



Teaching *Snow* in Wisconsin: A Guide for Educators

2013-2014 Great World Texts Program of the Center for the Humanities

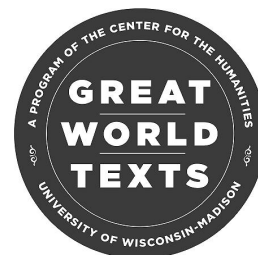
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How to Use this Guide

A Note on Context: Reading Across Time and Space

Snow is a work of fiction. While its sociocultural and geopolitical contexts are integral to its impact, and to our critical reflections on the texts, it is important to remember that this is a work of literature and not a historical document. While literature can help us teach culture, history, politics and so on, no one text can bear the burden of representing an entire nation, culture, or people. As you teach this novel, please keep in mind and emphasize where you can the cultural specificities that make this book unique. Doing so in a clear and explicit way will also help you and your students appreciate the text's ability to speak across time and space

How to Use this Guide

The material in this guide is intended to provide all you will need to teach the novel and its context. We believe that the historical and cultural background is necessary to understanding the novel, its characters, and their decisions, but we encourage you to teach the novel thematically, by tying it into other disciplinary issues and regular features of your core curriculum wherever possible.

Readings, reviews and handouts: The reviews and readings in the guide are intended for teachers, but many should also be accessible to students. These include readings that provide further background information for instructors as well as a variety of materials (especially from the internet) that might aid instructors in creating handouts. You are encouraged, where possible, to use the materials in this guide as handouts for your students. These readings, handouts, and other materials are all available electronically at the Great World Text website: <http://humanities.wisc.edu/public-projects/gwt/orhan-pamuk-in-wisconsin/teaching-resources2/>

Lesson plans and suggestions for discussion: The lesson plans and activities provided in this guide are designed to allow you the opportunity to tailor the way you teach the text to your own course, time constraints, interests, and goals. The individual units could be taught over one or several days or over the course of a few weeks, and you can mix and match ideas from the various sections to create your own syllabus. Each section includes a theme, followed by a set of discussion questions, suggestions for close reading, and on occasion specific quotes from the text that might be used to further discussion. Each section also includes suggested preparatory readings and a list of additional recommended resources.

Close Reading Strategies

The guide assumes that you will have read the entire novel, but all units also offer suggestions for specific passages within the text that would benefit from careful and attentive reading, analysis and discussion; these will be areas in the text from which the major ideas and themes of that unit are drawn. During discussion and for assignments, students should be encouraged to support their interpretations with evidence from the text. Close reading lends itself well to both group work and small-group discussions, and is an excellent way for students to develop their critical thinking skills as they make connections, use evidence to support their views, and discuss the impact of various literary techniques. For close reading to work successfully, it's important that the teacher always remind the students to point to the passage/line/occurrence that supports their position when they're sharing their ideas. Close reading teaches students the difference between "opinion" or "personal reaction" and "analysis." It also helps

teach students to assess the texts of its own merits, and avoid essentializing the cultural components of the text or stereotyping based on generalizations.

Reading a portion of text out loud as a class or small group, followed by discussion, can be an excellent way to develop close reading skills in the classroom.

The guide includes a [handout on close reading](#) that we encourage you to use in your classes.

Teaching Toward the Student Conference

Your students will come to Madison on Dec 2 2013 to present their work to their peers, listen to lectures from experts on the text, and workshop with UW faculty. At the conference, they will have the opportunity to meet and listen to the author of *Snow*, Orhan Pamuk. Unit 8 in this guide is explicitly devoted to preparing students for this visit and for the student conference. Prepare them for a successful conference by encouraging them to challenge themselves with projects that provide critical interpretations of the text in unique and complex ways. There is no limit to the type of project they might prepare. Past projects have included essays, painting, sculpture, weaving, culinary projects, photography, film and other multimedia, dramatic performances, song, dance, and more. The only requirement is that the students' projects must present a critical analysis of the text. Students will be required to write a short summary of their projects, which will be due to Heather DuBois Bourenane, (greattexts@humanities.wisc.edu) by November 11 2013.

Each school will select one student, or group of students, whose work is exemplary, to present at the **plenary session** on stage. It's recommended that the students themselves select (by voting) the "best" project for this presentation, which will be about 5 minutes in length. It is our expectation that these presentations will be polished, rehearsed and timed, and that they will provide an opportunity for your school to feel pride and investment in its participation in the program. *All other students* are expected to present their work in poster sessions during the conference, and will have the opportunity to stand next to their projects and answer questions about them from other students and conference participants. Every student who attends the conference should present his/her work at the conference.

UNIT 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTS

Objective: To provide background and context for the study of *Snow* and begin discussing the value of reading fiction, particularly fiction from another part of the world, with students.

Preparatory Reading:

- Orhan Pamuk, "From the Snow in Kars Notebooks." *Other Colors: Essays and a Story*. New York: Vintage, 2008.
- Orhan Pamuk, "Biography." <http://www.orhanpamuk.net/> On Orhan Pamuk's official website; contains his bibliography, reviews of his work, etc.
- Timeline of modern Turkish history (1923-present). *BBC*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1023189.stm
- Erdağ Göknar, "Secular Blasphemies: Orhan Pamuk and the Turkish Novel." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 45: 2 (2012): 301-326.

Additional Readings and Resources:

- Orhan Pamuk, "What Our Minds Do When We Read Novels." *The Naïve and Sentimental Novelist*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2010.
- A history of Kars, from the medieval period to the present day, as told through 19th – 20th century postcards of the city, is available here: <http://www.virtualani.org/kars-photoalbum/index.htm>
- George Hinton, "In Pictures: The Taksim Square Book Club." *Al-Jazeera English*. June 24, 2013. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2013/06/2013624105477515.html>

Handouts:

- What is Close Reading?
- Map of Kars, Turkey & of Turkey in relation to the Middle East, Europe, Asia, etc.

GETTING STARTED WITH *SNOW*

Discussion Questions

Why read literature?

- Why read literature? What does it offer that other mediums do not? For instance, can we imagine literature as...casting well-known events in a new light, giving voice to otherwise marginalized perspectives or to multiple voices, as suggesting alternate visions of history, or as shedding light on how individuals (might have) *felt* about different events? (*Snow* engages with all these possibilities while also interrogating them.) But there is also the sheer imaginative

pleasure of reading a novel, of immersing yourself in another world, something Pamuk has reflected on at length. If that joy is something you want to discuss with your students, Pamuk's "What Our Minds Do When We Read Novels," esp. p. 5-9., offers one possible starting point for discussion.

Why read literature from another part of the world?

- Why read literature from another part of the world? What might such literature give us, show us, tell us? Does it allow us to gain access to a faraway place and people? In what way?
- Ask students if they can think of any works of American literature that might have resonance in the rest of the world, and why? (For Faulkner's importance to Pamuk's development as a writer, for instance, see his *Paris Review* interview).
- What might people who've never been to the US learn from such literature? What might they not learn? (Consider comparing what American literature might offer, culturally-speaking, vs. movies, TV, consumer items; part of the purpose of such a discussion would be to recognize the limitations of regarding either, say, McDonald's or one work of fiction as at all representative of a culture or a country)
- Introduce/discuss close reading and critical thinking skills students will be practicing, using the "What is Close Reading" hand-out. Remind students that while there are many factual elements in *Snow*, *Snow* is a work of *fiction*; it's an imaginative construct. So – what does that mean?

Suggestions for Close Reading:

- *Snow* is a complicated novel. To get started, consider reading, carefully analyzing and discussing *only* the first sentence of *Snow* with your students. Consider comparing it to other famous first sentences students may be familiar with, such as "Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams to find himself transformed into a gigantic insect," from Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. Consider: What is the *work* of a first sentence? What does it do? How might a first sentence anticipate the rest of the novel? What do we learn from it?
- As a variation, ask students to paraphrase, or re-write, the first sentence of *Snow* in their own words, trying to arrive at as many variations as they can. Discuss as a class or small group, then return to the sentence Pamuk wrote: "The silence of snow, thought the man sitting just behind the bus driver." Why did Pamuk write this sentence in *this* particular way, rather than any other? (If this seems like too much attention to one sentence, work with the first three paragraphs.)
- Read, carefully analyze and discuss *Snow*'s epigraphs. Consider: What is the role of an epigraph in a novel? What do these particular epigraphs, all from nineteenth century European writers, *do*? (It might be worthwhile to return to the epigraph page once students have finished the novel as well).

Introducing Turkey – Lecture Points/Activities:

Mapping the World of Snow:

- Find first Turkey – then Istanbul – then Kars on any one of the maps provided. Discuss the significance of Turkey's location in relation to Western Europe and the Middle East, and then of Kars specifically; here it's important, for instance, to note its remoteness from Istanbul, and its proximity to Georgia, Armenia, the Caucasus, Iran. Consider reading and discussing with students Pamuk's short essay, "From the Snow in Kars Notebooks," which describes Pamuk's own visits to Kars and why he chose to set the novel there.

What do students know about Turkey?

- What do students know already? Ask any students who've been to Turkey to describe their impressions and experiences. Tell students what you know: it might be worthwhile to mention facts that might surprise students here, for instance, women were given the right to vote in Turkey in 1934 (before Switzerland, France, Lichtenstein), elected a female prime minister in 1993 (whereas there has yet to be a female head of state in the US, France, Spain, Sweden), has been a secular state since 1928 and held open elections since 1950, and is regarded a "model partner" by the Obama Administration for its cooperation in the 'war on terror.' Here it might be worthwhile to return to the map: Turkey borders Syria, Iraq, Iran, etc., hence its strategic importance for US interests in the region.
- Images of Turkey: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/turkey/images> Created by the Lonely Planet, this site contains some beautiful images of Turkey, from the Aya Sofya to the ruins at Ephesus and Hieropolis, to the strange lunar landscapes of Cappadocia. The images might help get students excited about Turkey and its long multicultural history.
- A history of Kars, from the medieval period to the present day, as told through 19th – 20th century postcards of the city, is available here: <http://www.virtualani.org/kars-photoalbum/index.htm>
The same site provides images and further information about the architectural history of Kars; students can see, for instance, pictures of the "thousand-year old Armenian churches" (20), Pamuk refers to, and another link at the bottom of the page will take them to a history of Kars's Russian architecture, part of what gives the city, according to *Snow's* protagonist Ka, its "melancholy air": <http://www.virtualani.org/kars/>

The Taksim Square Book Club

- It might be interesting to conclude a discussion of both literature and Turkish politics here with a visit to the Taksim Square Book Club, a movement that sprang up in Istanbul after the police violently ejected protesters from Taksim Square in June 2013. Inspired by Turkish performance artist Erdem Gündüz, who showed up at Taksim, alone, and stood silently facing the Atatürk Cultural Center for eight hours, according to *Al-Jazeera English*, "in the days that followed, thousands of people would emulate [Gündüz's] solitary act, standing silently, for minutes or hours, in places across Turkey." Participants added reading to their repertoire, transforming

their communal acts of standing, silently, in protest, into the “Taksim Square Book Club.” A question to ask your students might be: When, how, and why can reading *literature* be a form of resistance? Of protest? Slideshow of photos taken of the Taksim Square Book Club:
<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2013/06/2013624105477515.html>

Assignment and Project Ideas:

- Ask your students to keep a **reflection journal** in which they respond to the text and material covered in class. You might ask them to write 1-2 pages of personal response to the text, find points of identification, or highlight confusing or problematic passages. Or you could use the discussion questions in these lesson plans to create your own **guided journal** – a hand-out of prompts to which you require students to respond when reading the novel. This could be an ongoing project, a group activity, or an in-class writing assignment at the end of each class period.
- Pamuk has often described the act of reading a novel as being similar to the act of **looking at a painting**. Ask your students to draw, paint, or in some other manner recreate *their* vision of the “painting” Pamuk gives us in the first few pages of *Snow*. Consider having a class-wide discussion of the works students produced afterwards: for instance, what do the students’ visual interpretations reveal that we didn’t see before?
- Like Kars, with its border town history of Turks, Russians, Greeks, Armenians, and peoples from the Caucasus mingling, building and fighting with each other, Turkey itself has also always been a crossroad of cultures. For instance, it might surprise students that the ruins of the ancient city of Troy can be found in southern Turkey, or that Abraham, father of Judaism, Islam and Christianity, first heard the voice of God in Harran, also in southern Turkey. Ask students to **research and present** to the class on an aspect of Anatolian/Turkish/Ottoman history that they find interesting and that’s pertinent to an understanding of *Snow* and Turkey’s multicultural history, such as the Roman Empire in Turkey, the migration of the Oghuz Turks, the Ottoman Empire’s expansion, the long history of Greek and Armenian communities in Turkey, the early Turkish Republic and Atatürk’s determined westernization efforts, or present-day Turkey and its relations with the US and the EU.

UNIT 2: SNOW AS WORLD LITERATURE

"There are writers like Nabokov and Naipaul and Conrad who exchanged their civilizations and nations and even languages. It is a very cherished and fashionable idea in literature and so in a sense I am embarrassed that I have done none of this. I have lived virtually in the same street all my life and I currently live in the apartment block where I was brought up. But this is how it has to be for me and this is what I do. And look at my view. From here it is not so difficult to see the world."

- Orhan Pamuk, "Interview," *The Guardian*, 2004.

Objective: To begin thinking about the question of what "world literature" is through an overview of *Snow*'s critical and commercial reception in Turkey versus its reception in the rest of the world, culminating in a study of and discussion of the Nobel Prize and Pamuk's receipt of the Nobel in Literature in 2006.

Suggested Preparatory Reading:

- B. Venkat Mani, "Unpacking Orhan Pamuk's Library"
- Orhan Pamuk, "From the Snow in Kars Notebooks." *Other Colors: Essays and a Story*. New York: Vintage, 2008. 273-283.
 - "Dostoyevsky's *Notes from the Underground*: The Joys of Degradation." *Other Colors: Essays and a Story*. New York: Vintage, 2008. 136-143.
 - "Interviews: Orhan Pamuk, The Art of Fiction no. 187." *The Paris Review*. 2004.
<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/5587/the-art-of-fiction-no-187-orhan-pamuk>
 - "My Father's Suitcase." 2006 Nobel Prize Speech. Transcript:
http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2006/pamuk-lecture_en.html
Video link: <http://www.nobelprize.org/mediaplayer/index.php?id=91>
- Erdağ Göknar, "Secular Blasphemies: Orhan Pamuk and the Turkish Novel." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*. 45: 2 (Summer 2012): 301-326.
- "World literature." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_literature
Note: Concise and correctly documented entry; briefly references key theory on world literature by Goethe, Marx & Engels, Damrosch, Moretti and Casanova. Not intended for students, but rather as a reference point for teachers, should they wish to explore these theories further (in which case, consult the resources below).

Additional Recommended Resources:

World Literature

- Ertürk, Nergis. "Those Outside the Scene: *Snow* in the World Republic of Letters." *New Literary History* 41: 3 (Summer 2010): 633-651.

- David Damrosch. "Introduction." *What is World Literature?* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 2003. <http://press.princeton.edu/chapters/i7545.html>
Introductory chapter from a seminal text on world literature by one of the foremost scholars in the field. Should be accessible to students in AP classes.
- Andrew Mellon World Literature/s Research Workshop. University of Wisconsin-Madison. <http://global.wisc.edu/worldlit/>
An ongoing research workshop on world literature for faculty and students at UW-Madison. Scroll down to "Past readings" on the website to find PDF files of key readings/excerpts from major scholars, both past and present, of world literature, from Goethe to Moretti. PDF files are password protected; passwords available on request.

Translation and Publishing

- UNESCO's *Index Translatorium*. <http://www.unesco.org/xtrans/>
UNESCO's database of world-wide translations. Click on links to "Top 50 Authors" translated around the world, to "Top 50 Original Languages" (i.e., the languages most often translated from), versus "Top 50 Target Languages" (i.e., top languages works are translated into).
- Snaje, Olivia and Edward Nawotka. "Turkish Publishing on the Rise: It's more than Orhan Pamuk." *Publishing Perspectives*. April 16 2013. <http://publishingperspectives.com/2013/04/turkish-publishing-on-the-rise-its-more-than-orhan-pamuk/>
On attempts to increase the translation and circulation of Turkish literature beyond the borders of Turkey – and, as the title indicates, beyond Pamuk.
- "Orhan Pamuk's novels translated into 60 languages." *Orhan Pamuk Site*. <http://www.orhanpamuk.net/news.aspx?id=25&lng=eng>
An interesting list of the many languages Pamuk's works have been translated into, from Kannada to Basque, Arabic, Bosnian, etc.

