purpose of the visit to Kars, being the investigation into the suicide of the headscarf girls, he visits Serdar Bey, the publisher of *Border City News*, the official paper of Kars. Serdar Bey takes him around the city pointing out landmarks before stopping by the police headquarters. When he finally gets to explore the poorest neighbourhoods in town, he is struck by the shanties made of stone and corrugated sheets of aluminium. In their interactions with the families, he could sense the extent of their deprivation in their expectancy for humble food supplies. Even though the tales of hardship cast a shadow in spite of the sun streaming in through the window, it offered respite to Ka to peer out of the window at the snow falling outside – "it was as if a curtain of tulle had fallen before his eyes, as if he had retreated into the silence of snow to escape from these stories of misery and poverty" (Pamuk, *Snow* 13).

It cushions the impact of all the bloodshed that he witnesses in the three days he spends in Kars. Even on the night of the revolution, the snow muffles the violence on the streets. Ka is able to sleep soundly as the opposing factions in the city fight it

out. “Perhaps it was because this strange and magically soft snow absorbed the sound of the gunfights all over Kars that night that Ka was able to sleep so soundly” (Pamuk, *Snow* 169).

As Ka walks through the snow after his meeting with Blue, the boys from the religious high school engage Ka on his beliefs. They ask him what the snow reminds him of. Watching the snowflakes whirl down slowly, Ka reflects on the melancholy course of life. His life plays out in a vista of images from childhood and he senses how life added up to a unified whole: a snowflake. When Ka writes a poem in a spurt of inspiration that lines up an array of happy images including that of his ultimate dream of Ipek, he decides to call it “Snow”. It is this germ that he develops through to the image of the snowflake. In the snowflake with its unique symmetry, Ka sees the hidden symmetry of his life writ small. He felt “the poem that had unlocked the meaning of his life, he now saw sitting at its center” (Pamuk, *Snow* 87). When the silence of the snow rang as the loss in the city, his soul and his life, snow now seemed to be the key to the elusive meaning of life.

This is in tandem with Ka’s confession to Muhtar that snow reminded Ka of God. He speaks of the moments of introspection he had in the solitary life he led in Frankfurt and concluded that life could not be without purpose. The silence of the snow brought Ka closer to God. When Sheikh Saadettin Effendi invites Ka over, he says that he dreamt of seeing Ka out in the snow. Each snowflake had seemed to glow in a divine radiance. It was as if the snow was a sign. Just like how Galip in *The Black Book* sees signs all over the city hinting inevitably at a hidden core, Ka has sensed an absence; for a sign can only be a stand-in for something else. Ipek who

reads the invitation from the Sheikh urges Ka to go and details how the Sheikh can fill the void in any man's heart with the love for God.

> He acts as if there is something great inside you. After a while, you begin to see this inner beauty too, and because you have never before sensed the beauty within you, you think it must be the presence of God, and this makes you happy… You're so wretchedly unhappy that all you want is for God to save you… you embark on the road the sheikh has shown you because it is the only road in the world that will let you stand on your own two feet. (Pamuk, *Snow* 92)

Once at Sheikh Saadettin's place, Ka identifies himself with the believers. His self-restraint dissolves, baring his vulnerable soul instinctively. He did not want to be associated or identified with the bearded provincial reactionaries. He did not want to be identified as part of the uneducated peasantry: the aunties in scarves and the uncles with their prayer beads. But so imposing was the loss in the centre of his being that he yielded almost impulsively.

Necip in his conversation with Ka says that "(p)eople in high societies never believe in God. They believe in what Europeans do, so they think they're better than ordinary people" (Pamuk, *Snow* 105). Forsaking faith in God is clearly seen as a pre-requisite to be European or simply modern. Necip's description of "The place where God Does Not Exist" is a visualization of the loss in the postmodern individual (Pamuk, *Snow* 166). Necip describes the vision through an extremely narrow passageway between two walls that are back to back. At the end of the purple snowy muddy streets, is the place where the world ends. Here Necip sees a lone tree that is bare and leafless go red and burst into flames just because he's looking. The tree then

suddenly turns back to black. Necip states that the vision must be a product of his imagination spurred by the devil, for if the place did exist in reality that would mean that God did not exist.

It later turns out that the description is indeed of an actual landscape visible from Necip's bed in the dormitory. It was a purple light on the first floor that made the muddy street look purple. The illusion of the tree going red as if burning was conjured up by a broken red light from a signboard falling intermittently on the distant oleander tree. Fazil described this as Necip's vision of the 'end of the world' and accused Ka of calling it "The Place Where God Does Not Exist" (Pamuk, *Snow* 427). By this interpretation of the vision, Fazil felt that Ka had dishonoured Necip. But it was Necip himself who called it so. As such, Necip was actually voicing his own doubts without explicitly admitting it; the sense of loss that plagued him even while he persevered to adhere to faith and to fix meaning in life. This disclosure towards the fag end of the novel reperspectivizes Necip as someone almost as anguished as Ka.

The return to Kars is for Ka "a desire to look farther afield for childhood and purity" (Pamuk, *Snow* 18). Ka had been in exile in Frankfurt for an anti-government article that had been mistakenly attributed to him. Ending up in Frankfurt in Germany had not been a dream come true for Ka as would be expected by any Westward looking Turk. Ka had spent his years there in virtual isolation. He had refused to learn the German language for fear of adulterating his Turkish self. As a poet, he wanted to nurture his sensitivities with care, to preserve his purity and his soul. Risking the possibility of appearing a fool in front of Ipek, Ka bares his soul and the silence that engulfed him in Europe. The silence that procreates his poems. He speaks

of his isolated life in Frankfurt. Ka's humble reputation as a poet in Turkey had earned him a few poetry reading sessions in Frankfurt and apart from that his contact with even the Turkish immigrant community was minimal.

Ka talks of the endless days he spent in isolation observing the neighbourhood on his train journeys to the venue. Even on his commute, what he looked for was an echo of the loss inside himself.

> He'd peer into the beech forests, searching for the darkness at their heart. He'd see the sturdy children returning home with their rucksacks, and that same silence would descend on him; because he could not understand the language, he felt as safe, as comfortable, as if he were sitting in his own house, and this was when he wrote his poems. (Pamuk, *Snow* 33)

On other days when he had nothing else to do but spend his days reading, he would find the silence descend on him as he immersed himself in the treasure trove of books on topics ranging from poetry to even histories of engineering. Even on his evening stroll, even if on a weekend, the silence ensconced him as he paced the city from one end to the other. What was intolerable was the silence interred inside him, he needed noise. Ka senses the echo of the loss inside him as a silence threatened to devour him.

Military Coup - a loss of democracy

The central trope in the novel *Snow* is a military coup that predominantly amounts to a loss of democracy. This coup however is played out as theatre first and then spills out into reality; thus in its most postmodern avatar blurring boundaries between fiction and reality. Sunay Zaim, the architect of the theatre coup in the

novel, mentions Hegel who first noticed that history and theatre were similar (Pamuk *Snow* 202). History chooses the lead actors and thus its course and so do the chosen few on stage. Sibel Erol in "Reading Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* as Parody", reiterates Hegel's observation that both history and theatre are "based on performance, and that a good actor and a successful historical leader are those who bring out the potential alternative meaning in their sphere" (Erol 413).

Sunay Zaim, the ambitious theatre artist, considered himself to be an ambassador of "modern art and contemporary culture" destined to better the lot of the Turkish people (Pamuk, *Snow* 192). He toured the length and breadth of Turkey most often in inhospitable conditions and often to unwelcome locations to stage his plays. Unable to find suitable venues, they would often have to do with non-descript tea-houses, in a railway station, "in a fire station or an empty classroom in the local primary school or a humble shack or a restaurant; we could be playing in the window of a barbershop, on the stairs of a shopping arcade, in a barn, or on the pavement" (Pamuk, *Snow* 192).

Sunay considered himself to be a victim of an age and country not worthy of him. The social turmoil and poverty had drained the population of any energy for the arts and this he sees as the cause for his fall. Sunay had always believed in a larger purpose for himself with a potential to intervene in the making of history. Having played the roles of "powerful leaders like Napoleon, Lenin, and Robespierre, and Jacobin revolutionaries like Enver Pasha" in the seventies, Sunay was admired not only for his acting skills, but also for his leadership skills (Pamuk, *Snow* 192). Enacting the roles of revolutionary heroes, Sunay later went as far as assuming their identities. At the prime of his career, Sunay was the popular choice when a

newspaper ran a vote on who could best fulfil the role of the Turkish Secularist leader Kemal Ataturk. Sunay soon began acting like Ataturk off screen, striking poses showing his mannerisms and even making comments. His fortunes however shifted when he quipped that he would be willing to play the part of the Prophet. Soon, he was in the eye of the storm when the Islamist and secular press fought against each other. As a failed Ataturk, he lost his career in television and suffered for a long time making small acts along with his wife Funda Eser before putting together the touring theatre he now took all over Anatolia.

Sunay is an alumnus of the Kuleli Military Academy from where he was evicted for staging a secret performance of *Before the Ice Melts.* This speaks not just of indiscipline, but also of his political ambitions as the play is an important intertext for the coup in Kars. The play *Before the Ice Melts* by Cevat Fehmi Baskut narrates a three day coup in a small town during which the problems in town are solved by the patients of a psychiatric hospital. The coup in the play also takes place when the town is cut off from the rest of the world due to heavy snowfall.

On a similar vein, Sunay Zaim stages his political play that takes a violent turn with a detachment of soldiers marching onto stage and firing straight at the audience. The audience at first take this to be another taste of experimental theatre. But the reality dawns on them too late. The religious high school boys are targeted in addition to other random shots. Here, fiction spills over into the reality of the novel in its postmodern manifestation.

Sunay stages the play *My Fatherland or My Headscarf,* a take on the classic *My Fatherland or My Scarf* by Ottoman Namik Kemal. Namik Kemal was a playwright who garnered popularity by spurring political action. Sunay literally

enacts the political by ending his play with the coup. Theatre rather than reflecting history is creating history. Erol perceives the theatre coup as a parody of Turkish history, which is replete with similar coups. “Pamuk here amply exposes the hypocrisy of the Turkish public, who on the one hand criticize any military coup as a loss of democracy while on the other hand want the status quo guaranteed” (414). This he sees to be a parallel to Turgut Bey’s dilemma in choosing the top-down Enlightenment over the bottom-up approach of democracy (Erol 414).

A coup is a recurrent phenomenon in Turkish history exemplified by the seven times it occurred between 1908 and 1997. In Pamuk, it translates to a literary trope along with conspiracy. According to Erdag Goknar, “the “coup” came to represent a paranoid re-enactment of the establishment of the nation-state and a metonym for cultural revolution” (Göknar, *Secularism and Blasphemy* 166). The theatre coup in *Snow* is the collaborative effort of Sunay Zaim, an actor and a former military school student, the military represented by his former classmate Colonel Osman Nuri Colak and the ultranationalist paramilitary groups represented by Z Demirkol. The rise and impending victory of political Islam represented by the Welfare party and that of militant Islam represented by Blue unites them in the usurping of power and disbanding of democracy.

“Pamuk’s version of the Turkish military coup is a burlesque performance based in conspiracy that still leads to the tragic loss of life” (Goknar, *Secularism and Blasphemy*187). The performance of the much-publicized play was eagerly awaited and the live telecast of it was received enthusiastically by the residents of Kars. Ka is a witness to the earnest preparations for the show. Even the welcoming gestures of the people to take in the cable that stretched from the National theatre to the office of

the Kars Border Television to facilitate live telecast is a sign of this enthusiasm. This is the kind of warm reception that the performance of the touring theatre receives in Kars.

With the whole of Kars either at the theatre or tuned into the performance on TV, the play turns into a veritable image of terror when the soldiers on stage open fire into the unsuspecting audience. The residents of Kars who were out of touch with modern theatrical conventions, mistook it for some sort of theatrical ruse. As the slow realisation creeps in that the soldiers were firing live rounds, Necip even rises to warn the soldiers that the guns are loaded. He had fatally misjudged the soldiers' intent. The innocent victims who had stepped in for a night of entertainment ended up with bullets piercing through in their forehead, eyes, shoulders, neck or brains. The sleeping grandfather, the dealer of spare parts of agricultural equipment and the young salesman selling parlour games and encyclopaedia all die oblivious to the coup.

The violence of the evening is understated in the clinical description of the events. "They've sent hospital janitors to wipe up the blood in the National Theater," Ipek whispers the next day (Pamuk, *Snow* 178). The coup in *Snow* is shorn of the brutality of the bloodshed with the peace that ironically fills Ka. He was thankful for the silence and beauty of the night that was filling him with poems. The delight of producing poems after such a long hiatus elevates Ka to a state of mystical trance and the poem he writes that night titled 'The Night of the Revolution' "reflects the intersection of secularism, revolution and the sacred" (Goknar, *Secularism and Blasphemy*188). The new poem he wrote that night "…portrayed the bed, the hotel in

which he lay, and the snowy city of Kars as a single divine unity" (Pamuk, *Snow* 171).

This new poem Ka would assign to the memory axis of the snowflake, as military coups being clichéd occurrences in Turkey sparked innocent memories from childhood. The memory of coups, "when the whole family would wake up to sit around the radio, listening to military marches" lead to happy images of holiday meals together as family (Pamuk, *Snow* 171). A categorical reversal of the barbarity is effected. Ka remembers how guilty he felt for the hypocrisy in exchanging tales of torture in angry woeful whispers when all he wanted was to escape to the comfort of books. Even as the city went up in flames, Ka refuses to take notice and sleeps peacefully that night with the gunshots and explosions muffled by the snow.

"This cosy distortion of military violence, Pamuk argues, is part of the logic of conspiracy, coup, and Republican nationalism" (Goknar, *Secularism and Blasphemy* 188). This is what Sibel Erol terms the 'hypocrisy of the Turkish public' who condemn the military coup while covertly embracing the assault on democracy if it keeps the religious parties from coming to power. This complicity is glimpsed in the front rows of the National Theatre where the retired civil servant applauds after the carnage at the theatre. The ruthless bloodshed of the coup does not affect the better-off Ipek and her family as in the case of other wealthy counterparts as it is taken in the stride of the larger project of secularism, which purports to disestablish religion from politics as in the case of Kemalism.

Bodies as Text

When the protagonist, Ka, experiences loss in his postmodern anguish, Sunay Zaim and Blue portray unwavering commitment to their respective causes. The doubt

and fluctuation that plagues Ka do not seem to touch them. But the infallible revolutionary zealots are marked on their bodies. When Sunay first strides onto stage to rescue Funda Eser from the "fundamentalists" during the performance of the play *My Fatherland and My Headscarf*, his purposeful gait does not betray his limp. But in his private meeting with Ka soon after the coup, he clearly limps across the room. Years of wander all over Anatolia with his theatre troupe had left him lame. Towards the end when Blue is in prison waiting for his execution, he appears incredibly calm and dignified. In a statement that he hands over to Ka, Blue describes the evolution of life and mentions a limp he has in his right leg; this as a result of his fighting in Grozny with the Chechens against the Russians. Even the dog he meets in Frankfurt is lame.

> Pamuk's work…points to ruptures and losses that have created a split-consciousness and led to either fragmented or one-dimensional lives. Dwarfs, limping people and characters with missing limbs abound in his fiction. Their bodies are the visual and physical embodiments of historical erasures, the cost of the repression obfuscated by the purportedly successful story of Westernization. (Erol 404)

These real-world disabilities in the otherwise powerful characters leading their respective factions clearly point to deficiencies. Rather than coincidence, they may be read as politics of representation that pass ironic comments on their commitment to the causes they claim to espouse.

Blue the face of militant Islamic resistance speaks of his youth when he was an atheist before returning to Islam. But instead of building a basis of faith, he is beguiled by the claims of the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran that protecting the Islamic

faith was more important than praying and fasting. Blue's later intellectual pursuits clearly exclude religious texts. His engagement with Frantz Fanon's views on violence and the sociology of religion from Seyyid Kutub and Ali Sheriyat take him away from the core to tangential concerns that is constructed around the empty centre. The bodily deficiency here is a representation of the absence at his core.

Even though the protagonist, Ka is plagued by weakness and moral ambiguity evidenced by the consistent lying he indulges in at various instances, both Blue and Sunay Zaim remain steadfast in their beliefs even in the face of death. Sunay and Blue are radically different from Ka in this respect. While Blue is not easily seduced with the promise of freedom from incarceration, Sunay is the only idealist that commits suicide to prove his point. Sunay follows his project to completion. He plans his murder on stage blurring the line between art and reality, a tribute to his zealous endeavour to be the ambassadors of modern art even while taking to fruition his political ambitions. Ka remembers his meeting with Sunay on the day after the theatre coup and rightly senses that Sunay is the most powerful man in town. The bloody occurrences of the coup and after were at his behest. Is Sunay's limp as such an ironic reversal of the swollen rhetoric of nationalism? Even at the helm of affairs, the character is marked by the body politics of the text.

In the novel *Snow*, bodies become sites of writing where traces are left in the wake of sweeping historical erasures. The dwarf at the Sheikh Saadettin's lodge, the dwarf, Ka is reminded of from Nisantasi, the cross-eyed bus-company manager are all textual precipitates of the skewed process of Westernization.

Snowflake - Structuring Experience

Indeed the very novel, *Snow,* is constructed around an absent book. The collection of poems written by Ka during his stay in Kars is the lost object in the novel. The novel *Snow* is "structured around a self-referential absent text of the same name, the account of which constitutes the novel" (Göknar, *Secularism and Blasphemy* 180). This absence forms the centre of the novel parodying the existentialist concerns of postmodern novels. "The book of poems purports to reveal the identity of the protagonist, which is just another absence" (Göknar, *Secularism and Blasphemy* 180). Ka is an alienated entity who roams the streets of Kars readily assuming identities at the drop of a hat. Though a member of the secular bourgeoisie of Istanbul, he is quite at home with the religious high school boys and the religious company of the Sheikh. Here, character is overridden by 'metanarrative framing', that is the novels "provide an account of the historical, cultural and political contexts that 'constitute' them" (Göknar, *Secularism and Blasphemy* 180).

The lost collection of poems, the eponymous *Snow* is however a reflection of this absent core. The present novel is an enquiry conducted by Ka's friend "Orhan Pamuk" to unearth Ka's collection of poems written during his stay in Kars. The poems in the collection were not just anthologised in the conventional manner but arranged around the six-sided structure of a snow-flake. The form of the collection not just contains the poems but is the key to understanding the real meaning of the poems. The snowflake is a reflection of the hidden symmetry of life and creation.

In Sheikh Saadettin's invitation to Ka, he speaks of his vision of Ka in the street outside his residence, amidst snowflakes that shone with divine radiance, a sign. The conversation that ensues between Ka and the Sheikh unravel Ka's inner

void that readily opens up to the divinity on offing. Ka always associates snow with God and is constantly aware of a hidden symmetry in the world that is paralleled in life. The snowflake for Ka is a motif that mirrors this symmetry.

Till his visit to Kars, Ka had spent sterile years of solitude in Frankfurt with minimum socialising. The poems that flood Ka on his three-day visit to Kars is more of a revelation to him than anything creative. Devoid of agency, Ka is merely a passive medium to the flow. The trope of loss of agency parodies the postmodern repudiation of the author as the creator of text. The very idea of a controlling author who is omniscient is rejected. Ka attempts to make up for the deficiency by acting; here, by attempting to create a hermeneutic apparatus in the structure of a snowflake. The conscious endeavour to detangle the intricacies of meaning in the poem by unravelling the position of the poems on the snowflake is a purposeful exercise to regain agency. The metafictive narrative of the placement of the poems around the structure of the snowflakes is a conscious exercise to arrest the freeplay of the text.

Ka's decision to organize his poems around the nineteen points of a snowflake was obviously the parallel he perceived in it to life itself. The ubiquitous snowflakes in Kars always struck Ka to be large and magnificent. After Ka's meeting with the three boys from the religious high school, Necip, Fazil and Mesut; Ka is questioned on the genesis of snow which embarks him on a trip of reflection and reverie. Snowflakes for Ka were now miserable as they fell to the ground; as miserable as life itself, down to the predestined fall. He felt the emptiness inside him. Impressionistic images from his childhood parade in his consciousness weaving up to make the larger fabric of life. The periphery could be perceived and accounted for to make a unified whole; but if this whole was the fabric of niceties of life, there is still

no trace of the essence ensconced by the fabric. The fabric is only the shell and not the core.

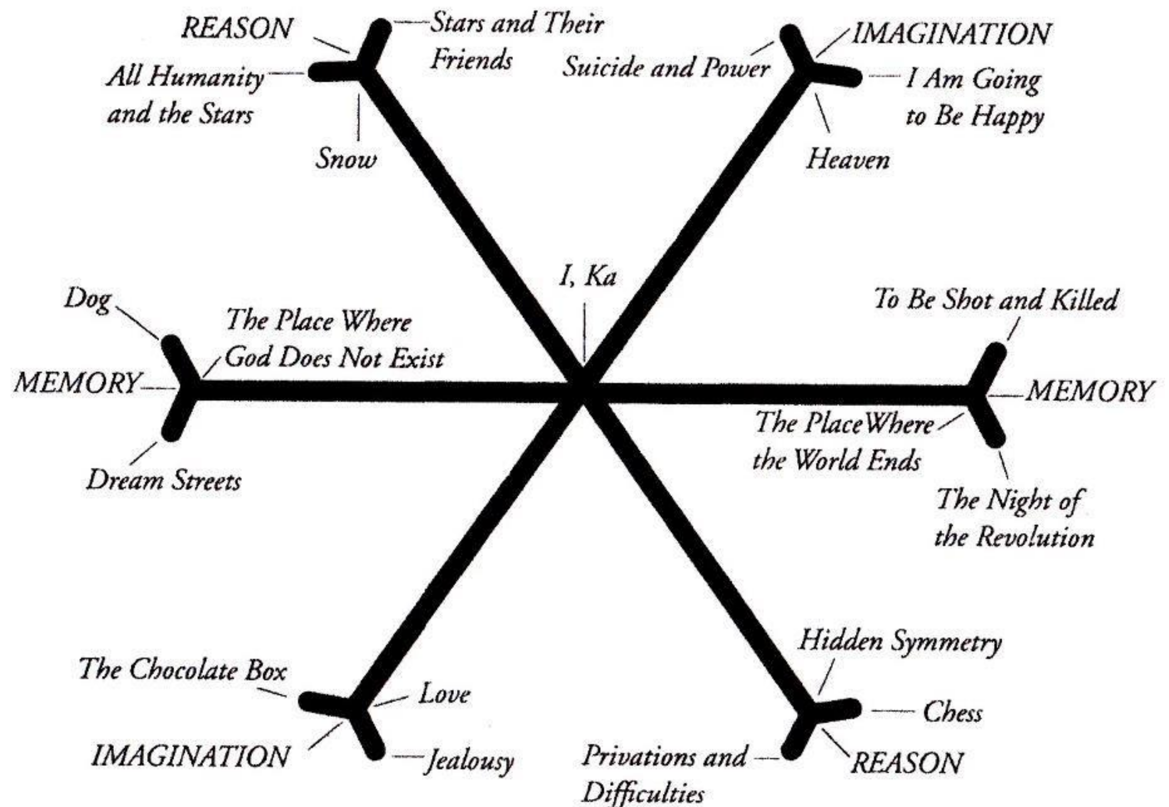
The train of reverie elicits a poem for Ka which makes him equally happy and terrified. The poem he calls 'Snow'. Ka decides that the snowflake is his life writ small. The inexplicability of the poem Ka attributes to that of life itself. Unlocking the poem would mean unlocking the meaning of life. Though the illusion of meaning and purpose beguiles Ka, it is the very elusive nature of his enquiry that keeps shifting his focus with a semblance of meaning. He sees the poem at the centre of a snowflake. Ka acknowledges a hidden symmetry to creation in his conversation with the Sheikh. It is this symmetry he sees in the snowflake.

On his return to Frankfurt, Ka studies the structure of snow obsessively:

> Once a six-pronged snowflake crystallizes, it takes between eight and ten minutes for it to fall through the sky, lose its original shape, and vanish; … he discovered that the form of each snowflake is determined by the temperature, the direction and strength of the wind, the altitude of the cloud, and any number of other mysterious forces, Ka decided that snowflakes have much in common with people. (Pamuk, *Snow* 382)

The course of its transient life is not the only commonality the snowflake shares with people. The overdetermined nature of the construction of the human subject is matched by the array of factors affecting the genesis of a snowflake. Ka thus decides that the poems need to be placed in their pre-ordained places to unlock the hidden symmetry of life rather than fabricate a structure himself. The painstaking exercise to place poems is a hermeneutic exercise to interpret the meaning of the

poems and thereby life itself. The book of poems that goes missing is the referent that the snowflake points to. Without recovering the collection (which is now irrecoverably lost), the contents of the poem can only be speculated. The meaning of the poems, like life itself which it symbolises, will endlessly be deferred.



The three axes of the six-pronged snowflake were designated as Memory, Imagination and Reason, inspired by Francis Bacon's "tree of knowledge." In his allusion to Bacon, an icon of Enlightenment philosophy, Goknar perceives the significance of Republican modernity, "which espouses Enlightenment ideals in its construction of secular modernity" (Göknar, *Secularism and Blasphemy*196). The extended attempt to discern the significance of the snowflake and its nineteen points as means to unravel the meaning of life presupposes a truth, value or meaning residing in the world. This essentially modern understanding of the world of meaning

as singular and exclusionary is subverted by the postmodern text that denies the stability of fixed meaning. The loss of the green notebook that contains the poems has cut off all access to the poems and thereby the subjectivity of its author. "The manifestation of the poetic self- that is, of the author – is permanently deferred" (Göknar, *Secularism and Blasphemy* 197).

