The Role of Religion in Shaping and Reshaping Inclusive and Exclusive Communities in Literature

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Edited by

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To My Parents

For Their Constant Support

This book contains graphic discussions of subjects of a sensitive matter; such subjects include rape, sexual violence and surrounding issues. While CSP works to ensure that any and all subjects of this nature are discussed in a matter than is appropriate, relevant and sensitive, we wish to give our readers due notice that the discussions may be distressing for those affected by these issues.

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INTRODUCTION

KAMELIA TALEBIAN SEDEHI

The term "utopia" was first used in English literature and culture after Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* which represented an ideal paradise. However, the main use of utopia had been traced back to Plato's *The Republic*. Sir Thomas More was inspired by the discoveries during the Renaissance and he wrote *Utopia* in order to show a different form of organization which led to a better way of living. The comparison between the real place and the ideal place is the key in the utopian texts. Utopia is an ideal place that was built by humans to be lived by humans (Longxi 2002, 2). The writers criticize the present condition, provide possible alternatives in their writing, and outlive new perspectives which give hope to the possibility of social improvement.

During Modernism, rise of Capitalism, Socialism, and Authoritarianism, the word dystopia emerged as a response to utopia. Dystopian literature focused on the peril of Capitalism, Totalitarianism, and many other social movements that repressed liberty. However, the very first appearance of the word dystopia dates back to 1868 "and is to be found in parliamentary speech in which John Stuart Mill tried to find a name for a perspective which was opposite to that of utopia. If utopia was too bad to be practicable,' then dystopia was 'too bad to be practicable.' (Claeys 2010, 16). Later on, "political projects of the twentieth century, the plurality of existential threats looming over the globalized world, and the hegemony of global capitalism converge to form a cultural milieu inundated with grim vision of the future" which led to the rise of dystopian literature (Jergenson 2019, 488). Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1921) Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), and George Orwells' *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) were the main major dystopian novels during the modern era. Dystopian authors compare the real world with future world in which political and social evils have upper hand and lead the society to a place where nobody wants to live. The dystopic authors focus on the politicians who govern the societies according to their self-interests; however, their writing is a warning to their readers. They depict the possibility of a disaster and bring awareness to their readers.

Previous books such as Chris Ferns' Narrating Utopia: Ideology, Gender, Form in Utopian Literature (1999) discussed the reason why utopian dreams of freedom have been recently written by women and he provided detailed analysis of texts to justify his reasons. Erika Gottlieb's Dystopian Fiction East and West: Universe of Terror and Trial (2001) emphasized the salvation of humans through history and justice. Mary E. Theis' Mothers and Masters in Contemporary Utopian and Dystopian Literature (2009) highlighted the importance of mothers as educators and then connecting nature and mothers and focusing on the reflection of violation of mother nature in dystopian literature. *Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature* (2010) by Gregory Claeys dealt with ecology, colonial/ postcolonial literature and feminism, while Thomas Horan's Desire and Empathy in Twentieth-Century Dystopian Fiction (2018) focused on ethical concerns embedded in dystopian literature. In relation to question of ethics, Franziska Bork Petersen's *Body Utopianism*: Prosthetic Being Between Enhancement and Estrangement (2022) focused on the idea of human desire to go beyond human body's limitations. Her book deals with estranging and critiquing the status quo applied to human body. While past and present research has successfully mapped utopian and dystopian literature, the matter of religion deserves further attention, especially in view of shaping inclusive and exclusive societies which further leads to utopian and dystopian communities. The aim of this book is to provide literary analysis of some selected literary texts and emphasize the sociological importance of religion in shaping and reshaping communities.

