Chapter-3

Conflict between Islamism and Secularism in Orhan Pamuk’s *Snow*

I

This chapter puts focus on character analysis and discusses how the conflict between Islamic ideology and secular ideas of the Western societies has taken place, as shown through different characters in Ferit Orhan Pamuk’s *Snow* (2002, English translation 2004). This critically-acclaimed political novel touches upon the complex, postmodern characteristics of the author’s other novels like the use of pluralism, stream-of-consciousness and grotesque elements, intertextuality, fragmentary and metafictional narration etc. *Snow* handles big themes such as identity crisis, cultural change, tradition and modernity, East-West conflict and so on. The author uses many types of formal techniques derived from Western fiction to portray themes and settings from the Ottoman past and the Turkish present in his works. He is well known for a sustained exposition of the conflict between Western and Eastern values, tradition and modernism/secularism and the crisis of identity. In an interview Pamuk says to Spiegel, “My books are a testimony to the fact that East and West are coming together. There needn’t be a clash between East and West, between Islam and Europe. That’s what my work stands for” (Pamuk, *Spiegel Online International*). In fact, Turkey is very often described as a bridge between the East and the West so far as individual rights, free will of the people to express themselves, violence and political affairs are concerned. However, there exists the clash between the ideologies of the Western culture and religious fundamentalism. In this context it is relevant to mention the view of Edward W. Said, who in his book *Culture and Imperialism* pointed out that “it is the case that no identity can ever exist by itself and without an array of
opposites, negatives, oppositions” (52). This concept of Edward Said is employed as critical framework to analyse how the polarity between the secular West and the Islamic world appears in Snow. The ‘New Historicist’ literary approach will be of great help while discussing the subject matter of the text relevant to this chapter because:

The object of study for a new historicist critic is the way in which a culture represents itself. For new historicists, written texts are the products of social, cultural and political forces, not solely the creation of an individual author, and so texts reflect and engage with the prevailing values and ideologies of their own time. (Brannigan 179)

To carry out such a reading in relation to Snow, for instance, would disclose that Pamuk’s novel is deeply embedded in the values and debates of the recent history of Turkey which will become clear in the discussion ahead.

Pamuk began writing Snow two years before 9/11, but surprisingly the problems of the post 9/11 found an echo in the pages of the novel. “With Snow, Orhan Pamuk walks a fine line between reality and fiction. With a novelist’s astuteness, he presents some of the dire political and social realities of Turkey, illuminating the underlying themes of the domestic threats to the state edifice in Turkey, namely, Islam and Kurdish nationalism” (Kavakci 163). In fact, the discussion of various ideas and ideologies in Snow focuses on the political choice of Turkey whether it would choose the identity of an Islamic nation based on Shari’ah or opts for a membership in the Western Union. However, the people of Turkey do not welcome Pamuk’s effort of building a bridge between Turkey and Europe. For instance, Kemal Kerincsiz, the leader of the Ultra-Nationalist Lawyers reacted in the
following manner after Pamuk was awarded Nobel Prize: “as a Turkish citizen I am ashamed ... I don’t believe this prize was given for his books or for his literary identity. It was given because he belittled our national values for his recognition of the [Armenian] genocide” (Traynor). Whatever might be the reaction of the people of Turkey in reality but Pamuk’s *Snow* provokes mixed responses through various characters so far as their choices are concerned. And it leads to the clash between the Islamic ideology followed by one set of characters and the secular law of the country followed by another in the novel. *Snow* also reflects the view of Akbar S. Ahmed about the clash between ‘two opposed philosophies’ where ‘one is based in secular materialism, the other in faith’ already mentioned in the introductory chapter.

However, while attempting to understand the reasons behind the conflict between Islamism and secularism in Turkey, the readers must not identify Muslim and Islamist as identical because, actually it is not so:

> “Muslim” is not synonymous with “Islamist,” in the sense that the first expresses a religious identity and the latter implies a political consciousness and social action. Accordingly, Islamist counter-elites can be both actors in the Islamist movements and professionals and intellectuals aspiring for political power. Islamism, however, does not only denote membership in an Islamist political organization, but also suggests a sense of belonging and a group identity. (Göle 47)

II

The story of *Snow* is set in the 1990s in Kars in north-eastern Turkey, once a border city between the Ottoman and Russian empires. Kars is presented as microcosm of Turkey in the novel. The novel opens with the poet-cum-protagonist
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Ka’s (Kerim Alakuşoğlu) journey from Erzurum to Kars by bus amid the ‘the silence of snow’. Kars is an isolated city in Anatolia far from Istanbul. Ka’s friend Taner has given him a proposal (who has shortly returned to his native Istanbul to attend his mother’s funeral after twelve years of political exile in Germany) to visit Kars. This trip of Ka to Kars is the outcome of that proposal. Taner provides “Ka with a valid press card” (Pamuk, Snow 8) and asks him to write an article “about the municipal elections coming up and how—just as in the city of Batman—an extraordinary number of girls in Kars had succumbed to a suicide epidemic” (8). Ka a “single and never married” middle-aged man cannot but accept the offer because his beautiful ‘old classmate’ İpek, whom he wants to marry, is now living in Kars with her father and sister.

Pamuk has exposed the character of Ka as an indecisive one. Ka is in dilemma as to whether he is an atheist or a believer in God. It is so because “he had grown up in a secular, republican family” (Pamuk, Snow 19). Moreover, he has never taken any religious tuition anywhere other than school. Whatever he might be but at least he does not encourage any anti-secular organization in a secular country like Turkey. It is evident from the fact when İpek asks Ka to meet with Sheikh Saadettin who influences Muhtar to join political Islam; Ka becomes irritated and says, “Am I supposed to pay my respects to every lunatic in Kars?” (92) Ka’s oscillating nature regarding his faith in God is reflected as he undergoes his journey from childhood to adulthood. During his childhood, Ka used to go to the ‘TeVikye Mosque’ along with their maid and play with the other children instead of worship. However “at school, I memorised all the prayers very well, to ingratiate myself with the teacher. He helped us memorise the fatiha by hitting us ... but then I forgot it all” (95). He reveals his
inner thought as: “I’m very happy right now. I have no need for religion” (93). It clearly reflects his inclination towards secularism.

III

The headscarves issue which is the subject matter of much discussion and confusion, especially in the European countries is a major issue in Pamuk’s Snow. “Women and the veil is a topic of great contemporary currency and political urgency. From the controversial headscarf ban in French schools to Orhan Pamuk’s new novel Snow, the veil is a potent visual symbol of political Islam and the ‘clash of civilizations’” (Dillon 682-83). This tussle between Islamism and secularism occurs due to the polarity of views between the two cultures that is the culture of the West and the culture of the ‘other’ already mentioned above. So far as the headscarf issue is concerned, Snow has similar kind of treatment as there is in Khaled Hosseini’s The Kite Runner as well as in A Thousand Splendid Suns.

The feminist movement, which began in 1920s, got its impetus in Turkey after the military coup of 1980. The feminists had the opportunity to uphold their movement with great freedom. However, Pamuk has depicted a number of Muslim women characters in Snow who do not want to compromise with anything that comes between them and their religious faith to achieve freedom. In the novel, it is clearly evident through the death of the “suicide girls” after the imposition of ban on veil by the secular government of Turkey. Subsequently, the Muslim men and women came forward in protest of the ban as it hurts the religious sentiments of their community. Pamuk has captured this impetus of the conflict between Islamism and secularism realistically in the novel. Ka, who plays “the intrepid reporter” (Pamuk, Snow 9) and speaking to the families, is shocked while ‘listening’ to the stories of wretchedness
and ‘poverty’ of the people of Kars. “But the suicide stories he heard that day would haunt him for the rest of his life” (13). The “headscarves girls” take such a step as they are debarred from wearing headscarves in schools. It is a gesture of resistance against the secular government’s order. Ka is puzzled to know that some girls have committed suicide not because of any physical torment or any kind of religious ‘conservatism’ by their parents or husbands or the problem of money but they did so all of a sudden during the time of their daily work, without any prior warning. It arouses more curiosity in Ka to go deep into the heart of the matter through his interviews with the parents of the victims. Since, it is the lone issue of ‘suicide’ by the ‘covered girl’, which brings Ka at this isolated part of Turkey; his primary concern is to investigate it first. While doing his duty by interviewing with the father of the same ‘headscarf girl’ Teslime, who died by committing suicide, Ka comes to know from him that:

Regarding the headscarf, clearly the girl’s mother, who wore one, had set the example, with the blessing of the whole family. But the real pressure had come from her schoolfriends who were running the campaign against the banishment of covered women from the Institute. Certainly, it was they who taught her to think of the headscarf as a symbol of ‘political Islam’. So, despite her parents’ expressed wish that she remove her headscarf, the girl refused, thus ensuring that she would frequently be removed by the police from the halls of the institute. When she saw some of her friends giving up and uncovering their heads, and others forgoing their headscarves to wear wigs instead, the girl began to tell her father that life had no meaning and that she no longer wanted to live. (Pamuk, Snow 16-17)
This speech by the deceased Teslime’s father leaves behind enough clues to support the view that the reason behind the death of his daughter is the ban on headscarves in religious institutions. Moreover, Teslime had shared similar kind of views along with her friends as she did with her father before her death. The readers also come to know this from Muzaffer Bey, the old mayor of Kars during the time of his conversation with Ka:

> ‘But now the streets of Kars are filled with women in headscarves of every kind’ ... ‘And now, because they’ve been barred from their classes for brandishing this symbol of political Islam, they’ve begun committing suicide.’ (Pamuk, *Snow* 21-22)