Metahistorical Narrativisation in *The White Castle*

The White Castle, the first novel by Orhan Pamuk to be translated into English, established him as an author of international reckoning. The very novel is a product of loss as Faruk Darvinoglu who translates the Ottoman story is a Professor who loses his job in the military coup of 1980. The character is a site of intertextuality in that he is a character from Pamuk's earlier novel *The Silent House*. It is not just his job that Faruk Darvinoglu has lost, his wife has left him and he has lost faith in his discipline. His discipline, history, he discovers "bore little resemblance to fact" (Pamuk, *TWC* 2). Historiography foregrounds the nature of writing history which cannot escape centrism of one kind or the other, opening up the contingency of multiple narratives. *The White Castle* is an alternative archiving of history. "(A)s he does his research, he is pre-occupied by the limits of history and the possibility of a new narrative form, one that accounts for what Hayden White would call "the fictions of factual representation" (Goknar, *Secularism and Blasphemy* 92).

Darvinoglu in the preface to the story, describes his attempts to verify the 'facts' of the seventeenth century manuscript he had discovered in the archive attached to the governor's office in Gebze and ended up unearthing various discrepancies in the records. He was nevertheless so fascinated by the story that he decides to translate it from the old Ottoman Turkish script to contemporary Turkish.

But the translation was a very liberal rendering of the original as the process of translation described testifies. Darvinoglu recounts how he read a few sentences from the manuscript kept on a table and proceeded to another table in another room to write down whatever he remembered of the idea in contemporary Turkish. This image is a double metaphor that represents, on the one hand, the precarious secularized national identity built on erasure and the elision in the process of historiography itself.

The alphabet reform of 1928 was a fault line between the ottoman past and the Kemalist secularized nationalism. The shift from the Ottoman Arabic script to the Roman script is a significant trope of loss in Pamuk, as is exemplified by the depth of loss it signified in the novel *The Black Book* (examined above). One of the measures to effect rapid reforms for the secularization of the country to catapult Turkey into modernity, the alphabet reform received mixed responses from the intelligentsia in Turkey. It was advocated as a necessary step to augment the adoption of a new national language and identity. The speedy implementation of the alphabet reform is a synecdoche of the secularization project that abruptly severed modern secular national identity from its religious Ottoman past. The Kemalist project that aspired to a redefinition of the Turkish identity had to break with its Ottoman Muslim heritage to integrate more readily with Europe. The alphabet reform thus symbolized modernization.

Erdağ Göknar in "Orhan Pamuk and the 'Ottoman' Theme" argues that:

> The image of having to shuttle between two desks in two separate rooms and record in the Turkish Latin alphabet only what is retained of the Ottoman

> Arabic script is an apt metaphor to describe the unstable, in-between position of the nationalized body among other historical texts. (35)

This half-baked national identity created by the top-down secularist project is the subject of most of Orhan Pamuk's novels. The conflicting subjectivities of the various factions in *Snow* represent the volatile political environment at the macro-level where they fight out the true meaning of being Turkish. At the micro-level, the individual characters grappling with their own existential crisis is an embodiment of their attempt to define their selves; be it Ka in *Snow* or the Venetian sailor or Hoja in *The White Castle*. The story that Darvinoglu narrates in *TWC* is an extended deliberation on the question of identity vis-à-vis the East and the West. The newly imposed Westward-looking Turkish identity built on the rupture from the Islamic past is situated on difference, a product of erasure.

The translation of the Ottoman text retrieved from the archive is deconstructive. The deviations of the text from other historical documents is parodied in the translation which is a different liberal reading of the text. The rupture is symbolised by the 'gap' between the texts both physically and in the translation. The purposeful liberalism in translation is an act of transgression.

> The novel is one of identification; the "gap" between "texts" is in a sense the elision and erasure of the Kemalist cultural revolution. The subtext is the messy, uncatalog(u)ed archive or the seventeenth century Ottoman Empire, a kind of wildly signifying unconscious. (Goknar, "Ottoman Theme" 36).

Darvinoglu, a victim of the military coup that comes down with an iron hand on the citizens to enforce one kind of conformity or another, breaches the confines of the

archival text to produce an alternative interpretive story. He moves to the next room and records what remains in his mind from what he has read.

The text deconstructs itself at the very beginning to expose the fictitious nature of the narrative as a parody of the unreliable exercise of historiography. Meaning lies in the in-betweenness of the texts. The subtext is endlessly deferred in multiple readings of the events. This is a trope that parallels the elusive nature of identities that the narrated story dwells on.

A Lost Past

The story of the young Venetian captured by the Turks in *TWC* is an elaborate exploration of the constituents of identity. The Cartesian exercise of the two doppelgangers to identify the elements that distinguish one from the other in the event of their bodily similarities is followed through. Set in seventeenth century Ottoman Turkey, the protagonists in this novel, unlike those from his earlier novels, have not been subjected to the secularizing project of Kemalist revolution. Such characters exhibited a rootlessness from being cut off from their Ottoman Islamic past; the new secular modern idealised as an a-historical entity that is completely antithetical to everything Ottoman. The protagonists in *TWC* however interrogate their identities with an even more obsessive intensity.

When the Turkish fleet intercepts the Venetian vessel carrying the narrator, he accepts his fate with resignation and prepares to leave with his prized collection of books. He is taken captive and incarcerated. He convinces his captors that he is a doctor and earns privileged treatment among the prisoners. Gaining a reputation after successfully treating even the pasha himself, he is assigned to assist Hoja in creating fireworks for the grand wedding function of the pasha’s son. Hoja, to his surprise is

an exact look-alike of the narrator; but seeming to be oblivious to the likeness. When introduced, he is described to know a little about fireworks and the narrator also knows something. So their knowledge put together would produce a memorable display for the masses. They succeed in the mission impressing the pasha.

But he is doomed to be executed due to his refusal to accept Islam as his religion. It is at this juncture that he is rescued by Hoja. His Turkish master, henceforth, is a character piqued by curiosity of all things scientific. The Venetian is for Hoja, an embodiment of the Western stereotype of knowledge and rationality. Hoja seeks to drain the last drop of enlightenment from the Venetian who is now his slave. The Venetian is promised freedom once he teaches Hoja everything that his brain has been filled with by his Western education; a promise that is deferred continuously.

Putting together Hoja and the Venetian, the pasha says that they would be able to complement each other. As the narrative unfolds, the two are involved in various projects together and later the Venetian moves in with Hoja, who finally acknowledges their resemblance. Their intellectual enquiries into their selves and their experiments prove them to truly complement each other. The two sites of identity merge in intellectual exercise and work as one. It is when the two unite that they put on the impressive display of fireworks. Hoja and the Venetian are complements to each other. They merge and later segregate with two loci. The hazy narrative lends to the movement of the loci; merging and unmerging to finally interrogate the presence of duality.

Yearning for his lost life and past, preoccupies the Venetian for the major part of the novel. Each scientific enterprise he undertakes with Hoja is carried out

earnestly in the hope of impressing him in order to win his freedom. But the projects keep coming in successively. They conduct experiments together and create new inventions for their patron pasha. After an unsuccessful attempt to escape captivity, the Venetian resigns to his fate. He loses hope of ever returning home so much so that it doesn’t even appear in his dreams.

When Hoja is engrossed in the preparations for meeting the Sultan, the Venetian, the narrator does not think of returning. He simply daydreams. There is a fluidity between Hoja and him when he states that he was the one working and not Hoja. He was not a captive but free to move around. Such polyvalent narration spot the narrative initially and later abound, culminating in a dense oscillation of narrative voice between the two till the duality is annihilated relegating the story to the illusory realm with the questioning of the materiality of the other.

TWC is a book-length deliberation on the existential crisis; a quest for meaning. Sitting at the two ends of the table, the Venetian and Hoja tried to extract the essence of their self’s from their writing. In their second round, the Venetian wrote of his happy dreams to compensate for the punishments he incited by predicting death for Hoja. The dreams were rather visions that solved the mystery of life itself. The incongruence between action and meaning was eliminated. Meaning was found in action, thereby ending the postmodern dilemma of undecidability.

His dream pointed to the inhabitants of the woods to possess the ultimate knowledge. The sanctity of the traditional beliefs is hinted at with the desire to return to an era preceding this emptying of meaning and essence. The people of the woods are literally supposed to be in the dark interiors admitting no light. This is a subversion of enlightenment. Meaning was in the darkness of the woods. The image

of shadows that do not die with the sun extend the conceit where they come out at night to master the secrets of life. They master 'the thousand little things that we should have mastered' (Pamuk, *TWC* 64). A corroboration of the idea that is reiterated in Pamuk as explored above. The individual little things that make up the essence of life line up before Ka to engender his most beautiful poem 'Snow' in the novel *Snow*. Meaning is the ephemeral effect of performatives. The dreams testify to the happiness that ensue from the coinciding of action and meaning; a veritable paradise lost.

The Venetian has lost his country, his nation, his past. His parents and his fiancé visit him in his dreams initially. Hoja invades his dreams and usurps whatever is left. His wildest fears materialize in the end when they trade identities. The Venetian and Hoja exchange their life stories and even their most private thoughts in preparation to the exchange of selves predicted early on in the narrative. When the confessions are not deep enough, the Venetian slave eggs him on to unearth his innermost motivations and fears. Having divulged the most private of information, they now shared a common past between them. Their shared interests and now shared work lives extended on to a fluidity that afforded a vacillation back and forth. Neither could claim a purity of existence. What was it that distinguished the two? Was it dreams?

The Venetian was now starting to lose his dreams too. Dreams looked forward into the future. They were born out of the past and materialized from hopes. Losing his dreams is a trope that revisits this novel like it does in many others. The missing wife in *TBB* is named Ruya. The meaning of the name is 'dream'. It is certainly not

by chance that Galip who has lost his wife is a symbol of the modern man who has lost his essence.

In *TWC*, dreams are topics of special interest to not just Hoja and the Venetian, but also to the sultan. When Hoja replaces the imperial astrologer in the sultan's court, the interpretation of dreams earns him a definite slot of time with the sultan daily. Hoja interprets the sultan's dreams and if he doesn't have one, the dream of somebody else who had a good one. The dreams were an excuse for Hoja to build on the conversation and draw the sultan into the subject closest to his heart: science. He was obsessed with the scientific principles underlying nature. The cause for currents, the habits of ants, the source of a magnet's power, animals both imagined and real and even weapons were part of Hoja's diverse interests. Hoja was now so engrossed in the attention he had gained, he was confident of his ability to build the weapon himself. The narrator, who had by now lost his past and all dreams of his own, however, was feeling left out. He wanted to share the dreams with Hoja.

Having lost all hopes of ever returning home, the narrator had settled into his new self – as a complement to his doppelganger Hoja. But Hoja after draining all that he could possibly can of the Western knowledge from the Venetian seemed now confident of working on his own. After narrating his discussions with the sultan, Hoja rushed off to design his ultimate war weapon. The narrator was now an isolated lone subject. He wanted to share these dreams. He even started to obsess on the plague in the city because, though dreadful, the fear had brought them closer. He wanted to relive the dreadful mirror exercise with Hoja. But Hoja was bent on punishing him for running away and saw hypocrisy in his entreaties now.

If Hoja's enthusiasm for knowledge kept him excited in the beginning, it was the Venetian who was agitated now for want of attention. He had lost all his dreams of ever going back to Venice. It seemed a distant dream now compared to his lived experience here. His family would have accepted his absence and moved on.

> (T)hey appeared less and less in my dreams; moreover I no longer saw myself among them in Venice as in my first years, but dreamt of their living in Istanbul, in our midst. I knew that if I should return to Venice I would not be able to pick up my life where I'd left it. At most I might be able to begin anew with another life. I no longer felt enthusiasm for the details of that previous life…(Pamuk, *TWC* 90)

This was not the first time that he had been unable to identify with his earlier self. When he had run away from Hoja and escaped to Heybeli Island, he did not revel in his freedom or hope of returning home. He spent his days on the island going fishing or daydreaming for hours on end. Memories of Hoja refused to let go of his dreams. He saw Hoja swimming alongside his boat with the dolphins and also his mother doing the same. When he would intentionally try to return to the dreams, he couldn't. It was Hoja alone that haunted him. He knew that he had to forget Hoja, but that was rendered impossible because of his guilt for leaving him to die of plague. It was Hoja that he longed for rather than to return home; a pointer to the disruption of his identity. On being recaptured by Hoja and taken back, he senses an extraordinary feeling of security.

The loss of his past life and nation was being rounded off with their exit from his dreams. This loss entailed a dispossession of his previous Venetian identity that was being reappropriated and dialectized by his encounter with Hoja. It was a process

initiated from their very first collaboration in various scientific projects and experiments together to their deliberations at the mirror and the table.

The scientific exercises of Hoja and the Venetian captive culminate in the construction of an ambitious war machine that would have the potential to decide the fate of future expeditions. The significance of the weapon was immense as the final project that could allegorically assert their identities. As Hoja spent more and more time with the sultan discussing his dreams and other subjects, the Venetian was starting to lose hope in Hoja's 'grand plans'. It was inevitable with the process dragging on for years together. The only reason the Venetian was participative was to spend time with his double. He longed for his attention and wanted to prove himself to be of some use. He was as aware as Hoja of the emptiness of their thoughts because they did not have any grand plan at the moment, only dreams of a plan. The grand plan had replaced every dream and become the reason for their existence.

Hoja would sporadically explode fits of anger at the stupidity of the people around him, signalling his frustration in the delay of executing his grand plans. He saw the project of the war weapon to be their ultimate saviour. The success of the project was thus imperative to prove that they too had not fallen into the rut like those around them. Hoja spoke of the project as their project and not his own. Including the Venetian as a collaborator in the project was reassuring for the Venetian as having lost all his own dreams, these from Hoja could somehow fill meaning in the life of the Venetian. He hoped that Hoja's enthusiasm would rub off and he could regain some aspect of his former self. In Hoja, he realises that sees an image of his own youth. This however is an indicator that he saw himself in Hoja.

Long past the days they spent looking at the mirror together, the Venetian longed for those moments of unity. Indulging in the lavish Ottoman life, the Venetian was changing not only in his temperament but also in his appearances. Though largely oblivious to his own metamorphosis, it must be a sense of this loss that draws him closer to Hoja's aspirations. When the sultan finally approves their dream project, the Venetian and Hoja collaborate seamlessly creating a sense of unity once again. Something that the Venetian had been missing with Hoja spending more and more time with the sultan. When the sultan bemused by their likeness, invites both Hoja and the Venetian over for conversation, the Venetian is thankful to regain the seamlessness of identity with Hoja. It pleased him to pique the sultan's curiosity about the fluidity of identity that flowed between the Venetian and Hoja. He derived pleasure in the amalgamation of their identities even if it was only in the eyes of the sultan.

> Like an attentive father who separates two brothers arguing over their marbles, saying 'this one is yours, and this one is yours', he disentangled us with his observations about our speech and behaviour. These observations, which I sometimes found childish and sometimes clever, started to worry me: I began to believe that my personality had split itself off from me and united with Hoja's, and vice versa, without perceiving it, and the sultan, by evaluating this imaginary creature, had come to know us better than we knew ourselves. (Pamuk, *TWC* 102)

The war machine had occasioned the unification of Hoja and the Venetian like in the days that they had spent mirror-gazing. Though he had lost his dreams of

his past life, what had replaced them were those of a more real life, because it was closer to his present lived experience.

The White Castle

The war machine was significant in not just unifying the two, like the trope of the mirror had done. It was the instrument by means of which the castle of Doppio, the eponymous White Castle could be captured. The toilsome years spent on designing and executing the construction of the machine is a parody of the incessant quest in search for identity: identity that elusive essence, the core that imbues every life with meaning. Galip in *TBB* scours the streets of Istanbul in search of his lost wife Ruya only to find her murdered in the end. How the quest for Ruya whose name literally means ‘dream’ is a quest for meaning has already been discussed.

Hoja had acquired the Venetian as a slave with the intention to squeeze out all the European knowledge that he could from him. Their relationship from the very beginning was defined by Hoja’s thirst for scientific knowledge. The first project of fireworks display for the pasha’s daughter’s marriage was a collaboration for technical complementarity. The sundry topics discussed were as wide ranging as nature itself. All through the conversations, Hoja, unlike the Venetian was not keen on discussing their similarities. For him, it was all about enlightenment. Hoja indulged in all subjects ranging from medicine to astrology and astronomy to engineering. All through the years, he worked tirelessly to build a clock which needed adjustment only a month, a cosmographic model of the universe and wrote treatises on creatures imagined and real. The fag end of the novel proves the decades of toil to be all directed towards winning the favour of the pasha and thereby the sultan to gain sanction of funds for developing the war machine.

Both the narrator and Hoja spent the initial months designing the ultimate weapon with cannons and long barrels. The experiments on the field with various proportions of gunpowder attracted the attention of large crowds including the sultan. But they had to abandon the use of cannons following the objection of the imperial master-general of artillery for intruding into their realm of affairs. The machine had to be designed afresh now and a frustrated Hoja stayed home with the elaborate planning while the narrator socialized lavishly enjoying life to the lilt. The ambiguous shape on paper that Hoja displayed seemed a stain to the narrator who called it the 'devil'. This stain of a devil took years yet again to transform into a terrifying creature as tall as a grand mosque. This fruit of decades of toil would be taken to the land of the Poles to capture the glistening Castle of Doppio, the eponymous White Castle.

Hande Gurses in her doctoral thesis *Fictional Displacements* points out that it could not be coincidental that the word 'creature' is used by the sultan when trying to 'disentangle' the identities of the Venetian and Hoja. He fuses both of them into a homogenous whole which assumes the unity of an 'imaginary creature'. It is the same term used later to refer to the war machine. The analogy between the creatures is cemented by the observation that the germ for the machine's genesis was spurned during the days they spent looking at the mirror. They have a common origin.

> He spoke of a great truth he'd perceived during the days of the plague when we had contemplated ourselves in the mirror together: now all of it had achieved clarity in his mind, you see, the weapon had its genesis in this moment of truth! (Pamuk, *TWC* 106)

The mirror–gazing days were the moments when they felt their similarities the most. They gazed at their reflection in the mirror and were struck by their bodily likeness. It was this unification of their identities that symbolically shaped into the war machine.

> The analogy between the 'creature' that is the weapon that Hoja builds and the 'imaginary creature' that the sultan perceives when looking at the Venetian and Hoja, highlights the implication of 'invention' in the construction of both. It is not only the war machine that is being 'invented' but also the identity of the narrator; the different representations of the narrator, as the Venetian and Hoja, 'invent' his identity as 'an-other'. The stories that make the narrator 'what he is' are invented just like the machine that Hoja invents…(Gurses 103)

The parallelism here is on the premise that both the processes are inventions. Constructing the weapon using all the scientific and technical know-how amassed over the years to create something functional that would render the Turks invincible in their future expeditions by being able to unleash destructive oppression on the enemies, is invention in the overt conventional sense; while the elaborate and convoluted discussions on the likeness between Hoja and the Venetian and their exercises to make sense of it progress throughout the novel inventing rather than discovering identities. This is an adept manifestation of the two registers of invention Derrida discusses.

> On the one hand, people invent stories (fictional or fabulous), and on the other hand, they invent machines, technical devices or mechanism, in the broadest sense of the word. Someone may invent by fabulation, by producing

> narratives to which there is no corresponding reality outside the narrative (an alibi, for example), or else one may invent by producing a new operational possibility… There, I would say, for the moment, in a somewhat elliptical and dogmatic fashion, are the only two possible, and rigorously specific registers of all invention today. (Derrida qtd in Gurses 104)

The endless narratives on their selves that flow into pages and pages invent the identities of Hoja and the narrator - even if it be that of trying to fix disparate sites of identities for the two or a fluid amalgam merging into one – by fabulation. Building the war machine uses the only other kind of register of invention possible according to Derrida. The war machine is the culmination of decades of planning and research to come up with such an 'operational possibility' that transcends the methods of war currently in place to open up a paradigm shift in war technology excluding the generally used artillery like cannons.

TWC thus rides the twin motors of invention by fabulation and invention by producing a new operational possibility directed towards the eventuality of capturing the White Castle, the ultimate of military victory. All the scientific endeavours is thus bent on the siege of the eponymous White Castle. This is however also the culmination of the introspective exercise of Hoja and the Venetian. The White Castle is the strategic post to capture so as to achieve military victory. It is also in its uncapturable existence a symbol of the unattainable essence called identity. The description of the magnificent White Castle atop a hill representing the ultimate goal is the picture of purity and perfection.

> It was at the top of a high hill, its towers streaming with flags were caught by the faint red glow of the setting sun, and it was white; purest white and

> beautiful. I didn't know why I thought that one could see such a beautiful and unattainable thing only in a dream. In that dream you would run along a road twisting through a dark forest, straining to reach the bright day of that hilltop, that ivory edifice; as if there were a grand ball going on which you wanted to join in, a chance for happiness you did not want to miss, but although you expected to reach the end of the road at any moment, it would never end. (Pamuk, *TWC* 128)

The majestic White Castle in its white splendour strikes the narrator to be too beautiful to be real. It was something that dreams were made of, unattainable even there. The tortuous trail to it would not lead to the end goal of the castle even in the dreams because the castle stood for ultimate happiness- the discovery of meaning in life. The Castle represented the ever-elusive core that imbue everything with meaning dispelling all ambiguity. The definition of identity would then be illuminated in the light. The capture of the White Castle would thus mean the capture of identity, the quest for which fills the intricate narrative. To disentangle the identity of Hoja and the Venetian and arrive at a definite ideal of identity is a concern to which the narrative reverts all too often in *TWC.* The siege of the Doppio Castle would have meant the fruition of that quest.

The word Doppio in Italian means 'double', a reflection of the trope of doubles that run throughout the novel explicitly in the double characters Hoja and the Venetian. The capture of the Castle is thus a resolving of the doubleness. The delineation of identity. The loss in the siege is predestined as the White Castle is too perfect to be attainable. The impossibility to attain the castle ties it to the concept of identity that creates the illusion of a graspable entity, at times seemingly meaningful

but only seemingly never meaningful. The White Castle thus is a construction that parallels the constructed identity that stands in for the loss that echoes the empty core in all novels of Orhan Pamuk.

CHAPTER 3

Lacking Identities: Doubleness and fluidity

Identity is an elusive concept that has disturbed the smug defines of definition. Even as politics of identity is invoked repeatedly to compartmentalize experiences and allocate entities to various subject positions, theories of identity continue to emphasize the construction of identity as an ongoing process rather than a fixity defined by past life or otherwise. Deconstruction reveals that there is nothing outside the text. Anything and everything is but an element that partakes of a system which by no means is finite. Any system defines itself in the context of other systems that surround it. This process continues infinitely with the textual elements evoking its difference from other elements to prove how it is unique.

> There is no final presence outside of difference, nor would such a presence be reached by subdividing signifiers to reach some atomic presence that would stop the differences becoming infinitesimal. This presence would be a substance, something that exists and maintains its identity without reference to anything else… Divine substance or human subject makes little difference: both are to be submitted to a 'deconstruction' which demonstrates that individual identity cannot be formed if that identity is not differentiated from an infinity of other signifiers which that individual could be. (Lewis 2)

Identity can thus never be fully self-contained. It is constructed in constant reference to other signifiers and deferred endlessly in the infinitesimal chain of signification. This explains why the process of identity construction is never complete.

> One is constituted by this process of signification from one element to another, and from here to yet another. One never finishes finding out who one is, or what it is. The event of differentiating oneself is an event that is never over and done with. This infinity means that one's identity, and the meaning of what one says, or what one's text says, is never entirely within one's control. (Lewis 2)

Identity is thus defined (con)textually and thus defers the process of forming a fixed determinate identity. This inherent difficulty of forming stable identities is echoed in the construction of characters in postmodern novels. The 'characters' (if at all they can be called that) cannot be confined to stable ontological positions. The characters as exhibited by Pamukian ones are delineated by differences and contexts rather than any inhering essence. There is no presence that can positively define identity. "(P)ostmodern characters always dramatize their own 'absence' from themselves" (Docherty 366). This ambivalent process of identification constitutes a subjectivity that enlists active participation in normative behaviour.

Lacan's conceptualisation of a subject builds on the Freudian idea of *spaltung* (splitting) which differentiates the ego and the subject and consciousness from the unconscious. Born into an already present symbolic realm of language, the subject is cut off from a direct relationship with the real, a breach that entails a lack and a separation. Though it offers a means of expressing our desires, it cannot be absolved of relegating the real into obscurity. The signifier interposes between the relationship with the real which is the materiality of existence beyond language and what can be expressed. It takes its place as it names the referent in its absence.

Lacan, thus develops the Freudian concept of *spaltung* to the split between the enunciation and the enunciated. This radical split disposes of the concept of a "self-sufficient, 'autonomous' subject of knowledge as it is constructed in the tradition of philosophy" (Stavrakakis 22). The *cogito ergo sum* that places identity where the thinking subject is, is overturned to construct a subject around a radical lack. The concept of a self-contained 'self' or 'I' is obliterated and reduced to a fiction. In the absence of a positively defined essence, subjectivity depends on the socio-symbolic order of language with its inherent social structures and laws.

> To relate to others each subject must take up a place in the language of the symbolic order. But this is problematic. What Lacan sometimes terms the 'wall of language' at once joins and separates subjects. It joins them in that it enables them to communicate, but it separates them in that communication is never complete. (Lapsley 73)

Communication of meaning is unstable as they differ in different contexts. Newer contexts offer newer meanings and thereby meaning is confined to the future moving along an endless chain of difference. The unnamed unameable real is apprehended through the signifier that stands in for it. This is problematic as language is lacking in that the crucial signifiers that enable communication are missing. Constant acts of identifications make futile attempts to close this split to form totalizing identities that subsume the division. These acts however only (re)produce the ex-centricity of the subject.