The chapters of the current book will focus on three major themes that are associated with notion of place, censorship, and social justice. Chapters One to Four examine the texts which focus on the notion of place and home in Turkey, Ireland, New England, and Austria. The first chapter investigates historiographic metafiction in The Daughters of Allah to discuss how this style of narrative gives voice to delicate religious topics such as the emergence of Islam. As a postmodern novel, the story retells the Islamic history. The chapter also merges memory, historiography, and rewriting through Genette's narratological techniques. Skepticism about the authenticity of religious texts has been met with various attempts to suppress and silence it throughout history. In addition, any new interpretation of a given religion's history that falls outside the widely accepted, established narratives has been subjected to a similar attempt of silencing. In a utopian society where believers and non-believers can live in peace, elements that are considered religious truths should also be debated, and different interpretations of the actions and utterances of the prophets and other faith leaders should be possible. In societies where such

discussions are restricted and different views on religion are excluded, Nedim Gürsel's novel *Daughters of Allah* can contribute to the formation of an inclusive society where the views of non-believers or groups with different beliefs are valued as well. The second chapter explores O'Duffy's Cuanduine Trilogy: *King Goshawk and the Birds*, *The Spacious Adventures of the Man in the Street*, and *Asses in Clover* and how it depicts dogmatism and capitalism which dominated Ireland and how religion leads to struggles for identity formation. O'Duffy's narrative portrays the status quo in actual Ireland, and her dystopic vision encourages the readers to create a new non-dogmatic community against the colonial past and present dogmatic society. Chapter Three focuses on the development of Ingeborg Bachmann's idea of "community" by elaborating the specificity of a literature that contains both the found and the desired. The "utopia" Bachmann imagines is to be understood less as a goal than as a "direction". To describe the community of juxtaposition that Bachmann's envisions in her poem "Bohemia Lies by the Sea". Chapter Four discusses that New England topography haunts Wharton to such an extent that it can be summoned imaginatively as a utopian/dystopian scenario in the middle of a bustling Paris, as is the case with Madame de Treymes. Both the stark New England community depicted in *Ethan Frome* and the austere "Mountain" from *Summer* are examples of inclusive and exclusive communities. The opening chapter of *Ethan Frome* suggests an account drawn from oral tradition, measuring the spontaneity of speech against the permanency of print. The narrator, by emphasizing the lonely and "scattered mountain villages" and "bigger towns in the valleys", shows how the rugged higher altitudes become geographic saliences of remoteness.

Chapters Five and Six of the book deal with censorship within societies that lead to suppression and exclusion of certain groups and inclusion of the others. As such, the fifth chapter on *The Handmaid's Tale* focuses on the religious totalitarian government and its role in suppressing women and leaving them with no social, educational, or sexual rights. The novel is analyzed through Greer's concept of female eunuch and Cixous's concept of feminine writing. While the fifth chapter is mainly on suppression of women, the sixth chapter deals with the censors of the books and the increase in the power of television and media. Technological advancement which is shown in Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* deprives people of a liberal humanist society. In his vision of dystopic and totalitarian community, moral framework is defined by television culture and mass media.

Finally, chapters seven and eight deal with social criticism. The seventh chapter on Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* and Namina Forna's *the Gilded Ones* focus on the need for an alternative religion for humans in desperate times. The two selected novels explore a journey from one religion to another; therefore, from suppression to a more liberal society. The author criticizes the society and how religion leads to inclusive and exclusive communities. The eighth chapter also deals with social inclusion and exclusion in the light of religious rules. The chapter deals with Octavia E. Butler's Earthseed trilogy and its negotiation between dystopian and utopian modes. The chapter furthers away and claims that social inclusion should not embrace only people, but also non-human species.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PAST IS A DANGEROUS COUNTRY: HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION, MEMORY AND RELIGION IN NEDIM GÜRSEL'S *THE DAUGHTERS OF ALLAH*

BARIŞ YILMAZ

Introduction

Nedim Gürsel (1951-) is a Turkish writer and literary critic who was born in Gaziantep, southeastern Turkey, but has lived in Paris since the 1970s as a political exile. Gürsel, who was introduced to French culture at a young age by his father, who was a French teacher, entered Galatasaray High School, a well-established institution in Turkey offering French-language instruction, before enrolling in French philology at university. Yet, it was not because of Gürsel's keen interest in French language and literature that he settled in France, but rather following the military memorandum of 1971, one of Turkey's periodic coups d'états, when he was sentenced to 7.5 years in jail for his essays on Lenin and Gorky. After being forced to flee his homeland due to a political incident, he managed to find a new home in Paris. He was able to secure a scholarship and enrolled at Sorbonne University, where he earned a degree in Modern French Literature. Later, in 1979, he successfully completed his doctoral degree, in which he compared the works of Turkish poet Nâzım Hikmet and French poet Louis Aragon, and returned to Turkey. Nevertheless, following the 1980 military coup d'état, after which his books *Uzun Sürmüş Bir Yaz* (1975, A Summer without End) and *Kadınlar Kitabı* (1982, The Book of Women) were confiscated on the grounds of "insulting and disparaging the security forces of the state" and "obscenity", respectively, he unwillingly left Turkey and relocated to Paris. Gürsel has lived in Paris since then, where he taught Turkish literature at the Sorbonne and lectures at INALCO (*Institut*

