

BEYOND EAST AND WEST: POLITICAL MELANCHOLY IN THE WORKS OF ORHAN PAMUK

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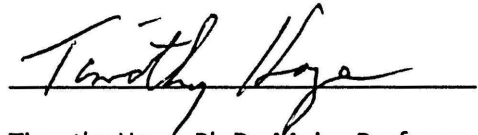
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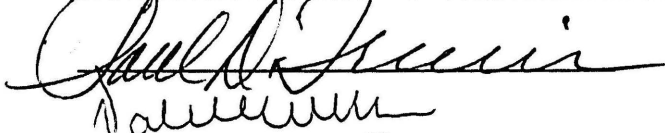

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To the Dean of the Graduate School:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Travis Cooper entitled "Beyond East and West: Political Melancholy in the Works of Orhan Pamuk." I have examined this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts with a major in Government.

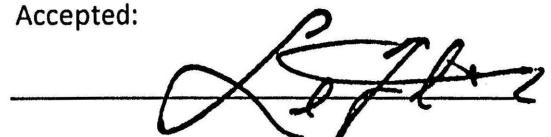

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We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

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ABSTRACT

TRAVIS COOPER

BEYOND EAST AND WEST: POLITICAL MELANCHOLY IN THE WORKS OF ORHAN PAMUK

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This thesis examines Orhan Pamuk's use of melancholy as a political concept. While the Nobel committee argues Pamuk's work is an example of clashing civilizations, this thesis argues Pamuk's novels examine how collective melancholy is the cause of, rather than a symptom of, political conflict. This thesis provides a conceptual analysis of melancholy, reviews the origins and uses of the term in both Western and Islamic literature, and examines how Pamuk reinvented the concept to explain Turkish political culture since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The primary sources include Pamuk's novels, essays, and speeches; medical and philosophical literature on melancholy and Sufi poetry. This thesis will show that Pamuk's reconceptualization of melancholy has political implications globally as well as in Turkey.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“To God Belongs the East and the West”

—(Quran 2:115; Surat al-Baqarah)

According to James Dougherty and Robert Pfaltzgraff, after the cold-war, international-relations theory has moved beyond the assertion that nation-states are the greatest division of political identity and questions the “utility of the state as a delineating concept.”¹ In other words, authority patterns previously associated with the state can arise from other institutions that transcend the state. Cultural, religious, and social institutions that have “little regard for formal state structures and boundaries”² give society values. Thus, modern scholarship on international-relations often looks beyond nation-states as the delineating division of political identity. Samuel Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations* argues civilizations have replaced nation-states as the primary unit of identity.³ Francis Fukuyama argues liberal democracy will become so widely accepted that we will reach the “end of history” and nation-states will become

¹ James Dougherty, and Robert Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*, (New York: Longman, 2001), 617.

² Ibid

³ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

obsolete.⁴ Edward Said, on the other hand, argues for a humanist critique of society that is free of labels.⁵ However, none of these theorists address the role of melancholy in the development of society. While melancholy has a role in every society, this thesis will begin by specifically examining the role of melancholy in the development of the Turkish Republic.

To examine the effect of melancholy on Turkey, this thesis will focus on the works of Orhan Pamuk, the only Turkish Nobel prize winner. According to the Nobel committee, Pamuk “in the quest for the melancholic soul of his native city has discovered new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures;”⁶ however, Pamuk himself referred to such class as idiocy and an illusion. In fact, the most critical concept in Pamuk’s novels is melancholy. Scholars who have studied Pamuk view his work as a reaction to reconciling western and Islamic civilizations and Islamic cultural traditions with secular political traditions. The contention of this thesis is Pamuk’s concept of melancholy is not a reaction to the clash between civilizations or traditions; instead, it is a response to Turkey’s inability to create a unifying political ideal since the founding of the Republic. Since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the Turkish Republic, Turkey has been between political ideals, not owing itself to its Ottoman past

⁴ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (New York: Free Press, 1992).

⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

⁶ Nobel Prize, "The Nobel Prize in Literature 2006." Last modified 2006.
http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2006/.

and not being able to achieve the ideal of westernization and modernity. In other words, the melancholy Pamuk describes comes from being between political and cultural ideals. This thesis defines this as the melancholic moment.

This thesis is organized into seven chapters. The next chapter will introduce the reader to Pamuk and will provide context to understand his role as a political figure. The second will examine melancholy as a Western concept and a Sufi concept. The fourth chapter highlights the political history of the Turkish Republic since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire to provide context for Pamuk's novels. The fifth chapter examines melancholy in *The Black Book* as representative of Turkey's descent from Ottoman ideals. The sixth chapter examines melancholy in the novel *Snow* and representative of Turkey's struggle to create a new political ideal. The final chapter will describe the global implications of melancholy specifically addressing Turkey's bid to join the EU.

CHAPTER II

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON ORHAN PAMUK

Ferit Orhan Pamuk was born in 1952 in Nişantaşı, part of the Şişli district of Istanbul. Nişantaşı, located on the European side of Istanbul, is an upscale neighborhood comprised of mansions that overlook the Bosphorus, nightclubs, luxury shopping, and the “wealthy, educated, secularist ruling class that, with the support of the army, had ruled Turkey since Mustafa Kemal Atatürk founded the Turkish Republic in 1923.”⁷ Pamuk’s paternal grandfather, Mustafa Sevkett Pamuk, was an engineer who made a fortune building railroads for the Republic. He purchased a stone mansion in Nişantaşı in the 1920’s. Pamuk’s father, Gündüz Pamuk lived in this mansion with his wife Seküre, his younger brother Aydın, his sister Gonul and her husband İlhan Akin. In 1951, he moved the family into a five-story apartment building he constructed adjacent to the mansion.

It was in the Pamuk apartments that Orhan’s paternal grandmother, Pakize, taught him how to read and write. According to Pamuk, his grandmother used to read “almost atheistic” poems to him. Pamuk once said, “In my childhood, religion was

⁷ Michael McGaha, *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2008), 18.

something that belonged to the poor and to servants. My grandmother—who was educated to be a teacher—used to mock them.”⁸ Pamuk’s only experience with Islam as a child was when his family’s maid would take him to the mosque, which, according to Pamuk, “was a place where the servants met to gossip, and I was so Westernized I felt naked taking off my shoes.”⁹

The 1950’s was a decade of dramatic change in Turkey economically and politically. In 1950, only two years before Pamuk’s birth, the Turkey held its first multi-party elections. In 1952, Turkey officially joined NATO. Andrew Mango, BBC correspondent to Istanbul and author of several books on Turkey, points out during the decade “the [land] under cultivation increased from 14 million to 23 million hectares, the number of tractors from under 2,000 to 42,000, the amount of fertilizer used from 42,000 to 107,000 tons. The length of metal roads rose from under 2,000 to 7,000 kilometers; 14 dams, 15 power stations and 20 harbors were built.”¹⁰ Private industry also grew at an exponential rate by investing in consumer goods and becoming subcontractors to government organizations.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Andrew Mango, *The Turks Today*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 2004), 47.

Orhan's father, Gunduz, was "an avid reader and book collector, a Francophile who wrote original poems and translated French poetry into Turkish in his spare time."¹¹ However, Gunduz did not succeed in becoming an artist. Instead he, like his father and brother, studied at the Istanbul Technical College and became an engineer. During the 1950's, he and his brother had lost much of the family fortune through poor investments, and Gunduz took a job with IBM in Paris while Orhan and his brother Sevket stayed in Istanbul with their grandmother. In 1961, Gunduz was in charge of IBM's operations in Turkey and moved the family briefly to Ankara. By the time the Pamuk family moved back to Istanbul, their financial situation deteriorated until Gunduz had had to declare bankruptcy and sell the family apartment and move into a less prestigious apartment in Cihangir.¹²

In 1966, Orhan began high school at Robert College "the most prestigious institution of higher education in Turkey."¹³ Despite the Pamuk's financial background, most of the students at Robert College came from wealthier families. Pamuk "carefully hid his passionate interest in art and literature" as well as his family's financial problems so he could fit in the popular crowd of upper class Istanbul children. He would spend his time after school going to the apartment in Cihangir to paint large canvasses of

¹¹ Michael McGaha, *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2008), 18.

¹² Ibid, 20

¹³ Ibid

Istanbul neighborhoods or to visit his classmates to “listen to Bob Dylan and the Beatles while playing poker and monopoly.”¹⁴

Orhan’s original intention was to become a professional painter. He began painting and drawing when he was seven years old as an escape from “the hostility between his parents and anxious conversations among adults in the family about their financial worries.”¹⁵ By the time he was in high school, he was painting large canvasses in the style of Maurice Utrillo.

By 1970, Pamuk had given up on becoming a professional painter and, following his father’s instructions, began college at the Istanbul Technical University. Originally, Gunduz Pamuk wanted his son to follow family tradition and become an engineer. However, given his son’s inclination towards art, he allowed Orhan to enter the architecture department.¹⁶ By 1972, Pamuk became disenchanted by the architecture program claiming the professors “possessed the souls of engineers, had no sense of play, and took no creative pleasure in architecture.”¹⁷ He also became increasingly disillusioned by his fellow classmates most of whom were Marxists activists. At first, Pamuk attended political meetings on campus and “was impressed by the passionate

¹⁴ Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 326.

¹⁵ Michael McGaha, *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2008), 20.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 22

¹⁷ Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 343.

idealism and courage of the student leaders, however, over time he would become bored with reading their political pamphlets on political ideology and strategy and eventually would replace them with the novels of Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust, and Virginia Woolf.”¹⁸

At this time, Pamuk lost interest in painting instead he would cut class and use his time to read novels. In 1973, Pamuk decided to leave the architecture department at Istanbul Technical College and transferred to the journalism department at Istanbul University. The following year, Pamuk would begin work on his first novel *Karanlık ve Işık* (Darkness and Light). He later changed the title to *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* (Cevdet Bey & Sons), named after his maternal grandfather Cevdet Ferit and loosely based on the lives of his paternal grandfather and father. It would take Pamuk four years to complete this 600 page novel. In 1978, Pamuk finished the novel and published it in 1982. In 1979, Pamuk entered his first novel in a contest sponsored by the Turkish newspaper *Milliyet*. The winner would have their novel published. Pamuk tied for first place with Mehmet Eroglu but would have to wait three years for publication.

While waiting for his first novel to be published, Pamuk began working on a second novel. According to Michael McGaha, Professor of Literature at Pomona College, this second novel was to be a political novel about “upper-class or middle-class

¹⁸ Michael McGaha, *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2008), 22.

students who went with their families to summer houses but also played around with guns and Maoist texts and had fanciful ideas about throwing a bomb at the prime minister.”¹⁹ However, the military junta in 1980 made it impossible to publish such a novel; therefore, Pamuk scrapped the work altogether. Instead, he wrote *Sessiz Ev* (The Silent House) in 1980 and published it in 1983. Much like *Cevdet Bey*, Pamuk loosely based *The Silent House* on his own family; only this time the focus is on his maternal family. That same year, Pamuk won the Orhan Kemal Novel Prize for *Cevdet Bey and Sons*.

Pamuk’s growing popularity in Turkey gained the attention of Thilda Kemal, wife of famed Turkish novelist Yasar Kemal, and Munevver Andac, widow of the influential Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet. Kemal and Andac used their influence to persuade the Gallimard publishing house in Paris to commission a French translation of *Silent House*, which would be produced by Andac herself.²⁰

Pamuk completed his third novel, *Beyaz Kale* (The White Castle), within one year, and published it in 1985. With *The White Castle*, Pamuk breaks away from the family novels of *Cevdet Bey* and *The Silent House* and “puts the traditional motif of doppelganger to a highly inventive use, exploring the areas in which East and West,

¹⁹ Ibid, 26

²⁰ Ibid, 28

which appear to be opposite and conflictive in so many ways, actually mirror each other.”²¹

In the fall of 1985, Pamuk’s wife, Aylin, became a Ph.D candidate at Columbia University, and Pamuk received a fellowship at the Iowa Writers Workshop at the University of Iowa. After a semester in Iowa, Pamuk joined his wife in New York where he got a job as adjunct faculty teaching the Turkish language. While at Columbia, Pamuk met Victoria Rowe Holbrook, a postdoctoral fellow in humanities and daughter of the American actor Hal Holbrook, who would translate *The White Castle* into English. In addition to being the first to translate one of Pamuk’s novels into English, Dr. Holbrook helped reintroduce Pamuk to the renowned Sufi writers Farid ud-Din Attar, Jelal ud-Din Rumi, and Sheikh Galip. According to Michael McGaha, his schooling in Turkey exposed Pamuk to the Sufi writers, but at that time “he had found it boring, antiquated, and irrelevant to his own interests and concerns. Furthermore, he had always associated those texts with fanatical Islamic obscurantists and right-wing Turkish politicians.”²² While in New York, Attar’s *Mantiq ut-Tair* (Conference of the Birds), Rumi’s *Mathnawi* (Couplets) and Galip’s *Husn u Ask* (Beauty and Love) inspired Pamuk to write his fourth, and arguably most complex, novel *Kara Kitap* (The Black Book). In 1990, Pamuk published *The Black Book* along side the English translation of *The White Castle*.

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid, 30

In 1992, while working on the novel *Benim Adim Kirmizi* (My Name is Red), Pamuk attended the Adelaide Writers' Festival in Australia. At this time, Pamuk began writing *Yeni Hayat* (The New Life). Pamuk took a break from *My Name is Red* and spent the next two years finishing *The New Life*. In 1994, *The New Life* sold 164,000 copies making it the fastest selling novel in Turkish History.²³

Four years after the success of *The New Life*, Pamuk finished writing *My Name is Red* and had it published at the end of 1998. The English translation of *My Name is Red* was released in America in 2001, the same week as the 9/11 attacks in the United States. After the 9/11 attacks, Pamuk, like many writers, searched for answers as to why those attacks happened. Pamuk wrote an article titled "Listen to the Damned" which appeared in *The Guardian* a mere eighteen days after the attack. In the article Pamuk states:

We must make it our duty to understand why the poor nations of the world, the millions of people belonging to countries that have been pushed to one side and deprived of the right even to decide their own histories, feel such anger at America. We are not obliged, however, always to countenance this anger ... It is neither Islam nor even poverty itself directly that succors terrorists whose ferocity and creativity are unprecedented in human history, but the crushing humiliation that has infected third world countries like cancer ... The western world is scarcely aware of this overwhelming humiliation experienced by most of the world's population, which they have to

²³ Ibid, 33

overcome without losing their common sense and without being seduced by terrorists, extreme nationalists or fundamentalists... The great majority of the world population... is afflicted by spiritual misery... What prompts an impoverished old man in Istanbul to condone the terror in New York in a moment of anger, or a Palestinian youth fed up with Israeli oppression to admire the Taliban who throw nitric acid in women's faces, is not Islam, nor the idiocy described as the clash between east and west, nor poverty itself, but the feeling of impotence deriving from degradation and the failure to be heard and understood.²⁴

What prompts terrorists, extreme nationalists, and religious fundamentalists are precisely the themes of Pamuk's sixth novel *Kar* (Snow).

In 2005, Pamuk became a controversial political figure in Turkey due to comments he made during an interview with Swiss newspaper *Das Magazin* while promoting the German translation of *Snow*.²⁵ During the interview, journalist Peer Teuwsen asked Pamuk why his fellow Turks hated him so much. Irritated by the question, Pamuk responded "Turkey is a strange place. There are people here who write five-hundred-page books about the 'secret Jews' in Turkey, and I am supposed to be one of them—pure anti-Semitism, terrible! This doesn't happen anywhere else."²⁶ Pamuk goes on to discuss the role of economic inequity between Turkey and Europe as a source of Turkish nationalism and religious extremism. He claimed Turkey must begin

²⁴ Orhan Pamuk, "The Anger of the Damned," *Other Colours: Essays and a Story*, ed. Orhan Pamuk (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 220-21.

²⁵ Michael McGaha, *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2008), 1.

²⁶ Ibid

acknowledge their past in order to create a peaceful future. This led Pamuk to make his most controversial statement "Thirty thousand Kurds were killed here. And a million Armenians. Hardly anyone dares to mention it. So I do. And that's why they hate me."²⁷

²⁷ Ibid, 2

CHAPTER III

WESTERN AND ISLAMIC TRADITIONS OF MELANCHOLY

Pamuk examines melancholy in his memoirs *Istanbul: Memories and the City*.

Pamuk uses the Turkish word for melancholy, *hüzün*, to distinguish the melancholy he describes as “a black mood shared by millions of people together”²⁸ from the melancholy described by Western scholars. Esra Akcan, professor of architecture and philosophy at Columbia University, suggests Pamuk’s association of the word melancholy with the Turkish word *hüzün* is to help the reader understand the Western and Eastern representations of Istanbul, to reconcile these “two distinct traditions,” and to begin to understand both words differently.²⁹ By comparing *hüzün* to the types of melancholy described by Western Renaissance writers and Sufi mystics, Pamuk shows where these two words intersect.

Western scholars who studied melancholy in the past defined it as either a medical condition or as a moral condition. Those who define melancholy as a medical condition focus on discovering the causes and cures of melancholy, and describe it as a

²⁸ Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 92.

