CHAPTER 9

The Spell of the West in Orhan Pamuk’s Snow and Amitav Ghosh’s In an Antique Land

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“My Fatherland or My Headscarf”

Ignored amid reports of the 2005 indictment of Orhan Pamuk for holding Turkey accountable for the mass murder of a million Armenians during and after World War I, and for the more recent killing of approximately 30,000 insurgent Kurdish nationalists, were the more serious offenses against Kemalist nationalism that Pamuk arguably commits in his celebrated novel Snow (2002). In Snow, Pamuk not only describes a deadly takeover of the remote borderland city of Kars and violent suppression of the city’s Islamists by an unreconstructed Kemalist showman and his henchmen, but also has his expatriate poet-protagonist, Ka, forge sympathetic bonds with religious schoolboys who insist on their complexity and unknowability in ways that Pamuk’s narrator (also named Orhan) respects and admires.

The leader of the takeover, Sunay Zaim, attempts to revive the glory days of Kemalist orthodoxy by making the performance of an old piece of secularist agitprop, My Fatherland or My Headscarf, the occasion for an armed coup while a seemingly never-ending blizzard isolates the city from the rest of the country. Pamuk initially presents Sunay’s plans to perform Head Scarf in the ironically deflationary manner that Eastern European filmmakers have perfected over the course of the last 50 years. But the satiric tone abruptly changes when Sunay calls for soldiers to
open fire on the Islamist schoolboys as they protest the play’s climactic moment in which a young woman proclaims her independence by removing her headscarf and, upon being attacked by her family and angry traditionalists, responds by burning it. The power of this scene is enhanced both by its unexpectedness and by the sympathy for the religious schoolboys that Pamuk has carefully cultivated. In its recounting, the scene gains added dimension from its contextual surround: a city that is geographically remote from cosmopolitan Istanbul, which has historically been the site of violent conflicts among Russians, Turks, and Armenians, and more lately, of bitter political struggles between and among secular nationalists; nationalist, Marxist, and Islamic Kurds; and, especially, political Islamists, who have cast the creeping shadow of “a second Iran” over the region. Recent witness to the murder of its mayor, and almost certain to witness the election of a political Islamist as his successor, the city is already at such a pitch of tension and anxiety that “even the most westernized secularists in [the National Theater] were frightened by the sight of their own dreams coming true” when the young woman burns her headscarf in Sunay’s play.

However, neither sympathy for the religious schoolboys nor anxiety about the shooting’s aftermath is allowed to sustain itself in the following pages, which are largely devoted to Ka’s characterization as a supremely self-involved poet who has not, as he has claimed, come to Kars to investigate the suicides committed by the city’s latter-day headscarf girls, but to reestablish a lost connection with Ipek, a former schoolmate, whom he hopes to persuade to share his heretofore solitary expatriate life in Frankfurt. Stubbornly fixed on Ipek’s embodiment as his last chance for personal happiness, Ka is more than willing to sacrifice whatever misgivings he might once have harbored about jeopardizing the lives of others in order to possess her. To his credit, Ka initially sustains being bullied and beaten by the not-so-secret police for his sympathies toward the schoolboys and his association with Blue, the leader of the city’s political Islamists. But presented with only one way out of this impasse, and motivated as well by jealousy of Blue’s past relationship with Ipek, Ka opportunistically betrays Blue in exchange for safe passage to Frankfurt for himself and Ipek. Rejected in turn by the more principled Ipek, Ka ultimately becomes the victim of a payback-killing for his betrayal of Blue after his return to Frankfurt, which our narrator, Orhan, explores and comments on in the last movement of the novel.

The book’s closing pages are haunted by an unusual request that the author conveys from Fazil, one of the surviving schoolboys, to the effect that Orhan’s readers—tempted as they might be to “sympathize with the way we are and even love us”—shouldn’t “believe anything” Orhan has to say “about any of us,” and by a last tearstained vision of “shabby rooms full of people watching television” that the author recalls seeing as his train departs from the city. Both request and vision echo an earlier perception of Ka’s about the impoverished city, its “sweet and funny” schoolboys, and the struggle of its suicide girls—who “saw at once that the heart of the matter was shame”—“to find a private moment to kill themselves.”