National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales). He is a member of the PEN International, a founding member of the International Parliament of Writers and has received several awards in Turkey and France (Belge 2010, 491; Balık 2019). Furthermore, when we think about postmodern historical novels, he is one of the first authors in Turkish literature that immediately springs to mind, next to Orhan Pamuk and İhsan Oktay Anar (Ecevit 2001, 92; Yalçın-Çelik 2005, 82–83).

There is no doubt that this profile represents the persona of a writer who, in any case, challenges authority and does not hesitate to provoke the reader as well. Gürsel often chooses topics that are controversial and are likely to stir up debate, such as politics, history, and religion. One of his most renowned novels, which has been translated into English, is *Boğazkesen: Fatih'in Romanı* (1995, The Conqueror: A Novel [2010]). The novel delves into the life of *Fatih Sultan Mehmet* (Mehmed II The Conqueror), the Ottoman sultan who conquered Constantinople, while simultaneously introducing the protagonist, Fatih, who is portrayed as a writer and embodies someof Gürsel's own characteristics. Fatih, whose name means conqueror, aims to compose a historical novel centered around the conquest of Istanbul and the life of Mehmet II. In the meantime, he bears witness to the events surrounding the military coup of 1980 in Turkey, which are interwoven with the historical narrative of Fatih the Conqueror's conquest. As a product of postmodern rewriting, the novel relies heavily on the tension between the fictionalization of historical events and the factual nature of writing. This fundamental contradiction or connection is a key component of the work's thematic and stylistic foundations. Nedim Gürsel's *Boğazkesen* presents a plot that focuses on the anxiety experienced by a writer attempting to establish themselves as a legitimate author. The challenges of writing are connected to a dramatic pursuit of rewriting history in a novel form, which is further complicated by the need to situate this rewritten history within a contemporary context. The novel's depiction of the struggle to transform history by means of rewriting it demonstrates the dramatic aspects of the postmodern genre (Aktulum 2015, 12–13). The characterization of Mehmed II in the novel as a ruthless and violent figure with the epithet "Boğazkesen" (Throatcutter), a figure highly revered in Turkish history, caused significant discomfort among conservative and nationalist groups. The controversial nature of the novel was such that Gürsel found it necessary to defend his work by providing an explanation of the intended purpose of the historical novel in one of his articles (Gürsel 1997, 74–75). Similarly, *Daughters of Allah* has sparked much debate and resulted in the author facing a lawsuit in Turkey for "inciting religious hatred" due to its topic, which appears to probe some sensitive areas of

Islamic history (Lea 2009). The title of the novel must be provocative enough to elicit a strong reaction from those who are unaware of its content or have not read it yet.

Linda Hutcheon has coined the term "historiographic metafiction" to refer to a particular form of historical fiction that incorporates the author's apprehension about the writing process into the narrative while simultaneously and inherently challenging the notion that historical narratives are based on incontrovertible facts. In this regard, Nedim Gürsel's novel *The Daughters of Allah*, the focus of this chapter, is also a prime example of historiographic metafiction. Examining the novel from this particular vantage point will yield several outcomes, including exposing the areas that the authorized historical account overlooks or intentionally conceals, formulating a hypothesis concerning the inherent inconsistencies in constructing a historical narrative, and possessing the capacity to articulate the unspoken by exploring a historically delicate topic such as the pre-Islamic Hijaz history, the life of Muhammed, and the emergence of Islam. To that end, it is necessary to present the theory of historiographic metafiction, explicate the manner in which historical narrative is approached in postmodernist literature, and subsequently scrutinize the novel by employing this approach as a framework. This study's significance lies in its exploration of a postmodernist, revisionist, and perspectivist retelling of Islamic history, which has been largely uncharted territory aside from Salman Rushdie's controversial novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988). Another objective of the study to assert that *The Daughters of Allah* can be categorized alongside other literary works that provide unconventional perspectives on religious figures and doctrines, surpassing established narratives. Examples of such works include Nikos Kazancakis' *O Χριστός Ξαναστανρώνετα* (1948; *Christ Recrucified*) and Jose Saramago's *O Evangelho Segundo Jesus Cristo* (1991; *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ*) and *Caim* (2009; *Cain*). In addition to these, I will make use of the theories presented in Gerard *Genette's Narrative Discourse* (1983) to analyze how historical narrative is embedded in individual experience in the novel through certain narratological techniques that overlap with metafiction. To achieve these objectives, it is necessary to begin by explaining the terms and concepts that will be used throughout the research.

