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HOME SWEET HOME: EXILE AND HOMECOMING OF BLACK IN ORHAN PAMUK'S *MY NAME IS RED* AND *KA IN SNOW*

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Abstract

Exile is a form of punishment that has been in practice since the time of Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome. In Ancient Greece, it was practiced chiefly in cases of murder, whereas, in Ancient Romans, exile emerged as a result of avoiding capital punishment. Exile continues to exist in the countries where the principles of democracy do not stand on the firm and strong foundations by the banishment of people due to political or punitive reasons. The exile's return to the forsaken native home will revive a sense of connection, reassemble pieces of his/her broken identity, and restore the fabrics of history destroyed by involuntary displacement. This article attempts to explore and to analyze the issues of exile and homecoming concerning two main characters in Orhan Pamuk's two novels, *Black in My Name is Red* and *Ka in Snow*, and to gain insight into their reasons that prompted their exiles as well as their homecoming. It employs comparative research, one of the research methodologies in Social Sciences, to comply with the aim of the study.

Keywords: Exile, Homecoming, Reasons, Black, Ka.

1. Introduction

Exile, referred alternatively as banishment, has a long tradition in history as a system of severe penalty. It is defined as "a form of punishment in which one has to leave one's home (whether that be on the level of a city, region, or nation-state) while either being explicitly refused permission and/or being threatened by prison or death upon return" (Exile, 2017). Exile has been in practice since the dawn of history. As a fundamental human experience, Adam and Eve were being exiled to Earth as a result of disobeying God's command. Adam's son, Cain, was banished because he committed fratricide by killing his own brother, Abel. In the history of Europe, people have often been compelled to abandon their homes for several reasons such as religious oppression, ethnic and minority containment, temperamental rulers, narrow-minded local politicians, political persecution, and countless other acts of physical violence. Exile was practiced by the Ancient Greeks and Ancient Romans. "Exile, strictly speaking," observes Maria G. Rewakowicz, "refers to forced separation from one's native land, without the possibility of return. The notion covers both the moment of expulsion and the condition of life immediately following banishment" (Rewakowicz, 2014, 44). In Ancient Greece, it was chiefly practiced in cases of murder. A murderer had been given the option of going for voluntary exile to avoid retaliation by the members of the victim's family. Lee H. Bowker documented the practice of exile as such: "In 508 B.C., Athens adopted a period of ten-year exile for political offenders. To be exiled in this fashion, a majority of votes cast in a special election open to all Athenian citizens had to favor the action" (Bowker, 1980, 67.) In Ancient Rome, exile, called *exilium* in Latin, was also a common form of punishment. It referred to both deportation and relegation. Bowker provided the

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following details on its implementation: “Deportation involved loss of citizenship and shipment to a specific remote area from which the offender was not allowed to depart. Relegation was milder in that the offender could choose where to live so long as it was outside of Rome proper, and there was no loss of citizenship” (Bowker, 1980, 67). In the 18th century, the English introduced the practice of exile as an alternative to the death penalty based on the punishment of outlawry implemented during the Anglo-Saxon period. English convicts were transported to the colonies in North America and Australia. Clare Anderson observed that “For over three hundred years during the seventeenth to twentieth centuries, around 380,000 transportation convicts journeyed to and around the plantations, penal settlements and penal colonies of the British Empire” (Anderson, 2016, 381).

Exile received a considerable amount of attention from experts from numerous scientific fields. In his essay entitled “Reflections on Exile,” Edward Said, one of the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century, considered exile to be “strangely compelling” and “terrible to experience.” He further asserted that

It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in an exile’s life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever (Said, 2000, 172).