Orhan Pamuk's novels engage with the complexities of identity of the characters. Rather than permit characters to reveal themselves through their actions and interactions with each other, the strategy Pamuk embraces is to explore the

interiority of his protagonists. This complicates the question even further as the character tries to grapple with the situation and attempts to place himself in context. The characters are almost always displaced individuals on the quest for a lost object, past or life. Characterization in Pamuk's novels exhibit a lack that transcend tangible objects of loss, constructing an ex-centric subject that is lacking.

The previous chapter explored the world of loss created by Pamuk to place his characters in. The present chapter studies the depth of the loss that manifests itself in the way the characters are constructed. On the one hand, loss is manifest in the intricate textual strategies like constructing characters in doubles or as fluid, while on the other, the text exhibits self-reflexivity with the characters engaging in elaborate discourses on their ontological status. In the case of *TWC*, the relationship between Hoja and the Venetian narrator progress through stages traversing the various discourses of subjectivity through the ages.

Existential Concerns in Doppelgangers

TWC, a doppelganger drama is quest into the constitution of identity. The Turkish sage or scientist, Hoja and the Venetian sailor captured and enslaved by the Ottomans have similar outward appearances. The uncanny resemblance between the two unnerves the Venetian narrator while the master, Hoja seems impervious to the fact. But this facade is soon torn away and together they begin to explore the avenues of similarities and differences that tell each apart. The relationship between the two turns out to be symbiotic with Hoja‘s unquenchable thirst for knowledge and ‘science’ and the narrator's need for companionship. The identities of the two melt and merge until they are virtually interchangeable. The conceit that drives the story is the two sides of the dichotomy that they represent. The narrator represents the

ostensible rational Western entity while Hoja embodies the anticipated Eastern other. The tables are however turned when the dichotomy breaks down with the two exhibiting more similarities than differences that eventually forefront the rationalist nature in both.

With the Hoja and the Venetian narrator having similar external appearances, the two characters try to make sense of the uncanny resemblance. The similarities pique their curiosity regarding the constituents of their respective 'self's that tell each other apart if the outward traits are identical. The Venetian gains considerable reputation in Istanbul with his knowledge in medicine and even gets privileged treatment because of it; but when he refuses to abandon his faith, he ends up being sentenced to the guillotine. The Venetian narrator with his head on the stump soon to be beheaded sees an apparition of sorts flying in through the trees towards him. He is appalled to see that "it was me" (Pamuk, *TWC* 21). The Venetian is deluded by their likeness and his muddled consciousness conflates the two. The fear of death and the trauma of captivity obfuscate his disarrayed mind already clouded by their likeness. When the threat to life dissipates and he is handed over as a slave to Hoja what lingers are his existential concerns that wax and wane according to the leisure he is afforded.

It transpires that it is not just the Venetian and Hoja who are smitten by their similarities, the pasha and the sultan at various points of time are disturbed by their similitude. On their patron pasha's return from his exile in Erzurum, Hoja gathers up all the contraptions he had invented during his wait for the pasha to return and transports it to his mansion to impress the pasha. The pasha however doesn't appear too interested. During the celebratory dinner that night, the pasha confesses that

whenever he tried to think of the narrator‘s face, what popped up in his mind was the face of Hoja. There is a discussion on how human beings are created in pairs; about twins who could not be told apart, look-alikes too bewitched by their likeness to ever part and bandits who stole lives of innocents and lived their lives. All the intrigue inherent in the subject due to muddled up information defies comprehension for the pasha, his displeasure preventing him from experiencing the charm of Hoja's well-rehearsed speech on the planets.

Hoja's array of instruments for the pasha's attention included a clock that would need adjustment only once a month and a cosmographic model of the universe that would explain the turning of the planets. He spent the night before the dinner reciting his presentation regarding the instruments over and over again and even backwards. But the pasha could not be easily persuaded to forgo his concerns about their likeness to pay attention to his speech. The jarring consciousness of the mysterious similarities between Hoja and the Venetian distract him. This duplicity haunted him to such an extent that the theories, ideas and inventions of Hoja do not interest him.

In the pasha‘s disillusionment is the reflection of the universal desire to pin identity. The predicament portrayed through the conceit of trying to assign identities to two look-alikes attempts to do the impossible. The post-structuralist breach in the signifier/signified bond that freed the signifiers from the signifieds set the tide of signifiers afloat. It is futile to try to pin them to a definite entity, because the ever-changing nature of the signified evades any effort to stabilise any architectonic structure between the two. The construction of identity is never complete. The ongoing process necessitates constant revision of defined identities. This ubiquitous

phenomenon foils the pasha's bid to assign the identity of 'Hoja' to one and that of the Venetian to the other. They continue to float and mingle as if in a dream escaping stability.

The pasha voices his postmodern anguish when he explodes:

> 'Be rid of him!' he'd said. 'If you like, poison him, if you like, free him. You'll be more at ease.' I must have glanced at Hoja with fear and hope for a moment. He said he would not free me until 'they' realized. I didn't ask what it was that they must realize. And perhaps I had a premonition which made me afraid I might find that Hoja didn't know what it was either. (Pamuk, *TWC* 29)

Apart from the pasha, Hoja and the Venetian themselves were of course haunted by their similarities. They later engage in various attempts to gain coherence of their separate selves. The sultan too, later, wonder at the miraculous similarities between the two and cannot come to convince himself of the distinction between the two. Often, the Venetian would be thought to be Hoja whose place he had taken in the court of the sultan during the time he spent at home working on the weapon. So preoccupied was the sultan with the likeness between the two that he could shockingly tell the two apart more than they themselves. he could disentangle the two of their characteristic traits from the other by pointing out that one was Hoja's and the other the Venetian narrator's like a father separating two brothers arguing over their marbles. The further experiments conducted by the sultan to address the question of identity is discussed in the next chapter.

Disentangling Mind and Body

Hoja's thirst for knowledge overrides his emotions and curiosities. He sets aside his curiosity regarding their resemblance to complete his immediate scientific task at hand. Everybody except Hoja seemed to notice the resemblance between them. The pasha's obvious dismay at the uncanny resemblance is reassuring to the narrator who finds in him a reflection of his own disillusionment. This secret which Hoja didn't want to acknowledge was the stick that the narrator was going to use to beat him with.

Hoja was greedy to make the most of the opportunity he had gained by receiving a representative of the West as his slave. He wanted to milk the Venetian of all his Western knowledge to his advantage. On the occasion of a hiatus from his intellectual assignments, he pounces on a trail to unravel the intricacies of the existential question. "Who can know why a man is the way he is anyway?" (Pamuk, *TWC* 37) The Venetian however doesn't bite the bait too easily as he realises his knowledge inadequate to address the question that has unsettled hoards of philosophers in history. He evades the question. When confronted repeatedly, the narrator tries to ward off the discussion giving varied pretexts. It is the narrator's helplessness that surface in his excuses. He acknowledges that it is a question that has disturbed many minds in his native country, but does not have a plausible explanation to it inadvertently referring to the non-committal dialogue on identity and subjectivity through the ages.

Traditonal philosophy constructs the subject of knowledge as self-sufficient and autonomous. The Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* presumes a positive essence of subjectivity that is discoverable in the consciousness. The narrator at first advises

Hoja to —think about why he was what he was' (Pamuk, *TWC* 49). Though the narrator seemingly has no obvious purpose in dispensing with this advice, this inevitably leads to the Cartesian dictum cogito, ergo sum – "I think, therefore I am". Descartes, in his extended philosophical investigations have tried to grapple with the issue of self-knowledge. Rejecting the Aristotelian presumption of man as a rational animal, he doesn‘t mask his distaste for dialectics which he feels only serves to obscure the natural light of reason. For Descartes, the only way to gain knowledge is intuitively or deductively.

"Caretesian 'intuition' consists in a mental or intellectual 'look' or 'gaze'. What this implies is that there are some truths that the mind can immediately perceive without the mediation of something else" (Skirry 11). Descartes' belief in the characteristic of the mind to grasp the truth or knowledge is explicitly implied in his faith in the power of intuition.

> By 'intuition' I do not mean the fluctuating testimony of the senses or the deceptive judgement of the imagination as it botches things together but the conception of a clear and attentive mind, which is so easy and distinct that there is no room for doubt about what we are understanding. Alternatively, and this comes to the same thing, intuition is the indubitable conception of a clear and attentive mind which proceeds solely from the light of reason. (qtd. in Skirry 11-12)

The only certainty that 'I' or a 'self' must exist springs from a point of doubt. According to Descartes, the very presence of doubt presupposes an entity that doubts or rather thinks. This actor, here the thinker, pre-exists the action, that is, doubting or thinking. Hence, 'I think, therefore I am' is self-justified. This knowledge though

appears to be deductively arrived at, is an act of intuition. This may be explained using Descartes' attribution of perception of truths as self-evident when the chain of deduction is so short that it does not necessitate the use of memory to retain linking arguments. On the contrary, it is perceived or 'recognized' by an act of simple intuition.

Thinking as a legitimate exercise to arrive at truths thus gains centre-stage. The off-hand remark of the narrator that he should think 'why he was what he was' turns out to be a loaded proposition- a method endorsed by giants like Descartes. Leading the discussion or line of thought in the direction seems more than mere co-incidence in *The White Castle*.

Pamuk‛s allegorical deliberation on the nature of human identity assumes philosophical overtones that transcends conventional characterization techniques employed in novels. The whole plot is driven by the self-reflective characters in the novel and the intriguing explorations into subjectivity. Hoja and the narrator write about themselves in an attempt to discover the essence of their selves.

Descartes' response to the question 'What am I?', examines the duality of existence. On the one hand, he is the mechanical configuration of limbs called 'the body' while on the other, he is nourished, moved about and engaged in sense perception and thinking: activities attributed to the soul. Hence, he was a combination of body and soul. But the Cartesian concept of the body is that it is inert, something incapable of self-movement. Something that cannot move, sense or think cannot possibly be 'I'. Veritably, 'I' is negatively defined as ―a non-bodily or immaterial thing" (Skirry 34).

TWC is replete with instances that reiterate this dualism. The narrator has repeated dreams where he finds himself separated from his body. The narrator on one instance dreams of his body separating itself from him and joining with a look-alike. The two of them, then conspire against the narrator. Dreams verily defy reality. Here, the body of the narrator conspiring against him would require them to direct their conspiracy against his asomatous self – his thinking self.

Thought alone is indispensable for me to exist. It is thinking that differentiates a human being from an animal. 'I', then am a thinking thing, the nature of which is immaterial, signified variably as 'a mind, or intelligence, or intellect, or reason' (Skirry 35). For Descartes, mind is where the human soul is, as this is what makes humans unique.

In Pamuk's *The White Castle,* the question of the human soul is examined in depth by analysing the process of thinking. Analysis in the true Cartesian manner of study follows the order of discovery. The approach is a posteriori where particular instances are studied to understand the causes. Thought that inevitably ensues from self, is recorded in pages day after day. The Venetian narrator suggests that one can know oneself by examining one's thoughts. But before that, we find that the narrator explodes suggesting that "a person could no more discover who he was by thinking about it than by looking in a mirror" (Pamuk, *TWC* 50) - a discrediting of the two noted ways of knowing the self: thinking as the proof to existence, and the mirror which initiates the sense of selfhood in an individual according to Lacan. We will examine the literal enactment of the mirror exercise later.

Hoja finds it difficult to bare his soul as a natural reflex. He asks the narrator to write about himself instead, which he does, beginning with his happy childhood at

Empoli. Hoja was quick to notice that this could not possibly be what 'they' thought about when 'they' contemplated themselves in the mirror. The narrator however kept up with recounting his past - two months of reviving and reviewing all the happy and sometimes painful memories. The Venetian severed from his hometown found some consolation in this reliving of his childhood. He didn't need anymore persuasion. The exercise was turning out to be pleasurable. It was the narrator now who took the initiative and whetted Hoja's appetite by revealing tiny bits of information which Hoja would inevitably latch on to.

The Venetian recounted an experience from childhood when he had a friend with whom he had gotten into the habit of thinking the same thing at the same time. Another effort to decode the trajectory of the mind. According to Descartes, a person is the combination of body and soul. The soul of a human self is distinct from that of an animal in that that it can think. This faculty of the mind which affords acts of intelligence and volition is what the human soul is. It is the mind. And for Descartes the mind is better known than the body. The senses are the gateway through which the body gains knowledge. But they are however quite unreliable as they are deceptive. The senses deceive and only the mind is able to grasp the real truth. In a context where the body is inconsequential and the mind prime, the self is where the mind is.

The narrator and his friend do not share bodily attributes but parallel their acts of intellect. When his friend dies, the narrator fears that he will be mistaken for the dead child and buried instead. This is legitimate because it is only the insignificant part of the body-soul duality -that is, the body - in which they differ. It is only the unreliable senses that are capable of distinguishing this difference. Otherwise, the

most important part of the mind-body duality, the mind becomes indistinguishable the moment they start thinking alike. The likeness of thoughts equates the two in such a manner that the two boys are one and the same to the mind. And the mind perceives more readily without the mediation of the deceptive senses. It is only natural that the boy fears interment.

Mind Structured like a Cupboard

Existential concerns unsettle Hoja and the narrator as well. They give in to the curiosity regarding their selves as and when they retire from their assigned duties. Hoja wants to extract all the knowledge from inside the head of the Venetian narrator as though from a storage closet. The scientist that he is, Hoja likens the insides of their heads to trunks with lids or cupboards in their rooms- tangible receptacles that could be opened up and frisked for its contents. Hoja realises that the Venetian his doppelganger differed from himself by the contents that filled their heads. Hoja wanted to rummage through the drawers in the Venetian narrator's head and search the compartments to soak up all the ideas and theories of Science that the 'others' had filled it with.

Hoja in his conception of the structure of the human mind, not surprisingly for a novel that allegorically traces the progression of theories of subjectivity, likens it to an organized structured space. Freud's conception of the mind has been a neatly structured topography with pre-ordained spaces allotted to different kinds of experiences. In his essay "The Unconscious" published in 1915, Freud introduced his model of the mind with three levels of awareness or consciousness, namely the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious. The conscious mind is the smallest area which accounts for all the conscious activities of a person while the major part

of the mind is attributed to be either subconscious or unconscious. The subconscious is where the memories, information, habits or behaviour patterns for quick recall is stored. The unconscious is the huge reservoir of all past memories and experiences. All repressed emotions and forgotten experiences reside in this deep layer of the mind and shape the individual's response to the world. This powerful reservoir is the origin of all deep-seated emotions.

Hoja's notion of the mind has a similar topography where knowledge is compartmentalized and stored away for future reference. The principal function of the subconscious and that of the unconscious to store knowledge rather than to process the information, function similar to that which is echoed by Hoja's idea of the mind with the storage compartments. The Venetian narrator as a representative of the West his lacking 'other'. The life and experiences of the Venetian is the unattainable end of the East-West dichotomy for Hoja being an Easterner himself. Constituting the two poles of the dichotomy which by definition is mutually exclusive, Hoja wanted to extract the experiences that constructed the Venetian into the person that he was. In order to achieve this, he had to access the contents of the various receptacles in the narrator's mind that stored all his conscious and unconscious memories.

Hoja tried to tease out the Venetian's opinion about anything before he wrote anything about it. This was not so that he valued the Venetian's opinion but because "what he really wanted was to learn what 'they' thought, those like me, the 'others' who taught me all that science, placed those compartments, those drawers full of learning inside head" (Pamuk, *TWC* 45). It was not just the contents inside their heads that interested him, but also the reason why the insides of their heads were so

arranged. The nature of the mind was also a scientific interest for Hoja. The study of the structure of the human mind was one of the ways to answer the plaguing question that disturbed him forever, "Why am I what I am?"

After the writing exercises designed to draw out the contents of the drawers, they take a break from the inquiry into the nature of their minds only to return to it time and again. When they spend time on trivialities waiting for the sultan to commission their project of the war machine, the narrator would dream up some obscure subjects in the guise of 'science'. Hoja would receive these endearingly and scorn at the ignorance and stupidity of his fellow countrymen regarding science. This would again raise in him the desire to understand the nature of their minds with 'science' (Pamuk, *TWC* 94).

They attempt to decode the sultan's mind by analysing the notebooks containing their dreams and memories. The metaphor of the mind to be a chest of drawers housing dreams and memories is a direct reference to Freud's conception of the unconscious as the storehouse of all memories and past experiences.

> As if we were enumerating the contents of the drawers of a chest, we tried to tally the contents of the sovereign's mind; the results were not encouraging: although Hoja was still able to chatter enthusiastically about…the mysteries to be solved still hidden in the recesses of our minds…(Pamuk, *TWC* 96)

Hoja and the narrator anticipate a catastrophic defeat of their empire drawing near. They fear that their defeat would not just mean loss of territories, but that of the loss of their beliefs and ways of life: a loss so silent that people would wake up changed ignorant of the change themselves. Hoja and the narrator decide to record all

their grim dreams and visions to present to the sultan with the hope of spurring him to action. The conclusion of this book too contained references to the mind using the metaphor of the cluttered cupboard (Pamuk, *TWC* 97).

Even while designing the war machine, he spoke of it to be connected to the unknown inner landscape of their minds. In the last chapter, I had examined the genesis of the weapon in the moment of truth when the two had gazed at the mirror together. The machine was no ordinary artillery with the sole purpose of military victory. The construction of the machine was a manifestation of the symbolic unification of their identities. If the recollection of the mirror-gazing days endorsed their bodily likeness, the machine was connected to the inner landscape of their minds; their symmetry or chaos. "(T)he cupboard full of junk we call the brain…" (Pamuk, *TWC* 105).

Fluidity

The structuralist understanding of identity formation by framing boundaries for the self and rejecting the different as other is critiqued by Serdar Bey, the publisher of *Border City News* in the novel *Snow.* In the absence of a final presence outside difference, identity is defined against the infinite possibilities that the individual could be. Pamuk's characters overcome the lack at their core and define their identities in terms of the self and the other. Serdar Bey reminisces of times when the national space was not fragmented.

> "In the old days we were all brothers," said Serdar Bey. He spoke as if betraying a secret. "But in the last few years, everyone started saying, I'm an Azeri, I'm a Kurd, I'm a Terekemian. Of course we have people here from all

> nations. The Terekemians, whom we also call the Karakalpaks, are the Azeris' brothers. As for the Kurds, whom we prefer to think of as a tribe: In the old days, they didn't even know they were Kurds…The Turkmens, the Posof Laz, the Germans who had been exiled here by the czar—we had them all, but none took any pride in proclaiming themselves different. It was the Communists and their Tiflis Radio who spread tribal pride, and they did it because they wanted to divide and destroy Turkey. Now everyone is prouder—and poorer." (Pamuk, *Snow* 26)

Serdar Bey laments the need to set the 'self' off from the other in order to make sense of it. Pamuk in his characters condemns the false binary of self/other, just as he ridicules the logic of the East-West binary.

Derrida deconstructs the opposition between presence and absence in difference. This refusal of fixity is flaunted in Pamuk's constructions of characters where they occupy not two opposing poles of a binary, but float on a continuum. Another technique Pamuk embraces in characterisation is to construct them in doubles. It is an attempt to prove the differences as relationship between similarities. The fluid nature of characters and the juxtaposition of doubles is explored in this section.

Hoja and the narrator are presented as the two sides of a coin in this fable that presents a postmodern conceit in the characters that represent the two poles of the East-West dichotomy; yet cannot form clear binaries because of the unmistakable similarities in their appearances. It is not just appearance that binds them together but how Pamuk has cleverly intertwined their identities that eventually mingle and merge.

Ever since the narrator‘s bondage, we find the narrator more inclined to an easy life without any discernible drive to acquire knowledge. The fireworks, the clock and the war-machine are all projects that they undertake together at the behest of Hoja. Hoja is seen constantly engaged in intellectual pursuits: the enthusiasm for which he wants those around him to share. He is frustrated by the smug ignorance in which they while away their time. His contempt is more than evident in his pre-occupation with 'his fools' that at times threatens to inundate his own productive endeavours. Despite being a native of the East, Hoja's rationality deconstructs the binary that relegates rationality and emotions to two sides of a neat bar. Hoja is hardly seen as the exotic 'other' languishing in luxuries, rather his scientific aspirations set him closer to the Western prototype. The Venetian however is seen settling into a comfortable life in the city when he gives up all hopes of escape. He has been around long enough to feel at home in the circumstances. Moreover he reasons that his mother and fiancée would have naturally given up hope on him and moved on in life. Both Venice and Istanbul were his home now.

The narrator is not devoid of scholarly ambitions. Initially in the novel, we find that he‘d rather not leave without a book even though it is into captivity.

> My eyes filled with tears as I turned the pages of a volume I‘d paid dearly for in Florence; I heard shrieks, footsteps rushing back and forth, an uproar going on outside, I knew that at any moment the book would be snatched from my hand, yet I wanted to think not of that but of what was written on its pages. It was as if the thoughts, the sentences, the equations in the book contained the whole of my past life which I dreaded to lose; while I read random phrases under my breath, as though reciting a prayer. (Pamuk, *TWC* 6)

But this love for books is not a universal Western phenomenon. It is the narrator alone of all the captives who is treated preferentially for his knowledge of medicine. It is this love for learning that has Hoja yearning. He rescues the Venetian from the gallows and takes him home. Thus begins the process of introspection and exploration that deconstruct the constituents of Venetian and Turkish identities to effect a conflation of the two poles of east and west.

The narrative of *TWC* undermines the fixity of identity from the very beginning of the novel itself. The narrator is established at the outset as the Venetian who is captured by the Turks from an Italian vessel. The narrator describes the anxiety and then the calm as he prepared for a life of incarceration carrying with him the little he could from his past life to settle into his new. However the passage that follows immediately problematizes the identity of the narrator.

> In those days I was a different person, even called a different name by mother, fiancée and friends. Once in a while I still see in my dreams that person who used to be me, or who I now believe was me, wake up drenched in sweat. This person who brings to mind now the faded colours, the dream-like shades of those lands that never were, the animals that never existed, the incredible weapons we later invented year after tear, was twenty-three years old then, had studied 'science and art' in Florence and Venice, believed he knew something of astronomy, mathematics, physics, painting. (Pamuk, *TWC* 6)

The affirmed Venetian narrator from the beginning of the novel now obscures his identity by describing his past in the West as that of different person. This anticipates the changeover to the identity of Hoja which he assumes towards the end of the novel. The narratorial voice is thus rendered uncertain. The narrator renounces

his Venetian past with the disclaimer "…one day a few people will patiently read to the end what I write here and understand that I was not that youth" (Pamuk, *TWC* 7); only to establish the Venetian as the narratorial voice again in the next passage detailing how the Turkish sailors take control of their ship.

Hoja and the Venetian experience moments of unity all throughout their life together. They contemplate on their similarities and concede at times that they are one and the same. The similarity in outward appearances and then the mirroring of attitude and actions often persuade the narrator that they are one person.

Hoja's encounter with the sultan was getting to be more frequent and his confidence was on a steady rise. As Hoja immerses himself more and more into his intellectual pursuits, he starts to dismiss all others who did not share his views as 'fools'. To define an identity, he needs to define himself negatively. His insatiable thirst for knowledge was his distinguishing factor. He was defining himself on the basis of difference. His fellow Turkish natives were impervious to the scientific significance or causes of the natural phenomena around them. This he viewed as a lack of intellectual competence. He was superior in being more aware of his surroundings making him more aligned to the Western stereotype.

With the assertion of his scientific temper, he was crossing over to the 'other'. This 'othering' is an inevitable process of forming an identity. The narrator confesses that his own predilection to criticize people while in his own country is shifting to Hoja with him faulting his fellows with ignorance. The narrator acknowledges the process of transformation of identities. This process of identity flowing and merging between the two continues foreshadowing the penultimate chapter where they exchange identities and Hoja returns to Venice in place of the narrator.

The writing and mirror exercises had resulted in a mutual sharing of pasts and dreams creating a shared life problematizing the ontological positioning of the two. While the Venetian narrator and Hoja waited impatiently for the sultan to sanction the construction of their dream project, the war machine, the two would recapitulate their pasts and visualize their plans for the future. Even in the shared enthusiasm for the weapon that would be their salvation, they could sense the foreboding of defeat.

Defeat was the loss of their ‘selves’. The people of their land would abandon their individualities and their collective sense of nation and adopt an alien culture. It is Hoja who recollects the episodes from the narrator’s life and not the Venetian himself. The memories are no longer the possession of one or the other. They are held commonly between the two whose identities shift and merge often. The sultan’s preoccupation with the question of their identity and his classification of their thoughts and actions indicate how indistinguishable the two had started to become suggesting a unity.

The distinction between Hoja and the narrator begins to blur even further when Hoja starts working on the weapons project alone. The intellectual domain purportedly a Western terrain is mastered by Hoja as seen in his work on the weapon independent of the Venetian. From this point onwards the interchange of identities progresses continually. They exchange their roles in court and Turkish society now with Hoja staying home to work on the weapons project and the Venetian narrator taking his place in the sultan’s palace.

> Since I knew the sultan’s enthusiasms and had the wit to play the buffoon, I would go to the palace in his place. When I told the sovereign that Hoja was ill, He didn’t believe me. ‘Let him work on the weapon,’ he said. Thus during

> those four years while Hoja planned and brought the weapon to completion, I went to the palace and stayed at home with his dreams as I used to do. (Pamuk, *TWC* 103)

Hoja is now confident of his own capabilities and works diligently for years as the Venetian settles to his Turkish life. He moves around in Turkish aristocratic circles indulging in affluence and stuffing himself; while Hoja seems to have forsaken this side of life completely. The interchange of identities was now at the social realm and the narrator was now initiated into Turkish society. On insertion into this pre-existing symbolic order, the narrator is remoulded by the laws and structures of the socio-symbolic terrain.

