

Reflection of Taboo and Taboo Breaking in Two Selected Novels from Iran and Turkey “I Will Turn off the Lights” by Zoya Pirzad and “Snow” by Orhan Pamuk

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Abstract

Taboo is one of the significant elements of popular culture, which is embedded in norms and beliefs. One of the essential sources for studying popular culture is literary works, especially novels. In the current article, the researchers have inspected taboo and taboo-breaking in two novels (“I will turn off the lights” by Zoya Pirzad and the novel “Snow” by Orhan Pamuk). The research method is analytical-descriptive, and the research data has been collected in a library and based on document research. The findings reveal that the studied authors, due to the influence of beliefs and opinions presented as taboos in society, are continuously involved in the contradiction between following taboos and breaking them and in the meantime.

Meanwhile, they regularly take the path of breaking taboos due to being influenced by the current culture in the society, which is going through the process of transition from tradition to modernism, and by creating courageous and inconsiderate characters in their works, they break some taboos, including religious and cultural taboos. They touch morally and politically. The research results reveal that the essential taboos used in the two novels are cultural taboos following religious taboos. Orhan Pamuk stated taboos more than Zoya Pirzad, and breaking taboos happened more in his novel than in Zoya Pirzad's.

Keywords: Taboo, Breaking taboo, Novel, Iran, Turkey, Tradition, Modernism, Culture

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1- Introduction

“Taboo” is considered a cultural, psychological, and social category that has been present since the beginning of human civilization and culture in different societies and diverse forms, and it includes different dimensions such as religious, political, social and cultural, behavioral and linguistic as well as instinctive and sexual taboos. It is one of the things that have existed

since ancient times and belief in supernatural and magical things. This concept has been understood in previous human civilizations up to modern and present civilizations and has a close relationship with popular culture.

One of the sturdiest taboos is religious taboos, which continuously exist in certain types of religions. “Religious taboos are categorized in the power taboos domain because they are related to gods and supernatural forces and include religious representatives who are the representatives of the gods and the religious rules and laws that the representatives of God have established or announced and any place, person or force that has a charismatic state. Because of the strength of these taboos, few people enter this domain, even those with weak and faint beliefs, hardly go beyond the sanctity of these taboos or publicly ridicule or criticize them because they believe in the definite and severe punishment and castigation of the wrongdoer is firm.” (Afshin-nia, 2016: 108).

Taboo is a type of exclusion that comprises both sacred and impure topics. Defilement of these taboos leads to punishments that can be supernatural and happen by themselves, and make the person who breaks the taboo subject to death, illness, and other calamities, or the society does it. The wrongdoer who does not stand up against the dos and don'ts of society is punished (Story, 2016: 71). In contradiction of public opinion, “breaking the taboo” does not constantly result in punishment. Occasionally, breaking taboos and altering preceding taboos becomes a foundation and a motive for the acquisition of privileges and rights in society, which include the parity of different human races, the equivalence of women's rights with men, the equality of different social classes, etc. Taboo breaking is likewise used in artistic and cultural affairs, and people use it to be seen better and express themselves.

1-1- Statement of the problem

Taboo exists in all societies and has been demonstrated in all kinds of arts, including literature. Accordingly, “taboo-breaking” is one of the most significant features in the literary works of the lands in the transition period from tradition to modernism. Unquestionably, this does not mean the absence of taboo-breaking throughout history; however, human beings have continuously had a severe attitude toward traditions, and taboo-breaking has existed in diverse forms since ancient times. However, the outstanding and noteworthy appearance of such an attitude is mainly seen in the periods when the people of the land voluntarily gave up their traditions and stepped into the modern era.

Regarding the geographical border and shared religion, Turkey and Iran are close culturally and socially. They have many common taboos, and because of the political and cultural exchanges throughout history, they have had similar fates in some periods. This concept has also appeared in the literature of the two countries. In their novels, the contemporary writers of these two countries have always paid particular attention to taboos and breaking taboos as a modern cultural phenomenon and a technique that can open up many narrative

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capacities for the author. Additionally, in this essay, the reflection of this category in two selected novels, “I will turn off the lights” (2001) by Zoya Pirzad and “Snow” (2002) by Orhan Pamuk, is analyzed and analyzed.

1-2- Research methodology

With a descriptive-analytical method, this research has evaluated the phenomenon of taboo and taboo-breaking in the novels of the last twenty years of two countries, Iran and Turkey, with a social approach. The data collection method in this article is the library and documentary studies. In the current research, the concept of taboo and taboo-breaking is criticized and analyzed after recognizing the requisite sources. By reading two selected novels and identifying social and cultural taboos, the multiple dimensions of taboo and taboo-breaking in the considered novels are analyzed, evaluated, and compared so that it is conceivable to attain the mutual influence of hidden and visible social behaviors in Iranian and Turkish society from the narrative context of novels. This comparative research is based on the American school. By comparing the similarities and differences between the types of taboos and breaking taboos in the mentioned novels, it is probable to examine the process of their emergence and their transformations in the culture of Iran and Turkey.