Literary Celebrity

- *The Nobel Prize* website. Link: <http://www.nobelprize.org>
- Verma, Smitha. "Pamuk Adds Spark to Jaipur Literary Fest Brawl." *The Telegraph*. (Calcutta, India). January 22 2011. http://www.telegraphindia.com/1110122/jsp/frontpage/story_13478268.jsp
"Star-Studded Jaipur Literature Festival." January 22 2011. *NDTV* video. <http://www.ndtv.com/video/player/news/star-studded-jaipur-literature-festival/188715>
Pamuk and Indian novelist Kiran Desai as literary celebrity couple of the year at the Jaipur Literature Festival.
- "Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk likens Egypt Coup to Garcia Marquez novel." *Hürriyet Daily News*. Aug 19 2013. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/nobel-laureate-orhan-pamuk-likens-egypt-coup-to-garcia-marquez-novel.aspx?PageID=238&NID=52860&NewsCatID=386>

- Orhan Pamuk. "Memories of a Public Square." *The New Yorker*. June 5 2013.
<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/books/2013/06/memories-of-a-public-square.html>

Discussion Questions

The Travels of World Literature

- First read and/or view Pamuk's 2006 Nobel Prize Speech with your students. To consider: Pamuk returns repeatedly to the notion of there being a literary or cultural "center." What does he seem to mean by that? Where does that center seem to be? What is his own relation to it? Who has access to that center? What might trouble or resist the idea of there being a literary "center"? (If your students are at all familiar with Dostoyevsky, you might also consider assigning Pamuk's essay on Dostoyevsky here; it is a fine, short, accessible essay that details the same cultural tensions and tautly drawn cultural maps that we also find in Pamuk's Nobel Prize speech).
- Then read B. Venkat Mani's essay, "Unpacking Pamuk's Library," with your students, paying particular attention to the discussion of book circulation, how Pamuk in particular circulates; finally, discuss with your students precisely what Mani means by "cosmopolitan reading." What kind of reading is this? What kind of literary space does it create? Who has access to it? Anyone? Why? Do your students agree with Mani's argument here? Share with them some of the statistics on translation available at the UNESCO website. What do they make of those statistics? What do they suggest about how culture travels?
- Ask students to investigate the Nobel Prize for Literature using the Nobel Prize website. What country awards the prize? Who sits on the committee that selects the prize-winners? Who has won the prize in the past? What countries are those authors from? Ask them to see if they can determine what the Prize for Literature is supposed to designate. Then discuss the results in light of what they've learned from Pamuk's "My Father's Suitcase," Venkat Mani's essay and the UNESCO translation statistics. What might be problematic about this prize? What might be hopeful, even utopian about it?
- As Mani notes in his essay, Pamuk is a best-selling author around the globe. Share with your students the following: 1) A list of the languages Pamuk's works have been translated into. What are they? What do they suggest about interest in Pamuk around the world? What languages has Pamuk's novel *not* been translated into? 2) View with your students the video from the Jaipur Literature Festival and read the short accompanying article; note the celebrity status Pamuk clearly enjoys. 3) Then share with your students some of Gökner's claims in his essay, "Secular Blasphemies," regarding how Pamuk balances his international literary celebrity and global audience vs. his relation to his Turkish readership. (Pamuk addresses some of these negotiations himself in the *Paris Review* interview; see particularly his discussion of the Turkish reception of *Snow*). Ask your students to think about how Pamuk's reception in Turkey changed as his international reputation grew; discuss why Pamuk's trial for "insulting Turkishness" might have helped fuel that international reputation.
- Share the excerpt on p. 633-4 from Ertürk's essay where she discusses the "double welcome" given "newly consecrated writers from unimportant countries," i.e., Turkey. What does she mean by this? Who is the implied "host"? Note her language: the writers are "consecrated." By

whom? What does that language suggest? What does she mean by “privileged knowledge” in this context? Why might that assumption on the part of “the West” be a problem? What does she suggest is the real reason Pamuk is often met by criticism in his home country? Conclude by discussing what some of the implications might be for a concept like “world literature,” given Pamuk’s not-unproblematic transformation into the world’s “single internationally visible” Turkish author. (For two quick examples, see Pamuk’s short recent essay in *The New Yorker* on the Taksim Gezi Park protests that roiled Turkey earlier this year. As is obvious from reading Pamuk’s essay, *The New Yorker* had clearly asked Pamuk to “speak out” about the protests; meanwhile the English-language Turkish daily *The Hürriyet Daily News* reports on Pamuk comparing the 2013 Egyptian coup to a Marquez novel. It’s not impossible to argue that what matters for these papers is less what Pamuk says, or even what insight he might provide, than that *he* has said them. Ask students if this is a problem, and if so, why?

Suggestions for Close Reading:

Stories within the Stories

- Read the epigraphs from Stendhal, Robert Browning, Dostoevsky and Joseph Conrad that introduce *Snow*. Who are these authors? Where do they come from? What are epigraphs like this ordinarily supposed to do? Do these work that way? Why might Pamuk have chosen these citations in particular to introduce us to the world of *Snow*?
- Read the story of Sohrab and Rüstem that Blue tells Ka when they first meet (p. 76-78 or 82-85). Why does he tell Ka this story? Why is it important to Blue? Who has access to this story; who remembers it? What does it tell us about “world literature”? Why might Blue telling this story to Ka be important to the novel?

Hans Hansen, Marianna and the World Sex Center

- In order to convince Blue and Kadife that he has connections with the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, and therefore get Turgut Bey out of the house so he can make love to Ipek, Ka invents a fictional character named “Hans Hansen,” who according to him is the editor. Yet the reader knows that this is an invention: “Hans Hansen” is the man who sold Ka his coat. Read pgs. 229-232 or 247-251 carefully: the “Hans Hansen” fiction gets increasingly elaborate and detailed. Ask your students what they make of this fictional character, and of Ka’s invention of him. What is important about this scene? What is significant about Hans Hansen’s name, appearance, the appearance of his family, what they eat, how their house looks, the fact that Ka is invited into their home? And why, as Ka keeps speaking, does his tale change from one of warm embrace by Hans Hansen and his blue-eyed, blond family, to one of exile and rejection? He tells Blue: “I didn’t care about the torture and death [in Turkey] that was reported. All I wanted was for Hans Hansen to call me” (232 or 251). (Make sure students pay careful attention to tone, irony, satire, stereotype here). Why does he tell Blue this story? Why might it be important that it’s *Blue* in particular who’s the audience for Ka’s self-abasement and apparent longing for Hans Hansen? What does Blue seem to think of “the West” in general? What is the essence of Ka’s critique of that view?

- Suggest to students that the Hans Hansen Fiction is an allegory for World Literature. If so, what do they make of it as an allegory? What might it suggest about access, about the opaqueness of cultures to each other?
- *Marianna* as world literature? The one thing that binds all the residents of Kars together in one space and one moment in time is watching *Marianna*, a Mexican soap opera. (See especially pgs. 239-241 or 259-261). Read the pages listed carefully. Why is *Marianna*'s wide-spread popularity important to the story? What does it seem to *do* for the residents of Kars?
- We learn of Ka's sad post-Kars life in Germany after returning from Turkey without Ipek – before we learn that they will not be going to Germany together. We also learn that there Ka lives on “Goethestrasse” (p. 251 or 271), has cut all this ties to the Turkish-German community (p. 256 or 278), and socializes only with the Italian and Yugoslavian workmen (significantly, neither Germans nor Turks) he gets a cigarette with now and then, and with “Melinda,” the American porn star he rents on film at the “World Sex Center” (p. 260 or 282). None of these details are accidental. But what do they add up to? What argument is Pamuk making?

The Hotel Asia and the Politics of Representation

- The Hotel Asia scene is a key scene in *Snow*. Read pgs. 267-280 or 288-305 carefully with your students, asking them for details, contradictions, tensions, patterns that they see emerging. There are many important things to notice here, ex., what is the “Hotel Asia” like as a hotel? Who is present at the scene? What groups? What genders? Who is the presumed audience for the statement they're trying to compose? Who is actually listening? Who is “we” here? How does that “we” change as the scene progresses? Why is that important? How might *this* scene be read as an allegory for World Literature, and if so, what is it arguing? Are the assembled men right about “the West,” and its attitude toward and perception of a country like Turkey? What do students make of the fact that the assembled men are writing a statement for an audience that literally does not exist? What does that do to the representation of the scene, to our interpretation of it? How does Pamuk's tone shift throughout the scene?
- Read/re-read Pamuk's essay, “From the Snow in Kars Notebooks” with your students; note the constant attention to representing accurately, representing honestly. Then read Fazil's final remarks to Ka on the last two pages of *Snow*, where he tells him, “If you write a book set in Kars and put me in it, I'd like to tell your readers not to believe anything you say about me, anything you say about any of us. No one could understand us from so far away.” The narrator, Orhan, responds by saying, “No one believes in that way in what he reads in a novel.” Fazil responds, in turn, telling him, “Oh yes, they do...If only to see themselves as wise and superior and humanistic...But if you would put in what I've just said, at least your readers will keep a little room for doubt in their minds” (425-6 or 462-3). This, too, is a key moment in *Snow* – but why? What is important about what Fazil is saying here if we consider Pamuk's argument(s) – about representation, about access, about the uneven geographies that shape our world?
- Is what Fazil says here (p. 425-6 or 462-3) true? Is it impossible to “understand” at a distance? Why is *doubt* important when it comes to representation, particularly representations of other cultures? Does that “doubt” suggest other cultures will, perhaps even should, remain forever opaque to us, unknowable, that we shouldn't seek to understand “at a distance” because it's

impossible? What *is* the responsibility of the narrator “Orhan” when it comes to representing the people of Kars? What is *our* responsibility as readers?

Questions of Translation

- Ask your students to open up the first page of *Snow*, and read the first few paragraphs out loud as a class. Then listen to the audio-file recordings of the first few paragraphs of the novel in the original Turkish, graciously created for Great World Texts by Nâlân Erbil. Assess students’ reactions. (This is intended to give students a feel for the thick differences of another language, to remind them that this is a work written *not* in English but in Turkish.) Use as a segue to a discussion of the problems of translation. For instance, there are those, like David Damrosch, who argue that world literature can be defined as those texts that “gain” in translation. Others, notably Gayatri Spivak, argue that a too-smooth translation can erase the sense of an encounter with something foreign, something Other, which we *should* encounter when we read a text written in a different language; it is part of the ethics of the text. What do your students think? Do they migrate between different languages?
- The original title of *Snow* in Turkish is *Kar*, which is the Turkish word for “snow.” *Kar*, in Turkish, is of course also a play on the place, *Kars*, and on the name the protagonist gives himself, *Ka*. To anyone reading the text in Turkish, the play on words is self-evident. To anyone encountering the novel as the English *Snow*, it is not. What might this tell us?
- The following courtesy of Nâlân Erbil: In the Turkish-language version of *Snow*, Pamuk uses various words for women’s head-coverings or veils, including *başörtüsü* (worn primarily by women in rural areas), *türban* (covers hair only) and *çarşaf* (full-body veil). Turkish also allows for the nuances that distinguish the *türbancı kız* (a woman either wearing or not wearing *türban* but who supports the ‘cause’) from the *türbanlı kız* (woman wearing a *türban*). None of these nuances are present in Freely’s translation, however; here the only term ever used is “headscarf.” Ask students what they make of Freely’s decision here. Why might she have made it? What assumptions is she making about her US/UK audience? What is the effect? Do students agree with Freely’s choice?

Activities and Project Ideas

- Ask students to **debate, select and vote** for whom they would give the Nobel Prize in Literature to – either a contemporary writer or someone from previous centuries. Students will have to back up their selections with evidence from what they’ve learned about world literature in the course of the class.
- Ask students to write an essay in which they reflect on the **power of language to create perception**, if possible giving examples of words in other languages which cannot be translated precisely into English. Students who speak another language well can provide a translation of a passage and reflect on their experience as translators. (Courtesy of Sofia Samatar, *Arabian Nights in Wisconsin Guide*).
- Ask students to create a **game** (video-game, board-game, pack of cards, etc.) that reflects the uneven, arbitrary contours and distribution of power, capital and culture found in the “map” of world literature that we have traced in this Unit. How does literature circulate? What rules govern its circulation? What would it take for a work of fiction to make it from one country to

another in this game? Would the rules be different for an Agatha Christie than for, say, an Azeri poet? Why does it matter? Students can start by reviewing the “Top 50 Authors” translated around the world, as available on the UNESCO’s *Index Translatorium*.

UNIT 3: ONCE AS TRAGEDY, THE SECOND AS FARCE: HISTORY, FICTION AND POLITICS IN *SNOW*

When and how is history like fiction? When does fiction turn into politics? What is political about fiction? Throughout *Snow*, fiction and politics blur, from the “news” Serdar prints that hasn’t happened but will, to Sunay’s coup, staged in a theater but resulting in real death, to characters in a Pamuk novel behaving “as if they’re in a Turgenev novel.” No one person’s narrative of history or national identity resembles another’s; literary representation turns out to be a political question, and politics a dangerous business: everyone in Kars, it seems, from Ka to Turgut Bey, has spent or will be spending time in prison, being beaten up, tortured, shamed. Why does Pamuk blur the boundaries between historical narrative, fictional narrative and politics so often in this novel? What might he be trying to say about the power of *narrative* to shape events, people, history?

Objective: To explore how *Snow* represents the connection between historical narrative, fictional narrative and political narrative as these reinterpret Turkish history and thereby shape people’s behavior in the present.

Preparatory Reading:

- Timeline of modern Turkish history (1923-present). *BBC*.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1023189.stm
Note the many political coups in Turkey since the Turkish Republic was established.
- Erik J. Zürchner, “Turkey since 1980.” *Turkey: A Modern History*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004. New ed. 278-338.
Though Zürchner can get bogged down in details and acronyms, this is essential reading for understanding present-day Turkey and the world of *Snow*. Accompanied by a glossary that identifies key persons and organizations. The writing is clear and accessible to students, but the chapter may be more readily digestible in excerpts.
- Erik J. Zürchner, “The Armenian Question,” from *Turkey: A Modern History*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004. New ed. 114-117.
Three-page excerpt from Zürchner’s book on Turkey (then the Ottoman Empire) during WWI. The CUP, frequently referred to in the excerpt, is the Committee for Union and Progress, a political organization. Accessible to students. For additional resources on “the Armenian Question,” see the bibliography at the end of the guide.
- “Who are the Kurds?” *The Washington Post*. 1999. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/daily/feb99/kurdprofile.htm>

Hand-outs:

- “Turkey, Turkish History and Snow – the Basics”

Additional Recommended Resources:

- Karl Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (1851-2).
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/>
Snow alludes to this text both implicitly and explicitly; the most pertinent section is excerpted below. A link to the full text is available at the link provided. Requires close and careful reading but should be accessible to students.
- Orhan Pamuk, "On Trial." *The New Yorker*. Dec 19, 2005.
http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/12/19/051219ta_talk_pamuk
Pamuk on his trial for "insulting Turkishness" by referring to the Armenian genocide and the repression of Turkey's Kurdish minority in an interview in a German paper. Accessible to students.
- Sibel Erol, "Reading Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* as Parody: Sameness as Difference." *Comparative Critical Studies* 4:3 (2007): 403-432.
Demonstrates how parody works in *Snow*. The most useful sections are p. 409-418. May be accessible to students in AP courses.
- J. Michael Kennedy, "Turkish Writer Opens Museum Based on Novel." *The New York Times*. April 29, 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/30/books/orhan-pamuk-opens-museum-based-on-his-novel-in-istanbul.html?_r=0
Last year in April, Pamuk opened The Museum of Innocence in Istanbul, inspired by or based on his novel of the same name. The article includes a link to a slideshow of objects in the museum. Accessible to students.
- Link to 2012 report on Turkey by the Committee to Protect Journalists:
<http://www.cpj.org/2013/02/attacks-on-the-press-in-2012-turkey.php>
- Link to PEN America: <http://www.pen.org/>
PEN America is the US branch of an internationally renowned non-profit that fights to defend writers and protect freedom of expression around the world.

Discussion Questions / Suggestions for Close Reading:

Fictions about Fictional Characters

- Rumors, stories, fictions and half-truths abound in the world of *Snow*. Compare Necip's legend of "Hicran" (p. 103-109 or 111-114), who turns out to be Kadife (p. 110 or 117), with Kadife's own story (p. 113 or 121-2). Why has Necip (and the other boys at the religious school) constructed this elaborate legend? Why does Necip want to share the story with Ka? Why does Pamuk allow the story to at once become real, with Necip's exclamation on p. 109/111 ("Hicran! She's out there on the street!") and *un-real*, given that none of Necip's fantasies of "Hicran" prove to be true? What might Pamuk be trying to suggest about fictional narrative? About its ability to create reality? What might this suggest about the world of Kars – a world where almost everyone professes absolute, unwavering political or religious opinions – whether those are secular (Serdar, Sunay) or Islamist (Fazil, Mersut, Blue, the assassin)?
- "Many lies were told about Blue" (70 or 76). This is one of the first things we learn about this "terrorist" with the "deep blue" eyes (72 or 79). How did Blue become famous in Turkey and in

Kars? (p. 69 or 77) How is his legend created? What aspects of the story prove to be true? Which do not? Why does Pamuk suggest Blue participates in the media-frenzy by staying silent? (p. 70 or 77)

- Discuss Ka's description of his first meeting with Blue. What surprises Ka about meeting Blue? What does not? Why are the differences important to *Snow*? How does Blue compare with the depiction of Islamic fundamentalists in Sunay Zaim and Funda Eser's play, *My Fatherland or My Headscarf*? How does he compare with most Western depictions of Islamic fundamentalists (ex., perhaps most famously, the Taliban)? Finally, given what we learn about Blue in the course of the novel, is he a "terrorist?" Conversely, is he wholly innocent of what he's accused of? What should we make, as readers, of his death at the hands of Kars's security forces?

