



FACULTEIT LETTEREN EN WIJSBEGEERTE

An Experimental Analysis: The Problem of "Liminality" in Orhan
Pamuk's The Black Book and The New Life

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ABSTRACT I

Liminality has usually been understood as a negative concept within postcolonial discourse. It evokes the idea of insecurity, uncertainty and an identity which is betwixt and in-between. In this dissertation, I discuss the cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha's reinterpretation of the concept of liminality within his theoretical framework in postcolonial studies, while I show the manifestations of the problem of liminal identity crisis of Turkey via the motifs of 'the uncanny' and 'the journey-quest' in Orhan Pamuk's The Black Book and in The New Life. While Bhabha's interpretation of liminality is positive regarding that the concept of liminality makes new meanings and hybrid identities possible, Pamuk's approach to liminality should be taken as negative concerning the traumatic experience of transition from the Islam-oriented Ottoman Empire to secular Republic of Turkey. Bhabhian liminality celebrates hybrid meanings and identities as well as negotiation and mediation of cultures. On the contrary, the problem of liminal identity crisis in Pamuk's writings is an indicator of the problem of impossibility of transcending the liminal phase. Pamuk's protagonists are subjects who are trapped in others' lives and stories; yet they are incapable of negotiating these new identities. Therefore, I argue that the liminal (transition) phase, in the case of Turkey, turned into an ongoing and institutionalized process which proves the impossibility of creation of an authentic identity.

Keywords: Liminality, transition, the third space, liminoid space, transitory gap, ambivalence, journey-quest, transition, Westernization, repressed past, uncanny doubles, non-belonging, oscillation, betwixt and in-between identity, past-present conflict, East-West clash, schizophrenic placelessness, fragmented identity, trauma

ABSTRACT II

Liminaliteit wordt doorgaans opgevat als een negatief begrip binnen het postkoloniale discours. Het concept roept het idee op van onveiligheid, onzekerheid en een dubbele identiteit. In deze masterproef, heb ik de cultuurtheoreticus Homi K. Bhabha's herinterpretatie van het begrip liminaliteit besproken binnen zijn theoretisch kader in postkoloniale studies, terwijl ik het toegepast heb op het probleem van de liminale identiteitscrisis van Turkije via de motieven van 'het unheimliche' en 'de reis-zoektocht' in Orhan Pamuk's The Black Book en The New Life. Terwijl Bhabha's opvatting van liminaliteit positief is met betrekking tot het feit dat het concept nieuwe betekenissen en hybride identiteiten mogelijk maakt, moet Pamuks benadering van liminaliteit als negatief beschouwd worden wat de traumatische ervaring van de overgang van de Islam-gerichte Ottomaanse Rijk tot seculiere Turkse Republiek betreft. 'Bhabhian' liminaliteit benadrukt de productie van hybride betekenissen en identiteiten, alsook het onderhandelen van en het bemiddelen tussen culturen. Het probleem van liminale identiteitscrisis in Pamuks verhalen daarentegen, is een betoging van het probleem van de onmogelijkheid van het transcenderen van de liminale fase. Pamuks romanhelden zijn personen die gevangen zitten in andere levens en verhalen; toch zijn ze niet in staat te onderhandelen over deze nieuwe identiteiten. Daarom beweer ik dat de liminale (overgangs-) fase, in het geval van Turkije, is omgezet in een voortdurend en geïnstitutionaliseerd proces dat de onmogelijkheid van de schepping van een authentieke identiteit aantoont.

Trefwoorden: Liminaliteit, overgang, the Third Space, liminoide ruimte, voorbijgaande kloof, ambivalentie, reis-quest, overgang, verwestering, verdrongen verleden, het geheimzinnige, het dubbele, schommeling, verleden-heden conflict, Oost-West conflict, schizofreen plaatsloosheid, gefragmenteerde identiteit, trauma

1. Introduction

In his PhD thesis called “The Collapse of Certainty: Contextualizing Liminality in Botswana Fiction and Reportage”, the South African academician Fetson Anderson Kalua states that

liminality is the converse of textual analysis or practical criticism, a reading method which views language as thoroughly referential. Liminality entails that words are liberated from their traditional or normal meanings and placed in resonant positions which imply new meanings. It is this approach . . . which represents a “polyphonic” contestation of discourses whereby any form of signification is relative, and one kind of idiom subverts and dismantles those around it. (17-18)

Referring to ‘in-betweenness’ or ‘transitory gap’ and with its different connotations, the concept of liminality represents the different aspects of this thesis. First, as the abovementioned passage suggests, this concept is used to challenge against the conventional type of reading of a text. It makes nonconformist readings possible by freeing the words from their fixated meanings. Therefore, in this dissertation, liminality will be employed in order to explain the Pamukian approach to the problem of liminal identity crisis. Pamuk, well-known with his innovative narration for recounting history,¹ puts the tabooed concepts – such as the Kemalist ideology, the minority problems or Turkish nationalism – related to the identity problems of Turkey ““under erasure”” (Hall 1). He is a writer who walks on the borderlines by which I refer to Pamuk’s capacity to confront and to interlace East and West, and past and present simultaneously. Turkish literary critic Jale Parla once said that Orhan Pamuk is the antithesis of Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962), who is one of the milestones of Turkish literary canon and the favorite Turkish author of Orhan Pamuk. Tanpınar was a writer who always struggled in order to create a solid and monolith identity of Istanbul. As antithesis of

¹ Hereby I refer to the histories of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey.

Tanpınar, says Parla, Pamuk has deconstructed this monolith identity and purified Istanbul from the myths. In her article “From Dream to Nightmare: Fantastic City Istanbul”, Turkish writer and translator, Taciser Ulaş Belge describes the contrast between Tanpınar and Pamuk as follows: “Gathering every other object that he looks at with an intention to create a collectivity, Tanpınar creates Istanbul as if an architect raises a building against gravity. What remains to Pamuk is to dig out and undermine the ground which Tanpınar has built on” (237) (My translation). In Pamuk’s writings, reader confronts the act of ‘digging out’ usually through tunnels, labyrinthine streets, narrow stairs, wells and the depths of the Bosphorus which all turn into Pamuk’s symbols for the repressed past, unconscious and perplexed identity.

In the chapter called “Do You Remember Me?” in The Black Book, when the protagonist Galip visits the underground mannequin atelier, the son of the old mannequin master says:

“With time, my father was using his knowledge of the letters to etch meanings onto faces of his mannequins that were no longer to be seen in our streets, our homes, or anywhere in society, and he was doing this at such speed that we ran out of space in the rooms we’d dug out of the mud. So in this sense, it was not really an accident that we happened onto the passageways at around the same time. My father quickly realized that our history could only survive underground, that life underground was itself a sign of the imminent collapse above, that these passageways leading to our house, these underground roads strewn with skeletons, provided us with a historical opportunity, a chance to create citizens who carried their histories, their meanings, on their faces.”² (191)

As this passage above suggests and as I will show more in detail in the next chapters, murky basements, mysterious underground passageways and the act of digging out are popular symbols in Pamuk’s writings. Within this context, in this dissertation, I will represent the

² Quotation marks belong originally to the quoted passage.

manifestations of these symbols in order to show the key reason for the problem of liminal identity.

Second, liminality will be the keyword when explaining the deep-rooted and traumatic experience of transition between the two different lives (Islam-oriented Ottoman Empire vs. secular Turkish Republic) and accordingly two opposed cultures (the Eastern and the Western civilizations). In that sense, the concept of liminality will be also representative for the writer-identity of Pamuk who both confronts and mediates the past and the present, and East and West. Announcing the Nobel Prize for literature in 2006, Permanent Secretary of the Swedish Academy Horace Engdahl described Pamuk as a writer,

who in the quest for the melancholic soul of his native city has discovered new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures . . . [and who] has renewed the art of the novel, has enlarged the roots of the contemporary novel by using not only his roots in Western culture but also in Eastern culture . . . [and] has stolen the novel from the Westerners and transformed it into something partly different from what we have ever seen before by including marvelous stories, tales, myths and mystical symbols in his web of prose.³

Third, liminality will help me to portray the problem of fragmented, split and also stuck nature of identity in Pamuk's two selected novels: The Black Book and The New Life.⁴ I will make a practical analysis of these books in the second and the third chapters of this dissertation.

