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**ORHAN PAMUK’S SHEKURE, IPEK AND
JANAN: THREE WOMEN CHERISHED BY
NUMEROUS MEN**

**Orhan Pamuk’un Şeküre, İpek ve Canan’ı: Pek Çok Erkeğin
Değer Verdiği Üç Kadın
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Abstract

Women have been exercising a considerable influence on men through beauty, charms, characters, and other physical attributes since the dawn of human history. This article attempts to discover and to highlight this power of women over men with particular examples taken from Orhan Pamuk’s *My Name is Red*, *Snow* and *The New Life*. Major women characters, Shekure, Ipek and Janan, are centers of attention and have been admired and cherished by numerous male characters in above-mentioned novels. In *My Name is Red*, Shekure embellishes her fantasies of three major admirers: Black, Hasan and Olive because of her exceptional beauty. In *Snow*, three admirers, by the names of Ka, Blue and Muhtar, are fascinated with Ipek’s beauty and each in his own way attempts to obtain her good graces. Finally in *The New Life*, Janan stimulates the feelings of love and affection in three men, namely Mehmet, Osman and Dr. Mehmet. She charmingly entices her admirers and makes them compete with each other in order to win over her heart especially Mehmet and Osman. The aim of this article is to determine and to identify the extent and depth of influence or power of women in male characters of the novels in question. It employs the Comparative Approach, one of the research methodologies in Social Sciences, in order to meet with the aim of the study. The initial findings of the study suggest that these three women, Shekure, Ipek and Janan, exercised prominent influence on the leading male characters of the three novels selected for the study. The author, Orhan Pamuk, broke away from the common practice of portraying weak, subjugated and subdued women seen in earlier works of literature and introduced the readers with strong-willed, determined, and steadfast women.

Key words: Women, cherish, male characters, *My Name is Red*, *Snow*, *The New Life*

Öz

Kadınlar, insanlık tarihinin başlangıcından bu yana güzellik, çekicilik, karakter ve diğer fiziksel özellikleriyle erkekler üzerinde önemli bir etki uygulamaktadırlar. Bu makale, Orhan Pamuk’un *Benim Adım Kırmızı*, *Kar* ve *Yeni Hayat* romanlarından alınan örneklerle kadınların erkekler üzerindeki bu güçlerini keşfetmeye ve vurgulamaya çalışmaktadır. Ana karakterler, Şeküre, İpek ve Canan, odak merkezleridir ve yukarıda bahsedilen romanlardaki pek çok erkek karakterler tarafından beğenilmekte ve değer verilmektedirler. *Benim Adım Kırmızı*’da, Şeküre, eşsiz güzelliği sayesinde Kara, Hasan ve Zeytin adlı hayranlarının fantazilerini süslemektedir. *Kar*’da, Ka, Lacivert ve Muhtar adlarında üç hayran İpek’in güzelliğine hayran kalmışlardır ve her biri kendi yöntemleriyle onun gözüne girmeye çalışmışlardır. En son olarak, *Yeni Hayat*’ta, Canan Mehmet, Osman ve Dr. Mehmet adlarında üç erkekte aşk ve sevgi duyguları

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uyarmıştır. Hayranlarını cezbedici bir şekilde baştan çıkarmış ve kendisinin kalbini kazanabilmek için, onların, özellikle Mehmet ve Osman'ın, birbirleriyle rekabete girmelerini sağlamıştır. Bu makalenin amacı, adı geçen romanlarda kadın karakterlerin erkek karakterler üzerinde tatbik ettikleri gücün kapsamı ve derinliğini belirlemektir. Çalışmanın amacına ulaşmak için, Sosyal Bilimlerde kullanılan bir araştırma metodu olan, Karşılaştırmalı Yaklaşım kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın ilk bulguları, bu üç kadının, yani Şeküre, İpek ve Canan'ın çalışma için seçilen üç romanın ana erkek karakterleri üzerinde belirgin bir etkiye sahip olduklarını göstermektedir. Yazar, Orhan Pamuk, önceki dönemlerdeki edebiyat eserlerinde görülen zayıf, boyun eğdirilmiş ve bastırılmış kadın betimlemesinden uzaklaşmış ve okuyucuları güçlü, kararlı ve sarsılmaz kadınlarla tanıştırmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadınlar, değer vermek, erkek karakterler, *Benim Adım Kırmızı*, *Kar*, *Yeni Hayat*

1. INTRODUCTION

Women have had a considerable amount of power over men and have been exercising great influence on them since the beginning of times with their beauty, physical attributes as well as charming personalities and stimulated them into action, guided men's philosophy of life, and provided courage and inspiration in the face of dire times and stood by them all the way. Certainly, in cultures where women are not free and could not exercise their individuality, men will also be deficient and problematic, be forced to accept the oppressive and despotic roles imposed on them by virtue of not being able to practice their own awareness under the pressure of patriarchal order, and will strive in a continuous inadequacy and restlessness in order to possess some distinctive qualities that are expected of them such as "warrior" and "powerful" and to be approved by the society. Terry Eagleton acknowledges this distinctive and unique function of woman in society and states that "The woman is both 'inside' and 'outside' male society, both a romantically idealized member of it and a victimized outcast. She is sometimes what stands between man and chaos, and sometimes the embodiment of chaos itself" (Eagleton, 1996: 165). Similarly, the author, Fulton J. Sheen emphasizes women's peculiar influence on men and how men try to be worthy of her as such "When a man loves a woman, he has to become worthy of her. The higher her virtue, the more noble her character, the more devoted she is to truth, justice, goodness, the more a man has to aspire to be worthy of her. The history of civilization could actually be written in terms of the level of its women" (Sheen, 1999:51). On the other hand, Groucho Marx, an American comedian and actor, states the influential power of women over men as such "Man does not control his own fate. The women in his life do that for him" (Marx, n.d.).