States, Stories, Histories

- We tend to think of "news" as a report of events *after* they've taken place, but the reverse is true in *Snow*: one of the first people Ka meets in Kars is Serdar Bey, owner of the *Border City Gazette*, who prints reports of events before they've happened (making them fictional), but which turn out to be true: Ka's poetry recital, for instance (p. 23 or 30), and Serdar's own death (p. 336-7 or 364-5). What might Pamuk be trying to suggest by blurring the boundaries between what happens and what's been said to have happened, between the past and the future?
- Ask students to consider the US context: how does the news media work in their own lives – news media at this point meaning newspapers, TV, blogs, texts and social media sites – to *create* reality, create our perceptions of what is happening around us? How does it work to create the stories we tell ourselves about a past event? What happens when stories compete with each other, when no one can agree about what the real "story" is or should be? And what about national stories in the US context? What stories are we told frequently? Which are forgotten? *Whose* stories are forgotten?
- What might have happened if social media were reporting on what happened in Kars during the theater coup?
- Why is it important to the story that Kars is "snowed in"?
- One of the most controversial issues in Turkish history to this day is the massacre and mass deportation of Ottoman Armenians in 1915. The Turkish state denies that this was a "genocide," and rather claims it as a necessary military maneuver (reputable historians differ from this view). Kars borders on Armenia [review map], and the ghostly presence of the long-gone Armenian community haunts Pamuk's Kars.

Ask students to locate as many mentions of the Armenian community they can; discuss the results. Arguably, all these references appear as fragments, traces, scattered quietly throughout the narrative: you'd miss them if you weren't looking or already aware of the history they reference. Why might that be? Why has Pamuk written this particular "history" in this manner? Why is it important to the world of *Snow*? What might he be trying to suggest about history and silence? About power and narrative? About the importance of *narrating* history? What other communities once lived in Kars?

For a brief, accessible summary and explanation of the contending arguments, see the excerpt from Zürchner, "The Armenian Question."

- Another of the “most controversial issues” in Turkish history and even more so in present-day Turkish politics, is the Kurdish question. The Turkish state claims the Kurds as part of Turkey; Kurds do not necessarily agree. Read the brief *Washington Post* introduction with your students, paying particular attention to the map the *Post* provides, and try to determine where Kars is in relation to that map. Then start tracing where and how Kurds appear in *Snow*. Who are the Kurds in this novel? Where do they appear? How? That is, how does Pamuk represent the Kurdish population of Kars? Why? How might that representation be contributing to a particular argument about Turkey, Turkish politics, and national identity?
- “ ‘Naturally, the police were following you,’ said the newspaperman” (25 or 26). Like Ka, everyone in Kars is surveilled by the police; everyone watches everyone else; at one point Necip tells Ka he never sent Kadife any of the letters he’d written her because “I knew they would be opened and read at the post office. Half the people of Kars are working as undercover policemen. Half the people in this hall are too. They follow us everywhere we go. Even our own people are following us” (136 or 145). Questions: Why is everyone following everyone else? Why do the police follow Ka, and listen in on Muhtar and Serdar? Why is surveillance as a metaphor important to the world of *Snow*?
- Ka has been living in exile in Germany since the 1980 military coup, when “the authorities” began prosecuting writers and Ka was “tried for a hastily written political article he had not even written” (33 or 35). Why does Pamuk include these particular details? What do they suggest about Ka? (There’s a certain halo over the writer-in-exile, but how does that halo look on Ka? Or Muhtar, who was not exiled but imprisoned?) What do the details of Ka’s exile suggest about the state that tried to prosecute him?

“...together they visited three classrooms where terrible things were going on. I will follow Ka’s lead here; just as he chose not to record them in his notebook, I will try not to dwell on them either.”

- Ka in the Cold Rooms of Terror, *Snow*, p. 184 or 197

- Read the citation above with your students. Why does Ka choose “not to record [the terrible things] in his notebook”? Why does the narrator, “Orhan,” “try not to dwell on them either”? What is being argued here? What else in *Snow*, particularly in the aftermath of the coup, remains unwritten? Un-investigated? Unspoken? What might Pamuk be trying to suggest?

History is Theater

- A coup occurs in Kars shortly after Ka’s arrival. It takes place in the National Theater, after a play, and is orchestrated by an actor, Sunay Zaim, whose favorite, career-defining role was playing Atatürk. Why does Pamuk portray Kars’s three day “revolution” as, essentially, a theatrical event – a play – and yet a play with deadly consequences? *Is history like theater/drama? Why or why not?*

- People in Kars who are not at the theater are watching it on their TV, and we learn that even “city residents who had grown bored with the play toward midnight and begun to doze off in front of their televisions, by the last eighteen seconds of the gun battle even their eyes were glued to the screen...” (159 or 170) Why is this detail important?
- Carefully re-read and discuss the play and theater coup scene with your students. How are these two chapters *narrated*? That is, from whose perspective are they told? Do the different observers agree on what they’re witnessing? (Answer: no). Why is that important?
- Another thing to notice about the narration of this key scene is that it’s a scene pieced together, after the fact, by the narrator, “Orhan.” Throughout we get references to “according to the colonel...,” or “one witness said...” Pamuk employs this narrative method throughout *Snow*. Why? What might Pamuk be arguing? What might it tell us about history, power, narrative, about who assembles history, about who gets to tell the stories history is made of?
- Why does no one react, or try to stop the soldiers while they’re shooting people in the audience? What do you make of the dairy owner who refused to give his name, and who says “we were afraid that if we moved from our seats...the terror would find us”? (159 or 170) What does he mean?
- Why does Pamuk describe the trajectory of each bullet the soldiers shoot during the “coup,” from who is shooting (“a Kurd from Siirt [who] had no wish to kill anyone”) to the history of the theater itself (from the “poor romantic Armenian girls” who used to watch acrobats from Moscow in the cheap seats, to the “last Soviet consul in Kars” who watched movies there with his dog)? What is the effect of this? Why do we learn these stories *now*? (That is, at this point in the story?) Why does Pamuk narrate them for his readers while also narrating a scene where young men, boys really, are being shot by soldiers?
- Ask them what they make of Pamuk’s *tone* in these two chapters. Where does the tone shift? Discuss the dramatic ironies present in the scene. Consider sharing with your students the following observation from critic Erdağ Göknaar, either before or after a discussion of parody and irony in *Snow*: “The nuances of irony and parody present in Pamuk’s novels often do not convey well in translation...especially when satire is combined with physical or verbal scenes of violence: the violence translates; the satirical nuance does not...During a personal conversation I had with Pamuk, he repeatedly interrupted himself with bouts of laughter while reading a draft of the theater coup scene from *Snow*. The humor in this scene is clearly lost on Anglo-phone readers, judging from reviews of the novel and personal experiences teaching the novel” (313, fn 27). For the full-text article, see “Preparatory Readings” for Units 1 and 2.
- The title of this Unit comes from a famous statement made by Karl Marx in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, a text Marx composed between 1851 and 1852 after Napoleon I’s nephew, Louis Napoleon, dissolved Parliament and declared himself sole ruler of France:

“Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce...Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. And just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves

and things, creating something that did not exist before, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honored disguise and borrowed language.”

- Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire*, Ch 1

Closely read and analyze Marx’s statement with your students [the complete text is available at the URL above]. What does Marx mean by suggesting history repeats itself? Why first as tragedy, then as farce? Ask your students if they agree with Marx’s claim. Why or why not? How is the first claim related to the second, ie that people only “make” history “under circumstances existing already,” that in fact “the tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living.” What does this mean? How might Marx’s observation about history as tragedy and farce, as repetition, as the weight of past tradition and persons “anxiously conjuring up the spirits of the past,” be pertinent to our understanding of *Snow*?

- Sunay Zaim, actor-general, quotes Marx, believing himself to be quoting Hegel (Marx was himself mis-quoting Hegel); talking to Ka after the coup, he tells him:

“It was Hegel who first noticed that history and theater are made of the same materials,” said Sunay. “Remember: Just as in the theater, history chooses those who play the leading roles. And just as actors put their courage to the test onstage, so too do the chosen few on the stage of history.”

The entire valley rattled with explosions... (*Snow*, 199 or 213)

Compare Sunay’s interpretation of Marx’s statement with the excerpt from the *Eighteenth Brumaire*. What is the obvious difference? Why include this? What might Pamuk be suggesting?

- Ask students what they make of the conclusion on p. 161 or 172, where we learn that the theater is now owned by Muhtar Bey, and a warehouse for “the ghostlike forms of refrigerators, stoves, and washing machines”? What might this tell us about history?

Activities and Project Ideas:

- Ask students to **write and stage a play** satirizing US history, politics and/or American cultural mores. Students might begin brainstorming by thinking of “hot button topics” that generate controversy equal to the headscarf in Turkey.
- At Kars’s Armenian Museum, “the story was the other way around” (32 or 34). Ask students to write an analytical research essay in which they **choose a statue, monument or museum**, from the local to the national (the National Mall, Ground Zero), and reflect on how museums/monuments/statues both honor history but also create it, erase it, all at once, i.e., whose story is being told? How is it being told? Whose story is forgotten?
- Alternately, students can 1) reflect on what a historical museum or monument *should* do, and then 2) **create their own “museum”** or monument narrating, honoring and/or commemorating

an event or series of events. Pamuk himself has actually done so: after completing a novel titled *The Museum of Innocence*, he created a museum to/about the novel, also titled The Museum of Innocence [see link above]. Students' museums/monuments could be physical, in real time, or virtual, and take any form. Each completed artefact should be accompanied by a reflective essay explaining and analyzing the choices made. What justifies the inclusion of one object rather than another? What kind of history are they trying to tell?

- Assign an **analytical essay** in which students examine the question of history first as tragedy, then farce, in *Snow*, using the citation from Marx as a starting point.
- Pamuk's fictional writers-in-exile (Ka) and prison (the miserable Muhtar), reflect a very real truth: many, many Turkish writers, from those whose trials draw international attention and condemnation (Yaşar Kemal, Pamuk), to others whose trials occur in obscurity, have been prosecuted by the Turkish state for various offenses: "insulting Turkishness," being a traitor to the state, etc. Turkey is regarded by the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists as "the world's worst jailer of journalists," with 49 journalists in jail in 2012 [see citation above]. And yet Turkey is *not* an authoritarian state; it has in many ways a vibrant public sphere, an energetic democracy and cracks in the press on controversial issues do appear – though in the wake of the Gezi Park protests, repression of journalists has increased. Ask one group of students to carefully **research the complex question of freedom of the press** and the censoring and jailing of writers and journalists in Turkey and present their findings to the class.
- Ask another group of students to research freedom of speech and of the press **world-wide**. The websites of organizations such as PEN America and the Committee to Protect Journalists are good places to start.

UNIT 4: RELIGION AND SECULARISM

The Turkish government estimates the numbers of Muslims in the country at 99.8% percent, of whom the vast majority are Sunnis. But the country also includes a large minority of Alevi Muslims, whose belief system incorporates Sunni Islam, Shiite Islam and the indigenous religious traditions of Anatolia. Other peoples of Turkey profess Shiite Islam, Armenian Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Roman Catholicism, Syrian Orthodox Christianity and Russian Orthodox Christianity. There are also small groups, amounting to the thousands, of Bahais, Yezidis, Jehovah's Witnesses, and an undetermined number of other Protestant and orthodox Christian denominations.

None of this religious multiplicity, however, appears in the world of *Snow*, where religious debate is instead starkly drawn between an adamant and absolutist secularism and an equally adamant and absolutist Islamism that is both fundamentalist and politically ambitious. It is a debate impossible to understand without a basic grasp of modern Turkish history. "Secularism" in Turkey, for instance, has never entailed the absence of religion; the particular mode of secularism adopted by the founders of the Turkish Republic from the French model (*laïcité*) in the 1920s was an "assertive secularism:" it did not so much divide religion and the state as assert the state's power over religious life. The consequences have reverberated throughout modern Turkish history.

Objective: To discuss the representation of religion and secularism in *Snow*, allowing students to learn more about religious practice in Turkey, with a particular focus on Islam and the debate between Islam and republican secularism.

Preparatory Reading:

- Feroz Ahmad. "Politics and Islam in Modern Turkey." *From Empire and Republic: Essays on the Late Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. Vol. 2. Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi UP, 2008. 303-331.
Note: From one of the major historians of modern Turkey.
- Ioannis N. Grigoriadis. "Islam and Democratization in Turkey: Secularism and Trust in a Divided Society." *Democratization*. 16: 6 (2009): 1194-1213.
Note: Dense, but lucidly written. Essential. The entirety should be accessible to students in AP classes, but it would also be easy to discuss in excerpts.
- Edward Said. "Introduction." *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon, 1978.
--- "Interview." http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwCOSkXR_Cw
Note: It would be difficult to understand the revulsion and simultaneous fascination with the "West," and with secular, "Westernized" Turks like Ka, expressed by many of the characters in *Snow*, without some basic understanding of Orientalism. The "Introduction" is intended mainly

for teachers; the videotaped interview with Said (see above) where he discusses his ideas might be more palatable for students.

Hand-outs:

- What is Islam?

Additional Recommended Resources:

- Esra Mirze Santesso. "Silence, Secularism and Fundamentalism in *Snow*." *Global Perspectives on Pamuk: Existentialism and Politics*. Eds. Mehnaz M. Afridi and David M. Buyze. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Çihan Tuğal. "Nato's Islamists: Hegemony and Americanization in Turkey." *New Left Review*. 44: 2 (2007): 5-34.
Note: Tries to account for the paradoxes inherent in recent Turkish politics. Themes and arguments very similar to Grigoriadis's, but with more of an attention to Turkey's role vis-à-vis the US and regionally.
- *The University of Georgia's Islam Resource Page* <http://www.uga.edu/islam/home.html>
Note: Great place to start for all topics related to Islam; click on any of the links **on the top of the page** for ease of access to all the information this site provides.
- *Inside Islam: Dialogues and Debates* <http://insideislam.wisc.edu>
A collaboration between UW-Madison and WPR's "Here on Earth: Radio without Borders." No longer live, but the links remain active.
- PBS. *Life of Muhammed*. 2013. <http://video.pbs.org/video/2365065552/>
Note: Great series that began airing on PBS August 20 2013. Takes viewers on a journey through Muhammed's life and visions and follows the development of the faith (etc).
- Said, Edward. "The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations." Lecture. University of Massachusetts-Amherst, 1998. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boBzrqF4vmo>
Note: A compelling, engaging and lucid lecture that importantly troubles any stark oppositions between "East" and "West." Relevant for *Snow* in that many of the characters in the novel profess absolute faith in the supposed "clash" and absolute differences between "East" and "West." Worth watching with and talking to students about.
- U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. "International Religious Freedom Report for 2012: Turkey." <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2012&dliid=208376>
Note: One of the better reports on religious statistics in Turkey because it emphasizes the diversity that does actually exist in the country. Note also that as of July 24, there have been at least *rhetorically* important changes in the Turkish government's relation with the Alevis, one of the religious minorities mentioned in the report. You can learn more here: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkeys-religious-head-embraces-alevis-atheists-.aspx?pageID=238&nid=51321>

Lecture / Discussion Points:

- Make sure students understand the following key points:
 - Islam is a *global* faith. At present it has 1.6 billion practitioners across the world, from Turkey to Indonesia, India to Egypt, the United States to Europe, etc.
 - While certain basic tenets unite Muslims, as for instance Christians across the world are united in their belief that Jesus was the son of God, there is nonetheless great variety in Islam as it is practiced in individual countries and continents.
 - There is a vast gulf between Islam, the religion, and *Islamism*, or political Islam.
 - You might also consider sharing things that may surprise your students, ex., Jesus is regarded as a prophet in Islam; Muslims regard Christians and Jews as “peoples of the book,” along with Muslims themselves; throughout the 14th-18th centuries the Ottoman Empire served as a safe haven for Jews fleeing persecution in Europe (etc.)