Indeed, one of the several reasons behind the suicide epidemic at Kars is the ban on headscarves in religious institutions by the secular government of Turkey. However, the followers of political Islam have not encouraged this outbreak as committing suicide is forbidden in Islam. It has certainly widened the rift between the two. In order to overcome the problem of suicide by headscarf girls, the government has taken a number of steps. “As a preliminary measure, the Department of Religious Affairs had plastered the city with the posters Ka had seen the day before. They proclaimed: ‘Human beings are God’s masterpieces and suicide is blasphemy’” (Pamuk, *Snow* 14). Again,

> ... as the state-run Department of Religious Affairs and the Islamists had joined forces by now to condemn suicide as one of the greatest sins, and there were posters all over Kars proclaiming the same truth, no one expected a girl of such piety to take her own life. (Pamuk, *Snow* 17)
But all these measures prove futile. With the increase in the number of deaths as a result of suicide epidemic, the followers of political Islam become more and more furious. Initially, they try to come out from that crisis desperately by demanding from the government the withdrawal of the ban on headscarves from the religious institutions. Finding no positive response, there occur a number of anti-Atatürk activities in the city of Kars such as:

... taking a hammer to the nose of the statue that stood in the garden of the Trade and Industry Lycée, writing ugly remarks on the poster hanging on the wall at the Gang of Fifteen Café, entering into a conspiracy to use hatchet to destroy the statue standing outside the government offices. (Pamuk, *Snow* 311)

The most heinous of all the anti-Atatürk activities that occurs is the assassination of the local Director of the Institute of Education at the New Life Pastry Shop. Ka is the witness of this shooting (of the Director of Education). The assailant is none other than Blue, a radical Islamist whom “he [Ka] immediately recognised” (Pamuk, *Snow* 73) during the latter’s visit to a hiding place to meet with the former. It is through the killing of the Director of the Education Institute by an Islamist that the readers come to know without a doubt the existence of the opposing nature of the norms of the political Islam and the existing laws of Turkey. Ka, who comes to look into the condition at Kars all of a sudden, finds himself in the centre of political clashes. When the local military at Kars stages a coup and kills as many Islamic fundamentalists as possible, Ka by chance involves himself in the role of mediator between Islamists and a Turkish government and the masses that has inclination towards the West.
However, to the surprise of the Islamists, they hardly derive any benefits from their anti-Atatürk activities. Contrarily, their activities go against their own fate as the government is not ready to tolerate their protests. The task of handling the Islamists is well done by the military force of Turkey. In this clash between the secular government and Islamists, the former has controlled the latter in no time:

Just after the coup had started, Z Demirkol and his cohorts had shot and killed one of the two Kurdish boys they’d caught writing slogans on the walls of Halitpaşa Avenue. After seizing another boy, they’d beaten him until he’d fainted. Then there was the young unemployed boy they’d taken to the religious high school so that he could clean the graffiti off its walls. When he’d tried to escape, they’d shot him in the legs. (Pamuk, *Snow* 311)

It’s true that the military becomes successful in their attempts to have control over the Islamists in Turkey but only for a short while. The Islamists raise their heads whenever they get suitable opportunity and try to revolt against the secular government and vent their anger. In this way, there continues the tussle between them. But then, it is from the external support that the Islamists of Turkey are encouraged to move forward in their mission. It is through the local news paper, the *Border City Gazette* that the readers get the real picture of Kars at present:

Although the people of Kars once lived side by side in happy harmony, in recent years outside forces have turned brother against brother, with disputes between the Islamists and the secularists, the Kurds, the Turks and the Azeris driving us asunder for specious reasons and
reawakening old accusations about the Armenian massacre that should have been buried long ago. (Pamuk, Snow 301)

Ka becomes afraid of the whole situation at Kars which is becoming more and more complicated each day but “what frightened him most was the thought of dying just at the dawn of hope that he might live happily ever after in Frankfurt with İpek” (Pamuk 303). Moreover, he is haunted by the thought that:

The many writers killed in recent years by Islamist bullets paraded before his eyes: first the old imam-turned-atheist who had tried to point out ‘inconsistencies’ in the Koran (they’d shot him from behind, in the head); then the righteous columnist whose love of positivism had led him to refer in a number of articles to girls wearing headscarves as ‘cockroaches’ (they strafed him and his chauffeur one morning as they drove to work); and finally there was the determined investigative journalist who had tenaciously sought to uncover the links between the Turkish Islamist movement and Iran (when he turned the key, he and his car were blown into the sky). (Pamuk, Snow 303-04)

In order to come out from such political crisis and fulfil his dream, Ka, who plays the role of intermediary between the Islamist, Blue and the government, does not hesitate to deceive Blue and Kadife. He does not reveal the real motive of Sunay behind the role offered to Kadife in the play to be staged at the National Theatre. Ka exaggerates the whole thing in favour of the two so that they might not reject the proposal given by Sunay. Ka admits it in front of Sunay: “First I had to flatter Kadife, then I had to flatter Blue” (Pamuk, Snow 340). However, İpek doubts Ka and blames him for the death of Blue and Hande. She shares it with her sister Kadife at the
National Theatre: “Ka knew where he [Blue] was hiding, and after his last visit to see you here, he never returned to the hotel” (407-08).

IV

Blue the representative of political Islam in *Snow* stands against the secular law of Turkey. He is known as the “Master” among his followers for “his being a political Islamist of some notoriety” (Pamuk, *Snow* 71). Orhan Pamuk introduces him (in chapter eight) as the ‘brown-haired’ clean-shaved little man who has an ‘aquiline nose’ and ‘breathtakingly pale skin’ with deep blue eyes. In his youth he was “a godless leftist” who “tagged along with the other young militants and stoned the sailors coming off the American aircraft carriers” (328). But with the passage of time there comes a radical change in him. He is no more sticking to the leftist ideology as before. The speech of Ayatollah Khomeini has influenced him greatly and brings him back to Islam: “The most important thing today is not to pray or fast but to protect the Islamic faith” (328). It has created such an impression in Blue’s mind that he joined Muslim organization with an aim to put the words of Khomeini into practice. Since then he never looks back. Nor does he lose his confidence. Such a high level of self-confidence enables Blue to become the leader of the Islamists. There is no doubt that Blue is an active member of political Islam. Even during his days in Germany, he has left no stone unturned to attend “at whatever Muslim association I happened to be visiting” (75). The sole purpose was to promote the ideology of political Islam. Unlike many other Islamists who become eminent for their involvements in murders “Blue’s fame derived from the fact that he was held responsible for the murder of an effeminate, exhibitionist TV personality named Güner Bener” because the latter “uttered an inappropriate remark about the Prophet Mohammed” (71). The incident took place while Güner Bener was presenting a quiz show broadcasted on a minor TV
channel. The young Islamists of Kars are in the clasp of Blue. That’s why the police does not arrest Blue despite their knowledge about the latter’s arrival in Kars: “because they wanted to know which young Islamists were his associates. Now they’re sorry, because last night, just before the raid on the religious high-school dormitory, he vanished like smoke” (Pamuk, Snow 210). However, one of the reasons behind Blue’s staying in ‘hiding’ place is to keep himself away from the press which ‘had made sure’ his ‘part’ in the execution of Güner Bener. This incident is known throughout the country and is widely criticized. Even, “Some of the Islamist press were as critical as the secularists. They accused Blue of ‘bloodying the hands’ of political Islam, of allowing himself to become the plaything of the secularist press, of enjoying his media fame in a manner unbefitting a Muslim, of being in the pay of the CIA” (72).

While most of the characters in Snow are attracted to the West, Blue disapproves it. According to him the humiliation of the Muslim world lies in the fact that it has “fallen under the spell of the West” (Pamuk, Snow 81). But he remains strict in his ideology. He doesn’t want to imitate the European culture because that would mean that “you’ll always be groveling” (357). His disapproval of the slavery of the Turkish press to the Western press and subsequently his hatred for the West is further revealed during the time of his conversation with Ka:

The Turkish press is interested in this country’s troubles only if the Western press takes an interest first ... Otherwise its offensive to discuss poverty and suicide. They talk about these things as if they happen in a land beyond the civilised world. (Pamuk, Snow 77)
Blue’s fanatical obsession with radicalism has its root in this belief. Indicating towards the press of Turkey and its servile attitude towards the Western press, Blue holds the view that a press which is not self dependent and influenced by other press while functioning has no right to continue to exist. That’s the reason why Blue does not want Ka “to write about the suicide girls for a Turkish paper or for a European paper!” (Pamuk, Snow 77) He further confesses that “because of the hatred I felt for the West, I admired the revolution in Iran” (328). His grievances for the West reach its peak when he says:

I refuse to be a European, and I won’t ape their ways. I’m going to live out my own history and be no one but myself. I, for one, believe it’s possible to be happy without becoming a mock-European, without becoming their slave. (Pamuk, Snow 331)

It is clear from the above speech that Blue is against “imitating the West” (Pamuk, Snow 331). By doing so he does not want to lose his cultural identity which is a sign of pride for him. To save this pride he prefers to maintain his distance from the European culture. Blue, the “militant Islamist who’d spent half his life railing against the merciless Turkish state,” is “now sitting in a prison cell because he was implicated in two separate murder inquiries ...” (326). But he is adamant in his decision. He refuses the proposal of Sunay ‘relayed’ by Ka for his release. Blue does not want to bow down in front of secular laws of the country by surrendering himself. That’s why during this conversation in the jail cell Blue said to Ka: “So tell him [Sunay] this: I reject his proposal. I thank you for taking the trouble to come all this way” (327). Blue dauntlessly replies Ka’s question “Aren’t you afraid of dying?” He says: “If that’s a threat, then the answer is no, I’m not afraid of dying. If you’re asking me as a
concerned friend, the answer is yes, I’m very afraid. But whatever I do now, these tyrants will still want to hang me. There’s nothing I can do to change that” (327).