Historiographic Metafiction, or Postmodern Historical Narratives

Historical novels have taken on various approaches over time, including realism, romanticism, nationalism, social criticism, and myth-making. Many historical novels of the 19th century aimed for a high level of historical accuracy, often using real-life historical events, figures, and settings as the backdrop for fictional stories. This emphasis on realism was intended to give readers a sense of the past "as it really was", while also making the story more engaging and relatable. Another popular approach to the historical novel in the 19th century was romanticism, which emphasized emotional expression and imagination over historical accuracy. Romantic historical novels often featured melodramatic plots, larger-than-life heroes and heroines, and exotic or fantastical settings, and they appealed to readers' desires for adventure and escape. In addition to these, the historical novel has also been used for specific purposes. A lot of historical novels during the 19th century were also driven by a sense of national pride and identity. Authors sought to create stories that celebrated their country's past and its people, often using historical events or figures as symbols of national character or strength. Certain historical novels were composed as a form of social critique, adopting a historical materialist framework to utilize the past as a tool to scrutinize present-day concerns. These literary works often analyzed and assessed established cultural practices, political systems, or inequities within society through a critical lens. There were also novels aimed to create or reinforce myths about the past, which often portrayed historical figures or events in a way that was not entirely accurate, but helped to construct a powerful cultural narrative that resonated with readers.

A historical novel could even contribute to the invention of a tradition, such as the *Waverley Novels* by Walter Scott, which "combined with the Highland regiments to spread fashion for kilts and tartans throughout Europe" (Trevor-Roper 2013, 28). Lukács (1989) contends that Scott, in contrast to simply recounting important historical occurrences, accomplished a poetic stimulation of individuals involved in those events. Through his historical novels, he facilitated a renewed encounter with the societal and individual factors that motivated people to perceive, emote, and behave precisely as they did within the historical context and the others followed his example (42). Of course, this viewpoint was also founded on the concept of dialectic in which society was envisioned learning from these big upheavals and demanding change.

After the 1960s, however, the idea of the historical novel went through significant transformations due to postmodernity. The change in the general expectation of literature and distrust of grand narratives allowed authors to be more flexible in their approach to interpreting the past, and this shift was fueled by a sense of urgency and desperation that emerged in the mid-twentieth century. Writers turned to the past as a means of elucidating the turbulent conditions of their present era (Cowart 1989, 1). Historical fiction's primary aim was no longer to simply recount past events for didactic, natioanlistic, or prosaic purposes, but to challenge the authenticity of traditional historical writing through a more recent historical narrative that asserts equal legitimacy. This has resulted in the assimilation of postmodern techniques into the historical novel of the era. In particular, contemporary authors interrogated the authority of narrative and destabilized established accounts, which constituted fundamental aspects of their approach to the past (de Groot 2009, 108).

The postmodern historical novel, "historiographic metafiction" in particular, goes beyond traditional historical novels' context-bound emphasis on presenting factual accounts of the past. It engages in a deconstructive discourse that calls into question the supposed factual accuracy of historiography. In challenging not only the quasi-realism of the historical novel but also the verifiability of historiographic arguments, it destabilizes truth claims – textual and non-textual – within the historical narrative. This destabilization is emphasized by the term "metafiction", which underscores the problem of narrative representation of history. The employment of postmodern techniques such as parody, irony, intertextuality, hypertext, and textual ambiguity is essential to this discourse.