The main argument of this dissertation theorizes the concept of liminality from the vantage point of Homi K. Bhabha. In that respect, my first objective is to explain liminality according to the theoretical framework of Bhabha and to illustrate the previous usages of the concept by

³ Quoted from the speech of Horace Engdahl which he gave during the announcement of 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature.

⁴ From now on, I will refer to The Black Book as BB and to The New Life as NL.

other scholars. My second objective is to present a practical analysis of liminality by appropriating and adapting it in the aforementioned books of Orhan Pamuk.

I argue that liminality is associated both with hybrid and split identities. I want to make it clear that the use of liminality is reasonably apt to analyze the problem of identity within postcolonial discourse. In its Bhabhian framework this term is utilized in order to deconstruct the authoritarian and the biased voice of the colonizer and to make the colonized's existence and response apparent. Bhabha does this by juxtaposing historical events – the suppression of the colonized by the colonizer— while placing them in an imaginary zone which he calls 'liminal space' or 'the Third Space of Enunciation'. One of my concerns in this dissertation is to make clear that liminality as it is reflected in Pamuk's writings portrays the "incidents of a fictional world", yet it simultaneously echoes "actually happened history". The in-between realm of liminality, in this context, is represented both in literal and figurative dimensions. The literal dimension is that Turkey as a country is situated between Asia Minor and (Eastern) Europe and has territory both in the continents of Asia and Europe. Turkey is literally inherited from and owned by both Eastern and Western cultures. On a smaller scale, the major city, Istanbul, where almost all of Pamuk's stories start from or take place, is a city literally divided. The cultural liminality from which Pamuk and his protagonists suffer emanates from a foundational historical transformation – from the Islamic imperial state to the secular republican nation-state – happened almost a century ago. In that respect, Martin Stokes⁵ observes:

In a society in which the state of being modern is cast so insistently in terms of forgetting, and in which the modern is so organically connected to the institutions of the nation-state, remembering becomes both a problem and a matter of cultural elaboration . . . The politics of forgetting paradoxically demands the preservation of a

⁵ Martin Stokes is a professor of music in King's College in London. He wrote several articles about the Turkish music and the intimacy between the Turkish culture and its reflections in music. In that respect, he has striking observations about the Turkish culture.

variety of things to demonstrate the necessity of their having been forgotten. When one of these objects in the repertoire of the “forgotten” is an entire city, . . . the city itself is likely to occupy a large and significant problem in the national imaginary – a problem that springs out of the experience of modern nationalism itself.⁶

Since the protagonists of Pamuk are the inhabitants of Istanbul, this traumatic memory of transition becomes a part of their unconscious. Pamuk brings this traumatic experience to the present-day mainly through his use of specific motifs. In this respect, I will analyze the problem of liminal identity crisis by way of drawing attention to certain motifs created by Pamuk. The two key motifs, which are the ‘uncanny’ and the ‘journey-quest,’ will be focused when explaining the betwixt and in-between identity of Turkey which is stuck between past and present as well as East and West.

In The Location of Culture, Bhabha asserts that the language has a slippery and ambivalent character; therefore, it is open for interpretation which makes it ambiguous and unstable. However it should not be forgotten that the concept would not deliver any meaning unless it is not used in a certain discourse. It should be noted that liminality, in this dissertation, is borrowed from postcolonial discourse and applied within a postmodernist context. In order to fully access the concept’s hybrid meaning, one should stand both inside and outside the text; one should also permit the creative readings and reinterpretations which brings reader to the performed meanings of Bhabha ad Pamuk. In other words reader, just as Bhabha and Pamuk, must become an implicit reader wandering amid the slippery world of meanings.

I want to make it clear that I tackle with two different approaches to liminality in this thesis. Liminality has been usually understood as a rather negative concept within postcolonial discourse. It evokes the idea of insecurity and uncertainty. In that respect, I argue that Bhabha reverses such negative reception of liminality. His reception of the concept is more positive.

⁶ Martin Stokes, ““Beloved Istanbul”: Realism and Transnational Imaginary in Turkish Popular Culture”. Mass Mediations: New Approaches to the Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond. 240.

For, Bhabha rediscovers liminality as an in-between zone that makes the emergence of new meanings and hybrid identities possible. This zone, Bhabha claims, also works as a space where the repressed can remake and recreate himself against the dominant. This point will be further explained when I talk about Bhabha's approach in detail.

It is crucial to note that Bhabhian understanding of liminality needs to be slightly reversed before being appropriated and applied into the oeuvre of Pamuk. Liminality, at first sight, does not represent a positive attitude in the narratives of Pamuk. In his autobiographical book Istanbul: Memories and The City, Pamuk writes about an emotion which he attributes to the Turkish people: 'hüzün'. Despite the fact that he compares 'hüzün' to melancholy, he distinguishes between the two. He demarcates 'hüzün' by its collectivity. On the contrary, melancholy, according to Pamuk, is a feeling undergone individually and it is not necessarily collective. 'Hüzün' is attached to the whole Turkish nation since the foundation of the Turkish Republic.⁷ Pamuk puts forward 'hüzün' in order to indicate the loss and the non-belonging. Out of these two, the non-belonging is more interlinked with the concept of liminality. The protagonists of Pamuk are wanderers and 'losers' in the literal sense of the word.

As indicated above, the reception of liminality differs according to the historical period and the context – postmodernist, postcolonial — that it is employed. Yet it always refers to a state of being which is betwixt and in-between, ambivalent, uncanny and unstable. This ambiguity that liminality contains can be both a situation to be celebrated or to be condemned, as we will witness over the course of this dissertation.

Determined as the key term of this research, in the first chapter, I will explain the origin of liminality and its diverse usages by different theorists. First, I will explain the usage of liminality by the folklorist Arnold Van Gennep. Second, I will mention the adaptation of

⁷ This thesis is not actually dedicated to the notions of "hüzün" or melancholy in the writings of Orhan Pamuk. Yet, I find it necessary to mention "hüzün" briefly when explaining the negative reception of liminality in the narratives of Pamuk. For further information about "hüzün", see the semi-autobiographical work of Pamuk, called Istanbul: Memories and The City.

liminality in the ritual process of semi-civilized communities by the anthropologist Victor Turner. Third, I will discuss the postcolonial approach to liminality by the Parsi cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha.

In the second chapter, I will elaborate the manifestations of liminality through the motifs in the two novels of the Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk. First, I will handle the motif of the uncanny in connection with the repressed unconscious and the past-present conflict. I will suggest that the uncanny manifests itself through the adventures of Galip in BB and appears also during the bus journeys of Osman in NL. Second, I will deal with the motif of the journey-quest. This motif will be discussed in reference to the quests of the protagonists for people (Galip's quest for Rüya and Celâl and Osman's quest for Janan) or objects (Osman's quests for a book).

2. CHAPTER I: The Metamorphose of ‘Liminality’: From Van Gennepe to Bhabha

2.1. The Origin and the First Usage of ‘Liminality’ in Theory: Threefold structure of Arnold Van Gennepe

The French ethnographer and folklorist Arnold Van Gennepe used the word ‘liminal’ in his book, The Rites of Passage (1908), in the context of tribal rituals by means of which he wanted to study life-crisis rituals and ceremonies of passage. He categorized these rituals, ceremonies, totems and taboos of the semi-civilized societies as ‘rites of passage’. His study was largely influenced by the magico-religious rituals of the tribal life. Van Gennepe searched for evidences for his studies mainly by the use of old tales and myths (such as Greek mythology, Arabic tales), authentic tribal rituals and the three major religions. Grounding his argument on a three-fold structure, which is “separation (*séparation*), transition (*marge*), and incorporation (*agrégation*)” (Van Gennepe vii), he employed the term “liminal (or threshold)” (Van Gennepe 21) in order to describe the disposition of the transition phase within the life crisis rituals.