²⁹ Esra Akcan, “The Beauty of Landscape Resides in its Melancholy,” *World Literature Today*, 80, no. 6 (2006): 42-43,

condition of one of four bodily humors. Scholars who defined melancholy as a moral condition believed it was the result of irrational passions. They sought to understand what would cause otherwise intelligent people to succumb to an irrational condition such as melancholy. During the Middle Ages, medical and moral studies of melancholy were separate and viewed as opposed to one another. However, during the Renaissance, scholars began combining medical and moral concepts of melancholy. They redefined melancholy as not just an illness but as a condition of mortality. Pamuk's contribution to the study of melancholy comes from his combining of melancholy as a condition of mortality with the melancholy described as a spiritual condition by the Sufi tradition. To explain Pamuk's contribution to the study of melancholy, we must first examine how the study of melancholy has developed over time.

Melancholy in the West

Melancholy first appeared in medical writing around the fifth century BCE when the Greek physician, Hippocrates, argued the human body is comprised of four primary humors: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. Hippocrates did not provide "a systematic discussion of melancholia" but did identify melancholia "as a disease caused

by an excess of black bile.”³⁰ Aristotle was the first philosopher to provide a systematic examination of melancholia. In *Problems Connected with Thought, Intelligence, and Wisdom*, Aristotle examines why men “who have become outstanding in philosophy, statesmanship, poetry or the arts”³¹ suffer from melancholy. Aristotle focused on conditions of black bile within the human body as the cause of melancholy. He claimed melancholy has different symptoms based on the temperature and location of black bile in the body. While the medical science of Aristotle is archaic, he does provide a fascinating list of people who suffered from melancholy and the symptoms they presented. Heracles, Plato, Socrates, and Bellerophon are all listed as men who suffer from the illness. According to Aristotle, the many symptoms of melancholy include despondency, fear, madness, and cheerfulness or grief without a clear cause. These symptoms are dependent upon the temperature and amount of black bile in a person’s body; however, melancholy is an internal condition “not owing to disease but by nature.”³² External forces do not directly cause melancholy; they simply alter the condition of black bile already present in the individual.

It is fascinating to note, Aristotle cites Homer’s description of Bellerophon’s melancholy “when he was hated of all the gods, then he wandered alone on the plain of

³⁰ Jennifer Radden, "Brilliance and Melancholy," *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva*, ed. Jennifer Radden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 56

³¹ Aristotle, "Problems Connected with Thought, Intelligence, and Wisdom," *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva*, ed. Jennifer Radden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 57

³² Aristotle, "Problems Connected with Thought, Intelligence, and Wisdom," *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva*, ed. Jennifer Radden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 61

Aleium, eating out his heart, and avoiding the track of men.”³³ Thus, implying solitude and isolation are symptoms of melancholy.

According to Aristotle, melancholy could be positive as well as negative. While black bile in its natural state is “cold... [it causes] stupidity, disease or despondency leading to suicide,”³⁴ when heated it can “produce ecstasy or inspiration similar to Plato’s divine frenzy.”³⁵ When heated black bile is “relaxed towards a mean,” the person is still melancholy, “but they are rational and less eccentric and in many respects superior to others in culture or in the arts or in statesmanship.” This positive attribute of melancholy became known to Renaissance writers as “heroic melancholy.”³⁶

Ibn Sina, an Islamic philosopher and astrologists known in the West as Avicenna, also wrote on the condition of melancholy and black bile. Like Aristotle, Ibn Sina claims there are symptoms of melancholy that are universal, and others that are dependent upon the location and condition of black bile in the body. However, Ibn Sina believed black bile “makes the disease of melancholy”³⁷ and is a “temporary and disordered fever.”³⁸ Ibn Sina provides a detailed analysis of melancholy in *On Black Bile and*

³³ Ibid, 57

³⁴ Bridget Lyons, *Voices of Melancholy: Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1971), 3.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid, 4-5

³⁷ Avicenna, “On the Signs of Melancholy’s Appearance,” *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva*, ed. Jennifer Radden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 78.

³⁸ Ibid, 77

Melancholy from Canon of Medicine (1170-87 C.E). Universal symptoms are “bad judgment, fear without cause, quick anger, delight in solitude, shaking, vertigo, inner clamor, tingling, especially in the abdomen.”³⁹ If fear is also present, symptoms will include poor judgment, anxiety, “abandonment of conversation ... and the fear of things which do or do not exist; and a greatness of fear of things which are not customarily feared.”⁴⁰

Ibn Sina continues to describe additional symptoms of humor affected by black bile:

When black bile is mixed with blood, there is happiness and laughter, and a strong sadness does not share in it. If however, it is mixed in with phlegm, there is laziness, inertia, and rest. And if it is mixed with or from yellow bile, there are agitation, lesions, some demonic influences, and similar manias.⁴¹

Ibn Sina argues these mixtures can be caused by overheating or the consumption of “melancholic foods” among a multitude of medical ailments. This list of symptoms suggests melancholy has not only physical and mental symptoms but also metaphysical symptoms.

Arabic writers like Ibn Sina associated medical humors with planetary powers. In the ninth century, black bile became connected with Saturn, and writers would

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Ibid, 78

associate the qualities of one with the other.⁴² For example, the “qualities of melancholy, its coldness and dryness, were attributed to Saturn, while ‘saturnine’ qualities, the planet’s slow motion resulting from its great distance, were transferred to the melancholy temperament.”⁴³ In *Voices of Melancholy*, Gellert Lyons notes:

The contradictory qualities that were attributed to Saturn the planet were a result of the diverse mythological origins of Saturn the god ... Through the amalgamation of melancholy characteristics with these mythological identities, Saturn acquired a well-defined personality and set of powers: he presided over melancholy complexions, qualities, diseases and organs.⁴⁴

It was the association between melancholy with Saturn the planet, and Saturn the god that allowed Marsilio Ficino to revive the Aristotelian concept of heroic melancholy during the Renaissance.

Ficino was a Neoplatonist described as “the most influential exponent of Platonism in Italy in the fifteenth century.”⁴⁵ While Ficino is most known for his philosophical contributions, he also practiced medicine and produced books not only on philosophy but also on matters of health. It was Ficino’s writings on health that

⁴² Bridget Lyons, *Voices of Melancholy: Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1971), 4.

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Jennifer Radden, "Learned People and Melancholy," *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva*, ed. Jennifer Radden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 87.

contained his most significant contributions to the literature on melancholy.⁴⁶ *Three Books on Life* was “the first book to single out the health of the intelligent and learned for special attention”⁴⁷ and was “distinctive in developing the astrological significance of melancholy, particularly its relation to the planet Saturn.”⁴⁸ It revived the Aristotelian concept of heroic melancholy, which would become a “resounding theme throughout Renaissance and later writing on melancholy.”⁴⁹

In *Three Books on Life*, Ficino focuses on the types, causes, and cures of melancholy in intelligent people. Ficino determines there are two types of melancholy, three causes of melancholy, and a long list of “dietary, talismanic and other means” to mitigate the effects of melancholy.⁵⁰ According to Ficino, the three causes of melancholy are celestial, natural, and human. The celestial cause of melancholy is the relationship of a person’s birth with the planet Saturn. Astronomers determined that Saturn was both cold and dry; the same qualities Hippocrates used to describe black bile. Ficino believed Saturn to be associated with “the highest contemplation” and was “the planetary patron of scholars, who suffered from melancholy both as a result of their solitary, thoughtful occupations, and as a condition of their genius.”⁵¹ Those born

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Bridget Lyons, *Voices of Melancholy: Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1971), 5.

⁵¹ Ibid

under Saturn would have a natural tendency to be thoughtful, contemplative, and intelligent; however, this attribute makes them susceptible to the natural cause of melancholy. Ficino argues the natural cause of melancholy comes from the "pursuit of the sciences, especially the difficult ones. According to Ficino philosophical investigation causes the soul to:

... draw in upon itself from external things to internal as from the circumference to the center, and while it speculates, it must stay immovably at the very center of man. Now to collect oneself from the circumference to the center, and to be fixed in the center, is above all the property of the Earth itself, to which black bile is analogous. Therefore black bile continually incites the soul both to collect itself together into one and to dwell on itself and to contemplate itself. And being analogous to the world's center, it forces the investigation to the center of individual subjects, and it carries one to the contemplation of whatever is highest, since, indeed, it is most congruent with Saturn, the highest of planets.⁵²

Therefore, those most prone to melancholy are intelligent people born under Saturn.

Ficino argues there are two types of melancholy: natural and adust. Only natural melancholy can be heroic. The combustion of black bile, or the mixing of other combusted humors with black bile, causes adust melancholy. According to Ficino, "any melancholy which arises from adustion, harms the wisdom and the judgement, because when that humor is kindled, and burns, it characteristically makes people excited and

⁵² Marsilio Ficino, "On Caring for the Health of Those Who Devote Themselves to Literary Studies," *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva*, ed. Jennifer Radden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 90.

frenzied, which melancholy the Greeks call mania and we madness.”⁵³ It is only natural black bile that can lead to wisdom; however, it must be in moderation. Ficino argues if black bile is too hot it produces “boldness, even to ferocity;” if it is too cold it produces fear and “extreme cowardice.”⁵⁴ If there is too little black bile, it will “arise unstable wit and a short memory” if there is too much we become lazy and tired.⁵⁵ Therefore, black bile must exist in moderation, in both quantity and condition. When the Saturnine person is blessed with this moderate condition of black bile, they are able to “practice the contemplation that was his genius, and to submit himself as completely as he could to Saturn” without the risk of the maladies of melancholy.⁵⁶ Thus, according to Bridget Lyons, Professor of English and Associate Dean for Humanities at Rutgers University, “Saturn could ... be both the cause of illness and, in a higher sense, the cure, and it symbolized the most fundamental contradiction of melancholy itself.”⁵⁷ Melancholy in this sense is heroic because it fuels the genius of intelligent people.

Apart from the humoral theorists who trace their roots to Hippocrates, other theorists, beginning with the stoics, viewed melancholy as a moral condition. In *Tusculan Disputations*, Cicero “went to some length ... to dispel the Greek notion of the

⁵³ Ibid, 91

⁵⁴ Ibid, 92

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Bridget Lyons, *Voices of Melancholy: Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1971), 5.

⁵⁷ Ibid

far-reaching mental effects of humoral melancholy.”⁵⁸ The Stoics believed all passions were “alien to the truly wise man,” and “reason should moderate and govern the passions.”⁵⁹ This was an idea “that Cicero saw to be somewhat at variance with humoral theory.”⁶⁰ A rational and wise person would be immune to any passions stirred by black bile; therefore, melancholics are flawed morally and mentally rather than physically.

Of the scholars who view melancholy as a moral condition is Pierre Charron. Charron examines the “social and ethical implications of melancholy” in his book *Of Wisdom*.⁶¹ According to Charron, melancholy is “not only contrary and an enemy unto nature, but God himself. For what other is it, but a rash and outrageous complaint against the Lord and common law of the whole world.”⁶² Therefore, “our subjective opinion of what was evil” is the cause of melancholy, and its cure is the “recognition that excessive grief is against reason, and that it was an impious unwillingness to accept God’s law as revealed in nature.”⁶³

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ Ibid, 6

⁶⁰ Ibid, 5

⁶¹ Ibid, 7

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Ibid, 8-9

According to Lyons, many Christian writers viewed melancholy with the same negativity as the Stoics by connected it with sinfulness.⁶⁴ The word for the sin associated with melancholy is *acedia*. Lyons argues *acedia* was first thought of as “a spiritual illness that beset monks, hermits, and others who had chosen the religious life, afflicting them with weariness to be busy about everything except their proper task.”⁶⁵ The word *acedia* would be eventually associated with the sin of sloth and laziness.

Lyons argues the artists of the Renaissance “reinterpreted and combined” *acedia* and Saturnine melancholy uniting the medical tradition of melancholy with the moral tradition of melancholy.⁶⁶ Lyons calls the Renaissance writings on melancholy ‘expository books’ rather than medical books because they emphasized both medical and moral problems.⁶⁷

Robert Burton’s *The Anatomy of Melancholy* is arguably the most influential of the expository books. Like Ibn Sina, Burton focuses on the physical, mental, and metaphysical symptoms and causes of melancholy. In this massive work, totaling over 15,000 pages, Burton discusses at length various causes including the humoral theories of Aristotle and Ibn Sina, old age, diet, love, God, and “bad Angels or devils.”

⁶⁴ Ibid, 6

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Ibid

For Burton, melancholy is divided into two types: melancholy in disposition and melancholy of habit. Melancholy of disposition is “that transitory melancholy” caused by moments of “sorrow, need, sickness, trouble, feare, grief, passion, or perturbation of the Minde.”⁶⁸ This melancholy causes anguish, dullness, and “vexations of the spirits, any ways opposite to pleasure, mirth, joy, delight.”⁶⁹ According to Burton, “no man living is free”⁷⁰ from becoming effected by such melancholy because by nature humans are “not here as those angels ... but subject to infirmities, miseries ... often molested and disquieted upon each slender occasion.”⁷¹ Because all people are at times affected with this type of melancholy Burton classifies it as “the Character of Mortality.”⁷²

Pamuk points out the similarities between Burton and Ibn Sina even though these two texts “rise out of such very different cultural traditions.”⁷³ Both Burton and Ibn Sina take an encyclopedic view of melancholy, both combine medical science with philosophy, and both provide possible cures for the illness. However, while Ibn Sina only discusses melancholy as a temporary condition, Burton outlines the possibility of chronic melancholy.

⁶⁸ Robert Burton, “The Anatomy of Melancholy,” *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva*, ed. Jennifer Radden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 131.

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 92.

According to Burton, all people are from time to time affected by melancholy of disposition; however, a person with "a rational soul is better able to make resistance."⁷⁴ If a person is unable to resist the effects of dispositional melancholy, is repeatedly subjected to them, and "precipitates themselves into a labyrinth of cares, woes, miseries; and suffer their souls to be overcome by them" dispositional melancholy evolves into melancholy of habit.⁷⁵ While melancholy of disposition is a transitory condition, melancholy of habit is "*morbus santicus...or continuous disease*" that will "hardly be removed."⁷⁶

Not only did the writers of the Renaissance merge medical melancholy with moral melancholy, the expository books described melancholy in terms of social paradigms.⁷⁷ Literary artists used these social paradigms to compose characters that embody the melancholic condition. The melancholic figure represented most often in Renaissance literature "took a stand against the world which was not an essential part of melancholy in its medical sense: he was primarily one who was discontented, sometimes to the point of mutiny and rebellion, with the existing social and political order."⁷⁸ This type of melancholic figure was known as the melancholic malcontent.

⁷⁴ Robert Burton, "The Anatomy of Melancholy," *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva*, ed. Jennifer Radden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 132.

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Bridget Lyons, *Voices of Melancholy: Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1971), 17.

⁷⁸ Ibid

The melancholy of the malcontent is caused by and directed at society; and therefore, is the first definition of melancholy with political implications. Since the source of discontent is the political and social authority system, the malcontent is defined by their level of political and social obedience. Thus, the cure for this form of melancholy is social and political conformity.

Philip Resnick, Professor of comparative politics at the University of British Columbia, argues malcontent is a social psychological disorder caused by political conditions within a multinational state. According to Resnick, while "melancholy is an emotional state, associated by philosophers like Aristotle with black bile, and by later artists and writers with brooding, Saturnal influences"⁷⁹ it can also take the form of national sentiment. Melancholy defined here is "a gloomy or pessimistic reading of one's national predicament"⁸⁰ and is prevalent in nationalities that, while successful in the past, have "lost their autonomy or claims to independence somewhere along the path to modernity."⁸¹ These melancholic nationalities are often minority groups that view their condition as being subordinate to the dominate nationality. In this definition, the opposite of melancholy is hubris, which is defined as an "overweening pride in one's own national community, its accomplishments, and potential, and a

⁷⁹ Philip Resnick, "Hubris and Melancholy in Multinational States," *Nations and Nationalism*, 14, no. 4 (2008): 797,

⁸⁰ Ibid, 790

⁸¹ Ibid

willingness to use military force in the pursuit of national objectives.”⁸² Resnick points to the treatment of the Welsh, Scots, and Irish by the British, the Basques and Catalans by the Spanish, and the Walloons and Flemings by the Belgians, as examples of the conflict between hubris and melancholy. A symptom of national melancholy is the “lamentation for things lost, e.g. the Jews for the two temples and their holy land; the English for ancient liberties before the Norman yoke; the Poles for their lost country after the three partitions the Serbs and the 1389 Battles of the ‘Field of Blackbirds’ in Kosovo.”⁸³ However, this lamentation must not be confused for nostalgia. While nostalgia is an emotion that seeks to re-live past glories, melancholy seeks to re-invent and undo past defeats.⁸⁴ Hubris causes resentment against the melancholic nationality which is “reinforced by a feeling that minority nationalities are unwilling to accept many of the symbols of shared political identity.”⁸⁵ This in turn, makes political unity an arduous task. Hubris is not only felt by those nationalities that are in the majority by number but also by those who are politically dominant and seek to “impose a view of national community that does not correspond to that of the majority community.”⁸⁶ Thus, the melancholy of the minority nationality comes not just from

⁸² Ibid, 789

⁸³ Ibid, 797

⁸⁴ Ibid, 790

⁸⁵ Ibid, 803

⁸⁶ Ibid, 797

being unwilling to conform to the political majority but also from being unable to express themselves to the national community.