“The Spell of the West”

A novelist whose past work variously trafficked in Nabokovian metafiction and the painstaking historical miniaturism anatomized in his 1998 novel My Name Is Red, Pamuk had, before Snow, shown little interest in addressing recent developments in Turkey, which include the increasing movement of social and religious conservatives from the countryside to the city, the ascent of Islamist parties that represent them to parliamentary majorities, and the predictably strident reaction to these developments of the largely right-wing secularist opposition. In Snow, Pamuk not only addresses such developments, but positions both his protagonist, Ka, and the narrator, conspicuously named Orhan, as characters who inadvertently make the same discoveries he has apparently already arrived at. In this respect, among others, Snow operates as a sustained, self-reflexive meditation on authorial responsibility that is all the more honest for its refusal, on the one hand, to make Ka a self-effacing, magnanimous hero and, on the other, to forgive the commitment to vengeful violence of the radical Islamists who murder Ka after his return to Frankfurt. Like the Turkish government, which has been engaging in an on-again, off-again courtship of Europe, the pursuit of stronger economic ties to Russia, a closer embrace of traditional Islam, and a strategic rethinking of its long-established partnership with Israel, in order to elevate its regional standing in relation to Iran and the Arab states of the Middle East, Snow forges a fitful and indeterminate path of its own between its Western and Eastern-oriented tendencies. Yet despite giving unusually sympathetic space, voice, and time to representatives of political Islam, the book paints a picture of a culture in which not only Ka, a child of the Westernized ruling elite, but the Islamists themselves feel the “mocking devil” of the West inside them.

In the economy of the novel, the fates of the bourgeois expatriate Ka and the would-be celebrity-radical Blue are twinned in more ways
than one, İpek having been Blue’s mistress before ceding that position to her sister Kadife, who is the most public face of the town’s headscarf girls. Though he portrays with greater sympathy the charmingly sincere musings of the religious schoolboys—one of whom wants to claim a space for Muslims who read and write science fiction—Pamuk devotes more sustained time to Blue, whose critiques of the West and insistence that Turkish Muslims shou.d work with and within their own cultural traditions and heritage are variably privileged and qualified. At one point, for example, he has Blue deliver an eloquent commentary on the neglected story of Suhrab and Rustem—drawn from Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh, the Persian “book of kings”—to support the claim that “we’ve fallen under the spell of the West, we’ve forgotten our own stories.” At another, he has him parry the Western critique of the embrace of fundamentalism in the Islamic world, claiming that “it is not poverty that brings us close to God […] no one is more curious than we are to find out why we are here on earth and what will happen to us in the next world,” while offering incisive critiques of the ideological inflexibility of the West, among which the rhetorical question, “Can the West endure any democracy achieved by enemies who in no way resemble them?” is the most penetrating. By contrast, virtually all actions associated with resurgent Kemalism in the novel are presented as unqualifiedly crude, regressive, violent, vulgar, and authoritarian.

Yet it’s exactly when Blue’s ability to surprise Ka and the reader alike with the thoughtfulness of his positions is most pronounced that Pamuk chooses to display Blue’s credulity, jealousy, and egoism in ways that predictably accord with prevailing Western views of political Islam. Pretending that he really is the cosmopolitan Westernized intellectual the provincial residents of Kars take him for (instead of the timid exile he is in fact, who has virtually no interactions with the German residents of Frankfurt), Ka pointedly bait Blue with the fabricated story of his friendship with one Hans Hansen, whom he presents as an editor of a Frankfurt newspaper that might be willing to publish a “statement” by Blue. (Hans Hansen, we learn, is actually the name of the Frankfurt salesman who sold Ka his beautiful charcoal woolen overcoat: the most conspicuous signifier of Ka’s European otherness during his stay in Kars.) Ka starts by claiming that the consummately enlightened Hans Hansen “takes offense when people discuss the West as if it’s a single person with a single point of view.” But Blue is too tied to his Occidentalist ideology to be persuaded out of his belief that “that’s how it is […] There is, after all, only one West and only one Western point of view,” adding, “And we take the opposite point of view.” Intent on contesting Blue’s unexamined beliefs about “the West,” Ka persists, painting an impossibly rosy picture of a Europe in which “Everyone, even the most ordinary grocer, feels compelled to boast of having his own personal views.” Ka then takes a different tack, flattering Blue into thinking that his remarks could constitute a “proclamation” and that some “biographical details” about their author might be desirable, to which Blue pompously responds: “I’ve prepared those already […] All they need say is that I’m one of the most prominent Islamists in Turkey and perhaps the entire Middle East.”