In order to gain insight in Van Gennepe’s model, these three phases must be briefly explained. The first phase, called ‘separation’ refers to the state of *detachment* of the society from the accustomed and fixed order of life, cultural practices and certain habits. The second phase called ‘transition’ is the state which the ritual subject is stuck between earlier or upcoming stages of life. Throughout the transition phase, the aim of the ritual subject is to reverse the sense of ambiguity, in-betweenness, uncertainty to a more concrete and certain self. The third phase, called ‘aggregation’ is considered as a space, where complexities and perplexities come into a harmony and the equilibrium is regenerated. It is necessary to notify that the transition period can operate both positively and negatively. The ritual subject that transcends to the aggregation phase remembers the transition phase as positive zone where conflicts are solved and dilemmas restored. However, this phase can also function as a conflict zone if the

ritual subject cannot cope with the ambiguities and uncertainties, and if the new ceremonies are difficult to adapt.

Before moving on to the interrelationships between the problem of identity crisis in the case of Turkey and the role of the liminal phase in this dissertation, it is essential to accentuate the origin of the concept of liminality. Van Gennep adapted the word 'limen' so as to emphasize the in-between status of the ritual subject (an individual as a member of the tribe or the whole tribe as a group) throughout the transition period. The word 'limen' is Latin for border. It refers more figuratively to "a transitory, in-between state or space, which is characterized by indeterminacy, ambiguity, hybridity, potential for subversion and change. As a transitory space it foregrounds the temporal border and in narrative is often associated with life-changing events or border situations . . ." ⁸ as well as with threshold, boundary, origin (beginning) and termination (end). Van Gennep used liminal to stress the attributes of the transition period influenced both from the beginning phase (separation) and the termination phase (re-aggregation). The key reason to characterize the transition phase by liminality is that liminality represents the non-possession and "waver[ing] between two worlds" (Van Gennep 18). It is a space where very few elements from the previous stage of life ⁹ exist. Throughout the liminal phase, an individual (called 'passenger' in the case of a ritual ceremony in order to emphasize the threshold position and the journey) goes through a period of ambivalence and ambiguity. Therefore it can be argued that the transition phase – which I will later address also as 'liminoid space' -- is a state during which the ritual subject struggles to mediate the aspects of the previous and the upcoming stages of life. However it is exactly this in-between position itself which legalizes the stuck position of the ritual subject in the liminoid space, where he is incapable to make an amalgam of the past and the present.

⁸ <<http://borderpoetics.wikidot.com/liminality>>.

⁹ Hereby I refer to the period that individuals live through before the separation phase.

The transition rites represent not only the passage from one social status to another but also the abandonment of the old realm and the entrance into a new one. In the chapter which deals with initiation rites, Van Gennep mentions the transitional period which is experienced during the passage from a predecessor to a successor. He argues that “transitional period is the time which elapses between the predecessor’s death and the accession to the throne. It is marked by a suspension of social life” (Van Gennep 111). Despite the fact that Van Gennep wrote this with a reference to an actual enthronement situation, I use this quote here for a symbolic reason. Started with an interregnum – a gap in continuity¹⁰ -- during the changeover of governments, the transition from the Ottoman Empire to Modern Turkey was also such a modification which necessitated a detachment from the old customs and usual modes of living. It was meant to create an *immediate*¹¹ re-aggregation which failed to materialize. A new society may not be possibly created with an immediate intervention; for the transformation requires a process. The transition period, in the case of Turkey, turned into an ongoing and institutionalized process which could not consummate itself until now and which for that reason has come out as a problem.

In the second paragraph of the first chapter I will be dealing with the approach of Victor W. Turner to the concept of liminality.

¹⁰ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/interregna>.

¹¹ Pamuk mocks this immediate transition in NL by referring to the aimless people who are eager to be a part of a group without any self inquisition and change their lives immediately. He also implies the problem of identity-switch: “I had heard of others who had read a book only to have their lives disintegrate. I’d read the account of someone who had read a book called *Fundamental Principles of Philosophy*; in total agreement with the book, which he read in one night, he joined the Revolutionary Proletarian Advance Guard . . . I also knew about those who had stayed awake the whole night reading books such as *Islam and the New Ethos* or *The Betrayal of Westernization*, then immediately abandoned the tavern for the mosque . . .” (NL 13).

2.2. The Elucidation of 'Liminality' by Victor W. Turner

Borrowing the concept from Van Gennep, the British cultural anthropologist Victor W. Turner sophisticated and deepened the meaning of liminal. In The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure which is a book about the ritual studies in Central Africa (Ndembu), Turner, in a similar vein to Van Gennep, makes use of liminal in order to portray “the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a “state”), or from both” (Turner 94). Turner defines individuals suffering from liminality as beings who are “neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (Turner 95). Reminiscent of the two-dimensional categorization of liminality by Van Gennep, Turner describes the first categorization which is separation, transition, and incorporation (Gennep 11) as “structural aspects of passage” (Turner 166), and the second categorization which is preliminal, liminal, and postliminal (Gennep 11) as features signifying spatially and temporality. Drawing attention to the ambiguous character of the ritual subject, Turner makes clear that a ‘passenger’ deals with such a “cultural realm” (94) that has slightly connected both to the previous phase from which the ritual subject isolates himself and to the next phase through which the ritual subject would gain new attributes, and accordingly a new identity. It should be stressed that Turner views liminality as a state that “arise(s) in times of *radical social transition*, when society itself seems to be moving from one fixed state to another” (133) (My emphasis).

Focusing particularly on indeterminacy and ambiguity as dominant feelings during the liminal phase, Turner argues that liminal personae’s are lack of “status, property, insignia, secular clothing indicating rank or role . . . Their behavior is . . . passive or humble; they must obey their instructors implicitly . . . It is as though they are being reduced or grounded down to a uniform condition to *be fashioned anew* and endowed with additional powers to enable them *to cope with their new station in life*” (95) (My emphasis). Turner points out that these liminal

beings tend to be passive. They are the recipients who cannot claim an authority in such a submissive position and have no other choice than to be subjugated. They are regarded as an untitled group of people suspended in an interspace. Being obliged to forget some specific characteristics or even *selves* of the preliminal phase (separation), liminal beings are forced to deal with the perplexities of the liminal phase (transition).

Applying the three-fold structure to the Turkey's history, the three phases can be outlined as follows: The Ottoman past as separation phase pointing to the break with the past, the war¹² period and the post-war era as transition phase indicating liminality, uncertainty and ambiguity, and the inaccessibility of the aggregation phase signifying the ongoing identity crisis. The separation phase came about as a result of the Abolition of the Ottoman Sultanate on November 1, 1922 as a part of the reformations of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the first political leader of the new nation-state. This crucial reform gave the full authority to the new Turkish Grand National Assembly founded in 1920 in Ankara. In the context of this dissertation, The Abolition of Sultanate, which is as a matter of fact a political act, can be interpreted as a ceremony or a ritual proving the passage from an old to a new state. The separation phase represents the shift from a multilingual, hybrid, thus heterogeneous Ottoman realm to the –supposed to be– monolingual, mono-ethicized, homogenized nation-state.