Numerous women in history, such as Eve in the Story of Adam and Eve, Delilah in the Story of Samson and Delilah and Helen of Troy, etc., used this power on men and had been very instrumental in making them carry out acts of paramount importance. In the Story of Adam and Eve, a narrative included in major divine religions, after being deceived by the serpent into eating a fruit from the forbidden tree claiming that the fruit was "good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom" (Genesis 3:6), Eve offered some to Adam who could not resist and proceeded to take a bite under the charming influence of her. Subsequently in the Story of Samson and Delilah, Delilah was bribed by the enemies to discover Samson's source of strength by making use of her irresistible charms and succeeded in revealing his secret and turning him over to the enemies when Samson discloses "A razor has never come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I be shaved, my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man" (Exum, 2012: 214). In Greek mythology, Helen, also known as Helen of Troy or Sparta, was rumored to be the most beautiful woman in the world, who was the wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta, but ran

away with Prince Paris of Troy, triggered the war between Greeks and Trojans and subsequently caused the complete destruction of the city of Troy. Helen, in the words of Christopher Marlowe, was “the face that launch'd a thousand ships / And burnt the topless towers of Ilium” (Marlowe, trans. 1993, 5.91-92).

Since literature is the reflection of the life in all its varied forms and shapes and often presents a picture of what people think, say and do in the society, literary characters, especially female characters, can make use of this exceptional power of manipulation to stimulate other characters, both male and female, into action. Especially female characters, just to mention a few like Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, and Emma Bovary in *Madame Bovary* challenged the authority of men and exercised their influence over them in order to trigger changes in them. In William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth is one of Shakespeare's most infamous female characters. She is ruthless, cunning and more ambitious than her husband. She is quiet aware of this and encourages and pushes Macbeth to carry out his bloody quest to become king. She knows how to push Macbeth's buttons and to stimulate him into action when she utters “Art thou afeard/To be the same in thine own act and valor/As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that. Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life./And live a coward in thine own esteem” (Shakespeare, trans. 2005: 1.7: 39-43). Jane Austen's lead female character Elizabeth Bennet poses to be an intelligent, witty and attractive young, if not outstandingly beautiful. She successfully lights a flame of change in aloof and superior Mr. Darcy and transforms him into a kind, noble and generous man with her sharp mind, charming personality and physical appeal because he eventually states his admiration for her as such “...for it is many months since I have considered her as one of the handsomest women of my acquaintance” (Austen, 1992:181). Emma Bovary in Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, a country girl educated in a convent, is a young and a beautiful woman that harbors idealistic romantic illusions. She has a craving for beauty, wealth, passion and a high position in society. She uses her alluring beauty to attract men and make them fall in love with her. Even though she agreed to marry Charles Bovary, a country doctor, who nurtured sincere and genuine love for Emma, she could not reciprocate his love because “before her marriage, she had believed that she was in love; but since the happiness she had expected this love to bring her had not come” (Flaubert, 2004:32). Her longing for passion and luxury led her engage in extramarital affairs with two men. She again succeeded in charming Rodolphe and Leon with her physical beauty.

Orhan Pamuk has been one of the authors in the last quarter of Turkish literature that came to the forefront with his investigation of Turkish identity and history and was mostly criticized with his views on Turkish politics. Despite the criticism that surrounded him, Pamuk has successfully established himself as a prominent writer in world literature by receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2006. Jale Parla attributed Pamuk's success to his

rare gift of that genius that beguiles at the same time as it challenges. The paradox that he is a 'difficult' best-seller is a myth that is created by the intellectual community in Turkey who are aware of the complexity of his novels but miss their beguiling simplicity (Parla as cited in Wroe, 2004, May 08).

Even if not in its formation, he is one of the male writers, who is influential in maintaining a male-dominated perspective that prevailed in Turkish literature in 19th century. Pamuk's novels invariably center around the male characters in terms of plot

construction, for this reason, the dominant language in the novel is the language of the man and the female characters are often presented to the reader through these male characters. Pamuk has been criticized by numerous critics, including Sule Suzuk Toker, author of *Pamuk Kadınlar: Orhan Pamuk Romanlarında Kadının Temsili [Pamuk Females: Representation of Women in Orhan Pamuk's Novels]*, that female characters either take limited or no part in narration. Budd Boetticher, an American film director famous for Western movies, stated the presence and the role of women in normal narrative film as such "She [woman] is the one, or rather the love or fear she inspires in the hero, or else the concern he feels for her, who makes him act the way he does" (Boetticher, as cited in Nichols, 1985:309). Likewise, Sule S. Toker stressed this subordinate role of women when she asserted "in Orhan Pamuk's novels, women appear before us as creatures that are affected by the consequences of the plot, but are not attached to men, placed as their "other" and maintained the story line" (Toker, 2013: 123). The purpose of their presence in novels is to provide support the male characters. In other words, female characters serve the existence of the male characters. They are mostly portrayed from the perspectives of men. It might be true that women can be source of inspiration for love or fear in men and served the existence of male characters, but this does not change that fact that they exercise a noticeable influence on male actors either in films or characters in literary works. Therefore, Pamuk's major female characters, Shekure, Ipek and Janan in *My Name is Red*, *Snow* and *The New Life* and their influences cannot be overlooked or underestimated even if they were overshadowed by male characters or remained vague and obscure under the ubiquitous dominance of them.

The female characters and their representation in Orhan Pamuk's novels have been the subject of two academic theses and a book. The first of these two theses, entitled as "Love Relations and Representations of Women in the Novels of Orhan Pamuk", dealt with love relationships depicted from the perspectives of the main characters in Pamuk's four selected novels. It eventually touched upon the issue of the representations of women in on these novels in question. The second thesis, entitled "Power of Men in the Novels of Orhan Pamuk", concentrated on male characters and their hegemony on female characters. It also addressed the position and role of female characters in the developmental formation of male power. The book, called *Pamuk Kadınlar- Orhan Pamuk Romanlarında Kadının Temsili [Pamuk Females: Representation of Women in Orhan Pamuk's Novels]* by Sule S. Toker, focused on the representation of women in Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* and *The Museum of Innocence* and attempted to answer two compelling questions such as "How does Orhan Pamuk write about women in his books?" and "Has the position in which the patriarchal system imprison women been reproduced in his pen or does the author liberate women with a revolutionary language?"