1-3- Research Background

Searching in libraries and literary research indexing websites reveals that there have been several types of research about the concept of taboo and taboo-breaking in different literary texts, which are mentioned as examples:

1- Doctoral dissertation by Vajihe Teymuri entitled “Analysis and review of Persian fiction taboos” 2- A thesis entitled “Breaking taboos in Iranian myths with a look at mysticism and folk tales” by Showkat Joy 3- The thesis “Taboo in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh” by Sasan Sufi, 4- The article “Examination of types of taboo-breaking and its reasons in the poetry of Forough Farrokhzad, Ahmed Shamlou and Nima Yoshij” by Sara Azad and Fatemeh Modaresi, 5- “Criticism of the essay on taboo and modern rationality” by Hassan Eslampour and 6- The essay “Reformer Hegel and anti-taboo” by Hassan Asghari.

However, as can be seen, so far, no research has been done in the comparative investigation of taboo and taboo-breaking in the form of comparative research, particularly regarding the two novels in question.

2- The theoretical framework of the research:

2-1- Comparative literature and its schools

Assessing and evaluating the culture and literature of nations necessitates the existence of a framework on which the theoretical structure of the research is founded. One of the critical

approaches to achieving this goal is to pay attention to the principles of the schools related to this type of literary criticism. “Comparative literature is one of the branches of literary criticism that evaluates works, elements, types, styles, periods, movements, and figures and generally compares literature in its general sense in two or more different cultures and languages (Anousheh, 1997). In another definition, comparative literature is “a kind of literary worldview that goes beyond national, linguistic and geographical boundaries and considers literature as a universal phenomenon whose human essence is the same in all cultures” (Youst; Anoshirvani, 37:2008)

Comparative literature has two primary schools whose new approaches are influenced by these two primary schools. These are “French school” and “American school.” In the comparative literature of the French school, the effect and influence of literary works are inspected, and due to this fact, time symmetry plays an essential role in this school. In other words, “from the point of view of the French school, comparative literature is a branch of the history of literature that examines the historical relations between two or more national literature.” (Youst; Anoshirvani, 2008:43). As stated, “The most significant characteristic of the French school is historicism. Specifically, the historical relationship or the relationship of influencing and being influenced is one of the principles of this school. (Ibid. 44) In the school of American comparative literature, not like the French school, no attention is paid to the relationship between different literatures based on the principle of influence and being influenced. What is original in this school is the principle of similarity, and “the American comparative school also considers comparative literature as an interdisciplinary research that compares the literature of nations with each other and inspects the relationship of literature with other fields of humanities and fine arts. Comparative literature, in its scientific sense, first appeared in France. Then it found its way to some western countries such as Germany, Italy, America, etc., and then went to the Far East and other countries such as Iran.” (Ezati Parvar, 2012: 57)

René Volk, one of the American schools of comparative literature leaders, believes that “comparative literature inspects literature irrespective of political, racial and linguistic obstacles. Comparative literature cannot be surrounded by a single method or limited to the existing historical relations. What very valuable similar phenomena are there in the languages or literary types common in the world that have no historical connection with each other?... It is also impossible to limit comparative literature in the history of literature and to exclude literary criticism and contemporary literature from it” (Makki, 196:1987).

Regarding this research, the topic of taboo and taboo-breaking, which is one of the essential topics of popular culture and “ethnography,” is analyzed based on the “American school” of comparative literature and by highlighting the principle of similarity in the literature of the two nations, it is analyzed and evaluated.

2-2- Lexical and idiomatic concepts of taboo

In the dictionary of Dehkhoda, the following is about taboo: “According to the religion of Polynesia, a person or something that has a sacred meaning and is forbidden to contact others is called a taboo.” (Dehkhoda, 1998). In the dictionary of Moin, the taboo is: “1- The social sanction of an act or a word officially. 2 - A person, thing or place sanctioned for the members of a tribe. 3- Any sacrificial or holy thing that is forbidden to approach and touch. (Moin dictionary)

The word taboo is taken from the terms of anthropology and the language of the Polynesian peoples. In the Polynesian language, a person, thing, place, and anything sacred or forbidden is called taboo. This word has no equivalent in the Persian language, and its English word is used. The term taboo is a set of opposite meanings, and “from Freud's point of view, it has a double meaning. It is both pure and impure and has been a contradiction since the beginning. In the past, many words in this category indicated two opposite meanings, such as “Want,” which also means lack. (Shamisa, 1991: 114)

Concerning taboos, there are diverse opinions from Freud's point of view. For instance, contrary to Freud's opinion, “Font believes that the taboo was neither pure nor impure in the beginning, and only indicated something demonic that should not be touched.” (Freud, 2008: 115). Taboo is a word full of mystery and vagueness; in the past, it had a substantial faith load. So that it was considered the red line of every tribe and ethnic group, and anyone who was disrespected would face the ultimate punishment. Besides, people believed that breaking the taboo would result in extraterrestrial punishments.