Linda Hutcheon defines historiographic metafiction as a literary genre that intentionally creates paradoxical situations while focusing extensively on the concepts of referentiality and representation, based on mostly Hayden White's *metahistory* theory (1973):

> … this kind of fiction (*Star Turn, A Maggot, The Old Gringo, Ragtime*, and so on) not only is self-reflexively metafictional and parodic, but also makes a claim to some kind of (newly problematized) historical reference. It does not so much deny as contest the "truths" of reality and fiction—the human constructs by which we manage to live in our world. Fiction does not mirror reality; nor does it reproduce it. It cannot. There is no pretense of simplistic mimesis in historiographic metafiction. Instead, fiction is offered as another of the discourses by which we construct our versions of reality, and both the construction and the need for it are what are foregrounded in the postmodernist novel. (Hutcheon 2004, 40)

In view of all these explanations, we can say that *Daughters of Allah*, which deals with the emergence of Islam from a different perspective, that of the idols of the pre-Islamic period, and also includes metafiction, is a novel that is fit to be analyzed within this framework.

Searching for the Real Islam: *Daughters of Allah*

Daughters of Allah is an in-depth examination of the tension between popular and scriptural interpretations of religion. Due to the cultural diversity within the Islamic world, the understanding and interpretation of Islam in Turkey can vary significantly from that in other regions such as the Arabian Peninsula and beyond. The novel establishes a connection between the Islam imparted by the narrator's devout grandfather, who fought for the Ottoman Empire in Hejaz during World War I, and the inflexibility of the established and historical version of Islam. This analogy explores two distinct historical periods. The first chronicles the prevalence of three goddess idols called "Lat, Uzza and Manat", also known as the Daughters of Allah, who were later removed from the Kaaba, along with the emergence of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad's propagation of the faith and the wars and other events that followed. The second period intersects with the author's personal experiences and encompasses his grandfather's memories of the war and his folksy understanding of Islam, which appears to diverge from the official doctrine. The contrast between these diverse interpretations of Islam is transformed into a symbolic narrative that depicts Turkey's gradual shift away from its Islamic roots towards secularism. The novel employs metafictional elements by integrating the narrator's personal experience and rewriting of historical events through parables drawn from diverse sacred texts. As "[t]he rewriting or recycling of canonical texts is a typical postmodern practice" (McHale 2015, 51), the canonical texts in this case include the holy writings – of all Abrahamic religions – as well as *hadith*, historical recitations of Muhammed's life, deeds, and sayings.

The novel's beginning with creation, specifically on the foundation of Arabia and Mecca, implies that the cosmogony with which it deals will be reproduced. The novel, in this sense, behaves as if it is a holy book itself, in terms of the sonority of the language it employs and the two surahs from *the Qur'an* used as epigraphs (Gürsel 2008, 12). However, this cosmogony does not begin with the descent of Islam into the planet, but with the idolatrous period that preceded it, namely with the reign of Allah's daughters: Lat, Uzza, and Manat.

The novel has multiple narrators and point of views, and the fact that Lat, one of the idols, is the first narrator after the indeterminate, omniscient narrator in the prologue, and that she talks in the first person indicates that we will listen to certain events from her point of view, which is a very courageous choice. As Genette (1983) suggests, "first-person"[1] narrative is particularly effective in creating anticipation in the reader. This is because the narrator is speaking from a retrospective perspective, allowing them to allude to the future and hint at their current situation (68). Ultimately, multiple narrators, when combined with metafiction, as is the case in this novel, "axiomatically shift context" (Waugh 2001, 102). Once more, it is possible to suggest that Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* is comparable to *Daughters of Allah*, as the former establishes a dialectical relationship between satanic and angelic perspectives in both a single literary work and a single narrator, resulting in an indistinguishable blending of the two discourses (Frank 2008, 184), whereas the latter combines the discourse of idolatry with that of Abrahamic religions through multiple points of view, again in a single literary work.