In light of the aforementioned argument, this article attempts to determine and to identify the extent and depth of influence or power of women in male characters of the novels in question. It employs the Comparative Approach, one of the research methodologies in Social Sciences, in order to meet with the aim of the study. In line with its objectives, the study sought to provide answers to two main questions: What extent do Shekure, Ipek and Janan exercise influence on major male characters? How do they use these powers in order to assert their desires?

2. Orhan Pamuk's Shekure, Ipek and Janan

Pamuk's female heroines, Shekure in *My Name is Red*, Ipek in *Snow* and Janan in *The New Life*, might seem to be behind the scenes or overshadowed by the male characters, but they have the power to trigger changes in male characters or to motive them into

action. These women became the object of attention and were desired and cherished by several men. In *My Name is Red*, Shekure, a 24-year-old heroine of the novel, commendably evokes admiration in every man that laid eyes in her and ultimately manages to dazzle them with her beauty. It is her fascinating and charming beauty that attracts the attention of young men and, in the words of Enishte Effendi, “every young man who frequented our house or heard what others had to say about us, or who knew about my beautiful daughter, Shekure, from hearsay, had fallen in love with her” (MNR, 24). She has three known potential admirers: Black, Hasan and Butterfly. Richard Eder asserts his fascination with her when he states that Shekure is “elusive, changeable, enigmatic and immensely beguiling, she is the finest portrait in the book. Not a portrait, in fact a Persian miniature” (Eder, 2001). Similarly, David Damrosch, renowned Comparatist, applauds Shekure’s attempt to manifest herself in a patriarchal society and further asserts that “Shekure is one of the most interesting characters in the novel. It’s a very sympathetic portrait of a complicated woman who is trying to negotiate her position within the traditional confines of a patriarchal society of her time” (Damrosch, 2010, 0:14). Ipek, in *Snow*, the daughter of a former old-guard secularist, is physically attractive and beautiful woman and is usually modern in her attitudes. Like Shekure, Ipek, too, has managed to entice and fascinate numerous men, Ka, Muhtar and Blue, through her feminine charms and physical beauty. Christian Lorentzen emphasizes Ka’s fascination with Ipek’s overwhelming beauty when he observes that Ipek possesses an arresting beauty that makes Ka sound as much the schoolboy as his new friend Necip” (Lorentzen, 2004, July 01). In *The New Life*, Janan attracts attention of Mehmet and Osman with her enchanting and captivating beauty. She is a young and beautiful university student who is first involved with Mehmet and then, with Osman with whom she sets off in search of the new life that the book. However, neither Mehmet nor Osman succeeded in engaging in a relationship with Janan, because she ended up marrying a doctor who “had managed to find a sound method of absorbing the book into his system and living in peace and happiness” (TNL, 246).

2.1. Shekure’s Admirers in *My Name is Red*

2.1.1. Black

Shekure’s first admirer, Black, who happens to be her cousin, fell in love with her when she was 12, and her father, Enishte Effendi explains Black’s predicament when stated “Black’s affliction was the overwhelming passion of an ill-fated youth who had free access to our house, who was accepted and well liked in our home and who had the opportunity actually to see Shekure. He did not bury his love, as I hoped he would, but made the mistake of revealing his extreme passion to my daughter” (MNR, 24). Due to his failure to suppress or “bury” his feelings, he exiled himself after Shekure’s father, Enishte Effendi, refused to give his daughter’s hand to Black in marriage. During his twelve years of exile in Persia “carrying letters and collecting taxes” and “working as a secretary in the service of pashas” (MNR, 6), Black has been instructed by his uncle to return to Istanbul in order to assist him to complete a long-cherished project, the book of illustrations, commissioned by the Sultan. This provided an excellent opportunity for Black to see his beloved, Shekure, again and to rekindle feelings of love. He paid individual visits to Master Osman, who happened to be the Head Illuminator and Enishte’s archrival, and three prominent master miniaturists, Olive, Stork and Butterfly, who were employed by Enishte to complete the task. In the meantime, Black caught a brief look of his beloved, Shekure, over the shutter of her windows and, much later, cherished this experience “a thousand times,” likened it to the moment “in which Hüsrev visits Shirin beneath her window” and admitted that he “burned with a love such as they describe in those books

we so cherish and adore" (*MNR*, 41-42). Eventually, Black successfully defeated his opponents, Hasan and Olive, in Shekure's hand in marriage and began making arrangements to be together in marriage.

However, when Enishte Effendi was brutally murdered, they were compelled to expedite their plans by filing official documents to prove her widowhood and arranging for an imam to officiate their marital union. Nonetheless, Shekure asserted her influence on Black and charged him with the tasks of finding her father's murderer and finishing the book before they physically consummated their marriage as she stated "until the villain who has murdered my father has been caught or until you find him —how I'd love to torture him myself! —and until Our Sultan's book, completed under the guidance of your talents and efforts, has been honorably presented to Him, you will not share my bed" (*MNR*, 231). As a result, Black immediately commenced his search for the murderer, and eventually identified him successfully. Even though he could not bring him to justice, he made him run away to his ultimate death at the hands of Hasan who beheaded him as he mistook him as one of Black's allies. Fortunately for Black, this incident works for his advantage and, consequently leads to the elimination of two of his rivals, Hasan and Olive although Black was not aware of the latter's interested in Shekure. One has to spend his life on the run and the other meets with the death that he deserves because of his greed and insatiable ambition. At the end of the narration, Black reunited with the love of his life, fulfilled his lifelong passion and perpetual desire and spent 26 years of his life in the company of his beloved, Shekure.