Whether it is the memories of the minorities past glories or the inability to express their own political ideals, a feeling of communal loss accompanies the national melancholy described by Resnick. Basque writer Jon Juaristi describes this loss in *The Melancholic Ringlet*:

Nationalist melancholy, like imperial melancholy, is a variant of melancholy derived from the loss of country, but with one important difference. Unlike the case of those who are afflicted by the loss of an empire, nationalists do not experience a real loss. The nation does not exist before nationalism.⁸⁷

It is the idea of loss, not the reality of loss, that creates the communal melancholy of the minority. The loss associated with national melancholy is not the loss of a tangible item, such as a country or political system, but rather it is the loss of a communal ideal. It is necessary for the nationalist discourse to include "sacrificial narratives of love and martyrdom, heroism and guilt, betrayal, and defeat,"⁸⁸ In order to create the common ideal of the melancholic nation:

Stories of martyrdom and of desperate glory, of loss and the negation of loss; histories that reversing the usual order of the marvelous stories, begin with a situation of plenitude in order to conclude with the dispossession of

⁸⁷ Ibid, 800

⁸⁸ Ibid

the new hero who must leave in search of arrebatada country, a prohibited language, a grail that will restore fertility to the land of the ancestor and salvation to an exhausted race. To suture wounds, make up for deficiencies, restore the lost Eden: this is the mission these stories impart.⁸⁹

In this sense, melancholy requires the belief in a glorious past that, while it can never be restored, can inform the ideals of the future. However, if the melancholics must cure their deficiencies they must first discover their deficiencies. Therefore, to reinvent the past ideal the melancholic community must first feel shame towards what distinguishes them from the majority. In other words, the melancholics must come to grips with their own "otherness".

Sigmund Freud expanded upon the understanding of melancholy as a social psychological disorder in his essay "Mourning and Melancholy." Freud examines the link between melancholy and the mourning one experience after the loss of a loved one. According to Jennifer Radden, Professor of Philosophy and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston, Freud "reconstrues melancholy and melancholia. From a state of imbalance and a mood of despondency, melancholia has become a frame of mind characterized by the loss of something."⁹⁰ Freud claims "the definition of

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Jennifer Radden, "Loss," *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva*, ed. Jennifer Radden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 282.

melancholia is uncertain,"⁹¹ and melancholy itself can take on various forms. However, like Aristotle, Ibn Sina, and Burton, Freud concedes there is a connection between melancholy and the feeling of grief. Freud defines mourning as "the reaction to the loss of a beloved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as fatherland, liberty, an ideal, and so on."⁹² This loss leads to either grief or melancholia in an individual. According to Freud, what separates grief from melancholia is grief "never occurs to us to regard it as a morbid condition...We rest assured that after a lapse of time it will be overcome."⁹³

Both melancholia and grief come with:

... a profoundly painful dejection, abrogation of interest in the outside world, loss of capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-rivaling, and culminates in delusional expectation of punishment.⁹⁴

What distinguishes melancholia from grief is melancholia "is in some way related to unconscious loss of a love-object."⁹⁵ Normal grief associated with mourning comes when the person is completely conscious of what has been lost. This is similar to the

⁹¹ Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholy," *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva*, ed. Jennifer Radden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 283.

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵ Ibid, 285

symptoms of melancholia described by Aristotle as grief without a clear cause; however, Freud's interpretation is related to loss.

The Sufi Tradition

According to Pamuk, there are "two very different *hüzün's*" in Islamic history "each evoking a distinct philosophical tradition."⁹⁶ The first tradition teaches melancholy is experienced when we "invest too much in worldly pleasures and material gain."⁹⁷ It is a moral illness associated with disobedience or lack of faith in Allah. The second tradition is rooted in Sufi mysticism and views melancholy as a condition regarding the individual's relationship with Allah and "offers a more positive and compassionate understanding of the word."⁹⁸

According to Pamuk the Sufis believe melancholy is:

...the spiritual anguish we feel because we cannot be close enough to Allah, because we cannot do enough for Allah in this world. A true Sufi follower would take no interest in worldly concerns like death, let alone goods or possessions; he suffers from grief, emptiness, and inadequacy because he can never be close enough to Allah, because his apprehension of Allah is not deep enough. Moreover, it is the absence, not the presence, of

⁹⁶ Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 90.

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ Ibid

hüzün that causes him distress. It is the failure to experience hüzün that leads him to feel it; he suffers because he has not suffered enough, and it is by following this logic to its conclusion that Islamic culture has come to hold hüzün in high esteem.⁹⁹

In this definition, melancholy is the cure for itself; the same logical inconsistency standard to the definitions of melancholy discussed earlier. However, this melancholy is not brought about by bodily humors, moral disobedience, or loss of an object. The melancholy described here comes from the recognition of being on the periphery of the ideal.

The Sufi poets, Rumi and Sheikh Galip, greatly influenced Pamuk's understanding of melancholy. Victoria Rowe Holbrook argues the Turkish Sufi tradition comes from Sheikh Galip "combining the teachings of Rumi and Ibn Arabi."¹⁰⁰ These poets used melancholic figures to represent mourning of the soul upon its detachment from and return to God. Rumi expresses the melancholy of separation in "The Reed Flutes Song":

Listen to the story told by the reed,
of being separated.
'Since I was cut from the reedbed,
I have made this crying sound.
Anyone apart from someone he loves
understands what I say

⁹⁹ Ibid, 90-91

¹⁰⁰ Shiekh Galip, *Beauty and Love*, trans. Victoria Rowe Holbrook (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2005), X.

Anyone pulled from a source
longs to go back'.¹⁰¹

The ontology Rumi teaches is called *vadet-i vücud* ("the unity of being").¹⁰² Rumi teaches all things "originate in God" and "voluntarily or involuntarily" return to God.¹⁰³ The Sufis believe the universe is divided into sensory, imaginal, and spiritual realms. All that exists in the sensory realm subsists in the spiritual realm, this is called the arc of descent. During the arc of ascent, the return to the spiritual realm, "one returns through the intermediary realm of imagination" and loses material form.¹⁰⁴ The contents of the mind "are not manufactured by the mind; rather, they are the soul's apperception of forms in the imaginal state."¹⁰⁵ The ability to perceive these forms clearly is dependent on the condition of one's soul. During the arc of descent, a veil is formed between the spiritual and the material tarnishing the soul's perception of the unity of being. This leads to the false distinction between self and other, this forms the source of spiritual melancholy.

According to Holbrook, "The faculties of the soul are located in the heart, which is often likened to a mirror. Worship of God 'polishes' that mirror. Thus, the images in

¹⁰¹ Coleman Barks, *The Essential Rumi*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 17.

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Ibid, xii

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, xiii

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

our minds differ in part according to the clarity of our hearts.”¹⁰⁶ The mirror’s reflection is representative of the soul’s ability to pierce through the veil and see how everything is reflected in God and vice versa. All things, the material, imaginative, and spiritual, are derived from God; this is what is meant by unity of being. Therefore, Rumi’s reed flute can be understood to mourn, not just for the separation from the reed bed, but also for the separation from all that emerges from the reed bed.

The arc of ascent is the return of all things, voluntarily or involuntarily, to God. The voluntary return to God is known as the Sufi path. When someone dies they pass through the imaginary realm, where they lose their material form, before they return to the spiritual realm. The Sufis believe it is possible to die before one dies, this concept is known as *baqa* and *fana*.¹⁰⁷ *Baqa’* derives from *al-Baqi*, one of the Ninety-Nine Names for God, referring to the divine attribute of everlastingness. The opposite of *baqa’* is *fana’*, which means passing away or dying to self.¹⁰⁸ These terms are found in the Qur’an:

Everything upon the earth shall pass away; but the Face of
the Lord shall remain forever...¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

¹⁰⁷ John Baldock, *The Essence of Sufism*, (Edison: Chartwell Books, Inc., 2004), 223.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

¹⁰⁹ Qur’an 55; 26-27

Everything in the material realm passes away, but the spiritual form always subsists. The material self passes away (fana') and returns to God and the unity of being and becomes everlasting (baqa'). Sufi poet and philosopher Fariduddin Attar expresses this in his epic poem "*Conference of the Birds*." In this poem Attar includes the tale of the moths and the flame, some moths were "brought together by a desire to learn the truth about the candles light."¹¹⁰ The first moth examined the flame through a window and described what he saw, but the wise moth dismissed him and claimed, "He knows nothing of the flame." A second moth flew even closer and touched the flame with the tip of his wing, but the wise moth dismissed him as well. A third and final moth approached the flame:

Intoxicated with love, he wooed the flame before throwing himself into its fire. He embraced the flame and then was engulfed by her so that flame and moth were united. Watching from afar, the wise moth saw the sudden blaze, and said: 'He has learnt the truth about the flame. But only he knows that of which we cannot speak.'¹¹¹

To become one with the flame and learn the truth of its light, the moth had to reach fana' by annihilating the self. Omer Khayyam expresses this in *The Ruba'iyat*:

If the heart could grasp the meaning of life,
In death it would know the mystery of God;

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 152-3

¹¹¹ Ibid

Today when you are in possession of yourself, you know nothing.

Tomorrow when you leave yourself behind, what will you know?¹¹²

However, in *The Treatise on Being* Ibn 'Arabi, a twelfth century Sufi mystic and philosopher, warns not to confuse the annihilation of self to mean we must cease to exist in order to know God. In *The Treatise of Being* 'Arabi writes:

And most of 'those who know God' make a ceasing of existence and the ceasing of that ceasing a condition of attaining the knowledge of God, and that is an error and a clear oversight ... For things have no existence, and what does not exist cannot cease to exist. For the ceasing to be implies the positing of existence, and that is polytheism. Then if thou know thyself without existence or ceasing to be, then thou knowest God; and if not then not.¹¹³

Nothing exists outside of God; therefore, all that exists is God. It is impossible for one to truly cease to exist because God cannot cease to exist. In order to know God, the idea of self and other must be eliminated.

By worshiping God, a person is able to polish the mirror that is their soul and see through the realm of imagination to the form of things, where everything is connected and there is no individual. Khayyam writes:

¹¹² Omar Khayyam, *The Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam*, trans. Peter Avery & John Heath Stubbs (New York: Penguin Book, 1981), 37.

¹¹³ John Baldock, *The Essence of Sufism*, (Edison: Chartwell Books, Inc., 2004), 167.

Neither you nor I know the mysteries of eternity,
Neither you nor I read this enigma;
You and I only talk this side of the veil'
When the veil falls, neither you nor I will be
here¹¹⁴

Khayyam speaks of the veil created during the arc of descent when one transitions from the spiritual to the material. This transition detaches one from the unity of being, creates the individual and the other, and prevents the individual from seeing the interconnectedness of everything. It is only by annihilating the concept of self and other that one is able to die before they die and reconnect with the unity of being.

In conclusion, melancholy in the Sufi tradition can be understood as something that begins when one is detached from God, continues on the path to reunite with God, and is exacerbated when it is realized that the union with God is not possible in the material realm. This understanding of melancholy implies the distinction between self and other is an illusion, and it is the nature of mortality to struggle against such delineating distinctions in order to reach unity. While in the West, the opposite of melancholy is the hubris of the dominate group, the Sufi's believe the distinction of such groups is an illusion that separates us from the unity of being. Therefore, for the Sufis

¹¹⁴ Omar Khayyam, *The Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam*, trans. Peter Avery & John heath Stubbs (New York: Penguin Book, 1981), 39.

the opposing emotion to melancholy is love because it calls for the unification of being rather than delineating distinctions such as a nation or civilization. The Sufi concepts of the arc of ascent, the arc of descent, and self-annihilation appear in Pamuk's writing; however, Pamuk secularizes these concepts.

Hüzün

Pamuk compares the Sufi tradition of melancholy with the melancholy of Burton and the West to articulate how the melancholy of Istanbul is a communal, rather than individual, melancholy. For Burton, "melancholy paved way to a happy solitude; because it strengthened his imaginative powers, it was ... to be joyfully affirmed."¹¹⁵ However, Pamuk points Islamic writers viewed solitude like the Sufis because "the central preoccupation, as with all classic Islamic thinkers, was the cemaat, or community of believers."¹¹⁶ Because the community was the focus of Islamic thinkers, values were judged "by the values of the cemaat and [they] suggested remedies that return us to it."¹¹⁷ The main difference for Burton and those who believed in heroic melancholy, solitude is desirable while for Islamic thinkers "solitude was not a desirable or even

¹¹⁵ Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 92.

¹¹⁶ Ibid

¹¹⁷ Ibid

admissible condition.”¹¹⁸ Therefore, the melancholy described by the Sufi writers is naturally political because it speaks to the actions of people within the community.

The melancholy Pamuk describes in *Istanbul* is not just the melancholy of the city but also the “[melancholy] in which we see ourselves reflected.” The melancholy “we absorb with pride and share as a community.”¹¹⁹ In other words, Pamuk describes the melancholy of the city's landscape. According to Pamuk, “to feel this hüzn is to see the scenes, evoke the memories, in which the city itself becomes the very illustration, the very essence, of hüzn.”¹²⁰ Pamuk continues to describe the melancholic scenes of Istanbul in a single sentence that is over two pages in length:

I am speaking of the evenings when the sun sets early, of the fathers under the streetlamps in the back streets returning home carrying plastic bags...of crowds rushing to catch ferries on winter evenings; of city walls, ruins since the end of the Byzantine Empire ... of tired old dolmuses, fifties Chevrolets that would be museum pieces in any western city but serve here as shared taxis ... of history books in which children read about the victories of the Ottoman Empire and of the beatings these same children receive at home ... of days when everyone has to stay home so the electoral roll can be compiled or the census can be taken ... of the days when a sudden curfew is announced to facilitate the search for terrorists and everyone sits at home fearfully awaiting ‘the officials’¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Ibid

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 94

¹²⁰ Ibid

¹²¹ Ibid, 94-6

Pamuk states, "It is by seeing hüzn, by paying our respects to its manifestations in the city's streets and views and people that we at last come to sense it everywhere."¹²²

Pamuk explains this melancholic landscape by comparing it to the melancholy described by Claude Levi-Strauss. In *Tristes Tropiques* (the Sad Tropics), Strauss described his travels to Brazil, the Caribbean, and India. Pamuk argues Istanbul is similar to the cities visited by Strauss because "the fragility of people's lives in Istanbul, the way they treat one another and the distance they feel from the centers of the West, make Istanbul a city that newly arrived Westerners are at a loss to understand, and out of this loss they attribute to it a 'mysterious air,' thus identifying hüzn with the tristesse of Levi-Strauss."¹²³ Pamuk argues the similarity between the melancholy described by hüzn and the melancholy described by tristesse is that they both "suggest a communal feeling."¹²⁴

However, the "feelings [tristesse and hüzn] describe are not identical." The tristesse described by Strauss "is what a Westerner might feel as he surveys those vast poverty-stricken cities of the tropics, as he contemplates the huddled masses and their wretched lives." The melancholy Pamuk describes, however, is a feeling that cannot be viewed from the outside.¹²⁵ While the tropics which Strauss writes of have a similar quality and melancholic atmosphere, the melancholic landscapes of Istanbul are

¹²² Ibid, 99

¹²³ Ibid, 101

¹²⁴ Ibid

¹²⁵ Ibid, 103

superimposed upon “the remains of a glorious past civilization” which “inflict heartache on all who live among them.”¹²⁶ Pamuk argues the remains of the Ottoman Empire are “nothing like the remains of great empires seen in western cities, preserved like museums of history and proudly displayed.” Instead, “these ruins are reminders that the present city is so poor and confused that it can never again dream of rising to its former heights of wealth, power, and culture.”¹²⁷ Here there is similarity between Pamuk’s *hüzün* and Burton’s melancholy. The melancholy the residents of Istanbul are repeatedly subjected to come from the city’s melancholic landscape; therefore, the *hüzün* Pamuk describes is a melancholy of habit.

The melancholy created during the Sufi arc of descent is similar. Istanbul was once the capital of the Ottoman Empire with its own unique history, culture, and political ideals. When the Ottoman Empire collapsed and the Republic of Turkey was formed, Istanbul, and Turkey as a whole, was detached from these ideals. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, issued a series of reforms to replace the past ideals of the Ottoman Empire with the ideal of modernization. Atatürk viewed modernization as synonymous with westernization. However, rather than creating an atmosphere in which these new ideals could grow organically from within society, Atatürk’s followers, known as Kemalists, superimposed the ideal of westernization on

¹²⁶ Ibid, 101

¹²⁷ Ibid

top of an already developed political and social culture. The creation of the Turkish Republic created conflicting political factions that have been competing for control over the political ideals of Turkey's future. Since its founding, the Republic of Turkey has been stuck between ideals, no longer on the arc of descent but not yet on the arc of ascent towards a new and collectively approved ideal.