Thus, this exile, suffered by unfortunate people, will expose a deep sense of essential sadness and anguish that will afflict the individual like a scabbed wound, which will start bleeding and paining when scratched. Paul Allatson and Jo McCormack, in their edited book *Exiled Cultures, Misplaces Identities*, put forward this definition of exiled: “Most commonly exile is defined as banishment, a physical separation and a geographical dislocation from home enacted by a state’s or a regime’s legal system, and intended to prevent certain social actors or groups from initiating change at national or regime levels” (Allatson & McCormack, 2008, 10). Elsewhere in the same essay, Said highlighted the inhumane and nonsensical practice of exile and stated that “exile cannot be made to serve notions of humanism. On the twentieth-century scale, exile is neither aesthetically nor humanistically comprehensible” (Said, 2000, 174). There can be no compelling justification for exile, especially in this modern world of today. The exile spends his/her entire life adapting to the life he/she built in the new location but fails to suspend his/her ties with the native environment. Said emphasized this process of adaptation as such:

For an exile, habits of life, expression, or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally. There is a unique pleasure in this sort of apprehension, especially if the exile is conscious of other contrapuntal juxtapositions that diminish orthodox judgment and elevate appreciative sympathy. There is also a particular sense of achievement in acting as if one were at home wherever one happens to be (Said, 2000, 186).

The passage above indicates that exile can signify a destination where former and current homes conveniently exist together. Still, the place home itself refers to the name for a constantly changing location. It demonstrates the exile’s fantastic ability to adapt to his/her natural environment. They never cut off the psychological connection with their respective places of birth.

Over the centuries, there have been profound changes in the practice of exile, and this act of banishment assumed a completely different shape in modern times. In his essay entitled “Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals,” Said highlighted this variation and further stated that:

Exile is one of the saddest fates. In premodern times banishment was a particularly dreadful punishment since it not only meant years of aimless wandering away from family and familiar places, but also meant being a sort of permanent outcast, someone who never felt at home, and was always at odds with the environment, inconsolable about the past, bitter about the present and the future....During the twentieth century, exile has been transformed from the exquisite, and sometimes exclusive, punishment of special individuals....into a cruel punishment of whole communities and peoples, often the inadvertent result of impersonal forces such as war, famine, and disease (Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 1994, 46).



In the 20th century, the practice of exile assumed a different format, and it began to be imposed chiefly for those who committed political offenses. The region of Siberia has been a well-known destination for exile, especially during the era of the Soviet Union. Exile could be an inevitable outcome of catastrophic events and widespread processes globally, such as revolutions, dictatorships, fundamentalism, ethnic cleansing, mass starvation, and poverty, etc. Exile can be addressed by many terms in today's recent scholarships: "diaspora, nomadism, cosmopolitanism, transnationalism, statelessness, homelessness, deterritorialization, transmigration, borderlessness, transmodernity, errance, and translated/ional culture" (Allatson & McCormack, 2008, 10).

The exile's most viable option to overcome his/her current predicament and to restore his/her connection with the homeland is through his/her return or homecoming. Homecoming has been defined as "a person's arrival home after being away for a long time" (Homecoming, 2019). An exile's return, if accomplished, will put an end to this detachment and induce a feeling of excitement and delight to the hopeless wanderer or drifter who successfully travels back home. Numerous writers have dealt with the enforced exile and the idealization of homecoming in their literary works. For the sake of complying with the aim of the article, it might be an excellent idea to mention some prominent authors of the twentieth-century who only dealt with the concepts in question, but also had first-hand experiences, at least, of exile. Franz Kafka shared the realities of homecoming in a parable called 'Home-coming' after spending a considerable amount of time in exile:

I have returned, I have passed under the arch and am looking around. It's my father's old yard. . . . A torn piece of cloth, once wound around a stick in a game, flutters in the breeze. I have arrived. Who is going to receive me? Who is waiting behind the kitchen door? Smoke is rising from the chimney, coffee is being made for supper. Do you feel you belong, do you feel at home? I don't know, I feel most uncertain. My father's house it is, but each object stands cold beside the next, as though preoccupied with its own affairs, which I have partly forgotten. . . . What use can I be to them, what do I mean to them, even though I am the son of my father, the old farmer? And I don't dare knock at the kitchen door; I only listen from a distance . . . And since I am listening from a distance, I hear nothing but a faint striking of the clock passing over from childhood days, but perhaps I only think I hear it. Whatever else is going on in the kitchen is the secret of those sitting there, a secret they are keeping from me. The longer one hesitates before the door, the more estranged one becomes. What would happen if someone were to open the door now and ask me a question? Would not I myself then behave like one who wants to keep his secret? (Kafka, 1958, 215).