2.1.2. Hasan

Hasan is another admirer of Shekure. He is the brother of her husband as well as her brother-in-law. He is madly in love with her and bestows the hopes of marrying her as Shekure's husband "who never returned from the war" (*MNR*, 43). Even though he was eight years younger than her husband and was endearing to her, Shekure expresses the possibility of her falling in love with Hasan because she "found to be more humane and reasonable than my husband, and who was obviously very much in love with me" and underlined that she "liked his humble and passionate demeanor, his pleasure in playing with my children and even the way he desirously looked at me as though he were dying of thirst and I were a glass of cold sour-cherry sherbet" (*MNR*, 54). However, despite his well-intentions and genuine care for Shekure, Hasan easily feels discontented and fails to balance his temper instigating him to display unpredictable and irrational behavior. In his brother's absence, he made plans to act as the head of the house, sold the slave who did the household chores and expected Shekure "to do the kitchen work, wash the clothes and even go out to the bazaars to do the shopping" (*MNR*, 53). In addition, Hasan crossed the line and tried to take advantage of Shekure's vulnerable situation. He attempted to defile her as Shekure stated that he "tried to corner me, kiss me and fondle me" (*MNR*, 54). Perhaps, it can be stated that Hasan's biggest mistake in making advances towards Shekure was his use of threats and his impatience in getting his carnal desires and lustful urges fulfilled as she attested that "He threatened me, cried like a baby and in his haste and fluster, never allowed time for a true and noble love to be born," and thus, she came to realize that "[she] knew [she] could never wed him" (*MNR*, 55).

Nevertheless, Hasan realized that he would not be able to win over his heart by acting violently towards her especially after Shekure returned to her father's house together with her children following his attempt to violate her. He wrote romantic and affectionate love letters with illustrations of animals on the corners which Shekure admitted that she

“recently begun to read them anew” and was greatly surprised because the letters “Hasan’s rich imagination, of which [she] wasn’t aware” (*MNR*,55). He succeeded in astonishing Shekure by his letters that he sent every day as well as in dismissing her suspicions as she confessed that “[she] was frightened of him,” but later, “[she] loved to read his letters again and again” (*MNR*, 169). As a consequence, the competition particularly between Black and Hasan for winning over Shekure’s heart intensifies, while Black persistently declared his genuine love for her in person, Hasan charmed her with his letters charged with intense emotions and rich imagination. However, Hasan becomes furious when he discovers Shekure’s wedding to Black and the death of Enishte Effendi. Both Black and Hasan accused each other of this untimely murder. On the one hand, he blamed Black and Shekure for arranging a scheme to kill Enishte Effendi because he opposed this marriage. On the other hand, Black held Hasan accountable for the murder with the motive of taking his revenge on Enishte Effendi because he would not allow Hasan to get close to her as long as he remained alive. However, Hasan’s slim chance of getting Shekure disappears when he committed the act of killing Olive thinking him to be an ally of Black. He “fled Istanbul, and disappeared, never to be heard from again” (*MNR*, 501).

2.1.3. Olive

Olive, whose real name is Velijan, is Shekure’s third admirer in the novel. He is a master in the art of miniature trained by Master Osman and the only miniaturist whose real name is revealed in the book. In the chapters of the novel he narrates, he does not disclose much about himself, but he is quite vain and arrogant concerning his artistic talent and maintains the opinion that the other artists are truly envious of him. As an artist, he is bestowed with “excess ability” and “could readily and easily do anything from gilding to ruling” (*MNR*, 310). Elsewhere in the novel, Enishte Effendi showers him with praises when he realizes that Olive came to kill him as he observes “You are the most talented, divinely inspired artist with the most enchanted touch and eye for detail” (*MNR*, 203). Master Osman recognizes the adverse dispositions of Olive and considers him to be “the most quiet and sensitive” and at the same time, “the most guilty and traitorous, and by far the most devious” (*MNR*, 312). However, he refuses to admit this violent trait of Olive and states that “He was wily, yes, but not in my opinion a murderer” (*MNR*, 312). But, he blinds himself with a needle used by “the legendary Bihzad” when it was revealed through definitive evidence that Olive was behind the murders of Elegant and Enishte Effendi. Olive also receives a death that he deserved at the hands of Hasan and was beheaded by him outside the miniaturist workshop when Hasan mistook him for one of Black’s allies.

Olive, too, is in love with Shekure as stated by Enishte Effendi “many who’d never laid eyes on her—fell in love with my daughter” (*MNR*, 28). Particularly, Olive, during his frequent visits to Enishte Effendi’s house, carefully surveyed the house and was eager to locate Shekure’s room as he reveals his intention in the novel “I couldn’t tell on which side Shekure’s room was located” (*MNR*, 149). He even lets his imagination linger around as to discover Shekure’s whereabouts in the house when he admits “I tried to illustrate in my mind’s eye where I would find my Shekure, behind which shutter” (*MNR*,149). Likewise, he grows envious of Black when he observed him leaving Enishte’s house because he confesses that he and Black “were two men in love with the same woman,” and devises several courses of action in order to get rid of Black as he considers in one of the actions he contemplates out loud “if I run ahead eight or ten paces, catch up to Black and land a blow onto his head with all my might, everything will go on as usual” (*MNR*, 150). However, Olive does not act or do anything in order to declare his love and affection

to Shekure. He simply claims that he is in love with her and aspires to marry her, but, nevertheless, he only expresses his discomfort and displeasure when he hears of his rivals in Shekure's hand in marriage. Ultimately, he meets with his death not because of his unrequited love but, because of his greed and overwhelming desire for more.