> In these four years I learned that life was to be enjoyed rather than merely endured. Those who saw that the sovereign esteemed me as he did Hoja soon invited me to the ceremonies and celebrations which were the daily palace fare…I'd go to the mansions of the ambassadors who were so curious about me, and after watching a ballet of girls and boys stretching their lovely limbs, or listening to the latest pretentious nonsense played by an orchestra brought from Venice, I would enjoy the benefits of my gradually increasing fame. (Pamuk, *TWC* 103-104)

Hoja integrates readily and gradually into Turkish society while Hoja stays home with work on the weapon project. Hoja is absent for so long that he is forgotten and easily replaced by the Venetian seamlessly. The stage is set for the ultimate exchange of identities in the penultimate chapter when Hoja takes on the Venetian's identity and leaves for Venice.

Identities, Performative

In the absence of a core from which identity emanates, the course of identity construction is centripetal.

> Forms of identity are often internalized by the individual who takes them on. This process can be theorized in terms of what Judith Butler has called 'performativity'. This refers to the repeated assumption of identities in the course of daily life. (Weedon 6)

Judith Butler in explaining the expression of gender identity states, "identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Butler 25). Thus, expressions by means of dress, behaviour, walking, etc do not ensue from identity but actually construct identity. The construction of identity depends on explicit processes of identification with certain established codes. This is in tandem with Lacanian psychoanalytical theory that foregrounds identification as central to the process of individuation. The individual inserted into a specific discourse acquires cultural practices of the discourse. This is by no means natural. It is the repetition of the modes of subjectivity and identity that is gradually internalized to form part of the lived subjectivity which is later on experienced as natural.

This is what we encounter in the evolution of the Venetian sailor in *TWC*. He is confounded by the presence of the doppelganger and struggles to make sense of the situation. His sense of self is under threat and we find his fears visiting him in his dreams.

> ...a dream I'd had: he had gone to my country in my place, was marrying my fiancée, at the wedding no one realized that he was not me, and during the

> festivities which I watched from a corner dressed as a Turk, I met up with my mother and fiancée who both turned their backs on me without recognizing who I was, despite the tears which finally wakened me from my dream. (Pamuk, *TWC* 35)

This is the first instance of the interchange of identities which is established by a mere exchange of attire. The introduction of a simple piece of furniture like a table is an intervention into the prevailing discourse. The use of a table is an innovative behaviour that adds to the process of identity construction. Hoja unaccustomed to the concept of a table likens it to a funeral bier initially. Performing acquired practices repeatedly establishes new modes of subjectivity and identity. Earlier Hoja is not pleased with the appearance of the table but he later finds it practical. “He grew accustomed to both to the chairs and the table; he declared he thought and wrote better this way” (Pamuk, *TWC* 25)

> As individuals inserted within specific discourses, we repeatedly perform modes of subjectivity and identity until these are experienced as if they were second nature. Where they are successfully internalized, they become part of lived subjectivity. Where this does not occur, they may become the basis for disidentification or counteridentifications which involve a rejection of hegemonic identity norms. (Weedon 7)

The culmination of the protracted process of identity construction is the final exchange of identities by the narrator and Hoja soon after the defeat at Doppio. Unable to capture the gleaming tower of Doppio, Hoja, totally dejected went on to usurp the life of the Venetian and replace him in Venice. They quietly exchange clothes and the narrator gives him his ring and medallion that contained his

grandmother's picture and a lock of his fiancée's hair as if in a solemn ceremony. Hoja simply puts on the identity markers and embarks on his journey to his renewed identity.

In the novel *Snow*, Ka is perceived in Kars as an outsider, whose bourgeois education reflects in his speech. His charcoal coat is more than just a piece of clothing. It is another detail that sets him off as 'European' in Kars.

> He was sitting next to the window and wearing a thick charcoal coat he'd bought at a Frankfurt Kaufhof five years earlier. We should note straightaway that this soft, downy beauty of a coat would cause him shame and disquiet during the days he was to spend in Kars, while also furnishing a sense of security. (Pamuk, *Snow* 3)

Ka is recognized by Necip from a distance by his coat. And at the venue before his recitation of his poem on stage, he stood out on account of his charcoal-grey coat. Ka uses clothing here for performing identity. It is something that he clings to all through the novel. The smell of the coat repeatedly reminds Ka of Frankfurt. He also associates it with Kaufhof and Hans Hansen, the blond German who sold him the coat.

The narrator in *The White Castle* started using Turkish clothes as the first step in assuming Turkish identity. Ka's coat for him is a step towards assimilation into the German society. The coat is a constant companion to Ka throughout the novel. He derives a sense of security from it. Beyond all this, the coat is a symbol that sets him off as European and by corollary, secular and progressive among the Turkish

nationals. Ka was conscious of this privileged image and it seemed to have worked as the inhabitants of Kars remember Ka for his coat even years after his death.

> … (I)t was clear that those who had attended had done so for political reasons or simply by chance, judging by the little they could tell me about his poems as compared with the copious notice they had taken of the charcoal-colored coat he had never taken off, his pale complexion, his unkempt hair, and his nervous mannerisms. (Pamuk, *Snow* 379)

In the *BB* too, the change of attire to change identity is exemplified. The mannequins of Bedii Usta were shunned and driven underground as they were against the principles of Islam. Bedii Usta however continued his passionate work in the underground atelier. He thought his moment had arrived when twenty years later, the westernizing wave of the early years of the Republic brought sweeping changes. Mannequins, imported from the West started appearing in the display windows of clothing stores. The metamorphosis set in motion by the westernizing project is perceptible in the revised clothing pattern of the people. "(The) gentlemen threw aside their fezzes to don panama hats and ladies discarded their scarves in favour of low-slung high heels…" (Pamuk, *TBB* 60).

When Bedii Usta approaches the department stores for soliciting orders for his mannequins, he is turned down as his mannequins do not look like Europeans. The mannequins in the windows are supposed to be European models to which the countrymen can aspire towards. The body becomes the site of transformation where the Westernizing project is inscribed. The mannequins become models for the Turks to imitate. "He wants a coat worn by a new beautiful creatyre form a distant unknown

land, so he can convince himself that he too can change, become someone new, just by putting on this coat" (Pamuk, *TBB* 61).

Another purveyor explains the situation to him as a 'dress revolution' in the line of the more formal and legal language and alphabet revolution that were solid political changes that effected tangible results for Westernization. The Turks no longer wanted to be Turks. This was why they went ahead with the dress revolution and shaved their heads apart from giving up their language and alphabet. Another shopkeeper states succinctly that 'his customers didn't buy dresses but dreams. What brought them into his store was the dream of becoming "the others" who'd worn that dress' (Pamuk, *TBB* 61).

The central concern of the novel, *BB* is Galip's pursuit of his wife, Ruya and their cousin Celal. The novel reveals Galip's search to be more of a quest for his own self. His obsession for Celal his columns unravels Galip's fascination for Celal's powerful role as a writer. The trajectory of his search progresses with Galip gradually stepping into Celal's role. The first stage in the appropriation of Celal's role is when Galip enters his apartment and performs his role as a columnist. Galip moves into Celal's room, wears his pyjamas and gets into his bed. Pamuk repeatedly uses performativity to effect interchange of identities.

Doubleness

The novel *Snow* explores the three days that Ka spends in the remote town of Kars in the northeast of Turkey. The town with its constant snowfall evokes a fairy-tale like ambience. Orhan Pamuk does an effective job of infusing an other-wordly charm to the setting. On Ka's journey to Kars at the beginning of the novel, it snows

incessantly and moves increasingly towards a blizzard. But Ka seems oblivious of the change that is going to strand him in Kars for the next three days. Pamuk describes the snowflakes whirling down with a dream-like quality reflecting the optimism of Ka who hopes to be cleansed by memories of innocence.

Kars, which offers a microcosm, where the clash of the secular and Islamist factions or rather that of the West and East will play out, is a remote city that had a turbulent past. It had been intermittently occupied by Russia. The clash in the city and in the heart of its inhabitants is a reflection of the ambivalence engendered by the controversial project of Westernization set in motion by Kemal Ataturk. In an attempt at modernization, the secular regime of Ataturk had divided the newly formed Turkish Republic on ideological terms. The radical changes advocated by Kemalists were mostly irreconcilable with Islamic ways of life resulting in a clash of interests. Pamuk has also incorporated the unrest of the ethnic Kurds who are alienated by the project in the novel.

Turkish identity, as such, remains a cipher that is suspended between the poles of East and West. This doubleness in the identity of the city and its inhabitants is a reflection of the larger picture of Turkey. Turkey straddling both the continents of Europe and Asia has forever been torn between the cultures and the politics of the two continents. The characters in *Snow* occupy positions on various points on the continuum of East-West or Secular- Islamist. In the present study, I examine how Pamuk pairs characters to form doubles while constructing their identities emphasizing the role of difference in identity formation in the course of the novel.

Ka had a secular up-bringing in a well-to-do family in Istanbul. This set up his westernized subjectivity to begin with. Born as Kerim Alakusoglu, he had long

since denied any reference to it preferring to be known simply as 'Ka'. This acronym that inevitably alludes to Franz Kafka's K affords an absurdist angle. The name Ka also resonates with the Turkish name for Snow 'kar' and, of course, the city Kars. The triad of Ka, kar and Kars forms an intricate relationship that anticipates the later arrangement of poems at the ends of the spokes of the snowflake. These are just some instances of the symmetry that Pamuk strives to impose on structures.

Snow is replete with characters constructed in pairs. Ka and his novelist friend, Orhan Pamuk, share similarities in character and even share events happening in the course of their lives. Both of them journey to Kars, albeit at different times. Both of them had a bourgeois upbringing in Istanbul giving them a secular outlook. They are both writers in exile with works by the name of 'Snow' to their credit. Pamuk's work is the novel now which the reader is reading now and Ka's work is the collection of poetry that he wrote while at Kars. The poems in the book were arranged to form the shape of a snowflake. Pamuk is in search of this volume which is irrecoverably lost.

Pamuk's obsession with doubleness is also evident in the characterization of Necip and Fazil; and Blue and Sunay. Pamuk has this obsession about twin characters which visits most of his works. In *The White Castle,* the Venetian talks of his childhood friend with whom he had got into the habit of thinking the same thing at the same time, like Necip and Fazil in *Snow*. We have seen the Venetian and Hoja engaging in the same exercise in the novel. Mirroring thoughts is a recurrent trope in his novels. Pamuk admits to this obsession that has roots in his childhood. In Pamuk's very first essay in the autobiographical *Istanbul and Memories of the City*, Pamuk confesses to have suspected, at a very young age, the presence of another

house in Istanbul with another Orhan who was his exact twin, his “double” or his “ghostly other”(Pamuk, *Istanbul* 3).

Necip and Fazil are almost identical twins, the two students of the religious high school who are said to think the same thing at the same time. “Fazıl and I are blood brothers”, said Necip. “Most of the time, we think the same things; we can read each other’s thoughts” (Pamuk, *Snow* 85). Pamuk remains true to his method of constructing identities for his characters in doubles. Pamuk’s obsession with doubleness is manifested in this recurring pattern of identity construction in most of his novels. It is however interesting that this recurrence that is recognizable to the close reader is achieved without becoming monotonous.

Stories play an important role in crafting identities in Pamuk‘s novels. Necip in his various encounters with Ka, use narratives to get his ideas across. On their first meeting with Ka after his meeting with Blue, the students from the religious school communicate to Ka through stories. Their existential crisis is better articulated through stories. They also resort to asking questions. This dialectical method coupled with stories form a sizeable part of the narrative. Necip, at first requests Ka to listen to Mesut’s story. But it is Necip who ends up narrating as the way the story is narrated is as important as the story itself.

Necip’s first story is about the director of a school on the suburbs of a city who contracts the disease of atheism from a man in a lift. This director finds life strange after that. He stoops to extremely low life and attempts to meet mothers of his pupils alone and even steals from fellow teachers.

> He would assemble the whole school to accuse them of blind faith; he told them their traditions made no sense and asked why they couldn't be free as he was; he couldn‘t utter a sentence without stuffing it with French words; he spent the money he had stolen on the latest European fashions. And wherever he went, he made sure to let people know how much he despised them for being 'backward'. (Pamuk, *Snow* 82)

Lawlessness lashes out in the schooland the director loses all peace. He roams the streets proclaiming that only an assimilation of the West and conversion to Christianity can make them rich like the West. He is later killed by the same man he sees in the lift at a later point of time in the elevator itself.

Mesut wants to know if that is how all atheists feel- ―desperate for peace and happiness" (Pamuk, *Snow* 83). They address the question to Ka, a representative of the bourgeois class who they take to be naturally atheistic. Ka, on the other hand dodges the question. He frankly admits that he cannot be sure of the status of his faith. He admits to pondering over the thought and cannot fall into either of the sides. But his later activities clearly indicate his desperation.

Necip later engages Ka with another narrative. It is no coincidence that Necip wants to be Istanbul‘s first Islamic Science fiction writer. (Necip is established early on as Ka‘s double with a temporal gap.) As is seen, all his stories grapple with the question of being and nothingness, man and the universe. Necip in the vein of a science fiction narrator sets the story in Gazzali, a distant red planet in the futuristic year 3579. It is portrayed as an affluent society with all material wealth, but ironically anxious and desperate on account of the gaping spiritual void. The story goes on to

steer away from the sci-fi strain and concentrate on Necip's forte, spirituality, friendship and love.

The story actually constructs for the reader the intensity of the friendship between Necip and Fazil. The two friends in the story, obviously mirror images of the Necip and Fazil in the 'frame story' exhibit selfless love for each other even when it turns out that they have fallen in love with the same girl, Hicran. Each of them is willing to let go of her for the other, though by killing themselves off. This exhibits their love for each other as well as for Hicran. Fazil is found dead in mysterious circumstances and Necip marries Hicran. Later, when Fazil returns from the world of the dead to accuse Necip of selfishness, he says that it is Necip's secret desire to see him dead that kills him. In other words, it is the end of their true friendship that kills him.

It is a realistic love story that has Hicran marrying Necip. But she confesses to have been in love with Fazil and married him only for his resemblance to Fazil. They decide on putting off their union to show deference to Fazil's memories. But they fall in love with each other in time and the natural urges take over. They are, however racked with guilt consciousness. Though this aspect of the story is realistic, the dominant thread of the story is undeniably spiritualistic. The planet Gazzali with in all its affluence does not engender a rich and easy life as one would expect. The people there are deeply anxious. They start an Islamic school there that trained students in Science and oration with admission only to the cleverest students. Necip and Fazil are two students there, depicted as thirsty for knowledge as they are here. They read on the East- West problems written 1600 years ago, which is our contemporary times. Pamuk so effectively uses the narrative of the boys to construct

their subjectivity. The narrative then shifts to the romantic intrigues. When Fazil returns from the world of the dead, he addresses the spiritual question again. The voice from the other side ratifies the existence of an afterlife visited by rewards and punishments for the life led here.

> I have earned the highest compliments of God‘s angels, and I have travelled to what is thought to be the summit of the highest plain of heaven; I have seen the terrible punishments meted out in hell to tie-wearing atheists and arrogant colonialist positivists who make fun of the common people and their faith—but everywhere happiness eluded me, because my mind was here with you. (Pamuk, *Snow* 106)

The threads of love, friendship and spirituality intertwine in the story and Ka at the end is able to discern the dominant strain to be spiritual. Necip, though with the stated ambition of being a science fiction writer seems to relegate the science side to the backburner. He speaks of Fazil's description of Gazzali as an aside rather than a construction of an imaginary world which so forms the central part of a sci-fi novel. He acknowledges that the story expresses his deepest convictions. This is significant as this unarguably establishes his deep-seated faith in life after death. Ka comments as much after listening to the story. Thus, Pamuk lays bare the convictions of the students not just for Ka, but for the reader as well. Stories are not just a means for the characters to make sense of their selves but also for the reader. This narrative which explains the nature of the relationship between Necip and Fazil, in chapter twelve of the novel goes by the subtitle "The Sad Story of Necip and Hicran"(101).

Necip's eidetic memory is exemplified in his vision of the landscape where God does not exist. The power of narrative is explored here too when Necip passes

on the image to Ka, who owns it when he recites this as his poem at the National Theatre. This vision has a profound influence on him and explains to him the idea and its desolateness like no other conversation could possibly do. Verily, stories are a sure-fire technique used by Pamuk to construct his characters for us and for the characters to make sense of themselves.

The doubleness in characters goes beyond Necip and Fazil. Necip may also be considered a double of Ka, the protagonist. This time, the characters are separated not in character but temporally. Both Necip and Ka are aware of a bond between them. Ka is patient with his repeated queries on faith and even personal matters

> "…I understand you. You are my future. And my instinct also tells me this: When you look at me, you see your own youth, and that's why you like me." A happy, cunning smile began to take shape on his lips, which made Ka uneasy. "So are you supposed to be like the person I was twenty years ago?" he asked. (Pamuk, *Snow* 135)

Necip takes liberties with Ka and says that Fazil and he think alike, but with Ka and himself there is a time difference of twenty years. Necip rightly speculates or rather narrates with conviction that Ka believed in God originally. Ka had painfully denied this belief and plunged himself in despair wilfully, to be able to write poems. Writing poems is only possible if one is extremely intelligent and extremely unhappy.

Ka finds the conversations with Necip comfortable as he is able to address his own repressed self. He opens up about his inner contradictions to this alter-ego of his. Or rather he concedes the predictions that Necip makes regarding his thought process. He even goes out of the way and agrees to have a conversation with Necip

quashed into a tiny toilet. Here they discuss Necip‘s image of a landscape where God does not exist. This description turns out to be the poem that Ka recites on stage at the theatre that day.

Necip and Fazil are religious and highly intelligent. The two of them are inquisitive and have conversations on about human nature and faith with Ka. They are rooted in their faith, but are not radical. They represent the true spirit of religion embracing the spirituality devoid of political ambitions. Ka is wary of the students, but they immediately reassure Ka that there is always room for non-believers in Muslim societies. Necip and later Fazil become spiritual companions of Ka. Both of them share dreams and when Necip dies, Fazil fills the void. At first, when Ka sees Fazil sit across him at the library, he misrecognizes him to be Necip. Fazil is mired in the Hamletian dilemma, whether he should seek vengeance and if he should on whom. This is exactly a re-enactment of the story that Necip narrates to Ka as his idea for a science fiction novel. The only catch is that it is Necip who dies and not Fazil, as in the story.

Blue and Sunay Zaim are another set of doubles in the novel. They are oppositional in their ideologies but share similar political strategies. Both embrace means of violence to achieve their ends. Blue is a radical Islamist while Sunay is a revolutionary socialist. “Both are charismatic political extremists who want to remake the world; and both understand the power of culture as a political weapon” (Caryl). Both of them die at the end of the novel.

Blue is in Kars to lend emotional support to the headscarf girls. He is right-wing and strives to endorse the tradition and culture of Turkey that secularization is working to flatten out. His political interests are at loggerheads with that of Sunay,

but the means they follow are similar. Blue, though not a theatre personality, is careful about the image he presents to the rest of Europe. He summons Ka to issue a statement to the West which he wants published in a German newspaper using Ka's connections in publishing. Blue registers his protest to the military coup that Sunay had pulled off through his theatrical performance. He begins by stating exaggerated accounts of casualties that ensued from state-abetted assaults on democracy. He explains the violence as a means of preventing the Islamists from coming to power. Blue is now reaching out to the West because of its purported legacy as defenders of democracy. He challenges the West to endure a democracy that is more than a mere imitation of the Western counterpart.

The use of stories in constructing selfhood may be illustrated in the case of Blue too. At the first meeting with Ka, Blue narrates the story of Rustem and Suhrab from Firdevsi's Shehname. The story elaborates the plight of the father and son duo who take on each other in battle without realizing their relationship. Blue speaks of how he read the story with trepidation each time thinking of the sin that would be committed unknowingly. The story is a means through which he makes sense of life. To begin with, Blue identifies with Suhrab's plight, but later he moves beyond that to partake of the deeper and dignified anguish of the father. The story, however, serves a purpose beyond the personal for Blue. It is not just how it relates to his life that is significant for him. But he wanted to illustrate the stories that make up the Eastern self, have been appropriated by those of the West.

> This thousand-year-old story comes from Firdevsi's Shehname. Once upon a time, millions of people knew it by heart—from Tabriz to Istanbul, from Bosnia to Trabzon—and when they recalled it they found the meaning in their

> lives. The story spoke to them in just the same way that Oedipus' murder of his father and Macbeth's obsession with power and death speak to people throughout the Western world. But now, because we've fallen under the spell of the West, we've forgotten our own stories. (Pamuk, *Snow* 78)

Pamuk, through the use of stories in the construction of self, discuss the erosion of the Turkish identity as an indigenous Eastern self. The rich cultural heritage of the country being supplanted by Western narratives emerges as a concern for Blue. Blue is not portrayed as radically opposed to the West. He wants to retain a dignified Turkish culture that can subsist without the fear of being subsumed into the larger narrative. Blue wants to portray a balanced dignified image of his nation. But his perception of the West is unitary. Ka points out the dangers of taking the West to be a single entity ignoring its inner multitudes.

Blue is very conscious of his self-representation when he needs to attribute a name to the statement. "All they need say is that I'm one of the most prominent Islamists in Turkey and perhaps the entire Middle East" (Pamuk, Snow 228-229). Nishevita J. Murthy in *Historicizing Fiction/Fictionalizing History: Representation in Select Novels of Umberto Eco and Orhan Pamuk* represents Blue as a performer who is constantly enacting his political position (75). He is wary of the news that comes out of Turkey as it shapes the image of the country for the West. He does not want his country to be considered fundamentalist. Murthy finds Blue to endorse the headscarf as a political symbol to establish Turkey as a non-Western country. But this study finds Blue more concerned with the scarf as a religious necessity that ensues from a God- consciousness that is disconcerting to the West. He wants to retain

authenticity while embracing the progressive. For Blue, the process of development does not necessitate their having to cut off their roots.

Murthy finds that Sunay, like Blue, uses performance to promote his Kemalist politics (75). Sunay with his politically ambitious theatre succeeds to an extent in pulling a military coup. The power he wields in the marginal existence of Kars is immense. Their plays attract colossal attention in Kars. Sunay forces Kadife, Ipek‘s sister to bare her head on stage as a political statement. Kadife agrees to the part so as to buy the release of Blue who has by now been arrested. But the plot takes an ironical twist with Sunay getting shot on stage. Kadife was to shoot Sunay in the rehearsed part. But on stage, the gun is actually loaded and Sunay falls dead. Blue is also assassinated.

Apart from the characters, the cities of Istanbul and Kars are doubles too. The novel begins with Ka's journey to Kars, a remote border city that had enjoyed immense prosperity of yore situated between two powerful empires: the Ottoman and the Russian. The characteristic trait of Pamukian novels that plays out in doubles is manifested in the setting in this novel. When Ka returns to Istanbul for his mother's funeral after his long stay at Frankfurt, he finds very little that is recognisable in Istanbul from his childhood. The streets, the shops, the cinemas were all afresh and so removed from his memory of home. The journey to Kars is a sort of return to childhood purity and innocence. Since being situated in an overlooked corner of Turkey, the place was insulated from the flattening out of modernity encountered around the rest of Turkey.

Kars is the double of Istanbul for Ka; just like Necip turns out to be a double for Ka, only with a time difference. More on the doubleness in characters will be

discussed in the next chapter. Returning to Istanbul, Ka felt that the city had lost its soul. Kars was what Istanbul was twenty years ago. The soul that Istanbul had lost seemed to have been at least partially redeemed in the provinciality of Kars

> ….(H)is journey to Kars can be seen as an attempt to step outside the boundaries of his middle-class childhood, to venture at long last into the other world beyond. In fact, when he found the shop windows in Kars displaying things that he remembered from his childhood, things you never saw in Istanbul anymore—Gislaved gym shoes, Vesuv stoves, and … those round boxes of the city's famous processed cheese divided into six wedges, he felt happy enough even to forget the suicide girls: Kars brought him that peace of mind he once knew. (Pamuk, *Snow* 18)

The architecture of Kars is described to be European in character. The hotel where he stays is an "elegant Baltic building". Ka has travelled so much towards the eastern border of Turkey which is on the Asian side of the country and still finds it to be European. Christian Caryl in his review of *Snow* finds this to be a geopolitical joke of sorts. He ponders on the irony that "one travels deep into Asia only to end up in Europe" (Caryl).

The geographical trope of doubleness is also evident in the construction of the double city in *BB*. The bustling city of Istanbul marches westward while the underground museum of mannequins was accommodated in the passageways that crisscrossed below. Galip visits the underground museum like Celal with the guide who explains how their history had a chance to survive only underground. The passages were built thousands of years ago by the Byzantines to escape the attack of Attila. The guide's father had retired to the underground city when he sensed the

imminent collapse of the civilisation as he knew it. This underground city was the refuge for each civilisation from the successive waves of invaders.

> …(E)ach incarnation of this city – Byzantium, Vizant, Nova Roma, Anthusa, Tsargrad, Miklagrad, Constantinople, Cospoli, Istin-Polin – had beneath it the underground passages in which the previous civilization had taken refuge. This had led to an extraordinary sort of double city…with the underground city ultimately wreaking revenge on the overground city that had supplanted it… (Pamuk, *TBB* 191)

The *BB* like other novels by Pamuk has characters constructed in doubles too. Galip is on the trail of Celal in the hope of finding his wife Ruya. He pores over Celal's columns and roams the streets of Istanbul in the hope of finding some clue to their whereabouts. It takes Galip a long time to finally realise that Celal had acquired an apartment in their Nisantasi apartment building, their lost childhood home. As soon as he enters Celal's empty apartment, Galip hears the phone ring. When he answers, the man turns out to be Celal's avid reader. He claimed to have passed on crucial material for Celal to later develop into columns for the paper. The man seemed impatient to meet Celal and pleaded for his address. Galip tries to dodge him and he confesses that he has been on Celal's trail for some time now.