2-3- Similarity of the political and social situation of Iran and Turkey

Since literature is constantly influenced by political and social issues, in the current article, the political and social situations of the two countries will be inspected first, and their commonalities will be explained. Then the origins and commonalities of fictional literature in the two countries will be discussed.

Iran and Turkey have many resemblances regarding historical, social, and political situations and conditions. “One of the standard features of these two countries is their political and historical establishment and independence, which throughout their history full of ups and downs has always been on the path and exposed to the invasion of many foreign elements, But it has never been under the absolute control and sovereignty of any power; instead, each of them has protected and perpetuated their culture and identity from the danger of destruction by applying policies against any foreign elements (Mir Abdini, 2004: 514). Despite such a glorious historical background and support, both countries are caught in a kind of anomaly and confusion when facing the modern civilization of the West; this

situation has caused fundamental changes and transformations in their social and cultural structure.

Based on some researchers' point of view, “the expansion of relations with the new civilization and the successive political and military failures of Iran and the Ottoman Empire, in contrast to the tremendous scientific growth and the remarkable progress of the Western countries, have caused intellectual conflicts between the thinkers and politicians of both countries, produced significant and historical effects and consequences in these societies. They were gradually getting acquainted with societies that had no political, social, economic, or cultural similarities with their societies. On the one hand, they saw the progress of the West, and on the other hand, the backwardness and ignorance of their own countries. (Qanun Parvar, 2004: 175).

After observing these conditions and events, "the first sparks of awakening and the motivation for progress and development were ignited among a group of Iranian and Turkish elites. They concluded that scientific and technical advances in war and other aspects of life have caused Europe to be superior to its own countries. To survive, they must undertake a series of improvements and renovations.” (Rais-nia, 2006: 210)

Later, “the Iranians and Ottomans' ongoing acquaintance with the strength and dominance of the West and the understanding of the deep differences between themselves and them adds to their incentive to attain progress and get rid of dissatisfaction and embarrassment caused by failures and letdowns.” Groundbreaking and modernist steps, which are called westernization, modernization, modernity, westernization, and so on, In the Ottoman, it continued with the reformist movements of the new regime. An acquaintance of Iran and Turkey with the indexes of a new civilization and the establishment of communication with the West through the visits of technical, political, and military experts, followed by the occurrence of significant scientific and cultural phenomena such as the arrival of the printing press and the beginning of newspaper writing, the establishment of new schools and educational centers, the publication of various books and press, the growth of the translation of scientific, literary and technical texts in both countries increased the literate and knowledgeable stratum of Iranian and Turkish societies and made them more familiar with new thoughts, methods, and trends. It arranged the context for a fundamental change in the literature of these countries.” (Ibid. 214)

Iranian and Turkish literature, as a result of contact with western literature, especially France, both in terms of language and thought and content, is inclined to be simplistic. “Language changed in terms of vocabulary and syntax. Simple expressions replaced complex words and complicated expressions. Regarding the content, political and social issues in human life with all its dimensions entered the literature. Concepts such as homeland, nation, independence, and freedom became the main themes of literature. With the growth of simple writing, the

emergence of new types of prose literature such as fiction, novels, short stories, playwriting, etc., and prose became very important and got literary validity compared to classical literature, in which poetry was more important. Like so, prose literature, especially story writing, became a prevalent and dominant literary type for stating different thoughts and ideas, and many writers expressed their views of life through it” (Akbari, 1996: 153)

3- Analytical processing of the subject:

3-1- Taboo and taboo-breaking in the novel “I will turn off the lights”

Among Iranian women writers in the contemporary era, few people can be found who have achieved the fame and success of Simin Daneshvar. In spite of all this, “Zoya Pirzad's name has been mentioned more than other Iranian women writers in the last few years, and the reason for this is her mastery of the writing process among women writers in the contemporary era. Though Pirzad was recognized very late for her writings, in just a few years, she gained the necessary credit to remain in the world of Iranian literature.” (Haidari; Bahramian, 2010: 130)

On the other hand, “simple language, expressive prose, and no frills, and most prominently, the precise transmission of the sense of femininity (which happened less in Iranian women's literature after Daneshvar) caused this book to be reprinted for the 13th time less than a year after the publication of her first novel called “I will turn off the lights,” and there are few books in the Iranian publishing market that spread so rapidly among readers and at the same time, to be approved and encouraged by famous Iranian intellectuals and writers” (Turkmani; Chamani, 2014: 54)