Here, the sense of not belonging dominated the mood in the extract, in spite of the familiarity, warmth, and intimate nature of the surroundings. Kafka's likely rejection was frequently personified with his father, and, consequently, ordinary and commonplace elements assume bizarre and alienating capacity. His father is the exact symbol of the home that is distant and unreachable for Kafka. Similarly, Vladimir Nabokov, an American writer of Russian origin, often articulated pains and sufferings associated with his exile from his country, Russia, and was constantly reminded of the permanent mark that his unintentional banishment left in his lonely soul. In an afterword to his acclaimed novel, *Lolita*, Nabokov expresses his lamentation for abandoning his home country and native language when remarks "My private tragedy, which cannot, and indeed should not, be anybody's concern, is that I had to abandon my natural idiom, my untrammelled, rich and infinitely docile Russian tongue" (Nabokov as cited Boyd, 2016, 42). Saul Bellow is another prominent American author who was conscious of the terrible sense of pain, suffering, and loss closely linked with the tragedy of exile. He was born into parents of Russian origin who emigrated from Saint Petersburg two years earlier before Bellow graced the world. Bellow, being a part of the Jewish community with a long history of exile or dispersion from their homelands, never familiarized himself with the status quo and maintained a life of retreat and marginality imposed by the notion of exile. Jewish life and identity have been one of the recurring themes in his works, and many of his characters fail to function in mainstream society and attempt to preserve their identity either by detaching themselves or by self-imposed exile. In his novel, *Herzog*, Bellow portrays a middle-aged professor of philosophy, named Herzog, who fails to communicate with members of his community because all channels of communication collapsed, imposes self-exile on himself and finds comforts in writing unusual number of letters, not only to friends, but to acquaintances, strangers, the famous, and the dead, but he had no intention of sending them. Robert R. Dutton observes that "Wherever Herzog looks, indeed whatever he sees, regardless of his attention is given to the past or the present, he feels alienation and, even worse, a uselessness, as if his life were an activity of wasted and



misplaced effort” (Dutton, 1971, 123). He continually engages in a necessary self-examination and takes it to the level where he understands that he can no longer function as a healthy individual. Thus, he detaches himself from the rest of the community and naturally finds comforts in self-imposed exile.

The theme of exile and homecoming has been the focus of various books and journal articles, mainly approaching the subject from a theological or religious point of view, portraying it from Christian and Jewish perspectives. For the sake of the fair treatment of the literature available on the theme, several published works, both books, and articles, will be mentioned to shed light on the treatment of the matter. Inara Verzemnieks, in her book entitled *Among the Living and the Dead: A Tale of Exile and Homecoming on the War Roads of Europe*, explores the recollections of the two sister’s separation from each other for 50 years during WWII including their abandonment of the family farm due to exile and joys of returning home even if during the temporary suspension of banishment. Another literary work, called *Booking Passage: Exile and Homecoming in the Modern Jewish Imagination* by Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, chronicles the exile and homecoming in modern Jewish writing through the exploration of a thousand of years of texts that deal with wanderings, deportations, the exile and homecoming of Jewish people. Rob Gaylard’s article “Exile and Homecoming: Identity in Zoe Wicomb’s ‘You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town’” focuses on one of the stories Wicomb wrote while she was in exile in London. In this particular story, the main character, Frieda, experiences identity crises and tries to define her identity as well as to locate familiar surroundings that she can call home. Gaylard exposes the problematic choice that Frieda had to make when he states, “Frieda must either go under, allow herself to be subsumed by family, or find an alternative that will give her room to breathe” (Gaylard, 1996, 183). Orhan Pamuk, one of the prominent authors in Turkey, has touched upon the themes of exile and homecoming in two of his famous novels, *My Name is Red* and *Snow*, through his two protagonists who go by the names of Black and Ka. This article attempts to explore and to analyze the issues mentioned above and to gain insight into their reasons that prompted their choices of exile as well as homecoming. The theoretical framework for this study leans against Comparative research, one of the research methodologies frequently in Social Sciences. The study aims to provide answers to the following research questions: What stimulated Black and Ka to go into exile? Was it by choice or necessity? What prompted them to return home?