Lat, whose point of view gives us a retrospective impression of what will happen in the future, is afraid. She is anxious, fearing that Abd al-Muttalib, the grandfather of Muhammad, and the other Qurayshites will follow in the footsteps of Abraham, who had already destroyed the idols:

> (…) In fact, I know that one of them, Abd al-Muttalib, who was in charge of the protection of the pilgrims who came here to see me, to come to my seat, had already turned his face away, ignored me, was even uneasy about my presence. I know now that if he had not been afraid of the pilgrims, he would have followed in the footsteps of Abraham, found a new God, a single God, and sought refuge in him. He will submit to him. He senses that with Allah, who knows, sees and hears everything, there is no need for us. That God cannot be considered our father, that we are not truly His daughters. But the revelation has not descended from heaven, not yet. The one who will say, "The disbelievers ascribed partners to Allah while He created the jinn. They blindly invented sons and daughters for Him.", has not yet been born. But his grandfather Abd al-Muttalib had the first traces of this verse on his face. That's why he doesn't worship me, whenever he shows up, he always turns

[1] Genette's preference for the term "voice" instead of "person" is based on the argument that the voice may not necessarily indicate the point of view of a person. Instead, it represents a focalization that depends on the narrator's consciousness at the time of narration or through their consciousness at a particular point in the past (Genette 1983, 10; 259). I, on the hand, prefer to use the traditional terms in narratology, as I do not intend to engage in a discussion regarding the terminology used in the field.

> his gaze upwards, towards the sky, as if seeking for something. As Abraham once did. (Gürsel 2008, 20; translation mine[2])

The novel continues with the story Abraham, the first Muslim of his time according to Islamic teaching, along with his disbelief in idols and his quest for an omnipotent God. Abraham of the novel, even as a child, questioned why "people worshipped these useless objects [idols] that could not see or hear," while he and all humanity embodied in him "needed to imagine and prostrate themselves to a superior, omnipotent being. Worshiping, glorifying, and submitting to his compassion, seeking sanctuary, acknowledging his might and wrath." (21–22). While parables about Abraham are narrated in the third person, the narrator abruptly shifts to the second person in the following paragraph: "The first time *you* heard the story of Abraham was from your grandmother." (23; emphasis mine). What is occurring here with the transition to the second person is that the person to whom the narrative is recounted, referred to as the *narratee* by Genette (1983), suddenly transforms into the omniscient narrator, and in this case, the author himself. It illustrates what Genette argues concerning the narratee, who "does not merge a priori with the reader (even an implied reader) any more than the narrator necessarily merges with the author." What occurs here is what Genette refers to as "an intradiegetic narrator corresponds to an intradiegetic narratee" (259). We should add that it is also an omniscient narratee, because throughout the novel these second-person narratives are interspersed within the story fragments.

The use of an intradiegetic narratee in a narrative raises the question of whether the first-person perspective narrated by the Daughters (*i.e.* idols) is also intended for an intradiegetic narratee. Could it be that the narrator, who was infused into the narrative through autobiographical elements, is the intended reader of the text? Can we say, then, that the author is not trying to persuade a wider readership to see the contradictions between folk Islam and historical-scriptural Islam, but rather to resolve a personal internal conflict? The answer to these is concealed inside the text's further narratological aspects. The first clue, however, is given at the same paragraph where the narrator switches to the second person. The intradiegetic narrator commences from a highly subjective viewpoint, revealing a distinct personal conviction at this juncture. This is none other

[2] The novel has been translated into German, French, and several other languages, but as of now, there is no English translation available. Therefore, all translations of the quotes provided are my own.

than the fundamental issue that also forms the starting point and crux of the novel:

> The magic of your childhood, but also of your entire past, of the questions you began to ask yourself, was hidden in your grandmother's voice, which only became clear when she recited the *Qur'an*, which flowed like water and washed and purified as it poured out. Questions about existence and nonexistence that arose in your mind but that you could never articulate, questions that no one could answer, not even your grandmother, that fat and sweet woman who rocked you to sleep as a baby in her arms. (Gürsel 2008, 23)

The fact that phrases such as "[i]f you recall correctly" (97) are often added to the reconstruction of these childhood memories raises doubts about the reliability of these accounts. However, this unreliability is meant to be particularly emphasized. We can also say that some triangulation points in the Turks' perception of Islam are also intended to be underlined. One of these is the *mawlit*, or odes to the birth of Muhammad, which Turks recite for death, birth or other reasons – and which are considered *bid'ah*, that is an illicit religious innovation, by some Islamic scholars (Kaptein 1993, 44–67), even within Turkey (Al-Alawi 2009, 84).