Unnervingly for Galip, the man seemed to have retraced the same steps as Galip to locate Celal. The man who identifies himself as Mahir Ikinci had checked at the office of the newspaper and had come to know that Celal hadn't been there in a while. He had then gone on to try and locate Celal's address in which he had succeeded in attaining a phone number at least. He also seemed to have a systematic plan to find the address himself by studying the various pseudonyms Celal used in his

columns. Galip himself notes down the list of names that he rattles off instinctively. Galip is perturbed to know that someone else had been examining Celal's columns like he had done, looking for him more intensively than he had. He perceives the other person to be his double. He could see how the person was not just on the same trail but also how more efficient he was. Galip starts to 'doubt his own reality' (Pamuk, *TBB* 239). The difference that sets him off from the other closes in to fog up his sense of his own self. The situation partakes a surreal aura as he feels that he could reach his full potential in combining efforts with his double. The other seems to possess what he lacks to complete his self.

Apart from the dominant tropes, the novel is replete with all sorts of allusions to doubles. When Galip listens to stories in the nightclub, a tall man who was introduced as a writer narrates the story of a man who spent a long time writing novels. He lost his ability to write as soon as his wife left him without stating any reason. The man solved his problem by imagining himself to be the person he was before he met his wife only to be disrupted again when his wife returned. The writer had objectively split his self to deal with the situation and assumed the self that suited the context.

Exile

Exile is a prominent trope of loss in the novel *Snow*. Ka is a political exile returning from Germany to Kars. Exile is not just a trope of physical displacement. Resulting in the loss of one's nation and all the associated perks, the displacement is a huge shift in the mental state of the exile. The ouster from the familiar to the alien context of exile is forced and problematic. The spatio-temporal rupture of exile often called for a redefinition of political and cultural allegiances, a long and protracted

process that often falls flat. Being in exile is a state of powerlessness as it results in a loss of one's political self. Displaced by the forced migration and socially dislocated by immigration to the country of asylum, the exile is cut off from his cultural roots. He now has to construct a new reality for himself in the host country and integrate himself into the social milieu, while the gaping loss is exacerbated by the loss of his political self.

Ka, the protagonist of *Snow*, was passionate about poetry and not very involved in politics. But he was forced to migrate to Frankfurt when he was wrongly implicated for a political article. His life in exile condemned to a rat hole in Frankfurt was steeped in loneliness. He does not assimilate into the large community of Turks there. He works in various capacities as a porter, mover, house painter and even as an English teacher to Turks. He was supported by Turkish communists there but only until he was pronounced to be a political exile by the officials. He got the benefits of asylum, but he became a loner and his fellow exiles found him 'too remote and too bourgeois' (Pamuk, *Snow* 262). He made some additional income doing poetry readings, but not enough to lead a comfortable life. His destitution and lack of a social life aggravated his sense of loss. It is his frustration that informs his abrupt and hurried attempts to seduce Ipek.

It is not just the reclusive nature of Ka's character that positions him in a state of loss. When Orhan Pamuk, Ka's novelist friend visits Frankfurt to claim his belongings, he notices the defeat in the face of Ka's close acquaintance, Tarkut Ölçün in Frankfurt.

> When he brought out pictures of his German-born son and daughter, he told me proudly that he'd sent them both through university; although Tarkut was

> a figure of some standing in Frankfurt's Turkish community, in his face I still saw the loneliness and defeat so commonly seen in first-generation immigrants and political exiles. (Pamuk, *Snow* 257)

Even in the face of material prosperity, the deep-seated sense of loss does not seem to have abated. Ka had in the fervour of his youth considered dying for his political beliefs to be worthwhile. But his later experience had informed him otherwise. "…(T)he fact of having spent years and years of exile in Germany for political beliefs he no longer held had finally severed the connection between politics and self-sacrifice" (Pamuk, *Snow* 303). He could see inadequacy of ideologies to infuse meaning to experiences in life. The dominant discourses that hold sway at a particular stage of life offer only a contingent semblance of meaning that dissipate to nothingness and expose the inability to subsume the void. The irrevocable lack that cannot be addressed by material conditions.

In the conversation Ka has with Muhtar in his office, they discuss the plight of various other acquaintances that go into exile. The experience of all the others reiterate the emptiness at the core of being. The experience of exile is only an incarnation of loss that exudes from the ineluctable lack. Their friend from Malatya, Tufan who had written on weighty matters like 'Third World Issues' for various periodicals, was now content with mopping the floor of Stuttgart central station. Another friend Mahmut was an outspoken leftist. He was now a member of a fundamentalist group devoted to trivial internal disputes as to who controlled the mosques. He showed the same argumentative fury here. The ontological positions shift while the reactions to life are governed by contingencies. An array of shifted

allegiances are listed out that reveal how the exiles have reconstructed their life on the loss they have endured.

Ka is cognizant of the fact that life is not about the quest of the ultimate truth as it is bound to disappoint. He recognizes the need to invest in the little truths that afford a semblance of meaning rather than look for a totalizing metanarrative. He voices this in his opinion to Kadife, "I'm saying this to you as someone who's spent years as a political exile. Listen to me: Life's not about principles, it's about happiness" (Pamuk, *Snow* 320).

Pamuk's characters have their own theories about how identity is formed. Blue has mature observations about the West's attitude towards outsiders. He relates his experience in Germany in his first meeting with Ka. When there, Blue would always find one German who fascinated him and try to imagine what that person would think of him, his clothes and his history. What he concluded from the exercise is that "Most of the time it's not the Europeans who belittle us. What happens when we look at them is that we belittle ourselves" (Pamuk, *Snow* 73).

Subsuming Lack

The Black Book, Pamuk's mystery story that forays into existential questions, has a simple plot on the surface where the protagonist Galip is seeking his wife and cousin, Ruya (Dream) who has mysteriously disappeared. Ruya is not the only one missing though. Their cousin and popular columnist, Celal has also vanished. Galip sets about looking for Celal in the hope that it will eventually lead to Ruya too. The complex narrative intersperses Galip's search for Ruya with Celal's columns which are themselves clues, albeit without referents. The postmodern condition of an empty

shell without any claim to a connection with the real is parodied here. The search itself is a parody, the postmodern outcome of which is anticipated. The novel itself becomes an experience of writing about writing (Can it ever be anything else?). It continues to lure the reader into the narrative in the hope of a closure that never arrives.

Galip's search for Ruya takes an experiential turn when the quest acquires the guise of a journey of self-discovery. In the hope of finding Ruya with Celal, Galip's intensive examination of Celal's life and writings expose the inner turmoil in Galip's own mind. What is revealed is more than a simplistic trail of clues that lead to knowledge that Galip knew all along but didn't know that he knew. This he himself concedes. On the one hand, the pursuit progresses with Galip assuming Celal's person. And the other concerns Galip's strained relationship with Ruya that he well comprehends but refuses to acknowledge.

Walter G. Andrews endorses Oguzertem's psychological reading of the *BB* on the Freudian/Lacanian premise. The novel according to this argument allegorizes the psychological state rather than any political or religious one. The referents of the narrative is that "of the son's (Galip's) appropriation of the power and potency of the father figure (Celal) as represented by the sign of the phallus (Celal's role as writer/interpreter)" (Andrews 120). It is Galip's quest for "power" that is consummated in the long run. Galip's path is destined to be revelatory in terms of his self. He admires Celal, their elder cousin of repute and so does Ruya. It is a process of self-discovery as well as that of deciphering the mystery of the world.

Celal is Galip's cousin, an immensely popular columnist who doesn't appear as a speaking character in the novel. He is literally ungraspable in the novel with so

many of the characters attempting to get hold of him. He is the object of attraction for Galip, Ruya and the others. Galip remembers how Galip and Ruya had as young children read the older Celal's columns with relish. The day for them even at present began with his columns that appeared on the second page of the *Milliyet*. Galip asks Ruya in the only conversation they have in the book if she has read his column. Celal, the father figure possessing the power of sway looms large in every frame of the novel. Ruya's attraction towards her fifty-three year old half-brother makes him all the more attractive to Galip who wishes to step into his shoes.

Galip's quest for Ruya leads him into appropriating the father figure by assuming Celal's identity and even writing his columns. Soon after Ruya's disappearance, Galip realises that Celal is missing too. He tries to trace the whereabouts of Celal in the hope that Ruya could be traced too. But Galip ends up taking calls in the guise of Celal and gradually assuming Celal's identity. Galip voices his sense of lack when he comes face to face with Celal's mannequin in the underground museum. Celal's mannequin dressed in his trademark raincoat stood with a framed copy of his column hanging from his neck like an execution order. Galip is flooded by his existential concerns.

> It's thanks to you I can't be myself! He felt like saying. It's because of you that I believed all those stories that turned me into you. For a long time he stared at Celal's mannequin, like a son studying a high-quality photograph of his father… Galip loved and feared this man: He wanted to be in Celal's place and escape him. (Pamuk, *TBB* 190).

Pamuk mentions the pull Celal's figure has on Galip by literally mentioning his attraction like that of a son towards his father. Celal's role as a writer is the power

he wields. Galip usurps the role effectively later. Reading Celal's column again and again till he felt the words to be nothing but shapes without meaning, Galip feels that "he could have written this column himself—he could write like Celal" (Pamuk, *TBB* 213). As soon as he realises this, he senses a propinquity with the meaning residing in the world. Reaching out to the symbolic phallus, addresses the lack and promises completion. Galip was elated to feel a union with Celal's thought process.

> …these were not Celal's ideas but his own, though in some odd way he saw them reflected in the text. Seeing the parallel between his ideas and Celal's, a wave of pleasure passed over him, much as it had done when he was a child and had managed to do a perfect impersonation of the man he longed to become. (Pamuk, *TBB* 219).

The desire to become Celal is not a recent urge. Galip's thoughts endorse the sense of absence born early on in childhood with the entry into the symbolic order. The quest for Ruya and consequently Celal, facilitates Galip's attempt to reach for complete pleasure by appropriating his role as a writer. The first step arrives when Galip finally locates Celal's secret quarters to be in the attic of their old apartment building in Nisantasi. Celal sneaks into the apartment stealthily and immediately receives a phone call. The caller, Celal's ardent reader impatiently requests for a meeting which Galip denies assuming the guise of Celal. The caller takes him to be Celal. Aunt Hale too had in the beginning of the novel mistaken Galip to be Celal on the phone. The next time this reader calls, Galip admits to having less trouble imitating Celal's voice. The man's more diligent quest even shakes Galip's knowledge of himself.

Galip admits that inside his apartment, immersed in Celal's world, Galip's pursuit of Ruya takes the back seat to foreground his real passion, Celal's writing. He explores the apartment refurbished to look exactly like it had forty years ago and settles into the space as its resident.

> …(H)e felt his way into Celal's bedroom. As he took off his clothes and stepped into Celal's pyjamas, he thought of the tall novelist he'd met in the club the night before, remembering how, in the historical novel he'd described, the hero had also stretched out on his double's dark and silent empty bed. He got into Celal's bed, but he did not immediately fall asleep. (Pamuk, *TBB* 245)

Slowly but steadily Galip was taking over Celal's life. In the first part of the novel, the narrative of Galip's quest moves forward in the odd chapters with the intermittent chapters reproducing Celal's columns for the paper. In the second part, the distinction starts to blur. After the chapter that describes Galip's enactment of Celal's life, the novel's narrative plan starts to get hazy. The immediate chapter that follows should have been Celal's column. But the next chapter doesn't afford an outright distinction. It can be a continuation of the narrative from the previous chapter where Galip goes to bed and lies awake; or it could very well be a standalone column on the topic of insomnia. The novel's form parallels the character's transformation. The chapters intrude into one another paralleling the encroachment of the characters.

Galip wakes up the next day to the happiness of having found illusory unity, a way out of the alienation he felt all through his life. Galip goes about his daily routine in Celal's apartment as naturally as Celal would. He settles with the day's paper and

when he notices a mistake in his column, he instinctively reaches out for his green ball-point pen to correct the mistakes. He makes himself comfortable with a cup of coffee and senses 'the happy confidence of a man … so much so that he almost sees no need to be someone else' (Pamuk, *TBB* 251). It is almost as if he has arrived at his final self. But the illusion is bound to break.

> Much later, when the sun was shining on the tightly shut curtains of the windows next door, Galip felt his optimism ebbing away. Though he was fairly sure that every object, word, and meaning was now in its proper place, the deeper truth that held them all together was still, he sadly admitted, beyond his reach. (Pamuk, *TBB* 252)

Galip's gnawing emptiness inside is symbolised by Ruya. The excruciating realisation concerning his relationship with Ruya is something that he had denied to acknowledge. Ruya is the absent centre of the novel that is referred to all throughout. The *BB* is a quest to find Ruya and in the process Galip's lack. Ruya is a character who is introduced from the point of view of Galip. Just like Galip, she has a minimal speaking part. The only time she speaks is on the phone to Galip. And even the authenticity of this call is suspect as Galip wonders in the days that follow if it really had been Ruya or just his imagination. He doubts all that he heard and if he had at all heard it right. He then considers that it could be that he himself had changed and he now saw all of it in a new light. On the day, she went missing, Galip called home from his office and Ruya had picked up right away. She was certainly not enthusiastic about his call. The conversation revealed a lack of intimacy in the relationship.

When Galip leaves the home for work in the morning, Ruya is still in bed. Galip recollects how his grandmother used to pride herself to be the sort of woman who rose before her husband in the morning. Galip doesn't expect that of her especially in contemporary times. But the memory just arrives as a thought. It is also mentioned that Ruya may have stayed awake well into the night reading. There doesn't seem to be many shared memories between them. He doesn't however, hold the slightest grudge.

When Galip observes Ruya fast asleep, he wonders what her dreams were made of. He recalls Celal mention that a person's memory was like a garden. Looking at her forehead, Galip tries to resist thinking about her dreams as he dreaded what or who he would meet there. "He longed to stroll among the willows, acacias, and sun-drenched climbing roses of the walled garden where Ruya had taken refuge, shutting the doors behind her" (Pamuk, *TBB* 3). Galip was shut out from Ruya's world. He admits to being jealous and afraid of the faces he might find there.

Ruya is a shadow of a character in the novel, a reconstruction by Galip's memories. Ruya loves to read detective novels by means of which she shuts Galip out completely and immerses herself in the world of fiction. She addresses the lack in her being by emerging in the world of the detective novel. The unbearable lack is addressed by the certain world of conventional fiction. Galip himself compares the uncertainty and overwhelming amount of information in the real world to the limited number of clues in the detective novel that Ruya reads. They are just enough for the detective to unravel the mystery to allow a satisfactory closure that is withheld in real life. Her escape from her 'self' in the detective novels is later parodied in her physical disappearance in the novel. The loss of Ruya as far as Galip is concerned is not a

loss, but a lack as she was not there in the first place. Galip tries to construct his private world of happiness by masking the gaping void in their relationship. He pretends to not have seen the emptiness which was nevertheless there.

The indifference Galip suffered is repressed till he can no longer hold onto the illusion of a happy marriage in the face of evidence otherwise. Ruya's detachment is verbalised only later during Galip's controlled emotional outbursts. Till then she is clinically described from the outside carefully sidestepping Ruya's interests which painfully did not include Galip. In fact, an early pointer to her attitude is reflected in Galip's dread of her garden of memories. Galip is obviously right in his premonition of the crowd he would find there and how irrelevant he is to her. Ruya, for Galip, is not a loss but a lack as she was never there for him in the first place.

CHAPTER 4

Manifestations of Desire

We saw in the earlier chapter how the speaking subject is alienated from his self in the event of introduction into the symbolic order; how language at once joins and separates the subject by making communication possible yet never completely. This Lacanian split of the enunciation and the enunciated is the radical lack around which the ex-centric subject is constructed.

> (T)he subject constituted on the acceptance of the laws of language, of symbolic Law – a function embodied, within the oedipal setting, by what Lacan calls 'the Name of the Father' – is the subject par excellence. Alienation is not resolved but displaced into another (symbolic) level, to the register of the signifier, to what Lacan calls the Other. Owing to the 'universality' of language, to the linguistic constitution of human reality, the signifier offers the subject an almost 'immortal', 'neutral' representation; only this representation is incapable of capturing and communicating the real 'singularity' of the subject. In that sense, it is clear that something is always missing from the symbolic, the Other is a lacking Other. (Stavrakakis 25)

The real – the materiality of existence, unrepresentable and inexpressible by language – is thus inaccessible to the subject. It is replaced by the fantasy world around the subject which is taken to be reality. This consolidates the alienation of the lacking subject. That the real is repressed by language causes us to constantly desire the expression of the inaccessible real.

> Desire is the striving for wholeness, for a situation in which the words spoken coincide with the position from which they are enunciated, that the subject and the ego overcome the division between them instituted by the stroke of the signifier, $: 'it is in relation to this *Spaltung* that the functioning of desire as such is to be articulated.' (Lewis 37)

The signifier interposes between us and the things named. It relegates it into absence by replacing it. But unconscious desire entails this lack attempting to close the gap for a direct apprehension of the real. The objects of desire however cannot replace what has been lost and so the succession of objects of desire is perpetuated. Desire for cultural objects to stand in for the loss is bound to fail as they can only name the loss and not replace it.

> Art (…) 'pacifies' desire by bringing its cause into the light of day. It puts on display not what is lost, which remains unnameable, but the fact of the loss itself, an analogy for the hollow at the heart of the speaking being. Ironically, then, the positive seduction of art for the viewer is the negativity it inscribes. (Belsey, "Poststructuralism" 51)

Cultural objects or art thus acknowledge loss but by definition do not subsume the gap. The inherently limitless nature of Lacanian desire accounts for the characters' behaviour and actions in the novel.

Desire for the Other

The arrival of the Venetian narrator is a point of rupture in the coherent world of certainties for Hoja, the pasha and the sultan in the Ottoman theistic society that forms the setting of the novel *TWC*. The Venetian sailor who is an exact likeness of

Hoja, the Turkish sage throws up questions regarding the constitution of identity. The Venetian and Hoja are themselves curious about their similarities and decide to examine their selves through their writing. For each of the two the other is their lacking ‘Other’.

For Hoja as examined earlier, the Venetian sailor is a storehouse of Western knowledge and science that needs to be internalized for him to complete his self. But, it is not just a one-sided desire. The Venetian at various points is overcome by an inexplicable desire for Hoja. He felt that he was one with Hoja.

The incidence of plague in Istanbul was a trying time for the people and the administration. The sultan was pressed to make decisions that would contain the epidemic and keep the people from panic. Hoja with assistance from the Venetian narrator kept count of the deaths to track the progress of the disease. The epidemic soon receded proving Hoja and the narrator’s predictions correct. Hoja was rewarded with the post of Imperial Astrologer in the sultan’s court with powers surpassing that. When the sultan went to the Hagia Sophia Mosque for Friday prayers, the entire city joined in to celebrate the end of the plague and Hoja had the pride of position directly behind the sultan. The Venetian was among the cheering crowds that rose in waves in celebration. He comes face to face with Hoja but Hoja walks away without noticing him. The Venetian felt that if Hoja had seen him, he would certainly have rescued him and he could have joined the victory parade. But he states that it is not the share of the triumph that he wanted to partake of, but Hoja himself.

> I should be by his side, I was Hoja’s very self! I had become separated from my real self and was seeing myself from the outside, just as in the nightmares I often had. I didn’t even want to learn the identity of this other person I was

> inside of; I only wanted, while I fearfully watched myself pass by without recognizing me, to rejoin him as soon as I could. (Pamuk, *TWC* 86)

Caught between the aporetic situation between conscious and unconscious, desire engulfs the Venetian as well as Hoja. For Hoja, the desire takes the more immediate form of his longing to unpack the contents of the Venetian's brain while for the Venetian the desire is an existential crisis.

During the days of the plague, Hoja comes home with a blister that looks a little bigger than an insect bite. The Venetian fears that he might get infected and tries to keep his distance, but Hoja plays on his fears by trying to touch him. The Venetian soon escapes captivity to land on Heybeli Island where he leads an unhurried life going to sea with the Greek fisherman with whom he stayed. Even when he had the chance, he could not convince himself that he would be able to escape to his own country. Thoughts of Hoja haunted him so much that he longed for him passionately. He could have escaped to his country, but he felt the urge to go back to Istanbul even if it was to see Hoja's corpse one last time. Eventually when Hoja comes to get him, instead of despair, the Venetian is engulfed by a feeling of security. It was only with Hoja that the Venetian could even hope to address his lack.

This gaping void engendered an insatiable desire in him whenever he was not actively engaged in some project; and this got to be more often as he spent more and more time for leisure than he did previously. Hoja after draining all that he could of the Western knowledge he could from the Venetian was confident and capable of working on his scientific endeavours single-handedly. It was only during the implementation of larger projects would Hoja summon the service of the Venetian. Hoja would dedicate his time on his passionate explorations in science while the

Venetian languished in the luxuries of courtly life, thereby affording increasingly more time for his existential concerns.

After Hoja and later the Venetian won favour with the sultan interpreting dreams and writing treatises on fantastical beasts, they waited for the sultan to either commission a new weapon project, establish an observatory or a house of sciences. Though Hoja still nurtured these dreams, the Venetian had lost his enthusiasm and hoped Hoja would follow suit. But Hoja's unabating obsession with science left the Venetian attempting to rekindle his interest in the obscure business he called science, only 'to feel a sense of camaraderie with Hoja' (Pamuk, *TWC* 93). Desire for the other loomed larger anything else for the Venetian.

He could not bear to see him in so much pain. He sought to lessen the pressure Hoja felt because being one with Hoja, his sufferings and defeats were the Venetian's too. There was no antipathy for his master, rather a deep-seated empathy with him. Hoja discussing his plans as 'our' plans delighted the Venetian as it afforded a union of the Venetian and Hoja in the signifier. "I thought of him as an orphaned child, I loved his rage and sadness that reminded me of my first years of slavery; and I wanted to be like him" (Pamuk, *TWC* 95). The Venetian repeatedly yearned to step outside his self and unite with that of Hoja.

> …it seemed for a moment that what paced, agonized, inside this room was not Hoja, but my own youth. The person I once had been had left me and was gone, and the I that now dozing in a corner jealously desired him, as if in him I, could recover the enthusiasm I had lost. (Pamuk, *TWC* 95)

The recurrent desire to unite with Hoja is symptomatic of the fragmentary nature of identity. He gravitates towards Hoja involuntarily in an attempt to reconstitute his identity through the available objects of identification. The failure of these repeated acts of identification reify the confirmed inability to attain any semblance of a full identity.

Mirror-Gazing: Imaginary Totality

In Lacan's account of identity formation, the human child as an infant experiences itself as continuous with the world around and thus inhabits a world closest to the pure materiality of existence or 'the real'. However, even at this stage, the child feels its body to be fragmented and identification with external objects is seen to be a way out for fulfilling the lack. Lacan examines the human child's fascination with its own image in the mirror and compares it with that of a chimpanzee. The chimpanzee soon loses interest while the human child is obsessed by its mirror image. The idealized image is for the child "an image of unity and completeness, an ideal which it anticipates but which it will never embody" (Lapseley 72). The identification with this image forms the basis for all its future identifications.

The premise of identity formation is flawed from the onset as the primitive identification of the child with the mirror image is itself false as it is the unattainable unified self that it promises. This misrecognition effected by imaginary identification alienates the individual by creating a false fiction that represents the self. This image is pleasing as it is consolatory, but it can never deliver meaning as it disregards the inner world of the individual. The image is thus experienced as a lack, a proxy for the infinite needs and drives that can never be satisfied.

The image of perceived selfhood is a unified whole as opposed to the fragmentary conception of its self. The presence of the mother in the mirror presents the 'other' against which the self is set off. While promoting identity formation, this initiates the construction of the 'I' in relation to the 'other'. The endless process of identifications is forever tied up with the desires of others.

In *TWC,* the Venetian narrator and Hoja encounter the existential question that they attempt to resolve in numerous ways. The two lookalikes engage in mirror-gazing literally enacting the Lacanian mirror-stage to affirm their respective identities. Hoja's desire to unravel the mysteries of the Venetian's mind has more to it than just his scientific knowledge. He intends to introspect for reasons that disturb all individuals who have the leisure to think of their own existential status.

In the interim between their scientific pursuits, Hoja and the Venetian were thrown together with not much to keep them occupied. Hoja wandered from room to room like a spoilt child unable to amuse himself. During this period of idleness, Hoja turns to the question 'Why am I what I am?" The Venetian is not equipped to answer the question but knows that it is a concern that has unsettled many minds even in the West. Hoja exclaims sarcastically, "So what should I do, look in the mirror?" (Pamuk, *TWC* 49). The Venetian narrator retorts that maybe he should do that. A few days later when he has regained his composure, he recounts that people did in fact look at mirrors more than they did in Istanbul. Hoja's derision is obvious in his response, "So you mean that they gaze in mirrors from morning till night!" (Pamuk, *TWC* 50). Though impulsive, his response hints at the Lacanian mirror stage where the first attempt at identification happens. The mirror-gazing does not however happen then as both of them are daunted by the eerie proposition.

It was finally when the plague hits the city that they actually get down to execute the idea. The Venetian was wary of mingling with the natives for fear of contracting the disease, but Hoja was not anxious. The Venetian cautions him against touching the students at the religious school, which Hoja doesn't take heed of. Hoja later notices a small red spot below his navel. He examines it and concludes that it might be some insect bite. The Venetian is however wary and tries to stay clear from him. After a spell of writing at the table, they share accounts from their childhood which bring them closer to each other. But the intimacy soon subsides.

Hoja rises from his seat with the lamp and gazes at himself in the mirror naked from the waist up. He invites the Venetian to look at the spot which now looked more like a pustule. The Venetian is intimidated by the proximity of Hoja's naked body. He holds back in fear but is forced to take off his own shirt to see if they shared the pustule too.