2. Exile and Homecoming of Black in Pamuk’s *My Name is Red* and Ka in *Snow*

Exile, as manifested by numerous definitions, mainly indicates a forced banishment of one from his/her native country or expulsion from a permanent place of residence due to an immediate threat to the person’s freedom or dignified existence. Exile has also been a predestined fate that befell upon Pamuk’s Black and Ka, two central characters in *My Name is Red* and *Snow*, respectively. Although the circumstances that compelled them to abandon their countries and to endure prolonged exile substantially differ, Black and Ka were torn out of their home environments, separated from their family and friends, and settled temporarily as exiles in alien or distant communities. The novel *My Name is Red*, set in 16th century Istanbul, presents a murder mystery on the surface, but, like many other literary works, it has several layers that are closely interconnected. It is virtually the tale of a washed-up artistic illustrator who was forced to go into exile and spend a reasonable amount of time in the eastern territories of the Ottoman Empire after naively falling in love with his charming cousin by the name of Shekure and being turned down by her. However, he was invited by his uncle, Enishte Effendi, to return home to assist him with a long-cherished project, the compilation of an illuminated book for the sultan. Eventually, he was charged to investigate the murder of the gilder of the book. As he tries to solve the crime related to this provocative book, he also wishes to win the love of Shekure, the reason he was exiled twelve years ago.

Pamuk’s *Snow*, set in a remote and neglected city in eastern Anatolia called Kars in the early 1990s, which the author considers it to be his “first and last political novel,” investigates some of the crucial and sensitive issues of Turkey and the Middle East such as the collision of Western values and Islamic fanaticism, tension between political Islamists, soldiers, secularists, and Kurdish and Turkish nationalists, etc. The novel narrates the story of an aloof and forlorn poet by the name of Kerim Alakusoglu, who conveniently prefers to be known by his initials Ka, is a forty-two-year-old, unmarried man from Istanbul who spends twelve years as a political exile in Frankfurt, Germany. Ka’s return home from exile was not by choice but due to necessity. He arrived in Istanbul to attend his mother’s funeral and received a job offer from a local newspaper to write an observatory article on the municipal elections in Kars Province and to investigate a local epidemic of recent suicides committed by young men. Subsequently, he has an ulterior motive of restoring his connection with his beautiful former schoolmate by the name of Ipek and hooking up romantically with her.



2.1. Black's and Ka's Exile

In *My Name is Red*, the central character, Black, who is a miniaturist by profession, developed romantic feelings towards his maternal cousin, Shekure, Enishte Effendi's enticing daughter, with whom he fell in love with "like every young man who frequented [her] 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" (Pamuk, 2002, 24).¹ As a token of his love for his beloved, Black made a replica of the famous work of art depicting Khosrow and Shirin, whereby he portrayed himself and Shekure instead of the legendary couple. However, Enishte Effendi expected Black to bury his love for Shekure, the "belle of belles," but "Black made the mistake of revealing his extreme passion to my daughter" (MNR, 24). Feeling rejected and depressed due to unrequited love, Black was compelled to leave his Enishte Effendi's house as well as Istanbul and had to endure an involuntary enforced exile for twelve years during which he was engaged in carrying letters and collecting taxes in melancholy cities of Persia. He also oversaw artistic manuscripts commissioned by wealthy patrons of art and acted as itinerant secretary in the service of pashas. Black spoke of making acquaintances of Persian artists during his stay in the city of Tabriz, whom he "met one by one all of the master illustrators and calligraphers of Tabriz by making books for pashas, wealthy Istanbulites and patrons in the provinces" (MNR, 23). The love and affection that Black felt for his beloved exercised a positive influence on the way or perspective he has on this new life as an exile. He stated: "In the years I endured my amorous exile, I often thought how I was in fact deeply indebted to Shekure and my love for her because they had enabled me to adapt optimistically to life and the world" (MNR,33).