Many zealous literary critics believe that Pirzad's fictional spaces come from the same place where most artists look for exemptions and strange events. Nonetheless, Zoya Pirzad, using this natural and daily routine of life, reaches a place that the former majority are unable to reach, and perhaps accusing her of writing for the market starts exactly from this point - the similarity of the raw material of Ms. Pirzad's novels with market writers. “In Pirzad's stories, women have a dominant role and position, and another important point in Pirzad's writings is that the women in Zoya Pirzad's stories are real. These are the kind of women we see every day in the streets of our city. Not weak and incapable, not exhilarated and proud of power. The women in Pirzad's stories continually try to make their lives the way they want. Of course, from time to time, she taunts women who have accepted the traditional role of women in Iranian society and are happy with it” (Paknia; Janfada, 2014: 49).

3-1-1- Cultural taboos

A) Shaving on the day of mourning

One of the cultural taboos that have always been highlighted in our society is not to shave the face during the days of mourning and after the death of loved ones. In the novel “I will turn off the lights,” the author mentions this issue in the mother's tongue to his addressee Alice. Since Alice has done makeup without paying attention to the mourning ceremony, so a taboo has been broken, and the author has ignored this old tradition:

“Mother grumbled to Alice,” I said, “Now, on the day of mourning, if you did not go to the hairdresser, nothing special would happen.” (Pirzad, 2001: 127)

In this example, the mother, a symbol of traditionalism, warns her child about breaking the taboo and not paying attention to the traditions and customs of society.

b) Cousin marriage

Cousin marriage has historically been a significant part of maintaining family stability, particularly among the royal and aristocratic classes. This topic is compared to the Armenian culture, and the author mentioned that cousin marriage is considered taboo in Armenian culture. However, in Iranian culture, it is introduced as a popular custom and has rewards:

“I know it is not a custom among Armenians, but among us, cousin marriage is not only not bad, but it also has rewards as the old saying goes.” (Ibid. 195)

In this part of the novel, as well as the issue of cultural dissimilarities, the taboo of cousin marriage among Armenians is also mentioned.

c) The right of a woman to choose her husband

In Iranian and Islamic culture, men have the right to choose a wife, and for a girl to be able to choose a husband is considered a disgrace and a clear example of taboo. In the novel “I will turn off the lights,” this topic is used once. We read from the language of the main character of the novel that the choice of a wife by a girl is introduced as a funny topic and the taboo of choosing a wife by men here. However, mentally and imaginatively, it is broken:

“For the first time, I thought how funny it is that the daughter chooses the husband and not the other way around.” (Ibid. 204)

As well as being out of Iranian culture and customs, this taboo-breaking is also considered a red line from the point of view of Sharia.

3-1-2- Moral taboos

A) Talking about divorce in the presence of children

In this novel, the topic of talking about divorce in the presence of children is also mentioned, and the author, from the language of the novel's characters, considers it an unpleasant thing that is not paid much attention to today:

“In front of the children, they say whatever they want. He talks about marriage and divorce as if someone bought a dress and returned it because he did not like it” (Ibid. 122).

Maybe talking about divorce in the presence of children is considered normal. However, in Iranian culture and customs, this behavior is never satisfactory, and older adults never raise such topics in the presence of children. It is considered taboo.

3-1-3- Political taboos

A) Students' political activity

In this novel, the existence of political taboos is mentioned once, and it is assumed that political activities by students are a taboo that is being broken:

“These days, all students are looking for trouble. What do we do to politics?” (ibid: 120)

In this novel, Garnik is a character who pays more attention to political issues than others. Garnik is an idealistic person who always seeks an ideal society and often gets involved in political affairs, and his political speeches have many fans:

Although Garnick's political discussions are mocked in the novel, it shows his political and social understanding and consciousness, which is rooted in social interest:

“For the first time, Artosh and Garnik discussed politics for two hours. After Garnik's departure, Artosh said that the Dashnaktsutyun party was once a leader, but now everything is changed; why Garnik is still a fan of Dashnaktsutyun.” (Ibid. 174)

b) Women's right to vote

Women's right to vote is one of the essential political taboos in the not-so-distant past, and no one had the right to talk about women's vote and choice in political matters. This subject is mentioned once in this novel, and it is clear from the tone of the character in the novel that this taboo is somehow broken:

“Ms. Nour Allahi was saying - I repeat, that the first desire and goal of Iranian women is to have the right to vote.” (ibid. 77)

This breaking of taboos is rooted in the trend towards modernism, during which Iranians became familiar with Western culture, and women, seeing the rights and freedoms of women in the West, expressed whispers of equal rights for men and women and the right to vote, which was considered a non-customary and taboo position at that time, gradually became a regular thing and was broken as a political taboo.