Esra Akcan uses the term "melancholy of object" to define the landscapes described by Pamuk. Akcan draws from the works of Aristotle, Ibn Sīnā, Sigmund Freud, Robert Burton, and Ahmet Tanpınar to identify what she calls two traditions of melancholy.¹²⁸ In the first tradition, the loss of a beloved object causes melancholy, but it arises from the self and is an "illustration of the melancholic mood of individuals."¹²⁹ This form of melancholy is distinguished as melancholy of the subject. Pamuk uses the concept "hüzün" to mean a collective melancholy that is only possible when "the melancholy of the subject and melancholy as object are woven together."¹³⁰ The subject of Pamuk's melancholy is the Turkish people themselves, and the object of melancholy is Istanbul as a global city. The missing element that provides the Turkish people and Istanbul their melancholy is the ideal of modernization that has been framed by the West as something that can only belong to the West. Akcan concludes, behind

¹²⁸ Esra Akcan, "The Beauty of Landscape Resides in its Melancholy," *World Literature Today*, 80, no. 6 (2006): 42-43,

¹²⁹ Ibid

¹³⁰ Ibid

Pamuk's Istanbul is a concept of melancholy that has political implications to the way Turkey responds to Western ideology and concepts of modernization.¹³¹

Thus, melancholy is a "cultural concept conveying worldly failure, listlessness, and spiritual suffering."¹³² However, the Sufi tradition holds melancholy in high regard because the recognition that causes melancholy is also the cure. Pamuk asserts melancholy has been central to Istanbul culture and "everyday life over the past two centuries" because "[Istanbul's] see it as an honor."¹³³ The melancholy of Istanbul "is a way of looking at life that implicates us all, not only a spiritual state but a state of mind that is ultimately as life-affirming as it is negating."¹³⁴ Pamuk claims that the source of melancholy is the grief Turks feel for "a city of defeat and loss, of poverty and ruins, a city that has been in decline for a hundred and fifty years." Again, Pamuk is using the city as an analogy for its citizens. According to Pamuk:

If you have a vision of a city as a main hero, characters, in a way, are also instruments for you to see the city rather than their inner depths. And the inner depths of the characters are also deduced from the city, as in Dostoevsky. You have all these perspectives moving around in the city and to imagine them in our mind's eye gives a correct and precise image of the city. Then it's

¹³¹ Ibid

¹³² Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 91.

¹³³ Ibid

¹³⁴ Ibid

impossible to distinguish the character from the city, the city from the character.¹³⁵

All of these traditions of melancholy, medical, moral, and spiritual, differ in many respects, but it is important to note the many aspects that remain consistent. All of these traditions outline physical, mental, and metaphysical symptoms, all allow for the possibility of negative and positive forms of melancholy, and all definitions of melancholy are ambiguous and inconsistent, often defining the causes and symptoms of melancholy to be one and the same. These inconsistencies cannot be reconciled because they comprise a key component to melancholy; the lack of a clear logical formulation. Melancholy, in part, comes when there is no logical next step, no blueprint for proper actions. It is what remains when ideals and logic are irreconcilable.

¹³⁵ "Sense of the City: Istanbul" 2003

CHAPTER IV

SECULAR AND ISLAMIC POLITICS IN TURKEY: A MELANCHOLIC HISTORY

According to Pamuk the only way to describe the intensity of Istanbul's *hüzün* is first to describe the political history of the Turkey from the destruction of the Ottoman Empire to the present.¹³⁴ The destruction of the Ottoman Empire also meant the destruction of the Ottoman identity and political structure. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, two factions dominated Turkish politics, secular nationalists and political Islamists, which competed over the creation of the new political order. The secular nationalists sought to make westernization the political ideal for the nation while the political Islamists sought to hold on to and incorporate their Ottoman and Islamic heritage into the new republic.

The Turkish War of Independence was won by the secular nationalists and Republican People's Party (CHP). Their leader, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, came into power in 1923.¹³⁵ Atatürk implemented a series of reforms to secularize and modernize the nation; however, his methods ostracized various religious and cultural groups who sought to have more control over the political future of Turkey. To fulfill their goal of

¹³⁴ Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 91.

¹³⁵ Hugh Pope, and Nicole Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: A History of Modern Turkey*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 2000), 46.

westernizing the country, the CHP sought to detach the nation altogether from their Ottoman past. To this end, the CHP issued a series of reforms that focused on removing Ottoman customs and limiting the influence of Islam.¹³⁸

The CHP held power for twenty-seven years; however, the power of the Islamic opposition grew following the death of Ataturk in 1938. In 1950, the CHP lost its majority for the first time.¹³⁹ During the Ataturk years, the secular nationalists were mostly successful in severing Turkey from its Ottoman heritage; however, their goal of making westernization the nation's uncontested political ideal was left incomplete.¹⁴⁰ Since the development of multiparty elections in 1950, the conflict between the secular nationalists and the political Islamists has prevented the development of a unifying political ideal to replace what was lost with the Ottoman Empire. If the Ottoman Empire's political ideal was represented in its heritage, Ataturk's reforms represent the completion of Turkey's arc of descent. However, the conflict between secular nationalists and political Islamists has prevented Turkey from beginning the arc of ascent toward a new ideal. Being in-between arcs is a condition of Turkey's melancholy. To understand this condition in terms of communal melancholy, one must first understand the Ottoman political heritage Turkey descended from, the CHP

¹³⁸ Ibid, 62

¹³⁹ Andrew Mango, *The Turks Today*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 2004), 45.

¹⁴⁰ Hugh Pope, and Nicole Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: A History of Modern Turkey*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 2000), 65.

reforms that severed Turkey's connection with this heritage, and the conflicts between secularists and Islamists in Turkish politics.

Ira Lapidus, Emeritus Professor of Islamic Social History at The University of California at Berkeley, argues there are two paradigms of political Islam that originate in the first and second golden ages of Islamic heritage. Each has its own distinct paradigm of the political role of Islam.¹⁴¹ The first of these golden ages was the seventh century rule of Arabia by the Prophet Mohammad; the second being the imperial Islamic society under the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴² To understand the Ottoman paradigm, one must first distinguish it from the paradigm of the first golden age. The first paradigm is political Islam that demands a political system that resembles the undifferentiated political religious community led by Muhammad.¹⁴³ In this system, political, social, and moral dimensions of society are totally integrated "under the aegis of Islam."¹⁴⁴ The Caliph is the leader and exemplar of all individual righteousness, economics, politics, and morality, and there is "no distinction between religion and religious authority and the state and secular authority."¹⁴⁵ The Caliph is the final arbitrator and all laws descend from the Shari'a. This era of Islamic heritage ended with a civil war in 656-60 between the Shiites and Sunnites. The Shiites believe only the descendants of Ali could rightfully

¹⁴¹ Ira Lapidus, "The Golden Age: The Political Concepts of Islam," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 524, no. Nov (1992): 13-25,

¹⁴² Ibid

¹⁴³ Ibid, 14

¹⁴⁴ Ibid

¹⁴⁵ Ibid

be caliphs, while the Sunnites accept an administrative succession of the caliphate. This divide led to the differentiation of Islamic religious communities and brought about the second paradigm of political Islam.¹⁴⁶

The Ottoman heritage represents the second paradigm of political Islam.¹⁴⁷ The Ottoman paradigm "tacitly recognizes the institutional divisions between the structures of state and religion; "¹⁴⁸ therefore, there is a reversal of the undifferentiated religious political community of the past. Administrators replaced tribal chiefs, and the caliphate transformed into an imperial institution governed by "the laws of political survival."¹⁴⁹ In this sense, the Ottoman Empire represents a "renunciation of political utopianism" in that the political system is no longer viewed as an infallible extension of Muhammad.¹⁵⁰ Lapidus states, "Muslims look to the religious sphere for personal and communal fulfillment, to Islam as a personal and social ethos and not a concept or institution of the political regime."¹⁵¹ Conquest and tribal dynasty legitimized the state, and, while it was led by men who held an Islamic worldview, the state was "not a direct expression of Islam but a secular institution whose duty it was to uphold Islam."¹⁵² While the Ottoman Empire indeed sought Islamic supremacy over other religions, the main role of

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 14-15

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 15

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 18

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 15

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 17

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 18

¹⁵² Ibid, 16

the state was to defend the Empire, prevent anarchy, minimize war, and to protect the Muslim community. Therefore, the state entrusted and promoted a separate religious community of scholars to “carry on the legacy of the Prophet.”¹⁵³ According to Lapidus, in the Ottoman political paradigm “the realm of Islamic authenticity lies within the soul of the individual and in the relations of individuals to each other within small communities.”¹⁵⁴ Because the legitimacy of the state is based on non-Islamic factors, the separation between the state and religious institutions are inherent in this paradigm. In line with the principle of promoting individual and communal religious authenticity, the Ottoman Empire promoted a *Millet* system of government. The Millet system allowed ethno-religious communities throughout the empire maintain their own autonomous laws, educational systems, and governing bodies based on their religious practices.¹⁵⁵

The Ottoman paradigm and the Millet system collapsed along with the Empire.¹⁵⁶ After World War I, political Islamists sought to restructure what remained of the defunct Ottoman Empire into a system that preserved the Islamic political tradition. However, it was the secular nationalists who gained control after the War of

¹⁵³ Ibid

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 17

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 21

¹⁵⁶ Ibid

Independence and, instead of restructuring and incorporating the Ottoman paradigm, the new Turkish Republic would be built “virtually from scratch.”¹⁵⁷

The Turkish Republic was founded in 1923; however, its origins can be traced back to the Young Turk movement and the Second Constitutional Period of 1908-18.¹⁵⁸ In 1876 Sultan Abdulhamid II implemented a constitutional government modeled after the French parliamentary system. However, after only two years the Sultan dissolved the constitution in response to parliamentary criticism over his handling of foreign debt incurred during the Crimean War.¹⁵⁹ During the thirty year period of constitutional freeze, many ultra nationalist organizations grew in opposition to the Sultan. The most influential of these nationalist groups was the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP).¹⁶⁰ Political exiles in Paris, led by Enver Pasha, Talaat Pasha, and “in a subsidiary role” Mustafa Kemal, formed the CUP. The ultra nationalist groups that formed during this period became known collectively as The Young Turks.¹⁶¹ Out of fear of the growing influence of the Young Turk movement, Sultan Abdulhamid II restored the constitution and parliament in 1908. The restoration of parliament sparked a power struggle between various factions of the Young Turk movement. The two main factions were the

¹⁵⁷ Hugh Pope, and Nicole Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: A History of Modern Turkey*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 2000), 58.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 33

¹⁵⁹ Ibid

¹⁶⁰ Ibid

¹⁶¹ Ibid

CUP and the Ottoman Liberal Union (Liberals).¹⁶² Both the Unionists and the Liberals were secular and stood in opposition to the Sultan-Caliph. However, the Liberals were much more conservative than the CUP. A decentralized government that preserves the Millet System of local autonomous governments was the focus of the Liberals. Because the Liberals sought to preserve the Millet system, and, therefore, defend the Muslim Millet, Islamic dialog naturally found its way into their political rhetoric despite their claims of being a secular institution. The CUP won overwhelmingly in the 1908 elections and the Liberals were relegated as a minority party with ever declining political influence.¹⁶³

During the years in between the Unionists rise to power in 1908 and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, the Liberals tried to reassert their political position by allying themselves with more radical Islamists groups. Because of the Liberals conservative orientation and Islamic rhetoric, they appealed to militant Islamic leaders. This led to various uprisings that demanded the implementation of the Shari'a. While the Liberals were pro-western and secular, they saw the alliance between themselves and the Islamic institution as essential to combating the policies of the powerful Unionists.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Alan Palmer, *The Decline & Fall of the Ottoman Empire*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1994), 205.

¹⁶³ Ibid

¹⁶⁴ Ibid

Following their defeat in World War I, the Ottoman Empire signed the Armistice of Mudros in 1918 signaling the end of Middle East involvement in the war.¹⁶⁵ The Committee of Union and Progress disbanded, and its top officials fled the country. This shifted the power back into the control of the Sultan, who under the Mudros Armistice maintained his political authority.¹⁶⁶ This led to the War of Independence from 1919-1922 between the remaining members of the Young Turk movement and the Sultan's regime.¹⁶⁷ After the War of Independence, the Republic of Turkey was formed, and the caliphate was dissolved. A radically secular government ran by Mustafa Kemal and his followers, known as Kemalists, replaced the Islam oriented Sultanate. Mustafa Kemal, who had become the hero of the Turkish War of Independence, provided the framework for Turkish identity post-Ottoman Empire.¹⁶⁸ Mustafa Kemal was given the title Ataturk, Father of the Turks, implying Turkish identity began when Ataturk founded the Republic. Hugh and Nicole Pope describe Ataturk as:

... a visionary statesman. He burst on the scene at a time when the Turks had lost faith in themselves, after the Ottoman 'sick man of Europe' had crumbled and collapsed. He was as complex as Turkey is today, full of contradictions, pulled in various directions, yet never

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 244

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 233

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 246

¹⁶⁸ Hugh Pope, and Nicole Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: A History of Modern Turkey*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 2000), 49.

losing sight of his ultimate goal: to unite the Turks and to create a modern state.¹⁶⁹

In order to unite the Turks and create a modern state, Atatürk first had to redefine 'Turk' in the context of the new Turkish Republic. He had to pinpoint aspects of the existing political and social systems that were in need of reform.

During the early days of the Turkish Republic, a time when "the Turks badly needed to regain a sense of pride in their identity," the word 'Turk' was tinged with negative connotations.¹⁷⁰ The Ottomans used 'Turk' as a derogatory reference to the peasant class. In 1914, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Lloyd George called the Turks "a human cancer, a creeping agony in the flesh of the lands which they misgoverned."¹⁷¹ In 1917, historian Andre Mandelstam claimed the Turks had "done nothing to justify their existence from the point of view of civilization. It is a people that has borne no fruit. Its historic mission was to destroy, and destruction needs no soul."¹⁷² These strong negative connotations of the word Turk made the task of redefining the concept an urgent one for the Kemalist regime. To counter the negativity associated with the word Turk Atatürk redefined the word to mean "anybody who chose to become a citizen of the new republic."¹⁷³ However, in the Europe "the racial model was in fashion" and "the line between geography and race soon became blurred" which

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 51

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 58

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 59

¹⁷² Ibid, 60

¹⁷³ Ibid, 59

caused the word Turk to be understood in ethnic terms by western outsiders.¹⁷⁴

Therefore being Turkish meant more than just citizenship it meant abandoning cultural, social, and racial identifications in favor of the patriotic, secular identification defined by the Kemalists. While this new definition of Turk restored some pride in the community it had also created a new division, between Turk and domestic other, which had not previously existed. This distinction between Turk and non-Turk represents a rupture in the unity of being that has exacerbated Turkey's melancholy.

Redefining the word Turk created an identity crisis in the new republic, made worse by Ataturks westernizing reforms. According to Hugh Pope:

He succeeded in imposing drastic reforms, but never completely set the heart of his country at rest. He led Turkey on the path of Westernization, but left it stranded half-way to full democratization because, deep down, he was not a democrat. He imposed a secular state, yet never won over those entrenched in their Islamic beliefs. In his eventful life are reflected the contradictions that still beset Turkey ... the pull between the East and the West, the comfort of tradition disturbed by the necessity for change, an awe of the achievements of Christian technology and culture held in check by a strong attachment to the Muslim faith.¹⁷⁵

Ataturk's vigorous pro-Westernization stance is credited to both the humiliation caused by the Ottoman's defeat at the hands of the West in World War I and to his contempt

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 60

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 51-2

for religion. According to his biographer Jacques Benoist-Mechin, Atatürk described Islam as “the absurd theology of an immoral Bedouin” and a “putrefied corpse that poisons our life.”¹⁷⁶ Among Atatürk’s reforms are a series of laws that directly attack Islamic traditions. These laws included banning the fez and “any attire remotely connected to Islam,”¹⁷⁷ replacing the Sharia with a new civil code modeled after the Swiss and a penal code modeled after Mussolini’s, replacing the Ottoman written script with the Latin alphabet, and replacing the Islamic calendar with the Western calendar.¹⁷⁸

Kemalists adopted secular nationalism as the state ideology of Turkey.

According to Feroz Ahmad, the Kemalists “did not want any opponents to their grand design to use religion as a barrier to the changes they envisaged.”¹⁷⁹ Therefore, Kemalists attempted to create a society based on a political paradigm entirely independent of the Islamic paradigm of the Ottoman regime. While it is correct that the Kemalists succeeded in creating a secular political foundation outside of the Islamic paradigm, they were unable to prevent their opponents from using Islamic discourse to challenge their legitimacy and bring attention to issues that were ignored by the single party regime of the early republic. In this way, Islamic political discourse remained a

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 68

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 62

¹⁷⁸ Ibid

¹⁷⁹ Feroz Ahmad, “Politics and Islam in Modern Turkey,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 27, no. 1 (1991): 3

large part the political debate even during the secularist reforms of the early 20th century.¹⁸⁰

The new Kemalists leadership was afraid of the growing coalition between the remaining members of the Liberal party and the Islamists. Thus, the Kemalists abolished the Caliphate to prevent this coalition from asserting religious based political authority. This increased secularism led to the dissolution of the “bonds of Islamic identity and solidarity” that held the previous Millet system in place.¹⁸¹ The Millet system held Muslim communities together because of their religious solidarity. When the Millet system dissolved, the Muslim community became divided into separate communities distinguished by nationality. Abolishing the Caliphate and the Millet system alienated religious and minority communities, notably the Kurds and the Sufi orders, and lead to various revolts across the country, such as the Shaykh Said revolt of 1925.¹⁸² In response to these revolts, the Turkish government passed the Law for the Maintenance of Order, which allowed them to close down Sufi lodges and abolish all political parties who were in opposition to the Kemalist led Republican People’s Party.¹⁸³

The Republican Peoples Party remained the only political party until 1930 when they allowed Fethi Okyar to create an opposition party, the Free Republican Party,

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 3-21

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 6

¹⁸² Hugh Pope, and Nicole Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: A History of Modern Turkey*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 2000), 249.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 250

within the Republican Peoples Party.¹⁸⁴ For the five years between the passing of the Law for the Maintenance of Order and the founding of the Free Republican Party, political opposition to the CHP had no political outlet and “political protest could be expressed only in Islamic terms.”¹⁸⁵ Liberal and Islamists opponents to the CHP coalesced around the new party and brought the Islamic political paradigm back into the political discourse. The increase in Islamic rhetoric made the ruling party nervous; however, the Free Republican Party dissolved in November 1930, only three months after its inception. Again, the Kemalists were able to remove political Islam from the national discourse until the creation of multi-party elections in 1946.¹⁸⁶

When Ataturk died in 1938, many of his reforms were incomplete, and the country never had the opportunity to develop political leaders apart from former military officers who were loyal to Ataturk. Due to Ataturk’s autocratic methods, the Turkish Republic was created as a hierarchical state masquerading as a parliamentary democracy. Army officers who were loyal Kemalists succeeded Ataturk’s regime; however, “rather than improving on the incomplete Kemalist revolution ... Ataturk’s successors froze the picture when he died: the Turkey he had delivered was taken to be a finished product. Any change from then on was portrayed as straying from the path

¹⁸⁴ Andrew Mango, *The Turks Today*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 2004), 62.