Likewise, Kerim Alakusoglu, conveniently shortened to Ka, in *Snow* is a forty-two years old native of Istanbul and published but a dried-up poet who lived as a political exile in the city of Frankfurt in Germany for twelve years although "had never been very much involved in politics" (Pamuk, *Snow*, 2005, 4)². He "rented a small place next to the train station; it had a window looking out over the rooftops of Frankfurt," and led a solitary life in silence until he gained public recognition that resulted in receiving invitations for poetry recitations from "Turkish immigrants, city councils, libraries, and third-class schools hoping to draw in Turkish audiences, and also from Turks hoping to acquaint their children with a poet writing in Turkish" (SNW, 33). Edward Said highlighted the desperate predicament and painful frustration of the exile in failing to adjust and fit into the life far away from home and, articulated Ka's prevalent sense of desolation as such: "as any real exile will confirm, once you leave your home, wherever you end up you cannot simply take up life and become just another citizen of the new place" (Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 1994, 61-62). Despite his short-lived popularity, Ka failed to achieve integration, maintained a highly routine life that involved traveling to the city library and reading a wide range of books in diverse scientific fields, and mostly remained in silence, not speaking to Germans or Turks. He observed thus: "But now I lived in utter silence. I wasn't speaking with any Germans, and my relations with the Turks weren't good either – they dismissed me as a half-crazed, effete intellectual. I wasn't seeing anyone, I wasn't talking to anyone, and I wasn't writing poems (SNW,34). Unlike Black, who mingled with the artistic community and continued to practice his profession of illumination in Tabriz, Ka spent 12 years of miserable loneliness in the city of Frankfurt and remained cut off from his roots, land, and past and failed to reconstitute his broken life.

During this over a decade of exile in distant lands, Black found comforts and consolation in love that he felt for Shekure, who was half of his age when he was twenty-four, and his declaration of love was deemed as an "act of insolence" by his Enishte Effendi. However, in exile, he "tried desperately to remember her," but, eventually, he admitted to himself that "[he] was slowly forgetting the face of the childhood love [he'd] left behind" and came to "realize that despite love, a face long not seen finally fades" (MNR, 6). The countenance of his beloved that Black engraved in his imagination gradually disappeared by the passing of the years and lamented that he had forgotten Shekure's face:

I knew that the face I imagined was no longer that of my beloved. Later, in the eighth year, I forgot what I'd mistakenly called to mind in the sixth, and again visualized a completely different countenance. In this way, by the twelfth year, when I returned to my city at the age of thirty-six, I was painfully aware that my beloved's face had long since escaped me (MNR, 6).

¹ Orhan Pamuk's *My Name is Red* will be referred to as MNR with its initial letters for convenience from now onwards.

² Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* will be referred to as SNW in short for convenience from now onwards



Black's visions of his beloved Shekure might have become blurred and obscured within twelve years that he endured in exile. However, this period has not diminished the intensity and vigor of love and affection he felt towards Shekure. His uncle's letter of invitation provided him the ample opportunity to revisit her and rekindle his love and passion for her. Years later, in his Enishte Effendi's home, Black wished that he had a portrait of Shekure which would help him to remember his beloved's face as he uttered: "Had I taken Shekure's portrait with me, rendered in the style of the Venetian masters, I wouldn't have felt such loss during my long travels when I could scarcely remember my beloved, whose face I'd left somewhere behind me. For if a lover's face survives emblazoned on your heart, the world is still your home" (MNR, 31). Shekure's portrait, drawn in Venetian style, would have made it more life-like, clearly displayed the features of her face, and would have provided Black the consolation and comforts in distant lands when he was experiencing agonizing pain of separation from his beloved.