Use the discussion as a segue to a discussion of the representation of Islam in *Snow*. Islam is diverse, polyphonic, alternately progressive and alternately conservative – like most faiths. Is this the Islam we encounter in Kars, in the world of *Snow*? If not, why not? What *kind* of religious debate is Pamuk interested in exploring in *Snow*?

- Watch the interview with Edward Said with your students (link above). Alternately, share and discuss the basics of Orientalism, i.e., of “Western” stereotypes and perceptions of the fixed and unchanging “East,” and of Islam as a perennial threat, and then watch and discuss Said’s lecture on the “Myth of the Clash of Civilizations.”
- Make sure students understand the particular nature of secularism in Turkey. For instance, how does Turkey’s model differ from the situation in the United States, or the UK? (Here it’s important to note both that there are multiple “formations of the secular,” to borrow a phrase from Talal Asad, *and* that the French model adopted by Turkey was a particularly univocal version).
- Additionally: how has class and geography constructed religious belief in modern Turkey? What have the consequences been for the development of Islam, in particular political Islam, in Turkey? What have the consequences been for people like the Kurds, who are Sunni Muslim (signifying “Turkishness”), but who themselves claim a separate ethnic identity?

Discussion Questions:

- Ask students for their definition of “secularism.” What does it mean?
- There is a great deal of discussion about God and religion in the novel. Broadly, ask students to characterize that discussion. For instance, how flexible is it? To what extent does it admit to contradictions, to paradoxes?
- Conversely, how flexible does “secularism” appear to be in the novel? To what extent do “secularists” like Serdar Bey or Sunay Zaim admit paradox or contradiction or even irony in their own firm beliefs? What are those beliefs exactly? (Strong conviction that political Islam is a threat, for instance)
- What *kind* of religious debate occurs in the novel? That is, what questions do characters ask?

What questions do they *not* ask?

- Why do we learn so little about Islam as a lived faith in the novel? For instance, in an Islamic country, the muezzin calls people to pray five times a day. It is an ever-present facet of life in an Islamic country, including Turkey. But not only does no one in Kars pray, apparently, but there is never a call to prayer. Why might that be? Why exclude such details? What is the effect of that?
- Read the dialogue between the Director of the Institute of Education and his assassin with your students (Ch 5, pgs 38-48 or 41-52). Why is the assassin in Kars? What do we learn about him in the course of his monologues? Why is he upset with the director? What is his attitude toward the state? Where do contradictions emerge in his proclamations? (For instance, on the one hand he regards the state as godless and in thrall to the West, on the other he at one point proclaims that “because I live in a democracy” – though it’s unclear whether that’s an ironic claim.) What does he think of as evidence of Turks not loving their country? What is his reaction to learning that the director’s wife wears a headscarf but his daughter does not?
- What about the director himself? How does he feel about the decision he made to ban covered girls from his school? Is he “an atheist,” as the assassin claims? Why are the director’s complicated and conflicted views on the issue of headscarves important to the story? Ask students if they think the director made the “right” choice, following Ankara’s law and banning the covered girls. What might they have done in his place?
- Why does Pamuk precede the assassination of the director with this long conversation between the director and his assassin? The assassin keeps claiming that he’ll let the director go if he just “answers one more question” – which the director does, and sometimes the answers even seem to please his would-be assassin. Why might this be important? Is this a genuine dialogue? If not, why not? Why might the *absence* of dialogue in what is, ostensibly, a conversation, be important? What work might that be doing in the novel overall?
- Why does Pamuk represent the dialogue as a transcript of a conversation, with “stage directions” for when chairs scrape and gunshots fire? What is the effect of that choice?
- We never learn the name of the assassin; he only appears as a voice in the transcript, as a “little man” briefly glimpsed by Ka. Why did Pamuk make this decision? What is the effect of not giving him a name or recognizable identity, of just leaving him represented in the novel as a voice and a gun?

Snow first appeared in print as *Kar* [Snow] in Istanbul in 2002. That same year, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s conservative Islamic party the AKP [Justice and Development Party] won a landmark electoral victory:

The electoral victory of the AKP in the 2002 elections marked a milestone in the rise of a new Islamist ‘counter-elite’. A new generation of well-educated, Western-oriented, religious and conservative professionals, who first appeared in the 1980s was taking control of the country’s government for the first time...[and] for the first time since the 1950s, peripheral social forces which were hitherto marginalized in republican Turkish politics would assume control of the state.

- Grigoriadis, “Islam and Democratization,” p. 1206

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- Why do the suicides of the “headscarf girls” trouble Necip, Fazil, and Mersut? What paradox do they have trouble accepting? How does Pamuk characterize these three young “boys from the religious high school”?
 - What does Muhtar tell Ka about why he became devout? (p. 54-55 or 57-62) Why does he describe it as something he “had secretly dreaded for a long time” and “would have denounced as weakness and backwardness” in his “atheist years...I was returning to Islam.” Carefully read and discuss these lines: what does it suggest about secular attitudes toward Islam in Turkey? Why is Islam something Muhtar has “secretly dreaded for a long time”? What does that suggest – about Muhtar, about attitudes toward religion? Why is Islam something he “returns” to, drunk on raki, “tears streaming from my eyes?”
 - Why does Muhtar later become disillusioned with his sheikh? (It has something to do with René Char).
 - Muhtar is the candidate for the “Prosperity Party,” which others refer to as the “Party of God” – that is, it’s the party of political Islam in Kars. Why is this important, given the somewhat ambiguous scene of Muhtar’s conversion and the reason for his disillusionment with the sheikh? That is, *what* work does it do for the novel, Muhtar’s candidacy? Why not have the sheikh himself run for office?
 - When Ka mentions religion in the novel, whether to the sheikh or to Muhtar, he frequently touches on the question of solitude, and “private faith” vs. communal worship. On p. 60 or 66, for instance, he tells himself, “in this part of the world faith in God was not something achieved by thinking sublime thoughts and stretching one’s creative powers to their outer limits; nor was it something one could do alone; above all it meant joining a mosque, becoming part of a community” (61 or 66). Analyze this sentence carefully with your students in light of what you have learned about the history of the relationship between religion and the state in Turkey (i.e., a history in which the state has actually reduced and restricted the public role of religion).
 - What does Ka think of the sheikh and the men around him?
 - In his drunken conversation with the sheikh, where does Ka locate God? What is important about this? What is he trying to articulate? (You can suggest to your students the argument made by one of Pamuk’s critics, which is that Ka is trying to articulate an essentially mystic, Sufi belief system: Sufism admits to, embraces, even delights in contradiction.)
 - Necip at one point entertains the idea that God does not exist. Why does this terrify him so? Why is it important for the novel that he *does* entertain that idea?

Activities and Project Ideas

- Ask students to write a **reflective essay** on the role of religion in their own lives. How does religion help define them as individuals, as members of a family, members of a community? How does it affect their daily lives? Do they ever find themselves in tension with their communities, schools, parents, friends, about their religion? Do they ever question their own faith? If students do not profess any particular faith, they could either reflect on how they would define “faith” or “belief” or “God.”
- Alternately, they could research and write about a religion they’ve always wanted to know

more about, ideally one practiced by others in their community, so they can attend worship, **observe** (respectfully), and perhaps even (respectfully) interview believers. They could catalogue the interviews and/or observations in **video or audio** form and later edit the results to reflect their concluding thoughts, arguments, responses to the religious practices they've observed.

- Ask students to write an analytical essay in which they carefully analyze Pamuk's representation of the tension between religion and secularism in *Snow*. What is he trying to argue about these tensions?
- Ask students to research the **diverse religious practices** of Islam in Turkey. What does it mean to be a Sunni Muslim? How is that different from being a Shiite? Alevi? Sufi? Bahai?
- Ask a group of students to research where the **three holy books** of the "people of the book" – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – overlap. What figures appear in all three texts? (Abraham, for one). What figures appear in both the Qur'an and the Torah, in both the Qu'ran and the New Testament? Why?
- Ask students to write a research paper comparing the tensions between religion and secularism in **Turkey with those in the United States**. For instance, there is a strict separation between "church and state" in the US Constitution. At the same time, religion plays a huge role in American politics; if a presidential candidate were to proclaim he was an atheist, for instance, it would be political suicide. Is this a problem? A strength of US politics? How does it compare to contemporary Turkey, where Erdogan's AKP party is in charge?
- Ask students to write a research paper about the **tensions between Islam and secularism in contemporary Turkey and Egypt**. In Egypt this year, the democratically elected, conservative Islamic party led by Mohammed Morsi, which had ruled Egypt, amid considerable controversy, since the fall of Mubarak, was deposed in a military coup. The exact same thing happened in Turkey in 1960: Turkey's then-first democratically elected government, also led by a conservative Islamic political party, was also deposed by a coup (there was another coup in 1980 as well, but the issue then was not religion v secularism). Egypt's situation is of course very different from Turkey's. But there are these two similarities: the strong and pervasive role of the military in both countries, and the fear of political Islam among secular groups. What might an investigation into those similarities reveal about the tension between religion and secularism, religion and the state, and democracy and military rule in these two countries?
- Ka grew up in a Europeanized, secular Istanbul neighborhood; he regards the sheikh and his men and most of the people of Kars, in the far east of Turkey, as "bearded provincial reactionaries." Ask students to research and reflect on how and **whether geography constructs religious choice and belief** in the United States. For instance, people refer casually to the "Bible Belt." But where exactly *is* the Bible Belt? Is it an accurate description of a particular geographical area? What does it imply? Are people less religious in urban areas or cities in the US? Findings should be based on thorough research and not on supposition. Students can present their findings to the class in the form of an **interactive map**. Discussion could segue into a discussion about what this might tell us about geography and religion both generally and in *Snow*; geography, after all, is about who we choose to live with, who we regard as our neighbors, and how we form communities.

Islam in America

One way of expanding this unit might be to explore Islam in America, particularly as it's experienced by young American Muslims today. Lots of sources out there: here are some suggestions to get you started:

On Point. "Inside American Islam." Aired Sept 14, 2010. *NPR/WGBH Boston*. Radio.

<http://onpoint.wbur.org/2010/09/14/inside-american-islam>

NPR/WGBH call-in show with author Reza Aslan and Akbar Ahmed, Professor of Islamic Studies at American University.

Southern Poverty Law Center. "American Muslims."

<http://www.tolerance.org/publication/american-muslims- united-states>

Webpage created by the Southern Poverty Law Center that details the 400-year old history of Muslim-Americans in the US

Aktar, Ayad. *American Dervish*. New York: Little, Brown & Co., 2012.

Novel about a young Muslim American, second-generation Pakistani immigrant, growing up in Milwaukee, WI, in the 1980s, and his struggles with religion and identity.

UNIT 5: GENDER

Veiling is a religious and cultural practice that dates back millenia. As Jennifer Heath notes in the introduction to her edited volume *The Veil: Women Writers on Its History, Lore and Politics*, “Statues of the ancient goddess – Sumerian or Babylonian or Phoenician or Egyptian – were frequently covered during processions on holy days, as were priestesses, as are figures of the Virgin Mary today.” Veiling indicated the “profound, hidden, divine knowledge” these figures were thought to possess, much like Moses, who veiled his “shining” face after descending Mt Sinai (Heath 7, 8). This is veiling as religious mystery. But what of veiling as a practice enjoined only on women? In ancient Greece and Rome, veiling was reserved for highborn women: it was a privilege of rank. Among the Tuareg of the Sahara, men veil, women do not. Observant Hasidic Jewish women cover their hair in scarves and wigs; nuns are said to “take the veil” when they enter religious life. But it is the veil as worn by Muslim women that has become a polarizing issue across the globe, a “locus for the struggle between Islam and the West...between contemporary and traditional interpretations of Islam,” and between the state and Islam (Heath 1).

It is as such a “locus” that the “headscarf girls” of *Snow* make their appearance. The issues they face were and are real: women wearing headscarves were banned from attending university in Turkey until 2010, like Kadife, Hande and Teslime in the novel, and are still prohibited from running for public office or working at a state agency. And not only in Turkey: France banned full-face veils in public in 2011, Belgium banned the *niqab* that same year, and many other European countries are considering following suit. The secular upper-middle class in Turkey would most likely agree with these European legislators in thinking the veil “backward” and a tool used to “oppress women.” In Turkey, that latter view dates back to the founding of the Republic, when Atatürk decreed that men were to shave their beards and adopt Western-style clothes, while women would no longer cover their hair. The new Western clothes of the new Turkish citizen would signal to the world the modernity of the new Turkish Republic.

In short, veiling is religious mystery; veiling is a religious practice. But it is also not something devout Muslim women simply “do.” As in all faiths, there is multiplicity: some devout women veil, others choose not to. What the twentieth century has done, however, is transform a multi-faceted religious practice into a simultaneously deeply *political* practice.

Objective: To explore representations of gender in *Snow*, with a particular focus on the veil, and help students learn more about gender politics in Turkey, a majority-Muslim country that is also a secular democracy.

Preparatory reading:

- Mohja Kahf, “From Her Royal Body the Robe was Removed: The Blessings of the Veil and the Trauma of Forced Unveilings in the Middle East.” *The Veil: Women Writers on its History, Lore and Politics*, ed. Jennifer Heath. Berkeley and Los Angeles: UC Press, 2008. 27-43.

Note: Kahf imagines the multiple and contradictory perspectives of women, mostly Muslim and/or from the Middle East, who choose to either veil or unveil, from ancient Mesopotamia to contemporary Egypt. A fine introduction to veiling as both politics and religious practice. A personal narrative accessible to students.

- Alev Çinar, "Clothing the National Body: Islamic Veiling and Secular Unveiling." *Modernity, Islam and Secularism in Turkey*. Minneapolis and London: Minnesota UP, 2005. 53-87.

Note: Illuminating essay that provides a history and analysis of state-mandated Westernized clothing in Turkey and the debates surrounding the resurgence of the veil in the 1980s and 90s. The most relevant sections for *Snow* are p. 59-65 and 78-87. May be accessible to students in AP courses.

- Sabrina Tavernise, "In Turkey, is tension about religion? Or class rivalry? Or both?" *The New York Times*. Feb 22, 2008. Retrieved July 6, 2013. Link:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/19/news/19iht19turkey.10165600.html?pagewanted=all>

Note: Briefly on how the headscarf debate in Turkey is framed through the prism of class and the rural/urban divide. Note that Ka, like Pamuk, is secular, upper-middle class and from Istanbul. Accessible to students.

- Bettül Akkaya Demirbaş, "Women still awaiting full freedom to use headscarf." *Today's Zaman*. Oct 12, 2012. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-295146-women-still-awaiting-full-freedom-to-use-headscarf.html>

Note: Recent description/timeline of the headscarf issue in Turkey. From a Turkish English-language daily. Accessible to students.

- Zehra F. Arat, "Turkish Women and the Reconstruction of Tradition." *Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East: Tradition, Identity and Power*. Eds. Fatma Müge Göcek and Shiva Balaghi. New York: Columbia UP, 1994.

Note: History and analysis of the development of women's rights in Turkey in the twentieth century, with a focus on the limitations of the Kemalist reforms. The Turkish Civil Code was revised in 2001; for more, see the following: <http://www.wwhr.org/category/turkish-civil-code> [WWHR is an NGO working for women's rights in Turkey].

Additional resources:

- *Inside Islam*, "Muslim Women and the Veil." <http://insideislam.wisc.edu/2008/11/muslim-women-and-the-veil/>

Note: Articles on the topic written by Muslim women for US and UK newspapers, including Mohja Kahf and Asra Nosmani.

- "The Quran: Differing Interpretations of the Divine Word: 1." *Women and Islam in the Middle East: A Reader*. Ed. Ruth Roded. New York and London: I. B. Tauris, 2008. [Available GWT website]

Note: From the surahs in the Qur'an that discuss veiling and the status of women, preceded by a short, accessible introduction that emphasizes the multiplicity of interpretations offered for these passages over the years. Roded also provides references to additional sources, ex., recent feminist interpretations by scholars and theologians.

- *ReOrienting the Veil*. <http://veil.unc.edu>

Note: Website started by two professors at UNC-Chapel Hill that explores veiling practices in

Islam, Judaism and Christianity. One section usefully compares Paul's statements on women and veiling in the New Testament with similar statements in the Qur'an. Offers "Lesson Plans" for educators, including one that introduces students to the relevant passages in the Qur'an that discuss veiling and the status of women.

- "The Islamic Veil across Europe." BBC. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13038095>
Note: List of laws across Europe that ban or are trying to ban some variation of the Islamic veil.