2.2. Ipek's Admirers in *Snow*

2.2.1. Kerim Alakusoglu (Ka)

Ipek's primary admirer is Ka, the protagonist of the novel. Kerim Alakusoglu, who conveniently prefers to be called with his initials, Ka, is a poet by profession, who experiences writer's block, as well as a political exile. Margaret Atwood highlights this plight of Ka as she states that Ka is a "gloomy but appealing poet who hasn't written anything in years" (Atwood, 2004, August 15). He arrived at Kars for two reasons: to rekindle romance with his college sweetheart and to write an article about the municipal elections in Kars as well to investigate a spate of suicides by girls in the city. Eileen Battersby, in her review of *Snow* entitled *Lukewarm on the Heels of the Story*, highlights Ka's priorities when she observes that "Ka is a drifter whose politics are well overshadowed by his poetry and by his obsessional love for Ipek" (Battersby, 2001, May 1). Ka's emotional attachment to Ipek dated back to his university life. He fell in love with her in his student years and has continued to admire her from afar even when he was in exile in Germany. Ka's first encounter with Ipek takes place in the lobby of the hotel where Ipek lives together with her sister, Kadife and father. She was standing behind the reception desk when Ka captured first glimpse of her. He was suddenly reminded "how beautiful she was during their university days" and felt "slightly nervous in her presence" (*Snow*, 22-23). Ka felt completely dumbfounded as well as extremely agitated and kept on wondering "how much of his agitation had to do with Ipek's beauty" (*Snow*, 23). His heart betrayed him and revealed one or two facts that his mind would have a hard-time in accepting. Apart from his desire to attend to his mother's funeral, he fostered a solemn desire to find a Turkish girl "to make his wife." He secretly wished, in deepest regions of his heart, that "this girl might be Ipek" (*Snow*, 23). As evidenced above, Ka could not get over of Ipek even after several years and felt enchanted by her beauty and charm. Here, Ipek's influence on Ka manifests itself through her physical beauty and brought back sentimental memories that they shared together during their university education.

Ka's formal meeting with Ipek takes place at a local pastry shop called the New Life Pastry Shop. On his way to the meeting point, Ka compares himself to a sad romantic hero of a Turgenev novel who was "setting off to meet the woman who has been haunting his dreams for years" (*Snow*, 31). As he entered the pastry shop and joined with Ipek, Ka felt profusely swayed by her glamorous beauty and alluring complexion and made him feel "unsettled" with "true extent of her beauty—her lightly colored lips, her pale complexion, her shining eyes, her open, intimate gaze" because Ipek "seemed even more beautiful now than at the hotel, lovelier even than she had been at university" (*Snow*, 31). After an exchange of pleasantries, when Ipek enquires about his real reason to travel to Kars, Ka assumes a direct approach and reveals his underlying intention when he stated "I found out in Istanbul that you and Muhtar had separated. I came here to marry you" (*Snow*, 35). Ipek was not charmed this remark of Ka and responded to it with a laughter as if she heard a very good joke. She would have rather preferred Ka to take his time to get to know her better and to engage in a game of flirtation with her. She believed that Ka simply took advantage of her desperate situation when she stated

You're so impatient that you couldn't hide your intentions at all. Don't try to pretend you came here because you always loved me and couldn't get me out of your mind. You came here because you found out I was divorced and remembered how beautiful I was and thought I might be easier to approach now that I was stranded in Kars (*Snow*, 36).

Upon this straightforward and blunt remark of Ipek, Ka felt ashamed of himself for being insensitive and selfish and determined to punish himself for his insolent conduct. Herein, Ipek uttered "the cruelest truth of all" and reminded Ka that, even though her life in Kars was harsh and bleak, she was not utterly desperate to leave this place and to start a new life elsewhere with a man who was only interested in her physical beauty and wished to capitalize on her sheer desperation.

Seemingly, Ka was experiencing the writer's block before he arrived in Kars but was showered with inspiration during his stay in Kars partly due to his experiences and partly due to Ipek's influence on him. He received inspiration to compose his first poem after several years and even calls it "Snow". Ka was lost in words and fails to understand how this happened, but offered a probable explanation and tells Ipek that "it's possible that this poem came to me thanks to you" (*Snow*, 88). Not only, he wrote 19 poems, but also succeeded in attaining intimacy with Ipek and convinced her to accompany him to Germany during the course of his stay in the city. After a blissful moment in the company of Ipek, Ka declared that "the greatest happiness in life was to embrace a beautiful, intelligent girl and sit in a corner writing poetry" (*Snow*, 245). However, this ecstatic moment did not last long and things took a different turn when Ka discovered Ipek's affair with Blue. He grew extremely jealous and divulged Blue's hideout to Z Demirkol, the vicious head of intelligence, and his soldiers and thus caused his violent death. Ka's pursuit of happiness was not fulfilled because Ipek had a change of heart and she decided not to leave with Ka. Ka had to leave Kars alone and when his train left the station, "the only thing she felt was heartbreak" and "after that night, she knew, there was no hope of ever loving him again" (*Snow*, 396). Ülker Gökberk, commenting on Ka's betrayal, stated that "Ka's act of betrayal, omitted from the narrative and suggested only by the course of events, entails primarily jealousy and passion, not political motivations" (Gökberk, 2008:10). Thus Ka's plans to start a new life with Ipek in Frankfurt fell apart and, tragically, he dies completely alone in Germany. Even though he successfully managed to have the biggest obstacle between him and Ipek, namely, Blue, removed, and the fact that Muktar had not a viable threat in his union, Ka failed to make Ipek love him and this became evident while talking to Ka's friend, Orhan bey when Ipek admitted "I loved Blue with all my heart" (*Snow*, 420).

