

Against the Modern World: A Different Ontological, Ethical, Epistemological and Esthetical Overview on Sufism and Sects

Selim Sözer

(Faculty of Theology and Religion Studies, Suleyman Demirel University, Turkey)

Abstract: The Western Europe based Renaissance and Reform movements as a revolt against the authority of the Church lead to the liberation of mind, a human-centered understanding and gave birth to the Enlightenment movement. The outputs of the Enlightenment movement are modern, post-modern and hyper-modern understandings and lifestyles. The Enlightenment and therefore the modernity promised to bring the heaven to the world, save mind from the captivity of magic and the next world, liberate mind and human and an illuminated, peaceful world. As a result of the Enlightenment, a small portion of the world became extraordinarily wealth while the rest became poor and stayed under the threat of famine and war. The cost of two world wars to the world is that millions of people either died or became disabled.

I think it will be possible with a new worldview to liberate man from his iron cage to remove unsustainable growth idea from being an absolute myth, to open the door of a different world with the idea that man has a soul, to eliminate the hostility emerged by the competition idea and to make the world a peaceful place. This means that you have something to say to this modern world. At the same time this means that there is a creator of the universe and the positions of the man in the universe are “the essence of the universe” and “the most honourable of the creatures”. This understanding is most obviously found in Islamic Sufism understanding. Such principles like multiplicity in unity and unity in existence give important clues related to this subject. Sufism exists in social field through the sects. While the sects should be the institutions to reflect the Islam in the best way, it is both interesting and worrisome that today, the sects have transformed into institutions functioning as bridges to carry water to the modernity ship and to transfer modernity to those who are late to be modernized.

Key words: modernity, tradition, sufism, sect

1. Introduction

Sufist Islamic interpretation can be seen as a different understanding and performing of Islam. The importance of the Sufism movement in the history of Islam and Islamic world of thought cannot be ignored. The institutionalized form of Sufism movement is called as sect. Sects have been unprecedentedly respected in Turkish history and performed extraordinary functions. It functioned as pioneer in and before the occupations, achieved the social cohesion during the Mongol invasion and mobilized the society during the war of independence.

Sects have prevented moral corruption and tolerated social, economic inequalities and discontents; taught the

society art and esthetical feelings and transferred rules and conventions during the urbanization of the society, revealed a living religion and provided different information types as an episteme; and therefore the importance of sects because of their infinite contributions to the Islamic history and culture cannot be ignored.

As we all know, Renaissance which emerged in a particular time period and region and the Enlightenment movement lead to a modern world with the help of modern science and technology. Then, the industrial revolution came true and this modern movement leads to the emergence of a modern society. Modern thought surrounded all societies and did not give passage to other thoughts and lifestyles. The contributions of modern thought to the world cannot be denied. Most importantly, the idea of bringing the heaven to the earth made world prosperous. Apart from the opportunities provided by the modernity, it should not be ignored that it has removed the man and the society from the reality and confined to the quantitative world, monotype thinking and rationalism and as Weber stated confined to an “iron cage”. Is not it the modernity which is the reason behind today's risk society, nihilist and idealess man, the information as a hostage of mind and senses, an understanding which does not allow different worlds and contingencies?

It is not appropriate to categorize the modern as modern, postmodern and hypermodern for us. This is because of the fact that all the modernisms are continuation of each other. Even if, some people take postmodernism as a revolt against the modernism, we take it like adopting itself. According to Bauman, it strengthens our argument to state that postmodernism is a modernism free of false consciousness. The most important element that makes us believe in that way is the relationship of modernism or postmodernism with the tradition and their understanding of tradition or sanctity. They are not different from each other in terms of the interpretation of sacred and their relationship with the sacred. Moreover, it is noteworthy that postmodernism has no connection with anything and its contact with the tradition is only limited to consumption and commoditization.

The way to handle the outcomes of modernism, satisfy the impossible non-satisfaction and consumerism, overcome hostility and environmental disasters caused by cruel competition and society, man and universe lies at reading aimless man, society and universe again with a different perspective. It should not be forgotten that the modernism which promises a heaven on the earth caused millions of casualties because of two world wars and poverty and famine because of the egocentrism.

The new things which are put forward by the Muslim world since they encountered the modernity and forgot that they have the reality and accepted to live in modern captivity do not represent their world but the verbalism that the dominant world would approve and appreciate. The discourses, approvals of the dominant world and repeating these discourses and approvals prevent us from being ourselves. By that way, it becomes impossible to perceive our history, geography and world of thought in their own integrity and consistency. In that point, we can say that the ancient needs to be discovered. I think we need to understand that it is only a hallucination to accept that there is another way to reach the tradition and roots.

In this study, we assume that a new reading of the society and the universe is only possible through revealing the traditional thought and understanding of life in the sense of correlating with the sacred (not in the sense of tradition). The most vivid manifestation of this tradition is seen at the Sufism. By considering the fact that Sufism perceives the world in a different way, we discuss the opportunity of creating an unmodern world through the Sufist teachings.

However, even if the Sufism has the potential to overcome security problem, egocentrism, hedonist and narcissist feelings, aimless, idleness and nihilist tendencies through a different ontology, epistemology, ethics and

esthetics, today the sects feed the current modern or postmodern ontology, epistemology, ethics and esthetics and support the rational and sensational one. It stands as another problem that institutions, which are expected to present a new, unmodern world, are functioning as a bridge for the modernism.

In this study, we examine what the modernism is and what kind of a world it promises, Sufist Islamic thought and the world that it presents and we aim to tell what opportunities Sufism can present to the man and the universe and how it can be a new breath opposing the modernism.