Another current that is considered *bid'ah*, especially by the very strict branches of Islam, such as Salafism, is Islamic mysticism, also known as Sufism (Woodward et al. 2013, 63), which has similarly been a very popular Islamic hue among Turks throughout history. In the novel, the narrator recounts his experiences visiting Sufi lodges in different regions of Anatolia and posits that their objective aligns with his own, namely, the pursuit of a path leading towards the attainment of ultimate truth: "You were going to search for a path. You didn't want to find the right path, you didn't want to take a certain path. You just didn't want to get off the road, to find yourself in a dark forest in the middle of the road of life." (77). This is a portrayal of a person seeking meaning in the life through faith, seeking a foundation for his faith, inquiring into the history of the religion based on the unadulterated faith of his childhood's naive, gullible, and innocuous family members or by exploring mystical interpretations of the same religion. The sole means by which he can find this foundation for his faith is through recollection and the act of remembering. Moreover, the process of reaching these memories itself takes on a prominent role in becoming the ultimate objective along the way.

The author effectively employs the technique of shifting between narrators, as well as various time periods, in order to create a complex and multi-

layered narrative structure. These include the time of the story, which is stratified in layers, but there is also the time of the narrative. The time of the story consists of three intertwined layers. The first pertains to historical events preceding the advent of Islam, and primarily concerns the life of Muhammad. The second layer revolves around the narrator's childhood, during which he is initially exposed to the stories presented in the first layer. The third layer can be seen as a narrative "present", in which the narrator engages with his childhood memories and attempts to come to terms with them. The time of the narrative, on the other hand, refers to what Genette calls a "pseudo" time in which all these narratives are put in *order* (Genette 1983, 35). However, the arrangement of the story fragments within the narrative deviates from a linear chronology, instead following a more fluid and non-linear order that diverges from what is prescribed by the time of the narrative. In other words, it is an anachrony, as there is a "discordance between the two orderings of story and narrative" (36). Anachronism is an instrument used frequently by postmodern historical novels in representation of the past when an "earlier historical characters speak the concepts and language clearly belonging to later figures" (Hutcheon 2001, 71). McHale (2004) calls this kind of anachrony in fiction "creative anachronism" and emphasizes that while classical historical novels, which purport to be a realistic representation of the past, inadvertently succumb into its grip, postmodern historical novels flaunt this inevitability in the representation of history (93). The anachronism in *Daughters of Allah* is of a similar nature and dovetails with the temporal shifts between the narrator voices present in the narrative. The author draws such parallel between İbrahim Efendi, a character known to the narrator during his childhood, and the historical figure Abraham. The parallel drawn involves the similarity between their sons; Isaac[3], who was commanded by God to be sacrificed by his father, and İsmail, who was actually murdered by his father İbrahim Efendi (Gürsel 2008, 283). At some point, the narrator underlines this similarity by ironically asking "what else could it be but a similarity of names?" (Gürsel 2008, 248). However, by saying "We haven't gotten to İsmail's story yet" or "you should also tell how your father died, whose grave you have never visited since that day" (Gürsel 2008, 29), the narrator once again disrupts the linear order of the narration by using the method Genette calls "prolepsis", which "refer in advance to an event that will be told in full in its place" (Genette 1983, 73). Through this technique, the narrative progresses ahead from the current moment in the chronology of

[3] In the Islamic tradition, the son who was offered as a sacrifice is believed to be Ishmael, while in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the same event involves Isaac as the sacrificial son.