2.2.2. Muhtar

Muhtar is Ipek's ex-husband and wants to get back with her. He is an appliance dealer by profession, and a poet like Ka, even if frustrated. He has been friends with Ka and Ipek during his university studies. Ipek has been a focus and target of affection and love both by Ka and Muhtar. Muhtar attained an enormous advantage over Ka by his successful attempts in getting into Ipek's graces and in convincing her into a matrimonial union with him. However, he failed to honor Ipek's choice even though he had been married with her for several years and they split due to her inability to conceive a baby. Eventually he realizes his mistake and cherishes hopes to reunite with her. He wants to re-marry her, and asks Ka to do him a favor in conveying a message to Ipek that expresses how much he regrets his actions. He reveals his intention to get back with Ipek when he informs Ka

"Tell her I am through acting like a jealous provincial husband; that I'm ashamed and sorry for the pressures I put her under during our marriage" (*Snow*, 61). It is evident that Muhtar could not get over Ipek and still fosters feelings of love and affection for her and maintains the earnest and grave hopes that she would give her a second-chance if Ka intervenes on his behalf because Ka has "come all the way from Istanbul, all the way from Germany even" (*Snow*, 62). At this moment Ka admired Muhtar and felt respect for him for being "pure and openhearted" and despised himself because he did not possess these qualities. However, Muhtar is not aware of Ka's real purpose in visiting Kars when he is requesting him to vouch for him in Ipek's presence. Despite his sincere attempts to reconcile with Ipek, Muhtar failed to persuade her about the candor and veracity of his promise for two reasons: firstly she knew that he was not sincere because "he says it every day" (*Snow*, 88) and, secondly, she admitted that she could not love him even if she "tried hard to love Muhtar" (*Snow*, 420).

After his separation from Ipek, Muhtar Bey turns to religion and then to politics and becomes the mayoral candidate for the Party of God. Muhammed Noufal regarded him as "an important spokesperson of Conservative Islam in the novel" (Noufal, 2017: 176). Contrary to Blue, he is not a radical Islamist and Pamuk apparently used him as a spokesperson with an intention to explain the inherent nature of political Islam. As an enthusiastic candidate, he is quite confident that he will be declared victorious in the election in four days and become the next mayor of Kars. Muhtar's confidence is well-founded and reasonable and he, in the words of Serdar Bey, the owner of the local newspaper, is "the only candidate the people trust" due to the prevalent commonplace hatred and division stimulated by "blood feuds, ethnic issues, and other destructive rivalries" (*Snow*, 26) even though, as a political candidate, he is not very bright, he is expected to attract votes of Kurdish people, who make up the forty percent of the city's population, because of his Kurdish identity. Although Muhtar's political career came to a halt when his party was shut down after the coup, he fostered the confidence and firm belief that he would "sure to be the candidate of the new Islamist party the next time there was an election and he would be mayor" (*Snow*, 411). Muhtar might have lost in love, but he is confident that he would achieve success in politics.

2.2.3. Blue

Blue is the third man involved with Ipek and Ka's biggest rival in his mission to win over Ipek's heart. He is an electronics engineer by profession and is a very charismatic man with his ties to terrorism. Paul Bailey pinpoints this appealing characteristic of Blue when he states that "Blue is flamboyant in his crafty way," only "outmatched in flamboyance by Sunay Zaim and his wife Funda Eser" (Bailey, 2004, May 14). Pamuk presented him in the novel as a "brown-haired and beardless" exceptionally handsome young man with "an aquiline nose and breathtakingly pale skin" (*Snow*, 72). Blue is regarded as the chief villain in the novel due to the recurring acts of violence and terrorism in the city. Known as "Master" among his admirers, he is a celebrity "political Islamist of some notoriety" hiding in Kars, who came to Kars with a mission to stop the suicide epidemic (*Snow*, 69). Despite the popularity and fame that he enjoys, Blue attracted criticism and derision from Islamists as well as secularists and was accused of "bloodying the hands' of political Islam," becoming "the plaything of the secularist press," gaining popularity in media in a "manner unbecoming a Muslim" and being in "the pay of the CIA" (*Snow*, 70). However, as a matter of fact, Blue is a leader of fundamental Islamic movement and his fanaticism or radicalism originate from his religious belief. Raising his complaints on the servitude of the Turkish press to the Western press, Blue expressed his belief that a press which is not independent and easily falls under the influence of others

cannot ensure its survival. Therefore, he urged Ka not “to write about the suicide girls, either for a Turkish paper or a European one” (Snow, 75). His resentment and criticism for the West intensifies and reaches its peak when he utters “I refuse to be a European, and I won’t ape their ways. I’m going to live out my own history and be no one but myself. I, for one, believe it’s possible to be happy without becoming a mock-European, without becoming their slave” (Snow, 324). It is evident that Blue refuses to imitate the West and rather prefers to assert his individualism and to protect his cultural identity which proves to be a source of pride for him. Therefore, he wishes to remain distant from the European culture in order to maintain and to preserve this pride.

Apart from his ties to radicalism and extremism, Blue is a charismatic and silver-tongued man who is a serial womanizer and has an innate talent in seducing women. He has no hesitation to start a new relationship before he ends the last one. He was involved with a good many of mistresses, including Ipek, her sister, Kadife and, his latest girlfriend, Hande. Andre Furman enumerates Blue’s characteristics when he states that Blue is a man with a composite of “curiously familiar admixture of charisma, sexual charm and outward gentleness” (Furman, 2004, August 15). Ka might be an expert with words, but Blue is an expert in charming and seducing women. He is referred to as “blue-eyed Casanova” in the novel. Blue’s first relationship was with Ipek and their affair began when Ipek was still married as Blue frequently visited their home upon the invitation of her husband, Muhtar as their marriage was going through a rough patch. As Ka himself witnessed, Blue “had a way with words and so knew just how to turn the head of an unhappy woman” and Ipek’s husband kept on showing his great respect and “urging him to visit Kars more often and chiding Ipek for not treating him with more hospitality and tolerance” (Snow, 360). However, Blue shifted his attention towards Ipek’s sister, Kadife, when she associated herself with the head-scarf girls in order “to get closer to Blue” (Snow, 361). It was only when Blue began returning Kadife’s feelings that Ipek distanced herself from Blue and thus, she “was able to keep her faithless lover at bay” (Snow, 361). Even though Blue ended his relationship with both sisters, his influence on them still persisted. While Ipek admits that she could not get over him when she confronting Ka as she stated “He’s very compassionate, Blue, very thoughtful and generous” (Snow, 364), Kadife “promised to bare her head on live television” at the expense of going against her belief in order to secure Blue’s release from captivity (Snow, 353).