It hardly matters for Blue to suffer the death sentence but his concern for the political Islam counts a lot for him. He wants to strengthen the spirits of the followers of political Islam: “On the subject of my execution, I would like to make clear that I have no regrets about anything I have done for political reasons at any time in the past, including today, 20 February” (Pamuk, Snow 328). Seeing the lethargic attitude of the people around him, Blue develops an outlook that would enable him to lead a sincere life. When Ka denies as an ‘agent’ of anyone, Blue reveals his own identity with strength of mind, “After all, I see myself as an agent of Islam” (330). He is completely conscious of the goal of political Islam while according to him others are not. It is reflected in the following words:

These meek lambs here – they might have strong religious beliefs, but at the end of the day they obey the state’s decrees. And all those rebel sheikhs, all those who rise up because they fear our religion is slipping away, all those militants trained in Iran, even those like Saidi Nursi who enjoyed long-lasting fame – they can’t even count on having graves in the first place, let alone resting in peace in them. As for all those religious leaders in this country who dream of the day their names turn to emblems of faith – the soldiers load their bodies on to military planes and dump them in the sea. (Pamuk, Snow 330)

Blue is so active in his mission of strengthening the organization of political Islam that his name is widely known in his native land and abroad. While
interrogating Ka in order to know the assassin of the director of the Education Institute and the whereabouts of Blue “the round-faced agent explained” that:

... Blue was a dangerous terrorist and a formidable conspirator. He was a certified enemy of the republic and in the pay of Iran. It was certain that he had murdered a television presenter, so a warrant had been issued for his arrest. He had been sighted all over Turkey. He was organising the fundamentalists” (Pamuk, *Snow* 182-183).

That’s the reason why this enemy of the country is under the observance of the military force of Turkey now and then. But Blue knows how to handle such pressure without losing his guts. Ka further observes “a mixture of pride and extraordinary tenderness” (Pamuk, *Snow* 239) in the appearance of Blue during the time of the interview. However, it changes into ‘resolve’ later on. He leaves no stone unturned to defend him and tries to justify the actions of the Islamists so far. Rather Blue guards the Islamists saying that they are not involved in the assassination of the mayor and the director of the Education Institute in any way:

He said that the state had arranged for the mayor and the director of the Education Institute to be assassinated to provide a pretext for the coup. And the coup itself was designed to prevent the Islamists winning the election. The banning of all political parties and associations proved his point, he said. (Pamuk, *Snow* 232)

He continues to justify the deeds of the Islamists with a cool and calm composure. He then adds to his previous statement in favour of the Islamists by saying that:
It is deplorable when Islamists go on television to boast about killing just one poor atheist, but it is just as appalling when secularist-orientalists seek to vilify the Islamists by running news reports that augment the death toll to ten or fifteen. (Pamuk, *Snow* 235)

Blue does not fail to understand the motive behind Ka’s arrangement of such interview with him for the ‘Western newspaper’. He, thus, without any hesitation points his finger towards the Western press and says “all they need to say is that I’m one of the most prominent Islamists in Turkey, and perhaps the entire Middle East” (Pamuk, *Snow* 233). His abhorrence against the West continues which is reflected once again when the title for one of the columns meant to be published in one of the German newspapers is selected as “An Announcement to the People of Europe about the Events in Kars” in its first draft by a ‘leftist-militant informer’. Blue reacts:

> We’re not speaking to Europe; ... We’re speaking to all humanity ...
> The people of Europe are not our friends but our enemies. And it’s not because we are their enemies – it’s because they instinctively despise us. (Pamuk, *Snow* 277)

He further reveals his inner voice saying that he would never try to be like the people of the West for gaining any kind of benefits. He does not want the West to be the master of all and poke their nose in the affairs of others. He, thus, vehemently rejects Turgut Bey’s views about Europe as “Europe is our future, and the future of our humanity” (Pamuk, *Snow* 277). Blue says with brimming confidence that “as long as I live I shall not imitate them or hate myself for being different to them” (278). His hatred for the West is an aspect of rivalry between the two different cultures in *Snow* that has been described as a “clash of civilizations” (Huntington, 28). Despite his
anger against the West Blue accepts the bitter reality about the mastery of the West. His awareness of the fact compels him to say to Turgut Bey that: “I couldn’t care less about your European masters. Where they’re concerned, all I want to do is step out of their shadow. But the truth is, we all live under a shadow” (Pamuk, Snow 280).

Finding no other options for his release from the jail, Blue agrees to the proposal of Sunay. According to the proposal Blue would allow his beloved Kadife to bare her head on stage at the National Theatre during the performance of the play A Tragedy in Kars. But as soon as Blue reaches the hiding place after his release from the jail, he alters his decision. It shows his real nature of a ‘villain’. According to the agreement it is at the cost of Kadife’s assurance of uncovering her head on ‘live television’ that lets him go but now he is least interested in that. Blue says to Ka that “I want you to tell Kadife not to have anything to do with that disaster they plan to stage this evening” (Pamuk, Snow 356). He tries every alternative for his safety but at last he has to face the cold hand of death “on the night of the revolution” (400), during a raid in his ‘hiding-place’ when he was watching TV along with Hande:

According to the official report, Blue took one look at the soldiers and the police officers assembled outside and rushed to get his weapon; he then opened fire without warning. Several neighbours and the young Islamists who would turn him into a legend almost overnight remember that, after getting off a few rounds, he cried, ‘Don’t shoot!’ Perhaps he was hoping to save Hande. However, Z Demirkol’s special operations team had already taken up positions around the perimeter, and in less than a minute not just Blue and Hande but every wall of their safe-house was riddled with bullets. (Pamuk, Snow 402)
Blue dies a bitter death and everything comes to an end. However, the common people will remember him as a radical Islamist for his criminal records. Still, Blue earns some compliments from İpek before his death:

Blue is very compassionate, very thoughtful and generous ... He doesn’t want anyone to suffer. He cried all night once, just because two little puppies had lost their mother. Believe me, he’s not like anyone else ... He’s very strong-willed, he’s decisive, he’s so powerful, but also so much fun.... (Pamuk, Snow 371)

While scrutinizing the death of Blue İpek blames Ka as the possible spy and responsible for the death of Blue and Hande. She says to Kadife: “I think it was Ka who betrayed them to the special operations team. That’s why I didn’t go back to Germany with him” (Pamuk, Snow 408). Whether her suspicion has any valid ground or not is not clear. But the report of the inspecting colonel “implicated Ka in the coup” as a result of which “the military court summoned him as a witness” (418). It is due to Ka’s “failure to appear at two hearings” that he has been “charged with obstruction and issued a warrant for his arrest” (418). Fazıl too believes that it is Ka who deceives Blue which leads him but to the grave. He says to Orhan Bey that “after Ka had failed to persuade Kadife to give up the play ... he’d visited Z Demirkol in his new headquarters, where the latter was waiting for Ka to tell him Blue’s whereabouts” (428).

Despite his fanatical obsession with political Islam, Blue offers authentic insights into some facets of society and makes genuinely shocking criticism of it. He points out that: “Most of the time it’s not the Europeans who belittle us. What happens when we look at them is that we belittle ourselves” (Pamuk, Snow 75).
Blue’s claim justifies Said’s view regarding the inferiority complex of the ‘other’ as stated in *Orientalism*. According to Blue it is merely the distortion of the fact because some “girls who commit suicide are not even Muslims” (77). His keen insight into this matter compels him to ask Ka not to write any articles about the girls who committed suicide in any paper inside or outside of Turkey because “suicide is a terrible sin! It’s an illness that grows the more you focus on it!” He goes on saying:

> And it’s wrong to say they’re taking stand over headscarves. If you publish lies like this, you’ll only spread more rumours – about quarrels among the headscarf girls, about the poor souls who have resorted to wearing wigs, about how they’ve been destroyed by the pressure put on them by the police and their parents. (Pamuk, *Snow* 77)

Muhtar also has inclination towards political Islam though he is not as radical as Blue. His attraction towards the Islamic philosophy and its impact on society is noteworthy. “Muhtar was not from one of those wishy-washy centre-right parties; he was a proponent of radical Islam” (Pamuk, *Snow* 67). To be more precise, it is through the character of Muhtar that the readers are supplied with an apt opinion by the novelist to evaluate the system of beliefs of political Islam. He doesn’t want merely to sit idly and support political Islam. He joins “Prosperity Party, the party of God” (26) as an electoral candidate to contest in the forthcoming election with a purpose to promote political Islam. According to Serdar Bey, the owner of the *Border City Gazette*, the local newspaper, Muhtar has a fair chance of winning. He says to Ka:

> The only candidate the people trust is the one who is running for God’s party ... And that candidate is Muhtar Bey, the ex-husband of İpek
Hanım ... Muhtar’s not very bright, but he is a Kurd, and the Kurds make up forty per cent of our population. The new mayor will belong to God’s party. (Pamuk, Snow 27)

Muhtar got married with his classmate İpek and tried to settle down at their native town that is Kars, but it was in vain. Muhtar was a poet friend of Ka during the time of their college/university education. They were in the same ‘political group’ that is “left-wing” (Pamuk, Snow 37). However, Muhtar diverts his attention towards religion only after his divorce. It is revealed by İpek. She says to Ka that:

Muhtar took over his father’s Arçelic and Aygaz white-goods distributorship ... And once we were settled here, I tried to get pregnant. When nothing happened, he started taking me to doctors in Erzurum and Istanbul, and when I still couldn’t conceive we separated. But, instead of remarrying, Muhtar gave himself to religion. (Pamuk, Snow 35)

