

Agonising Liminality: A Study Of Orhan Pamuk's *Snow*

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Abstract

This article throws light on the distress a liminal experience could give for an individual or to a community who belong to a specific ethnicity, regarding the novel *Snow* written by the Turkish writer, Orhan Pamuk. Turkey located geographically in the edges of landscapes where the east and the west meet encounters this liminality over a couple of decades and stays as the setting of the novel *Snow*. In the liminal state, people fall in the breaks and crevices of the social structure which they think. The liminal stage individual encounters, a period of instability and vulnerability. Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* reflects the unpleasant experience of progress from the Islam arranged Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey. The setting of the novel, the town of Kars, a periphery city fringe to Turkey stands as a representative of Turkey's minimization from the world. Pamuk supplements the fruitless condition of the city all through this novel.

Keywords: Liminality, agony, inbetweeners, threshold

The term 'Liminality' alludes to a time of change. Liminality is synonymous within-betweeness, fringes or edges. Liminality portrays a condition of being 'past normal classes'

and, accordingly, structures a classification itself, 'in-between categories'. Liminality serves as a midpoint between a beginning stage and a closure point. It is seen to be perilous by the individuals who need to maintain the custom and keep up the structure of a specific network.

Both liminal and liminality have its roots from the Latin "limen" which signifies "limit". The status of liminal people is socially and equivocal. In a liminal stage individual encounters that he is a traveler associated with a past phase the subject which distances him and the succeeding stage which would increase new personality. In the liminal state individuals fall in the middle of the breaks and intervals of the social structure which they know. All through the liminal stage, an individual experiences a time of fluctuation and uncertainty. Sometimes the progress speaks to the relinquishment of the old domain and the passage into another one. In this way, the liminal stage is filled with holiness and strengthening as well as with death and murkiness.

Turkey is in the edges of networks where the east and the west meet topographically and socially. It exists as a portal or a cradle zone. Resting in the conversion of Europe and Asia, Turkey which is in between the cracks of the West and the East has a few developments that attempt to make a way of life contained in the liminality for all time. Turkey falls on a separation point between the Western and Islamic human advancements. It is considered as liminal state conflicted between the Islamic roots and the possibilities of Western progress.

Orhan Pamuk's novels mirror the horrible experience of change from the Islam situated Ottoman Empire to common republic of Turkey. His heroes stay unequipped for negotiating with the new identities. Pamuk is an author who strolls on the borderlines to go

up against the east and the west. Pamuk goes up against as intercedes with the past and the present and with the East and the West.

The East-West dichotomy because of the Westernization of the Ottoman writing, stayed a central topic of the Turkish literature in the second half of the nineteenth century. There were a few authors who felt that the arrangement lies in the East-West union attempted to establish the same based on the individual journeys of the characters who are conflicted between the two universes.

Pamuk's books reverberate what really occurred in Turkey's history and furthermore depicts the fictional world in the domain of liminality in a literal dimension. Turkey has an area both in the landmasses of Asia and Europe. Both the East and Western societies attempt to claim legacy to Turkey. Istanbul, the capital city of Turkey, where Pamuk sets his accounts, is isolated socially and literally. The condition of liminality is evident because of the authentic change from Islam to a secular republic.

Pamuk's novel *Snow* recounts to the story of a person called Ka who comes back to his local town Kars in the wake of experiencing twelve years of exile in Germany. The setting of the novel is the town of Kars, a fringe city peripheral to Turkey is a representative of Turkey's minimization from the world. The setting of the novel and the occasions that occur illuminate the East-West question through examining issues of Kemalism, secularism and militarism. Pamuk complements the barren state of the city all through this novel. The city Kars serves as a “microcosm of Turkey, where the memories of the former Ottoman Empire-the harmonious co-existence of multiple cultures, languages, religions and ethnicities - are juxtaposed with the modern era of harsh modernity” (474).

Numerous Turkish leaders have endeavored to portray Turkey as an extension between societies. Huntington sees that the extension is a counterfeit creation that bonds Turkey's situation as a nation whose character is completely torn, prompting the double-crossing of social qualities and nationhood. The novel *Snow* appropriately thinks about this issue. Ka's entry during a snowstorm and the occasions depicted speak to the contention between the powers. The novel attempts to gauge how much a religion characterizes an individual and political personality. To reestablish a portion of the past wonders of the city of Kars, occupants orchestrate a theater execution as readiness for the coming elections. The city is presently financially discouraged.

. The portrayal of the novel spreads three days in the life of the character Ka who visits Kars as a writer and an artist from Istanbul. The account of the novel is told by a storyteller named Orhan. The novel *Snow* describes Turkey "into being". He has arrived to engage himself in writing article on the overarching suicides among young girls in the town. He finds that the young ladies of his village challenge the official restriction on wearing headscarves. Blue, a political Islamist heads the head-scarf young ladies in their agitation against the ban.

Ka's examination over the overall tension empowers him to see the battle between the East and the West, the Ottoman past and the western modernity, portrayal and reality and furthermore the human character of Turkey. When the character Serdar Bey leads Ka for a customary visit to the assistant chief of police, Ka witnesses things that reflect the situation of the people such as 'the past tea houses where gloomy unemployed men sat watching television'(11) and the place where a former mayor was shot dead. Later, Ka proposes, "It

(Kars) was the poorest and the most overlooked part of Turkey” (18). Likewise, Ka’s encounters with the people of various walks of life reveal the plights of the people of the town. Apart from the suicide epidemic he is informed of the high unemployment. There are people ‘who worked for twelve hours...but still couldn’t support the family. (12). When Ka tries to find out why the city has fallen into poverty where he receives unconvincing explanations such as the snap of business ties with Soviet Union, the plundering of Communists Guerillas and the plundering of wealthy people.