¹⁸⁵ Feroz Ahmad, "Politics and Islam in Modern Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 27, no. 1 (1991): 7,

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 9

laid down by the *ebedi sef*, or Immortal Leader.”¹⁸⁷ The militaristic tendencies of the army officers that succeeded Ataturk in power made the leadership distrustful of any opposition. Therefore, the Turkish Republic “never really developed the concept of teamwork central to party politics.”¹⁸⁸

After Ataturk’s death his vice president, loyal Kemalist Ismet Inonu, served as the Republic’s second president until 1950.¹⁸⁹ In 1945, the Republican Peoples Party passed a land reform act that transferred land ownership from the state and some private landowners to the rural peasants. This enraged some of the land owning members of the party, specifically Adnan Menderes and Celal Bayar. Menderes and Bayar retaliated against the passing of the land act by proposing a motion demanding “the democratic principles of the constitution be applied in practice.”¹⁹⁰ After the motion was defeated, the party expelled Menderes, and Bayar resigned. This led to Menderes establishing the first official opposition party since the Free Republican Party called the Democrat Party.¹⁹¹

In the parliamentary elections of 1946, the Republican Peoples Party won 400 seats to the Democrats 40. Being that the CHP has held single party rule since 1925, the

¹⁸⁷ Hugh Pope, and Nicole Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: A History of Modern Turkey*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 2000), 65.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid

¹⁸⁹ Andrew Mango, *The Turks Today*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 2004), 27.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 41

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 42

seats picked up by the Democrats was rather significant. In the elections of 1950, the Democrat Party won with 53% of the vote and won 408 seats in the Parliament.¹⁹²

While the Democrat Party was not considered an Islamists party, it did use Islamic rhetoric in its attacks against the Kemalists.¹⁹³ The Democrat Party attacked the militant secularism of the Kemalists regime. The Democrats claimed by placing limitations on the personal Islamic identities of the religious class the CHP violated democratic principles. While this brand of rhetoric appealed to Islamists, the Democrat Party viewed as secular reconstruction of the failed Free Republican Party.¹⁹⁴ Because of these concerns over the Democrat Party, members of the right wing branch of the Democrat Party left to form the Nation Party.

The Nation Party was an electoral failure and failed to pick up any seats in parliament; however, it forced the Democrat Party to take notice of its own right-wing and Islamists supporters. While the Democrat Party won over 400 seats in the new parliament, their electoral win appeared even larger because electoral system allots every parliamentary seat in an area to the party that polled the highest in that electoral region.¹⁹⁵ Knowing that their electoral win was unnaturally inflated, therefore not as

¹⁹² Ibid, 43-5

¹⁹³ Feroz Ahmad, "Politics and Islam in Modern Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 27, no. 1 (1991): 10,

¹⁹⁴ Andrew Mango, *The Turks Today*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 2004), 42-3.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 45

strong as most believed, the Democrat Party still had to reach out for support in the Islamic electorate.

The change in power from the ultra-secular Republican Peoples Party, which was experiencing abandonment of what little Islamic support it had, to the Democrat Party, with ever increasing Islamic support, led to a new Islamic paradigm that embraces westernized democratic policies and decentralization of governmental authority. To further their cause of increasing their Islamic electorate, the Democrat Party began to merge their democratic and Islamic credentials into a policy that tied the Islamic tradition to their democratic values. The Democrat Party did this by supporting the building of Mosques and religious schools across rural Turkey.¹⁹⁶ It must be noted that unlike the first Islamic political paradigm that called for an undifferentiated rule of religion over politics, the education policy of the Democrat Party required that religious education be voluntary rather than mandatory.

The economic crisis in the late 1950's coupled with contentious debates with Greece over Cyprus led to anti-government demonstrations throughout the country. In response, Prime Minister Menderes called for the creation of an "extraordinary commission" to investigate the opposition parties.¹⁹⁷ In 1960, the military, primarily composed of Kemalists, determined that the Democrat Party had "subverted the

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 46

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 52

constitution and abused their power in order to maintain themselves in government.”¹⁹⁸

After an eleven month trial, known as the Yassıada trial, the entire parliamentary branch of the Democrat Party was imprisoned, and Prime Minister Menderes was executed.

Shortly after the imprisonment of party officials and the execution of Adnan Menderes the new military leadership, the National Unity Committee banned the Democrat Party from politics.¹⁹⁹ The Kemalists military was able to eliminate the political opposition and Islamic involvement in the government; however, the Islamic political paradigm flourished and became even stronger in the 1970’s by Necmettin Erbakan and the various political parties he established.²⁰⁰

Dissatisfied with the current political parties, the Naksibendi brotherhood, an orthodox Muslim sect, recruited Erbakan to establish a new openly Islamic party called the National Salvation Party.²⁰¹ The new party focused on public morality and Islamic virtues, however, in keeping in line with the Ottoman Islamic paradigm, all religious instruction remained voluntary, and the religious leadership remained with the religious community and not the state.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 53

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 54

²⁰⁰ Feroz Ahmad, "Politics and Islam in Modern Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 27, no. 1 (1991): 13-19,

²⁰¹ Andrew Mango, *The Turks Today*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 2004), 71.

Erbakan's National Salvation Party won only 48 seats in the 1973 elections, however, neither of the other two parties, the centre-right Justice Party led by Suleyman Demirel, or the Republican Peoples Party led by Bulent Ecevit, were able to attract enough votes to have a majority.²⁰² The lack of a parliamentary majority forced Demirel and Ecevit to convince Erbakan to form a coalition government. The logical choice for Erbakan would have been to form a coalition with Demirel. Both Erbakan and Demirel were openly Muslim; both used Islamic rhetoric in their campaigns, and both relied on the conservative vote, however, personal animosity between Erbakan and Demirel made such a coalition impossible. Therefore, Ecevit became Prime Minister by creating a coalition with Erbakan. The coalition between the National Salvation Party and the Republican Peoples Party marked the first time the Kemalists and Islamists formally joined each other politically, and the first time a major Islamists party moved to the political left. However, the relationship between Ecevit and Erbakan did not last long as Erbakan was never completely comfortable with the leftist and secular policies of Ecevit.²⁰³

In July 1974, Ecevit authorized 'Operation Peace' and military intervention in Cyprus. Operation Peace was so popular Ecevit believed he could win the majority without Erbakan. Therefore, Ecevit dissolved his coalition with Erbakan, resigned as

²⁰² Ibid

²⁰³ Ibid, 72

Prime Minister, and demanded parliament call for new elections. However, parliament refused to hold new elections, and Erbakan formed a new coalition with Süleyman Demirel and the Justice Party.²⁰⁴

The unexpectedness of these actions created hostility between the left-wing and right-wing movements in Turkey and soon violence broke out across the country. The military blamed the vitriol in Parliament between the new right-wing coalition government of Demirel and Erbakan and the left-wing led by Ecevit. The hostility escalated throughout the 1970's until finally in 1980 the military dissolved the constitution, banned all political parties, and installed itself as the new government until 1983.²⁰⁵ The political violence of the 1970's and the military coup of 1980 provides the setting for Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book*.

After the military had reinstated the constitution in 1983, Erbakan restructured the National Salvation Party into the Welfare Party; however, due to the laws that banned the politicians of the 1970's he would not be able to lead the party until 1987.²⁰⁶ The Welfare Party differed from its predecessor in its context if not in concept. The political climate of the 1970's left Erbakan dissatisfied with right-wing politics and made him aware of the importance of successful coalitions between the secularists and the

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 75

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 76-80

²⁰⁶ R. Quinn Mecham, "From the Ashes of Virtue, a Promise of Light: The Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey," *Third World Quarterly*, 25, no. 2 (2004): 342

Islamists. Erbakan's new party promoted radical change and social justice rather than conservative religious principles. According to Erbakan the Welfare Parties ideology was one that had a 'national viewpoint' or 'milli gorus' in Turkish.²⁰⁷

According to R. Quinn Meham at the Center for International Security and Cooperation, the milli gorus movements platform was the recognition of:

The importance of social justice, Turkey's exploitation by the West, religious freedom, ethic tolerance, promotion of private enterprise, creation of an interest free 'Islamic' economy, an end to state corruption, and denunciations of an 'imperialist Zionist system' that threatened Turkey's national independence.²⁰⁸

Banu Eligur, author of *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey*, argues Islamic principles were the basis of social justice in Erbakan's milli gorus movement.²⁰⁹ Because using religion for political purposes was illegal Erbakan used "code words *national* and *culture* to refer to Islam, and *National View* to refer to the project of political Islam."²¹⁰ Erbakan believed the Ottoman Empire was "a successful experience" and "Turkey had nothing to learn from the West regarding state governance."²¹¹ Both left and right winged political parties in Turkey were imitating the west. Therefore, the ideal of westernization in Turkey is a foreign imitation. Erbakan sought to replace the foreign

²⁰⁷ Ibid

²⁰⁸ Ibid

²⁰⁹ Banu Eligur, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 66.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 67

²¹¹ Ibid

ideal of westernization with 'national view' that was in line with the political Islam of the Ottoman Empire.

The elections of 1987 were the first that Erbakan was able to return to politics as the official leader of the Welfare Party. While the Welfare Party polled very modestly in the 1987 elections, Erbakan was able to increase the parties vote in each of the next four elections.²¹² By 1996, the Welfare Party was the largest party in parliament and Erbakan become Turkey's first Islamic Prime Minister.²¹³ However, Erbakan's political experience in the 1970's had a lasting effect on his political actions in the 1990's. Erbakan frustrated his parties constituency by creating a coalition with the secular True Path Party, which he felt was necessary to secure the non-religious vote, and by showing too much reverence for the secular constitution created by the military in the 1980's, which he did to prevent the threat of another military coup.²¹⁴

Erbakan was unable to prevent the military from interfering with his government. In 1997, the National Security Council, the pro-secular leadership branch of the military, issued a set of demands to Erbakan that threatened his leadership and the Welfare Party. The military demanded the closure of Islamic schools across the country and the removal of Islamists sympathizers from the government; out of fear of

²¹² R. Quinn Mehm, "From the Ashes of Virtue, a Promise of Light: The Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey," *Third World Quarterly*, 25, no. 2 (2004): 342,

²¹³ Ibid

²¹⁴ Ibid, 343

another military coup Erbakan signed the proposal and resigned from the government. Soon after Erbakan resigned the military filed a motion to ban the Welfare Party from politics.²¹⁵ Members of the Welfare Party that were close to Erbakan saw that the Constitutional Court was about to close the party; therefore, they created the Virtue Party to take its place.²¹⁶

The creation of the Virtue Party created fierce political debates within the government. The new party debated who would be the new party leader after Erbakan was banned from politics. The main candidates were Recai Kutan, a close political ally of Erbakan, and Recip Tayyip Erdogan, the popular Welfare Mayor of Istanbul.²¹⁷ Those opposed to the new party argued that it was merely an extension of the banned Welfare Party and, therefore, illegal from inception. The election of Kutan as the leader of the Virtue Party supported this argument. Kutan argued that the new party was distinctly different from the Welfare Party because the diminishing role of religion in government was not its concern. Rather, the diminishing role of democracy in Turkish politics was the focus of Kutan's party. Kutan suggested the failure of previous Islamic oriented parties was not that they stressed religious values, but rather undemocratic secularism

²¹⁵ Ibid, 344

²¹⁶ Ibid, 345

²¹⁷ Banu Eligur, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 198.

suppressed those values.²¹⁸ Kutan, much like Erbakan, believed that increased democracy would empower the religious communities and would lead to increased political power in the hands of the Islamists. In other words, increasing democratic reforms would create a system much like the Ottoman paradigm that separated state authority from religious authority but allowed the state to be empowered by its religious constituency.

However, not all members of the Virtue Party were happy with Kutan's leadership. Nearly half of the Virtue party coalesced behind Abdullah Gül and Recep Tayyip Erdogan in a faction that would become known as the Reformist Movement.²¹⁹ The Reformists argued Kutan was driving the party to the middle in an attempt to wait out the ban on Erbakan's political involvement. Abdullah Gül believed not only was Turkey in the midst of a deficiency of democracy, but the Virtue Party itself was acting in anti-democratic ways. According to Gül, Erbakan was still running the party from behind the scenes, and Kutan was stifling the opinions of those not loyal to Erbakan. In May 2000, Abdullah Gül officially challenged Kutan for leadership during the party's

²¹⁸ R. Quinn Mehm, "From the Ashes of Virtue, a Promise of Light: The Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey," *Third World Quarterly*, 25, no. 2 (2004): 346,

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, 345²¹⁹ R. Quinn Mehm, "From the Ashes of Virtue, a Promise of Light: The Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey," *Third World Quarterly*, 25, no. 2 (2004): 346,

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, 345.

convention. Kutan narrowly maintained his position; however, the party was already heading into decline.²²⁰

In June 2001, the Constitutional Court voted to ban the Virtue Party claiming it was just a renaming of the banned Welfare party controlled by Erbakan. Rather than challenging the ruling of the court members of the Virtue Party split into two new political parties, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), founded by the reformists, and the Felicity Party, founded by Erbakan.²²¹

The creation of these two parties marks the most recent evolution of the Ottoman political paradigm. Both parties maintained their Islamic credentials, but both differ in their political ideology. The Justice and Development Party sought to bridge the gap between the secularist and the Islamists; they recruited member from outside the Virtue Party; they toned down their religious rhetoric, and they stressed personal religion and ethnic tolerance. The Felicity Party, however, increased their anti-west and religious rhetoric, and this led many voters to question the legitimacy of the Felicity Party, many believed it was still an extension of Erbakan's banned Welfare Party.²²² The 2002 elections swung heavily in favor of the Justice and Development Party due to the rising popularity of the Justice and Development Party and the increased suspicion toward the Felicity Party.

²²⁰ Ibid, 349

²²¹ Ibid

²²² Ibid, 351

The Justice and Development Party had increased its percentage in each election 2002.²²³ In 2003, Erdogan was named Prime Minister of Turkey to the chagrin of the nations' secularists. In 2007, when it was believed Erdogan was going to run in Turkey's presidential election protests were in Ankara denouncing Erdogan out of fear he would implement an Islamic agenda unilaterally. In response to these protests, Erdogan announced he would not be the party's candidate for President and threw his support behind Abdullah Gül.²²⁴

While Gül is considered more moderate than Erdogan, his candidacy did little to calm the fears of the secularists. Both Gül and Erdogan have been publically criticized over their wives' decision to wear headscarves, a practice that was banned in public by Atatürk. During the election Gül was questioned about his wife's headscarf to which he replied "these are individual preferences and everybody should respect them."²²⁵ Gül continued to position himself as a moderate by stating "the president must be loyal to secular principles, if I am elected I will act accordingly."²²⁶ Gül won 339 out of 550 parliamentary votes, more than enough needed for victory, and became Turkey's first Islamist president. During his inaugural speech Gül "pledged support for secularism,

²²³ Ibid, 352.

²²⁴ "Turkey Must Have Secular Leader." *BBC News*, World News, sec. Europe, April 24, 2007.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6587061.stm>

²²⁵ "Profile: Abdullah Gul." *BBC News*, World News edition, sec. Europe, August 28, 2007.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6595511.stm>

²²⁶ "Turkey Must Have Secular Leader." *BBC News*, World News, sec. Europe, April 24, 2007.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6587061.stm>

human rights and Turkey's efforts to join the European Union and showered praise on Ataturk and the army." In his acceptance speech, Gül claimed "Secularism - one of the main principles of our republic - is a precondition for social peace as much as it is a liberating model for different lifestyles, I will embrace all our citizens without any bias."²²⁷

Just as Turkey was electing its first Islamists president the trials against the Ergenekon organization were just beginning. Ergenekon, named after a mythological valley in Anatolia, is an alleged terrorist organization comprised of ultra-nationalists and Kemalist military members. The Ergenekon organization has been accused of terrorist activities with the goal of overthrowing the government. In 2008, 86 militants were indicted for conspiring to attack high profile Turks. The indictment accused members of Ergenekon of attacking an administrative court and murdering a judge in 2006 and of attacking a pro-secular newspaper while impersonating Islamists. The indictment also accuses Ergenekon of planning to kill Prime Minister Erdogan along with prominent Kurdish political leaders. Orhan Pamuk was identified as one of Ergenekon's assassination targets. According to the indictment, "The attacks and the planned killings were aimed at creating chaos that would lead to the overthrow of the government." Some commentators in Turkey believe the Ergenekon trials are being used to suppress

²²⁷ "Islamic-rooted Gul Wins Turkish Presidency." *NBC*, News edition, sec. World, August 28, 2007.
<http://www.nbcnews.com/id/20473346/41336890>

opposition to the Justice and Development Party. This theory gained legitimacy when members of opposition parties were detained without official charges.²²⁸ While the extent of the Ergenekon conspiracy remains unknown— legal proceedings and investigations are currently in progress at the time of this thesis— it represents the newest chapter of conflict between secularists and political Islamists in Turkey.