2. What Does the Modern World Mean?

In order to understand the modern world, it is essential to examine the meanings of modern and to witness the emergence of modernism in historical process.

In the Large Turkish Dictionary; the meanings of modern word are “Be appropriate for the present time, era, day; contemporary, new, appropriate for the West and Europe, rootless, traditionless” (Doğan, 1996, p. 779), its French counterpart consists of such meanings like contemporary and related meanings (Bolay, 2009, p. 251), and Turkish Dictionary of Turkish Language Association gives the meaning of up-to-date. The counterpart of the English word, modernity, is “modernite” or “modernlik” in Turkish. Modernity is a different way of believing, knowing, thinking and lifestyle. When we look at the past from the present, modernity, in terms of an outstanding paradigm, definition, concept and reality, refers to a new human experience which challenges and overthrows all experiences and aggregations of the history.

It is impossible to understand the modernism without taking the mental elements that constitutes the modernity. Moreover, it cannot be denied that modernism should be accepted as a philosophy (Kahraman, 2004, p. x). We mean both the modern and the postmodern by the modernism concept. In spite of the deep differences between each other, the challenging situation to include both of them is obvious. On the one hand, postmodern has a function to transform the modern, on the other hand, it needs to be said that postmodern creates a transformation, an inflection rather than a diffraction and disengagement considering its internal features (Kahraman, 2004, p. 11). While the modernism is the process to develop a power, postmodernism is the process to eliminate the power and liberate the individual as much as possible (Kahraman, 2004, p. ix). Actually, it is possible to say that postmodernism is at a proper position in the world proposed by the Sufism. However, because of their attitudes towards the tradition, reference points, proposed worlds and lifestyles, recognized authorities; we have shown courage to put them into the same equation. While the modernity perceives the entity from the wrong point, the fact that postmodernism break the entity into pieces may constitute our starting point. Because we face with the loss of reality in the postmodern world.

In this context, to say the followings will not be wrong: Modernity stands opposing to the traditional world. Because it exists by eliminating the roots, beliefs, paradigms. Traditional world refers to the world in which information, thought and culture passes from generation to generation. This process has a social function to guarantee the stability and sustainability (Toku, 2000, p. 170). We do not mean the conventions and customs by the tradition. The word, tradition, especially in this study refers to “ad-Din”, all sacred things, or in other words, his manifests. It refers to the constants of the religion which exists for centuries (Nasr, 2007, p. 70). Yet, all solid things evaporate in modernism (Berman, 2013). Modernity is a anthropocentric worldview consisting of all basic philosophical assumptions of the Enlightenment. A special profile, bracked human soul’s desire and requests, is meant by the anthropocentric (Bulaç, 2012a, p. 10). No matter what it is called, whether a great revolution or a

magnificent transformation, all historical, cultural, religious, philosophical, traditional aggregations have been ignored with the modernism and the idea that there is a creature which cannot be seen or sensed has been ignored with a new knowing and sense of creature and a totally secular and profane world has been created (Akgül, 2012, p. 181). Modernism is the differentiation of family, economics, politics, religion and art and increasingly instrumentalisation of these elements found in life. Here is the point where the word, modern, intersects with profane and secular.

A modern world totally excludes finalism or a teolist understanding. Weber, defines the rejection of “celestial” by positioning profanation and disenchantment right opposed to the divine plan (Touraine, 2012, p. 25). There is universe constructed on how rather than why and God is replaced with the science.

Modern society design is an agent created by people who do an act in the permanent progressive historicity (Yıldırım, 2012, p. 19). Modern project has a content in compliance with the hegemonic history reading which excludes singular history understanding and all multiple readings. The content involves an evolutionary perspective from the primitive society to the modern society. History has reached to an unrivalled end by extending to modern west civilization (Yıldırım, 2012, p. 21). This progressive theory takes historical process as from cave dweller to superman, from barbarism to civilization, from stupidity to wisdom or genius, from war and survival struggle to peace, harmony and cooperation (Sorokin, 1997, p. 17). As a result, the West is hailed as the winner of this process. As the West is advanced, the others are naturally not advanced and they are perceived as the late societies (Altun, 2011, pp. 40, 45).

It would not be wrong to say “modern world is a world without tradition”; and it is the name of a world in which new and “advanced” ones and all things, which belong to the past and sacred, evaporate. In contrast, modern means, for us, the thing pulled off from the principles which manages everything and notified through the revelation and pulled off from the excessive ones (Nasr, 2012, p. 98). The relationship between modernity and the rejection of the sacred, postmodernism's understanding which does not accept any constant or authority push both of them beyond the tradition. Modernity distorts the reality and postmodernism breaks the reality into pieces and man is slid into chaos (Bulaç, 2012b, p. 31).

Five stages are named that societies have to get through in order to create a modern society. First one is traditional society stage. The last one is the consumer society which is one of the most important indicators of postmodernism (or newly debated hypermodern) (Rostow, 1960; quoted by Altun, 2011, pp. 49-51).

Modernism, which shapes our lives, stands as a hegemony which requires us to shape our lives. Exclusion of the past and canonization of the new. On the other hand, postmodernism means that there is no reality, constant, authority, ultimate and self-generated one. Everything is possible. Everything depends on the perspective and everything is relative.

Modernism has become a imperious system attempting to organize the daily life since 19th century. This is a radical change. This change is a transformation involving the reorganization of the society and emergence of new relationships.

Generally, four modernisms are told which are the political modernism, cultural modernism, economical modernism and social modernism. Some certain features about the modernism and modern man can be determined by analyzing through these four dimensions of modernism: The first features are told to be positivism and rationality in these characteristics. The only verification authority is mind and senses in the modern world. Modern man, who perceives the mind as everything, does not want to know anything besides those generated by mind and senses. In other words, the modern man is positivist and rational.