Discussion Questions:

Gender and Clothing

- Begin by asking students to consider the role clothing plays in their own lives. How does clothing work to reflect belonging to a certain social group and exclusion from another?
- Alternately, do an informal survey of how many students in the class are wearing, say, jeans. On the assumption that many students *are* wearing jeans, consider asking them why that might be. What implicit social codes govern what we wear and what we don't wear? Another example worth discussing might be why, starting in the 1920s, women in the West started wearing skirts *and* pants, but it is still unusual for men in either Europe or North America to wear skirts. Why?
- Make sure students understand the difference between "sex" (biology) and "gender" (cultural). Discuss gender roles and relations in Turkey vs. the US. Tell students about the history of women's rights in Turkey. [See Arat and Çinar's articles] It is a legally progressive history, but has often emphasized traditional (mother, wife) roles for women socially and culturally. How does this compare to the US? How "free" are American women? Students' inclination will probably be to say, "very." Consider mentioning the high incidents of domestic violence in the US, a lack of political representation comparable to men's, the fact that women overall still earn less than men, etc. Issues raised regarding contending definitions of freedom, choice and agency may provide a useful segue to discussing similar issues in *Snow*.
- One fun way of getting started discussing gender and the veil in *Snow* might be to watch and discuss the *Burka Avenger!* trailer with your students. *Burka Avenger!* is a cartoon show created by a Pakistani rock star, Haroun; it features a young Pakistani woman who's a teacher by day, superhero by night, and whose superhero costume is a *burqa* (technically it's a *niqab*, but perhaps that didn't sound catchy enough), and whose superhero quest involves fighting off bad guys who close girls' schools in Pakistan.
Link to *Burka Avenger!* trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pdbhf4iPE>
Link to NPR show on *The Burka Avenger*: "Lady in Black: Burka Avenger Fights for Pakistan's Girls:" <http://www.npr.org/2013/07/31/207288030/lady-in-black-burka-avenger-fights-for-pakistans-girls> Aired July 31, 2013.

Gender and Clothing in Snow

- Compare the lives of the "headscarf girls" with those of Ipek and Kadife. How do they differ? How are they similar?
- How do the lives of the women in the novel compare with those of Muhtar Bey, Ka, Necip, Fazil, the other boys at the religious high school, Serdar, Sunay, Blue and the Sheikh? Who has agency

in the novel? Who has power?

- Compare the men in the novel to each other: Ka, Blue, Muhtar, Sunay, Z Demirkol. Why is this Ka's story? Why do all the women love Blue? To what extent do the men in *Snow* fulfill conventional masculine gender roles? (Ka does little but dream, write poems, prevaricate, make love, cry – a lot; Blue is supposedly a “terrorist” but cries at the thought of orphaned puppies and Ipek loves him, she says, for his “compassion;” Muhtar tries to assert dominance over Ipek in the home, but he is if anything one of the more powerless, abject characters in the novel, and Ipek leaves him.) Why might this be? What is Pamuk trying to argue?
- Can suicide be a form of protest? When? Why? What *kind* of protest is it? Are the suicides of these young women “protests”? Compare these young women's deaths to the well-known “protest suicides” of Thich Quan Duc (the monk who self-immolated to protest the US-backed regime in Vietnam) or Muhammed Bouazizi, the Tunisian fruit-seller whose self-immolation started the Arab Spring. How are they different? (There are many, but an important difference is that the young women's deaths are quiet, unspectacular; their deaths aren't “staged,” the media was not invited.) What might that difference tell us? Is it a gendered difference? (Are men's bodies worth more than women's?) Compare the young women's decisions to kill themselves with Sunay Zaim's decision, conversely, to stage a literally “theatrical” coup, a spectacle, during which many die – eventually also Sunay himself.

Suggestions for Close Reading:

- Read p. 13-17 or 14-18 with students, where Ka first hears the stories of the “headscarf girls” who've committed suicide. What do we learn here about their lives? Why did they commit suicide? What terrifies Ka about their suicides, and why? Compare what we learn here to Kadife's debate about these suicides with Sunay on p. 396-397 or 430-1.
- On p. 113-114 or 121-2, Kadife tells Ka about why she started wearing the scarf, and why she kept wearing it even after being thrown in jail. Read the relevant sections carefully and discuss the reasons she gives Ka for the choices she's made. Consider, for instance, comparing the complexity of her decision with the (simplistic) reasoning given by professed secularists like Serdar and Sunay, or the (equally simplistic) reasoning given by the religious high school boys Necip, Mersut and Fazil. What is Pamuk trying to suggest here?
- Consider sharing the following with your students (courtesy of Nâîlân Erbil): Maureen Freely, the translator of the edition of *Snow* that we are reading, translated the ‘headscarf’ play Sunay and Funda stage at the National Theater in Kars as *My Fatherland or My Headscarf*. The original Turkish title of the play is *Vatan yahüt Çarşaf*. “Vatan” could be translated as either “fatherland,” “motherland” or “homeland;” it does not itself mean either mother or father. Question: why did Freely choose to translate the play as *My Fatherland or My Headscarf*? Ask students what they make of Freely's choice here, what effect it has on the novel, and whether or not they agree with her decision. (For more on translation issue, see Unit 2).
- Two key scenes in the novel occur in the theater and center around a woman taking off her scarf: first Funda Eser, then Kadife. Read and analyze these two very different scenes with your students. Why the repetition? Why the repeated emphasis on unveiling as, literally, drama? As spectacle? What are some crucial differences between the two “interpretations”?
- Discuss the scene toward the end of the novel when Ipek agrees to Ka's request that she be

locked up in his room (p. 368-370 or 399-401). If *his* motivation is clear (he's jealous), what is Ipek's? Why did Pamuk choose to stage this scene? And why does he later give us "Ipek's Point of View," which starts with her still in Ka's room, waiting for him to return?

- While *Snow* pays a great deal of attention to one particular item of clothing (the headscarf), Ka's "soft, downy beauty of a coat" also receives its share of adulation. Revisit the scenes where Ka's coat is described or discussed, esp. p. 3 (Ka on the train to Kars), p. 177 or 189 (when Ka remembers the real Hans Hansen), p. 203 or 218-9 (Sunay asks to borrow Ka's coat), and p. 255 or 277 (Ka's death). Why these repeated references to a coat? What does the coat represent and why is it important that it seems to lead to Ka's death?

Activities and Project Ideas

- Ask students to write a **reflective essay** on how clothing indicates belonging to a certain social group and exclusion from another, using carefully detailed and analyzed examples from what they themselves, their friends, family, etc. wear.
- Alternately, students can choose one particular item of clothing that is particularly significant for them, and describe and analyze its importance in depth; they could, for instance, imitate Mohja Kahf's method, of imagining and recreating the voices of others for whom such an item of clothing may have had personal, religious or political significance; the final project could take the form of a **narrative, audio-files, of a series of dramatic monologues** the student would perform for the class (etc).
- View Turkish artist Nilber Güres's video performance, "Undressing/Soyunma," with your students [see below]. In the video, Güres is wearing multiple headscarves given to her by family members and other personally significant women; as she removes the scarves, she calls out the name connected to each one (the name of her mother, her aunt, etc). Discuss Güres's performance and what she might be trying to convey here. Then assign students the task of **creating a dramatic interpretation/performance of their own**, developed around an item of clothing. Students should think critically about what they're trying to convey or argue.
- Ask students to write a reflective essay on the following two questions: When and why might an item of clothing be perceived as a threat? When is clothing a type of protest?
- Ask students, first, to **choose a site in which to examine gender roles** in the US: high school, family, religious affiliation or institution; secondly, to observe and gather data on that site over a period of days or weeks; and thirdly, write an analytical essay that details and analyzes their findings. What's expected of men as opposed to what's expected of women at this particular site? What gender "laws" can be transgressed without penalty here, and which cannot? What "laws" seem to be changing?
- Ask students to write a **research paper** investigating the various laws banning some variation of the Muslim veil in Europe, even though the population that engages in that particular practice in most countries is very small. Most laws were either proposed or initiated in the past three or four years. So why now? Why do these countries' legislators feel the need to place official bans on the clothing worn by a tiny minority of their respective populations?
- Kadife and Ipek are both very close to their father, Turgut Bey. Like children in a fairy tale, however, they appear not to have a mother. In fact, mothers are remarkably absent from *Snow* – and from Kars, the town the world forgot. Ask students to **write a story** told from the

perspective of Kadife and Ipek's mother. The story should obey the rules of the fictional world Pamuk has created, and what we learn about his different characters – Ipek, Muhtar, Kadife, Turgut. Given that one and only rule, who was this woman? What might she have to say? What would she tell her daughters?

Suggestions for expanding this unit:

The Veil as Art

One way of expanding this Unit would be to explore the work of a few women artists from majority-Muslim countries who have explored both gender roles and the veil in their work. These are a few suggestions:

- **Nilber Güres.** Turkey. "Circir," "Undressing/Soyunma."

Both Güres's photographs in the series "Circir," which in playful, powerful, visually striking images depicts women's everyday lives in an area of Istanbul confiscated by the state, and her video performance, "Undressing/Soyunma," may be worth exploring and discussing with students. In the video, Güres "starts with multiple headscarves given to her by family members and other personally significant women. Many of the cloth patterns that completely cover the artist's head and obscure her face reflect her Kurdish heritage. As she removes the scarves, a slow process due to the many pins securing them to her head, she calls out the name connected to each scarf" ("Nilber Güres," Austrian Cultural Forum).

Link to "Undressing/Soyunma:" <http://www.theoneminutes.org/m20070640sr10...world-one-minutes-Undressing-Nilbar-Gres> Note: The quality of this reproduction isn't great.

Link to Güres's website and images from the "Circir" series: <http://nilbargures.com/circir/>

- **Asma Ahmed Shikoh.** Pakistan. "The Beehive."

100 Muslim women across America contributed to this installation by mailing Shikoh one of their hijabs (Shikoh lives in New York). Each of the "cells" of the hive holds a scarf with the identity, occupation and location of the owner. A close-up of one of the cells of the hive, "Photo 1e," reveals a testimonial from Ozge in Wisconsin: "I wore this scarf proudly on my graduation for all my friends who resisted the headscarf ban in Turkey."

Link to photos and description of the installation:

<http://www.asmashikoh.com/gallery4.htm>

- **Shirin Neshat,** Iran. "Rapture."

Neshat, the most internationally reknown artist of the three listed here, has also used the veil to powerful visual effect in her video installation *Rapture*, among many others works. *Rapture* was shown at MMOCA in Madison from Dec 11, 2010-March 6, 2011. (Note: There are clips available online, but they are of very poor quality).

Link to a description of the installation and images from the exhibit:

<http://www.mmoca.org/exhibitions-collection/exhibits/shrin-neshat-rapture>

Islamic Feminism

Another way of supplementing this unit would be to look more closely at contemporary Islamic feminism. There are a plethora of sources out there; here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Margot Badran. "Islamic Feminism: What's in a Name?" *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences*. Oxford: OneWorld, 2009. 242-252. [Available GWT website]
Note: Excellent introduction to the subject. Academic, but clear. Should be accessible to students.
- "Islamic Feminists Transforming the Middle East." NPR's *Talk of the Nation*. Aired April 27, 2010. <http://www.npr.org/2010/04/27/126309699/islamic-feminists-transforming-middle-east>
Note: Conversation moderated by Neil Cohen. The speakers were Sakena Yacoubi, founder and director of the Afghan Institute of Learning, and Isobel Coleman, US author of a recent study of Islamic feminist movements.
- "They Hate Women, Don't They?" by Arzu Merali. *The Guardian* (UK) 2002. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/jun/21/gender.september11>
- "Fighting for women's rights." *BBC News*. BBC report on the Third International Congress on Islamic Feminism: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7689897.stm>

UNIT 6: READING *SNOW* THROUGH THE 2013 TAKSIM GEZI PARK PROTESTS

“Stop! Don’t fire; the guns are loaded!” - Necip, *Snow*, p. 157 or 168

Toward the end of May 2013, a small group of protesters peacefully assembled in Taksim Gezi Park, one of the last public green spaces left in Istanbul, hoping to prevent its demolition. In its place, a government-backed plan aimed to build a shopping mall housed in an Ottoman-style army barracks. The government reacted forcefully to the group’s presence: riot police moved in, protesters were sprayed with tear gas and water cannons; their tents were burned. In response, on the night of May 31, 10,000 people assembled at the park to protest the government’s actions. Riot police moved in again to disperse the protesters, but the numbers only swelled – and spread, to Ankara, Izmir, Rize, Dersim and elsewhere in Turkey. Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan called the protesters “vandals” and “extremists implicated in terrorism.” As police clashed with protesters across the country, thousands were injured, hundreds detained; journalists were muzzled.

Now, Turkey is not Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Syria or Bahrain. For all the flaws of its democracy, it is a democracy. That is, the protesters weren’t seeking the overthrow of either Erdoğan or his government: they began with the modest wish of holding a public referendum about the government’s plans for Gezi Park.

So what happened? Why did their mere *presence* in a public space, resisting those plans while dancing, chanting, gardening, doing yoga, reading, erecting a makeshift public library, appear to be such a threat, such a sign of “extremism,” to Erdoğan’s government?

Objective: To encourage students to engage with the broader political issues explored in *Snow* by discussing the Taksim Gezi Park protests that took place in Turkey in May-June 2013, reading these as connected not only to *Snow* but to the 2011 Arab Spring, the Occupy Wall Street movement, even the 2011 Madison, WI protests.

Preparatory reading / viewing:

- “Timeline of the Gezi Park protests.” *Hürriyet Daily News*.
<http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/timeline-of-gezi-park-protests-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48321&NewsCatID=341>
Gives a clear, detailed timeline of events as they unfolded. From Turkey’s oldest English-language newspaper. Accessible to students.
- Kimmelman, Michael. “In Istanbul’s Heart, Leader’s Obsession, Perhaps Achilles’ Heel.” *The New York Times*. Video and article. June 7 2013.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/08/world/europe/in-istanbuls-taksim-square-an-achilles-heel.html?ref=michaelkimmelman>

Excellent video for an introduction to the protests/alternative city erected by protesters at Taksim Square. Accessible to students.

- Christie-Miller, Andrew. "Occupy Gezi: From the Fringes to the Center and Back Again." *The White Review*. <http://www.thewhitereview.org/features/occupy-gezi-from-the-fringes-to-the-centre-and-back-again/>
Engaging narrative introduction to the politics of the Gezi Park protests by a *Times* correspondent living in Istanbul. Accessible to students.
- Shafak, Elif. "The View from Taksim Square: Why is Turkey in turmoil?" *The Guardian*. June 3, 2013. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jun/03/taksim-square-istanbul-turkey-protest>
Describes protesters' concerns. By a Turkish-German novelist/journalist. Accessible to students.
- Bayat, Asef. On "Street Politics and Political Street," "The Politics of Fun" and "Social Movements and Political Change." From *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*. 2nd Ed. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2013. 12-13, 110-111, 142-150 and 311-316.
A "study of agency in times of restraint" by a prominent sociologist. Explores how revolution happens not just through regime change but through "ordinary people mak[ing] meaningful change through everyday actions." The selections here explore public spaces as sites for social change, youth as a "revolutionary class," and why authoritarian regimes and fundamentalist doctrines find simply having fun a political threat. The language is academic but clear, and should be accessible, with guidance, to students in AP classes.

Additional Recommended Resources

- Henton, George. "In Pictures: The Taksim Square Book Club," *Al Jazeera English*. June 24, 2013. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2013/06/2013624105477515.html>
Report and slideshow of the "Standing Man" protests at Taksim Square, begun by performance artist Erdem Gündüz. Protesters stand silently and read books at Taksim Square in central Istanbul.
- "After Protests, Forums Sprout in Turkey's Parks." *The New York Times*. July 7 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/08/world/europe/after-protests-forums-sprout-in-turkeys-parks.html?pagewanted=2&r=0&ref=world>
"People's Forums" for gathering and discussion spring up in public parks across Turkey in the aftermath of the Taksim Gezi Park protests.
- "Turkey protests: Clashes continue despite PM's warning." *BBC News*. Video. June 11 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22852762>
The police attempt to clear Taksim of protesters with tear gas.
- Çihan Tuğal. "Nato's Islamists: Hegemony and Americanization in Turkey." *New Left Review*. 44: 2 (2007): 5-34.

Tries to account for the paradoxes in the rise of Erdoğan's pro-Nato, conservative Islamic political party, the AKP, the party in power at the time of the Gezi Park protests. Interesting to keep in mind here for its analysis of Erdoğan's politics.