> …(P)erhaps it was the coldness of the mirror that made my flesh creep, I don't know. Ashamed of how I must look, I stepped outside of the mirror's frame. Now I saw Hoja's face reflected obliquely as he brought his head close to my torso in the mirror; he'd bent that huge head everyone said resembled mine straight towards my body. He's doing this to poison my spirit…(Pamuk, *TWC* 70)

Hoja steers him closer to his body and back into the purview of the mirror. The two of them gazing at the mirror together duplicate the Lacanian mirror stage where the infant sets off its self against the mother. The presence of the mother in the mirror validates the image as them initiating the imaginary order. The child identifies

itself as different from the 'other' in the mother. The Venetian and Hoja looking at themselves in the mirror together attempt to distinguish one from the 'other'.

At the onset of their exercise, they are taken aback by their resemblance to each other. The child before the mirror stage experienced itself as one with the mother. It was continuous with the world around. Here, the Venetian occasionally finds himself feeling at one with Hoja. Looking at the two of their half-naked bodies in the mirror, he is reminded of how he had first felt when he saw him at Sadik Pasha's place. "The two of us were one person!" (Pamuk, *TWC* 71). The Venetian ventures to validate himself as the child does with the mother.

> I made a movement to save myself, as if to verify that I was myself. I quickly ran my hands through my hair. But he imitated my gesture and did it perfectly, without disturbing the symmetry of the mirror image at all. He also imitated my look, the attitude of my head, he mimicked my terror I could not endure to see in the mirror but from which, transfixed by fear, I could not tear my eyes away…(Pamuk, *TWC* 71)

The mirror stage is a beginning of selfhood, though faulty on being misrecognition in Lacan. The recognition with an image that is a false fiction of a complete and unified self is a misrecognition that forms the basis for all future identifications later in life. Though false, the image offers a satisfying image of wholeness that is assuring and consolatory. The Venetian is not able to partake of this satisfaction when Hoja mirrors his every action thereby annulling his attempts to define himself as separate from Hoja with whom he is "bound fast" (Pamuk, *TWC* 71).

In the mirror stage, Lacan's account is reassuring:

> First of all one achieves a certain finite and unified ipseity by means of the mirror stage, our identification with the little other, which gives us a sense of our individuality as a body and then as an ego; secondly, the loop of selfhood is more firmly tied by the signifiers with which one identifies in the big Other, the signifiers to which one finds oneself pinned and which one uses to describe oneself. (Lewis 30-31)

Though the Lacanian mirror stage is duplicated, this initial stage of ipseity is not achieved as envisaged above by Lacan. It is not just the Venetian's movement that Hoja mirrors but also his thoughts. The Venetian's attempts to verify himself by moving is counteracted by Hoja's similar movements. Hoja now ventures to imitate his thoughts. Knowing very well how frightened the Venetian is at the moment, Hoja confesses to his own fears regarding the plague. Equalizing their thoughts led to the conflation of their selves. By coming to common grounds with the Venetian on the basis of his thoughts, Hoja cements their identification continuing the play with his fear. He, thus, claims to have access to the Venetian's thought process.

"'Now I am like you,' he said. 'I know your fear. I have become you!'" (Pamuk, *TWC* 72). The mirror gazing had not taken them any step further in defining their selves. Instead the Venetian was drowning even deeper into oblivion. He had told him about his childhood and youth. Hoja had appropriated that and his life was even more beyond his control.

The image of unification, according to Lacan's account, is not just from mirror images but from any object that reflects. It is not just the visible exterior that

reflection encompasses. The range of objects that mirror the sound, the touch or even the will of the child counts. Here, Hoja is in that sense a mirror to the Venetian. This explains the anxiety he experiences whenever he faces the question of their likeness.

Derrida is uneasy on seeing his own portrait. The Venetian is uncomfortable when he first sees Hoja in Sadik Pasha's palace. He is no less aware of their resemblance even when on the guillotine. What strikes him first is their likeness. "…(I)t was me…" he thinks (Pamuk, *TWC* 21). Now when they return exclusively to the question of their selfhood by writing about their thoughts or by looking at themselves in the mirror, the similarities are overwhelming. Now, it was not just the mirror but Hoja himself that served as a mirror.

Seeing Hoja was for the Venetian like seeing his own portrait. For Derrida, the self-portrait is repulsive as it is reminiscent of death. His photo represents his death and not himself. The photo will outlive himself while he will succumb to mortality while the photo will abide. The image does not suffer the constraints of the lacking subject. The Venetian is alarmed by his reflection in the image of Hoja. This motif recurs in the Venetian's fear of being buried alive with the boy whom he had got into the habit of thinking the same thoughts.

Writing the Self

The Venetian and Hoja were wracked by desire to define their selves and the accounts above detail the intellectual pursuits they engage in to close the gap. Their bodily similarity was one reason for their desire while Hoja's incessant curiosity to unpack the contents of their heads also led them to explore ways to achieve the end effectively. The unfulfilled desire was so unbearable especially with Hoja's other

passion, that for science having to wait on account of non-receipt of funds from the sovereign.

> He would renounce his belief that the fundamental science worthy of practice was the one which would analyse the causes of their folly; renounce the desire to know why the insides of their heads were like the way they were, and stop thinking about it! I believed these broodings were born out of despair because the signs of favour he expected from the palace did not appear. (Pamuk, *TWC* 45)

The long years after were spent waiting and meanwhile the two of them encountering and debating ways to know their selves. Dismissing momentarily the use of the mirror in knowing the self, their debates end with Hoja demanding the Venetian to prove his courage by writing about himself to discover who he was. Thus begins a routine that the two return to often as a means to unravel the meaning of their selves.

> At first I wrote a few pages about my happy childhood with my brothers and sisters, my mother and grandmother on our estate at Empoli. I didn't know just why I chose to write about these memories in particular as a way of discovering why I was who I was…(Pamuk, *TWC* 51)

Hoja is not happy with the subjects he chose to write on. The failure of the process as an exercise to know the self rests on two contentions. First, the subject on which they decide to write and second, the process of writing itself. Hoja expected to demystify the secrets of one's self by writing but couldn't see how the Venetian's accounts of his life with his brothers, sisters, mother and grandmother could count as

parts of his self. He could not appreciate the need for the mention of his life in Empoli. The methodology of enquiry is however, quite in tune with the poststructuralist attitude that rejects any kind of essentialism. Rejecting the possibility of a pre-given or self-determining essence, the contingency and ungrounded nature of things is emphasized by poststructuralism.

The dismissal of the humanist tradition of assuming a knowable world is not a conscious decision in the novel. The Venetian when confronted with the task of writing to uncover his self is at loss on where to begin. The undecidability in the nature of the question is itself a confirmation of the uncertainty at the heart of the matter which has been discussed at length in the previous chapters. He inadvertently begins with his past. The contingent nature of reality necessitates the exploration of conditions that precipitated that particular reality.

Beginning with his childhood is thus natural to find the point of genesis of his selfhood. His siblings and his parents and the setting of Empoli were all no doubt integral to the experiences that constitute his self. Hoja was not happy with the contents of his writing as he could not see how they connected. The Venetian continued as he could see no other recourse. The historical trajectory was followed as a promise of an entry-point to selfhood. He even persuades Hoja to attempt the same by writing because "he would discover what it was that truly set him apart from his fools" (Pamuk, *TWC* 52). Inevitably Hoja too sets down the story of his life with anecdotes about his family members.

The two of them sat at two ends of the table playing this dangerous mind game. The writing predictably not offering much of a solution to their existential crisis was not a solace to Hoja. Clearly dissatisfied with the contents of their writing,

he wrote down the title 'Why I am What I Am' on his expensive imported paper (Pamuk, *TWC* 54). But he could not go beyond writing the title. Instead he wrote on the foolishness or inferiority of others. The writing like art that can only allude to loss and not actually stand in for the loss could do nothing to extinguish desire but only acknowledge the loss. Hoja flies into a rage: "all of this writing had got him nowhere; he'd learned nothing new, and he still didn't know why he was what he was" (Pamuk, *TWC* 54).

Failing in the ways already tested, they decide to venture onto alternate paths of enquiry. Hoja decides that it was thought and not their pasts that they should be writing down. "Just as man could view his appearance in a mirror, he could examine his essence within his own thoughts" (Pamuk, *TWC* 55). Excited by the new proposition both of them sit down to write but quickly deviates down the trodden path. The Venetian writes about his childhood again while Hoja reverted to the faults of others. The Venetian offers a writing detour into his own faults that he supposes would take them forward to know his true self. The Venetian writes about his faults, even imagined and exaggerated ones but Hoja refrains. It is only after constant coaxing he eventually writes something negative about himself. But he tears it away without showing it to the Venetian narrator. The whole process proves intellectually draining to Hoja. He is not just inhibited by the confessions of his evils. It is also the overdetermined nature of reality that defied definition. The infinitude and the play rendered a concrete representation impossible. The impossibility of pinning identity starting from a feasible point is problematic and so the exercise involves an attempt to tie down the infinite array of signifiers. Hoja's anxiety echoes the dread of the postmodern openness and ungroundedness.

The second point of contention here transcends the content that is written. It is not entirely the question of the inadequacy of their pasts or their fears to decisively define their identity. The question is also that of the adequacy of writing itself to represent reality.

> Whether we look at writing from the point of view of writers or readers…, one of the defining features of writing seems to be that its effects are never quite controllable. To write or to read is to be in a position of openness to the possibility of unexpected or chance effects. (*Derrida Dictionary* 156)

When a sentence is begun, the way it ends cannot be predicted even by the rules of grammar. What ends up on the page is never a transparent direct apprehension of the real. There is always a gap between writing and reality. The signifier is always at a distance from its referent, which is the thing itself or reality. Philosophical writing especially however claims to lay bare a prior ‘truth’. An impossible proposition as there can never be a kind of “writing that operates at the level of ‘degree zero’ representation” (*Derrida Dictionary* 157). The gap between writing and reality (or presence) thus cannot be closed. In writing, the referent is understood to be absent. The one who writes is absent too. Built on absences, the signifier is not affected by this absence. The prominence of the signifier dominates the referent. The referent cannot be encountered outside its shadow. Literary writing does not have a problem with this as it privileges the signifier. But literal writing that purports to reveal truths (which is the kind of writing required for philosophical writing) is handicapped by the gap that separates the signifier and the referent.

> The lack of presence…functions as a passage or avenue of exchange pointing in two directions at once: outside-in and inside-out. Such is the openness, the

> fluidity, the ungroundedness, the indeterminacy that has always been associated with writing as a system of representation. (*Derrida Dictionary* 158)

Hoja is evidently angered by the absence of a philosophical exposition of the Venetian narrator's self in his writing. He cannot and does not know what could close the gap between writing and referent. What he expected was a signifier that explained away his anguish. That is a tall order given the fact that writing is defined by absences. Writing can only allude to the loss and pacify desire by serving as an analogy to the lack at the heart of the writing subject.

Writing here also embodies the desire to return to a past era of meaning. In the initial years of captivity, the Venetian had hopes of winning freedom and returning home if he cooperated with the Turkish masters' projects. Everything he did was in the hope that he could earn their pleasure and finally return home. His services as a physician was appreciated, and so was his role in the fireworks display. But contrary to expectation, he was sentenced to death for refusing to believe in Islam. When rescued by Hoja, he hopes to be freed once Hoja extracts all his knowledge. But he later realises that even Hoja doesn't know what it was that 'they' must realise before he could be freed. The Venetian's desire to return is now latent as he suspects his hopes to be in vain.

The repressed desire resurfaces in his dreams which play with his anxiety regarding the likeness between Hoja and himself. When the Venetian is asked to write as a means to know the self, the Venetian revisits his past. He writes about the happiness of his childhood and his family. He himself acknowledges: "…(P)erhaps I was prompted by the longing I must have felt for the happiness of that life I'd lost…"

(Pamuk, *TWC* 51). Writing thus becomes a means of returning to his childhood which is imbued with a wealth of meaning.

The Venetian writes of how he had escaped from an encounter with a bear on a hunting expedition in the Alps with his father and his brothers. He wrote of his feelings when their beloved coachman was trampled to death by their horses. Though Hoja rejects these subjects as worthless, the Venetian continues writing about his life at home. Reliving his experiences prior to being a slave offers him pleasure, a means to pacify desire.

Objects of Desire

The relationship between the Venetian narrator and Hoja in *TWC* begins with their collaboration in the fireworks display for the pasha's son's marriage. The Pasha in his desire to arrange a spectacular event throws together the Venetian and Hoja to organize an unparalleled fireworks display. Hoja and the Venetian do not excel each other in the know-how regarding fireworks. Both of them know very little. They however set to work to arrive at the right camphoric mixture. Various experimental mixtures are tested out at the city limits till the right proportion was arrived at. They put up an impressive fireworks display on the wedding and is rewarded by the pasha.

The days the two men spend together is described to be not very relaxed. They are disturbed by their resemblance as discussed in the previous chapters. Hoja scrutinizes the Venetian to unravel the mystery behind their likeness.

> …(T)he more he learned the more curious he became. But he seemed hesitant to take any further steps to penetrate the meaning of this strange knowledge. It was this inconclusiveness that oppressed me, that made the house so

> suffocating! True, I gained some confidence from his hesitation, but it did not reassure me. (Pamuk, *TWC* 15)

Though commissioned by the pasha to experiment and come up with a spectacular show of fireworks, the path of experiment and discovery is a natural predilection for Hoja. Both of their enthusiasm for invention and discovery is an attempt to find a stopgap to fill in the gap of the being. The inconclusiveness that oppresses Hoja is a constant that affects both of them all through the novel. The fireworks like all the later inventions, discoveries and treatises in the novel are proxies that promise satisfaction but only enlist more desire. They do not, however, deliver and lead to a succession of objects of desire.

The fireworks display in the beginning of the novel is paralleled by the building of the ultimate war weapon in the latter part of the novel. Chapter two looked at how the war machine was a means to capture the essence of identity represented by the eponymous White Castle. The weapon, designed to besiege the pure white emblem of meaning, the White Castle, fails unsurprisingly as the essence cannot be captured. The painstaking efforts that go into the construction of the war machine is an embodiment of desire.

Hoja's thirst for knowledge is the prime motivator that drives the narrative. Even in the middle of the fireworks experiments, the two discuss the planet closest to Earth. Hoja had a special interest in astronomy. He broaches an assortment of topics all through his discussions with the Venetian. He disputes Ptolemy's system, tries to calculate the times of prayer and fasting in northern countries and wonders if "there was a place on earth where people could face Mecca whichever way they turned" (Pamuk, *TWC* 25). Hoja creates clocks that did not require setting very often and

cosmographic models. The chief pursuit they engage in during intervals from their duties are writing treatises on diverse topics. They finish long treatises on animals with drawings of violent grasshoppers and flying fish; consider writing one on the currents on the Bosphorus River and write stories to distract the sultan. The objects of desire arrive in successions for the Venetian and Hoja. They move from one to another in the hope for closure. All these do not however stand in for the lack at the heart. These signifying surfaces acknowledge loss. They can never deliver complete satisfaction.

Reconstructing a Life

Snow offers accounts of immigrant experience through the observations of Ka and Blue, the radical Islamist. Ka spends an alienated life in exile in Frankfurt. The loss that subsumes the life of an exile has been discussed in the previous chapter. Ka is alienated by the double bind of an exile as well as that of a wrongly implicated one. All the concerns of exile along with the identity mistakenly imposed on him as a political exile condemn him to a life of misery and loneliness. The ‘neither here, nor there’ anguish of an exile is intensified by the inability to integrate either with the migrant Turkish community in Frankfurt or with the political exiles there.

Ka’s inner contradiction is reflected in succumbing to his need to be accepted as European in Germany while explicitly denying any conscious effort to do so. He constructs an elaborate narrative around a salesman who sold him a coat, even while he cites his lack of interest to learn German. Ka is clearly not sure of himself. He almost seems to be proud of the fact that he has not attempted to learn German. This renders him an island in the host country. Ka remains aloof from the German society and is also alienated from the Turkish immigrant community. The reason being that

he does not share the intense ideology of the other political exiles. (Ka was exiled for an article published in a Turkish daily that was incorrectly attributed to him, when he was in reality not very interested in politics). Pamuk has created in the character of Ka, a typical exile uprooted and lost.

Ka was for most part a recluse in Germany with little or no contact with Germans. In fact for him, the only German he knows by name is Hans Hansen who sold him his charcoal-grey coat. This character becomes the subject of loads of speculation during political intrigues with all the political stakeholders in Kars. Ka discusses imaginative encounters with Hans Hansen who he projects as a journalist to Blue. In the course of the conversation, they talk of how the Turks are looked upon condescendingly in Europe. They talk of the pity that they have for the persecuted exiled Turks and how some Turks live off this pity.

Ka spins an elaborate yarn on the imagined encounters he has with Hans Hansen whom he projects as a journalist for the German newspaper the Frankfurter Rundschau. Ka relates his imagined invitation to the German's home with so much conviction, almost nostalgically. It renders some sort of a longing for the contact that he never had. A meeting that would have offered some respite to his lonely existence in Frankfurt.

The narrative reconstruction of his life in Frankfurt emphasizing his imaginative encounter with Hans Hansen is a desire enlisted from the separation that he has endured. Hans Hansen is simply a salesman who sells him the coat and Ka sees him just briefly, once when buying the coat and when he goes back to get it after shortening. But the contact is more than a random encounter. Ka invests it with much more significance. Hans Hansen had blonde hair and his name itself seemed so very

representative of German names that it etches on Ka's mind. He also remembers that he the image of this man used to crop up when he woke up in the middle of the night. Hans Hansen thus represents for Ka all the Germans whom he failed to befriend in Germany. It is a symbolic structuring of the desiring subjectivity that is lacking.

When Blue wants to issue a statement to the West about the military coup in Kars, he contacts Ka who is ostensibly a journalist with roots in Germany. Ka fools him with his account of intimacy with Hans Hansen. He is extremely graphic in his detailed description of their household. He paints a happy picture of a bright house amidst a garden with an adoring wife and children. He goes on to narrate a happy family gathering over a meal, helping children with homework and all the mundane experiences of everyday life to lend credibility to the bluff. Blue and Kadiffe keep asking for details of his meeting with Hans Hansen and Ka leads them on without any hesitation.

The course of his narration however gives in to his desperation when he is asked if the family ever pitied him for being a destitute Turk in Germany. Ka, however, responds without breaking out of his reverie. He denies having felt so and even forgives them if they did harbour such thoughts. He recognizes that it is not the other but the lack within his own self that is responsible for his misery. He expresses regret of not having been invited to their home again. This image of desolation is a reflection of his alienated existence as an exile in Germany. The anguish over not being able to enter that secure safe haven of Hans Hansen's home is Ka's frustration of being locked out of selfhood in a doubly alienated country.

Ka's pilgrimage to Kars is more than just for a journalistic assignment. Ka, living for twelve years as an alien in Frankfurt, is deeply divided in spirit and the

journey to Kars is inevitable. Though he is considered Western and European in Turkey, he is looked upon as an outsider in Germany. Caught in this contradiction, Ka's life turns out miserable. In Kars, Ka states that he hopes to return to his 'childhood and purity' (Pamuk, *Snow* 18). His return from exile is an attempt to fulfil his desire to return to a state before the Lacanian separation that fragmented experience. A desire to return to the imaginary state of unification with the real that was lost with the insertion into the symbolic order.

Ka's journey to Kars braving the lashing snow that portends an impending blizzard is ominous. He returns to Turkey after his long stint in Frankfurt as an exile for his mother's funeral. The lonely life he leads there impels him to the journey through which he hopes to regain the lost meaning of his life. The deep sense of loss precipitates in a desired object that is symbolic but can never fulfil the desire. Though he states the journey to Kars to be for a journalistic investigation into the suicide of the headscarf girls, he admits that his real intention was the hope to take Ipek as his wife.

Ipek is for Ka, the symbolic representation of the desired object. The missing complement that would complete his subjectivity. Ipek represents here the object of desire and the anticipated sense of fulfilment it promises. It is thus a pointer to the narcissistic dimension of love. Lacan condenses his idea of love into a myth that he presents at a seminar. He likens love for an object as a hand stretching out to a fruit or flower. As soon as he reaches the fruit or flame, another hand extends to touch his own (Leader 45). This image lacks symmetry as the hand finds another hand in place of the object that it reached for. "There is thus a lack of symmetry behind what seems

to be a perfectly symmetrical relationship … the disparity between the object of desire and the demand for love" (Leader 45).

When Ka's friend in Istanbul mentions Ipek in Kars, he readily takes up the assignment to write about the suicide epidemic. In fact, he acknowledges that he returned to Turkey not just to pay his last respects to his dead mother. He wanted to marry a Turkish girl. His life in Frankfurt as described earlier is less than ideal. The fundamental lack at the centre of being enlists desire for objects that promises fulfilment. The desire to take a Turkish wife is to represent the Turkey and the associated life he has lost to exile. The secluded life he leads in Frankfurt could be rendered at least bearable. Ipek as such represented for Ka the complement to his life in Frankfurt. In their initial meetings, he envisions his life with her in Frankfurt. "They were in the same Kaufhof where he had bought the charcoal-gray coat he now wrapped so tightly around him; they were shopping together on the second floor, in the women's shoe section" (Pamuk, *Snow* 27).

Ipek represents for Ka the signifier for his own lacking. This signifier is not identical to the desire but stands in for the subject's desire. Before Ka knows of Ipek's divorce from Muhtar, he dreams of her. His former vision was not of any specific woman. It was only a signifier of lack.

> Ka was not haunted by the image of Ipek, but in his mind was the vision of a woman very much like her. Perhaps Ipek had entered his thoughts from time to time, but it was only when he'd heard of her divorce that he began to think about her; indeed, it was precisely because he had not dreamed of her enough that he was now so keen to stoke his feelings with music and Turgenevist romanticism. (Pamuk, *Snow* 31).

The object of desire is for the subject a way of structuring unconscious desires. Ka appropriates the coordinates of his desire to posit Ipek as the complement for his subjectivity. It is however bound to fail due to the impossibility of ever satisfying desire completely. Every time Ka sees Ipek, he is overwhelmed by her beauty. The fascination holds as an illusion of unity with the Other. But the Other is always lacking and this lack is what Lacan terms *objet a*. The constant search for fulfilment and love sustains as once they are achieved, the lack in these goals surface and moves to other objects of desire.

Ipek was formerly married to Muhtar. Marrying Ipek was not the end of desire for Muhtar. His void surfaced in the form of his inability to gain a reputation as a poet. Ipek was not able to conceive adding to the despair of Muhtar. The child was a means of satisfying desire that was denied. "God wouldn't even give me a child who might do all the things I had not done, who might release me from my misery by becoming the westernized, modern, self-possessed individual I had always dreamed of becoming" (Pamuk, *Snow* 53).

They soon separate leaving Muhtar even more miserable than ever. The separation however rekindles his desire for Ipek and he wants to marry her again. Desire lasts as long as it is lacking. Once close, the object of desire reveals its lack reasserting the impossibility of jouissance. Ipek now represented the symbolic object of desire for both men who have their own reasons for defeat.

> ... the bitter truth that stood between them. The worst of it was that they had both inured themselves to defeat and to the pitiless unfairness of life. Ka feared that both of them longed for Ipek as a symbol of escape from this defeatist state of mind. (Pamuk, *Snow* 54)

In the *TBB*, Ruya is the object of desire for Galip. Even when Ruya had not taken flight, she was aloof and unapproachable to Galip.

Poems

Ka, had a middling reputation as a poet and was known in Kars in this capacity. The small town, at the time of his return, was at the cusp of a historical event. The town was to have its first live telecast of a play to take place at the National Theatre. On visiting Serdar Bey at his press, Ka is shown the next day's paper. Ka is surprised to see it report that he read a poem titled 'Snow' in the news report of the play that takes place at the theatre. Ka assures him that he had no such poem and that he had no plans for a performance. But Serdar Bey reassures him that he had the knack of foretelling the future. True enough, Ka who had not written poems in a while writes poems in Kars and performs at the National Theatre.

Ka, an alienated individual as has been established by the factors mentioned previously, is plagued by a sense of lack that is addressed in his writing of poetry. Ka, as a poet is not in the novel portrayed as the source or creator of poems. He is not credited with agency as in the case of the traditional concept of poet as the creator of meaning. Pamuk narrates a process of writing poetry that negates the conscious intervention of Ka. The poems seem to come to Ka in a sort of divine revelation.

In the middle of a conversation with Turgut Bey and company over dinner at the Snow Palace Hotel, Ka is asked how he wrote poems. Hande, a friend of Kadife inquires if it is by concentration. Concentration would suggest a conscious effort on the part of the poet. Ka seeks clarification as to what she means by concentration and she elaborates that she cannot concentrate that is, visualize herself without a scarf. Hande clearly intends concentration as a process of imagining a certain proposition.

Ka denies having ever consciously constructed a poem. The process for him is something that he takes to be divine inspiration. Pamuk even legitimises the process by mentioning the analogy of an anecdote from Coleridge. The anecdote details his account of how he wrote the fragmentary poem ‘Kubla Khan’. It had come to him in a vision he had when he fell asleep. The sentences of the book he had been reading before falling asleep reorganize themselves into a poem and take on a life of their own.

> Imagine, a magnificent poem that had created itself, without the poet’s having exerted any mental energy! Even more amazing, when Coleridge woke up he could remember this splendid poem word for word. He got out his pen and ink and some paper and carefully began to write it down, one line after the other, as if he were taking dictation. (Pamuk, *Snow* 146)

The process of poetry writing is similar in the case of Ka. He led an isolated life there with practically no contact either with the Germans or with the Immigrant Turkish population. He is shrouded by a silence that pervaded his soul. He speaks to Ipek of “the silence buried inside him, the silence that had kept him from writing a single poem for the past four years” (Pamuk, *Snow* 33). But it is out of the same silence that would emerge a poem. Later the silence engulfs him so much that he is overpowered by it. He needed noise as it was by shutting out noise that he could write poetry. He was shut out from company and from poetry.