In his investigation about the suicide of young girls, Ka additionally accumulates points of view from many people. He comes to know “when the authorities had outlawed the wearing of headscarves in educational institutions ...the rebels at the Institute of Kars had been first barred from the classrooms”(16). Pamuk also portrays the prejudices of the West over the wearing of headscarves he says for the Westernised Upper-middle class “a covered woman would have been someone who has come in from the suburbs- from the Kartal vineyards... to sell grapes. Or the milkman’s wife or someone else from the lower classes” (22).

The novel *Snow* also probes the tensions in cultural memory in the process of Identity formation. Pamuk in the novel gives a short history of the city and how it was subjected to various strains down the ages. He says there were Armenian community, Persians, Greeks, Georgians, Kurds, and Circassians. He also reveals that Muslims were driven out when Russian Army gained control over the city.

The conversation that takes place between the director of the Educational Institute and the person who has come to murder him aptly reflects the mindset of the traditional Islamists

and the modern republicans. The murderer recites the chapters of Holy Quran and the need to obey God, the director too describes another verse from the Quran and justifies his position.

Pamuk also portrays the political factions of Kars who prepare a manifesto and propose. There is a character called Blue, who expresses his hatred towards the west, saying “The people of Europe are not our friends but our enemies. And it’s not because we are their enemies- its because they instinctively despise us” (277)

In the novel, *Snow* there exists a schematic polarity among the characters who treat Westerners as Atheists and religious as markers of fundamentalism. Hande a role first says “Even if I did take off my headscarf, I don’t think I’d become the kind of woman who flirts with men, or who can’t think of anything but sex. After all, I won’t be doing it of my own free will” (125). Later she admits and proposes her dread that without the headscarf she may be called “either an evil stranger like the agent of persuasion or a woman who can’t stop thinking about sex” (125).

The character Necip tells how a good aspect of a man decreases if he becomes an atheist. He recounts to the narrative of a school head which turns into a nonbeliever after his experience with an outsider. He says of the school head “Infected by the disease of Atheism he began to put unreasonable pressure on his lovely little pupils: he tried to spend time alone with their mothers; he stole money from another teacher who he envied” (83). Similarly the character Blue asserts “Will the West, which takes its great invention, democracy, more seriously than the Word of God ...there is, after all, only one West and only one Western point of view. And we take the opposite point of view” (233).

In a political group, every individual keeps up a natural distinction by conveying a monologue associated with the reasons for their own. The characters characterize the East and the West as totally unrelated, unique that can't coincide. Blue says; “all the West wants is for the rest of the world to imitate them like monkeys...” (233). Likewise, an unnamed person who sits next to Blue proclaims “ I’m so sorry, I’m not a westerner ... I’m a proud part of me that isn’t European. If the Europeans are beautiful I’m ugly ; if they’re intelligent, I prefer to be stupid; if they’re modern, let me stay simple.”(285)

Pamuk's unpretentious still ruthless portrayals of political and monetary unevenness that prevails in the non-Western space unfurl the cosmopolitical differentiations and social discernments. From the novel *Snow*, it is comprehended that small town Kars rests in the cosmopolitical Interzone molded by the metropolitan focuses of Ankara, Istanbul, and Frankfurt.

In the novel *Snow*, the poem lines which the character Ka composes mirror his comprehension of God and his position towards political Islam and secularism. The polarity between Secularism and Islam as well as Europe and traditional Turkish society tears Ka apart. In spite of the fact that he is established in Western secularism from time to time, he discovers comfort in Kars with Ipek. His adoration for Ipek speaks to the battle among reason and feeling. More often than not Ka stays as a mouthpiece of Pamuk himself. Ka, who is anticipated as a Western secularist toward the start of the novel, respects modernist poetry and considers the Islamic fundamentalism as antimodern. The youthful Islamists feel that Ka is a sign of the West. Necip, an Islamist youth blames Ka for having a nexus with the Western scholarly people.

The figure of Ka and his character are keys to comprehending the East-West talks that go through the novel. He introduces a more drawn out history of control of the West over the non-West, an order that advises the relationship regarding Europe with non-Europe. As the discussion proceeds, the Kurdish dissident, makes an awkward expression, “When they write poems or sing songs in the West, they speak for all humanity. They’re human beings-but we’re just Muslims. When we write something, it’s called ethnic poetry” (279). A few people contend that Turkey ought not sell out its transcendent religion and Turkishness saying “ 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” (279).

The discussion and disappointments go profoundly of the subject of identity, nationhood, and the connection between Turkey and the West. Turbulent occasions of interest and political dealings pursue. Toward the part of the novel, Ka leaves Kars for Frankfurt overlooking his Homeland where he is later killed and Ipek says that life isn't about standards however about joy. Orhan attempts to rediscover Ka who is in Germany through the last's sections of his works and his discussions with a couple of Turks who dwell there. Thus. Ka and his character are keys to comprehending the East-West talks that go through the novel. The characteristics of the novel uncover the socio-political discussions of Turkish society and the agony and inner conflicts they experience.

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