At this point in their interview, Ka becomes boldly opportunist. Trying to turn Blue’s desire for notoriety into an occasion to get İpek’s father out of his hotel so that he, Ka, can make love to İpek in his absence, Ka concocts a plan that requires a Kurdish nationalist and an ex-communist (İpek’s father) to co-sign Blue’s proclamation in order to improve its chances of being accepted for publication by Hans Hansen. Then, to win Blue’s trust in Ka’s friendship with the German, Ka fabricates the story of being invited to a family dinner at Hans Hansen’s house in which he also seeks to arouse Blue’s envy of the comforts and equanimity of the Hansen household. Initially, Blue’s confidence in his Occidentalist views of the West would appear stronger than any “facts” to the contrary Ka can fabricate, as evinced by the following exchange prompted by Blue’s question, “Did you see a cross on the wall?”

“I don’t remember. I don’t think so” [said Ka].
“Contrary to what our own Europe-admiring atheists assume, all European intellectuals take their religion and their crosses very seriously. But when our guys return to Turkey, they never mention this, because all they want to do is use the technological supremacy of the West to prove the superiority of atheism.”

The next question Blue asks is possibly more indicative of what Pamuk wants to reveal about his character than is the misguided certainty with which Blue speaks of European intellectuals: “Did they pity you? Did their hearts go out to you because you were a miserable Turk, a lonely destitute political exile, the sort of Turkish nobody that drunken German youths beat up just for the fun of it?” Although Blue is clearly taking pleasure in baiting Ka, one cannot fail to notice how much Blue’s construction of the “Turkish nobody’s” perceived inferiority to his German host embeds assumptions about his own perceived inferiority that emerge during his first interview with Ka. Blue tells
Ka in this earlier encounter that wherever he walked when he was in Germany

there was always one German who stood out of the crowd as an object of fascination for me. The important thing was not what I thought of him but what I thought he might be thinking about me; I'd try to see myself through his eyes and imagine what he might be thinking about my appearance, my clothes, the way I moved, my history, where I had just been and where I was going, who I was. It made me feel terrible but it became a habit; I became used to feeling degraded, and I came to understand how my brothers felt. 14

The nuances of this exercise in transference are hardly lost on Ka who rather perversely proceeds to paint a picture of the increasing comfort he was made to feel in the company of the graciously hospitable Hansens, which he knows will exacerbate Blue's envy and self-pity while contradicting Blue's belief that Ka's pride was crushed in the transaction:

They were a happy family, but that didn't mean they were flashing smiles every other minute, as we do here even when there's nothing to smile about. Maybe this is why they were happy. For them life was a serious business to be dealt with responsibly. It wasn't a dead-end struggle or a painful ordeal the way it is here. But their gravity of purpose permeated every aspect of their lives. Just as the moons and fishes and suchlike on their curtains helped lift their spirits. 15

For good measure, Ka closes his account of his lovely evening by returning to the earlier point of contention, "There were no crosses on the walls, just beautiful scenes from the Alps. I would have given anything to see this all again," a remark that elicits Blue's "open revulsion." 16

Among the many objectionable moves Ka makes in the sequence, one may wonder which one exactly prompts so open a display of contempt on Blue's part. Does Blue simply not credit Ka's cruelly fabricated account? Does he know that he is being toyed with and resents it? Or is his revulsion directed more toward Ka's fawning admiration for the Hansen household than to the content of Ka's story—which, if it were true, would effectively contradict Blue's claim to know all about European intellectuals? In a section of Violence, Slavoj Zizek writes:

The problem with fundamentalists is not that we consider them inferior to us, but rather that they themselves secretly consider themselves inferior. [...] The problem is not cultural difference (their effort to preserve their identity), but the opposite fact that the fundamentalists are already like us, that secretly they have already internalized our standards and measure themselves by them. 17