Another important feature of the modernism is humanism. Humanism, as one of the most obvious features of the Western metaphysical tradition, stands out as a powerful, self-directed subject notion: A subject that references itself and the measure of everything itself. Renaissance accepts “man” as the most magnificent creature as its main philosophy. There is no need for God, anymore. This formation gained strength from the thought system of Enlightenment Era and positivist worldview (Türkdoğan, 2008, p. 467).

From a postmodern perspective, the humanism opportunity is provided with a metaphysics which cast human as central and exclusionist. This situation points out the end of all spontaneity ideas including God and subject notion (Küçükalp, 2003, pp. 126–137). We can say that while the modern perspective is humanist, the postmodern perspective is anti-humanist. Man is removed from the reference source position and no other reference or authority replaces the man in anti-humanist thought system.

Secularism is the principle feature of both modernism and postmodernism. While, modern objects to the sacred and religion and does not accept religious information as an information source, postmodernism accepts religious information as an information source and states that religion can be placed. Even if religion is an acceptable element in postmodernism, it is not accepted as a reference source. It would not be wrong to state that both of them are secular and the world has entered into the process of secularization during the postmodern period. Modern man is secular. We can infer the followings from the secularization term:

- (a) Restriction of desires, happiness and pleasure to this world; requirement to achieve the goals immediately and in this world;
- (b) Exclusion of everything related to excessive, abdomen and afterlife issues from our minds, lives and the world;
- (c) Taking the earthly desires of man into the center;
- (d) Rationalization of the religion, purifying it from the sacred and excluding it from the world; by that way the world itself will become the absolute (Bulaç, 2012b, p. 30).

Everything seems more artificial, moved away from its essence and distorted in the modern life (Guénon, 2004, p. 242). At this point, it can be realized that reality is replaced with a simulation. There is no longer a reality, there are simulations and we take them as real (Boudrilard, 2011, pp. 13–21). By that way, we watch the things on television as if they are real even if we know that they are not. This theme commodifies everything surrounding our lives. Everything is degraded into tradable things and a world, in which we exist as much as we own, has been created.

Both modernists and postmodernists question what is moral. One thing for sure is that international moral values are denied and reference to the sacred is disregarded.

Individualism, emerged with the modern lifestyle, has brought ethical pluralism. The main problem of this pluralism is whether there are ethical principles to determine good and bad. In other words, modern and postmodern perspectives of our era are deprived of a moral basis. Each modernism, which cut its connection with the sacred, has become the alimentative element of multiple moral understandings. Morality and rightfulness seem like a jactitation in these modern times when values are pluralized, moral ones are simplified, freedom and wealth state are equalized, strong ones are right, semantical maps are lost, the spell is broken, values are lost, the man is divinized (Bayram, 2006).

The relativity of morality, which has become inextricable today, allows man to marry both to the fellow creature and, for example, a dog. The belief that man is a self-commanding creature and the only authority over his body legitimates both abortion and the nudity. Moreover, this legitimacy allows man to be the decision-maker

over death. In other words, modern man has the right for euthanasia. Because, life and death are up to the man. Moreover, they decide to have children. The child, which is “the grant of God” in the traditional ontological perspective, transforms into an object which is brought to the world by parents in modern ontology.

There is no place for dedication, permanent ones and altruism. These values are for the traditional world. If you have a connection with the sacred, you can let the dedication, altruism, generosity, modesty, solidarism, cooperation exists in your world. The abovementioned values do not have a meaning in the modern world of hedonist feelings, brought with the excessive individualism.

One of the most important indicators of the modernism is individualization. In this sense, “Where does the modernism lead us?” question is always present. Studies in this field have shown that people care less about self-realization, independence and privacy. In other words, self-determining, leading an exciting life, reaching something in the life, to feel pleasure as much as possible are among the life purposes of the modern man. Individualization brings about the individualism. Individualism, indispensably leads people to hedonism, egoism and narcissism. Some others state that individualism stage should be achieved for the emergence of free individuals and by that way we can move from self-pressure to self-realization. Therefore, it is believed that individuals, who can choose freely, organize their lives independently and rationally free from all authorities, will exist in the society. Yet, while small authorities, social allegiances and environmental audits get lost, large scale anonymous allegiances emerge. As, the traditional protective communication networks come loose, state, fashion, media, government (definition of Foucault^{*}), consumption and related systems replace them (Loo- Reijen, 2006, pp. 163–165).

Freedom is found among the biggest promises of modernity. This refers to create the free individual who is self-deciding and judge of his own destiny. Moreover, this understanding refers to free man from all information and beliefs outside the material world and to liberate and liberalize man with the free mind.

Is the free individual a legend? Escape from Freedom of Erich Fromm states clearly that the free individual is a legend. Modern man wants to escape from freedom. There are three main reasons for the escape: First reason is the need to be connected to an authority. The second is the destructiveness. Destructiveness arises from the need to destroy another to deal with the emotional isolation. The third reason is the conformism. To place reliance, the challenging decision making process and the responsibility of the decision leads to re-enact the actions of others. (From Erich Fromm, Loo- Reijen, 2006, pp. 176–178) Free modern man's attitude towards the freedom leads him to other addictions.

The freedom promise of modernity resulted in the instrumentalisation of the mind and captivated man, who is not made up of the material ones and mind, in “iron cage”. The main factor constituting the “Iron Cage” is the epistemological approach of modernism. An information understanding, which ignores the worlds other than the sensorial, rational worlds that can be experienced, is the main obstacle before the liberation of man. Unsustainability, insufficient and meaninglessness of modernism's this approach lead man to begin a quest and accepted all kinds of information with the postmodern understanding. Epistemological perception, which emerged parallel to the ontological disengagement of modern man from God and revelation, keeps its connection with the revelational esoteric (internal) information temporary.