Turkey's internal struggles since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire are prime examples of the effects of communal melancholy on a nation. The founders of the Turkish republic created a system where political identity is not associated with race, ethnicity, or religion but instead political identity is based on the national conscious. However, instead of developing a national conscious that is inclusive of the various religious and ethnic communities that were leftover by the Ottoman Empire, they instead developed an identity that rejects religious and ethnic nuances. This has created a political system in which nationalistic and ethno-religious forces are in constant contention with one another for control over Turkey's political future. Atatürk and his Kemalist revolution were temporarily able to put Turkey on an arc of ascent towards westernization and modernity, however, this path has been disrupted by political conflict between Kemalists and Islamists.

²²⁸ Daily Mail Reporter "Trial of 86 Militants Accused of Trying to Topple Turkish Prime Minister Opens Amid Court Chaos." *Daily Mail*, Online edition, sec. News, October 20, 2008.

Since the death of Ataturk, neither the Kemalists nor the Islamists have been able to gain full control over the political ideals and direction of the country. If the fall of the Ottoman Empire represents the Turkish Republic's arc of descent, than the inability of the Kemalists and Islamists to work together has prevented Turkey from ascending towards a new ideal. This puts Turkey in a unique position between the arcs of descent and ascent which is defined in this thesis as a melancholic moment. To begin the arc of ascent and cure their collective melancholy Turkey must eliminate divisive distinctions such as secular or religious, modern or backward, west or east, and allow all members of society to have an equal voice in their political future.

CHAPTER V

THE BLACK BOOK: THE LOSS OF THE IDEAL, AND THE ARC OF DESCENT

Pamuk's *The Black Book* is set in Istanbul over ten days in January 1980. *The Black Book* follows Galip through Istanbul while he is searching for his missing wife Rüya, which is the Turkish word for dream. Translator Güneli Gün describes Rüya as the "Platonic ideal."²²⁷ Galip searches for mystical signs that will direct him to his dream. However, the only signs Galip finds are "red herrings that only lead him back to himself."²²⁸ Pamuk claims *The Black Book* is an attempt "to do for Istanbul what James Joyce had done for Dublin in *Ulysses*." While Joyce presents his story of Leopold Bloom through characters and stories that reflect Homer's *The Odyssey*, Pamuk's portrayal of Galip is framed by the literature of Sheikh Galip's *Beauty and Love* and Rumi's *Mathnawi*.

The action in *The Black Book* begins when Galip, an attorney, returns home from work to find Rüya had left him. Determined to find his wife Galip starts searching for clues that will guide him to her whereabouts. While searching for Rüya, Galip discovers his cousin, Rüya's half-brother and famous newspaper columnist, Celal Salik has also

²²⁷ Güneli Gün, "The Turks Are Coming: Deciphering Orhan Pamuk's Black Book," *World Literature Today*, 66, no. 1 (1992): 59.

²²⁸ Ibid

been missing for days. Convinced Rüya and Celal must be together Galip's search for Rüya becomes a simultaneous search for Celal. The word Celal has many meanings and connotations in Turkish. Celal, pronounced Jelal, is easily recognizable both as a name the character shares with the poet Rumi and also as one of the Ninety-Nine Names for Allah. Celal's last name Salik means "a traveler on the Sufi path."²³¹ Galip is also easily recognized by Turkish speakers as a reference to Sheikh Galip whose *Beauty and Love* plays a vital role in the novel.

Through the course of the novel, we learn Galip and Rüya fell in love while reading *Beauty and Love* together. Like *The Black Book*, Sheik Galip's *Beauty and Love* is a story about a man's quest to be reunited with his beloved. Sheik Galip's tale begins with Beauty and Love as schoolmates learning together from Professor Madness when they fall in love and are separated by Lord Dazzle. Lord Dazzle takes Beauty to the Land of Heart, the spiritual realm, where she must wait for Love to find her. Because Love is in the material realm and Beauty is in the spiritual realm, they can only communicate by giving letters to Poetry to pass on through the realm of imagination. They use Poetry as the intermediary "not only because he is speech, communication, but because he works in form, in imagination,"²³² in this way Poetry acts as the link between the material and

²³¹ Michael McGaha, *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2008), 106.

²³² Shiekh Galip, *Beauty and Love*, trans. Victoria Rowe Holbrook (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2005), xv.

the spiritual. For Love to arrive in the Land of Heart, he must first “burn down the Fortress of Forms” that separates the material realm from the spiritual realm. After he burns down the Fortress of Forms, Love realizes the material realm and the spiritual realm coexist, and it is only after Love purifies his soul that sees that he and Beauty are the same:

For Love is but Beauty, and Beauty Love
You’ve practiced that path of error thereof
In unity there is no make-believe
In that duty nothing that cannot be ²³³

In the end, Love is reunited with Beauty when Love discovers the unity of being and breaks through the veil that separates the material from the spiritual. In short, Beauty and Love begin united, are separated by the veil between material and spiritual, use Poetry to transcend through imagination, and are reunited when the form of self is annihilated. Therefore, the reunion between Beauty and Love represents the melancholic’s descent from and ascent back towards God.

Like *Beauty and Love*, *The Black Book* begins with Galip and his ideal, in the form of Rüya, united. When they become separated Galip uses Celal’s writings as an attempt to transcend imagination and find his lost ideal; it is only after he loses sense of himself is he able to find his lost love. However, unlike in *Beauty and Love*, by the time Galip finds Rüya it is too late. The true melancholy in losing his wife/dream was that he had

²³³ Ibid, 200.

to lose his belief in signs, transcendence, and ultimately Islam; because they failed to bring him to his object of desire Galip is forced to abandon his rational constructs and succumb to the melancholy of that loss.²³⁴ Islam's role in this melancholy is the same that Christianity was for Nietzsche. Thus, *The Black Book* represents Turkish society coming to terms with the death of God just as Galip must come to terms with the death of his ideal.

McGaha suggests *The Black Book* is "an allegory for modern man's gaining control of his destiny by killing (and therefore in a sense also becoming) God and in the process also destroying the mystery (or dream [Rüya]) that made life worth living."²³⁵

According to Jale Parla:

[the] concentric structure [of the Black Book] might be said to rest on the paradigmatic possibilities of the simple sentence 'Galip, looking for Rüya , finds Celal and kills him, unintentionally killing Rüya , too,' which the author does not tire of exploiting. The sentence might be read as 'the novice, looking for an ideal, finds the master and kills him, unintentionally killing the ideal, too,' or 'a man, looking for identity, finds his double and kills it, unintentionally killing his former self, too,' and so on.²³⁶

While at a night club, Galip meets with a woman named Belkis whom he was classmates with in middle school. Belkis informed Galip that she has been in love with

²³⁴ Ian Almond, "Islam, Melancholy, and Sad, Concrete Minarets: The Futility of Narratives in Orhan Pamuk's "The Black Book", " *New Literary History*, 34, no. 1 (2003): 75-90.

²³⁵ Michael McGaha, *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2008), 1.

²³⁶ Ibid

him for years and has tried to imitate Rüya to win over his love. This convinces Galip that the best course of action to find Celal and Rüya is to acquire Celal's memories, to do so Galip begins to read everything Celal has written. Galip begins to impersonate Celal and starts to write newspaper columns under Celal's name. When Galip first starts to write Celal's newspaper columns he begins to take on Celal's identity and begins "to feel his own identity melt away."²³⁷ According to Maureen Freely, who translated *The Black Book* into American English, the best English language understanding of Pamuk's melancholy is a loss of self identity.²³⁸ By writing as Celal, Galip obtains self-annihilation becomes Celal. It is only by becoming Celal that Galip can be led to his lost ideal. By having Galip write as and ultimately become Celal, Pamuk is alluding to Sheik Galip imitating Rumi's *Mathnawi*. Just as Galip steals from Celal, Sheik Galip stole from Rumi. According to Shiek Galip:

The mystery I took from the Mathnawi
I stole, but I stole common property
Endeavor to understand this yourself
Find that precious pearl and steal it yourself²³⁹

In this sense, the loss of self identity is positive in that it allows Galip to transcend himself and begin the arc of ascent.

²³⁷ Maureen Freely, "A Translator's Tale," *World Literature Today*, 80, no. 6 (2006): 30-33,

²³⁸ Ibid

²³⁹ Shiekh Galip, *Beauty and Love*, trans. Victoria Rowe Holbrook (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2005), 202.

“The mystery I took from the Mathnawi” is used as an epigraph to *The Black Book*’s thirty-third chapter *Mysterious Paintings*. This chapter describes a contest held at the grand opening of an Istanbul night club. The night club owner commissions a contest between two painters to paint murals along the walls of the club. The painters must create their murals while a tarp divides the room and prevents either artist from seeing what the other is creating. One artist paints a mural depicting a busy Istanbul street with the Bosphorus in the background. On the other side of the room the other artist installs a giant mirror that reflects the first artist’s painting. The artist who installs the mirror is declared the winner because even though the mirror is reflecting the same image as the painting “in the silver light of the candelabras it seemed brighter, finer, and more beautiful than the original.”²⁴⁰ In essence, this is a retelling of the parable of the Chinese and Greek painters told in Rumi’s *Mathnawi*. In Rumi’s story the Chinese and Greeks argue over which group were more talented painters. To settle the argument the Sultan commissioned each group to paint a house. While the Chinese painted the house in elaborate and vibrant colors, the Greeks simply “scrubbed and polished their house until it gleamed.”²⁴¹ Similarly to the artist and his mirror the Greeks were declared the winner because the reflection of the Chinese colors was

²⁴⁰ Orhan Pamuk, *The Black Book*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 398.

²⁴¹ Michael McGaha, *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2008), 107.

considered more beautiful than the original. Rumi interprets this story in the first book of the Mathnawi in a poem titled *Rose*:

Have you ever plucked a rose [Gul] from Gaf and Lam?
You name His name; go, seek the reality named by it!
Look for the moon in heaven, not in the water!
If you desire to rise above mere names and letters,
Make yourself free from self at one stroke!
Like a sword be without trace of soft iron;
Like a steel mirror, scour off all rust and contrition;
Make yourself pure from all attributes of self,
That you may see your own pure bright essence

According to McGaha, Rumi is warning us “not to become fixated on mere words or captivated by reflections but to go for the real thing they represent.”²⁴² Pamuk’s mirror and the Greeks reflective house are symbolic of the human soul. As discussed earlier the Sufi’s use the mirror as a symbol for the soul and “vanity, egotism, and selfish desires and passions cloud the mirror.”²⁴³ By eliminating these individualistic qualities, the mirror is polished and reflects the attributes of God. McGaha reminds us, “it is only through the annihilation (fana) of the false self that the true self can attain ‘subsistence’ (baqa) in the presence of God.”²⁴⁴ However, rather than representing the reflection of God’s attributes the mirror in Pamuk’s night club illustrates how Turkey has been dazzled by imitations and false representations of itself. According to the nightclub owner, “all the pleasant jokes, the pleasant coincidences, and the world’s mysteries

²⁴² Ibid, 108.

²⁴³ Ibid

²⁴⁴ Ibid

were tricks perpetrated neither by the painting nor the mirror; customers high on drugs and booze, flying on clouds of woe and melancholy, rediscovered the golden age in their imaginations and, full of the joy of solving the mystery of that lost world, the confused the enigmas in their minds with the replica before their eyes."²⁴⁵ Therefore, the imitation of self, or the false self, is confused as the real self.

According Gün, the minor narratives throughout the book point to a society that is losing a collective ideal.²⁴⁶ One of the stories within *The Black Book* is credited to a fictional F.M Üçüncü who claims that the world is occupied separately by the West and the East and "at times one of the two halves was victorious over the other, making it the master and the other the slave."²⁴⁷ Turkey's quest to modernize along Western lines has forced them to become a slave to the West, and by doing so, they are forced to forget their collective Ottoman past and create a new secular and modern future. Gün points to this enslavement by the West as the source of Turkey's loss of their own ideal which is the source of their melancholy.²⁴⁸ This is expressed in *The Black Book* by the story of the mannequin maker who was ordered to stop creating Ottoman mannequins and instead create Western mannequins. While the mannequin maker obliges, he is

²⁴⁵ Orhan Pamuk, *The Black Book*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 400.

²⁴⁶ Güneli Gün, "The Turks Are Coming: Deciphering Orhan Pamuk's Black Book," *World Literature Today*, 66, no. 1 (1992): 59-63,

²⁴⁷ Orhan Pamuk, *The Black Book*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 320.

²⁴⁸ Güneli Gün, "The Turks Are Coming: Deciphering Orhan Pamuk's Black Book," *World Literature Today*, 66, no. 1 (1992): 59-63,

never able to let go completely of the past and continues to create Ottoman style mannequins in his basement. According to Pamuk:

In order to establish a modern and Westernized nation, Ataturk and the whole Turkish establishment decided to forget Islam, traditional culture, traditional dress, traditional language and traditional literature. It was all buried. But what is suppressed comes back, and it has come back in a new way. Somehow, in literature, I am myself that thing that comes back, but I came back with my postmodern forms. I came back as someone who not only represents tradition, traditional Sufi literature, traditional form, traditional ways of seeing things, but also as someone who is well versed with what is happening in Western literature. So I put together the experimentalism, I mix modernism with tradition, which makes my work accessible, mysterious, and I supposed, charming, to the reader.²⁴⁹

The mixing of West and East and modernism and tradition is rampant in *The Black Book*. Pamuk begins the thirty-first chapter of the Black Book with the lines “I was sleeping with the weariness of sorrow in the middle of the journey of our life we call a dream, Rüya, in a dark wood of high-rises in a muddy city where the faces are even gloomier than the gloomy streets, when I came upon you.”²⁵⁰ This is a clear allusion to the opening of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, “In the middle of the journey of our life I found myself in a dark wood, for the straight way was lost.”²⁵¹ The similarities to Dante do not end here. In the *Divine Comedy*, Dante begins his journey in hell, travels through

²⁴⁹ Michael McGaha, *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2008), 114.

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 111

²⁵¹ Ibid

purgatory, and ultimately ascends towards heaven representing the soul's reunion with God. Similarly, immediately after Galip's descent into the "inferno-like mannequin workshop" he climbs to the top of a minaret at the Sulemaniye Mosque. This represents both Galip's descent from the old ideal and ascent towards the new ideal which, according to McGaha, is an "archetypal symbol of the journey of initiation and transformation whereby we reclaim the authentic self and release the false self."²⁵² This is where the Sufi concepts of fana' and baqa' are critical to the understanding of the novel.

The Black Book is divided into two parts; the first represents fana' while the second represents baqa'. Accordig to Sooyong Kim, professor of Ottoman Literature at Koç University in Istanbul:

The novel's division into two sections fits the paradigm of the Path to self-disintegration and to self-reintegration. The first half ends with Galip's entry into Celal's flat. Galip literally is at the threshold of losing his selfhood. Up to this point, Galip undergoes, as it were, a rite of passage. He looks for various signs and clues to form a meaning, until he comes across one sign that points him in the direction of the Sherikalp apartment... As the second section unfolds, Galip leads a dual life. Galip impersonates Celal: he lies in his flat, wears his clothes, reads his files, answers his phone calls and writes articles under his name. He takes on Celal's attributes and subsists, in function and form, in Celal's reality, corresponding to Mevlana's [Rumi's] understanding of 'form' and 'meaning.' His

²⁵² Ibid

selfhood is reintegrated with Celal's, hence Galip actualizes his selfhood as a writer.²⁵³

The concepts of fana' and baqa' are elaborated on in the novel's penultimate chapter "The Story of the Crown Prince." This chapter is a parable about Prince Osman Celalettin, once Sultan Abdulhamit II's younger brothers, who "discovered that the most important question in life was whether to be, or not to be, oneself."²⁵⁴

For the last twenty-two years of his life the Prince resigned himself to his hunting lodge where he dictated his thoughts to a scribe. When the Prince moved from being fifth to third in line for the throne he spent six years reading voraciously "hungrily turning from page to page in search of ideas that might prove useful; soon he had convinced himself that he might be able to use these ideas in his future reign and so restore the Ottoman Empire to glory."²⁵⁵ The years he spent reading were the happiest of his life, however, according to the Prince "because all I did was read ... because my only dreams came from the books I read. Because I spent those six years alone with their authors' thoughts and voices ... throughout those six years, I was unable to become myself...I was not myself, and perhaps that was why I was happy, but a sultan's duty is not to be happy---it is to be himself!"²⁵⁶ This is of utmost importance for a sultan because "peoples who had not discovered a way of being themselves were condemned

²⁵³ Ibid

²⁵⁴ Orhan Pamuk, *The Black Book*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 422-25.