Muhtar returns to Islam from his “atheist years” (Pamuk, Snow 56) under the influence of Saadettin Efendi, the Kurdish Sheikh. The Sheikh used to treat Muhtar like a friend and shows him “the road to God Almighty” (57). Presently, he is “running on the Islamic fundamentalist ticket” (53). Muhtar says to Ka:

It was at this point that some devil within – half utilitarian, half rationalist – a remnant of my atheist days, began to goad me. People like me find peace only when fighting for a cause in a political party with like-minded people. Which is why I joined this party – I knew it would give me a deeper and more meaningful spiritual life than I had found with the men in the lodge. This is, after all, a religious party, a
party that values the spiritual side. My experience as a party member during my Marxist years prepared me well. (Pamuk, *Snow* 58-59)

Muhtar’s reaction after hearing the news of the murder of the Director of the Education Institute from Ka is notable:

> All across Turkey, our support of the covered girls is the key expression of our political vision. Now someone’s tried to assassinate the wretch who refused to let those girls past the entrance of the Education Institute; ... (Pamuk, *Snow* 52)

The dream of Muhtar, ‘the district head of the Prosperity Party’ (Pamuk, *Snow* 64) to become the mayor of Kars after winning in the forthcoming election comes to an end with his arrest. The police arrest him for the assassination of the Director of the Education Institute. And it becomes worst when under compulsion “he’s signed a statement declaring his withdrawal from the race” (106). In fact, Muhtar has closeness with Blue. It is revealed through İpek’s conversation with Ka. İpek says to Ka that though her ex-husband Muhtar has friendship with the radical Islamist Blue, he does not favour extremism: “For a while, Muhtar was very much taken with him, so he paid a few visits to our house. But when Muhtar decided he wanted a more moderate and democratic form of Islam, he distanced himself” (Pamuk, *Snow* 91). It is Muhtar, who, for the first time takes the pain to send for Blue to Kars and used to pass most of their time together for quite some time at the initial stage. “But after the Istanbul press branded him [Blue] a terrorist, he didn’t want to put the party in a difficult position, so now when he comes here, he never gets in touch” (300).

After all, Muhtar has undergone a crisis at one point of life. He has to withdraw his nomination file to cease contesting election for the Prosperity Party. Still he does
not have any complaint about his life: “He was happy with the way his life was going: although the Prosperity Party had been shut down, he was sure to be the candidate of the new Islamist party the next time there was an election, and was confident of a time to come when he would be mayor” (Pamuk, *Snow* 421).

Political Islam also is brought into focus through Kadife (İpek’s sister) in the society of Turkey. She represents political Islam as the leader of the “covered” movement. Pamuk, however, attends to the harmful outcomes of this movement which is against secular way of life. It sounds interesting to see the transformation of Kadife from an ‘infidel’ (modern girl) to a religious one. Previously, “she’d go on television and bare her bottom, and flaunt her legs” (Pamuk, *Snow* 110). Now, she wears “one of those nondescript headscarves” (112) regularly worn by thousands of Muslim women. It is “the symbol of political Islam” (112) at present. Kadife, the daughter of an ‘atheist father’ felt ashamed to say Islam as “our religion” (110) when she was a model. Even she used to encourage girls from the religious high school to remove the scarves from their heads to become modern. But now she is leading the “headscarf” movement very actively. She is involved in this movement so deeply that she does not like to talk about her ‘faith’ with a secularist or an atheist. She clearly states: “And I’m not one of those Islamist toadies who go around trying to convince secularists that Islam can be a secular religion” (114).

Kadife condemns Teslime for the latter’s extreme step of committing suicide in front of Ka because “Human beings are God’s masterpieces and suicide is blasphemy” (Pamuk, *Snow* 113-14). She further adds that: “If you turn to the twenty-ninth line of the Nisa verse of the Glorious Koran, you’ll see that suicide is clearly prohibited” (114). In fact, Kadife’s reference from the *Holy Qur’ān* is apt. The above mentioned verse of the *Holy Qur’ān* states that:
O ye who believe! eat not up your property among yourselves in vanities: but let there be amongst you traffic and trade by mutual goodwill: nor kill (or destroy) yourselves: for verily Allah hath been to you Most Merciful! (4:29).

Kadife further elaborates upon it and says to Ka that: “The Holy Koran is the word of God, and when God makes a clear and definite command, it’s not a matter for ordinary mortals to question” (Pamuk, Snow 114). It shows that Kadife has gained sufficient knowledge of the Shari’ah of Islam. Her conscience pricks her so much that she repents for her past deeds. She shares her feelings with Ka: “Now I’ve come to see that God put me through all this suffering to help me find the true path. Once I was an atheist, like you” (116). It is due to this awareness that Kadife has become a popular figure in the religious high school where some of the admirers “worshiped her by the name of Hicran” (115).

In fact, Kadife works as an agent of Blue. She meets with Ka secretly in Room 217 of a hotel where the latter is staying to convey Blue’s ‘message’. At the same time she warns Ka that the latter must not “go to Blue looking for quotes” or “try anything funny” (Pamuk, Snow 228) and rebukes Ka thus:

Make sure you show Blue respect. Whatever you do, don’t try to belittle him by playing the conceited, foreign-educated, European sophisticate. If you let this sort of foolishness slip out by accident, don’t even think of smiling ... And don’t forget, the Europeans you admire and imitate so slavishly couldn’t care less about you ... and they’re scared to death of people like Blue. (Pamuk, Snow 229)
But the irony lies in the fact that Kadife “smiled” (Pamuk, *Snow* 379) while reading the secret letter ‘openly’ at the National Theatre given by Blue through Ka. It reveals Blue’s intention of resisting her to bare her head in front of the audience. And she sticks to her promise as she says, “I don’t need an excuse. Sunay’s already told me I’m free to go home if I wish” (379). Kadife has taken such decision to uncover her head in exchange of Blue’s release from the jail. But at the same time she violates her promise as the leader of the headscarf girls as well as the Shari’ah of Islam by bowing herself in front of secularism. Contrarily, she propagates the secular character of the country through her performance of baring her head at the National Theatre. Expectedly, it enrages the believers of Islam in general and the followers of political Islam in particular.

Minor characters like Necip and Fazıl are also the supporters of political Islam. In fact, they have a little role in *Snow*. However, these two boys from the religious high school play the role of commentators through whom the readers are supplied with the valuable information about the happenings in the religious high school and also about some of the notorious Islamists like Blue. Necip says to Ka during the time of his first meeting with the latter that though Ka has met with some people “but there’s one more important person in Kars that you need to meet” (Pamuk, *Snow* 68). Though Necip has not seen Blue for a single time in his life, he has great liking for him. He, then, shows Ka the way to Blue’s ‘hiding-place’ and requests him to keep it ‘a secret’. Furthermore, the readers come to know through Ka about Necip’s inclination towards political Islam when he reads out a piece of paper in front of Sunay Zaim: “… he’d been doing odd jobs at the branch headquarters of the Prosperity Party for a while … he was an admirer of Blue and had been making overtures to him during the eighteen months Blue had been visiting the city, ...”
(Pamuk, *Snow* 205). But at the same time Necip’s role as a critic cannot be denied. Defending his religion, Necip says to Ka that “political Islamist is just a name that Westerners and the secularists give to us Muslims who are ready to fight for our religion” (Pamuk, *Snow* 69). Pointing towards Ka’s doubt in the existence of God, he further says to Ka that: “People in high society never believe in God. They believe in what the Europeans do, so they think they’re better than ordinary people” (105). Necip dies at the National Theatre as he is shot by military during the time of the show of the play *My Fatherland or My Headscarf*.

Fazıl looks like Necip but unlike Necip he is afraid of politics. In the words of Necip, “Fazıl is the most religious person in our group, and I trust him more than anyone else in the world. But he’s worried that if he gets involved in politics, he’ll end up with a police file and might get kicked out of school” (Pamuk, *Snow* 109). Fazıl unburdens his heart by revealing his secret desires in front of Ka:

He [Necip] wants me to take revenge. That’s why I am convinced he’s dead. But when school opens all I want to do is study, I don’t want to take revenge, I don’t want to get involved in politics. (Pamuk, *Snow* 220)

Though, Fazıl does not want to involve himself in politics, he is under its firm grip. It is evident from his presence in Room 307 of the Hotel Asia amid the Islamists led by Blue. Furthermore, he says to Ka that: “For years and years I’ve thought my friends and classmates were wrong to get mixed up in politics, and now suddenly I want to join the Islamists and do something to protest against the military coup” (Pamuk, *Snow* 294). However, Fazıl does not hide his actual inner motive behind his desire to join the Islamists. The main purpose behind it is to make Kadife notice him so that the
latter might become a hero in the former’s eyes. Though, Fazıl is four years junior to Kadife, they have got married two months after the latter’s release from the jail.

V

Sunay Zaim, unlike Blue, sees European culture as a culture of civility. He tells the people of Turkey that they have “embarked on the road to enlightenment and no one can turn you from this great and noble journey” (Pamuk, Snow 158).