The West and Western values have been presented as superior values all over the world by supporting the

^{*} The thing that is perceptibly found in the hands of each individual and can be transferred to create an authority, a political sovereignty. Foucault, Dits et écrits.

theory that modernism has a progressive historical understanding with technology. The fact that everyone living on earth wants to consume and live like a Westerner resulted in unsustainable development understanding, production and consumption relationships. In this sense, modern man put competition in the centre instead of solidarism, replaced the “Why did we come to this world and why do we live?” question with how to lead a life of good quality. When this production and consumption manner caused the destruction of nature, it led to the emergence of a new risk society. While the risk society created the worrisome modern man, this man became a hasty, uneasy and unsatisfied individual.

Modernity promised a heaven on the earth by this progressive history understanding and denying the relationship among afterlife-sacred-man. Modernism, excluding itself from the sacred and “afterlife” understanding, attempts to create the heaven on the earth. While the claim to bring the heaven to the earth feeds infinite life passion, it turns the “habitable” world into a hell for all the people outside the Western world in order to create a world in which pleasures are enjoyed at the maximum level. In order to provide all blessings more than the religions promise, it is attempted to create an imaginary wealth and therefore people want to enjoy the pleasures as much as possible in this consumption based world. The realization of this situation will make the rest of the world suffer and will lead to unsustainable exploitation of the world and destruction of the nature.

Modernism is based on exclusion the death from the life. Death stands out as a problem. It does not give meaning to life; instead it makes the life unbearable. Therefore, nobody wants to face the death and even the cemeteries are built outside the city.

In the modern worldview, which has no references to the death and cleaned from the sacred, life has only an instrumental importance and value without any holiness. As the world does not have any sacred and immanent value for the modern-secular man, people experience a meaning loss in case of such situations like illness, getting older and injury as they are deprived of the pleasures of young and healthy life. Confronting with the death, which makes life miserable and cause people to leave from the earth heaven, is the sourest agony. Nobody wants to die anymore and people do not die in their beds but in hospitals. Everything is indexed to live a few more minutes (Şişman, 2011, pp. 52–61).

In a platform where man leaves his own nature, doomed to be completely homeless, relationships are artificial; alienated from himself, nature and production-consumption objects, it is obvious that man needs a new life understanding. Ontology, epistemology, ethics and aesthetics understandings of this world are totally different from the modern one.

3. Sufistic Life: A Different Stance against the Modern Life

In this part, we attempt to explain sufistic school of thought and sufistic lifestyle which will protect man and especially the Muslim against the crisis of modern life by reviving his bound with the sacred.

Islam religion divides into three components: Faith, which involves everything that the individual believes in; Islam, which involves everything the individual is supposed to do and the goodness as an active virtue which makes believing and practicing perfect. Shortly, goodness is the symbol of mind and will which intensify and deepen faith and practices (Schoun, 2012, pp. 265–266). We know that from the Gabriel hadith of the Prophet. In this hadith; Gabriel: What is faith? What is Islam? What is goodness? Gabriel asks and the Prophet answers. In reply to the goodness question, he says; it is to act as if you see the God. This answer refers to the esoteric dimension of Islam. (For the Gabriel Hadith: Muslim, Faith, hadith no: 1, 5. Bukhari, Faith, Hadith no: 37;

Tirmidhi, Faith, hadith no: 4; Abu Dawud, Sunnah, hadith no: 16; Nasa'i, Mevakit, hadith no: 6; Ibn Majah,, hadith no: Muqaddima, 9).

It is possible to say that Sufism is an emphasis on the ascetic life in Islam. However, it is hard to say that there is complete similarity between the current movement and the initial ascetic movement emerged with Hijra Bayazid Bastami, Mansur al-Hallaj after in the 2nd century, and with people like Suhreverdi and Ibn Arabi in later centuries. It would not be wrong to say that an ascetic movement which reached perfection breed sufism with a completely esoteric (internal) understanding.

As the Islamic Studies were started to be coded from the first century of Islam, the ascetic and spiritual life principles of Islam were preached and sufi science emerged as a branch of science and conceptions of life. The ways were searched to call communities which were fed up with the political discussions and occupied with world and consumption by getting away from the afterlife thoughts by saying "The sign of falling in love with God of a God lover is to be subject to the Prophet with his practices, morality, commands and sunnah" to ascetic and to live upon taqwa (Kara, 1990, pp. 13–32; Günay, 1999, pp. 82–90).

Three stages of sufist movement are told in Islamic history. The first two centuries of the Hijri time period corresponds to a period in which the spiritual and moral life of the Islam is highlighted. Representatives of this are called ascetic, abid, nasik and kurra. Hasan Basri, Veysel Karani, Malik bin Dinar, Rabiätü'l Adeviye are the outcomes of this period.

The second stage is the sufist era. The sufist movement emerged in this era brought science, skill and ecstasy which were of secondary importance during the ascetic period to the forefront. Bishr Hafi, Maruf Karkhi, Bayazid Bistami, Sahl Tusteri, Sırrı Sekati, Hamdun Kassar are the outcomes of this period.

The third stage is Unity of Existence. The idea that there is only one entity in the universe, this entity is the existence of God whose existence is absolute, universe consists of the different manifests and transfigurations of this existence is the obvious characteristic of this period. To raise the skill, discovery and aspiration is the common slogan of this period's sufies (Uludağ, 1994, pp. 124–127).