In Kars, Ka is spiritually cleansed by the snow and experiences a sense of peace. Here, when he gets hopes for a future with Ipek, poems start coming to him in bouts of inspiration. At the dinner, explains to Hande of his creative process which is

not a process at all, but Ka is more like a medium for the revelation. The company there gets to witness it soon enough.

> … Ka's face turned ashen at this point, but there was nothing in his expression to suggest fear or dizziness; what Serdar Bey recalled seeing in his face was sublime joy. The maid went further and told me that a light had entered the room and bathed all those present with divine radiance. In her eyes, he achieved sainthood. Apparently someone then said, "A poem has arrived," an announcement that caused more fear and amazement than the imaginary gun. (Pamuk, *Snow* 127)

The account of the poem arriving from the company who witnessed the event must have no doubt been coloured by their respective perceptions. Ka's elaborated discourse on the divine origins of his poems seem to have influenced their impression of the episode. What is certain is that the poem seemed to have 'arrived'.

The first poem that Ka 'receives' in Kars is soon after his extended parley with Necip and his friends. After his secret meeting with Blue, Ka meets them on his way back. They equate being Western to be atheist and thus believe that Ka is an atheist. Ka dodges the question but confesses to his awareness of a supreme power that sends him poems. They spend a long period of time discussing their beliefs when Ka senses the call from deep inside him. He hurries back to his hotel where he opens his green notebook and sets about writing down that came to him word by word.

The task did not require any intellectual involvement from his part. It was just like following a dictation. It just came to him. Writing poems is not expression of Ka's genius. Rather than an 'Author', he is a 'scriptor' as posited by Roland Barthes.

Ka admits to his minimal role in the scripting of his poems affording his poems a textual independence that frees it from his intentions. But the text is not totally free as in the case of Barthes' 'death of the author' as the poems are bound by the contexts most often in the poems of Ka.

The first poem Ka writes in Kars is entitled 'Snow'.

> The poem was made up of many of the thoughts that had come to him all at once a short while earlier: the falling snow, cemeteries, the black dog running happily around the station building, an assortment of childhood memories, and the image that had lured him back to the hotel: Ipek. (Pamuk, *Snow* 89)

The poems are a structuring of his unconscious desire. They are an attempt to mitigate the sense of lack experienced by Ka. "(L)iterary texts hold the possibility of capturing at least for a moment our desire to return to the imaginary order and regain that sense of pure joy when we were once whole and united with our mothers" (Bressler 155). The poems are an attempt for Ka to return to the imaginary realm of unification with the mother, a state of purity.

In the train of reverie that culminates in the revelation of the poem, the image of his mother looms large. He looks at the snow swirling down and is reminded of events from his childhood, his father's smell after shaving, his mother making breakfast and she giving him a pink syrup for his cough. The presence of his mother is an instigator to his poems that are signifiers that stand in for the loss endured by the division of subjectivity.

Death Drive

The novel *Snow* is replete with characters that represent scions across the various spectrum of the Turkish population. The headscarf girls form a section that emerge as the initiating point for Ka's return to Kars after twenty years. The conflict between the secularist nationalists and the Islamists had problematized the practice of faith for the devout Muslims. The espousal of the headscarf was seen as a political symbol rather than the practice of private religiosity. Serdar Bey narrates how the political parties were invoking tribal pride to segregate the people for political gains. The communists and the oppositional Prosperity Party, that claim to be the party of God divide the people into antagonistic identities.

> The price of public conflict between secularist nationalists and Islamists is precisely the loss of any such privatized religiosity in which each individual may decide on her answerability to God. The 'snow' of *Snow* engulfs Necip, the Islamist, the headscarf girls, and Ra himself, who form a collective of dispersed private (or "true") practitioners with no choice but to die. (Ertürk 639)

When he is assigned the duty of investigating the suicide epidemic that had gripped the border town of Kars, he evaluates the situation from the opinion of his contacts there. Serdar Bey, the publisher of the *Border City Gazette* takes him around the city to speak to the family of the girls who committed suicide. The stories that he hears from the families haunt him forever. The abrupt manner in which they killed themselves in the midst of their daily routine, without raising any suspicion was frightening to Ka.

The first girl for example was engaged to an elderly tea-house owner. She had her dinner with her family and had stepped into the garden to get dessert when she climbed into her parents' bedroom through an open window and shot herself there. Another sixteen year-old had been rebuked by her father for a scuffle with her siblings for the remote control of the television. A teen mother of a six month old baby committed suicide unable to endure the beatings of her unemployed husband. One of the girls Teslime was a covered girl and had taken to wearing it as part of religion after her mother. But the restrictions that banned covered girls from educational institutions got her expelled from class regularly. Despite the support from her school friends and from home, she commits suicide abruptly after finishing her prayers. This is all the more unexpected as suicide is considered blasphemy in Islam.

Teslime and Hande are both friends of Kadife, Ipek's sister. Kadife and Hande later discuss Teslime's suicide at a dinner at the Snow Palace Hotel. Teslime was in her third year in school on the verge of graduating. She was stressed out by the pressure from school and from home to remove her scarf. The pressure from the authorities got even worse when her father's grocery store was threatened to be shut down. Her friends urged her to remain strong in the face of the threats and proposed suicide to be better than baring her head. Hande was the most vociferous one. Teslime was such a devout believer that she never dreamed that she would take it seriously and commit suicide.

The sundry reasons for which the girls commit suicide suggest that there is no certain cause to the desire for death. It seemed that the spiritual, religious or otherwise longed for death. Hande presumes that a lot of girls consider suicide as a

means to control their bodies. She probably assumes that it is a way of getting back to those who violated them. More importantly she suggests that "a suicide wish is a wish for innocence and purity." (Pamuk, *Snow* 126).

It is the constant failure of desire to satisfy that propels one from signifier to signifier. Disappointed by insatiable desires, one longs for 'something more that would satisfy and fulfil us beyond the meagre pleasure we experience' (Homer 90). This something is Lacan's concept of jouissance, a sort of pain in pleasure. "Jouissance expresses that paradoxical situation where patients appear to enjoy their own illness or symptom" (Homer 89). Compulsive repetition of painful experiences was a contradiction to Freud's pleasure principle and he termed this the 'death drive'. Lacan however argued that "… we are not driven *towards* death but *by* death. It is loss that drives life through desire but … human beings settle for any experience, however painful, rather than fall out of the familiarity of the symbolic into the trauma and void of the real" (Homer 89).

While desire constantly shifts from one object to another, jouissance is more consistent and thus opposed to desire. "…(T)he symbolic is governed by the death drive. Death is the beyond of pleasure, the inaccessible, the forbidden – the ultimate limit that cannot be overcome; and this ultimate limit is also related to jouissance" (Homer 90).

Desire for Recognition

The novel *Snow* offers a political profile of Turkey with representation from the secular nationalists, the Islamists (radical and otherwise), the reactionary Kurds, the leftists and all the people in between. Kars, the remote town and its inhabitants offer a microcosm of the Turkish situation. A military coup upturns the upcoming

election in Kars that is expected to be won by the Islamist Welfare Party. Blue, the radical Islamist is also in Kars. The novel becomes a stage for the characters to portray themselves of the class types that they typify. All of them but exhibit a desire for recognition.

Muhtar, the candidate for the Party of God which is slated to win the elections is found to be a depressed man. He describes his struggles to Ka, his classmate. Muhtar was an appliance dealer and an unsuccessful poet. He was married to the beautiful Ipek. But he did not have a contented life as they lacked a child. Muhtar finds himself in the company of the Kurdish sheikh Saadettin Efendi. The conversion to devout religion offers him satisfaction for some time. But he again finds himself entangled in the endless spiral of desire. He writes poems that he assumes to be flawless. The poems are however not accepted for publication in the literary magazine, *Achilles Ink,* embittering Muhtar further.

Blue summons Ka to issue a statement to the 'West' soon after the coup. Kadife smuggles him into Blue's secret quarters where he wants to speak about the coup. Ka had assumed the identity of a reporter for the Western press and so seemed an appropriate medium through whom to reach out to the West. Blue dictates an exaggerated report of the casualties of the coup and explains why the coup was designed to prevent the Islamists from winning the elections and coming to power democratically. He further explains that it is not poverty that brings them closer to God but a curiosity to learn the meaning of life on earth and the life after death.

Blue's eagerness to explain himself and his people to the West exhibits his desire for universality. He supposes democracy to be a common ground for them to unite. He wonders why their God-consciousness should be a reason to abandon them

to the vagaries of the so-called secularists who claim to be the messiahs of democracy. Is it really about democracy, freedom and human rights or just a call to imitate the West? Blue wants to break down the false binary of the East-West divide to unveil the inherent contradiction in such a construction.

Blue in issuing the statement is conscious of the image he portrays of himself. He is trying to clarify the stance of his nation as not opposed to all that the West stands for. He tries to deconstruct the binary and reveal the universality of humanity. In issuing the statement he caters to this collective need as well as his individual desire for recognition. He succumbs to this desire when he says that he would like to be referred to as ‘the most prominent Islamist in Turkey, and perhaps the entire Middle East’ (Pamuk, *Snow* 233).

When Ka expresses the doubt of being able to publish the piece as it only represents one voice from Kars, Blue agrees to include other signatories in the statement from a cross section of Kars. They organise a party of representatives from the various stakeholders to issue a joint announcement to an international audience. The meeting takes place at the seedy Hotel Asia, catering to dubious clientele that included petty smugglers and prostitutes form Georgia and Ukraine. But the disillusioned Turgut Bey takes it to be a cosmopolitan place of historical significance.

Room 307, where the meeting was scheduled was full of representatives with their own concerns to voice. The individuals there represented a cross section of the Turkish society. There were youth from the religious school, Kurdish nationalists, old-style socialists and a granny whose son was missing among the others. All of them are self-conscious about the image they will be portraying to the international audience.

The title of the declaration was ‘An announcement to the People of Europe about the Events in Kars’ (Pamuk, *Snow* 277). Blue is opposed to the title as it speaks to Europe alone thereby privileging the West. Turgut Bey, the Westward-looking bourgeois that he is believes that it is Europe that they should be addressing as their future is Europe. This emphasizes the desire that the secularist nationalists nurture of assimilating into the cultural discourse of Europe. The violent proscription of religious symbols that are an integral part of Turkish culture to the flattening out of an exclusive Western discourse of modernity is revolting to Blue and the others. Addressing all of ‘humanity’ with their announcement seemed too ambitious, but the suggestion of replacing ‘Europe’ with the ‘West’ was inconsequential and the word ‘humanity’ was adopted.

The content of the joint statement prove to be the next point of contention. The statement declared that the coup had been staged to prevent the certain victory of Islamist and Kurdish candidates in the upcoming elections. Turgut Bey alone objects as he supposes such a prediction to be premature. He surmises that the coup was theatrical and would last only as long as the roads to Kars remain blocked. Turgut Bey obviously doesn’t make much of the situation. When he is snubbed by the others for being ambivalent, he challenges them to tell him what they would say to the West if they were given two lines of space in a big German paper. One Kurdish boy from the lycee accepts. “We’re not stupid! We’re just poor! And we have a right to insist on this distinction” (Pamuk, *Snow* 282). There is complete pandemonium as all the listeners pitch in with their own views and clarifications. The passionate pronouncement is the necessary concomitant of having lived with a sense of being déclassé.

He declares that the greatest error of mankind is to confuse poverty with stupidity. The compassionate leaders in history have cautioned against this shaming distinction. And there may be other Westerners who would not assume that his poverty is a direct result of his foolishness.

> …(B)ut when an entire nation is poor, the rest of the world assumes at once that all the people of that nation must be brainless, lazy, dirty, clumsy fools. Instead of pity, the people provoke laughter. It's all a joke: their culture, their customs, their practices. As time goes by, some of the rest of the world begins to feel ashamed for having thought this way, and when they look around and see immigrants from that poor country mopping their floors and doing all the other lowest-paying jobs, naturally they worry about what might happen if these workers one day rose up against them. So, to keep things sweet, they start taking an interest in the immigrants' culture, and sometimes even pretend they think of them as equals. (Pamuk, *Snow* 283)

The Kurdish youth has clearly given the topic a thorough examination and admits that he could never go to Germany because he would inevitably mistrust any good person for merely being a Westerner. His prejudice would humiliate him to even try to prove themselves similar in thoughts. The extended discourse on national shame unveil the universal desire for recognition. The strenuous effort to convince the West is symptomatic of this desire.

"The three youths from the Kurdish association … threatened to withdraw their signatures from the joint declaration unless the *Frankfurter Rundschau* published it, thus restoring Kurdish culture and literature to its proper place in world history" (Pamuk, *Snow* 276). The joint declaration was an explicit invitation to the

West to take notice of the indigenous cultures and accord it the deserving respect as part of world history. Nergis Erturk in "Those Outside the Scene: *Snow* in the World Republic of Letters" posits that "The people of Kars, a "forgotten" city, are invested with an unfulfilled desire for universality, or world historical agency, produced at the intersection of constraining forces of mass mediation, uneven "glocal" development, and political repression in state violence" (640). And for getting Europe to take notice, it is ironic that they have to legitimize their selves as types or representatives of various factions to earn recognition as in the case where they need to unite in the joint declaration.

Sunay Zaim, the theatre actor at the helm of affairs in Kars when he successfully pulls off the coup is the character that takes his desire to culmination with the final play where he is killed on stage. An alumnus of military school, Sunay's political ambitions are born when he is first chosen to play the revolutionary leader Ataturk in a biopic. The role gets to his head so much that the distinction between theatre and history begin to blur for him. He dresses like Ataturk and starts airing his political views in the guise of that of Ataturk. The opportunity however disintegrates when he inadvertently draws the ire of the religious public. A slighted Sunay constitutes a theatre troupe that tours the towns of Anatolia staging their 'Brechtian Bakhtinian' plays (Pamuk, *Snow* 141). Sunay and his wife Funda Eser take the burden of enlightening the masses upon themselves through their plays, albeit with low comedy included.

The road block owing to the blizzard presents Sunay with the opportunity to realize his political dreams. The recognition that was denied to him as Ataturk is regained in the political agency usurped by means of the theatre coup. Sunay takes

the help of his former mate from military school, Colonel Osman Nuri Çolak to stage the coup where he emerges as the head of the operations. The desire for recognition propels him to achieve this through the intersection of life and art in the theatre coup when his political ambition is thwarted. The play "My Fatherland or My Head Scarf" depicted a woman removing her veil and burning it as a symbolic gesture of her freedom from the religious forces. She is rescued by 'Republican soldiers' who turn to the audience with their loaded guns. The confluence of life and art begins the coup in Kars. The snowbound city of Kars is under the control of Sunay and his forces till the snow recedes by the time when he stages his next play 'Tragedy in Kars'. In this performance, he gets Kadife to play a role of removing her scarf and committing suicide after that. But it is Sunay who is shot onstage. He hands Kadife a gun and asks her to shoot him when he is utterly defeated. The gun was loaded and he is killed on stage. The act was no doubt planned as Sunay himself sends out a report of him being shot onstage to the *Border City Gazette.*

Sunay had always dreamed of using his art to 'intervene in the flow of history' (Pamuk, *Snow* 189). Losing out on his role as Ataturk was disheartening for Sunay and the theatrical coup in Kars was a moment of redemption. Both the plays he stages in Kars are the merger of his two profound interests, art and politics. The announcer for the second play proclaimed

> …(T)here would come an end to the tragedy that had visited social and spiritual paralysis upon the nation, and that the people of Kars would be delivered at last from the religious prejudices that had too long excluded them from modern life and prevented women from enjoying equality with men.

> Once again, Life and Art were to merge in a bewitching historical tale of unparalleled beauty. (Pamuk, *Snow* 365)

It is at this deadly merger of life and art that Sunay orchestrates his own death. His death is the point when his onstage and offstage life coincide. He becomes the republican hero he plays onstage in life. His desire to control his life achieves fruition with his death; “the desire to impose a final meaning upon it and freeze into a myth” (Irzik 194).

Alaaddin’s Shop

Alaaddin’s store is a ubiquitous presence in *TBB.* It plays a major role in the lives of all the characters in the novel. In the first chapter itself, Galip mentions it when he speaks of the people he might find in his wife’s garden of memories. He wonders if he might meet up there with someone from a foreign magazine bought at Alaaddin’s store. The pistachios Ruya munched on came from Alaaddin’s and so did food for Vasif’s fish. The fish food came all the way from Europe and it was available only to steady customers.

Alaaddin’s store was close to Galip and his family’s apartment building in Nisantasi and the store and its owner were a constant part of their lives. Alaaddin’s store housed a multitude of articles evoking the image of the treasure trove in the mythical Alaaddin’s cave. It was jam packed with objects that symbolized the fulfilment of desire for a number of people. The sick children of Nisantasi awaited the return of their mothers with a toy, a book or an adventure comic from Alaaddin’s. The children in schools yearned for the moment they would be devouring the chocolates and pulling out pictures of popular soccer or film stars or some wrestler

from the magazines bought at Aladdin's. The girls who bought acetone for removing nail polish from the store would later in life recall the image of the shimmering store "like a fairy tale from a distant land" (Pamuk, *TBB* 41). The store and its contents represented for them the missing *objet petit a* that would lend meaning to their insipid lives.

The store, an embodiment of desire, however predictably did not always deliver for those who did get their knick-knacks from there. The brown shoe polish bought at the shop turned out to be black inside. The domestically made chocolate from the shop contrary to satisfying had resulted in a full body rash. A woman complained of the stocking bought there. The domestically manufactured battery ran out before the radio finished playing the first song. The needle of the compass always pointed to the Tesvikiye police station instead of pointing north. Alaaddin could not help with the girl's address when the painter's apprentice found a love letter in the pack of Bafras he bought there.

Alaaddin was looked upon as a promise to desire, but he has helpless. He further refused to accept the blame for the failure of the objects to deliver satisfaction. Desire was bound to disappoint as the Other is lacking. Desire is the manifestation of the something that is lacking in the subject and the Other (Homer 72). The demand of an infant for "love goes beyond the object that satisfy its needs. For Lacan it is this irreducible 'beyond' of the demand that constitutes desire" (Homer 73). As such there is always something unfathomable for the subject in desire of the Other.

It is this Lacanian 'separation' that is encountered in Alaaddin's inability to provide answers or solutions to the problems or desires of his customers. The

customers' and Alaaddin's lack symbolized the two lacks in the subject and in the Other. Alaaddin was a promise to satisfy the demand for love of the subject. His glistening treasure trove was futile. The surreal aura around Alaaddin "tugged at the boundaries of the known world and defied everyday logic" (Pamuk, *TBB* 42).

This very mystery fed the interest in him. His customers approached him with all sorts of outlandish demands. He delivered toy ballerinas that twirled when a magnetic mirror was brought near them, tricolored shoelaces, small plastic statues of Ataturk with blue light bulbs for eyes, pencil sharpeners shaped like Dutch windmills, pine-flavoured gum with pictures of birds numbering from one to a hundred, pink backgammon dice, Tarzan and Barbarossa decals and a variety of metal ware. He did not turn down the quirky demands like those for ink that smelled like rose water or singing rings. He assumed that the fact that they were being inquired of validated their existence and it sent him off on a trail of all the shops in the city until he tracked the mystery object. He struggled to cover for his lack. What he realised was that the people who came into his shop with their various odd demands were surprisingly united in their desire. In that respect, they were a homogenous crowd.

> If you stood in this shop and looked out at the people passing by, you'd never guess that they were inclined this way or that way, but once you knew them as customers, you came to see they really were a crowd, a crowd driven by desires he could not begin to fathom. (Pamuk, *TBB* 45)

The ineptitude of Alaaddin to deliver all demands even if rare reveal his lack endorsing the image of the lacking Other. He was lacking just like the crowd that was united in its unfathomable desire. Alaaddin himself was frightened by the

incomprehensible and strange demands of the people. Unconscious desire is "the wordless language that bound Alaaddin and his customers together" (Pamuk, *TBB* 46). The mystery was not amiss on him as he wondered "if an unknown power from another planet was trying to send him a message" (Pamuk, *TBB* 46).

Desire to Tell

Earlier sections have explored how writing is means of exploring the self for the Venetian and Hoja who try explicitly to structure their experience by writing about the trajectory of their lives. In Snow, the poems just reveal themselves to Ka as involuntary acts of structuring. Celal, in *BB*, writes his columns that serve as a structure or framework that organizes his experience and invests it with coherence and meaning. It is not just the columns that attempt to structure experience, all the novels utilise stories to make sense of their experiences.

The first column of Celal that forms the second chapter of *TBB* is titled "When the Bosphorus Dries Up" reflecting Celal's mention of his garden of memory drying up. Unconscious desire is manifested through some form of representation like a dream, a slip of the tongue or a text. Here the column describes the pitch-black bog that will replace the shining waters of the Bosphorus. The swamp full of leftovers from the lives of the city's inhabitants resurface as ghosts terrifying them. Celal's imagery is far from happy in his description of the residue at the bottom of the Bosphorus. The sunken submarines, the dilapidated oil tankers, turbot and swordfish skeletons, the long-lost skeletons of orthodox priests, rusting anchors, the shattered bulbs of an over-turned chandelier, moss-covered cuckoo clocks and mussel-encrusted pianos all evoke the desperation of Celal's failing memory.

Celal describes a black Cadillac he will find at the bottom of the Bosphorus. It belonged to a Beyoglu bandit who had sped off the bridge into the waters along with his mistress. Though divers had failed in locating the Cadillac under the water, Celal was fairly sure of its whereabouts. Just like he says that the green ball-point pen that Galip and Ruya dropped into the Bosphorus is not lost, if they know which part of the Bosphorus they dropped it into. Celal imagines plunging into the darkness and making his way past the rotting corpses at the bottom to the Cadillac. He would approach the Cadillac almost seeking permission from the fearful skeletons guarding it. The car would be caked with mussels and sea-urchins and the windows covered with moss. He then describes how he would take out his green ball-point pen from his pocket "to scrape the pistachio-coloured moss off the glass" (Pamuk, *TBB* 20).

Celal's memories from hearsay and personal incidents mingle in a recreation in his columns.

> …(I)t was one of Celal's trademarks to mix everyday objects dating back centuries with those from his own past; the muddy slopes of his future Bosphorus were littered with Byzantine coins and modern-day bottle caps, both bearing the name of Olympos. Unless…his memory was beginning to fail him. "When the garden of memory begins to dry up," Celal had said, "a man cannot but dote on its lingering rosebuds, its last remaining trees. To keep them from withering away, I water them from morning until night, and I caress them too: I remember, I remember so as not to forget!" (Pamuk, *TBB* 21)

His columns were the manifestations of unconscious. The repository of all his experiences conscious or otherwise. The loss of his memory would render him locked out of his being. That would spell the end of his writing career.

The column ends with a call to his distant love to come to him as soon as possible at this time of disaster. His memory was fogging up and he would soon be ensconced in forgetfulness. He beckons his love to embrace him as they shut out the outer world and await the hour of their death (Pamuk, *TBB* 20). Celal has often been said to send cryptic messages to his readers through his columns. Galip too hopes to find clues to Ruya's whereabouts in Celal's columns. It is clear in retrospection that this unambiguous call to his love in the column is a veritable clue that Galip misses out on because Ruya disappears on the same day.

The column on Alaaddin's store was obvious as the store is the centre of their shared childhood. The store figures in almost all of their conversations when Galip goes to dinner at Aunt Hales soon after Ruya takes flight. The mystical charm of Alaaddin's store and its contents are as alluring as its curious keeper. This column is confessedly a memoir that recounts his vivid memories from childhood to salvage it from slipping into the depths of oblivion in the event of his failing memory. Alaaddin's store was an integral part of the life all the people in the locality. On the night Ruya left him, Galip recounts the image of light falling on the pavement in front of Alaaddin's shop on a snowy evening (Pamuk, *TBB* 52). It was a reflection of the light inside the shop that Galip felt was similar to the shade of Ruya's complexion. Eventually Celal and Ruya ends up getting killed there. Celal outside the store while Ruya dying quietly inside, lying among the store's treasure trove. It is redolent of the store's significance in their lives that is enacted in Celal immortalising

it in his column. The column on Bedii Usta's mannequins too serve to ground his thoughts regarding the metamorphosis his people was undergoing. He records the observations of Bedii Usta and his son on how the people were imbibing foreign gestures and losing authenticity. The column is a way of affirming the findings of the father-son duo and realising its significance in understanding the meaning of the world.

The column Celal writes on the three elderly columnists he chances upon at a table in a restaurant is an adapted transcription of the advice they shower on him. The reproduced conversation is Celal's way of examining his own vocation as a columnist. In them he saw his future unfold. In their studied arrogance, he saw his own slighting of younger journalists years later. One of the columnist asked if the fourteenth century Sufi, "Rumi the great mystic poet (had) included the woman who died while making love to a donkey in the fifth book of his *Mathnawi* for the story or the lesson that could be drawn from it?" (Pamuk, *TBB* 86). When Celal could join in the conversation, he says that it is for the story alone, like all other stories though Rumi has veiled it in a lesson. Celal admits that he writes solely for entertainment. The elderly gentlemen however take it upon themselves to educate Celal as to writing columns. They say that writing purely for entertainment is like drifting in the open sea without a compass. "The story is the compass" Adli, the first columnist says (Pamuk, *TBB* 87). This reifies the desire to articulate, confess or narrate the complex experiences in life to confer upon it a coherence. They also imbibe a sense of history while warning him immediately that he would never be able to write it down. This again emphasizes the gap that is bound to be effected as "the act of mimesis which enables us to pass from life to life-story introduces a 'gap' (however minimal) between living and recounting" (Kearney 132).

Pamuk's characters constantly engage in metaphysical conjecturing and the characters in *TBB* are no different. Celal's columns were manifestations of desire, but they also become straightforward exploration of the nature of desire. In the column "The Eye", Celal acknowledges his lack even after his contentment of writing a particularly imaginative piece for his column. He realises that the lack can only be temporarily addressed by objects of desire as they will foreseeably fail to deliver.