Sunay’s fascination for the Enlightenment and high regard for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), the head of the secular government of Turkey are the factors behind his strong faith in secularism. He imagines himself to be like Atatürk, the first president of Turkey and tries to give an authentic shape to secularism in Turkey. Since 1923, after the success of Turkish military and subsequently the foundation of the Republic in Turkey by Atatürk, there comes a remarkable change in the policy of the government in the country. Unlike the Ottoman, celebration of universal notion of Islam, Kemalist government tries to set up a different identity in Turkey which is secular in nature. In Snow, Sunay tries to imitate the personality of Atatürk. It is evident from a couple of incidents in the novel. For instance “He [Sunay Zaim] was wearing an army uniform from the thirties with the fur hat in the style of Atatürk and the heroes of the War for Independence” (Pamuk, Snow 157). Then, Pamuk’s exposition of the two staged coups in the National Theatre at Kars carried out under the leadership of Sunay Zaim bear striking resemblance with the actual event that took place during the last decade of the twentieth century:

The last major military intervention in politics was the so called ‘soft coup’ of 1997, in which the military dominated National Security Council, an advisory body to the government, pushed out an Islamist
The influence of the ideology of Hegel in addition to the leadership quality of Atatürk motivates Sunay Zaim to carry out those two successive coups at the National Theatre at Kars:

‘It was Hegel who first noticed that history and theatre are made of the same materials,’ said Sunay. ‘Remember that, just as in the theatre, history chooses those who play the leading roles. And just as actors put their courage to the test on the stage, so, too, do the chosen few on the stage of history. (Pamuk, Snow 202)

Pamuk tells the readers that Sunay Zaim has been a great actor since the “seventies” (Pamuk, Snow 7). He used to work in Istanbul along with his wife, Funda Eser, but has never, astonishingly, put his theories into practice until this coup in disguise at the National Theatre.

In the novel, the first staged coup episode is precipitated by a show of a Kemalist play My Father or My Scarf by Funda Eser. Sunay addresses the audience before the play begins. In his speech, Sunay, the owner of a theatre group in the city of Kars at that time, does not hesitate to point his finger towards the Islamists in particular and any other organizations that go against the secular character of Turkey in general. Thus, like a hero brimming with confidence Sunay Zaim addresses the audience in favour of modernity at the National Theatre:

Oh, honourable and beloved citizens of Turkey ... Do not fear. The reactionaries who want to turn back time, those vile beasts with their
cobwebbed minds, will never be allowed to crawl out of their hole. Those who seek to meddle with the republic, with freedom, with enlightenment will see their hands crushed. (Pamuk, *Snow* 158)

The news of the death of the director of the Education Institute perturbs Sunay Zaim so much that he cannot hold his nerves. He further addresses the audience at the National Theatre in an angry tone: “This lowly murder will be the last assault on the republic and the secular future of Turkey!” (Pamuk, *Snow* 159) It reflects Sunay as a proponent of secularism. To his surprise, Sunay hears a retaliatory shout from a supporter of political Islam. ‘The short’ and ‘fearless boy’ says: “Damn the godless secularists! Damn the fascist infidels!” (159) However, it does not affect Sunay zaim. He applauds the soldiers who fired at the “troublemakers” (173)/agitated audience at the National Theatre with the same impetus and says to the audience:

This is not a play – it is the beginning of a revolution ... We are prepared to go to any lengths to protect our fatherland. Put your faith in the great and honourable Turkish army! Soldiers, bring them over. (Pamuk, *Snow* 163)

Sunay Zaim “a Kamalist vaudeville artist who stages a play within-a-play coup that constitutes the centrepiece of the novel’s presentation of secondary realities” (Heyking 75) proceeds according to the plan. The purpose is not merely to liberate women from the headscarf but there are political reasons too behind it. “Sunay’s theatrical coup represents nothing less than a parody of Turkish history, which is marked by a series of similar coups. The fictional coup becomes real not only because Sunay demonstrates military power, but also because people are complicit with it – they want the coup as a means of security” (Erol 414).
As the play proceeds at the National Theatre the conflicting attitude of the Islamists and the secularists among the audience is exposed: “From the middle and back rows, where the boys from the religious high school were seated, there came a few shouts of protest, one or two whistles, and a fair amount of booing” (Pamuk, *Snow* 149). Contrary to it “a couple of officials sitting up front clapped approvingly” (149). The remaining audience are anxiously waiting with fear in their eyes to see what would happen next. The ‘old fashioned’ short play opens in such a manner that “most of the locals in the National Theatre were shocked and confused by the first scene” (150). In this scene the actress Funda Eser comes wearing a veil only to move ‘up and down the stage’ which the boys from the religious High School have taken for granted “the respected symbol of political Islam” (150). However, it would prove to be a mere illusion in the last scene of the play. On the other hand “in the second scene, when the women [Eser] made her grand gesture of independence, launching herself into enlightenment as she removed her scarf, the audience was at first terrified. … even the most Westernised secularists in the hall were frightened by the sight of their own dreams coming true” (Pamuk, *Snow* 151). The motive behind the staging of the play *My Fatherland or My Headscarf* is to unite the secularists and the Islamists but it is in vain. On the contrary “Eser’s play reveals the irreconcilable divide between the secularists and the Islamists” (Heyking 80).

After the ‘ardent patriotism of the Kemalist period’ there was worry among the modern Turkish people generated by the radical Islamists. The authorities could hardly ask women not to wear veils:

Fear of the political Islamists was so great that they had long ago accepted that the city must remain as it always had been. I say ‘dreams’, but not even in their sleep could they have imagined the state
forcing women to remove their headscarves as it had done in the early years of the republic. They were prepared to live with the practice, ‘as long as the Islamists don’t use intimidation or force to make Westernised women wear scarves, as we’ve seen in Iran’. (Pamuk, *Snow* 151)

The main targets of this bloody coup at the National Theatre are none but the Islamists who oppose secularism in Turkey. And everything occurs in favour of Sunay and the military. “All the hardened political Islamists in the student body had attended the performance at the National Theatre, and they had all been arrested on the spot ...” (Pamuk, *Snow* 172). To uproot the Islamists “a tank and two army trucks attacked the religious high-school dormitory” (172). Moreover, “they’ve raided the university hostels, the religious high school, the party headquarters ...” (178) on the same day which leads to further deaths. The number of death casualty is large in number. The army load the dead bodies of the students of the religious high school in the truck and sends the victims to their respective villages. Umman Bey, the deputy governor came on to the stage at the National Theatre and “announced a curfew in all of Kars until twelve o’clock the following day” (173). He does so in order to avoid any kind of revolution by the followers of political Islam.

In order to achieve his goal Sunay Zaim is well prepared and strongly determined to overcome whatever obstacles come his way. He says to Ka:

> But no matter how long I languished in the mire, no matter how much filth, wretchedness, poverty and ignorance I saw around me, I never lost my belief in my own guiding principles, never doubted that I had reached the summit. (Pamuk, *Snow* 193)
Sunay was ‘expelled’ when he was a final year student in Kuleli Military Academy as he ran away to Istanbul for performing in various ‘Beyoğlu theatres’ and also for taking part in the play named *Before the Ice Melts*. Since then his theatrical career began with great momentum. It is evident through his performance at the National Theatre. “Especially impressive was his decisiveness in the final acts of these plays, when power had passed into his hands and the time had come to mete out punishments to the wicked oppressors” (Pamuk, *Snow* 193):

Sunay was among those nominated by this popular jury; in fact, as he was still well known for his fine work during the democratic era, he was the clear front runner from day one. He had, after all, been playing revolutionaries for years. Turkish audiences had no doubt that the handsome, majestic, confidence-inspiring Sunay would make an excellent Atatürk. (Pamuk, *Snow* 194)

Sunay bursts out in anger in front of Ka and says “Atatürk had no time for bird-brained fantasists” (Pamuk, *Snow* 207) indicating the disciples of political Islam. At the same time he does not hesitate to point out that those students from the religious high school, who are in jail now, could be rebellious if precaution is not taken in time:

They’ll throw bombs at anyone and anything – they don’t care as long as they are heard ... No one who’s even slightly Westernised can breathe freely in this country unless they have a secular army protecting them, and no one needs this protection more than intellectuals who think they’re better than everyone else and look down on people – if it weren’t for the army, the fanatics would be turning
their rusty knives on the lot of them and their painted women, chopping them all into little pieces. (Pamuk, *Snow* 207)

Therefore, the combined effort by the state and the army is necessary to tackle the “dangerous fanatics” otherwise “we’ll end up back in the Middle Ages, sliding into anarchy, travelling the doomed path already well travelled by so many tribal nations in Asia and the Middle East” (Pamuk, *Snow* 207-208). Sunay, then, shifts his attention towards Blue. He does not understand “What does this murderer have that makes everyone fall for him? Why is his name legend throughout Anatolia?” (211) So, he seeks the helping hand of Ka, who had met with Blue once before. Sunay approaches Ka very cunningly and urges him to meet with Blue once again.