2.2 Black's and Ka's Homecoming

Homecoming, or in plain terms, returning home, represents not only a person's coming or returning home a coming or returning to one's home after being away for a long time. It indicates much more for an exile, especially exiles like Black and Ka. Homecoming has the potential to reunite and re-connect them with their homeland and to reclaim their true identities no matter for what reason or reasons they left their beloved homes and endured a life of loneliness, sense of loss, and constant longing as an exile in new and yet formidable surroundings. Black and Ka did their best to adjust and accommodate themselves in their new world but they often "perceive themselves as less real because, cut off from home and their native language, they find that the new world seems feeble, almost phantasmatic" (Jerzak, 2009, 408). No matter how hard and sincere they try to fit into their new homes, they cannot shake off this yearning and longing for the home they left behind. The exiles' desire for home was articulated by Obododimma Oha as he observes: "Although the exiled person may design coping strategies to deal with in-betweenness, including trying to assimilate the culture of the context of exile, the nowhere-ness persists with the performance of memory and longing for home" (Oha, 2008, 81). However, Black and Ka, like every person in exile, did not break the emotional and mental connection with their point of origin, and, in the words of Tomas Pavel, they "almost immediately hope for and expect a return in an attempt to replace the upheavals of the present with a faith in the future. They rarely view their removal from the homeland as an irreversible step but rather a temporary withdrawal" (Pavel, 1998, 26).

In *My Name is Red*, Pamuk's Black returned to Istanbul after a twelve-year of forced exile in distant lands at the summons of his maternal uncle, Enishte, under whose patronage he had lived as a young man and learned the art of illumination before his exile 12 years ago. Black was recruited by his uncle, together with miniaturists, to work on a secret project whose details were not revealed even to Master Osman, who happened to be the Head Illuminator. Enishte has been charged by the Sultan, who commissioned this unique illustrated book to be completed in time for the anniversary of the Hegira. Enishte informed Black of the nature of the task at hand as such:

"Just as you did in concert with the calligraphers and miniaturists of Tabriz, I, too, have been preparing an illustrated manuscript," I said. "My client is, in fact, His Excellency Our Sultan, the Foundation of the World. Because this book is a secret, Our Sultan has disbursed payment to me under cover of the Head Treasurer. And I have come to an understanding with each of the most talented and accomplished artists of Our Sultan's atelier...I wanted the things I depicted to represent Our Sultan's entire world, just as in the paintings of the Venetian masters (MNR, 25).

Black was asked to join Enishte's team of artists hired to undertake the task of working on a unique book entrusted to Enishte's able hands and expertise by the sultan to be illustrated in the European manner to extol his glories and reign. However, he was initially charged to explore and to investigate the whereabouts of the fellow miniaturist who suddenly disappeared without any trace. To solve this, Black was instructed by Enishte Effendi to visit Master Osman, who happened to be Enishte's archrival. Black, accompanied by Master Osman, toured the art workshops within the city and observed apprentices, students, and master artists in producing pieces of art.

Similarly, Ka's return from exile in *Snow* triggered out of necessity as he received the tragic news of his mother's untimely death and made his way back home to perform his filial obligation towards his beloved mother and to attend her funeral. Ka returned to Istanbul, where he had spent several years of happiness and childhood, following a twelve-year of political exile in the city of Frankfurt. Istanbul that Ka left a little over a decade ago changed extensively. He was hoping to come across familiar and commonplace



faces or sites as he wandered through the streets where he had played in his childhood. As he returned “to the streets of his childhood, looking for the elegant old buildings where his friends had lived, buildings dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century, but he found that many of them had been destroyed. The trees of his childhood had withered or been chopped down; the cinemas, shuttered for ten years” (SNW, 27). Ka felt quite disappointed as there was no sign of the Istanbul of his childhood. As he was making his way to Kars as he was asked to investigate a spate of suicides, Ka nurtured sincere optimism that he could find traces of his childhood world that he failed to discover in Istanbul as described in the book:

As for Kars, though he'd been living abroad for some time, Ka was still aware of it as the poorest, most overlooked corner of Turkey. For this reason, he may have been taken by a desire to look farther afield for childhood and purity: If the world he knew in Istanbul was no longer to be found, his journey to Kars can be seen as an attempt to step outside the boundaries of his middle-class childhood, to venture at long last into the other world beyond (SNW, 18).