Zizek's formulation is, of course, hardly as original as he seems to assume. It is, moreover, motivated by his dubious (and consoling) assumption that the Western cultural imaginary is so universally influential that it has penetrated the collective unconscious of those who say they hate "us" the most. Indeed, how can Zizek presume to know that the same standards "we" measure ourselves by have been internalized by "the fundamentalists," as if either "we" or "they" can be construed in the same inclusive generalization Blue seeks to apply to European intellectuals in Snow? What space does such a formulation allow for other, more penetrating and less easily assimilable observations made by Blue or by the religious schoolboys in the course of the novel? (Could Zizek, for example, imagine a religious schoolboy whose sincerest aim is to write Islamic science fiction?) In the event, it is the obsequious way in which Ka mimes his devotion to the European liberal-humanist dream, with its "gravity of purpose" that can still make room for the "moons and fishes" of childlike optimism, and that seems best designed to prompt Blue's "revulsion," though Blue surely must know that Ka's happy evening with his good Germans has been ramped up (if not invented) for his benefit. And the fact that Blue is repelled, either by Ka's performance of inferiority, or by Hans Hansen's perfectly ordered commonwealth, speaks well for Blue's capacity to exercise standards of measurement that are arguably his own.

Blue is, however, hardly a predictable character as Pamuk writes; he is as much a "pretender" as we assume others might be in his position, and far from orthodox either in his professions or behavior. Indeed, his dialogues with Ka often make him seem more intent on enjoying notoriety than on effecting radical social change. But for a self-styled political Islamist, Blue is more eloquent, perceptive, and penetrating than Zizek might care to imagine, and also more of a true believer. In this respect, among others, Blue resists another of the established themes about fundamentalist radicalism that Zizek recirculates in Violence: that it is a "shield" erected "in panic" against the too sudden, and insufficiently mediated, onrush of modernization. Lacking the "new social narratives and myths [that] slowly came into being" over the course of several centuries in the West, Muslim societies," Zizek claims, "were exposed to this impact without a protective screen or temporal delay, so their symbolic universe was perturbed much more brutally." 18 The
problem with this thesis is the extent to which it flatters the West into thinking it has a veritable monopoly both on what is thought or thinkable in the rest of the world and on keeping pace with the "onrush of modernization" it has set into motion. (How, one wonders, does "the West" explain to itself the regressive belief of tens of millions of modern Americans in apocalyptic religious fantasies and collateral disbelief in evolution?) Pamuk resists this thesis not only by presenting the spiritual content of Islam in compelling ways, and by advancing the counterthesis that poverty and irresponsible governance are the truer breeding ground of political Islam, but also by asserting the thinkability of different thoughts in the Islamic world. As noted earlier, Blue is allowed to make this point himself when he movingly recounts the "thousand-year-old story" of Suhrab and Rustem and concludes:

Once upon a time, millions of people knew it by heart—from Tabriz to Istanbul from Bosnia to Trabzon—and when they recalled it they found the meaning in their lives. The story spoke to them in just the same way that Oedipus' murder of his father and Macbeth's obsession with power and death speak to people throughout the Western world. But now, because we've fallen under the spell of the West, we've forgotten our old stories. They've removed all the old stories from our children's textbooks. These days, you can't find a single bookseller who stocks the Shehname in all of Istanbul! How do you explain this? 19

At the same time, of course, the displacement of such books by "the spell of the West," which this passage both laments and confirms, leads us back, inexorably, to a second reckoning with Zizek's thesis concerning the Islamist's alleged internalization of a sense of inferiority. It also intrinsically resonates with Edward Said's discussion of "the troubling, disabling, destabilizing secular wound," which he considers "the essence of the cosmopolitan, from which there can be no recovery, no state of resolved or Stoic calm," but which Blue seeks to seal with the imprint of a religion whose provenance is, as Said confirms, profoundly syncretic. 20

How would Pamuk—or Blue—explain how things have reached this pass? Is it primarily the fault of the imperializing force, or the technological superiority, of the West? Is it mainly attributable to the alleged weakness, inferiority, or backwardness of Islamic religious cultures and civilizations? Are powerful outposts of global capitalism like Saudi Arabia and a history of authoritarian governments like those of Kemalist Turkey, Mubarak's Egypt, and Saddam's Iraq also to blame? Or could it rather be owing to the powerfully repressive counterforce of political Islam, and its puritanical suppression of traditional music, dance, art, and literature? Although Blue doesn't mention it, while high-culture markers like the Shehname may have become conspicuously absent from the bookstores of the Middle East, the Koran has never been so ubiquitous. How would Blue explain this? He would likely beg the question, and take the tact he pursues in his last interview with Ka, stressing the difference between the communitarian basis of Islamic practice and belief, and the incapacity of so Europeanized an "individual" as Ka is to comprehend the love of God:

"I don't want to destroy your illusions, but your love for God comes out of Western romantic novels," said Blue. "In a place like this, if you worship God as a European, you're bound to be a laughing stock. Then you cannot even believe you believe. You don't belong to this country; you're not even a Turk anymore. First try to be like everyone else. Then try to believe in God." 21

As other moments in Blue's interactions with Ka make clear, a distinct leveling impulse informs Blue's take on political Islam, which specifically precludes a "typical little European from Nisantas" like Ka from even claiming identification as a Turk. Although the West has cast its spell over Ka and the privileged class he represents, it has not presumably had its way with Blue who, in the same interview, also claims, "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." 22

"The Explosive Barrier of Symbols"

The process of his evolution from "godless leftist" to religious militant that Blue describes in the autobiographical remarks he passes on to Ka in their final interview is described as being mediated by his "hatred of the West," his admiration for Iran's Islamic revolution, and the inspiration of "Frantz Fanon's work on violence," among other things. 23 Though it has its basis in an unexplained feeling of hatred, Blue's transformation is otherwise logical and coherent. And it has sustained itself over the course of Blue's service in the wars in Chechnya and Bosnia, in which he pointedly claims never to have killed anyone, thereby establishing his commitment to his professed ideals while avoiding being easily assigned the role of wild-eyed terrorist. The transformation of workaday
Egyptian fellaheen into observant Muslims, described by Amitav Ghosh in his 1992 book, *In an Antique Land*, is a very different process and far less romantic than the fictional Blue’s passage through post–Cold War hotspots, political exile in Germany, and the development of a self-styled notorious identity in Turkey. But it too appears to have its basis in a specific relationship of inferiority to the West.

Ghosh weaves two narratives through a work of nonfiction that starts by recounting a period of anthropological fieldwork in Egypt in 1980, ends by describing return visits to Egypt made in 1988 and 1990 (at the beginning of the first Gulf War), and in between involves Ghosh’s reconstruction of the movements of a twelfth-century Jewish merchant and his Muslim slave from Egypt through Aden to the western coast of India and back. By the time of Ghosh’s second visit, “All the brightest young men had beards, and many more wore white robes as well,” but according to Jabir, one of Ghosh’s more articulate interlocutors, it was no longer “safe to look like a Muslim” given the government’s fears about political Islam’s threat to its authority. In Ghosh’s version of Zizek’s thesis, the path Jabir takes to orthodox Islam can be contextualized by what Ghosh calls “the real and desperate seriousness of [the fellaheen’s] engagement with modernism,” their seeing “the material circumstances of their lives in exactly the same way that a university economist would: as a situation that was shamefully anachronistic, a warp upon time.” What prompts Ghosh’s articulation of this thesis is the refusal of a group of fellaheen to believe that Ghosh’s India, a place they associate with the manufacture of diesel water pumps, hence, as far above them on the “ladder of ‘Development’” could possibly house peasants “in adobe villages [who] turned the earth with cattle-drawn ploughs” as they still did in Egypt.

In 1980, the 17-year-old Jabir was prouder than any other of his fellow villagers at having a man from such an advanced country in their midst. The Jabir that Ghosh meets in 1988, however, is more conflicted by his recent experiences with “modernism.” Their first conversation begins when Jabir does what to Ghosh seems an astonishing thing given all the time he has spent in the two Egyptian villages in question, that is, lock the door to his room, thereby shutting out the boys who have been following them through the village as well as the rest of Jabir’s family, for whom the closing off of private space is (allegedly) a new concept. Jabir then recounts his years at a nearby university, the camaraderie of friends made there, his learning “the real meaning of Islam,” a summer job spent working construction in Iraq, a stint in the army, and his present job as a bricklayer while he waits for a “government job to which he is entitled by virtue of his college degree.” But the optimistic narrative is broken by Jabir’s implied certainty that the government job won’t materialize, and that if he wants to marry and achieve the level of self-respect his younger brother has already achieved, he will have to return to Iraq soon.