In the last section of his book, “Humility and Hierarchy: The Liminality of Status Elevation and Reversal”, Turner explicates two sorts of rituals in which liminality is mostly present: Life-crisis rites and calendrical rites. The latter are collectively experienced and refers to a whole nation. Besides these rites can be a sign of status elevation as well as status reversal. Calendrical rites are, therefore, important in order to display the functioning of liminality both as an elevation and a reversal. In the case of Turkey, it is controversial whether the transition phase has caused either an elevation – with the positive changes in the social life such as the passage from monarchy to democracy, the emancipation of women, the escalation in literacy,

¹² By war, I refer to the First World War. The Turkish War of Independence occurred between the years of 1919-1923.

the secularized social life¹³ –, or a status reversal – through having reduced the cosmopolitan Ottoman Empire into a homogenized nation-state where one ethnicity dominates the rest; having effaced the imperial heritage and language; having imported the Western values and adapted them to the social life which caused the cultural clash and perplexity.¹⁴

My next paragraph, which presents the core theoretical framework of this dissertation, will deal with the reception of liminality in the postcolonial context through the critical analysis of the cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha.

¹³ The abolition of Sultanate in 1922, the abolition of Caliphate in 1924, The New Civil Code imported from the Swiss civil code and adapted in 1926, the woman suffrage in 1934, the alphabet reform in 1928 were all the notable reforms done by Ataturk which served for the status elevation of Turkey.

¹⁴ Exemplifying the status reversal: The multicultural opulence of the Ottoman language was lost, the aggrandizement of the dominant ethnicity (Turks) resulted in conflict with other ethnic and religious minorities both in the first years of the republic and afterwards; the citizens faced the problem of obligation to refuse their past as well as their daily rituals in order to adapt the new modes of living. They were required to import and adapt the specifically chosen Western symbols such as modern clothing, the France hat or the Latin alphabet.

2.3. A Contemporary Re-interpretation of ‘Liminality’: Bhabhian Liminality

Homi K. Bhabha was born in 1949 in Mumbai. He is one of the most influential theorists of the cultural studies and is particularly known for his pathbreaking analysis of post-colonial culture. Notwithstanding the fact that Bhabha loomed large in the post-colonial studies, in this thesis, I will chiefly adapt Bhabha’s approach and his reinterpretation of liminality.

Benjamin Graves argues that “Bhabha seeks to find ‘the location of culture’ in the marginal, ‘haunting’, ‘unhomely’ spaces between dominant social formations”.¹⁵ Bhabha builds upon the theory of Victor Turner, who made use of liminality in an anthropological sense as I explained in the previous paragraph. However, in a Bhabhian context, liminality becomes a symbol for a spatial-temporal space which mainly refers to a transitory gap as well as to the dynamism and the creation of meaning itself.

The key concepts that form the Bhabhian postcolonial theoretical framework can be recapitulated by means of four concepts: Liminality, hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence. These key terms which David Huddart sums up in his introduction to Homi K. Bhabha:

describe ways in which colonized people have resisted the power of the colonizer [...]. Instead of seeing colonialism as *something locked in the past*, Bhabha shows how *its histories* and cultures constantly *intrude on the present*, demanding that we transform our understanding of cross-cultural relations. The authority of dominant nations and ideas is never as complete as it seems, because it is always marked by anxiety, something that enables the dominated to fight back. (Huddart 1) (My emphasis)

¹⁵ Benjamin Graves. Brown University. <<http://semiedu2013.blogspot.be/2013/03/homi-bhabha-postcolonialism.html>>.

Bhabha's breakthrough in The Location of Culture¹⁶ is his empowering of the colonized before the colonizer while inactivating the colonizer's dominancy over the colonized. He argues that colonial discourse is no longer representing merely the colonizer. The 'objectified' colonized transforms to the subject position and simultaneously objectifies the colonizer. The space where the two subjects negotiate reveals the formation of hybridity and is defined by Bhabha as follows:

Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal. . . . It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power.

For the colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space . . . (159-160)

It should be noted that Bhabha's model of hybridity refers in no way to a total effacement of indigenous of opponent cultures' traits. The originality of Bhabha is hidden in his celebration of the negotiating aspect of hybridity. Huddart sketches the originality of Bhabha's framework in two respects. First of all Bhabha uses a conceptual vocabulary for his analysis of the colonial and postcolonial texts. Secondly, his work portrays that the West is troubled by its 'doubles', in particular the East (Huddart 2). Huddart emphasizes that 'doubling' is actually a way of shaping identity. The act of defining what you are, by stating what you are not, determines your identity.¹⁷ While Huddart claims that "colonial doubling is something that troubles the self-image of the colonizer; [and] similarly, the East troubles the bounded self-image of the West" (Huddart 2-3); Bhabha stresses that people will have to confront their "uncanny doubles" (Bhabha 194).

¹⁶ For the rest of the dissertation, I will refer to The Location of Culture as LC.

¹⁷ Stuart Hall says that identification is subject to *différence*. "It requires what is left outside, its constitutive outside, to consolidate the process". (Hall 3). The Questions of Cultural Identity.

In this context, Bhabha argues that there is a troubling situation between the quest for a stable confidential identity and the dislocating and cunning mimicry. Mimicry, says Bhabha, stands for an object or situation “*that is almost the same but not quite . . . the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; . . . mimicry is therefore stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal*” (122). For Bhabha, mimicry is used to point how the colonized adapts the cultural signs of the colonizer. This adaptation means in no sense that the colonized imitates the colonizer identically. Bhabha employs here two notions which are ‘anxiety’ and ‘agency’ that go hand in hand. The colonizer aims for the colonized to adopt and adapt the customs and conventions of the colonial rule. Gradually, the colonized begins to show resemblances to the colonizer. The colonized takes over the colonizer’s cultural signs such as language, gestures and manners. It is literally this resemblance which gives the feeling of anxiety to colonizer. The colonizer, who uses ‘difference’ as a weapon against the colonized in order to declare his supremacy and authority, gets hit by his own weapon; because the returned gaze of the colonized reverses and even nullifies the idea of difference. In this negotiation process of anxiety and agency, self is constantly constructed. Therefore identity is one more time claimed as a process and not as a fixed notion.

At the very beginning of LC, Bhabha refers to the immediate changes taking place during a period of transition:

Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively . . . The social articulation of difference . . . is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. It is in this sense that the boundary becomes the place from which something begins its presencing in a movement not dissimilar to the ambulant, ambivalent articulation of the beyond that I

have drawn out: 'Always and ever differently the bridge escorts the lingering and hastening ways of men to and fro, so that they may get to other banks . . .

The bridge gathers as a passage that crosses. (Bhabha 2-5)

What Bhabha denotes here above by “cultural engagement” is, in the case of Turkey, the engagement with the Western culture. During the transition period, cultural engagement was performed through the reformations of Ataturk. The separation from the Ottomans caused a quite complicated period of negotiation. As a consequence of the nebulous period having taken root from the detachment from the Ottomans, and considering the endeavors of getting closer to the West, it can be said that Turkey went through an intervening period. What Bhabha indicates in the abovementioned quotation with “cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation” refers precisely to duality emerged with confusion in this very moment of transition of the country. This will be passing through to the oncoming years of the republic in the shape of the problem of liminal identity crisis.

2.3.1. The “Bridge” Metaphor and the Manifestation of Bhabha’s Third Space

In his introduction in LC, Bhabha observes

What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These “in-between” spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. (1-2)

On the basis of the transitory and intermediary nature of liminality, it can be claimed that the metaphor of the bridge which recurs frequently in the studies of writers who are central to this thesis (such as Bhabha, Pamuk, Huntington and Turner) is worth mentioning. Bhabha’s view on the bridge, as well as his reception of liminality is positive rather than negative, while Turner and Huntington analyze it in negative terms.