> As always, I felt myself lacking, though I was pleased with my writing and the stories I'd invented. If I celebrated my small victory with a long walk, if I thought of nothing else form start to finish, I would, I hope, escape the melancholy that pulsed through my veins like an incurable disease, if only for a few short hours. (Pamuk, *TBB* 113)

Repeating Galip's awareness of an eye watching him, Celal in his column recounts the metaphysical experience he has on his late-night walk down the street when he senses an "all-knowing, all-seeing eye" gazing down at him. In a dark street lined with wooden houses, there was a mosque that was enclosed by a wall. The wall however extended into the dark seemingly without end. It was herein the darkness into which the wall and the street extended that he sensed the presence of the eye.

He was well aware that this metaphysical experiment he embarked on had its genesis in the emptiness he felt inside himself. Leaning against the mosque wall, he feels that the eye know the emptiness inside him. It dawns on him that the eye was his own creation as he was its. The thought spiralled out to a whole new world of meaning. He constructed a logic for the existence of the eye as a manifestation of desire. He created the eye to watch him. He felt he existed only "under the eye's

constant surveillance" (Pamuk, *TBB* 115). Soon he forgot that it was he who created the eye and started thanking the eye for allowing him to exist.

> I longed to obey its every order! If I did, another and more beautiful existence awaited me, but this was difficult to achieve; the difficulty of the enterprise did not (like so much in life) stem form pain; it had more to do with achieving calm, accepting that which we have come to see as natural. So the thought world into which I fell while leaning on the mosque wall was nothing like a nightmare; it was a happy realm woven from memory, conjured from images…(Pamuk, *TBB* 115)

The description so far cannot but have invoked the parallel to organized religion. And it is no doubt the comparison that Pamuk intended as is proven by the constant mention of the mosque where he glimpses the presence of the eye. The mosque is mentioned various times in close proximity in the chapter that describes the genesis of the eye. The eye is first glimpsed in the darkness into which the mosque wall extends to meet the street. He realises that the eye knows the emptiness inside him while "leaning against the mosque wall" (Pamuk, *TBB* 115). The momentary respite from emptiness he feels on the hopes of achieving a more beautiful existence is leaning against the mosque wall again. He feels that he is "at the centre of this garden of bliss" while introspecting all the while leaning against the mosque wall" (Pamuk, *TBB* 116).

The creation of the eye is a reflection of the construction of religion to address the emptiness in the heart of being. The eye or the person that Celal situated at the centre of the illusory universe he created was not his double. It was more like they were one and the same. He tried to model himself on the image of that person. He

was delighted that he had finally arrived when he felt that he looked like the person he wanted to be. This echoes the Christian belief that human beings were created in the image of God referred to as 'imago Dei' and to which they should strive to conform. Similarly he became His equal and he was at one with Him. "The eye was the man I wished to be" (Pamuk, *TBB* 117).

He was enchanted by the geometric clarity of the landscape that the eye had rendered possible before him. But the promising metaphysical landscape soon disintegrates to reveal itself as a mere manifestation of desire, empty. 'He' is a crowded collage of all the people, fictional and real from his past. So is the landscape. The person leaning on the mosque wall longed to be Him contriving to forget that it is he who created Him. It is reassuring initially but he does remember at least glancingly the fact that he created Him sending the house of cards falling apart. The trope most certainly alludes to the self-doubt that plagues the most ardent of believers. This fleeting moment of memory that points to him creating the eye is the point of rupture. The moment when the geometrical clarity deconstructs to reveal the emptiness inside. This vicious chain loops continuously around the empty core. "If the man makes his move and manages to reach Him, then the eye would be in a difficult position—or, precisely speaking, a vacuum….Et cetera, et cetera" (Pamuk, *TBB* 119).

Whatever respite he found in the fold of religion from the gnawing emptiness could not but crumble like the various centres that have been substituted repeatedly attempting to affirm meaning to experience. The metaphysical experiment with the eye suffered a similar fate. Celal describes his walk back home along the wall of the mosque, passing a cemetery to his own house and his bed. He was back where he

began. He, however, continues the thought in later columns where he professes that "We are all waiting for Him" and "I must be myself". The latter column also explains the trope of doubleness as a system of meaning that he uses much like Orhan Pamuk himself to point to a secret symmetry.

As mentioned earlier story-telling is resorted to repeatedly in all of Pamuk's novels to impose coherence on the chaos of experience. The careful patterns of emplotment in stories lend a sense structure to lived experience. The patrons of the nightclub in *TBB* tell stories to the group present. Galip enters to hear a beautiful woman telling a story about a woman trying to make a man accept a sign she read on the face of a coin salvaged from the sea floor by a diver. Galip immediately assumes that the woman in the story is the woman telling the story itself. The man and the woman get married but with his refusal to see the sign that has changed her life, she is forced to live her life alone in a tower. From this, he gathers that she had left her husband. Galip suspects he would have liked the story any better if he had heard it from the start, but the way he interprets the incidents to connect with the narrator's personal life endorse his belief in the relationship between narrative and life.

A writer at the club narrates the story of a writer after warning his listeners to not confuse the protagonist with the narrator. He narrates the story of a writer who was so obsessively tied to his desk that he loses all social skills. He doesn't hate people but just loves his work more. He gets married to a beautiful woman, but his routine doesn't change. When he came to bed close to the prayer dawn call, he would imagine what his silent wife was dreaming. Their reveries spilled into each other and they were breathing in harmony. The wife one day leaves him without giving much of a reason. The story obviously parallels the plot of the novel *BB*. The writer's wife

leaves him in much the same way as Ruya left Galip. The story that been cleverly woven within the story enriches the narrative infusing new meaning into the layers. The technique of mis-en-abyme is used often in the novels of Pamuk.

The photographer's story concerned a beautiful young widow who commissioned him to bring her the copies of all the photos he took at the night club. He thought she must be looking for someone in particular in the photos. But every day she asked for photos in different poses or enlargements of someone but never of the same man. It seemed that the woman was trying to read their faces. She found the despair in their faces frustrating. She had hoped to see some happy meaning in the faces at the nightclub. She wondered if this was the only offering at a nightclub, how empty their faces would be at their dreary desks at work. After eleven years of reading faces, she finally finds a face with meaning inscribed with the newly introduced Latin alphabet. The meaning she found was love. This story anticipates Galips search for meaning in the faces he observes on the bridge in search for meaning.

The stories, but remain empty promises affording only a semblance of meaning because it soon disintegrates leading to a search for new stories to structure experience. The endless chain of signifiers bound to face a seeker of knowledge is symbolized in this chain of stories leading to one after the other in the hope of providing meaning. The trope of mis-en-abyme is repeated to drive home the idea of the void. In the chapter "In Which the Story Goes Through the Looking Glass," the stories serve as an allegory to the endless chain of desire. The chapter follows immediately after Galip laments not knowing anything, how all he knew would forever be in the dark. The thing he enjoys about sleep is that he can forget the gap

between the person he is and the person he wants to be. The stories in mis-en-abyme reflect this despair.

When the two cousins had gone out with their mothers for shopping on a holiday, they find themselves between two full-length mirrors in the clothes department. They are stunned by the infinite chain of their reflections that become smaller and smaller until they vanish into infinity. This chain defers meaning into the infinite at the hypothetical end of which the search for meaning may end. The chain of reflections extending into the dark infinity reflects the image of the mosque wall and the street extending into infinity. It was in that darkness that Celal situated the all-seeing, all-knowing eye.

In the magazine that the children later read:

> …we turned to the back page to find a picture of a red-headed girl reading the same magazine we held in our hands: she too was looking the redheaded girl on the back cover, who was looking at a smaller version of the same back cover, on which a smaller redheaded girl was looking at a back cover on which was an even smaller redheaded girl… (Pamuk, *TBB* 368)

The dizzying trope of mis-en-abyme is repeated on the jar of olive paste he saw served on Ruya's family's breakfast table. The jar of Ender Olive Paste had on its label the picture of a happy family having breakfast with a jar of the same olive paste on the table. The jar predictably had a label with a smaller version of the same family with the jar on the table. The cousins could again "trace the chain families to the vanishing point" (Pamuk, *TBB* 368).

This is the starting point of another story where it is the story that is reflected endlessly to the vanishing point. The story narrates the life of two cousins who had an older cousin whom they adored. One day they grabbed a book from him and started to read it. They read in it a love story so beautiful that he realises that he has fallen in love with his cousin at that exact moment when holding the book in both their hands. The story they read is of 'Beauty' and 'Love', a girl and a boy born in the same tribe. They fall in love with each other and the boy in the story too realises that he had fallen in love when they were reading a story of a sultan named King Jubilant and a young beauty named Eternal. These lovers, as expected, had fallen in love when they were reading a third love story and they, while reading a fourth. The mis-en-abyme continues.

Galip recognizes the pattern of the infinite loop only later when he is now utterly lost in his search for meaning: "Each story led another story in an infinite chain, with each door leading to another door that led to another" (Pamuk, *TBB* 370). Here, I would like to go back to some of the stories that the characters in *TBB* narrate that reflect Galip's search for Ruya. In a previous chapter however, Pamuk inserts the reader into the loop of the mis-en-abyme. Here in this story that follows, functioning on the metafictional level, the reader of the novel is also a link as part of a story in the chain of stories. In the chapter "Who Killed Shams of Tabriz?", Rumi's search for his beloved Shams of Tabriz is described. He sets out for Damascus and searches the entire city for some sign. Combing the city for clues to his whereabouts, talking to old friends and acquaintances, "the search itself became more important than the answer he'd come to seek" (Pamuk, *TBB* 260). This is exactly what the present novel *TBB* is about.

The infinite chain of desire is also manifested in Pamuk's ubiquitous use of lists all through his novels. These lists are most often chains of images that promise meaning in one if not the other. When Galip roams the city in search of signs of the city, he looks in all sorts of unlikely places. He stares transfixed at a selection of objects peddled by a junk dealer:

> Two elbow-shaped pipes, assorted records, a pair of black shoes, a broken pair of pliers, a lamp base, ablack phone, two bedsprings, a mother of pearl cigarette holder, a broken wall clock, a stack of White Russian banknotes, a brass faucet, a figurine of a Roman huntress—the goddess Diana?—an empty picture frame, an old radio, a pair of doorknobs, a sugar bowl. (Pamuk, *TBB* 216)

Other than consciously looking for meaning in objects that are painfully listed out, lists symbolizing the infinite chain of desire is a trope that Pamuk resorts to in most of his novels like the chain of stories. In the novel *Snow*, the solemn snow swirling down invokes a chain of memories beginning with the smell his father had after shaving. The list continues till he feels the spoon in his mouth from the sugary pink syrup his mother gave him for cough. This consistent trope of lists tends to freeze the narrative movement in the novels. These horizontal stretches of signifiers or syntagmatic chains freeze the narrative pleasure of enumeration. The list of images trail off to infinity like the chain that stretches into the dark, the darkness that holds meaning, if at all it can be reached.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Orhan Pamuk, in his novels, weaves postmodern allegories that are preoccupied with loss of one kind or the other. The complex narratives woven out of intertextuality enrich the layers to produce dense texts that reward the earnest critic with its endless possibilities. A perusal of most of his novels justify that his novels are primarily concerned with the politics of identity in a country situated on the divide between the East and the West. His novels are often studies that delve into the East-West question at multiple levels. The vicissitudes of radical Westernising reforms engendered confounding ambivalences that are reflected in the novels. The encroachment onto the personal space by the nation to inscribe a national identity top-down often resulted in clashing of cultures, the depiction of which earned Pamuk the Nobel. The successive waves of reforms and their reception by the characters complicate the plot in most of his novels.

At other times, the East- West problematic is explored in the international context with Turkish identity and its cultural baggage set against the European identity put forward as the ideal towards which the modern Turk should aspire. An extended discourse on the question of being a Turk in the international scenario becomes a part of the novel *Snow* where the various factions in the provincial town of Kars debate the definition of a Turk as against the world outside.

In the context of the politically charged criticism that the novels and its writer often receive, the worldly losses in the novels have been traced and demonstrated to be pretexts for abstract and conceptual inquiries into subjectivity and other

concomitant themes irrespective of geographical location. The Ottoman legacy that enrich the narratives thematically and stylistically serve as refreshing contexts to explore universal postmodern concerns.

Post-modern theories untie all moorings of ‘reality’ to set the infinite array of signifiers afloat. The breach between the signifier and the signified signalled the end of any definitive utterance or meaning. The constant sliding of the signified under the signifier effected a gap between the word and the thing invalidating the identity of language with what it names (Lucy, *Literary Theory* 23). Language was exposed to contain a ‘lack’ which is what makes reality plausible.

> Lack and division are essential to the structure of language, the very structure in which absent reality is made to function as if it were present. From this it follows that presence (truth, reality, self-identity) is an effect of a system (language) that is constituted by absence and separation. (Lucy, *Literary Theory* 23)

In the present study, the novels were studied in detail to identify the various tropes of loss employed. The losses were examined as not just the results of tangible losses that plague Turkey as a nation or the losses on personal levels. Instead an attempt has been made to demonstrate that beyond the objects-losses, it is a permanent irremediable lack that is represented by Pamuk in these tropes. The loss of an object in the past may be later on experienced as a lack, but Lacanian lack “does not necessarily involve a loss” (Drąg 23). Drąg cites LaCapra in *Revisiting Loss: Memory, Trauma and Nostalgia in the Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro*: “a lost object is one that may be felt to be lacking…a felt need or a deficiency” of “something that ought to be there but is missing” (23). The specific historic or contextual losses are

overridden by the realisation that it is the indeterminate absence that triggers the tropes of loss manifest in the novels.

The central concern of the novel *TBB* is Galip's wife Ruya whose name means 'dream' in Turkish. This obvious loss is the fallout of a crumbling marriage that Galip had possibly seen coming but had refused to acknowledge the thought. Ruya's relationship with her half-brother Celal is revealed to unfold a classical family drama. Ruya's departure can be explained adequately by her concern for Celal's failing memory, but the previous analysis illustrate how Ruya's name meaning dream anticipates her disappearance. Being a dream, she was bound to dissipate. Dreams are fault lines that are symptomatic of the unconscious which is the ultimate realm of meaning or being of the subject. This is why it is so imperative to Galip that he find Ruya, his dream. Galip wanders around the city of Istanbul in search of clues to Ruya's whereabouts. Anything and everything he sees is a sign for him. The people on the bridge, the plastic bags they carried, the peddler on the street, all seemed to be pregnant with meaning but inaccessible. The hope of eventually reaching a presence is what made life bearable. Thus desire is directed towards the hope of addressing the lack.

Celal's loss of memory is a significant incident in *TBB* because memory is the key to the past. His loss of memory is metonymical of the larger loss of the past in the novels. Being a writer, memory is the source for his columns. The collective memory of the nation is what binds him to his reader and Pamuk even cites from Rumi to emphasize the importance of a writer sharing memory with the readers. Ruya's ex-husband endorses the loss of this collective memory of his people as a nation. He attributes this malady to be the consequence of a Western intrigue to erase

their collective memory. They lament the loss of this essence, but fail to see that the privileged presence accorded to memory like religion or any other centre is bound to disappoint.

The Alphabet reform of 1928 was one of the many abrupt changes ushered in by the Kemalist regime. The Turkish language that was till then written using the Arabo-Persian script adopted the Latin script. The change in the script broke off the thread of their cultural legacy. The future generations could not access their past. The ramifications of the change in script is depicted in the inability to read faces. Pamuk laments the loss of an era when the meanings on faces could be read as clear as day. The letters on faces were in the Arabic script which was obsolete now. The gap let meaning slip out of reach. A remedy to the predicament is to decipher the Latin script in the faces. Perhaps that would situate meaning. But the splicing of the various instances of substituting centres in the novels, be it memory, past, religion or a script is only a provisional stopgap that will soon exhibit its lack.

The abstract loss of *Snow* rings through the whole of the novel in the unrelenting snowfall in various intensities. The military coup that amounts to the loss of democracy represents the grand trope of loss in this novel. The violent theatrical coup is an enactment of the recurrent coups that are a part of Turkish history. The casual reception of the military violence among the bourgeoisie and the loss of the lives and freedom of many of the religious school students is examined. In spite of all the bloodshed, Ka gets to write more poems even on the night of the revolution.

Loss is inscribed on the bodies of the otherwise strong characters in *Snow*- Sunay Zaim and Blue- in the form of disabilities or deformities. Sunay is the most powerful person in Kars at the time. The top military official in town is at his

command. Primarily an actor, Sunay considers himself the ambassador of modern theatre. He tours the country extensively with his theatre troupe for his stated aim of taking art to the masses. Blue, the fundamentalist whose has spawned many a legend is steadfast in his belief and strong in character as opposed to Ka, who vacillates in his stance frequently. Both Sunay and Blue are lame. Their limp like so many other deformities in the novels like the limping dog, the dwarves and the cross-eyed bus-company manager are all instances of bodily inscriptions of the loss which ensued the Westernising process.

The novel *TWC* is itself explored as a product of loss. The elision in historiography is dramatized by the way Faruk Darvinoglu translates the manuscript he finds in the governor's office in Gebze. He places the manuscript on a table in one room and goes into another to write it out in the modern Turkish script. The physical distance between the two is symbolic of the rupture, the loss in historiography. It also serves as an analogy to the abrupt process of alphabet reform, a synecdoche for the larger cultural revolution of the Westernising process.

The symbolic loss in *TBB* of dreams (Ruya) is literal in the case of the Venetian in *TWC* after his long detention in Istanbul. Subsequent to the constant denial of his request to return home to Empoli after each successful project, the Venetian resigns to his life in Istanbul. Gradually he starts losing the ability to return to his past even in his dreams. The loss of his past is representative of the loss of his identity which is in the process of being reappropriated and dialectized by his encounter with Hoja, the Ottoman Turk.

The ultimate loss in *TWC* is demonstrated to be that of the eponymous Doppio Castle which is a symbol of purity. All the endeavours of Hoja in the novel is

directed to be towards attaining the patronage of the sultan so that he will commission the construction of the ultimate war machine, Hoja's dream project. This giant beast of a machine becomes the instrument for the seamless mingling of the identities of Hoja and the Venetian sailor. The capture of the Castle of Doppio would have meant a victory over the question of essence. The entangled identities would be resolved by the siege of the castle in whose name the word Doppio means double. The inability to capture the castle is symbolic of the inability to capture meaning or identity.

The textual strategies employed by Pamuk in the construction of the characters as fluid and in doubles along with the extended ontological discourses and experiments by the characters themselves, posit the loss they experience to be a mere resultant of the tangible historical losses. Therefore, the loss that infects the length and breadth of Pamuk's novels is studied as a representation of the lack that characterizes the Lacanian subject upon emergence in the symbolic realm.

The uncanny resemblance between Hoja and the Venetian in *TWC* is explored beyond the physical. The question of the constituents of identity is confounded by their similarities in spite of their differences. The doubleness in the construction of the characters in *Snow* is a trope to emphasize the construction of identity by the process of identification and othering rather than some essential character emanating from an inner presence. Sunay Zaim and Blue are doubles as demonstrated by their temperaments and loyalty to their convictions.

The ambiguity in the narrative voice in *TWC* is revealed to problematize even the reliability of the events narrated. It becomes difficult to distinguish between Hoja and the Venetian not just for the pasha and the sultan, but to the reader at times as to

who is working on the machine and who is socialising in court. They eventually trade places. But the narrator now imagines if there was such an interchange after all. The fluidity employed in the obvious identities of Hoja and the Venetian as representatives of the East and West is used to further comment on the binary construction. The Derridean rupture is embodied in the fusion of the entities that are supposed to stay on either side of the bar.

Galip assumes Celal's identity in *TBB.* This is explored as the fulfilment of a natural predilection for Galip, the son who lacks. Celal's role as a writer is a representation of the sign of the phallus. Galip appropriates the father figure Celal's profession in compensating his lack. The quest thus turns out to be not just for his wife/dreams, but also ultimately the lacking signifier.

The existential concerns of the lacking subject is explored in detail through the experiments of Hoja and the Venetian where they trace an allegorical history of identity politics. The two look-alikes examine their bodily similarities as the beginning of their inquiry. They however embrace the Cartesian cogito and progress to exploring their minds. Their past or their attitudes that constitute the contents of their minds which in turn is said to be structured like a cupboard prove insufficient to define their self.

Ka's lonely life is the epitome of loss in the novel *Snow*. His life in Turkey was cut short when he was exiled to Germany for a political article wrongly attributed to him. Apart from the loss of his home country, exile is a predominant state of loss. One's political self being one of the main casualty. The neither here, nor there situation creates an irresolute identity inhibiting full social involvement. Ka practically isolated himself in Germany, from Germans and from fellow Turks.

The lack of an essential identity leaves one with no choice but to construct one through identifications. The role of performativity in the process is explored. The charcoal grey coat sets Ka off as a member of the Istanbul bourgeoisie and is often an identity marker. The Venetian in *TWC* too assumes by donning Turkish attire. The final interchange of identities is also effected by exchanging clothes. Galip in *TBB* too slips into Celal's pyjamas as part of his appropriation of Celal's life.

The mannequins in Bedi Usta's underground museum have become obsolete because they refused to assimilate the foreign gestures. The creator rightly observes that the tiny gestures that people perform are the markers of their identities. His close observation of the Turks had informed him of the transformation his people were undergoing. The loss of their gestures had alienated them.

The lacking subject strives for wholeness in a succession of desires as the inaccessible unnameable real eludes the subject eternally.

> The object a is that which would bind together the morsels of our fragmented body, and which would overcome the split in the subject instituted by castration. The object a is thus a 'part-object', the part of us that was lost: 'a comes to fills the gap [boucher la béance] that constitutes the inaugural division of the subject'. (Lewis 187)

This various engagements with desire in the novels to address the lack despite the futility of the exercise is identified and analysed.

The desire for the Other is embodied in *TWC* by the inexplicable oneness that the Venetian feels with Hoja. When Hoja walks by in a victory procession after the plague is contained, the Venetian feels left out not because he wanted to share the

fame, but because he wanted to be by Hoja's side. He felt that he was not separate from Hoja, a desire to unite with Hoja to be himself. Hoja's desire to complete his self is by possessing the contents of the Venetian's mind. The exercises like mirror-gazing and writing all are identified as embodiments of desire. The two of them engage in one scientific project after another. The inadequacy of one to satisfy leads to another thereby the chain.

In *Snow*, Ka is impelled by the desire to return to a previous era of contentment. His return to Turkey and the journey to Kars is a manifestation of his desire to return to his childhood purity. The life of an exile was particularly lonely for Ka. The stories he constructs around the German salesman Hans Hansen who sells him his iconic charcoal grey coat in Frankfurt is symptomatic of his desire. He constructs an image of wholeness by narrating an imaginary family for the man he barely knows. The contented wife and happy children sharing the warmth of a dinner together all spring from his own desire.

Ka is driven by his desire for Ipek in his journey to Kars. In her, he sees a possible completion of his self. But Lacan's formulation of the desire for the object of love is narcissistic. The desire is not for the object itself as it is for addressing the lack in the self. Winning Ipek serves as the illusion of unity for Ka. The illusion persists till she is attained. The case of Muhtar's relationship with Ipek illustrates the inability of love to satisfy. No sooner is the relationship materialised that other desires take over to break the illusion of contentment.

For Ka, writing poems is not an intellectual process. It is an unconscious structuring of desire that stems from his lack. All his experience and his past precipitate in the poems that promise an imaginary unity to the fragmented

experience of the self. Poems are for Ka attempts to reach jouissance, like they are for the suicide girls who see in death the beyond of pleasure. The desire for recognition, which is a fallout of the lack, also surfaces in the various leaders of the multiple factions when they meet to sign the joint declaration to the Westerners in the novel *Snow.* The glistening treasures of Alaadddin's store in *TBB* is also an embodiment of desire.

The desire is by definition irremediable and is shown to move along the chain of constant deferral. The lack is experienced repeatedly and the quest to fill the void begins again. The disquieting lack is felt and inadvertently verbalised occasionally. This is evident in the words of Celal who confesses to experience the joy of satisfaction only briefly after writing a particularly interesting article or story. He says so in no uncertain terms that he feels himself "lacking" (Pamuk, *TBB* 113).

The findings that have been made liberate the writings of Orhan Pamuk from the geographic and historical contexts of inquiry and universalise the experiences of the characters to reflect the general human condition. My study opens up further avenues of inquiry into the construction of the novels. A study of Celal's columns that intersperse the narrative in *TBB* as manifestations of desire will produce new meaning in the relationship between the columns and the narrative of Galips's quest. Pamuk's female characters have been shown to embody desire in the predominantly male Pamukian world. But the mention that has been made of Pamuk's image of God in in his memoir *Istanbul Memories and the City* is female. It is a line of enquiry that may be further developed to understand the gender question in relation to Pamuk.

The arguments above have attempted to prove not just my propositions but also to open up new lines of thoughts and debates that will add to the scholarship on

the understanding of the self. The endemic elusiveness of the self and the resort to identification of one kind or the other that inevitably results in the process of othering is a phenomenon that needs to be understood even outside literature. The thesis thus attempts to prove a humble pointer to the need to override the false binary of the self and the other and unite on the ground of universal human experience for the larger good of humanity.

This study *Loss: An All-Pervasive Trope in Selected Works of Orhan Pamuk* has attempted to show how Pamuk's characters construct narrative monuments that embody pleasure which result from desire rather than represent the past through historiographic metafiction. It is not tangible historic cultural external losses that are the basis of the all-pervasive loss that pervades the oeuvre of Orhan Pamuk. The numerous tropes of loss identified in the novels emphasize this point. The lack plaguing the characters are not the immediate corollary of a turbulent past but the residue of the universal transcendental condition of lack. The nature of this lack is indeterminate and possibly limitless.

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