Sunay falls in deep ‘trouble’ for his ‘offhand remark’ in an interview with an ‘anti-Western’ religious newspaper that: “Perhaps one day, when public deems fit, I might be able to play the Prophet Mohammed” (Pamuk, *Snow* 195). This ‘careless comment’ by Sunay enrages the Islamists as it is forbidden in Islam “that any mortal should presume to play the Great Prophet” (195). Sunay condemns Blue as an “evil man” who can go to any extent at any hour of the day. He wants to get rid of Blue as soon as possible. According to him:

He’s definitely the mastermind behind the assassination of the director of the Education Institute. He goes around telling everyone that he’s against suicide while he’s busy turning poor, brainless teenagers into suicide bombers. (Pamuk, *Snow* 314)

Sunay wants to handle the Islamist like Blue technically with a purpose to leave behind certain lessons for others so that they might not dare put themselves in Blue’s shoes. His “… aim in life is not to punish these heinous creatures, these
reactionaries and terrorists in our midst” (Pamuk, Snow 314). He wants to do something in the manner it is done in Thomas Kyd’s play *The Spanish Tragedy* which influenced him greatly. He waited for fifteen long years to perform in similar kinds of play “that ends in suicide” (314). In fact, he wants to give a real shape to his long awaited dream very soon through his performance at the National Theatre. It will be done “in front of a live audience, and, of course, it will go out on television at the same time so that the whole city can see it” (314). In order to make the play more convincing for the people of Turkey, Sunay has ‘simplified the plot’ of the play/“amended the play” (Pamuk, Snow 319) *The Spanish Tragedy* just before the end of it. He also changes the title of the drama originally inspired by Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*. The new title is announced by ‘the television announcers’ as *A tragedy in Kars* “during the last half-hour of the relentless promotional campaign” (399). Its sole purpose is to highlight secularism at the cost of religious customs. To make things in favour of secularism and to show its dominance and control over political Islam, Sunay includes Kadife, the leader of the ‘headscarf girl’ to play the role of an appropriate “Spanish lady”(319). According to that role Kadife has to cover her head initially on stage, and at the end being exhausted of the bloody dispute, she has to remove her veil. Moreover “Funda will play her evil-hearted rival. Kadife will appear on stage wearing a headscarf. Then, in defiance of the ludicrous customs that have given rise to the blood feud, she’ll bare her head for all to see” (314). This step of Sunay certainly would provoke anger in the followers of Islam. Despite knowing the fact that “the political Islamists would see this as a demoralising ‘move’”, (360) Sunay moves ahead with his mission. However, it’s not an easy task for Sunay to convince Kadife and make her agree to play such role which is against the customs of her religion (Islam). Thus, he seeks the help of Ka, who can solve the problem by
acting as a mediator. Initially, Ka does not agree to Sunay’s proposal in order to keep himself away from the possible ‘target’ of the Islamists. But Ka agrees when Sunay promises the former about his safety by providing security. Sunay further promises to Ka that: “If Kadife bares her head, I can have her Blue released at once. They can run off together to some foreign land and live happily ever after” (315). It acts as a bait not only for Kadife and Blue but also for Ka. He is spending every minute under bad political condition. That’s why Ka takes the responsibility to convince Kadife. And he does so by emphasising it as the only option for Blue’s release from the jail so that she might agree to play the role mentioned above. After a long protest Kadife shows little interest to this proposal but that too depends on Blue’s approval: “Well, let’s see if Blue will want me to save him by pulling off my scarf” (Pamuk, Snow 319). Finally, she accepts the proposal at the cost of Blue’s release. She takes this decision only after getting Blue’s approval through Ka who is a mediator and “a double agent” (380). The rest is well done by Funda Eser. She convinces Kadife well regarding the latter’s role in the play. Funda Eser encourages Kadife time and again during the time of the rehearsal of the play to bare latter’s head. She very cunningly kisses and pats Kadife frequently to arouse “the dormant evil that Kadife kept hidden” and says to Kadife to “let your hair speak for itself, and let the men go mad!” (352). The extreme height of such provocation is seen when Kadife wants to “study the script” of the play:

Funda proclaimed that the only script that counted that night would be the moment when all the men of Kars gazed, dumbfounded, at her long, beautiful, radiant hair. The women in the audience would be so moved by love and jealousy that they would want to reach out and touch it. (Pamuk, Snow 353)
Sunay’s decision to include Kadife in the play meant to be staged at the National Theatre is not merely to give her an opportunity to act as an actress but to prove the dominance of secularism over anything and everything at least in Turkey. Through Kadife’s role Sunay tries to show to the students of the religious high school and the Islamists in particular and the people of Turkey in general, the surrender of religious customs to the secular identity of the country. Though, Kadife disagrees to accept this role initially but then she is not a feeble minded girl who cannot take self decision. She says to Ka that “if I decide to bare my head, I won’t go halfway. I’ll really do it” (Pamuk, *Snow* 320). Sunay is very enthusiastic and eagerly waiting to see her bare head on stage (according to the demand of that role) in front of the people of Kars because: “it will also have profound political consequences” in addition to its “artistic triumph” (341).

Subsequently, Sunay stages the second coup at the National Theatre with the show of his much waited play *A Tragedy in Kars* with the same purpose as the previous one. In his ‘second performance’, the actor Sunay Zaim plays a shocking role by undergoing a real death on stage. During the first twenty minutes of the play there occurs an exchange of dialogues between Kadife and Sunay over “a blood feud in some ‘backward, impoverished and benighted’ town”: “Sunay raged against the backwardness of blood feuds and of people who allowed themselves to be drawn into them; he debated the matter with his wife and a younger woman who seemed to understand him better (this was Kadife)” (Pamuk, *Snow* 399). In between their heated discussion, Kadife ironically says to Sunay that: “In a city where men are killing one another like animals just to make it a happier place, who has the right to stop me killing myself?” (402) Kadife has to take either of the two important decisions that are
“about baring her head and about committing suicide” (403). It is the crucial aspect of the play apart from Sunay’s sacrificial death on stage.

However, the second act which starts with a secular note with Funda Eser’s “belly-dance parody” (Pamuk, Snow 404) draws much more attention of the audience at the hall of the National Theatre. It is because of “the cumulative effect of Kadife and Sunay’s long scenes alone on stage” (404). During their long debate on stage about the reasons behind committing suicide, Sunay suggests ‘love’ and ‘poverty’ may be the possible reasons behind it. But Kadife does not agree with him and thinks ‘pride’ as the primary reason behind it. She further adds: “A woman doesn’t commit suicide because she’s lost her pride; she does it to show her pride” (405). At the same time she makes it clear to Sunay that she does not support suicide, which depends on every individual’s ‘own decisions’. Furthermore: “All they achieved by killing themselves was an even greater loneliness. Some were disowned by their families, who in some cases refused even to arrange the funeral prayers” (405-06). To the surprise of all Sunay took his Kırıkkale gun out of his pocket and says to Kadife “when you’re sure that I’m utterly defeated, will you please use this to shoot me?” (406). Special attention is paid so that the students of the religious high school must present themselves at the theatre and thus realise the significance of the play.

The third act begins with ‘a folk song’ about a ‘raped’ women sung by Funda Eser but the major attraction lies in the scene next to it when “– two armed soldiers marched on. The audience watched in tense silence as they erected a gallows centre stage. Sunay limped confidently across the stage with Kadife to stand right beneath the noose” (Pamuk, Snow 409). After an argument between Sunay and Kadife for a short while, Sunay reveals his intention behind the staging of that particular play to Kadife. It is to let the women of Turkey be as free as the European women. Kadife
reacts to it with a positive response and becomes ready to bare her head. “And then, to prove that I’m motivated by neither your coercion nor by any wish to be a European, I’m going to hang myself” (410). To cut short their conversation in order to save the audience from the monotony of long speech, and to ‘turn our words to deeds’, Sunay takes out the kirrikale gun and tries to ‘explain’ the plot of the play to the audience. Shortly after that Kadife announces her desire to bare her head and addresses the audience to ‘watch’ her uncovered head: “Anguish flashed across her face; then, with a clean, single stroke, she lifted her hand and pulled off her scarf” (412). This is how; the leader of the headscarf movement completes the process of digging grave. When the people of Kars are busy in gazing at the ‘beautiful, brown hair’ of Kadife, she prepares herself to shoot Sunay. All of a sudden,

A gunshot sounded in the hall. All of Kars watched in wonder as Sunay shuddered violently – as if he’d really been shot – and then fell to the floor ... Kadife rushed forward with the gun and fired again, and again. With each shot, Sunay’s body shuddered and lurched upwards. And every time it fell back to the floor, it seemed heavier. She fired four times in smart succession. (Pamuk, Snow 412)

Even after such a clear visual sight there are a number of people who are thinking that Sunay is merely ‘acting’. But only after a moment they have come to know the naked truth of Sunay’s death by watching “at the uncommonly realistic sight of his bloodied face” (Pamuk, Snow 412-13). Finally, with the arrest of Kadife by Z Demirkol and his companions, the play A Tragedy in Kars comes to an end. After a couple of hours later following the arrest of Kadife military forces arrive at the National Theatre:
Several military units rolled in to suppress the city’s ‘little coup’ and met with no resistance. The governor, the military chief of staff and a number of other officials were dismissed for dereliction of duty; the small band of conspirators who had staged the coup were arrested, along with a number of soldiers and MİT agents, who protested that they’d done it all ‘for the people and the state. (Pamuk, Snow 414).

Most of the audience at the National Theatre remains dumbfounded and are forced to believe the reality of what they have just seen. Surprisingly, there are the other ‘residents’ of Kars, who have watched everything that happens on the stage and yet they fail to become sure about Sunay’s death until they have gone through the local newspaper, the Border City Gazette, the next day. Though there occurs a number of ‘popular local theory’ about the surprising death of Sunay on stage, ultimately “Kadife’s last words (‘I guess I killed him!’) had turned her into something of an urban legend” (Pamuk, Snow 415). But at the same time “the cause of the headscarf girls in Kars had been greatly weakened four years earlier, after Kadife had bared her head ... that the Kars movement had yet to display the dynamism of those in Istanbul” (431). At the end of the play A Tragedy in Kars, and afterwards the people of Kars remain in dilemma about Kadife’s motive behind the shooting of Sunay Zaim to death on stage and let herself be safe:

There were those among Kadife’s Islamists admirers and her secular accusers who maintained that this was precisely what was so crafty about the way Kadife had killed Sunay and then refused to kill herself, but the inspecting colonel held that this was to confuse art with reality. (Pamuk, Snow 416)
Such a performance by Sunay not only astonishes the audience at the National Theatre who see it with their own eyes but also the people of Kars. Sunay reveals his desire behind that role to Serdar Bey, the local journalist just a day before the staging of the play. In his words: “What I am trying to do is push the truths of art to their outer limits, to become one with myth” (Pamuk, *Snow* 344). The audience at the National Theatre in particular and the people of Kars in general who have watched the play *A Tragedy in Kars* on live TV becomes more curious. They eagerly wait to see what might happen in the last scene. This concluding scene of the play surprises everyone:

Sunay produced the Kırrkkalı gun he had brandished in the last act and showed it to Kadife and the audience. ‘Now you are going to bare your head. Then I shall place my gun in your hands and you will shoot me ... And, as this is the first time anything like this has happened on live television, let me take this last opportunity to explain to our audience how they are to understand. (Pamuk, *Snow* 411)

Thus, the two coups that occur at the National Theatre, once during the time of the performance of the play *My Fatherland or My Headscarf* and the other at the time of *A Tragedy in Kars* to suppress the Islamists, stirred by a political motive are considered as the heart of the novel, *Snow*. In fact, the people of Kars consider “the ‘staged coup’ more as a strange theatrical event than a political one” (Pamuk, *Snow* 415). In this regard John Updike aptly says that:

He [Pamuk] is attracted to the unreal reality, the false truth, of theatrical performance, and “Snow,” in its political aspect, pivots on
two nights of performance at the Kars National Theatre, in which illusion and reality are confoundingly entwined. (Updike)

The “other mastermind,” (Pamuk, *Snow* 340) other than Sunay Zaim behind the coup at the National Theatre is Colonel Osman Nuri Çolak. This “middle-aged soldier” (408) does his duty properly and thus helps Sunay and the other performers of the play *A Tragedy in Kars* to perform smoothly by handling the students of the religious high school and the Islamists present at the National Theatre. He enters the National Theatre with an ironical remark about Kadife. When Kadife is suffering from pain and weeps at the news of Blue’s death, Colonel Osman Nuri Çolak adds salts to the injury by asking her an unpleasant question: “With all due respect, miss – how may I ease your pain? If you do not wish to go on stage, I have some good news for you: the roads have reopened, the armed forces will be entering the city at any moment” (Pamuk, *Snow* 408-09). Moreover:

Under Articles 313 and 463 of the Turkish Penal Code, Colonel Osman Nuri Çolak was charged with establishing a vigilante group implicated in murders by unknown assailants; for this, he received a very long sentence, but six months later the government declared a general amnesty and set him free ... Without undue rudeness, he would accuse his friends of bowing to the religious fanatics for want of courage. ((Pamuk, *Snow* 417)

Kasım Bey, the assistant chief of police too has made a contribution so far as the coup at the National Theatre is concerned. He co-operates Sunay to a great extent to conduct the play. He emerges on the screen just before the play to begin and addresses the audience. “Furthermore, he admonished, ‘this time’ no rowdiness would
be tolerated-no one would get away with shouting or hissing or making coarse comments of any sort” (Pamuk, *Snow* 373).

Z Demirkol who is playing a ‘good cop’ is angry at the discharge of “crackpot Blue” (Pamuk, *Snow* 360). While watching ‘night’s episode of *Marianna*’ along with his friends where Ka too was present, Z Demirkol shows his farsightedness and his sense of responsibility through his speech to Ka:

> Do you want me to tell you why I love Marianna? ... Because she knows what she wants. But intellectuals like you, you never have the faintest idea, and that makes me sick. You say you want democracy, and then you enter into alliances with Islamic fundamentalists. You say you want human rights, and then you make deals with terrorist murderers ... You say Europe is the answer, but you go around buttering up Islamists who hate everything Europe stands for ... You say feminism, and then you help these men wrap their women’s heads in scarves. You don’t follow your own conscience; you just guess what a European would do in the same situation and act accordingly.” (Pamuk, *Snow* 362-63)

According to Ka, this long speech ‘signify’ that Z Demirkol is a ‘good cop’. He has done his duty properly. Like a responsible cop, he continues interrogating Ka about the whereabouts of Blue, a ‘terrorist’ and a ‘murder’ or “whose life you’ve just saved” (Pamuk, *Snow* 363). Very shrewdly Z Demirkol informs Ka about their ‘new operations centre’ which would be held on the top floor of the religious high school where “we’ll wait for you there” (363). He adds: “You’re already aware that this handsome hero with the midnight-blue eyes is wanted for the barbarous murder of a
bird-brained television host who stuck out his tongue at the Prophet Mohammed, and that he was also behind the assassination of the director of the Education Institute” (363). Z Demirkol is so devoted in his duty that he along with his ‘special operation team’ stayed for a couple of days more even after the road being clear from snow “so that they could kill a few more Islamists and Kurdish nationalists” (427).

The ‘inspecting colonel sent by Ankara’, who has been given the responsibility to inspect Sunay’s death on stage and to prepare a thorough report on the ‘theatrical coup’, does his work fairly without paying any attention to the “many theories” (Pamuk, Snow 415) of the people of Kars. “His analysis of the gun scene confirms it was more a case of sleight of hand than magic” (415). Furthermore, on the basis of the Colonel’s report nobody is responsible for the death of Sunay as “… he [the Colonel] wound up alleging that the true mastermind – the one who had helped Kadife memorise her lines and taught her the various manoeuvres she would deftly perform – was none other than the deceased himself” (416). This ‘meticulous report’ of the inspecting colonel impresses the military prosecutor as well as the judges “who ruled out that Kadife had not killed for political reasons. They found her guilty of negligent homicide and lack of forethought, and sentenced her to three years and one month in jail. She would be released on parole after serving twenty months” (Pamuk, Snow 416-17).

Then the secular bend of mind of Professor Nuri Yılmaz, the director of the Education Institute is clearly reflected through his conversation with his soon to be assassin, an Islamist in the New Life Pastry Shop. It gives the readers a vivid picture of the clash between the ideology of the political Islam and that of the secular laws of the country. The “tiny man” (Pamuk, Snow 38) has come from Tokat covering a long distance ‘in the dead of winter’ only to give shape to the design of the political Islam
by slaying the director of the Education Institute. But just before he “shot him [the
director] in the head and the chest” (38), the Islamist has tried to defend the headscarf
girls logically by giving references from the Qur’ān, the ‘Holy Book’ of Islam. The
spread of the news that the girls who covered their heads “as dictated by their religion
and the Holy Book” (Pamuk, Snow 40) are disallowed in the educational institutions
through “a Muslim radio station called “flag” perturbed him so much that he cannot
but come at such an odd hour of the season to teach the director a lesson for denying
schooling to the covered girls. Referring to the “31st verse of the chapter entitled
“Heavenly Light” in the Holy Qur’ān (40), the assassin reminds the director about the
compulsion of the headscarves for women in Islam. Professor Nuri agrees that “this
verse states very clearly that women should cover their heads and even their faces”
(40). But at the same time the director has shown his inclination towards the laws of
the country which is secular in nature as he says: “We live in a secular state. It’s the
secular state that has banned covered girls from schools as well as classrooms” (40).
The ban of headscarf in educational institutes makes the Islamists angry. And this act
of reconciling “God’s command with this decision to ban covered girls from the
classroom” by Professor Nuri who too “fear God” (40), makes their fury reach its
peak. The Islamist seeks to create psychological pressure on the director in a very
polite and gentle manner during the time of their conversation. He tries to prick the
conscience of Professor Nuri by pointing out his unstable/fickle identity and religious
faith. He thus put up a series of questions to the director of the Education Institute:
“Can a law imposed by the state cancel our God’s law? ... Does the word ‘secular’
mean “Godless”? ... What’s more important, a decree from Ankara or a decree from
God?” (40-41) He calls the director ‘infidel’ time and again and torments him
mentally with such questions as: “Is your conscience bothering you? ... What good
can come to this country if women uncover their heads?” (44) He further boasts of being a member of a democratic country which he misinterprets thus: “Every once in a while I’ll get really upset about something I’ve heard, about an injustice done to a believer. And because I live in a democracy, because I happen to be a free man who can do as he pleases, I sometimes end up getting on a bus and travelling to the other end of Turkey to track down the perpetrator wherever he is and have it out with him, face to face” (Pamuk, *Snow* 41). But the situation becomes ironical when the Islamist says to Professor Nuri, “I don’t belong to any religious organizations. I despise terrorism. I believe in the love of God and the free exchange of ideas” (41). He further goes on justifying his decision to kill the director and the people like him by referring the *Qur’ān* “as the *Holy Koran* states, it is my duty to kill any tyrant who visits cruelty on believers” (Pamuk, *Snow* 45). On the contrary, Professor Nuri, who is unmoved by the words of the Islamist at the New Life Pastry Shop could only add salt to the injury by supporting the secular views as he says, “When a woman takes off her headscarf, she occupies a more comfortable place in society and gets more respect” (46). The conflict continues as the Islamist thinks opposite is true where “headscarves protect women from harassment, rape and degradation. It’s the headscarf that gives women respect and comfortable place in society” (46). He starts condemning Professor Nuri as a “shameless atheist” (46) and “shameless idiot” (47). The above conversation clearly reflects Professor Nuri’s ardent belief in secularism. He prefers a bitter death rather than violating the secular law of the country.