Turkey’s identity crisis did not actually go through a Hegelian (master-slave/colonized-colonizer) process. It is a handicapped-hybridity by which I refer to the confrontation of two opposite cultures that are contaminated yet not synthesized. Turkey, on the one hand, identifies itself with the newly established secular nation-state adapting a Westernization-modernization project; on the other hand remains a torn country. After its renouncement, the old capital Istanbul was no longer a bridge¹⁸ between the two continents. The new nation-state

¹⁸ Istanbul is a city located at the complex crossroads of the East and the West. The ambivalence of the cultural setting posits a challenge to the formation of a well-defined identity because this meeting of the East and the West produces a sense of cultural unease rather than cultural vibrancy. This brings us to the question whether Istanbul, in micro scale, and Turkey, in macro scale, should be really considered a bridge connecting two civilizations. It should be noted that a bridge literally connects two separate things while it belongs to none of them and hangs constantly in liminoid space.

chose Ankara, the heart of Anatolia as their capital and repudiated all the history, memories and stereotypes which Istanbul was identified.

I would like to argue that the bridge metaphor in the case of Turkey loses its positive connotations and operates as rather disruptive phenomenon in the writings of Pamuk. The fact that Turkey is situated between two continents and accordingly two distinct cultures, it has a bridge position depicted often as a positive trait. However, my approach to the problem of the liminal identity crisis of Turkey intends to prove that this optimistic reception of the bridge metaphor does not actually function in that way.

Bhabha's understanding of the bridge should be regarded as a negotiation and mediation zone rather than an in-between territory or a physical bridge. A bridge, for Bhabha, is what he calls "the Third Space of Enunciation". Benjamin Graves states that Bhabha's "liminal space . . . does not separate but rather mediates . . . mutual exchange and relative meanings".¹⁹ This space of negotiation and mediation smoothes the borders and celebrates hybridity. Within the frame of the postcolonial theory, Bhabha formulates "the Third Space of Enunciation" in connection with his interrelating notions of hybridity, ambivalence and liminality. Bhabha underlines the productivity of the Third Space and claims that it dislocates the dictated histories and refuses the conformist approaches of authority. The Third Space of Enunciation portrays in an important sense Bhabha's understanding of the bridge metaphor. This space, Bhabha says, is a zone which challenges the conformist idea of one single history and identity, where cultural differences are simply negotiated. This zone opposes the univocal and homogenized version of history. Emphasizing the changeability and fluidity of identities, Bhabha aims to deconstruct the idea of "the fixity and fetishism of identities" (Bhabha 13). He describes his Third Space as an "interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed

¹⁹ Benjamin Graves. Brown University. <<http://semiedu2013.blogspot.be/2013/03/homi-bhabha-postcolonialism.html>>.

hierarchy” (5). Given Bhabha’s notion of ‘agency’, the outcome of the Third Space is considered to be positive in the sense that it is heterogenized, multi-vocal and mediated. It mitigates both the dominant voice of the colonizer and helps the voice of the colonized to be heard. Whether he calls it the liminal space, the third space or the border zone, all these terms of Bhabha’s invoke the idea of a space which is unstable and multilayered considering the different levels of narrations which include national as well personal histories.

Similar to Pamuk’s novels²⁰, Bhabha’s very own analysis and articles function as the Third Space of Enunciation through which he negotiates the cultural meaning through “complex, fragmented mosaics of quotation, neologism, poetry, and cultural analysis” (Huddart 14). Huddart summarizes Bhabha’s way of writing as combination of “historical descriptions, psychoanalytic analogy, and literary criticism” (15). Bhabha’s fieldwork of post-colonial criticism, Huddart affirms, is “psychoanalysis of modernity” (Huddart 111).

Bhabha emphasizes the ongoing process of figuring the cultural meaning which he also calls ‘hybridization’. According to Huddart, Bhabha focuses on “what happens on the borderlines of cultures . . . He [Bhabha] thinks about this through what he calls the liminal, meaning that which is on the border or the threshold. The term stresses the idea that what is “in-between situated” cultural forms or identities . . . is central to the creation of new cultural meaning” (Huddart 7). In other words, betwixt or stuck identities are open to reformation and re-reading. Bhabha’s borders should not be understood as physical borders between countries, yet as imaginary borders where the cultural meanings come into being.

²⁰ What creates the problem of liminal identity crisis is the “pedagogical” –the dictated, imposed-- itself. Therefore Pamuk’s narratives should be read as a remedy to this crisis motivating the reader to execute a performative reading. As Engdahl suggests, the novels of Pamuk operate as spaces where cultural meanings are negotiated. Thus I argue that the novels of Pamuk do not intend to create a third space; but they are the third space themselves.

Furthermore, hybridization, though received as a positive notion supporting transformation and ‘becoming’, is an “agonistic process of negotiation”, says Huddart (113). Bhabha argues that:

such an intervention [agency or performance] . . . challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national narration of the People . . . It is that Third Space . . . which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew. (54-55)

As suggested above, the Third Space functions in two ways: First, it creates the potential for the subjects to call the established meanings and identities into question. It aims for the deconstruction of the fixed notions. Therefore it should be regarded as a productive space. Second, the Third Space is immanently disruptive, because it gives a feeling of uncertainty and insecurity to the subjects. It can also be considered as what Peter Brooker called “hyphenated identities”.²¹ Such identities may indicate two opposite denotations. It may both imply the division and the connection of two separate things. Hyphenated or hybrid and liminal or threshold identities invoke eventually the same connotation of unbelonging and oscillating in-between from which the real conflict is arisen.

Referring to the unfixed nature of identity, Kalua states, “Homi Bhabha contends that identity, especially in culture, cannot be pinned down, but is always subject to and constructed through a negotiation of difference in what he calls liminal spaces, or the spaces in-between . . .” (1).

²¹ Kuortti, Joel, and Jopi Nyman, eds. Reconstructing Hybridity: Post-colonial Studies in Transition. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007. E-Book.

Therefore it can be concluded that Bhabha endorses the potential negotiation between cultures and the active role (agency) of the repressed culture when re-building identity.

Drawing from the several examples that Bhabha used in his book in order to illustrate liminality and hybridity on text, it can be claimed that Bhabha regards the text as the Third Space and the author as a negotiator within the scripted world. In my dissertation, through my reading of Pamuk's selected works within postcolonial studies and through mediating the Bhabhian and Pamukian worlds, I hope to show that the worlds of BB and NL can be considered (liminal) third spaces and Pamuk as the creator of and the mediator in these spaces. In the case of Turkey, the Third Space turns into a space of both confrontation and negotiation for personal stories and dominant national narratives, floating identities, past-present conflict and troubled memories.

3. CHAPTER II: An Account of the Recent History: The Transition from The Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey

As Turkey's identity problem cannot be considered apart from the country's past, we must now turn to the historical facts in order to trace the origins of this identity crisis. The problem of perplex identity has long formed a conundrum for the people of Turkey. Patriotic Turkish nationalism came into being in the form of a forced homogenization during the creation process of the nation-state. The hybrid cultural heritage of the polyglot and multicultural Ottoman rule had a Turkic foundation, yet as it is widely known, this heritage was largely fed by Persian, Byzantine and Arab art, ethics and traditions.

In his opening paragraph of "Beloved Istanbul": Realism and the Transnational Imaginary in Turkish Popular Culture,²² Martin Stokes makes a striking comparison between the funeral ceremonies of the two former Turkish presidents, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1923-1938) and Turgut Özal (1989-1993) in order to demonstrate that Turkey is a "multi-souled" country. His comparison highlights the main difference between the places where they were then buried. Atatürk, the founding father of Turkey, was buried in Anıtkabir, a distinct mausoleum specially built for him in the new capital, Ankara. Özal's coffin was carried to the Süleymaniye Mosque (an Ottoman mosque built for the Ottoman sultan Süleiman the Magnificent) after the burial service in Fatih, known as a conservative Islamist neighborhood in Istanbul. By underlining the places of burials, Stokes actually addresses the different characters of the two cities and the two faces of the country. Istanbul was stigmatized as the old city inherited by the demised empire; and Ankara became the new imago and symbol of the secular and modern republic. In this context, Stokes states that "if modernist republican aspirations were clearly focused on Atatürk's capital, Ankara, Istanbul was condemned as an unpromising site for national regeneration; the labyrinthine complexity of the streets, its

²² Martin Stokes. "Beloved Istanbul": Realism and the Transnational Imaginary in Turkish Popular Culture. Mass Mediations: New Approaches to the Popular Culture in the East and Beyond. 224.