- "2011: Occupy Wall Street." *The New York Times*. Dec 30 2011. Video.
<http://www.nytimes.com/video/2011/12/30/nyregion/100000001254962/2011-occupy-wall-street.html>
Video summary of the Occupy Wall Street movement.
- "2011: The Arab Spring." *The New York Times*. Dec 30 2011. Video.
<http://www.nytimes.com/video/2011/12/29/world/middleeast/100000001253159/2011-arab-spring.html>
Video summary of the Arab Spring, as of Dec 20 2011.
- "Occupy Wall Street: The Story Behind 7 Months of Protest." *The Guardian*. Video. Retrieved Aug 22 2013. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFOWci6yrSs>
Emphasizes the role social media played in creating the Occupy Wall Street movement.
- *Occupy Wall Street: The Revolution Continues worldwide!* <http://occupywallst.org/>
The official website of the Occupy Wall Street movement.
- "Who are the Kurds?" *The Washington Post*. 1999. Retrieved Aug 22 2013.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/daily/feb99/kurdprofile.htm>
Dated but usefully brief summary, with map; should be used with the *Al-Jazeera English* timeline, updated as of Mar 2013.
- "Timeline: PKK conflict with Turkey." *Al-Jazeera English*. Last Modified March 21 2013. Retrieved Aug 22 2013.
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2013/03/2013320652845642.html>
- "Kurdish-Turkish Conflict." Retrieved August 22 2013.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish%E2%80%93Turkish_conflict
Describes in detail the Kurdish-Turkish conflict from the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire to the rise of the PKK and present peace efforts. Occasionally the grammar is peculiar, but it's a well-researched and, as of date of retrieval, correctly and thoroughly documented entry.
- Danforth, Nick. "Occupy Gezi and the Kurdish-Turkish Conflict." *Dissent: A Quarterly of Politics and Culture*. June 11 2013.
<http://www.dissentmagazine.org/blog/occupy-gezi-and-the-kurdish-turkish-conflict>
Briefly explores the paradox of Erdoğan's authoritarian measures against the protestors at Gezi with his simultaneous efforts to negotiate peace with the PKK and grant greater cultural and human rights to the Kurdish people.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is public space – a park, a square, even a street – important in a democracy? What do such spaces allow for?
- Ask students if they have ever protested or wanted to protest something they felt was unjust? If you see or hear something that you think is fundamentally wrong, is it your responsibility to try to "stand up" for what is right? How aware are they of the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, and other social protest movements around the world? What do they think of them?

- Watch the Taksim Gezi Park and Occupy Wall Street videos [see above] with your students. Make sure students understand the aims that motivate the protestors in Turkey vs. the US. But also ask: what similarities do they notice between the two groups? Who are they, for the most part? What are they *doing* in the public spaces they're "occupying?" (Essentially, in both cases, creating alternative cities within the greater cities of New York and Istanbul.) Why might doing so in and of itself be an act of protest?
- Read the Christie-Miller and Shafak articles with your students; make clear the collusion between Erdoğan's neo-liberal economic policies and the complete lack of public input and oversight in regards to Gezi Park that originally sparked the protests. Then view the Occupy Wall Street website; while the movement was criticized for the multiplicity of its goals, what was its slogan and basic message? What sparked the movement in the first place? Use this as a basis for discussing the nature of 21st century democracy with your students. What is a "real" democracy? An *ideal* democracy? Is it only about voting? Should "the people" have a say in everything? Do students agree with the Occupy Wall Street movement? With the Gezi Park protests? Does democracy require that people have input when the landscape in which they live, the spaces that they use, the "public" spaces – are being torn down, demolished? What is the *symbolic* significance of a public park being demolished to make way for a shopping mall?

"They were not just shouting and stamping, they were also enjoying themselves – this is one thing that everyone later forgot."
- At the National Theater, *Snow*, p. 154 or 164

- In both videos, it is also clear that protestors – at least before the tear gas arrives in Taksim and San Diego – are having *fun*. They're dancing, chanting, laughing, talking, gardening. They're also in both cases mostly young. 1) Ask students why this might be important – both the age of the participants and the fact that they're enjoying themselves. Is there, can there be, a "*politics* of fun?"
- Share and discuss excerpts from Bayat's book with your students. What does Bayat mean by calling "youth" a potentially "revolutionary class"? What specifically, in Bayat's view, do authoritarian governments and fundamentalist doctrines find threatening about fun?
- In *Snow*, there is no protest movement and no revolution. But there is a coup – followed by mass arrests, murders, torture. Who do the police and military take into custody? Who does Ka meet at the police station, and later at the veterinary school, in the "cold rooms of terror"? What gender, age and ethnicity predominates among those being arrested, beaten up and tortured? (Ch 21) Who, in others words, is regarded as a threat to the temporary military "state" Sunay Zaim has instituted?
- Return to the question of youth as a "revolutionary class." Here, that class, that threat, is defined as young, male, poor, often Kurdish and "religious," if only by virtue of having attended the "religious high school." Ask students to generalize: why might simply being young and male be perceived as a threat by a military state? (Compare the fate of these young boys to the "headscarf girls," for instance. Both are perceived as a threat, but in different ways). Why might

adding poverty and religion to the young male mix add to the perception of a threat posed to the state? By the military state? What does “male” signify in the abstract?

- Read Ch 21 carefully with your students. How does Pamuk portray these alleged young terrorists, extremists and guerillas? Why?
- Most of the young boys arrested and detained are poor Kurds. Who *are* the Kurds? Read the short *Washington Post* piece, the *Al-Jazeera English* timeline and either summarize for or read with your students the Wikipedia entry on the “Kurdish-Turkish conflict.” Pay particular attention to the map the *Post* provides: where is Kars located on that map? Now, getting at why the Kurds have historically been perceived as a threat by the Turkish state (and by Iraq, Iran and Syria) is a complex question, but given that the PKK *did* kill people and was labeled a “terrorist organization” by Turkey, the US, the EU and Nato, and given that Pamuk, arguably, wants his readers to regard *Snow*’s temporary military-theater state as a representation of the Turkish state or at least of *a* state, are the military, the intelligence services, the police, etc., justified in their mass detentions and arrests of the religious high school boys? If not, why not? What measures are justifiable for a state to enact when it perceives itself to be under threat, and which are not? (Here you might inform or remind students of the internment of the Japanese during WWII, the secret detention of hundreds of young male Muslims by the US after 9/11, etc., along with more recent disclosures, such as the NSA surveillance program.)
- View the photos from the Taksim Square Book Club. Ask students what they think of it. Is this an effective form of protest? Why or why not? When and how can or is *reading* be an act of protest?
- Compare to the Kurdish situation (Turkish republic’s repression of the Kurdish language and culture), which we learn about in few but telling glimpses in *Snow*. When and how is culture an act of protest? Why is culture important? Music, songs, language, poetry? Why might culture be seen as a threat? (Think here, for instance, about how the Walker government in Wisconsin has banned the “solidarity singers” from assembling and singing in the Capitol).

“Who wrote the new poem on the wall here?”

“Half the boys who used to come here are poets.”

“Why aren’t they here today?”

“Yesterday the soldiers rounded them all up.”

- Ka and the boy at the counter, *Snow*, p. 291 or 315

Activities and Project Ideas

- Ask students to create their own **video/video scramble** of the Gezi, Wall Street and Tahrir Square movements, providing voice-overs analyzing and commenting on the similarities and differences between them.
- Divide your class into small groups, approx 4-5, and assign them the task of determining either a local, national or international **wrong that they, as a group, will set about trying to right.**

How will they go about it? What will they do? What will their tools be? Students will need to document their efforts and present them at the end of the semester to the rest of the class, analyzing their efforts and their success.

- Divide your class into small groups, approx. 4-5, and assign them the task of **“occupying” a public or institutional space** of their choosing; they will need to document their occupation via video, photography, audio, narrative, or some combination of these. Students should first determine what their chosen space (i.e., a street, a park, a classroom, etc) is traditionally used for, and then try to determine how they can “occupy” it – that is, subvert, intervene, interrupt, make people think. “Occupations” can range from the playful, such as placing an object that traditionally belongs in one kind of space into another (a piano in the middle of the street, sunglasses in a freezer), to the serious.
- Ask students to write an analytical research essay on **why and how culture and the arts are important for a democracy** to thrive. Students will need to provide ample, detailed, and thoroughly analyzed examples drawn either from the local or national context.
- Ask students to write a reflective essay analyzing the **importance of public space** for a democracy to thrive. Students will need to provide ample, detailed, and thoroughly analyzed examples drawn either from the local, national or international context.
- Ask students to write a reflective essay analyzing the importance of public *green* spaces both for the residents of an urban city and for a democracy. Are public parks more important than additional shopping malls? Why?

UNIT 7: THE HIDDEN SYMMETRIES OF *SNOW*: FORM, GENRE, MYSTERY

Objective: To explore questions of form, content, character and genre in *Snow*.

Suggested Preparatory Reading:

- Pamuk, Orhan. "Literary Character, Plot, Time." *The Naïve and Sentimental Novelist*. Trans. Nazim Dikbas. Cambridge and London: Harvard UP, 2010. 57-87.
---"Words, Pictures, Objects." *The Naïve and Sentimental Novelist*. Trans. Nazim Dikbas. Cambridge and London: Harvard UP, 2010. 87-119.

Additional Resources:

- "Sufis, Sufism, Sufi Orders" <http://islam.uga.edu/Sufism.html>
"Sufi Poets and Sufi Poetry." <http://islam.uga.edu/sufipoetry.html>
Entries on Sufi Islam and Sufi poetry from *The University of Georgia's Islam Resource Page*. Explains the importance of poetry, of the search for the Beloved; offers links to the works of Sufi poets Rumi (who lived in Roman Anatolia/southeastern Turkey) and Yunus Emre (also Turkish). Retrieved Aug 23 2013.
- "Dervish." *Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. Ed. John L. Esposito. *Oxford Online Reference*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003. Online Ed. 2012.

"He called the poem 'Snow.'" - *Snow*, p. 87 or 94

Discussion Questions / Suggestions for Close Reading:

Genre

- It snows in *Snow* – a lot, constantly; it never stops. "Snow" is not just title, poem, weather, landscape – it is also metaphor, vision, silence, God. Assign groups of students different chapters and collect all the appearances of the word "snow." Ask them to closely and attentively read and interpret what "snow" seems to represent in the sections they've been assigned. Then try assembling those appearances chronologically as a class. Does the meaning of the word, what its use is as symbol, as metaphor, change? What does it change into?
- The original Turkish title of Pamuk's novel is *Kar*, the Turkish word for "snow." *Kar* of course echoes the word *Kars*, the town where the novel is set, and the name of the protagonist, *Ka*.

Why has Pamuk deliberately created these *sound* echoes? To link place, person, snow/weather? (For more on the translation issues involved here, see Unit 2).

- *Snow* is a novel. Yet within its pages we encounter a variety of other genres: not just one, but two plays (*My Fatherland or My Headscarf* and Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*), a short story (Necip's), a soap opera (*Marianna*), and a series of poems, one of which has the same title as the novel itself: "Snow." In fact, two of the main plot points, or events that occur in the novel, concern either the writing of poems or the performing of plays. Ask students what the effect of this is. How do they react to it as readers? What kind of *work* does it do for the novel? For Pamuk's argument in the novel overall? (Here, think back perhaps to questions raised regarding fiction, history and politics in Unit 3, and to questions of representation, ethics and power in Unit 2). Consider introducing students to the literary term, "mise-en-abyme."
- Another way of phrasing that question would be to observe that *Snow* is a novel about past events retrieved, assembled, recreated and reimagined by a novelist-narrator, "Orhan;" the one thing he *cannot* recover is Ka's book of poems. It is the one artifact that is not and cannot be recreated, re-narrated, or re-imagined. Why? Why might that absence be important for the novel's argument overall? (Consider how at one point "Orhan" refers to himself, the novelist, as a "clerk." Why is that significant? What do "clerks" do?)
- Share the excerpt from Pamuk's Norton lecture, "Literary Character, Plot, Time" [see above] with your students, where Pamuk claims that the "process of imagining [the shared objective time of the novel] is political, in that it is similar to the way we might imagine a group that represents the people in the novel, or a city crowd, or a community, or a nation; and it is at this juncture that the novel is furthest from poetry and the inner demons of its protagonists, and closest to history" (81-2). What does Pamuk mean by this? Why is imagining a "shared objective time" political? Why does it render the novel "closest to history" and furthest from poetry? Ask your students if they agree with Pamuk's claim.
- At one point in *Snow*, we're told: "Everyone in Kars wrote poems" (102 or 110). Why is this important? In the same sentence we also learn that while everyone writes, no one publishes: "Ka was the first person Necip had ever met to have his poems published" (102 or 110). Why does the narrator provide us with these two details about the life of poetry in the lives of the people of Kars? What does it suggest?
- The first time they meet, Blue tells Ka, "you're a modern-day dervish. You've withdrawn from the world to devote yourself to poetry" (76 or 82-3). Why does he tell him this? What does it mean? Look up "dervish" in the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam* and read more about Sufi Islam [see resources listed above]. Is Ka a "dervish"? Consider Blue's declaration in light of what Ka tells the Sheikh, that "God is...outside, in the empty night, in the darkness, in the snow that falls inside the hearts of outcasts" (97 or 105). Is Ka trying to articulate a mystical union with the divine here, an alternate religiosity beyond the narrower definitions of the Sheikhs, Necips, Blues and Sunays? How might that argument be linked to the novel's overall argument about what poetry is and what poetry does? What does poetry represent in the novel?
- In another of Pamuk's Norton lectures, "Words, Pictures, Objects," he tells us, that "novels are essentially visual literary fictions," that a "novel exerts its influence on us mostly by addressing our visual intelligence – our ability to see things in our mind's eye and to turn words into mental pictures...writing a novel means painting with words" (93). Ask students to close read and discuss this passage. What is Pamuk claiming about the novel as a literary form? Do

students agree with him? Ask them to think about novels/other narrative art. Is he saying any novel is basically a “graphic novel”? What remains different about a novel, however much it “paints with words,” and a graphic novel/comic book/TV show or film? Is *Snow* a “visual literary fiction”? How? Where?

“The snow reminded me of God...of the beauty and mystery of creation, of the essential joy that is life...I want to believe in that God who is making this beautiful snow fall from the sky. There’s a God who pays careful attention to the world’s hidden symmetry...”

“Of course there is, my son.”

“But that God is not among you. He’s outside, in the empty night, in the darkness, in the snow that falls inside the hearts of outcasts.”

- Ka with the Sheikh, *Snow*, p. 96 and 97 or 103 and 105

Character, Form, Content

- Ask students to look up the definition of “character” in the OED, and consider it both as noun and adjective; then hare with them early 20th century British novelist E.M. Forster’s famous distinction between “round” (complex, dynamic, unpredictable) and “flat” (two-dimensional, unchanging) characters. Have them consider the definition in light of other novels or narrative art (films, TV series), that they’re familiar with. What is the effect, for the reader/viewer, of the “round” character? What is the effect of the “flat” character? Segue into a discussion of characterization in *Snow*. Are the characters we encounter in the novel “flat” or “round,” or perhaps something in between? (For instance, critic Sibel Erol has referred to the characters in *Snow* as “stick-figures in a snow-globe”).
- Alternately, do we like them, empathize with them, want to know what happens to them? Are we supposed to? Is the engagement and identification that traditionally accompanies our encounter with the “round” character part of Pamuk’s intent with *Snow*? Why or why not? Ask students to find concrete, specific evidence in the novel for whichever claim they find more convincing.
- Alternately, compare Forster’s claim with Pamuk’s in “Literary Character, Plot, Time,” on p. 67-8, i.e., “People do not actually have as much character as we find portrayed in novels...human character is not nearly as important in the shaping of our lives as it is made out to be in the novels and literary criticism of the West” (67-8). First, ask students to examine Pamuk’s claim: what does he mean, exactly, by people “not actually having as *much* character” as novels might suggest, or by “human character” not being “nearly as important in the shaping of our lives” as we imagine? If this is true, what does shape human character? What does “shape our lives”?

Secondly, ask students if they agree with Pamuk's claims. Third, consider Pamuk's claim in light of the characters we encounter in *Snow*.

- Consider Pamuk's claim in light of the *structure* of the novel, in particular the way it organizes events. For instance, after Ka and Ipek have first made love, the very next page tells us of Ka's lonely life in Frankfurt; in other words, we, as readers, know long before the characters in the novel, what will happen to them. We know they will not live "happily ever after" – though we don't know why or how exactly it happens. Why? What is the effect of such dramatic "interventions" in the plot, or in the time of the novel? What is its effect on our relationship to the characters, to the novel itself? Why might Pamuk be interested in creating such an effect in this novel? How does it help combine the form of the novel with the content, i.e., with the argument he's trying to pursue in the novel?
- Kadife means "velvet" in Turkish. Ipek means "silk." Why give the main female protagonists of the novel the names of soft, tactile fabrics, and the lover they both share and love, Blue, a name that is also a color?
- The narrator of Orhan Pamuk's novel, "Orhan," is – like Pamuk – also a novelist. Necip, who has writerly ambitions himself, merges with Fazil (according to Fazil) after his death; Necip Fazil was a well-known Turkish poet who wrote mystical (and controversial) Islamic verse. "Ka" is not the protagonist Ka's real name, but the name readers know him by and one that conjures, on the one hand, the *Ka-Kar-Kars* echo, and on the other, the protagonist of Kafka's famous dystopian novel *The Castle*, Josef K. (The sound of the letter "K" in Turkish is *ka*). What is the purpose of these extra-literary literary references? What is their effect on the reader? Consider whether such references create a community of readers by including those who recognize the implied references, excluding those who do not – what might the purpose of that be?