VI

The views and opinions of the other minor characters like Turgut Bey, Orhan Bey and Serdar Bey give the readers a clear insight about the ideas and ideology used in *Snow* and the Turkish society.
The view of Kadife’s father Turgut Bey regarding the coups at the National Theatre is based on the Marxist ideology. It is revealed when he says to Ka that:

It was not only religious extremists who objected to a covered women baring her head; everyone else in the theatre was afraid that this spectacle might enrage the unemployed men witnessing it, not to mention the youthful horde milling at the back of the hall … beautiful neck. (Pamuk, *Snow* 151)

Turgut Bey, according to Blue, is the best example of ‘the communist-turned-new-democrat’ contrary to kadife’s opinion. But “Blue insisted that, like all old communists, Turgut Bey was not really a democrat, that he was probably quite pleased about the coup because it was hammering the Islamists, but he didn’t want to give the left a bad name, so he was pretending the coup was wrong.” (Pamuk, *Snow* 238)

In fact, Marxist attitude of Turgut Bey and his support for Marxism is revealed when he expresses his view about the heroine, Marianna of the ‘Mexican soap opera’ of the same title – *Marianna*: “… Turgut Bey offered a running commentary on the underlying reasons for Marianna’s and Mexico’s persistent poverty. He applauded Marianna for her own war against the capitalists, and from time to time even addressed the screen: ‘Be strong, my girl, help is on its way from Kars’” (Pamuk, *Snow* 245). Furthermore, we find Turgut Bey defending his Marxist ideology as he says “people give themselves to religion because they were poor, he said … It’s wrong to say this in public, but I am against military coups,’ he declared” (245-46). Turgut Bey again says to Ka just before attending the meeting at the Hotel Asia that: “The question is, speaking as the communist, modernising, secular, democratic patriot I
now am, what should I put first – the Enlightenment or the will of the people? ... then I have no choice but to go and sign the statement” (247). Turgut Bey recalls his past as a young leftist when he was strong-minded and avoided “to join the Turkish bourgeoisie” (250). When a ‘young man’ among the Islamists present in the meeting held at the Hotel Asia asks Turgut Bey the reason behind his coming if he is ‘not against the coup’. Turgut Bey instantly replies that “I have come to this meeting because I wish to prove to the Europeans that in Turkey; too, we have people who believe in common sense and democracy” (279). It clearly reflects Turgut Bey’s readiness to embrace the European culture.

After gaining the experience by attending the meeting at the Hotel Asia, Turgut Bey reveals his views about the justification of the military coup that has taken place at the National Theatre in the recent past in the presence of Ka, Serdar Bey and his daughter Kadife. He says:

I’m glad I got to see with my own eyes how low the level of political understanding has sunk – young and old alike, they’re hopeless. I went to this meeting to protest against the coup, but now I think the army is right to want to keep them out of politics. They’re the dregs of society, the most wretched, muddled, brainless people in the city. I’m glad the army couldn’t stand by and let us abandon our future to these looters. (Pamuk, Snow 307)

Though Turgut Bey very boldly favours the military coup and condemns the activities of the Islamists, his confidence calms down and becomes practical enough to understand the consequences of allowing his daughter, Kadife to bare her head on stage. He says to Funda Eser, “If my daughter does this, the religious fanatics in this
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city will never forgive her” (Pamuk, *Snow* 353). His concern for his daughter creates panic in him as the scheduled time of the play to be performed at the National Theatre comes closer. He says to Ka that: “It’s clear that Sunay has planned another unspeakable outrage for this evening’s performance. I feel like a fool, falling for Funda’s assurances and letting my girl go off with those lunatics” (374).

Orhan Bey comes to Kars to ‘locate’ his friend Ka’s nineteenth and the last poem in Kars entitled “The Place Where the World Ends”. It is the only unwritten poem that Ka “read on stage on the night of the revolution” (Pamuk, *Snow* 382). Orhan Bey comes to know about it from the owner of the Snow Palace Hotel and writes for the *Lance* ‘Kars’ the first political Islamist newspaper:

... the man who had assassinated the director of the Education Institute four years earlier had not been from Kars, ... The assassin, he said, had turned out to be a tea-house owner from Tokat. It was later proved that he had committed another murder around the same time using the same weapon. When the ballistics reports came back from Ankara, the man from the Tokat was charged with the murder, and he confessed he’d come to Kars because Blue had invited him. (Pamuk, *Snow* 430)

He “effortlessly jotted down” this poem in order to “conclude the book to which he would give the title *Snow.*” (Pamuk, *Snow* 381)

Next, Serdar Bey provides some information regarding the human value that existed in the past. He says to Ka that: “In the old days we were all brothers ... The kurds, whom we prefer to think of as a tribe, in the old days didn’t even know they were Kurds. And it was that way through the Ottoman period; none of the people who chose to stay went around beating their chests and crying, “We are the Ottomans!”
(Pamuk, *Snow* 26). However, such pride comes to an end with the passage of time because the communists “spread tribal pride” through “their Tiflis Radio” with a purpose “to divide and destroy Turkey” that makes everybody “prouder – and poorer” (26).

While talking about the gradual progress of the political Islam, Serdar Bey says to Ka that:

‘As for these Islamists. They go from door to door in groups, paying house visits: they give women pots and pans, and those machines that squeeze oranges, and boxes of soap, cracked wheat and detergent. They concentrate on the poor neighbourhoods, they ingratiate themselves with the women, they bring out hooked needles and sew gold thread on to children’s shoulders to protect them from evil ... Even people with jobs – even tradesmen – respect them, because these Islamists are more hardworking, more honest, more modest than anyone else’. (Pamuk, *Snow* 26)

VII

After a thorough study of *Snow* it can be said that the presentation of the clash between the religious customs and the secular laws of the society in Turkey where politics of religion is a motivating force, as depicted in *Snow*, is praiseworthy. The growing awareness in political Islam in Turkey led to the conflict between secular and religious beliefs and the result is a dramatic one. It transforms drastically the lives of the people in the town of Kars where tension is generated in the minds of the people.
Ka’s observation regarding the society of Turkey is notable. He views it from two diverse perspectives. Firstly, as a local he does not fail to understand the strength of Islam which has become an influential means for commanding political control in Turkey. Secondly, like the foreigners or more specifically the Westerners, he too cannot make head or tail of whether the religious customs should be encouraged or not in a secular country.

Then the rejection of Enlightenment the West stands for in the eyes of Blue and his cohort is well portrayed. The arguments put forward by these characters in favour of their own culture and the hatred for the Western culture are not altogether baseless.

Next, the two coups at the National Theatre at Kars are blessing in disguise for the secular government of Turkey. It is so, because after the coups the condition of the Islamists/militants becomes miserable. According to Varto, ‘an army friend’ of Fazıl’s father, who says to Orhan Bey that: “... most Kurdish militants had either been killed or thrown into prison; no one was joining the guerrillas any more. As for the young Kurds who’d attended the meeting at the Hotel Asia, they’d all abandoned the city...” (Pamuk, Snow 432). The readers are also aware of the fact that three years after Blue’s death “several young Islamists had come from Istanbul to ask about Blue, the enemy of the state. They had left without finding his grave, probably because the corpse had been dumped into the sea from a plane, to keep his burial site from becoming a place of pilgrimage” (433). And it is ‘heard’ that:

... those young Islamists were following the same path Blue had taken on his own ‘pilgrimage’. They’d escaped to Germany, had founded a fast-growing radical Islamist group in Berlin, and, according to Fazıl’s
old classmates from the religious high school, had written a statement – published on the first page of a German-based journal called *Pilgrimage* – in which they’d vowed revenge against those responsible for Blue’s death. It was this group, we guessed, that had killed Ka. (Pamuk, *Snow* 433)

It is true that the headscarf issue is one of the major issues which draws the attention of the Islamists in Turkey. But if we enquire about the reason behind the suicides of women at Kars at the root level then we will find that it is not merely the ban on headscarf in religious institution that causes it. According to one of the followers of Sheikh Saadittin Effendi, “the epidemic had many causes, for example unemployment, high prices, immorality and lack of faith” (Pamuk, *Snow* 101).

The success of secularism over political Islam at Kars in particular and in Turkey in general, is seen to a great extent due to the several coups at several ‘hiding-places’ of the Islamists and at the National Theatre. For instances, the coup led to the death of the ‘radical’ Islamist Blue at his hiding place; then the coup at the National Theatre led to the death of a large number of Islamists particularly from the religious high school; and finally it is due to the coup that “the old dormitory is empty now. After the coup, they closed it – they called it a nest of terrorist and reactionary militancy” (Pamuk, *Snow* 425). It is due to these coups after certain interval that the Islamists cannot raise their heads collectively for their rescue. Nor do they get ample time to strengthen their religious organizations smoothly. Thus, the Islamists cannot but bow down in front of secularism and this weakness is partly reflected through the emptiness of the dormitory, once a terrorist’s nest, now “there’s nothing in here but birds” (426), where there is nothing except darkness. Some other examples can also be cited which are relevant to justify it. Fazıl, who used to support and work for
political Islam at times is now no more crazy for it but leading a happy life with his wife Kadife and ‘their six-month-old, Ömercan’, working as a ‘receptionist’ in the Snow Palace Hotel. To become self depended and to devote as much time as possible to work, he further joins two other jobs, “one was at the Palace of Light Photo Studio and the other was at Kars Border Television” (418). And Kadife, once a leader of the ‘headscarf’ girls, now “busied herself with hotel business” (418). Muhtar after suffering torment in jail for his alleged involvement in the activities of political Islam is leading a moderate life now. He is optimistic about his possibility of another chance to contest election for “the new Islamist party the next time there was an election” (421). And there is a fair chance to become a mayor.

Moreover, Pamuk has shown the contrast between the two—Blue, the ‘radical Islamist’ and Sunay Zaim, the true proponent of secularism. On the one hand, Sunay is preparing to die a real death on stage during his performance in the play *A Tragedy in Kars* for the sake of secularism: “I staged this revolution precisely so that you women could be as independent as women in Europe. That’s why I’m now asking you to remove that scarf” (Pamuk, *Snow* 410). In fact, he keeps to his words in front of the audience ‘on the night of the revolution’. Even the people of Kars have seen “the live broadcast from the National Theatre” (402) on TV. On the other hand, Blue remains adamant in his decision to carry out the principles of political Islam and prefers death rather than surrendering himself to the secular force of Turkey. As a result of which Blue dies a brutal death at his ‘hiding-place’ at that very night at the hands of Z Demirkol’s special operation team.
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