3-1-4- Religious taboos

A) Communication with non-mahram

In this novel, communication with the non-mahram is the most critical taboo to be broken, and creating a female character named “Clarice” who is a lonely woman, has prepared the context for the formation of her relationship with a character named “Simonian” and describes the details of the relationship between these two people leads to the breaking of the taboo of communication with the non-mahram.

“I do not know if my mother's loud laughter tormented me or because I could not say that Mr. Davtian always invites me to coffee and he has known for a long time that I like salty gata.” (Ibid. 26)

In the following example, the narrator is astonished that his sister is speaking with a married and non-mahram man because this behavior is considered a religious and moral taboo that his sister violated:

“This time I took the chocolate sheet from the table, wondering since when my sister shows interest to a man who is already married and has a child.” (Ibid. 42)

Kissing a non-mahram's hand is also considered an irreligious, immoral, and taboo behavior, which the author violated in this novel:

“When I put my hand forward, he brought his hand forward. But instead of shaking hands, he bent down and kissed my hand. Artosh coughed once”. (Ibid. 45)

Putting aside moral and religious thoughts and addressing a non-mahram woman with the pronoun “you” is a taboo that is broken in this novel:

“I felt I was blushing. Because he said “you,” or because I was not used to someone complimenting my work?” (Pirzad, 2011:150)

In the following instance, the non-mahram man's insistence on using his first name is a religious and moral taboo that has been broken:

“He asked me to call him “Emil” instead of Mr. Simonyan.” (Ibid. 112)

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In the example below, the mother, as a symbol of religiosity and traditionalism, warns her daughter, who is a symbol of westernization and the requirements of modernism, about the relationship with the non-mahram, but she does not pay attention:

“The mother said slowly, - I have said a thousand times that it is not right to hang out with this couple. They have no morals and decency at all....” (Ibid. 122)

b) Hijab

The issue of hijab is also one of the most significant religious taboos, which is considered and respected in Islamic societies, including our country, and breaking it is considered a crime, in addition to not paying attention to religious teachings because it has been mentioned in our constitution.

In the novel “I will turn off the lights,” the issue of hijab and its taboo is mentioned once, but the character's behavior in the novel shows that she ignores this taboo and breaks it:

“I looked at myself for the last time in the corridor mirror; I wondered if the collar of my sleeveless dress was too open. Is not the skirt of my dress too tight? My mother said, - We left. I wish you would put a shawl on your shoulder.” (Ibid. 43)

c) Joking with the names of the prophets

Religious taboos in contemporary fiction are sometimes broken. The reason for that should be the spread of Western culture in Iran because Western countries have always had an ideological conflict with Islam and are trying to create Islamophobia. Respecting the Prophets in Islam is a subject that has general acceptance, and not paying attention to it is an example of breaking the taboo, which is mentioned once in the novel:

“You should not joke with Jesus and the church. It is a sin.” (Ibid. 266)

3-2- Taboo and taboo-breaking in the novel “Snow (Kar)”

Orhan Pamuk can be considered the most famous writer from Turkey, and the main reason for his fame is his winning the Nobel Prize. Pamuk is an intellectual and transnational writer who, as well as expressing the pains and problems of the Turkish people and the historical failures of this land, also pays attention to explaining the problems and issues of the people of the world, which makes him a world-renowned writer. His writing style is likewise very striking and pleasant, and perhaps no other writer has as much tenderness and simplicity in his prose as Orhan Pamuk. Orhan Pamuk can describe his characters with simple but powerful prose. He is a good storyteller, and he narrates the story in a way that, in addition to the fact that the story is very tangible and familiar, it is very unusual and different at the moment. (Dehbashi, 2006: 96)

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An exiled poet named “Ka” returns to Turkey and travels to the abandoned city of Kars. His apparent purpose in coming to this city is to report on the wave of suicides among religious girls who are prohibited from wearing headscarves and hijabs. Nonetheless, Ka's memories of an attractive girl named Ipek, who was recently divorced, also played a role in his coming to this city. After some time, Ka discovers that numerous people, from Ipek's ex-wife to a charismatic terrorist, are after him. In the novel Snow, a lost gift suddenly returns to its owner; a theater performance turns into a bloody massacre.

3-2-1- Cultural taboos

A) Divorce

The topic of divorce is considered a cultural taboo because, in all cultures of the world, divorce is an unfortunate thing that has bitter consequences for every family. In this novel, the issue of divorce is mentioned several times as an unfortunate matter, firstly, the reason for it is social and moral factors, and secondly, its consequence is the homelessness of couples, especially women, which ultimately leads to unfortunate issues such as suicide or moral corruption.