"...Much later, when he thought about how he'd written this poem [Snow] he had a vision of a snowflake; this snowflake, he decided was his life writ small; the poem that had unlocked the meaning of his life, he now saw sitting at its center. But – just a the poem itself defies easy explanation – it is difficult to say how much he decided at that moment, and how much of his life was determined by the hidden symmetries this book is seeking to unveil."

- *Snow*, p. 87 or 94

- Read the excerpt above carefully and attentively with your students. What does the narrator mean by suggesting Ka is seeing a poem – one poem – "sitting at [the] center...of his life"? Why is the distinction that follows important, that "it is difficult to say how much he decided at that moment, and how much of his life was determined by the hidden symmetries this book is seeking to unveil." What is being argued here about time, agency, history, community? About

knowledge and mystery? What is being revealed about the structure of the novel itself? What *are* the “hidden symmetries” of *Snow*?

Activities and Project Ideas

- Using a few of the descriptions of snow in the novel as inspiration, ask students to remember and **collect their own memories of snow**. How many descriptions can they come up with? How many words for snow are there in the *Wisconsin* native’s vocabulary? Assemble the results: what emotional landscape, vision, metaphors does “snow” appear to be in your classroom?
- **Ka’s book of poems, *Snow***, is never recovered. Ask students to write it, using the titles scattered throughout the novel as inspiration.
- According to Pamuk, “writing a novel means painting with words.” Ask students to choose the one scene in the novel that they feel is representative of the novel overall (whether because it’s the one they most enjoyed, found most interesting, funny, confounding, or because it best represents what the novel is trying to argue), and **reinterpret it visually** (painting, drawing, photographs, video, etc.)
- But what of the other senses? Touch, sound and smell? Is the visual really the one primary sense that a writer conjure with words? As before, ask students to choose the one scene in the novel that they feel is representative of the novel overall, and reinterpret that scene through **sound, or smell, or touch**. Create a “novel” of archived sounds to represent *Snow*, or archived smells, or kinds of tactility, such as sculpture or textiles.
- Ask students to **write a short fictional narrative** featuring a protagonist who is, like Ka, either inert or unlikeable or both. Discuss as a class: what narrative techniques can a writer use to engage readers in spite of such a protagonist?
- Ask students to write a reflective research essay on whether art – music, poetry, novels, painting – does in fact enable us to commune with the divine (However or whatever we name “the divine”). **Are poets, artists, and musicians closer to God than the rest of us?** Why? Students should be encouraged to use specific examples from their own reading, reflection, and perhaps research. There are many famous mystics within Sufism, for instance, who were also poets: ex., Rumi (who lived in Roman Anatolia) and Yunus Emre (Turkish). For Rumi, poetry, like whirling, wine-drinking and joy, was part of the journey toward the Beloved (God). Students could also create an art-work (visual art, dramatic performance, poetry, etc) that they believe constitutes a **communion with the divine**, whether their own or what they’re hoping to conjure in their audience.
- Events in *Snow* do not always proceed in a linear fashion; instead they leap back and forth in time, often telling readers that something is going to happen before it has happened within the narrative itself, such as Necip with a bullet in his eye long before he’s shot, or telling readers Ka ended up dying alone in Frankfurt right after Ka and Ipek make love. Write out the main plot points on note cards in the order in which they’re told in the novel; then rearrange them. What happens? What is the effect of the structure as is? What kind of novel do we get once events have been rearranged?

UNIT 8: ENGAGED READINGS – MEETING THE AUTHOR AND PREPARING FOR THE STUDENT CONFERENCE



This year, the Great World Texts program will again be welcoming the author of the current text to the Student Conference, and students from all over the state will have the rare opportunity to interact with the author of the novel they've been studying. This interaction will be the heart of the Student Conference, and our keynote presentation will consist of *A Conversation with Orhan Pamuk*, during which students will ask questions of the author.

Meeting the author is a amazing, exciting event, but also one that brings special considerations for how we approach the text and our projects. How should students act around the author? What kinds of questions should they ask? How can they best prepare for this meeting? What should teachers do if students are disruptive or rude?

Objective: Prepare students to make the most of the Spring Student Conference through active, engagement with the author; and to provide tips to build confidence, address concerns, and set expectations for decorum and behavior during the conference.

Preparatory Materials:

- Preparing for the Great World Texts Spring Student Conference
- Guidelines for Student Conference Presentations
- Presentation Proposal form
- Presentation Summary form (due by Nov 11 2013)

Additional Readings and Resources:

- “The Short Story #8: Meeting the Author.” YouTube Clip. (Starts at 2:30)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pY9IH61bpyY>
Fun clip to show students and break ice about issues they might be concerned about
- Dane Gutman, “The Perfect Author Visit.” <http://www.dangutman.com/pages/planvisits.html>
Some great tips for preparing students and making sure author visits go well.
- Jo Walton, “How to talk to writers.” <http://www.tor.com/blogs/2008/12/how-to-talk-to-writers>
- Suzanne Roberts, “How to talk to a writer.”
<http://the-how-to.tumblr.com/post/32877145596/how-to-talk-to-a-writer>
- CCBC’s tips for meeting an author: <http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/authors/tips.asp>

Pamuk Interviews:

- Interview with Charlie Rose on March 13 2011. YouTube clip.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olRQCQXo6So>
- Interview on “Just Books,” 2009. YouTube clip.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Zc3iiM89zU>

Handouts/Presentation Materials for Students:

- Guidelines for Presentations
- Presentation Proposal form
- Presentation Summary form (due by Nov 11 2013)

Lecture Points:

- **Prepare your students for meeting Orhan Pamuk the *person*.** Emphasize that, like all people, he could be nervous, excited, happy, sad, shy, in a good or bad mood, etc. Show clips of him doing interviews (the ones listed above are good places to start), and show the class his photograph so they can think of him as an individual from the start.
- **Emphasize being courteous and respectful:**
 - Always greet the author, thank him/her for coming, and introduce yourself before jumping into your question.
 - Use polite language
 - Try to make eye contact and be conscious of body language
 - Avoid overly criticizing parts of the book you didn’t like or saying you “hated” the book
 - Thank the author for his time (and for writing the book if you enjoyed it!)
- **Help students avoid anxiety and feeling nervous:**
 - Focus on the experience, not the “performance” or “act” of talking to the author

- Take a deep breath. It's ok to be nervous, but the author is just another person – he or she came all the way to Wisconsin just to talk to *us*, which might make you feel nervous, but it should also make you feel confident that she thinks you have something to say that is worth hearing.
- This is a chance for **dialogue**. **Dialogue means both voices matter**. The author wants to hear from you as much as you want to hear from the author. Sharing your ideas and reactions to his book will make it easy to start a conversation. Thinking about our interactions with the author as a chance for conversation takes the pressure off our own performance and lets us focus on the chance to learn.
- **Encourage them to be SPECIFIC:**
 - Don't just say "I love this book!" Say what you loved most about it. What inspired you? What made you think? What challenged you?
 - Avoid yes or no questions (*Was it hard to write this book?*) Instead, ask questions that allow room for thought and interpretation (*What was the biggest challenge you faced when writing this book?*)
 - Consider the "lead in" to your question. Give a little context to let the author know where you're coming from. For example, "Why did you choose [x]?" would be a much more interesting question if the speaker first explained WHY [x] is interesting or confusing to him/her. Ex., "I loved this character, but was confused by some of his choices, such as [give example]. Why did you choose to have him do [this or that]?"
- **Be prepared:**
 - Think about how the author might react to your questions. Role-play possible answers.
 - Prepare a list of possible follow-up questions if he does/doesn't answer a certain way.
 - **Know the consequences.** This conference is a serious academic affair and a lot of planning has gone into this event by teachers, students, and UW staff. The people in attendance have all traveled far and spent weeks and months preparing and getting excited for the conference. Being disruptive, discourteous, or disrespectful to the speakers or your peers during the conference is unacceptable, and teachers whose students do not follow the decorum guidelines will be expected to remove students immediately from the room.

Discussion Questions:

- How would you like to be treated (or not treated) if you were the author?
- What questions do you most want answered? What do you want to know about the author that the book can't tell you?

Assignment and Project Ideas

- **Role play: Meeting the Author.** Have students prepare questions for various authors and practice asking and answering them. What questions got the best (or worst) answers? Why?
- **Brainstorm: productive questions.** Ask students to get in groups and write down every single question they can think of to ask the author. Then switch questions with other groups and discuss the questions, then select the best ones. Did any groups have the same questions? How do we decide what “good” and “bad” questions are? Hint: “bad” questions are ones that are too easy to answer, very obvious, or could be easily answered by anyone who read the book.
- **Research the author.** Students can get excited about the author’s visit by doing research into her life, background, hometown, and body of work. Learning more about who Roy is, why she’s famous, what makes her interesting to others, will get students excited to meet her and inspire interesting questions.
- **Writing exercise:** ask students to write, and revise their questions independently and in groups. Have them work together until they feel the question is worded perfectly so that it is clear, direct, and interesting to both the author and the audience.

Suggestions for expanding this unit:

- Apply the author visit guidelines above to other author visits or assemblies the students have attended or will attend. Have them compare or assess how “well” that speaker was received, and why.

NOTES ON CHARACTERS

(Alphabetical)

Blue. Called “the Master” by his admirers, “infamous Islamist terrorist” by secularists such as Serdar Bey, there are rumors about Blue in Kars, in the Turkish media, even in the Frankfurt press, most of which turn out to be unsubstantiated. The narrator, Orhan, notes that Blue, by staying in hiding, “wasn’t just hiding from the police; he stayed off the streets as a way of maintaining his legend” (71 or 78). Ka describes him as a “an extraordinarily handsome man,” brown-haired and beardless, with “midnight blue” eyes and “breathtakingly pale skin,” in whose “manner, expression and appearance there was nothing of the truculent, bearded, provincial fundamentalist whom the secularist press had depicted with a gun in one hand and a string of prayer beads in the other” (72 or 79). He becomes famous after threatening to kill an “effeminate” Istanbul TV personality after the latter had “uttered an inappropriate remark about the Prophet Muhammad;” the TV personality is then killed. But Blue has an alibi, and Necip claims Blue hasn’t killed anyone. He is Kadife’s lover.

Director of the Institute of Education. Director of the equivalent to a college in Kars. Though a “religious man” (38 or 41), he identified with the “secular political camp,” and refused to admit young women wearing headscarves (such as Teslime, Khadife) into the Institute. Ka and Ipek witness his assassination at the end of Ch 4. The narrator of *Snow* reproduces a tape-recorded transcript of his conversation with his assassin in Ch 5.

Fazil, teenage student at the religious high school, friends with Necip. In love with Teslime. Even though he didn’t “know her personally,” he knew her “as a soulmate” (84 or 91).

Funda Eser, actress, Sunay Zaim’s wife.

Ipek (in Turkish, “Ipek” means Silk), daughter of Turgut Bey, estranged wife of Muhtar, Ka’s love interest. Childless (35 or 37).

Ka, the protagonist. Poet, from a middle class family, grew up in wealthy, Europeanized areas of Istanbul. Has been living in Frankfurt, Germany, since the 1980 coup in Turkey forced the exile or arrest of writers, leftists, and pretty much anyone in between. Has returned to Turkey and traveled to Kars ostensibly to write an article about the “suicide girls” of Kars, but really to see Ipek and convince her to return with him to Germany.

Kasim Bey, assistant chief of police. Spies on Muhtar and the activities of the Prosperity Party.

Kadife, Ipek’s sister, Blue’s lover, Necip’s fantasy “Hicran.” Used to go to university in Istanbul but failed her exams and transferred to the Institute of Education in Kars to live with her father and sister.

Originally an atheist, like her father and sister, she starts wearing the veil, gets arrested, and has now become devout. (See p. 113-4 or 121-2).

Mersut, friend of Necip and Fazil. One of the students at the religious high school. Aggressively questions Ka about his beliefs, and is more fundamentalist in his views than either Fazil or Necip. Is in love with Hande.

Muhtar Bey. Ipek's estranged husband, a friend of Ka's from Istanbul. Used to write poetry and belonged to leftist political groups. Went to prison after the military coup of 1980 ("the military took over and we all went to prison," p. 53 or 58). Returned to Kars with Ipek, took over his father's "Arcelik and Aygaz appliance distributorship" (35 or 37), and refers to his early experience of Kars as "everyone [in Kars] wanted to die or leave. But I had nowhere to go. It was as if I'd been erased from history, banished from civilization" (53 or 58). Meets Saadettin Efendi, a Kurdish sheikh, and becomes a devout Muslim. Is now running for Mayor of Kars on the Prosperity Party ticket. Ethnically Kurdish. Like Ipek, Muhtar is from Kars (35 or 37).

Necip. "A teenage boy with large green eyes and a childish good-natured face" (65 or 71). Attends the religious high school, is best friends with Fazil, takes Ka to see Blue for the first time and is in love with Kadife. What he wants in life is to "marry Kadife, live in Istanbul, and become the world's first Islamist science fiction writer" (134-5 or 144). Has a vision of landscape where God does not exist that Ka turns into a poem (142-3 or 152). Is shot in the eye at the "theater coup."

Serdar Bey, owner of the *Border City Gazette*. Republicanist/secularist; believes "we were all brothers" (25 or 27) under the Ottomans and that the Prosperity Party and their adherents want to turn Turkey into "another Iran" (27 or 29) Prints the news before it has happened (29 or 29-30).

Sunay Zaim, actor and would-be Atatürk. Married to Funda Eser. His greatest roles were as political figures, and he has now transformed that past into a reality by staging an actual coup in Kars during a snow-storm. More of his acting career and how it falters after he becomes known as the "failed Atatürk" (193 or 207) can be found in Ch. 22.

Turgut Bey, owner of the Hotel Asia, widower, father of Ipek and Khadife, used to be a teacher before being fired and thrown in jail for his political beliefs, where he was tortured. Though a secularist, he's proud and supportive of his daughter, Khadife, for wearing her headscarf and thereby finding "a new form of rebellion" and means of defying the state (114 or 121).

Sheikh Saadettin Cevher. A powerful religious leader in Kars ("sheikh" is an honorific title for elder, Islamic scholar, or someone who seeks wisdom through Islam). Everyone visits the sheikh, even secularists, army people, soldiers. As Ipek tells Ka, "he's on the side of the state...when a man this powerful invites you over, you don't turn him down" (90 or 97). He is Muhtar's religious advisor.

Zahide. Kurdish maid at the Snow Palace Hotel owned by Turgut Bey and his daughters.

Z. Demirkol. Alias of a “writer and old Communist” who first appears as the curtain draws on Sunay Zaim’s “theater coup,” and then rushes into the night shouting “Long Live the Republic.” Becomes responsible for multiple mysterious deaths and assassinations that occur in Kars after the coup. More of Z Demirkol’s bio can be found on p. 162 or 173.

Groups and Organizations

Kurds. An ethnicity. The majority of the population of Kars are Kurds. After the coup, the police round up Kurdish nationalists, left-wing terrorists, and anyone suspected of having aided or abetted the “Kurdish nationalist guerillas” (170-1 or 182-3). For more on the politics of Kurds in Kars, see p. 269 or 291-2. For more information on Kurds in Turkey, review the 1999 *Washington Post* piece, “Who are the Kurds?” along with the more recently updated *Al-Jazeera English* timeline:

- “Who Are the Kurds?” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/daily/feb99/kurdprofile.htm> Dated but usefully brief summary, with map. Try to locate Kars on that map.
- “Timeline: PKK conflict with Turkey.” *Al-Jazeera English*. Last Modified March 21 2013. Retrieved Aug 22 2013.
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2013/03/2013320652845642.html>

Kurdish Marxists. Originally, the PKK, the Kurdish group led by Abdullah Öcalan that has since the 1980s been fighting the Turkish state for an independent Kurdistan, was called the Kurdistan Workers’ Party; Öcalan espoused a radical Marxist ideology coupled with Kurdish nationalism, that he has since abandoned.

Socialists, Marxists, Communists, Left-wing militants. As in many countries around the world in the years following WWII to the fall of the Berlin Wall, these were popular political ideologies, with a rise of left-wing militancy around the world particularly noticeable during the 1970s (ex., the Bahder Meinhof group in Germany, the Weather Underground in the US). Left-wing groups were violently suppressed in Turkey after the 1980 coup and people (like Turgut Bey) were imprisoned for their political beliefs. As Pamuk notes, tongue-in-cheek, in *Snow*: “Socialist militancy had once cast a long shadow over Kars, but now it was spent; these days no socialist would dare set an ambush, kill a policeman, or start a mail-bomb campaign without first seeking the support of the Kurdish guerillas” (269 or 291).