The fourth stage is the period in which the movement was started to be called and institutionalized and attained a place. During this period, many sects like Qadiriyya, Naqshbandi, Qubrevi, Khalwati were derived. It cannot be said that there are certain divisions among these stages. They are mostly connected to each other.

In all cases, it can be said that sufism means to feel under the supervision of God no matter where the individual is or what he is doing. The purpose of the sufism is to breed the perfect man; more precisely, to make the man reach perfection. This situation starts with the acceptance of universe's thelo. The attempt to exit from the narrow patterns of the material world and to reach the real entity underlies the sufism. In this sense, it is necessary to mention a different ontology and a different epistemology which is the source of ontology.

The modern man, who is coded to live the life without exploring its meaning, attempts to make sense of himself under the meaningless, purposeless grippers by consuming. The attempts to make sense by consuming emerged a man profile desired by the capitalism, interest groups, dominant ideologies and government (Foucault's definition). The lifestyle proposed by the sufism functions as a counter stance against the consumption understandings. This is the man model who seeks for the teleology of life at himself not at the objects. Modern man feels his existence as much as he owns. Traditional sufist thinking examines how much he matures with the information he has. In other words, this means that you are not "what you own" but "what you are looking for" (Kılıç, 2012, p. 11).

Humanism, as one of the basic characteristics of the modernity, bases on the beliefs that man should be the

focus point and man is the measure of all things. God is replaced with the man, in a way. It is a complete paradox to present a sacred opposed to the idea of modernism to clean the world from the sacred. The main philosophy constituting the main opinion of Islam and especially the essence of sufism is the unity of existence and the holiness of assets deriving from this one existence. The caliph of God adjective to qualify the man in the sufist literature is;

“Nicely behave yourself; you are the essence of universe. You are the apple of the eye of creatures.”

“Nicely behave yourself; you are the essence of universe. You are the apple of the eye of creatures.” by the words of Sheikh Galip. The difference of this understanding from the humanism of modern thought lies behind its of God and universe. While the modern understanding leaves man unguarded and alone by him, Islamic understanding aims to liberate man who has the status of being the caliph of God in the perfect man sense and is believed to carry a soul from the God by He is not a simple creature. All the creatures in the world were commanded to grovel to him (Kılıç, 2011, p. 173).

Modern ontology leaves no place for the man apart from the material world. The material world covers a place which can be seen and sensed. In the sense of existence, the spontaneity of the creature is the essence. As an universe apart from the material reality cannot be imagined, there is no place for a creator. There is no world apart from this one. Sufies do not accept any other entity apart from the Almighty God. The third verse of Hadid/57 suras declares that Allah is Al-Zahir, al-West, al-Awwal and al-End. In this sense, Ibn Arabi says “no”, “He is the only entity” to the “Did God really leave room for a fifth circumstance?” question. The idea that there is no other supreme creator whose existence is absolute and everything is He or his transfiguration lays the basis of sufist ontology. A totally amalgamative understanding is dominant instead of the binary (Cartesian/dualist) world. This thinking manner is called “unity in abundance” in sufism. The idea that everything is He provides a complete area of freedom. The individual, who gives himself only to one entity (God) which is completely different in terms of existence, becomes abstemious against other individuals and creatures (Kılıç, 2012, pp. 30–33).

There is no such term as heart in the modern terminology. He accepts thinking as a mental function and his view towards the verses are shaped within the rational framework (Kılıç, 2008, pp. 102–103). Sufistic information is based on observation and inspiration unlike the sensual and empiric of modern science understanding, reading and memorizing of Salafism, rational equating and logical regulations of Kelamiye. “Information source of us and others who are on this path is not mind or thought but advance of the God” saying of Ibn Arabi is frequently repeated. Sufistic information is inherently secret and esoteric. It had protected its flexibility by protecting these characteristics and had become innovative. There is no other organization which has contributed to the deepening and expansion of Islamic thought as much as the sufism did thanks to its subjectivity and being discovery centred. This course is what keeps Islam alive in the hearts with its novelty, freshness, liveliness and excitement (Uludağ, 1994, pp. 123–172).

The discourse of sufism gain importance as the modern world is like a captive of pleasures, consumption and fashion centres in spite of its cartesian worldview, positivist and rationalist epistemology and freedom promises. The unity in existence concept of sufism may be a remedy for the shredded man. With the help of inspirational information and invention experience, sufism may save the man from epistemological understanding, which is the “iron cage” of man who is positivist and tends to exclude all information apart from the sensual ones. It may help the man to taste new and different spiritual experiences. The idea to be with the God while fighting with the loneliness as a result of individualism and depression caused by this loneliness and to enjoy experiences in the world as the manifestation of God may be the remedy for this loneliness and worries about alienation from the nature.

We think that the modern man, who is isolated from the modern values system, greedy, consumer, competition and therefore struggle centred, raised in a education methodology free of mercy, unaware of “dying for”, solidarism, fidelity, needs a new perspective (Kılıç, 2011, p. 174). “Reed flute” metaphor of Rumi may help us with both this perspective and destruction of nature and environmental disasters caused by the empery logic which resulted from the mechanical universe consideration and perceives the world as yielded for the man: The reed flute, which is transformed from the reed plucked from the reed bed, always moans. It reflects its sadness because of being away from its home. Guiding is up to person’s behaviours which is away from his home in this world and pines for his home as a traveller.