events to a future occurrence. It is widely employed in fiction, and functions as a form of flashforward. The narrator can utilize prolepsis to impart a sense of the present temporal location of the story to the reader, among others in metafictional works that experiment with the conventions of storytelling during the latter era of the 20th century (Currie 2012, 39–40). But here, as the different layers of the story are intertwined, it would be more accurate to talk about metalepsis, which means that an extradiegetic narrator or narratee is involved in the story and anticipates the course of the story (Genette 1983, 234–235). According to Heiss (1997), metalepsis is one of the most important elements in the postmodernist articulation of narrative time. Postmodernist novels tend to prioritize the present moment and alternative temporalities over broader temporal developments, which is similar to the approach taken by modernist novels. However, postmodernist narratives differ from modernist ones in that they depict the present moment as having multiple possible outcomes, rather than a single, self-contained instance of presence. As a result, postmodernist narratives often challenge conventional notions of causality and temporal order, and blur the boundaries between the narrator and the characters. This type of narrative experimentation is not typically grounded in the psychology of the human mind, as it was in modernist literature. Rather, postmodernist narratives tend to detach narrative time from any specific observer, and may not represent any temporality other than that of the text itself (63–64). The inclusion of such temporal refractions, mostly through prelepses and metalepses, with a regularity that is frequent rather than occasional, indicates that the text at hand also purposes to represent its own temporality.

The fourth chapter of the novel, "Hacı Rahmi Ram from Hacı Rahmanlı", focuses on the narrator's grandfather, who, in numerous aspects, symbolizes the Turkish people as a whole, and his piety. During the Hijaz expedition in the first World War I, the Arabs, Muhammad's people, the *ummah,* joined forces with the British and "betrayed" the Ottoman Empire, creating a drift in his grandfather and his faith. It is not in vain that this incident is included in the story, for one of the main reasons why the principle of *laïcité*, one of the pillars of Turkey's nation-state formation, was widely embraced by a significant segment of society was that the Arabs had rebelled against the Ottoman Empire – hence against the Caliph of Islam – and fought alongside the British. This incident, which was to become one of the crucial social ruptures in the history of Turkey, caused the secularists in the society to develop an allergy, if not against the religion of Islam, at least against the Arab society to which it had been sent. Indeed, with this occurrence, the notion of *ummah* and *ummahism*, which was one of the ideologies of survival of the Ottoman Empire, was severely wounded. We can also take

this disillusionment, manifested in the narrator's grandfather Hacı Rahmi Efendi in the novel, as an example for the crystallization of the fracture between popular Islam and official Islam. The following sentence further underlines this internal conflict: "... because his faith was complete, his faith was not shaken even for a moment. Well, in the war, when he was defending Medina against the ummah of Muhammad, against the natives of that city, of those lands, when he was killing Arabs, was his faith not shaken? You should have asked him this question while he was alive, it is too late now." (Gürsel 2008, 96). Another event in which the collision between the secularizing Turks and Islam is emphasized is the Menemen incident. The narrator refers to Officer Kubilay, who was beheaded by radical Islamists in the city of Menemen in 1930, as "[y]ou know that he was neither the first nor the last victim of murders committed in the name of Islam." (271).

While the narrative focusing on near history is centered on the relationship of the well-intentioned Muslim-Turk with Islam, the story based on the history of the Hijaz takes a new perspective on the events that took place in the region with quotations from the surahs of *the Qur'an*. These include battles that took place during the lifetime of Muhammad and his reign, as well as events before Muhammad's birth that can be associated with Islam, such as the Year of the Elephant, in which tells the doom of Abraha coming with his army to destroy the Ka'bah is recited (Gürsel 2008, 68–69) or the birth of Muhammad and the miracles that heralded his birth (72–76). All these parables were told to the narrator by his grandmother or grandfather, which is the kernel of the novel that builds the contours of tension between historiography, individual memory, religious conventions and reconstruction all of these. Religious accounts, which are instrumental in reviving childhood memories sought to be recuperated, and in revitalizing deceased grandparents, are also agents of constructing a universal narrative that transcends personal experience and rewrites the history of an entire religion.

The difficulty lies in the fact that, although postmodern fiction with its unconventional relativistic outlook also grapples with the risk of narrating the fragile events of the past, this danger is heightened when it comes to the history of religions, particularly within the context of Islam. Consequently, the past as understood and construed by people throughout history is contingent upon cultural values and preoccupations of the era, rendering it not only a foreign country (Lowenthal 1985), but also a dangerous one. Thus, in the novel, the omniscient narrator who delves into the history of Islam demonstrates awareness of this issue. For instance, when a desire to "hear the story of the death of Amr bin Zayd, one of the three *Hanif*s of