“Although she has separated from her husband's Mukhtar and has stayed with her father and sister in Snow Palace Hotel.” (Ibid. 15)

b) Punishing girls and restricting them by parents

In this novel, the author narrates a period of Turkish history where traditionalism and prejudices prevailed, and girls were deprived of the minimum freedoms prescribed by law. In such a setting, the girls were never allowed to leave the house, and the conservatism and prejudice of the fathers had limited them to such an extent that they were the targets of beatings, and secondly, they did not even have the right to buy their essentials.

“It was not only the constant beatings that the girls experienced or the conservatism of their fathers, who did not even allow them to go out; or the endless surveillance of jealous husbands, or lack of money.” (Pamuk, 2016: 24-25)

These girls, despite their inner desire, were victims of their fathers' expediency and utilitarianism and were forced to marry older men:

“For example, there was a girl who was forced to be engaged to an old man who owned a tea house.” (Ibid. 25)

In this novel, girls are limited to such an extent that they are considered the most oppressed section of society and are the targets of all kinds of slander. The slanders that affect their fate and future and suddenly destroy their life:

“The crying parents explained that she committed suicide after her teacher accused her of not being a virgin. Because this rumor was spread all over Kars, her fiancé has canceled the engagement, and other suitors, who wanted to marry our daughter, have given up.” (Ibid. 29)

3-2-2- Moral taboos

A) Communication with non-mahram

One of the most critical moral taboos raised in the novel, which also has a high frequency, is the issue of illegitimate relationship with the non-mahram. Some of the female characters in this novel do not follow moral issues. They seek pleasure from this disgusting work by violating moral principles and breaking the taboo of communication with non-mahram. In the meantime, lustful men are not blameless in deviating women. Here are some examples in this field:

“Alexander, Tsar of Russia, came here to hunt and had a secret meeting with his mistress.” (Ibid. 37)

“They have a warm relationship with the wives of the unemployed, who do not know where the next meal will come from and give them hope.” (Ibid. 47)

“A photo showed his wife kissing men in front of his eyes in various shows.” (Ibid. 340)

“Do you think it is not a shame that while Mukhtar was selling electric rice cookers in his store, this wicked person had a warm and loving relationship with his wife and was enjoying her?” (Ibid. 623)

b) Disrespecting elders

Insulting and insulting elders is a moral taboo mentioned in this novel. In order to retell the importance of breaking this taboo, the author has referred to the position of this moral virtue in the Holy Quran:

“Is it written in the Qur'an that you shoot a revolver at someone older than you and insult them?” (ibid. 79)

“Be polite in the presence of the imam. Do not interrupt him” (Ibid. 124)

c) Atheism

Disbelief in God is one of the taboos that we see in the novel, and considering this period of Turkish history, disbelief in God and abandoning religious beliefs have been brought up many times in the novel, and the taboo of atheism has been broken several times directly and indirectly in the novel. For instance, in the following example, the author stated breaking the taboo of atheism and expressed the complications that arose from breaking this taboo:

“Suffering from the disease of atheism caused him to exert unreasonable pressures on his young and lovely students: he tried to be alone with the mothers of his students, and he stole money from another teacher who was jealous of him.” (Ibid. 146)

d) Talking about sex

Generally, the privacy of sexual relations is one of the most critical moral taboos shared among different cultures. It is considered a taboo that should not be broken, both in custom and Sharia law, but this taboo in the novel “Snow” does not last long, and we see it being broken many times by the characters:

“Even if I do not wear a headscarf, I do not think I am one of those women who flirt with men and thinks about nothing but sex.” (Ibid. 217)

e) Drug abuse

Considering the complications it has for the individual and the society, drug abuse is considered a moral and cultural taboo, the breaking of which causes problems for the individual and his relatives. In the novel “Snow,” we often see the use of drugs by the characters who have chosen this wrong path to reach peace and are caught in its predicament:

“In practice, he used opium for fun.” (Ibid. 254)

f) Glancing and looking at the non-mahram

Looking at non-mahram and so-called glancing is considered a moral taboo as well as a religious one, and in most cultures, it is a wrong and offensive matter and is considered a taboo:

“There, on an untidy bed, was a beautiful woman with white skin color and beautiful eyes sleeping. Ka could not help ogling”. (Ibid. 323)

g) Prostitution

The taboo of prostitution is brought up many times in this novel, and sometimes it is broken by the characters of the novel. Maybe it can be said that sexual taboos in Pamuk's novel are more frequent than other taboos, and the reason for this is the transition of Turkish society from traditionalism and paying attention to customs to modernism:

“The woman was suffering from typhoid, but she was still a prostitute.” (Ibid. 323)

“The hotel is filled with women who have come from Georgia and Ukraine to smuggle small goods or do prostitution.” (Ibid. 468)

“The hero who was the victim of sexual rape speaks...” (Ibid. 586)

“It was said that the units of the Kars Security Organization took the rumors about the Saudi-affiliated network (which is supposed to kill several Russian women who flocked to Turkey to work as prostitutes after the collapse of the Soviet Union) seriously.” (Ibid. 128)