2.3. Janan’s Admirers in *The New Life*

2.3.1. Mehmet

Janan’s first admirer is a young man named Mehmet. He is a “pale, tall and thin” university student with whom Janan fell in love. Mehmet is the one who read the book and made radical changes in life. He was studying medicine, but he “quit it in order to devote all his time to the life in the book” (TNL, 75). He completely abandoned his past with the aim of assuming a new life. He changed his name to Osman and cut off his relations with his father and family. In the words of Bradford Morrow, Mehmet is “in many ways Osman’s doppelganger who had likewise fallen under the book’s indomitable spell” (Morrow, 1997, July 13). Shortly after he was being introduced to Osman by his girlfriend, Janan, and finding out his desire to search for the new world, Mehmet sincerely asked him to stop pursuing his desire to discover the life described in the book because he himself undertook the long bus rides and escaped dangers in search of this new life and eventually managed to come back from the world of the book full of apprehension and dread. He informed him of his own experiences and gave him the following advice: “Believe me, at the end there is nothing but death. They kill without

mercy. They could be watching us even now" (*TNL*, 30). Mehmet tried hard to convince Osman into giving up his plans to search for the new life the book promised as he stated "It doesn't exist. Think of it as tomfoolery perpetrated on children by an old sap. The old man thought he'd write a book to entertain adults the same way he did children...but if you believe it, your life is lost" (*TNL*, 31). However, Mehmet was gunned down at a bus stop and disappeared mysteriously without a trace.

Mehmet met Janan at a hotel where he was working at the reception desk. They saw each other more when the academic session began in the fall. They spent time together and enjoyed each other's company. Eventually, they fell in love with other. He was not very articulate and talkative as a result of the grief that he felt due to the life he left behind and assumed a new identity. In the words of Janan, he "desired a new life" and turned his back to his past because "his past meant nothing to him" (*TNL*, 62). However, due to "the terrors he had encountered on his quest," he returned feeling upset and disconsolate, but it was Janan who kept him company and provided support as she stated "I convinced him that together we'd make it there" (*TNL*, 78). Janan exercised a certain amount of influence on Mehmet even if it was 'modest' and was able to beguile him "through her perseverance and protestations of anxiety" (*TNL*, 63). Nevertheless, after the failed assassination attempt, Mehmet left the city abruptly without any trace, and, Janan, his girlfriend and beloved, set off in long and tedious bus journeys in search of him and the new life as she declared "We were looking for clues to get us There and find Mehmet" (*TNL*,72). In the end, he was tracked down by Osman who undertook the task of finding the number of men named Mehmet in his list and, finally, was shot by him at the movie theater. Thus, Osman eliminated his rival on his quest to win over Janan's heart, but he also returned home empty-handed when he discovered that she left without any word or trace.

2.3.2. Osman

Osman is Janan's second admirer. He is an engineering student, who became obsessed with a book and fell in love with a girl, Janan, who shared the same obsession. He was fascinated with Janan in his first meeting with her and, was equally mesmerized when he received a kiss from Janan. He expressed his utter surprise and kept on cherishing the moment of the kiss when he stated "No one had ever kissed me like that before, no one had ever looked at me like that" (*TNL*, 22). He felt determined to pursue her and was willing to do everything in his power to be with her as he stated "Mom, I am in love. I am slipping away, Mom. Mom, I am afraid, I do anything for her" (*TNL*, 23). Osman admitted that he "was head over heels in love" and "had come to realize my[his] guiding spirit could be none other than Janan" (*TNL*, 32). He felt miserable and depressed after Janan disappeared and he failed to find any traces of her. He frequented the places that he encountered Janan and engaged in fantasies that involved her hanging out in cafeteria or classrooms. The longing that he felt for Janan and the torment that he experienced in her absence heightened his anguish and he found solace and comfort in unusual habits he formed as he stated "I called up and asked after her under twenty-eight different guises, each time using a different voice; and I would not go home before I said Janan thirty-nine times, forming her name in my imagination with the letters I extracted from billboards, posters, flashing neon signs" (*TNL*, 40). Growing tired of his hopeless search for Janan and weary of his pointless existence in his routine life, Osman felt that he needed to make changes and decided to embark on a journey in search of both this new life and Janan as he justified his plan: "New life could begin only by my leaving that room; if I were to keep leaving that room in the morning only to return to it at night, I could never reach Janan nor that land" (*TNL*, 40).

Osman's fascination with the book and the new life that it reveals was manifested with the declaration in the opening lines of the book: "I read a book one day and my whole life was changed" (*TNL*, 3). Like a liberating captivation, the book permitted him to take a quick glance at a murky conspiracy and a potential eternal love. It prompted him to re-evaluate his life and triggered a realization about its triviality as evidenced in his fascination with the new life and monotony of his life: "the more I turned the pages, the more a world that I could have never imagined, or perceived, pervaded my being and took hold of my soul. All the things I had known or considered previously had now become trivial details" (*TNL*, 5). Dan Cryer addressed this transformation in Osman and stated that he "becomes a convert to a passion resembling a faith, eager to shed the meaningless routine of his old life and leap into the new one, no matter what the cost." (Cryer, 1997, April 14). Having been convinced that the new life could only begin after he leaves his home and embarks on a journey, Osman haphazardly got on a bus and rode into unknown destinations across Turkish landscape "so determined to find the unknown realm" (*TNL*, 44). During the course of his journeys, Osman witnessed fatal accidents, lifeless bodies and blood-soaked passengers, assumed a new identity and reunited with Janan with whom he continued his trip. Together, they located Mehmet's family, and got acquainted with Mehmet's father, the eccentric Dr. Fine who ran a secret organization in order to "keep watch on his rebellious son and to murder readers of the book" (Stone, 1997, April 27). Having been convinced that Mehmet is still alive, Osman embarked another journey with an aim to find and to eliminate him, considering him to be the biggest competitor for Janan's affections. However, Osman did not kill Mehmet out of jealousy, but only killed him when he realized that Mehmet deviated from the path the book guide them and rendered it unreachable for him: "So it was no longer because I wanted to possess Janan, but because he did not believe in you, O Angel, that on my way to the station I contemplated plugging him" (*TNL*, 228). Nevertheless, Osman's act of murdering Mehmet did not yield total happiness and peace for Osman. Towards the end, he made up his mind to return home, embraced his former identity and re-integrated with his life.