“mixed” population and *schizophrenic placelessness* (“between” Europe and Asia) serving as a telling foil for the nation builders’ vision of a modern society” (225) (My italics). Istanbul was no longer considered to be the centre of attention. Its cosmopolite history was ignored. Ankara turning into the symbol of recently arisen nation and the victory against the Allies, and Istanbul as the reminder of a decadent empire and a dismissed past; the new and the old capitals were portrayed as one another’s antithesis. In this respect, it can aptly be claimed that the clash of past-present plays a crucial role already by the beginning of the nation-building period.

As a colonizer-imperial power, the Islamic background for the Ottomans was always a significant characteristic to be glorified. The transition period²³ from the multilingual, hybrid and heterogenized Ottoman realm to the (targeted) monolingual and homogenized nation-state was a mismatch between the Islamic grounded society taking its power from its colonialism, monarchy and cosmopolitanism (hybridity) and the republican nation-state established upon a state-imposed secularism and Westernization.²⁴ It was this mismatch that resulted in a dislocated identity.

This denial of the Ottoman past can be put forth as the major reason of present-day’s identity perplexity. The new country felt the urge to write a new history in order to push down the Ottoman past. In The Black Book, Pamuk explains this urge with a metaphor of asphalt. He describes how “the cobblestones along the streetcar line disappear under a layer of asphalt for which he could see no reason” (BB 12). In this quotation, while the cobblestones represent the Ottoman heritage and past, the new asphalt refers both to the Westernization-modernization project that took hold of Turkey and to the urge to break away from the past. A similar

²³ The transition period started right after the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923) which waged against the Allies who occupied the Ottoman territory by the end of the WWI. By transition, I refer mainly to the reformations materialized by Ataturk following the victory gained in 1923. During his 15-year presidency, Ataturk made several reformations as part of the Westernization-modernization project. This project remained incomplete. After his death in 1938, Turkey’s development drastically slowed down.

²⁴ What the republican intelligentsia meant by Westernization was to catch the level of the contemporary Christian West under the name of modernization.

metaphor appears also in NL: “. . . taking the cue from the new highways . . . where the recent paving obscured youthful memories, everything seemed busily anxious to forget us and our memories . . .” (NL 239).²⁵

Turkey was literally compelled to oscillate between two selves which should be addressed as the authentic self and the imposed other. By authentic-self, I refer to the originary self. This is in fact the cultural heritage – Islamic Eastern identity using the Ottoman alphabet and Ottoman garments (fez) -- which is inherited from its imperial background. The imposed other is the new costume (cultural identity) that the new nation-state tries to put on. The latter was a secular Western identity adapting Latin alphabet and French hat. In the hands of revolution and the Westernization-modernization process, the authentic-self turned into a negative-self. Two main arguments can be considered when regarding the Ottoman heritage as negative-self. First of all, the mission of the nation-state was defined as winning recognition from Western civilization. Because of the reasons that I have mentioned above, the remnant of a decadent empire, which was compared to an underdeveloped Eastern civilization, was the last thing new Turkey would have wanted to be linked up with. Correspondingly, the West was determined as the model civilization whose modes of living were accepted as standards to be achieved.²⁶ For Turkey, it was not likely to deny the deep-seated Ottoman past immediately and entirely. And therefore this transformation could nevertheless escape turning into an identity problem which individuals have to settle up with. David Huddart observes that identities in one sense operate as palimpsests. Identities, he says, “are overwritten, heavily annotated manuscripts, on which earlier writing is still visible underneath newer writing: they [palimpsests] offer a suggestive model of hybrid identity” (Huddart 107). The relation between the Islamic Ottoman identity and the secular Turkish identity function also as palimpsest: The traces of memories are almost erased, yet they are

²⁵ In the Turkish version of this passage, Pamuk uses directly the word “asphalt”.

²⁶ Prof. dr. İlber Ortaylı. *Türkiye'nin Yakın Tarihi* [The Close History of Turkey]. İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2012.

still visible. The newly established identity that Turkey tried to internalize included the unwanted partial presence of the Ottoman culture while it drifted Turkey to a cultural exile in the country of origin itself. In that sense, it can be suggested that the monarchic, religious body of government as well as the culturally Eastern-laden past were canopied with the redefined national (secular Turkish) and cultural (Westernizing-modernizing) identities.

Referring to the clear-cut made between the imperial past and the republican nation-state, Nergis Canefe²⁷ argues, “the founding narratives of Turkish national history were efficiently institutionalised, popularised and canonised under the aegis of a Turkish nation-state” (137).²⁸ Therefore, it is apt to claim that the performers of the nation-building project chose for a deliberate and internalized rejection of the Ottoman past. Canefe explains further how this nation-building project took the shape of a clash between forgetting and rewriting history. By accentuating the power of Kemalist ideology, she argues,

what is peculiar about the Turkish case is that patriotic Turkish nationalists have gone to great lengths to silence the Ottoman heritage of the new nation and its state in virtually every area of life, including memories of the previous demographic and cultural make-up of Asia Minor. It is in this context that the Turkish Independence War is deemed as the new beginning for the historic Turkish nation. The rejection of one’s recent past to such a degree requires both ideological devotion and extensive military bureaucratic might. (Canefe 148)

The Kemalist ideology, settled on an effacement of past, brought the necessity of writing a ‘functional’ past or no less than ‘rewriting’ the past. In Bhabha’s words, this narrativized²⁹

²⁷ Nergis Canefe is an associate professor in York University in the Department of Political Science.

²⁸ The Turkish Nationalism grew more than ever during the War of Independence; for this was the perfect timing to build their ‘own nation’ both for the Muslim Turks at that time situated in Anatolia and for the Muslim Balkan migrants who fell victim for the forced migration.

²⁹ The word, ‘narrativized’ explains the effacement of the past and its being continuously replaced/rebuilt/ rewritten by the ideological apparatus -- that is its being narrativized.

past “make[s] them [the citizens of the nation-state] the immanent subjects of a range of social and literary narratives” (Bhabha 201).

This internalized denial of the past, Canefe observes, was “an alarming degree of amnesia institutionalized by the Turkish nation-state” (139) which aimed a collective loss of memory and “officialised and popularized forgetfulness” (ibid). This “officialised and popularized forgetfulness” was encouraged also in the shape of concrete objects such as the thousands of statues and busts of Atatürk spread all over Anatolia where “the concrete apartment building . . . besiege the statues of Atatürk like prison walls” (NL 273). They were there in order to remind the tenets of Atatürk who aimed to give a modern imago to Turkey. However, Ecevit argues, these Atatürk busts and statues have turned into emptied pop images that do not contain any real meaning (57).

Identity, Hall claims, though constantly in shift and transformation, is formed through the consciously regulated “historical and institutional” (Stuart Hall 4) processes. In the case of Turkey, it can be claimed that serious modifications made under the name of the nation-building project. One of these reforms was the alphabet reform³⁰ made in 1928. This symbolical turnaround from the Ottoman alphabet, which is an amalgam language and written from right to left, to the Latin alphabet, which is identified with the Western culture and written from left to right, indicated a literal U-turn in mentality.³¹ The interstitial mind which is stuck in-between cannot better be described than the preface of The White Castle narrated by Faruk Darvinoğlu.³²

³⁰ Because of the language disengagement happened during the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkey, accession to the texts that had been written under the Ottoman rule was limited and even blocked. This act was literally meant to block the past.