None of Ghosh’s interlocutors are as sweet, funny, or as pure of heart as Pamuk’s fictional religious schoolboys. Like Jabir, they pragmatically attempt to reckon with lives in which “the relations between different kinds of people […] had been upturned and rearranged” in the space of six years, largely because of the Iran-Iraq war, which, according to Ghosh, placed Iraq in desperate “need of labour to sustain its economy.” While many better-off young men stayed at home for college and fell under the spell of Islam, their poorer neighbors went off to Iraq and returned with televisions, refrigerators, and enough money to marry and add additional floors to their parents’ homes.

When Ghosh returns for a last time in 1990, at the beginning of the Gulf War, everything has changed again. In the last page of the book, he recounts watching the news on a color TV that another of his young interlocutors has brought back from Iraq. What they saw was

footage of the epic exodus: thousands and thousands of men, some in trousers, some in jallabeyas, some carrying their TV sets on their backs, some crying out for a drink of water, stretching all the way from the horizon to the Red Sea, standing on the beach as though waiting for the water to part.

In addition to alluding to the reverse exodus across the Red Sea on which Moses led the Jews (which Said explores in his book *Fremd and the non-European*), this passage speaks to the deeper theme that links *In an Antique Land to Snow*, and, by extension, to the role played by the other in narratives of national self-definition set in North Africa and the Middle East (see, for another example, Tayeb al-Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North*). For Ghosh as for Pamuk, that other is the modernist West broadly considered, the always already apparent elephant in the room around which Ka’s debates with Blue pivot, which makes its intrusive presence felt even more in an earlier exchange between Ghosh and a deeply ethnocentric Imam. This conversation gets off to a bad start when the Imam speaks of Hindus as knowingly as Blue speaks of European intellectuals—claiming that “They worship cows” and “burn their dead” and will never progress if they “carry on doing these things.” But it turns positively surreal when the Imam and
Ghosh—"delegates from two superseded civilizations, vying with each other to establish a prior claim to the technology of modern violence"—get into a quarrel about whether India or Egypt has better bombs and guns, which is ignited by what Ghosh terms "the explosive barrier of symbols" that has been erected far from the purview of Egypt or India alike. As Ghosh concludes: "Despite the vast gap that lay between us, we understood each other perfectly. We were both travelling he and I; we were travelling in the West."32

Coca

A chapter in Fragments of Culture: the Everyday of Modern Turkey (2002) begins by remarking an incident in February, 1998, in Istanbul when a small plane commissioned by the Turkish national postal service (or PTT) showered thousands of leaflets on a large-scale demonstration of "thousands of students from different universities holding different ideological views ranging from leftist to nationalist, rightist, and Islamist to liberal democrat" who rallied to protest "a new circular from the Ministry of Education banning headscarves and beards in universities." Unusual as it already was to have generally opposed parties unite in defense of a cause so closely identified with political Islam, the scene became odder still when the message of the leaflets was made plain, that being the PTT's offer to provide "free service for people to send faxes to the English-language weekly Time in order to elevate Ataturk from second to first in their survey of the most influential people of the twentieth century" (a standing that had already been inflated by an energetic get-out-the-vote effort conducted over the Internet).33 The author of the chapter, Ayse Saktanber, interprets "both the content and the image of this episode as a graphic depiction of Turkey's predicament, which can be formulated as 'modernisation from above, Islamisation from below,'" while being careful to note that "in this demonstration these Islamist students [...] were not against the Turkish state as such, but rather Kemalism as the official ideology of the republic and its westernizing project," and were engaged in an effort "both to build an identity and represent their 'otherness.'"34

Roughly 13 years after this collision between resurgent Kemalism and headscarf demonstrators, with Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the head of Turkey's Islamic Justice and Development Party (AKP), serving a second successive term as prime minister, it would appear that some of the wider gaps between modernization and Islamization have been bridged. Indeed, Ghosh's "explosive barrier of symbols" may itself be in the process of dissolution as the spell of anxiety and emulation the West has long cast over Turkey and the rest of the Middle East also begins to lift. Pamuk himself has recently remarked "the fading" of the "rose-colored dream of Europe," which was "once so powerful that even our most anti-Western thinkers and politicians secretly believed in it," either "because Turkey is no longer as poor as it once was," or "because it is no longer a peasant society ruled by its army, but a dynamic nation with a strong civil society of its own." More pointedly, Pamuk contends that "Turkey and other non-Western countries should think about American Europe" because of its "callousness toward the sufferings of immigrants and minorities, and the castigation of Asians, Africans, and Muslims now leading difficult lives in [its] peripheries." Such attitudes and behaviors indicate Europe's lack of faith in its own "fundamental values," while retrospectively confirming Blue's suspicion that the evening Ka spent with Hans Hinsen's family was nothing but a tall tale.35