²⁵⁵ Ibid

²⁵⁶ Ibid

to slavery, races to degeneracy, nations to nonexistence, to nothingness” and “all peoples that are unable to be themselves, civilizations that imitate another, nations that find happiness in the stories that belong to others were condemned to collapse, annihilation, and oblivion.”²⁵⁷

According to the Prince, “to be oneself a person must hear only his own voice, his own stories his own thoughts,”²⁵⁸ because he has spent so much time reading other peoples writings his own thoughts were clouded by the thoughts of others. The Prince told his scribe about a dream he had in which he had become sultan, “In my daydream I had just dignified my haughty speech with the words ‘As Voltaire says’ ...when suddenly I saw where I had landed myself in so doing. It suddenly seemed to me that the man I imagined as the thirty-fifth Ottoman sultan was not me but Voltaire—not me but a Voltaire impersonator.”²⁵⁹ Thus, the Prince ordered all his books to be burned. He burned the works of Schopenhauer because he did not want to rule as a German philosopher. He burned Sheikh Galip because he turned him into “a melancholic lover.” He also had the works of Bottfolio burned because he made the Prince see himself “as a Westerner who longed to be an Easterner,” and likewise had works of Ibn Zerhani burned because he made the Prince “an Easterner who longed to become a Westerner, and because [the Prince] had no wish to see [himself] as an Easterner, a Westerner, an

²⁵⁷ Ibid

²⁵⁸ Ibid

²⁵⁹ Ibid

obsessive, a madman, an adventurer, or a character from a book.”²⁶⁰ The Prince soon discovered eliminating books would not rid him of the influence of others, therefore, he also began to discard all of his furniture and other belongings.

By eliminating everything, the Prince believed all that would remain would be his true self. However, the Prince remained envious of the “stones in the desert for just being themselves, and rocks in mountains where no man has ever set foot, and trees in valleys hidden from human eyes.” Soon after conveying these words to his scribe he Prince died in his hunting lodge “from which he has managed to eliminate everything that is not himself, and in the process he has also eliminated himself.”²⁶¹ Thus, the Prince has “undergone fana’ but has failed to attain baqa’; in other words, he has succeeded in passing away but not been reborn.”²⁶²

In his article “The Black Book and Black Boxes: Orhan Pamuk’s *Kara Kitap*” Walter Andrews argues:

In Turkey, “Being oneself” is not just a private anxiety or a topic for the psychiatrist’s couch, it lives very much on the surface of public dialogue. For Turkey to be “modern” and “secular” it had to cease—abruptly—being something else, and Turks of more conservative political persuasions have long struggled with the feeling that the dislocations and discontents of their modernity may be bound to the load

²⁶⁰ Ibid

²⁶¹ Michael McGaha, *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2008), 113.

²⁶² Ibid

of that something which might well have been the “true Turkish self.” Meanwhile, on the left, the feeling is quite the reverse: that something was lost far earlier—under the Ottomans—only to be recovered by Turkish nationalist modernity. For Turks these feelings then become powerful points of leverage in political rhetoric.²⁶³

Ultimately Galip discovers Celal and Rüya were engaged in radical political activities that were common and violent in 1970’s and 1980’s Istanbul. By the time Galip finds Rüya both she and Celal have been murdered. Rüya has been over politicized by the divisions between Islamists and secularists in Turkish politics, and Galip is never able to reunite with his dream. Therefore, *The Black Book* serves as a warning against both becoming too involved in divisive politics and becoming too attached to political distinctions. Thus, Galip’s story ends similar to Prince Osman Celalettin; Galip has reached *fana’* but has not successfully obtained *baqa’*. Galip, like Turkey, has completed the arc of descent but is unable to complete the arc of ascent.

²⁶³ Ibid

CHAPTER VI

SNOW: THE MELANCHOLIC MOMENT

While *The Black Book* represents Turkey's domestic struggle to create a unifying ideal, Pamuk's novel *Snow* explores the effects melancholy has on a society that is on the periphery of modernization and its effects on global politics. This novel is described as Pamuk's first political novel; however, it may "better be described as 'antipolitical'."²⁶² According to Pamuk,

This isn't a political novel of the '30's or '40's, or socially committed, or with a political agenda. This is not propaganda. This may be the first political novel ever written where there's almost no propaganda in it...I'm not saying, look, here are bad guys, here are good guys. I'm not taking sides. In fact, it's more a crying out for happiness: Life is short, enjoy it, take your girl, and run away.²⁶³

In another interview Pamuk has said:

I've had enough of big ideas. I've been overexposed to them in my over-politicized country. Literature is my reaction to this, an attempt to turn the game around and invest it with a certain humor, a certain distance. I want to tell the reader: Don't take everything so damned seriously. Isn't life beautiful? Pay attention to life's details. The most important thing in life is happiness, and the

²⁶² Michael McGaha, *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2008), 156.

²⁶³ Ibid

possibility to survive in this intolerant society we have created.²⁶⁶

Michael McGaha described the novel as “a warning against the dangers of getting overly involved in politics.”²⁶⁷

The novel is set in Kars, a small town in eastern Turkey known for its snow and poverty. The Kars described by Pamuk is divided between secularists and Islamists clashing for political control of the city. The novel focuses on Ka, a poet and political exile returning to Turkey after twelve years in Germany, who travels to Kars as a journalist for an Istanbul newspaper to report on a series of suicides committed by school girls who have been banned from wearing headscarves in school. However, his true motivation to travel to Kars is to seduce and marry Ipek, a childhood friend who recently divorced her Islamist husband Mutar. Mutar is running for Mayor of Kars as the candidate for an Islamists party. The trip lasts three days while Kars is isolated from the rest of Turkey by a blizzard that has blocked the roads. During these three days, Ka is stranded in Kars with secularist militants, Islamist students, and Kurdish separatists while each group is coming to terms with the political melancholy effecting Turkey.

While in Kars Ka witnesses the assassination of the director of Education, meets with an Islamic terrorist named Blue, and befriends the leader of the headscarf girls,

²⁶⁶ Ibid

²⁶⁷ Ibid

which all culminates in a secularist coup that leaves everyone struggling to contact the outside world.

Pamuk describes the history and landscape of Kars in the same melancholic frame as he does Istanbul establishing the city as the melancholic object that is necessary to *hüzün*. Pamuk describes Kars history:

Kars was an important station on the trade route to Georgia, Tabriz, and the Caucasus; being on the border between two empires not defunct, the Ottoman and the Russian ... During the Ottoman period, many different peoples had made Kars their home. There had been a large Armenian community; it no longer existed, but its thousand-year-old churches still stood in all their splendor. Many Persians ... had settled in Kars over the years; there were Greeks...Georgians and Kurds, and Circassians from various tribes ... To the Russians Kars was a gateway to the south and to the Mediterranean, and with an eye to controlling the trade routes running through it they invested a great deal in civic projects ... The streets and the large cobblestone pavements, the plane trees and the oleanders that had been planted after the founding of the Turkish Republic ... gave the city a melancholy air unknown to Ottoman cities, whose wooden houses burned down...²⁶⁸

This description of Kars is similar to Pamuk's description of Istanbul. The melancholy comes from the persisting reminders of the lost splendor and global importance of the city. The melancholy of Kars is the same habitual melancholy associated with Istanbul.

²⁶⁸ Orhan Pamuk, *Snow*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 19.

Pamuk chose Kars as the setting for his novel because the city is “emblematic of remoteness, poverty and provincial isolation, and could therefore serve very well as a symbol of Turkey’s position vis-à-vis the Western world.”²⁶⁹ According to Pamuk, he did not write *Snow* to “replicate the city” but rather to “project onto Kars” the questions posed to him by the melancholic landscape.²⁷⁰ Kars is on the periphery of Turkey; the distance between Kars and Istanbul is representative of the distance between Turkey and the power centers of the West. Pamuk states he used the snow for which the city is famous to cut the city off from the rest of Turkey; making it impossible for the town to communicate its crisis to the world outside of Kars.²⁷¹ For the rest of Turkey Istanbul is a symbol for modernity and westernization, however, Kars is a symbol of Turkey’s isolation and failure to express itself globally. Pamuk shows how the ideal of modernity is defined as a Western ideal and Turkey will forever be just short of obtaining it.

Annihilating the Self and Becoming the Other: The East-West Question

When Ka first reunites with Ipek at the Snow Palace Hotel they “shook hands in the manner of the westernized Istanbul bourgeoisie, but after a moment’s hesitation

²⁶⁹ Ibid, 157

²⁷⁰ Orhan Pamuk, “From the Snow in Kars Notebooks,” *Other Colours: Essays and a Story*, ed. Orhan Pamuk (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 273.

²⁷¹ Ibid

they moved their heads forward ... and kissed on the cheeks."²⁷² Both Ka and Ipek have western and eastern experiences and sensibilities, however, in Kars, the duplicities of Pamuk's characters are reduced to one-dimensional representations. According to Sibel Erol:

... the characters in Kars are defined in terms of a schematic dichotomy. For example, being a Westerner automatically means being an atheist. Being religious ... is immediately understood as a marker of fundamentalism. Interestingly, these one-dimensional and mutually exclusive definitions are not imposed from the outside, but are articulated by the characters themselves.²⁷³

No one notices Ka and Ipek's westernized greeting, however, they both still feel inclined to adjust the greeting to one more acceptable in Kars. Pamuk examines the ambiguities of West and East and show readers the similarities between these so-called clashing civilizations by creating characters that view the world and themselves one-dimensionally.

To explore these ambiguities, Pamuk creates characters that mirror each other and present opposing characteristics. Pamuk uses the doppelganger theme in many of his novels to explore the "question of the 'other,' the 'stranger,' the 'enemy' that

²⁷² Orhan Pamuk, *Snow*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 23.

²⁷³ Sibel Erol, "Reading Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* as Parody: Difference as Sameness," *Comparative Critical Studies*, 4, no. 3 (2007): 411.

resonates inside each of our heads."²⁷⁴ Pamuk believes the novel form allows writers to create characters that reflect not just their own lives and cities but the lives and cities of the readers. Therefore, novels allow writers to "take our own stories and present them to all humanity as stories about someone else."²⁷⁵

The other is a creation of mind that addresses individual "primitive hatreds, fears, and anxieties," however, by identifying with characters that on the surface appear opposed to their own values the reader is liberated "from the confines of his self."²⁷⁶ The ability to imagine oneself as someone else is what Pamuk describes as the source of a novelist's politics. Pamuk first used the doppelganger motif in *The White Castle* in which he pairs an Italian scholar with an Ottoman astronomer to show the West and East as twins.

The White Castle begins with a preface written by the fictional historian Faruk Darvinoglu; a character from Pamuk's *The Silent House*. The preface claims the story comes from a manuscript written by an unnamed slave in the 17th century Ottoman Empire. Darvinoglu translates the manuscript from Ottoman script to modern Turkish. This implies the narration of the story is not entirely reliable. Despite the difficulty in translating the text, and the historical discrepancies he finds, Darvinoglu publishes the

²⁷⁴ Orhan Pamuk, "In Kars and Frankfurt," *Other Colours: Essays and a Story*, ed. Orhan Pamuk (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 227.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 228.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid*

translation claiming “to see everything as connected with everything else is the addiction of our time. It is because I too have succumbed to this disease.”²⁷⁷ The story is told from the point of view of an unnamed Italian Scholar who is kidnapped by the Ottoman armada and sold as a slave to a Pasha in Istanbul. The scholar turned slave convinces the Ottoman authorities that he is a medical doctor and is asked to cure the Pasha of his illness. As a reward the slave is sold to the Sultan’s astrologer, Hoja. Hoja informs the slave he will give him freedom after the slave has taught him everything he knows about Western science. The slave notices he and his new master look exactly like, so much so he “is terrified that this other identical body will steal his identity.”²⁷⁸

It was not just the slave but also the master who was worried about his own identity and one day asked the slave “why am I what I am?”²⁷⁹ Frustrated that neither he nor the slave could answer the question, Hoja demanded the slave write down what made him who he was so he could learn from him and duplicate his method. However, the slave wrote only about the good and bad experiences and memories of his life before becoming a slave. Hoja found the slave’s answer unsatisfactory and began to write for himself, however, Hoja “wrote nothing but reasons why ‘they’ were so inferior

²⁷⁷ Orhan Pamuk, *The White Castle*, trans. Victoria Rowe Holbrook (Manchester: Faber and Faber, 1991), 4.

²⁷⁸ Michael McGaha, *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2008), 95.

²⁷⁹ Orhan Pamuk, *The White Castle*, trans. Victoria Rowe Holbrook (Manchester: Faber and Faber, 1991), 48.

and stupid.”²⁸⁰ The irony is Hoja used the slave’s writing to steal the slave’s identity. The end of the novel ambiguously implies the master and slave switched identities entirely; thus leading the reader to believe it may have been Hoja, not the slave, who has written the manuscript.

According to Pamuk, “I am still not sure if it was the Italian slave or the Ottoman master who wrote the manuscript of *The White Castle*.”²⁸¹ The slave’s writings suggest a person’s identity is “the sum total of his or her life experiences,” however, the distinction between himself and others is what defines Hoja’s identity.²⁸² By memorizing the slave’s life experiences, coupled with his remarkable physical resemblance, Hoja steals the slave’s identity, however, in doing so the distinction between himself and others is blurred and thus his own identity vanishes. In other words, they lose themselves by becoming the other.

In the last chapter the Sultan puts all these distinctions of identity to rest:

Must one be a sultan to understand that men, in the four corners and seven climes of the world, all resembled one another? Afraid, I would say nothing; as if to break my last effort at resistance he would ask one again: was it not the

²⁸⁰ Ibid, 54.

²⁸¹ Orhan Pamuk, “The White Castle Afterword,” *Other Colours: Essays and a Story*, ed. Orhan Pamuk (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 250.

²⁸² Michael McGaha, *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2008), 95.

best proof that men everywhere were identical with one another that they could take each other's place?²⁸³

The ability for a Western slave and his Eastern master to change places so easily with each other brings us to how Pamuk addresses the East-West question. Pamuk warns the frame of East and West has connotations in the West that assume "the poor countries of the East should defer to everything the West and the United States might happen to propose." There is a "perceived inevitability that the culture, the way of life, and the politics of places like the one where I was raised will provoke tiresome questions, and an expectations that writers like me exist only to offer answers to those same tiresome questions."²⁸⁴ Pamuk argues the East-West question is a question about "wealth and poverty and about peace."²⁸⁵ Pamuk argues the Ottoman Empire began to feel "overshadowed" by the "more dynamic West" and were so "dazzled by the superiority of the West" they began a series of Western reforms. The "underlying logic" of these reforms "is the conviction that Turkey's weakness and poverty stem from its traditions, its old culture, and the various ways it has socially organized religion."²⁸⁶

²⁸³ Orhan Pamuk, *The White Castle*, trans. Victoria Rowe Holbrook (Manchester: Faber and Faber, 1991), 137.

²⁸⁴ Orhan Pamuk, "In Kars and Frankfurt," *Other Colours: Essays and a Story*, ed. Orhan Pamuk (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 230.

²⁸⁵ Ibid

²⁸⁶ Ibid

Therefore, the path to modernization lay in imitating the West just as Hoja imitated his Italian slave; by imitating the West "Westernizers dream of transforming and enriching their country and their culture."²⁸⁷ Because Westernizers view their goal as the creation of a country that is "richer, happier, and more powerful," they tend to be "nativist and powerfully nationalistic."²⁸⁸ However, because they view the West as superior they must also view various aspects of their own culture and country as "defective, sometimes even worthless;" therefore, they feel a sense of shame towards their culture, traditions, and histories.²⁸⁹

Like *The White Castle, Snow* examines the ambiguities of East and West identities; however, while *The White Castle* presents the East-West question in the relationship between two characters, *Snow* presents the values and qualities of the west and east by dispersing them throughout several characters; by doing this Pamuk shows how all people, whether western or eastern, are the same.

The Melancholic Moment

Ka is described as:

Forty-two years old and single, never married ... tall for a Turk, with brown hair and a pale complexion that had become even paler during his journey. He was shy and

²⁸⁷ Ibid

²⁸⁸ Ibid, 231

²⁸⁹ Ibid

enjoyed being alone ... he is an honest and well-meaning man and full of melancholy, like those Chekhov characters so laden with virtues that they never know success in life....educated, Westernized, literary man ... one of those moralists who believe that the greatest happiness comes from never doing anything for the sake of personal happiness.²⁹⁰

The government sent Ka into exile for writing a column that offended the state; however, he returned to Turkey after twelve years to attend his mother's funeral. Ka had grown tired of his own country's troubles and backwardness. However, while in Europe he found himself "gazing back with love and longing."²⁹¹

Ka's trip to Kars begins after his mother's funeral. This is similar to Albert Camus' *The Stranger* which begins with the death of Meursault's mother which represents the loss of the ideal. Nietzsche articulates this concept as the "death of god" in *The Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.²⁹² In the *Gay Science* Nietzsche states:

God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. Yet his shadow still looms. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers ... Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?²⁹³

²⁹⁰ Orhan Pamuk, *Snow*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 4-5

²⁹¹ *Ibid*, 31

²⁹² Christopher C. Robinson, "Theorizing Politics after Camus," *Human Studies*, 32, no. 1 (2009): 1-18,

²⁹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 120.