³¹ In order to gain a deeper insight into the close history started with the transition from the imperial Ottoman past to the republican Turkey, the Kemalist ideology and its tenets, the striking change in the body of politics after the last military coup in 1980, the resurgence of Islamist movements, Özalism under the presidency of Turgut Özal, the problem of the ethnicities (Kurdish, Armenian etc.), and Turkey’s candidacy for the European Union, see the article “Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe” by Kevin Robins. in Questions of Identity. (London: Sage Publications, 1996. 61-86).

³² Faruk Darvinoğlu is a character from Pamuk’s second novel Silent House. Faruk’s father, Selâhattin Darvinoğlu was a physician (1881-1942). As his surname suggests, he favored the West’s positivist mentality and therefore he was always in conflict with his conservative and fatalist wife Fatma.

I found this manuscript in 1982 in that forgotten ‘archive’ . . . at the bottom of a dusty chest stuffed to overflowing with imperial decrees, title deeds . . . At first I didn’t know what I would do with the book, other than to read it over and over again. My distrust of history then was still strong . . . after reading a couple of sentences from the manuscript I kept on one table, I’d go to another table in the other room where I kept my papers and try to narrate in today’s idiom the sense of what remained in my mind”.³³

The act of pending between the rooms and writing over what only reminds in his mind is not only an animation of the break between past and present; but it is also an example of the liminal identity. I mean that the person, rolling between the papers of this old archive, feels the necessity to dig out the past for some reason. The act of Faruk confirms the impossibility of a full access to the text, so does the impossibility of a full access to the past. Gökнар interprets this as

having to shuttle between two desks in two separate rooms and record in the Turkish Latin alphabet only what is retained of the Ottoman-Arabic script is an apt metaphor to describe the unstable, in-between position of the nationalized body among other historical texts . . . The novel is one of identification; the “gap” between “texts” is in a sense the elision and the erasure of the Kemalist cultural revolution. The subtext is the messy, uncataloged archive or the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire, a kind of wildly signifying unconscious.”³⁴ As Bhabha notes, gaining identity is parallel to the accession to the past: “as far as this consciousness can be extended *backwards* to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person . . . (69)

³³ Gökнар. 35

³⁴ Gökнар. 36.

As mentioned before, the past was blocked and the old writings had limited access as a result of the change of the alphabet, reaching to the authentic-self was also not possible. In that respect, I suggest that the reforms of Ataturk should be touched on in order to gain a deeper view to this U-turn in mentality of the citizens of the new nation-state. In his article, “Variations on a Theme of Liminality”, Turner makes use of Gennepian term “limen”.³⁵ “Limen” refers to “a very long threshold, a corridor almost, or a tunnel which may, indeed, become a pilgrim’s road or passing from dynamics to statics, *may cease to be a mere transition and become a set way of life [...]*” (Turner 37) (My italics). Describing a person or a whole nation as “liminaries” (Ibid), who are “neither here nor there” (Turner 95), Turner argues that liminaries are identified by “the loss of their preliminal names, by the removal of clothes, insignia and other indicators of preliminal status” (Ibid). From my standpoint and with an attempt to show the interlink Van Gennep’s and Turner’s approaches to the problem of liminal identity crisis one more time, I suggest that the markers of the Ottoman reign such as the Sultanate, the Caliphate, dervish lodges, the Ottoman language and the traditional clothing, which constituted the backbone of the Ottoman culture, were the ceremonies of the empire that got lost or left during the transition period. During the Westernization-modernization process, Turkey experienced the “‘loss’ of meaningfulness” (Bhabha 179). With the replacement of the abovementioned ceremonies, the social system and the way of thinking of the society turned upside down. Having been deprived of their centuries-long habits and rituals, people experienced the effacement of the memories, which embedded deep in their unconscious. This experience boiled down to cutting the umbilical cord of an entire nation. Having been eradicated from their parent culture, the war-torn people were symbolically situated in an environment, which was quite unfamiliar as well as incompatible in comparison to the previous one.

³⁵ See the chapter about Arnold Van Gennep.

The new and modern imago, tried to be created at first by the willful mimicking of the Western civilization in terms of constitution (Swedish), outfit (fez replaced by France hat and any chador was forbidden) and alphabet, was meant to eliminate any claims of religious affiliations during the transformation phase of the nation. For, the Republican Turkey chose laicism and accepted it as its role model for the basis of the new regime. The nationalist elites (republican intelligentsia) who stood for a progressive Turkey and who expelled religion from the state affairs by way of the abolishment the Caliphate in 1924, strove to expurgate the nation from its negative-self and went for an enforced adaptation of a Westernized and accordingly modernized mode of living.

Having aimed to remove itself from the wrecks of the Ottoman Empire, which was stringently identified with the – irrational, backwarded, exotic and superstitious — East while “the recognition that tradition bestows a form of identification” (Bhabha 3), Turkey gave the impression of being a nation that had no link with the past. However, the members of the new nation-state ignored the fact that they brought some internalized, engrafted problems with them. The rejection of the parent culture, namely the Ottoman cultural heritage, prevented Turkey from creating an organic culture. Individuals have suffered from, as it were, a “part-culture”³⁶ syndrome -- looking maybe externally Western while being mentally stuck in the liminoid space. This relation of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey is such a metonymic one that both have become each other’s signifier. Though undesirably, they have turned into names reminding of each other in every context.

³⁶ Homi K. Bhabha. “Culture’s In-Between” in Questions of Cultural Identity. (London: Sage Publications, 1996) 54.

3.1. Huntington's Approach to Turkey as a 'Torn Country'

In The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order (1996) which is a book casting a critical eye over the post-Cold War period, American political scientist Samuel Huntington classifies the reactions of the non-Western societies to the West and modernization under three groups: "rejecting both modernization and Westernization; embracing both; embracing the first and rejecting the second" (72). Huntington places Turkey in the second group which embraces both modernization and Westernization. Elucidating on Toynbee's ideas, Huntington argues that the nations which fall under the second group are convinced that their "indigenous culture is *incompatible* with modernization and must be abandoned or abolished, and that society must fully Westernize in order to successfully modernize" (73) (My emphasis). If we remember that Ataturk was born into a rooted Eastern culture, studied in the Ottoman cadet school in Istanbul, became a soldier and served for the interests of Ottoman army till the end of the World War I, it will become clear how greatly he was aware that the basic political institutions³⁷ of the Ottomans which made them the central power as a sovereign empire ruling over the Islamic world, were nothing but hindrances on the way to modernization and Westernization.

Huntington summarizes the liminal status of Turkey and its oscillation between an Eastern soul and a Western costume as follows:

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk . . . had created a new Turkey out of the ruins of the Ottoman empire, and had launched a massive effort both to Westernize it and to modernize it. In embarking on this course, and rejecting the Islamic past, Ataturk made Turkey a "torn country," a society which was Muslim in its religion, heritage, customs, and institutions but with a ruling elite [the Turkish intelligentsia] determined to make it modern, Western, and at one with the West . . . Kemalism involves the difficult and

³⁷ These institutions were the Caliphate and the Sultanate.

traumatic task of destroying a culture that has existed for centuries and putting in its place a totally new culture *imported* from another civilization. (74) (My emphasis)

It can be concluded that Atatürk's reforms were aiming "technical modernization through a cultural Westernization" (Huntington 74). As suggested above, the Kemalist ideology considered Westernization as a prerequisite to achieve modernization. While rejecting the physical heritage – whether it is the old capital Istanbul, Ottoman language, dervish lodges, traditional outfit -- of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey became canopied and colonized by the cultural values of another empire.³⁸ On the other hand there is another crucial point that Huntington highlights above, when he argues that there is a widely accepted assumption that Westernization and modernization go hand in hand. In fact they do not always reinforce each other's existence. Besides Huntington describes Turkey as a "torn country"³⁹ which "since the 1920s has been trying to modernize, to Westernize, and to become part of the West" (138).