In the city of Kars, Ka discovered objects that he never saw in Istanbul like “gislaved gym shoes, vesuv stoves” on display in the windows of the shops that took him through memory lane and reminded him of his childhood.

Apart from carrying out the wishes of his uncle and assisting in the preparation of the secret book, Black also intended to revitalize his love and passion for Shekure and expected her to reciprocate his affections. As a result of his long absence from Istanbul, Black has attained maturity and become more handsome with his tall and lanky figure and curly hair. He nurtured mixed feelings when he visited Enishte Effendi's house and anxiously expected to see Shekure's countenance again after all those years. Black's mind wandered and concentrated on the objects that “Shekure had touched and the large pillow upon which she'd reclined who knows how many times” in his Enishte's house while listening to him absent-mindedly when he was providing Black details about this unique book that the sultan commissioned (MNR, 32). Eventually, Black was handed a letter of Shekure by a peddler called Esther as he was leaving Enishte's home and also caught a glimpse of Shekure's face in the window. Shekure felt utterly confused when she pushed the shutters to open the window and saw Black through her window. This scene awakened conflicting feelings in her while she was dazzled by his countenance; she also went ahead and sent him a favorable response by a messenger. She expressed her dilemma and astonishment of seeing Black again as such:

He'd grown and matured, and, having lost his awkward youthful lankiness, he turned out to be a comely man. Listen, Shekure, my heart did tell me, he's not only handsome, look into his eyes, he possesses the heart of a child, so pure, so alone: Marry him. I, however, sent him a letter wherein I'd given him quite the opposite message (MNR, 39).

Shekure admitted that she did not mean to discourage Black, and they secretly began to exchange letters, and she eventually realized that she liked Black more than her other suitors. However, it was after the murder of Enishte Effendi that Shekure quietly met with Black, whom she finally consented to marry him due to fear than out of love. Black heartily accepted the conditions set by Shekure to plan their marital union. He was first tasked to obtain a divorce for her from her missing husband and arranged for an imam to officiate their matrimony. However, Shekure did not allow Black to consummate their new marriage and charged him with final tasks of completing Enishte Effendi's secret book and finding the murderer. As Shekure stated: “I refuse to sleep in the same bed with you until that devil-of-a-man is found until my father's murderer is caught” (MNR, 210). Black loves her deeply and passionately and showed little care about his security when he confronted the murderer. He gallantly fought with the perpetrator and sustained a mortal wound that would compel him to live his life as a disabled person. In the end, Shekure nursed the Black back to health, and the very incident brought them closer because they fell for each other all over again. Ultimately, it was worth for Black to return from exile because he succeeded in winning the hand of his beloved in the marital union even at the cost of losing his life, and he failed to complete his Enishte's secret book which was the primary reason for him to end his exile.

Unlike Black, Ka, whose principal motive was to attend his mother's funeral, was commissioned by an elite newspaper to cover the municipal elections in Kar and to investigate on a succession of local suicides among women and girls in the city. However, it was after Ka learned that his former classmate, Ipek, turned out to be living in Kars and was recently divorced from her husband and his first meeting with her at the lobby of the hotel that he was staying which, conveniently was managed by Ipek's father that Ka's heart revealed a fact that his mind refused to acknowledge:



Ka's purpose was not simply to attend his mother's funeral but also to find a Turkish girl to make his wife; second, it was because he secretly hoped that this girl might be Ipek that he had traveled all the way from Istanbul to Kars (SNW, 23).