Here, we need to open a special parenthesis for consumption. We are living in an era in which everything is tradable, even the values are commoditified and consumed. Everything is indexed to consumption in life. Today, consumption does not mean to meet the general needs by good or service. Instead, consumption should be interpreted as a global and consistent indicator system regulated by codes and rules. In this order, the world of needs, natural and biological order is replaced with values and categorizations. It would be correct to call the societies, in which this order is constantly alive, as consumption societies. There is no division between the real needs and fake (pleasures) needs. Man believes that purchasing, owning and performing the consumption act bring privilege and prestige. He exists as much as he consumes, owns and appears. The concept of need has passed beyond meeting a material and physical need and become a need for differentiation and awareness. The individual is always encouraged to purchase in a rational and hierarchical needs system created by the society. Consumption is a necessity, habitus, and lifestyle for the individual. In this sense, consumption is no longer an action performed freely. It is nearly an obligation and symbol of survival. The alienation emerged as a result of force is so inclusive that consumption becomes the structure of the society and gains incontestability. Henceforth, the benefactor customer is replaced with the participant one.

Besides goods and services, culture is also affected from the consumption. We witness that culture is accultured and transformed into a consumption object in the shopping malls. This is what Adorno calls as culture industry. Culture reaches to cultural use value. In this way, status determination through accultured magazines, encyclopaedia leads to a sharp competition.

While machine was the symbol of industrial society, gadget is the symbol of consumption society. Gadget can be defined as functional uselessness of the consumed object. Let’s look around us; which one can be called functional as it is necessary? As if we are surrounded by plenty of trinkets which are not necessary. However, gadget is perceived as the reality of object consumed in the society.

Advertisements and brand name are two important symbolic values of this world. Status acquisition is attempted through brand fetishism while brain atrophy is provided through advertisements (Boudrillard, 2012, p. 18). Consumption of sexuality itself is the subject of another article.

For how long the environmental destruction and intense pressure on natural resources of the production carried out to consume the resources of the world can be maintained? How will the sense seeking of the modern man be responded? How will the modern man, who lives meaningless, unchecked and addicted to deprivation get the satisfaction? Oriental religion mysticism and Islamic sufism perspectives, which attract attention in the West, may point us the starting point. The way to overcome the anomaly of consumption society lies at the poverty and traveller understanding of sufism. The modern people can find his sense and insignificance problem a solution by putting importance on spiritual pleasures, trivializing the world before leaving and prioritizing the afterlife.

The encounter of Muslim with the modernism has been either confrontational or cohesional. As

confrontational Muslims accepted the arguments of modernism, they became more developmental, democratic, rationalist, secular and pro-nation-state and therefore highly modernized. The cohesional Muslims, who think that the modern thought owes all its acquisitions to the Islam, have taken the modern thought as contemporaneity and have not noticed what the Enlightenment Thought, which laid the foundation of the modern thought, means and therefore what kind of threats have been waiting for them. We can see that the thing, which will rescue the world from crisis, lift the man up the real meaning world and make sense of the universe, life, death, creature and nature is to overcome the modernity and “to reach the excessive one” (Bulaç, 2012c, pp. 245–276).

Those who talk about being a modern Muslim or adaptation of Islam to the modern one are actually talking about bringing two different worlds together. It does not seem possible to wait the modern understanding, which ignores nonsecular and irrational ones, to come to an agreement with Islam.

“As the Muslims struggled against the first Christian methods and endeavours with their historical experience of 14 centuries, today they have been struggling against the modern world and become a part of this world.” “Modernism has been expecting the Islam to have a new role and/or function by transforming without separating from its history. Because, Islam has faced the problem to be thought, perceived and practiced in the ‘life universe’ whose physical world and tools were changed and which was shaped by an epistemological and with a different world of values.” “In other words, Islam/Muslims are against a world which is interpreted, shaped and even rebuilt by the modernity; and Islam is either going to reinterpret itself for this world or overcome this world with a proper interpretation of its own ideals and epistemological priorities.” (Aslan, 2012, p. 133)

We need to know that the way to overcome the modernity and post-modernity is through traditional insight. As emphasized above, the traditional word is used related to the sacred or ad-Din. The insight tradition puts a difference between knowing and being intellectual. It states that is possible through insight by connecting self-realization to being intellectual. Because, it is stated that the heart comes into play prior to mind. While knowing is related to mind, being intellectual is related to the insight of the heart. In this sense, self-realization leads to the realization of God. “men Arefe Nefsehu Fekad Arefe Rabbehu” (the one who knows himself knows God.) Because, Quran tells us to “think with heart”.

4. Sects without Sufism

Islamic world has been facing with a difficult battle today. The battle has continued on different dimensions. One of the dimensions is to surrender to the modern world by leaving the struggle. This implies to interpret the revelation through the modern perceptions. It has appeared as making peace between the modern world and religion and religionization of secularism. On the other hand, sticking with its own context is considered as the traditional interpretation method. It would be appropriate to portray this understanding as the contemporary interpretation of Islam. The second dimension is related to how to involve Islam as an Islamic law order in the life. In this context, “Islamic Life in the Modern World” viewpoints insinuate this issue. The third dimension is related to whether the revelation will be loyal to the reality understanding of its own tradition, how the reality will emerge and whether it will create a connection with the sacred.

Muslims have been suffering from the modernity since 18th century. Military and technological superiority pushed the Muslims to be like the Westerners and the development and modernization was anticipated without considering the histo-incompatibility. Today, we see that we have not been able to save us from the modernization and societies have had different experiences of modernization. These experiences were subject to such a

conceptualization like “Non-western modernisms”. It was thought that everybody would have a different modernism as a result of this conceptualization. Yet, the following questions are still unanswered: Is there any change at the main elements (positivism (modern science), rationalism, secularism, nation-state) of modernism? For how long have the countries with different modernism maintain these differences?