“The two hotels next to the garages, which were brothels, the place of cockfighting, and illegal killings, were prevented from doing their wrong deeds for a while.” (Ibid. 383)

h) Not wearing a veil

Hijab is considered one of the most significant subjects of the novel, and in this novel, we are dealing with the historical period of the abounding hijab in Turkey. Therefore, the hijab taboo has been mentioned and broken many times in this novel:

“The elegant velvet evening dress that Mukhtar bought for her in Istanbul is so open at the back that her husband only allowed her to wear it at home.” (Ibid. 598)

“When authorities outlawed headscarves in educational institutions across the country, many women and girls refused.” (Ibid. 30)

“This performance wakes up a young girl from her slumber; the girl who was wrapped in a black scarf takes off her scarf and sets it on fire.” (Ibid. 39)

“She used to go to TV, unbutton her chest, show off her legs, and flirt.” (Ibid. 191)

3-2-3- Political taboos

A) Assassination of political officials

The political officials of any country are always under protection, and killing them is considered unacceptable and a political taboo because the person whom the people elect has a high position, and killing him, is a desecration of the people's right to choose. In this novel, we sometimes encounter the assassination of political figures, which is the result of political and party confrontations:

“When the mayor of Kars was murdered, all the newspapers in Istanbul covered it.” (Ibid. 12)

“Many Islamic terrorists still commit murders...” (Ibid. 124)

b) Referring to the groups that oppose the government

The narrative of this novel is dedicated to a period of Turkish history when the party and political conflicts were extremely tense, and parties such as “PKK” and communists were presented as political opponents of the ruling system that was talked about them as a political taboo and had consequences:

“He could feel the presence of separatist Kurdish guerrillas (PKK) in the city.” (Ibid: 20)

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“After endless wars, riots, massacres, and atrocities, the Russian and Armenian armies occupied Kars one after the other.” (Ibid. 37)

“Communist guerillas in the 70s, when they were rampaging, had made a capital run away.”
(Ibid. 46)

“It was the communists and their Tbilisi radio that spread ethnic pride. They meant to destroy Turkey.” (Ibid. 47)

c) Massacre and genocide

Genocide is considered a political taboo and is accepted by all cultures and public beliefs. In this novel, the taboo of genocide and the subject of the Armenian massacre are mentioned:

“A part of this museum remembers the massacre of Armenians.” (Ibid. 56)

d) Insulting the ruling system

As stated, this novel narrates a period of Turkish history where the political atmosphere is closed, and any criticism of the government is met with a strong response. Insulting and criticizing the government in this novel is a political taboo that is mentioned numerous times in the novel:

“Anyone who was convicted and found guilty of insulting the government felt proud.” (Ibid. 58)

e) Torturing and killing opponents of the ruling system and stigmatizing them

The torture and confrontation of anti-riot police with critics and rioters are also considered a political taboo because, in political literature, criticizing and rallying against the wrong policies of the ruling system is acceptable and opposing these criticisms. Political demands are considered taboo, and in this novel, we see this taboo being broken and violated by the Turkish security forces:

Being beaten by the police is a taboo that is mentioned in Pamuk's novel:

“Mukhtar realized from this look that as soon as he arrived at the police headquarters, he would be severely beaten.” (Ibid. 115)

In the witness of the following example, the issue of beating the police is also mentioned, which is an unusual and taboo issue:

“In the old days, the town police used to beat religious conservatives.” (Ibid. 118)

“His behavior was anti-Islamic, and he was introduced as a payee of the CIA organization.”
(Ibid. 126)

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“It was said that the government organized a secret group to intensify these sectarian conflicts.”
(Ibid. 128)

Torturing prisoners and criminals is also a political taboo that most societies consider themselves exempt from, and sometimes this issue causes conflict between two countries. They accuse each other of violating the rights of criminals:

“They pulled one of his nails during the torture.” (Ibid. 204)

“But he is worried that if he gets involved in politics, the police will file a case against him, and he will be kicked out of school.” (Ibid. 190)

“His father has been imprisoned for years because of his political beliefs and his opposition to any form of government tyranny.” (Ibid. 477)

f) Spying

Spying is one of the clear and old examples of crimes against the national security of any country and is considered an important political and security taboo. In this novel, the topic of spying is mentioned many times, and this political taboo has been broken and violated many times:

“Ka said: I spy for the newspaper of the Republic.” (Ibid. 132)

“It was said that the units of the Kars security organization took seriously the rumors about the Saudi-affiliated network (which is supposed to kill several Russian women who flocked to Turkey to become prostitutes after the collapse of the Soviet Union).” (Ibid. 128)