Notes

1. According to Spiegel Online International, January 23, 2006, Pamuk "was charged with the criminal offense following an interview he gave the Swiss newspaper Tages Anzeiger in February 2005. In the interview he said that 30,000 people had died in the conflict between the Turkish security forces and Kurdish nationalists, and that 1 million Armenians had died in Turkey during World War I, and [that] 'nobody but me dares to talk about it.' Official Turkish policy is to deny that there was any genocidal campaign against the Armenians, claiming that they died along with many ethnic Turks during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Pamuk's comments provoked outrage amongst right-wing nationalists in Turkey. The writer was then charged under Article 301, which makes it illegal to insult the republic, parliament or any organs of state." http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,396786,00.html

2. As Pamuk writes, 'Fear of the political Islamists was so great that [...] not even in their sleep could [the National Theater audience] have imagined the state forcing women to remove their head scarves as it had done in the early years of the Republic' (148). All quotations from Snow are drawn from Orhan Pamuk, Snow, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Vintage, 2004). Orig. Kar (Istanbul: Iletisim, 2002).

4. Ibid., p. 425.
5. Ibid., pp. 15–16, 25.
6. Ibid., p. 98. Ka refers to this "mocking devil inside him" as he unsuccessfullty tries to purge himself of such "Western" tendencies as his "need
for solitude" (97) and habitual skepticism during his interview with Sheikh Efendi in chapter 11. Islamists like Blue feel it more projectively, anticipating that they will be perceived as inferiors in interchanges with Europeans.

7. Ibid., pp. 77, 78–79.
8. Ibid., p. 228.
9. These views have been rearriculated in Slavoj Zizek's recent diagnosis of Islamic resentment. According to Zizek, "What [terrorist fundamentalists] lack is a feature that is easy to discern in all authentic fundamentalists, from Tibetan Buddhists to the Amish in the U.S.: the absence of resentment and envy, the deep indifference towards the non-believers' way of life. If today's so-called fundamentalists really believe they have found their way to truth, why should they feel threatened by non-believers, why should they envy them?" He adds that “Deep in themselves, terrorist fundamentalists also lack true conviction—their violent outbursts are proof of it. How fragile the belief of a Muslim must be, if he feels threatened by a stupid caricature in a low-circulation Danish newspaper.” In Slavoj Zizek, Violence (New York: Picador, 2008), pp. 85–86.

10. Pamuk, p. 228. Cf. Zizek: “Those who propose the term 'Occidentalism' as the counterpart to Edward Said's 'Orientalism' are right up to a point: what we get in Muslim countries is a certain ideological vision of the West which distorts Western reality no less, though in a different way, than the Orientalist vision distorts the Orient,” Violence, p. 60.

12. Ibid., p. 230.
13. Ibid., p. 231.
14. Ibid., p. 73.
15. Ibid., p. 232.
17. Zizek, p. 86.
18. Ibid., p. 82.
19. Ibid., p. 78.
20. See Edward Said, Freud and the Non-European (London: Verso, 2003), 54. While the fictional Blue would likely be happy to approve Freud’s assignment of an Egyptian origin to Moses, he would be less keen about having to concede the European provenance of many of his political ideas: this despite his own Orientalist valorization of what is, after all, a classic Persian—as opposed to a Turkish—text. The sixteenth-century assimilation of other Persian cultural artifacts and artistic practices by the Ottomans is one of the principal stories embedded in Pamuk’s earlier novel My Name is Red, trans., Erdağ M. Göknar (New York: Vintage, 2001). Orig. Benim Adım Kırımızı (Istanbul: Iletișim, 1998).

22. Ibid., p. 324.
25. Ibid., p. 200.
26. Ibid., pp. 308, 311.
27. Ibid., pp. 321, 293.
28. Ibid., p. 353.
32. Ibid., p. 236.
34. Saktanber, p. 255.