In other words, humans, through science and logic, have lost sense of transcendence and the sacred. God and religion are no longer enough to explain the world and there is no blueprint for life.²⁹⁴ The funeral for Ka's mother sparked his decision to travel to Kars which the narrator states "was at least partly motivated by a desire to return to his childhood."²⁹⁵

In the opening pages, Pamuk describes Ka's bus ride to Kars and the snow outside his passenger window:

If he hadn't been so tired, if he'd paid a bit more attention to the snowflakes swirling out of the sky like feathers, he might have realized that he was traveling straight into a blizzard; he might have seen at the start that he was setting out on a journey that would change his life forever and chosen to turn back. But the thought didn't even cross his mind ... he lost himself in the light ... in the snowflakes.²⁹⁶

Ka saw the snow outside as a sign "pointing the way back to the happiness and purity he had known, once, as a child."²⁹⁷ Like Galip in *The Black Book*, Ka is looking for signs to guide him to his ideal but instead they lead him nowhere. Ka's real purpose to return to Turkey was to "find a Turkish girl to make his wife."²⁹⁸ Ka is searching for a new ideal to replace the one lost by his years in the west. After Ka seduces Ipek and the

²⁹⁴ Christopher C. Robinson, "Theorizing Politics after Camus," *Human Studies*, 32, no. 1 (2009): 1-18

²⁹⁵ Orhan Pamuk, *Snow*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 18

²⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 4

²⁹⁷ *Ibid*

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 23

two make love for the first time, Ka goes to his hotel window and stares at the snow.

Ipek asks what Ka is thinking about when he stares at the snow outside:

I'm thinking about my mother," said Ka, at first not knowing why he said this, for though she had just died, his mother was actually far from his thought. Later, returning to this moment, he would explain it by saying, "My mother was on my mind throughout my visit to Kars."²⁹⁹

Ipek then asked Ka if he was happy as a child:

People don't know when they're happy, at least not at the moment. I decided years later that I'd been happy as a child, but the truth is, I wasn't. On the other hand, I was not unhappy in the way I was during the years that followed. I just wasn't interested in happiness at first ... A moment arrived when I was so unhappy I could barely move, and that's when I began to think about happiness³⁰⁰

Ka's trip to Kars after the death of his mother is representative of the arc of descent. Ka is fascinated by the snow because he sees more than "just the beauty in the geometry of the snowflakes," in the snow Ka sees the interconnectedness of everything, a grand design where everything and everyone play a part.³⁰¹ At first Ka believed his childhood was happy as Ka got older and moved to the West he realized just how unhappy those years were. However, the isolation he felt while in Frankfurt prevented Ka from finding happiness as an adult. The same can be said for the Turkish Republic. Turkey believed the founding years under Ataturk were happy; however, as

²⁹⁹ Ibid, 263

³⁰⁰ Ibid

³⁰¹ Ibid

the republic got older and more Western people began to realize how divisive and damaging the founding was. Ka's arc of descent led him to Kars where he is trapped between ideologies clashing for political control; this is representative of Turkey's clashing ideologies.

These clashing ideologies, the secularists and Islamists, come together in the novels thirty-first chapter to write a joint statement about the coup that has taken place in Kars. The statements first proposed title was "Announcement to the People of Europe about the Events in Kars," the Islamists immediately opposed this title; "We're not speaking to Europe we're speaking to all humanity...The people of Europe are not our friends, they're our enemies. And it's not because we're their enemies, it's because they instinctively despise us."³⁰² The "leftist" in charge of drafting the document argued not all of Europe despises the Turks but only the European bourgeoisie, "the poor and unemployed were their brothers, he reminded them, but no one other than his fellow socialist were persuaded."³⁰³ Turgut Bey, Ipek and Kadife's former communist father, interjected "Europe is our future, and the future of our humanity. So if this gentleman thinks we should say *all humanity* instead of *Europe*, we might as well change our statement accordingly."³⁰⁴ Blue, the leader of the Islamists, argues that Europe is not the future and Turkey should not imitate or feel shame for not being like the Europe.

³⁰² Ibid, 270

³⁰³ Ibid, 271

³⁰⁴ Ibid

This angers Turgut Bey who states, "It's not just the Islamists who take pride in this country, the Republicans feel the same way."³⁰⁵ Ultimately, the two groups could not decide on whom to address their statement to and gave it the simply title "An Announcement."³⁰⁶

The two groups debated furiously over what they should say in the joint statement. Turgut Bey asks everyone in the room to each write what they want to say to the rest of the world if given the opportunity. One of the Kurdish youths in the room claimed, "All I'd want them to print in that Frankfurt paper is this: We're not stupid, we're just poor! And we have a right to want to insist on this distinction."³⁰⁷ This statement starting an argument over the word "we," "Who do you mean, my son, when you say we? Do you mean the Turks? The Kurds? The Circassians? The people of Kars? To whom exactly are you referring?"³⁰⁸ The youth responded, "Mankind's greatest error, the biggest deception of the past thousand years is this: to confuse poverty with stupidity ... People might feel sorry for a man who's fallen on hard times, but when an entire nation is poor, the rest of the world assumes that all its people must be brainless, lazy, dirty, clumsy fools."³⁰⁹ The youth continues, "When a Westerner meets someone from a poor country, he feels deep contempt. He assumes that the poor man's head

³⁰⁵ Ibid

³⁰⁶ Ibid

³⁰⁷ Ibid, 275

³⁰⁸ Ibid

³⁰⁹ Ibid

must be full of all the nonsense the plunged his country into poverty and despair.”³¹⁰

Therefore, the only way to escape humiliation is by “proving at the first opportunity that you think exactly as they do. But this is impossible, and it can break a man’s pride to try.”³¹¹ However, as one unnamed man at the meeting points out, “if the Europeans are right and our only future and only hope is to be more like them, it’s foolish to waste time talking about what makes us who we are.”³¹²

Since its founding, Turkey has used westernizing reforms to eliminate the humiliation felt by the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Secularists and Islamists in Turkey define themselves by their relationship to the west; meanwhile, they have lost sight of the history, experiences, and geography that they share. Thus, the conflict between secularists and Islamists in Turkey has prevented the development of a political ideal independent of Western consideration. Without a political ideal that unifies all humanity Turkey is unable to embark upon the arc of ascent which is necessary to cure its collective melancholy. Being between arcs can be described as a melancholic moment. During the melancholic moment an opportunity arises to either create a political ideal that is inclusive of all humanity or to hold on to cultural, religious, and ethnic distinctions that exclude members of society. If society becomes overly

³¹⁰ Ibid, 276

³¹¹ Ibid, 277

³¹² Ibid, 279

politicized it becomes exclusive and ruptures the unity of being, and deepens its collective melancholy.

In *Snow*, the only character that can communicate to all of the communities in Kars is Ka, who ultimately becomes despised by everyone. Ka's death is a warning that Turkey is already on the path towards an exclusive political ideal and must reverse course before it is too late.

Both secularists and Islamists were upset by the novel. According to Pamuk:

The secularists were upset because I wrote that the cost of being a secular radical in Turkey is that you forget that you also have to be a democrat. The power of the secularists in Turkey comes from the army. This destroys Turkey's democracy and culture of tolerance. Once you have so much army involvement in political culture, people lose their self-confidence and rely on the army to solve all their problems. People usually say, the country and the economy are a mess, let's call in the army to clean it up. But just as they cleaned, so did they destroy the culture of tolerance. Lots of suspects were tortured; a hundred thousand people were jailed. This paves the way for new military coups. There was a new one about every ten years. So I was critical of the secularists for this. They also didn't like that I portrayed Islamists as human beings.³¹³

Turkey's Islamists were also outraged by *Snow*:

The political Islamists were upset because I wrote about an Islamist who had enjoyed sex before marriage. It was that kind of simplistic thing. Islamists are always suspicious of me because I don't come from their culture, and because I

³¹³ Orhan Pamuk, "Paris Review Interview," *Other Colours: Essays and a Story*, ed. Orhan Pamuk (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 373-4.

have the language, attitude, and even gestures of a more Westernized and privileged person. They have their own problems of representation and ask, how can he write about us anyway? He doesn't understand. This I also included in parts of the novel.³¹⁴

Both the secularists and the Islamists in Turkey are suspicious of each other; viewing one another as an inferior identity. Turkey's emphasis on identity politics has caused the secularists and Islamists view identity and ideals as inseparable; therefore, neither group can represent the other adequately. *Snow* is Pamuk's warning against the over politicization of identity, culture, and civilization. Rather than creating a political ideal based solely on identity, society should seek an ideal that represents all humanity.

³¹⁴ Ibid

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In 2006, Orhan Pamuk received the Nobel Prize in literature. According to the Nobel committee, Pamuk won the prize because "in the quest for the melancholic soul of his native city has discovered new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures."³¹³ Rather than supporting the idea of clashing civilizations, as Samuel Huntington suggests, Pamuk's novels show that all civilizations originate in the unity of being and delineating distinctions such as Western and Eastern civilizations are illusions that create ruptures in the unity of being. These ruptures are the source of political melancholy which can lead to domestic and international violence.

Pamuk's novels explore the melancholy caused by Turkey's inability to create a political ideal that represents the unity of being. Such delineating distinctions as secular, Islamist, Eastern, and Western, have created ruptures in the unity of being that is the source of collective melancholy or *hüzün*. The descent from and ascent towards the ideal of the unity of being is a continual process of humanity that melancholy disrupts. The melancholic moment between the arc of descent and the arc of ascent represents a time in which society is most susceptible to extremism whether from nationalist or religious

³¹³ Nobel Prize, "The Nobel Prize in Literature 2006." Last modified 2006.

http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2006/.

sources. However, the melancholic moment also presents society with the opportunity to become more inclusive of humanity and heal the ruptures in the unity of being. While Pamuk's novels examine the melancholic moment in Turkey, his concept of melancholy also has global implications.

The assumed clash between Western and Eastern civilizations is one of many possible examples of the ruptures in the unity. Categorizing people by what makes us different, such as culture or civilization, rather than focusing on what unites humanity creates these ruptures. According to Pamuk, we must realize "that other people in other countries and continents and civilizations are exactly like you."³¹⁶ When people fail to see these similarities, it becomes easy to create political systems that are exclusive and isolate large masses of people who are deemed inferior. By focusing global politics on the East-West question, politicians have created a global melancholy that has diminished the prospect of peace.

Pamuk uses the melancholy of Turkey as a microcosm of the melancholy that affects global politics in the 21st century. For Pamuk, the most immediate concern of global politics is Turkey's bid to join the European Union. *The Paris Review* asked Pamuk

³¹⁶ Michael McGaha, *Autobiographies of Orhan Pamuk: The Writer in His Novels*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2008), 39.

if he believes “the constant confrontation between Turkey’s Eastern and Western impulses will ever be peacefully resolved?”³¹⁷ Pamuk responded,

Turkey should not worry about having two spirits, belonging to two different cultures, having two souls. Schizophrenia makes you intelligent. You may lose your relation with reality ... but you shouldn’t worry about your schizophrenia. If you worry too much about one part of you killing the other, you’ll be left with a single spirit. That is worse than having the sickness. This is my theory. I try to propagate it in Turkish politics, among Turkish politicians who demand that the country should have one consistent soul—that it should belong to either the East or the West or be nationalistic. I am critical of that monistic outlook ... The more the idea of a democratic, liberal Turkey is established, the more my thinking is accepted. Turkey can join the European Union only with this vision. It’s a way of fighting against nationalism, of fighting the rhetoric of Us against Them.³¹⁸

Pamuk is not mourning the loss of the Ottoman Empire but rather is “criticizing the limited way in which the ruling elite ... had conceived of Westernization.” Pamuk claims the ruling elite:

... lacked the confidence necessary to create a national culture rich in its own symbols and rituals. They did not strive to create an Istanbul culture that would be an organic combination of East and West; they just put Western and Eastern things together...What they had to do, and could not possibly do enough, was invent a strong local culture, which would be a combination—not an imitation—of the Eastern past and the Western present.

³¹⁷ Orhan Pamuk, “Paris Review Interview,” *Other Colours: Essays and a Story*, ed. Orhan Pamuk (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 368.

³¹⁸ *Ibid*, 369

Pamuk argues joining the EU “will not destroy Turkish identity” but would give Turkey the confidence “to invent a new Turkish culture.”³¹⁹ Therefore, joining the EU would alleviate the shame Turkey feels from being viewed by the West as “defective, sometimes worthless”³²⁰ and would allow Turkey to focus on developing a political ideal that is inclusive of both their secular and Islamists communities.

Western opposition to Turkey joining the EU has created strong nationalist resistance to Westernization within Turkey. According to Pamuk, even the members of the Turkish bourgeoisie, who have been the strongest supporters of Westernization, are becoming angry with west. This anger comes from “watching the negotiations with the European Union, seeing that for all our efforts to be Western, they still don’t want us, discovering that they intend to dictate terms on democratic structures and human rights.”³²¹ Pamuk argues, “it is one thing to criticize the democratic deficits of the Turkish state or find fault with its economy; it is quite another to denigrate all of Turkish culture ... It is the cruelest of ironies that the fanning of nationalist anti-Turkish sentiment in Europe has provoked the coarsest of nationalist backlashes inside

³¹⁹ Ibid, 370

³²⁰ Orhan Pamuk, “In Kars and Frankfurt,” *Other Colours: Essays and a Story*, ed. Orhan Pamuk (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 231.

³²¹ Orhan Pamuk, “Family Meals and Politics on Religious Holidays,” *Other Colours: Essays and a Story*, ed. Orhan Pamuk (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 215.

Turkey.”³²² Pamuk discusses this nationalist’s backlash in his essay *Family Meals and Politics on Religious Holidays*:

They [Turkish nationalists] say there is ‘also’ torture in the West. They say that the history of the West is full of oppression, torture, and lies. They say that Europe’s real interest is not in human rights but in its own advancement. In such and such a European country they ‘also’ persecute minorities in such and such a way; in a certain European city the police ‘also’ quell vociferous discontent among the citizenry with brute force. What they mean to say is that if they do commit an evil in Europe, we should also be permitted to go on doing it here, and perhaps do it even more. What they mean, perhaps, is that if Europe is to be our model, then we should emulate its torturers, inquisitors, and two-faced liars. The optimistic Kemalists of my childhood holidays Europe’s culture, its literature, its music, its clothes. Europe was the fountain of civilization! But in the seventy-fifth year of the Republic, it has come to be seen as a source of evil.³²³

Pamuk argues Turkish nationalists used to use Western culture “to distinguish themselves from the lower classes and so legitimize their superiority” are now using Europe “to serve as the bogeyman, so they can say that when people are tortured and minorities persecuted here, it is happening not here alone but in Europe too.”³²⁴ Thus, Turkish nationalists use the human rights abuses and anti-Turkish rhetoric in Europe to justify the human rights abuses in Turkey. However, if the EU “as a gesture of

³²² Orhan Pamuk, "In Kars and Frankfurt," *Other Colours: Essays and a Story*, ed. Orhan Pamuk (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 234.

³²³ Orhan Pamuk, "Family Meals and Politics on Religious Holidays," *Other Colours: Essays and a Story*, ed. Orhan Pamuk (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 215-16.

³²⁴ *Ibid*, 216

friendship" were to accept Turkey's bid to join, the nationalists in Turkey and Europe would lose their legitimacy.³²⁵

Pamuk argues, "Europe has gained the respect of the non-Western world owing to the ideals it has done so much to nurture: liberty equality, and fraternity."³²⁶ It is these political ideals that should be the criteria to judge society not distinctions such as West and East or secular and religious. Pamuk discusses Turkey's bid to join the EU in a speech he gave in Frankfurt when he accepted the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, Germany's most prestigious literary award. He argues, "Those who believe in the European Union must see at once that the real choice we have to make is between peace and nationalism. Either we have peace, or we have nationalism."³²⁷ He continues his speech:

The most important thing that Turkey and the Turkish people have to offer Europe and Germany is, without a doubt, peace; it is the security and strength that will come from a Muslim country's desire to join Europe, and this peaceable desire's ratification ... If Europe's soul is enlightenment, equality, and democracy, if it is to be a union predicated on peace, then Turkey has a place in it. A Europe defining itself in narrow Christian terms will, like a Turkey that tries to derive its strength only from its religion, be an inward-looking place divorced from reality, bound more to the past than the future ... There are millions of Turks like me who believe wholeheartedly in the European Union. But what is more important is that

³²⁵ Orhan Pamuk, "In Kars and Frankfurt," *Other Colours: Essays and a Story*, ed. Orhan Pamuk (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 235.

³²⁶ Ibid

³²⁷ Ibid, 234

most of today's conservative and Muslim Turks, and with them their political representatives, also want to see Turkey in the European Union, helping to plan Europe's future...Just as I cannot imagine a Turkey without a European prospect, I cannot believe in a Europe without a Turkish prospect.³²⁸

Accepting Turkey's bid to join the EU would be a step toward healing the rupture in the unity of being. This allow Europe and Turkey to develop a political ideal that is universal to humanity and create an inclusive political system that brings people together.

International political organizations such as the EU appear more concerned with distinctions such as West and East, Christian and Muslim, civilizations and culture, however, by forming political institutions that focus on political identity rather than political ideals these organizations become exclusive of a vast number of people. Pamuk's writings are an attempt to shift the focus from identities to ideals as the source of political legitimacy. Ultimately the goal of political institutions should be to establish a political ideal that brings people back to the unity of being.

³²⁸ Ibid, 235

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