3-2-4- Religious taboos

A) Suicide

The subject of suicide in this novel is considered one of the main subjects because we are facing characters whose life in the world has not met their expectations, and they take the path of suicide to reach peace; this essential religious and moral taboo is broken many times in this novel:

“I am interested in the municipal elections and also in the issue of women who committed suicide.”
(Ibid. 11)

“When the mayor of Kars was murdered, all the newspapers in Istanbul covered it. The women who committed suicide were not left out.” (Ibid. 12)

The theme of suicide in this novel is protuberant. It shows that the disorder of identity and psyche in a society that breaks away from its past and steps into a future that is vague and

different from the past is very likely. One of the most important and tangible effects of it is the tendency to commit suicide among teenagers and young people:

“For instance, a girl was forced to be engaged to an old man who owned a tea house. She had dinner with his mother, father, three siblings, and her paternal grandmother... from there, she went to his parent's room through the window and killed herself with her father's hunting rifle.” (Ibid. 25)

“One girl goes straight to her room, finds a large bottle of veterinary medicine, Merotaline, and drinks it all like a soda.” (Ibid. 25)

“The girl had already prepared a rope and a hook in the ceiling, so she hanged herself until her husband broke the door.” (Ibid. 26)

“Men kill themselves three to four times as often as women.” (Ibid. 26)

“Man is the masterpiece of God's creation, and suicide is blasphemy.” (Ibid. 27)

“Taslimeh... attached her scarf to the hook of the chandelier and hanged herself with it.” (Ibid. 31)

“My child, I am a Muslim. I am against suicide.” (Ibid. 85)

b) Insulting religious sanctities

In the novel “Snow,” in numerous places, we are faced with insulting the holy things, including the prophets, which is one of the signs of the transition of Turkish society from an Islamic country to secularism:

“A presenter who has a childish face is stylish and makes obscene and sly jokes about Islam.” (Ibid. 128)

“The night when Nasib returned from his night lessons, he saw that his dear friend had hit his target by firing several shots.” (Ibid. 186)

“He understood that not shaking a woman's hand is an Islamic tradition.” (Ibid. 196)

“God forbid that every mortal should dream of playing the role of a prophet.” (Ibid. 339)

c) Women's virginity

Due to language limitations, women usually approach the descriptions related to marital relations cautiously, unlike men, who can dwell on any aspect of forbidden issues.

“This is what suicide gives to girls who have been deceived and lost their virginity; this ruling is also valid for virgin girls who are married to those who do not love them.” (Ibid. 219)

Novels Taboos	I Will Turn Off the Lights	Snow	Total
Cultural taboos	4	2	6
Moral taboos	2	12	14
Religious taboos	3	4	7
Political taboos	2	8	10
Total	11	26	37

4- Conclusion and final evaluation

Scrutinizing the frequency of taboos in the two novels discloses that religious taboos have a high frequency, but breaking these taboos in the novels is less than breaking cultural taboos. The reason for that should be found in the Islamic nature of the two countries because religious taboos have formed an inseparable and acceptable part of the culture of these two countries. Writers cannot enter the religious taboos due to religious and political reasons. Obviously, due to the Turkish political system that separates religion from politics, the breaking of religious taboos in the novels of this country's authors is more significant than the works of Iranian authors.

Moral taboos also have a substantial frequency in the two novels, but taboo-breaking in the field of ethics is more in the Turkish novel than in the Iranian novel. The reason for that should be sought under cultural and religious taboo-breaking because morality in these two societies originates from culture and religion. The breaking of cultural and religious taboos exposes moral taboos to be discredited.

Though political taboos are more or less used in all Iranian and Turkish novels, none of the studied writers are political writers who can openly criticize the ruling system, and they have only limited themselves to stating some political terms such as democracy, freedom of speech, elections, political assassination, torture, and such things.

The research results reveal that taboos and breaking taboos have a substantial frequency in the studied novels. Authors have mentioned the subject of taboos and breaking taboos in their novels with sometimes common and sometimes different motives.

The statistical analysis of the number of taboos in the two novels discloses that the frequency of cultural taboos in these novels is higher than in others. The reason for this should be sought in the cultural situation of the two countries. Because the two countries of Iran and Turkey are countries with rich indigenous cultures, which, of course, have many cultural commonalities, but in recent decades, the trend towards modernism and the passing of traditions has been evident in both societies.

Generally, because writers are always considered to be the innovative and intellectual stratum of society, they are always more influenced by the society's culture and cultural exchange with other societies than ordinary people, and this causes them to look at some cultural, religious, moral and political traditions of their society with doubt and criticism and to include this issue in their stories. Consequently, a critical look at culture, religion, ethics, and politics eventually leads to breaking the taboos related to these fields, and in this way, the authors, in addition to introducing taboos and breaking some taboos, strengthen their story in terms of tension and suspense, in this way, they express their innovative approaches.

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