2.3.3. Dr. Mehmet

Dr. Mehmet is the third admirer and, eventually the husband of Janan. He is a doctor of residency by profession. He amazed Osman with "his clean-shaven face or his physically fit and self-confident manner" (*TNL*, 199). Mehmet heightened Osman's admiration when he found out that while the book had adverse effects on his life and disoriented it, the same book had a favorable impact on doctor's life and changed it in a positive direction as he expressed his surprise: "How could the very book that had changed my world and screwed up my destiny have affected this man as if it were a vitamin pill?" (*TNL*, 199) Dr. Mehmet passed on a piece of advice to him and suggested him to underline the book while reading in order to grasp the pure meaning of the book by avoiding any subjective analysis. He went through some issues related to the loss of his religious faith, falling in love with a girl and embracing Marxist views, and feeling emptiness, but it was through the book that he saw in "a friend's library" and carefully read it "everything fallen into place" (*TNL*, 200). He made his peace with life and "accepted its reality like an undeniable tree in the garden, or a friend in the street" and "quit being rebellious" (*TNL*, 200).

Dr. Mehmet is the most fortunate one of Janan's admirers. In the end, he gets to be the one reuniting his life with her. There is no indication in the book whether Dr. Mehmet cherished love or affections towards Janan or if she bestowed any feelings of love for him. Regardless of what the case is, Dr. Mehmet is Janan's ultimate choice of life partner because her boyfriend, Mehmet was nowhere to be spotted, and Osman ventured into

new sets of bus journeys when she was lying sick on the bed. Osman found out about Janan's marriage to Dr. Mehmet through a "garrulous woman" who happened to recount all the marriages that took place in that year and his own investigations that "she married a doctor from Samsun, and they settled down in Germany" (TNL, 240).

Conclusion

Orhan Pamuk's heroines, Shekure, Ipek and Janan, are women of strong and vigorous character and had a hard time in determining whom to choose as a partner in life. Shekure, in *My Name is Red*, was compelled to marry out of necessity because her husband had been absent leaving her and her children behind, and her invaluable supporter, her father, was brutally killed by a fellow artist. Even though she dismissed Hasan's advances earlier but was drawn towards him due to romantic letters he sent, Shekure decided to marry Black because he proved to be a man that she could count on and she was convinced that she has feelings of love and affection for him. Black, prompted by Shekure's love and her irresistible influence that she exercised on him, did not mind endangering his life in search of Shekure's father's murderer even at the extent of sustaining physical injury. Although she agreed to marry Black immediately after her father's demise due to her vulnerability, she refused to consummate her marriage with Black and charged him with the tasks of identifying Enishte Effendi's murderer and completing the book commissioned by the Sultan. Despite Black's failure to complete this precious book, Shekure joined her life with him in a sacred matrimony because he managed to earn her trust and, eventually hand in marriage.

In *Snow*, Ipek has been involved with three admirers, Ka, Blue and Muhtar. However, she remained alone at the end of the book because she realized that she was in love only with the notorious terrorist, Blue and, even though, made plans to unite her life with the poet, Ka, she had a change of heart after she discovered that Ka revealed Blue's whereabouts and thus, had him killed. Ka had no alternative but to return to Germany alone where he eventually met his death. Muhtar, who happened to be Ipek's ex-husband, regretted his actions and sought another change from her through his assertive pleas and assurances that he had changed and would never mistreat her again. The charismatic terrorist, Blue, had no intention of getting back with Ipek and had already moved on as he enjoyed having numerous mistresses and was not interested in making any kinds of commitments. Moreover, he was discovered in his hideout and was mercilessly murdered by the security forces. Thus, Ipek still remains unattached at the end of the novel as she was at the beginning.

Like Shekure, Janan, in *The New Life*, ended up with one of her admirers, namely Dr. Mehmet, but there was no indication in the book whether her union with him was a marriage of affection and love or a marriage of convenience. Janan married him, left the country and settled down in Germany with him. However, her other admirers, Mehmet and Osman, met with their deaths. Her first admirer, boyfriend, Mehmet, ran away after an assassination attempt, assumed a different identity, but, eventually, was located by Osman who killed him because he wanted to eliminate a competition for Janan's affections and, also because Mehmet didn't believe in the new life suggested by the book. Janan's another admirer, Osman, fell in love with her when he first met her, decided to leave his home and his mother after Janan disappeared with the intention of tracking her down as well as discovering the new life that he was fascinated about. However, Osman failed to unite with Janan even after he killed his rival, Mehmet, because Janan had already left when he returned from his trips and had never seen her again in person apart from the news that Janan got married and left the country with her husband. Like

Mehmet, Osman also met with his death as a result of the road accident that he was involved in on his way to return home.

The findings of the study suggest that these three women, Shekure, Ipek and Janan, exercised prominent influence on the leading male characters of the three novels selected for the study. They successfully asserted their will and desires on major male characters and stimulated them to act in line with these desires. The author, Orhan Pamuk, broke away from the common practice of portraying weak, subjugated and subdued women seen in earlier works of literature and introduced the readers with strong-willed, determined, and steadfast women.

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