MIT, the national intelligence agency, Kars branch. “In the old days, MIT kept files on leftists and democrats, but now they’re mostly interested in Islamists” (114 or 121). They spy on Muhtar and the Prosperity Party, raid Muhtar’s office, and beat him up for no particular reason; they do not beat up Ka. The pictures they show Ka of the Director’s would-be assassin are of “doleful youths staring miserably into the police camera...most of them young Kurds” (64 or 70).

The Prosperity Party, also referred to as the “Party of God.” The party of political Islam in the novel. Muhtar is their candidate for mayor.

KARS – IN RELATION TO TURKEY:



TURKEY – IN RELATION TO THE MIDDLE EAST, EUROPE, ASIA and AFRICA :



Additional Recommended Resources – Teaching through Film

Some suggestions for using film in your classroom to teach *Snow*:

- Elif Savas and Brian Felsen. *Coup/Darbe*. 2000.

Focuses on the multiple military interventions/coups that have occurred in Turkey since the 1920s; though very low budget, the archival footage is excellent and they got access to an amazing number of people. You can learn more about it here: <http://www.elifsavas.com/coup/index.htm>. Available on DVD.

- Zelfa and Tarquin Olivier. *Atatürk: Founder of Modern Turkey*. 2001.

Widely available, highly problematic. Focuses on Turkey's founder, Atatürk, and is in the realm of the hagiographic. Not exactly inaccurate, but glosses over - to put it mildly - a few bad things that happened in the early years of Atatürk's Republic. The tone is also a bit strange: at one point it refers to Atatürk's first wife as a "gentle oriental woman." It shouldn't serve as an introduction to Turkish history, but could well serve as a starting point for a discussion of the Atatürk-adulation that Sunay, for instance, exhibits in *Snow*.

- History Channel International. *History of Turkey*. N.d.

Available on YouTube. Reasonably good as far as the history goes, but unfortunately interviews a few too many American professors (i.e., there's a problem in who it represents as an "expert" on Turkey.) Focuses on the Ottoman Empire and the early years of the Republic. Here's the link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNh-rhRVr28>

- PBS. *Life of Muhammed*.

Series that began airing on Sept 20 2013. Excellent introduction to Islam. Engaging and accessible to students. <http://video.pbs.org/video/2365062119/>

- PBS. *Islam: Empire of Faith*.

Good history of the Ottoman Empire. Unfortunately, however, also traffics in some unfortunate Orientalist stereotypes, for instance by featuring an inordinate amount of slow-mo shots of faceless men in turbans on horseback riding across the mountain wastes. It's worth watching for the history, certainly, but the riders in their turbans (etc.) should be examined, contextualized and discussed after any viewing. That in itself could be a useful classroom exercise, however; obviously, the intent with the series is very earnest: to show a US audience how much Islamic culture has contributed to the world. So the rhetorical devices PBS uses to try to do that, for that particular audience, and what the effects are, are perhaps worth discussing. The series is available in most public libraries and for purchase. Does not focus on modern Turkey, to my knowledge.

- Fatih Akin. Recommended are: *Head-On* (Gegen der Wand, 2004), *The Edge of Heaven* (2007) and *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul* (2005).

Internationally renowned Turkish-German). His movies are available in the States with subtitles and are worth viewing for an understanding of modern Turkey and of the Turkish-German diaspora in Europe. Like Pamuk in *Snow*, Akin is very interested in people in conflict, or tension, with their world, their values, their desires. His filmography is available here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatih_Ak%C4%B1n

- Orhan Eskiköy and Özgür Dogan. *On the Way to School* (İki Dil Bir Bavul). 2008.

Tale of a Turkish teacher sent by the government to teach in a remote Kurdish village in eastern Turkey, the only problem being that he doesn't speak a word of Kurdish (a language banned for many years by the government; rhetorically some of these restrictions have been lifted, but they stay in place in practice). Available on DVD with English subtitles.

What is Close Reading?

Close reading is a specific method of literary analysis, which uses the interpretation of a small piece of text as a way to think about the whole. This kind of analysis invites readers to pay close attention to the effects of the specific words on the page. We ask ourselves *why* each word was chosen, *how* it contributes to the broader themes and ideas of the text, and *how* it interacts with other words/images in the text.

For example, the first sentence of *Snow* reads as follows: “The silence of snow, thought the man sitting just behind the bus driver” (3). Pamuk could have written this sentence in any number of other ways: “The man sitting just behind the bus driver thought about the silence of snow,” or “Snow is silent, thought Kersim Alakuşoğlu, as he sat on the bus.” All versions technically have the same meaning, but we come away with different impressions. It’s our task as careful, attentive readers to figure out what effect the choices Pamuk has made has on the story we’re reading. Close reading asks us to pay attention to the nuances of language and how it generates our sense of reality – both our own and that of the text.

While there is no “right” way to analyze a text, there are more and less convincing ways of interpreting different passages. The steps below are intended to help you persuasively close read a passage in a literary text (though the skills you develop are applicable to the close reading and analysis of any text anywhere):

1. Summary

Read the passage once without making any annotations. Start by asking yourself: what’s going on here? What is the speaker/character/narrator saying? Who is speaking? In what context? If you are unable to write a 1-2 sentence summary of the passage, read through again until you have a clearer idea. Don’t panic if you’re unsure, many texts are deliberately ambiguous or confusing; it is not always possible to say for definite what is happening.

2. Mood & Tone

The second time you read through, think about the overall mood created by the writing. Is it comic, tragic, sinister, serious? What is the tone of the writing: formal, playful, ironic? Does the writer use understatement or exaggeration? (This is very important to pay attention to in *Snow* particularly.)

3. Literary Devices

Circle/underline the specific words, images and literary devices which contribute to the mood and tone you have identified. These might include any of the following:

- Unusual vocabulary/word choice (archaic words, neologisms, foreign imports, slang/colloquialisms). Use an online dictionary such as www.askoxford.com if you need to look up words you don’t recognize.

- Symbols: does the writer use images which seem to represent something else?
- Metaphors and/or similes
- Striking comparisons or contrasts
- Personification
- Alliteration and/or onomatopoeia

4. Bigger Picture

Having considered these details, you can start to develop your overall interpretation of the passage. Consider the ways that your passage fits into the text as a whole. What do you think is the text's main message? How does it contribute to the broader themes of the work? How do the particular literary devices you have identified help to emphasize, intensify or trouble the other questions and issues that the text raises?

What is Islam?

"All mankind is from Adam and Eve, [therefore] an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black any superiority over white except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim...Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves."

Excerpt from Mohammed's last sermon to his followers, 632 C. E.

Dates from: Approx. 622 CE in Mecca, located in what is today Saudi Arabia.

Note: Muslims believe Islam has no beginning, but 622 CE is the date the Islamic calendar begins: it is the year Mohammed made his pilgrimage to Mecca.

Adherents: 1.57 billion, according to a comprehensive demographic survey completed by the Pew Research Center in 2009 [see link in "Resources"]. Muslims are found on all five continents of the world, with 60% living in Asia and about 20% in the Middle East and North Africa; these regions do, however, have the highest percentage of Muslim-majority countries. More than 300 million Muslims live in countries where Islam is not the majority religion: India, for example, has the third-largest population of Muslims worldwide, China has more Muslims than Syria, while Russia is home to more Muslims than Jordan and Libya combined. Of the total Muslim population, 10-13% are Shia Muslims and 87-90% are Sunni Muslims. Most Shias (between 68% and 80%) live in just four countries: Iran, Pakistan, India and Iraq. There are approx. 2.5 million Muslims in the US.

It is important to note that while all Muslims adhere to certain basic tenets of the faith [see below], there is extraordinary diversity in the world's Muslim communities--diversity that is cultural, political, ideological *and* religious.

Prophets: Muhammad is the last and final prophet, but Islam also recognizes Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Joseph, Moses, David, John the Baptist, Jesus, and others, as prophets or messengers of God.

Texts: The *Qur'an* (Qur'an) is the primary scripture of Islam, in addition to the *Hadith* (literally "report" or "tradition"), a collection of books chronicling the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers. The original language of the Qur'an and the Hadith is Arabic. The *Qur'an* is considered sealed; that is, permanently unalterable.

Clergy: *Sunni Islam* does not have formal clergy; however, *imam* is a term of respect for one who leads prayers, or sometimes for a religious professional. *Shiite Islam* has hierarchical clergy, from the *mullah*, who has made a serious study of Islamic law and literature, to the *mujtahid*, an Islamic religious scholar, to the very powerful *ayatollah*, who sometimes rules entire countries.

Terms and Fundamental Precepts:

The *Five Pillars of Islam* are as follows: profession of faith ("There is no God but one God and Muhammad is his prophet"); prayer – in the direction of Mecca and five times a day; giving to the poor and performing community service; fasting during the month of Ramadan; and finally, making a pilgrimage to Mecca

Major Holidays:

Ramadan: a month-long holiday observed with fasting during daylight hours and prayer. It commemorates when Muhammad was given the *Qur'an* by the angel Gabriel. The day after the end of Ramadan, *Eid al-Fitr*, is a holy day celebrated with decorations and gift giving.

Eid al-Adha – marks the end of the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca. Traditionally, some Muslims celebrate this three-day festival by sacrificing an animal and sharing the meat with family and the needy.

Terms

Muslim – a follower of Islam

Mecca – in Saudi Arabia. It is the main holy city of Islam and the location of the Kaaba.

Shia – branch of Islam with 560 million adherents. The Shia grant authority to the lineage of Ali, who was a cousin of Muhammad, and to the direct descendants of Muhammad. Shia or Shiite is a shortening of Shiat Ali, which means "Partisans of Ali."

Sunni – branch of Islam with 940 million adherents; the Sunni grant authority to the lineage of caliphs who retained leadership over the claims of Muhammad's descendants. The majority of the Turkish population is Sunni.

As Salaam Alaikum – traditional greeting among Muslims, in Arabic; it means "Peace be upon you."

Hijra – migration of Muhammad and his followers to Medina in the year 622 CE, after which Islam spread rapidly; also the beginning of the Islamic calendar

Sunna (or *Sunnah*) – way of life prescribed in Islam, based on teachings and practices of Muhammad (therefore on both *Qur'an* and *Hadith*)

Hajj – a pilgrimage to Mecca which every Muslim is expected to undertake at least once during life; one of the Five Pillars of Islam

ummah – community, especially the community of believers; can refer to a group of individuals or the body of Islamic nations

ablution – cleansing with water, performed before prayer

halal – lawful; literally "allowed by Allah;" permitted under Islamic law

Kaaba – the black cubic building which houses relics of Muhammad; the point toward which all Muslims pray

Resources:

Pew Research Center's Religion and Public Life Project. "Mapping the Global Muslim Population." Last updated in 2009.

<http://www.pewforum.org/2009/10/07/mapping-the-global-muslim-population/>

Links to a variety of maps determining the distribution of Muslims around the globe.

The Islam Project. "Muhammed, Islam and the World."

http://www.islamproject.org/education/es_islam_overview.htm

Brief and useful overview of Islam, from a website dedicated to providing educational resources for teachers.

"The Farewell Sermon." *Inside Islam: Dialogues and Debates*. April 10 2012.

<http://insideislam.wisc.edu/2012/04/the-farewell-sermon/>

Summary of Muhammed's last sermon to his followers, the *khutbat al-wadaa*, given in 632 C.E. in the Gregorian calendar (i.e., the calendar followed by the U.S.). Encapsulates the basic tenets of the faith. From the website/educational resource created by UW-Madison in collaboration with WPR's *Here on Earth*. <http://www.islamicity.com/Mosque/lastserm.htm> Link to Muhammed's sermon, translated into English.

*For additional resources, see the full list available in "Unit 4: Religion and Secularism," in the *Instructor's Guide*.

This hand-out adapted from information available at the University of Georgia's resource page for "Studying Islam and the Diverse Perspectives of Muslims:" <http://islam.uga.edu/>

Turkey and Turkish History for *Snow* – The Basics

Basic Facts on Turkey:

Government: Turkey is a secular parliamentary democracy. Founded as a Republic in 1923, It has had multi-party elections since 1950. There were military coups in 1960, 1971 and 1980.

Population: Approx. 74.7 million people live in Turkey, according to a 2011 census, of whom 70-75% are Turkish, 18% Kurdish, and 7-12% other minorities

Languages include Turkish (official), Kurdish and other minority languages.

Religion is 99.8% Muslim (mostly Sunni Muslim). 0.2% are Jews and/or belong to various Christian denominations.

Economy: Stark divisions as regards transport, communication and prospects for employment between western and eastern Turkey.

Foreign Relations: Joined the UN in 1945; in 1952 became a member of NATO. Ally of US during Iraq war. Began accession talks with the European Union in 2005.

Bordering Countries: Turkey borders Bulgaria and Greece to the north, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran and Iraq to the east, and Syria to the south.

Very Brief History

Modern Turkey was founded in 1923 from the Anatolian remnants of the defeated Ottoman Empire. For hundreds of years, the Ottomans had ruled a multi-ethnic and multi-religious empire which at its height encompassed most of the Middle East, North Africa and Western Asia. Though its rulers and elite were Muslim, as was the majority of the population in its territories, the system of *millet* instituted and maintained by a succession of sultans ensured that adherents of other religions, from Christians to Jews, could live and thrive in peace within its borders. In the waning years of WWI, however, following the defeat of the Ottomans and the dissolution of the empire, that diversity was seen as a threat, resulting most famously in the mass deportation of Armenian communities from their homelands in eastern Anatolia. To this day, official Turkish history claims this as a necessary military maneuver. The Kurds, a nomadic ethnic group also resident in eastern Anatolia, would likewise prove troublesome to the government of the new Turkish Republic in the years after WWI.

The leader of the Turkish Republic was Kemal “Atatürk” (“Father of the Turks”), who instituted wide-ranging social, legal and political reforms in the country. The most important of these for an understanding of *Snow* was ensuring Turkey would be a secular state. Atatürk and his fellow reformers believed Islam had contributed to the stagnation and eventual military defeat of the Ottomans. The “assertive secularism” Atatürk adopted from France ensured not only that state and religion would be separate, but that the state would assume control over religious life. In addition Atatürk instructed women to “modernize” by removing their veils and told the men to shave their beards; he also abolished the Arabic script in which Turkish had been written and instead adopted Roman lettering.

Multi-party elections occurred in Turkey first in 1950. Since then democracy has remained relatively stable, though fractured by intermittent military coups (1960, 1971, 1980). The most significant of these for understanding contemporary Turkey and *Snow* was the 1980 coup. Waves of arrests spread across the country in the wake of the coup: “in the first six weeks...11,500 people were arrested; by the end of 1980 the number had grown to 30,000 and after one year 122,600 arrests had been made. By September 1982, two years after the coup, 80,000 were still in prison, 30,000 still awaiting trial” (Zürchner 279). Anyone who had expressed even vaguely leftist or Islamist viewpoints was arrested, from trade unionists to teachers, lawyers and journalists. Torture was applied as a matter of course (see Zürchner 279-280). In *Snow*, it is after the 1980 coup that Ka flees to Germany, while fellow poet and would-be leftist Muhtar is arrested, as is Muhtar’s father-in-law, Turgut Bey, a teacher. The ghost of the 1980 coup also hovers over Sunay Zaim’s “theater coup.”

As in 1960 and 1971, civilian control of political power was eventually restored, roughly in 1983-84. A separatist insurgency begun in 1984 by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has dominated the Turkish military's attention and claimed more than 30,000 lives, primarily in southeastern Turkey. Kars, where *Snow* is set, is in the northeast, but the majority of its population is Kurdish and the long-running Kurdish-Turkish conflict very much a background to events that take place in the novel. As of this writing, peace talks are underway between the PKK (now the Kongra-Gel, or Kurdish People's Congress), and the Turkish government.

The democratically elected party in power in Turkey in 2013 is the AKP [Justice and Development Party], a conservative Islamic party led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Under its leadership, Turkey has pursued membership in the European Union and proven itself an ally to the US in the region. Before the events of Gezi Park in May-June 2013 darkened his image abroad, Erdoğan was frequently hailed as “the most democratic leader” Turkey had ever had in the UK/US media.

Adapted from the CIA World Factbook’s entry on “Turkey:”
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html>

Additional information provided by Zürchner, *Turkey: A Modern History*. London: Tauris, 2004.

See also: Owen Matthews. “Rethinking Turkey’s Past.” *The Daily Beast*. April 12 2010.
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2010/12/04/rethinking-turkey-s-past.html> On the legacy of the 1980 coup for present-day Turkey.