Since the beginning of the study, we have emphasized that sufism is the most important understanding to save both the modern world and the modern man from the crisis. The sufism thought, which prioritises the afterlife, convey the universe and man to the meaning world of ontologically existence in unity and unity in existence principles, takes the universe and man as of the divine existence and in that way perceives the entity as deposit, will lead us. Moreover, the sufism thought will illuminate us by assigning the position of “essence of universe” who obeys only God and in that way reaches to the freedom and by taking the environment and its components as deposits to be respected. Its approach to the nature and temporary universe understanding and perfect human being thought will change the consumption patterns and existence will precede owning.

Considering today’s sufism movement, or more precisely the institutionalized sects, we see that they are far from the above mentioned meaning search. Most of them has transformed into “congregation members” from “sect members” and practiced on relation and identity principles.

It is debatable how much these communities are similar to the sufism with their problematic relationships of sufism with its basic terms. Sufism is based on the principles like inspirational journey, removing obstacles to becoming a perfect human being, soul purification, the massive abandonment, prioritising humility. The intersections of these concepts and today’s sects are subject to debate.

The sects, which are generally classified as religious groups, have been transforming into modern congregations. Most of the religious and sufist groups in Turkey have acquired the important characteristics of modernism by putting importance on science, technology, global trade, capital investments (Efe, 2008, p. 81). They have been swiftly modernizing through their foundations, secular educational institutions, media institutions, parties, even banks. It would not be an exaggeration to say that they arbitrated in the process of conveying modern elements of modernity to the classes who have been late to face with modernism. It is an important indicator that the institution named ESI, which is Europe based, used the concept of “Muslim Calvinists” to define the conclusion of its research conducted with businessmen in Kayseri.

As religious groups transformed into modern congregations have been attempting to create a political and economic power basin for themselves. Therefore, I do not think that these groups, which confuse the meaning world of Muslims, will provide a solution to overcome modernity, which has problems with the sacred and tradition, and reach “transcendental (excessive) one”. However, the sufism thought has the strongest potential to present an alternative world against the modern world, modern ontology, modern epistemology and modern morality.

The sufism movement is never at a symmetrical maturity and nobility with past successes. It is not possible to wait a bright future from those who have no relation with the Islamic thought in general and more precisely with the sufism movement, unaware of the philosophical, social, scientific and ideological problems of this world. (Uludağ, 1994, p. 171)

There is no remarkable sufist movement in either Turkey or other Muslim countries. The current sects and their followers cannot go beyond repeating the past incompetently. There is neither a sufi like Rumi nor a sufi work like Masnavi. Moreover, today’s sect followers are not even able to understand Ghazali, Ibn Arabi, Suhrawardi and Rumi in real terms (Uludağ, 1994, p. 127).

5. Conclusion

There is no doubt that people, who are alienated while modern life is constantly crowded, are under the pressure of ambitions, dissatisfaction and stress caused by anxiety. The individualized and alienated man is doomed to an artificial and virtual world by getting away from the natural ones through the technology. There is an increasing need of people for sincerity, love, warmth, beauty, glory and transcendence. There is a greater need of modern man than ever before for spiritual, emotional ecstasy, mental, moral condition that sufism has given. (Günay, 1999, p. 311). There is almost no similarity between the traditional sufist understanding and today's modern congregation — sect understanding. Because, the sufism, which is no more than the traditional religious interpretation, and all other traditional authentic religious interpretation besides sufism have to clash with the modernism. Because, wisdom, namely the knowledge of reality, pays tribute and serves to the nature. The understanding of governing the nature in order to collect power has lead to the exploitation of the nature as much as possible. It is a crystal-clear fact that this understanding is not authentic.

Religious groups, especially the sects seems to have chosen the way to come to terms with modernism rather than fighting, struggling or at least settling accounts. For example, the technology is not a “devil invention” anymore. Moreover, it is another subject of study that believers are tech-savvy. Therefore, Muslims do not want to discuss the fact that the technology used determines their comprehension patterns.

The chosen modern secular pattern of education has been making all nature compatible acceptances of the religion invalid one by one. Building secular educational institutions instead of working on a new epistemology can only be because of accepting the situation. Accepting the situation and the fact that our children are waiting for their thirties to be parents and to carve out a career for themselves is worrisome. We do not understand that this bar will be forties in the future because of the acceptance of modern life.

As the children are supposed to grow up in their houses and mother's bosom and the authentic interpretation of religion also, we need to question the modern life. While, we need to change our ontological viewpoint in order to provide the opportunity for the children to grow up in their houses and mother's bosom, we are questioning the religious structures who are proud of building the best pre-school teaching institution. Those religious parents who push their children to take the mercy and compassion feelings away from their mothers in preschool teaching institutions from the paid instructors or push their children to the virtual world so that the children will not bother them, do not get advice from the wisdom of Khidr, even from the sharia of Moses.

The most prominent image of modernism, capitalism or post-capitalism is on the consumption. The most determinant characteristic of consumption is plentifulness and saving. This characteristic provided the denial of scarcity in a mysterious and crisply way (Baudrillard, 2012, p. 17). The plentifulness and saving has excluded the saving and divine gift belief of religious individual. Extravagance concept is replaced with consumption and divine gift is replaced with handsome profits.

In brief, whether sufism or not, as the religiousness has compromised with the modernism through the government and ideology, it assumes the volunteer strutting of modernism and functions as a volunteer bridge to create the connection between the traditional society and modernity. In that way, the promised world of sufism becomes impossible because of the congregations which functions as the strutting of modernism and a bridge.

The world needs to progress towards the transcendental (excessive) one without having a conflict or harmony with modernity. It can be said that the sufism has the potential to meet this demand and open the door of a new world.