Ka was a failing poet when he returned from exile, but he began writing poems again when he trodded snow-covered streets of Kars, and he grew closer to Ipek, whom Ka admired since his high school years. His affections for Ipek intensified as Ipek entered into his thoughts, and he cherished genuine interest and apparent inclination towards her. He revealed his ardent admiration for Ipek when he met with her a pastry shop, and the impact that she had on him was described in the following words: "Ipek seemed even more beautiful now than at the hotel, lovelier even than she had been at university. The true extent of her beauty – her lightly colored lips, her pale complexion, her shining eyes, her open, intimate gaze – unsettled Ka" (SNW, 31). Feeling blissful and ecstatic with the intimacy he achieved with Ipek, Ka even started to fantasize about a new life with her in Frankfurt and amiably persuaded her to accompany him there. He provided glimpses of the life they would lead in Germany when he uttered: "There's a cinema in the Film Museum that shows undubbed American art films late on Saturday nights," said Ka. "That's where we'll go. We'll stop along the way at one of those restaurants around the station and have döner and sweet pickles" (SNW, 377). However, Ka grew excessively jealous when Ipek admitted her brief affair with the notorious outlaw Blue, but they were eventually reconciled and resolved to leave for Germany together. Ipek changed her mind and decided to stay back when she received the news of Blue's death and assumed that Ka revealed Blue's whereabouts out of intense jealousy. Ka had to return to Germany without her and spent the rest of his life as a depressed man until he was assassinated by a sympathizer of Blue. It is highly crucial to state that Ka had no intention to end his exile in Germany as he was performing his filial obligations towards his mother. Even the intense and passionate affection that he felt for Ipek could not convince him to stay and start a new life with her. Contrary to Black, who stayed back and was quite blissful to start a life with his beloved, Ka was quite steadfast in his resolve to return and continue his life there in Germany.

3. Conclusion

As observed by Edward Said, exile "is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted." It is relatively accurate in the cases of Black and Ka who did not only spend twelve-year of exile in distant lands, failed to adjust themselves to their new surroundings, but also experienced a longing for their respective homes. Black spent his years of exile performing administrative tasks for people in higher offices in Persia, and, in the meantime, tried desperately to keep the image of his beloved alive in his mind's eye but realized that he gradually forgot what Shekure's looked like. His homecoming, or return, was prompted when he received a letter from Enisthe Effendi, summoning him to return to Istanbul, and charging him to write the story for the secret book commissioned by the sultan. Black's homecoming yielded two favorable outcomes for him: first, it allowed him to return to his real home, and second, it provided the ample chance for Black to rekindle his passion and love for Shekure. Black became a whole again after his exile of over a decade ended, and he reunited with the object of his affections.

In the same way, Ka wasted precious twelve years of his life as a political exile in Frankfurt. He initially enjoyed some public attention and received invitations to attend poetry recitations, but mainly remained as a solitary figure even among the Turkish community including fellow political exiles. He failed to achieve integration and led a marginalized existence of an exile. Ka only returned to Istanbul out of an obligation to carry out his filial duty of attending his mother's funeral. However, he had to prolong his stay in Turkey because he was commissioned by a newspaper to cover municipal elections and to investigate a wave of suicides among local young women. Ka heard from an acquaintance that his former classmate, Ipek, who was recently divorced from her husband and was currently staying in Kars. Upon his first meeting with her, Ka's feelings for Ipek intensified, and he made it his ultimate aspiration to convince her to accompany him back to Germany. Disheartened with the social and political condition of the country, Ka did not have any intention to stay but rather wished to return to his life in distant lands accompanied by his beloved, Ipek. Nonetheless, Ipek changed her mind and decided to stay when she discovered Ka's betrayal of Blue and Ka had no choice but to return to this solitary life alone only to be assassinated in exile. Ka's rift with his self and true home could never be bridged because he neither felt at home in Frankfurt nor in Istanbul or Kars. To him, his life in exile was much more tolerable than a life that he would lead in solitary confinement in his own country. He wished to endure the life of an exile but he did not want to endure it alone if he was accompanied by Ipek. But to his disappointment, Ipek chose to stay behind and compelled Ka to return to exile all alone.



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