References

- Abel Jeanniere (1990). *Modernite Nedir? = (What Is Modernite), Modernite Versus Postmodernite*, edit and translated: Mehmet Küçük, Vadi Yay., Ankara, Turkey.
- Akgül Mehmet (2012). *Modernlik — Modernleşme, Postmodernlik, Sekülerleşme ve Din*, edit: Niyazi Akyüz, İhsan Çapçioğlu, Din Sosyolojisi El Kitabı, Grafiker Yay., Ankara, Turkey.
- Altun Fahrettin (2011). *Modernleşme Kuramı Eleştirel Bir Giriş*, Küre Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Arslan Abdurrahman (2012). *Modern Dünyada Müslümanlar*, İletişim Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- AtakulÖzden (2014). “Modernlik ve Modernleşme”, available online at: http://80.251.40.59/education.ankara.edu.tr/aksoy/ere/oatakul.doc&rct=j&frm=1&q=&esrc=s&saU&ei=ND5TVbD5PMiNsgHfn4GoBA&ved=0CBIQFjAA&sig2=RI2-8BIYhYcQNO5RpjFnMw&usg=AFQjCNGI-ZR_7W5j2DoaJUkO-7DW8PCI6g.
- Baudrillard Jean (2011). *Simülaklar ve Simülasyon (Simulacra and Simulation)*, translated: Oğuz Adanır, Doğubay Yay., Ankara, Turkey.
- Baudrillard Jean (2012). *Tüketim Toplumu= (Le Société de Consommation)*, translated: Hazal Deliceçaylı-Ferda Keskin, Ayrıntı Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Bayram A. Kemal (2006). “Modern Zamanlarda Etik ve Siyasal Değerler”, *Dem Der.* year: 2, number: 5, available online at: http://www.dem.org.tr/dem_dergi/5/dem5mak3.pdf.
- Berman Marshall (2013). *Katı olan Her Şey Buharlaşıyor (All That IS Solid Melts Into Air)*, translated: Ümit Altuğ-Bülent Peker, İletişim Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Bolay Süleyman Hayri (2009). *Felsefe Doktrinleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, Nobel Yay: Ankara, Turkey.
- Bulaç Ali (2012a). *Din ve Modernizm*, Çıra Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Bulaç Ali (2012b). *Postmodern Kaosta Kible Arayışı*, İnkılâp Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Bulaç Ali (2012c). *Kutsala Tarihe ve Hayata Dönüş*, Çıra Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Doğan D. Mehmet (1996). *Büyük Türkçe Sözlük*, İz Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Efe Adem (2008). *Dini Gruplaşma ve Cemaatleşme Olgusunun Sosyolojik Açısından İncelenmesi*, (Isparta Örneği), Isparta, Turkey.
- Mehmet Göktaş (2009). Şeyh Galip’in “Hoşça Bak Zâtına Kim Zübde-İ Âlemsin Sen” Mısraı Bağlamında İnsanın Mahiyetine Dair, *Erzincan Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol. 11, No. 2, Erzincan, Turkey.
- Guenon René (2004). *Niceliğin Egemenliği ve Çağın Alametleri (Le règne de la quantité et les signes des temps)*, translated: Mahmut Kanık, İz Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Günay Ünver (1999). *Toplumsal Değişme, Tasavvuf, Tarikatlar ve Türkiye*, Erciyes University Publication, Kayseri, Turkey.
- Kahraman H. Bülent (2004). *Postmodernite ile Modernite Arasında Türkiye*, Everest Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Kara Mustafa (1990). *Din, Hayat, Sanat Açısından Tekkeler ve Zaviyeler*, Dergah Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Kiliç Mahmut Erol (2008). *Evvele Yolculuk, Söyleşi: Sadık Yalsızuçanlar*, Sufi Kitap Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Kiliç Mahmut Erol (2012). *Tasavvufa Giriş*, Sufi Kitap Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Küçükalp Kasım (2003). *Nietzsche ve Postmodernizm*, İstanbul, Turkey.
- Loo H. R. van der and W. Van Reijen (2006). *Modernleşmenin Paradoksları (Paradoxen van Modernizing)*, translated: Kadir Canatan, İnsan Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Nasr S. Hüseyin (2007). *Makaleler-I*, edit and translated: Şehabeddin Yalçın, İnsan Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Nasr S. Hüseyin (2012). *Modern Dünyada Geleneksel İslam (Traditional Islam in The Modern World)*, translated: Hüsamettin Arslan- Savaş Şafak Barkçin, İnsan Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Rostow W. W. (1960). *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, Cambridge University Pr., Cambridge.
- Schoun Frithjof (2012). “The Quintessential Esoterism of Islam”, in: Jean Louis Michon, Roger Gaetani, *Aşk ve Hikmet: Yolu Tasavvuf (Sufizm: Love and Wisdom)*, translated: Nurullah Koltaş, İnsan Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Sorokin Pitirim A. (1997). *Bir Bunalım Çağında Toplum Felsefeleri (Social Philosophies in an Age of Crisis)*, translated, Mete Tunçay, Göçebe Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Şişman Nazife (2011). *Günün Kısa Tarihi*, Timaş Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Toku Neşet (2000). “Gelenekten Moderniteye”, *Düşünen Siyaset Dergisi*, Vol. 2, No. 13, Esin Sanat Felsefe Yay, Ankara, Turkey.
- Touraine Alain (2012). *Modernliğin Eleştirisi, (Critique de la Modernité)* translated: Hülya Uğur Tanrıöver, YKY Yay, İstanbul, Turkey.
- Türkdoğan Orhan (2008). *Osmanlı’dan Günümüze Türk Toplum Yapısı*, Timaş Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.
- Yildirim Ergün (2012). *Hayali Modernlik, Türk Modernliğinin İcadı*, Doğu Kitabevi Yay., İstanbul, Turkey.