Huntington observes the present-day situation of Turkey as follows: "The obstacles to Turkey's becoming fully European, the limits on its ability to play a dominant role with respect to the Turkic former Soviet republics, and the rise of Islamic tendencies eroding the Atatürk inheritance, all seemed to insure that Turkey will remain a torn country" (149). In other words, he claims that Turkey will maintain its betwixt and in-between identity. The problem of internalizing the imported identity, according to Huntington, turns into a (Western) virus. He states that "once it is lodged in another society, is difficult to expunge. The virus persists but is not fatal; the patient survives but is never whole" (154).

Furthermore, he wishes to draw attention to the fact that the bridge position of Turkey between the Middle East and Europe can make Turkey a bridge in its positive sense; yet it may also mean that Turkey does not belong to any of the two. Huntington claims that "when

³⁸ I refer above to the Western civilization as an empire in a symbolic sense.

³⁹ Huntington claims that there are three key requirements to call a country 'torn'. The first requirement is a full support from the political and economic elite of the country. Secondly, the common citizens have to be eager to redefine their identity. Thirdly, the core values and the fundamental institutions of the imported culture should be keenly acknowledged and adapted. Huntington does not forget to add that the process of conversion is indispensable to be experienced as painful both politically and socially as well as, in fact the most, culturally (Huntington 139).

Turkey's leaders term their country a bridge, they euphemistically confirm that it is torn" (149). For that reason, he alleges that the torn countries go through a cultural schizophrenia which emanates from the clash between the imported culture and the rejected indigenous culture.

As Huntington argues that "the spread of pop culture and consumer goods around the world represents the triumph of Western civilization trivializes Western culture. The essence of Western civilization is the Magna Carta not the Magna Mac. The fact that non-Westerners may bite into the latter has no implications for their accepting [and internalizing] the former" (58) and it has also no insinuations that the non-Westerners are 'becoming' Westerners through the Westernization.⁴⁰ This argumentation summarizes the situation in which the problem of liminal identity situates itself. In short, on the way to create a new identity, Westernization-modernization project set as the major goal-to-be-achieved has turned into an "overdetermined process" (Hall 5) and since it could not be internalized, the imposed identity remained as an unfitting costume.

⁴⁰ Huntington illustrates the fact that extrinsic features are not representative enough to analyze the inner dispositions of a group. He sketches that "somewhere in the Middle East a half-dozen young men could well be dressed in jeans, drinking Coke, listening to rap, and, between their bows to Mecca, putting together a bomb to blow up an American airliner. During the 1970s and 1980s Americans consumed millions of Japanese cars, TV sets, cameras, and electronic gadgets without being "Japanized" and indeed while becoming considerably more antagonistic toward Japan. Only naïve arrogance can lead Westerners to assume that non-Westerners will become "Westernized" by acquiring Western goods. What, indeed, does it tell the world about the West when Westerners identify their civilization with fizzy liquids, faded pants, and fatty foods?" (58).

4. CHAPTER III: The Manifestations of ‘Liminality’ in The Black Book and The New Life

4.1. The Structure of BB and NL

In my first chapter, I tried to justify the relevance of the concept of liminality for my argument and to build on the theoretical framework of Bhabha. My argument was that Turkey suffers from the problem of a liminal identity crisis, which mainly emanates from a series of negative experiences to have come out of the transition from empire to republic in the post-World War I period. Other reasons for this crisis were the immediate and radical changes aimed at reforming the life style, the forced effacement of the indigenous culture and the influences of all these elements on the contemporary identity problem of Turkey. Until now, I have tried to present a theoretical explanation of liminality by giving the concept’s original use and its reinterpretations by different scholars in the course of time. I have also presented a historical overview of the WWI and post-WWI years which will help to gain insight about the transition experience.⁴¹

In this second chapter, my aim is to present a practical analysis of liminality by tracing this concept in The Black Book and The New Life by Orhan Pamuk.

BB is the fourth book of Pamuk, first published in 1990. It is known as an amalgam of stories from the mystical Sufi culture, hurufism⁴², Ottoman literary masterpieces such as Hüsni ü Aşk (Beauty and Love) by Sheikh Galip (1758-1799) and Mesnevi (Mathnawi) by Jalâl ad-Dîn Muhammad Rûmî (1207-1273) and folktales.

BB, as its name suggests, is dark, stereotypically melancholic and convoluted. This (non)color refers to the total absence of light, depths of unconscious, shunned memories, meaninglessness and nihility. In BB Pamuk makes a collage from stories taken from Eastern

⁴¹ The transition in the post-WWI years encapsulated the fifteenth year presidency of Atatürk. Afterwards it was a sort of recession period in Turkey caused first by the death of Atatürk and later by the WWII. Turkey did not participate in WWII, yet felt the negative impacts of it. The military coups (the most important ones are 1960, 1971, 1980 military coups) made in Turkey also represent the constant questioning of identity, the continuous clash between the Islamic-oriented conservatives and liberal progressives, and between the minority groups (Kurds, Armenians, Alawites et cetera) and nationalists.

⁴² Hurufism was a mystical doctrine within the Sufi culture, studied by Fazlallah towards the ends of the 14th century. Fazlallah thought of Quran as a book written with a kabbalistic system of letters. This doctrine was based on reading the hidden letters on people’s faces.

literature and he bases this collage on the Western novel tradition. This mixture of Eastern literary heritage and the Western novel is already a manifestation of Pamuk's enthusiasm to both confront and merge East and West.

The story of BB takes place in Istanbul and lasts only ten days. The time is 1980, which is also the year of the latest military coup in Turkey. The coup is mentioned in the last chapter, when Galip, the protagonist, faces the dead bodies of Rüya and Celâl⁴³ in Alâaddin's Shop. One morning, the thirty-three-year-old lawyer Galip discovers that his wife left home in a mysterious way. From then on, the plot revolves around Galip's quest for his wife Rüya in the labyrinthine streets of Istanbul. The linear plotline is interrupted by the columns of Rüya's half-brother Celâl. Pamuk here creates a writer, Celâl, within the story. Celâl writes for a widely-read newspaper called 'Milliyet' (Nationality) and, as we witness, his columns play a great role for Galip's quest. These columns are inserted within BB in the form of subplots, through which Celâl reflects the cultural heritage of Istanbul and his own experiences with this dismissed heritage. These columns are also replete with symbols and references to the past and the perplexing experience of transition. During his search for Rüya, Galip convinces himself that there are clues hidden within these writings which can help him find Rüya. Galip intrudes in Celâl's flat in order to look for hints. Yet in the meantime he starts living there, wearing Celâl's clothes and reading his writings. In the course of the book, Galip will also start writing on behalf of Celâl. Galip realizes that he is actually not searching for Rüya; instead he is trying to find his *self*. He begins to become Celâl.⁴⁴ The literary critic Jale Parla explains that this doubling is caused by the 'selflessness' of Galip.⁴⁵ Galip's admiration for Celâl results in taking Celâl's writer-identity over. Already in the middle of the book, when Galip visits the Mars Mannequin Atelier of Bedii Usta, he comes across the mannequin of

⁴³ In Turkish, Galip means 'victor or conqueror'; 'Rüya' means both 'dream' and 'vain hope' and 'Celâl' means 'glory'. In BB, Rüya transcends its literal meaning: "dream". It refers not only to the complexity of the Galip's quest for his self, but also the jumbled thoughts filling his mind, the tense atmosphere of the streets of Istanbul and the hazy unconscious.

⁴⁴ Literary critics consider *The Black Book* also as a story in which Pamuk tries to find his writer-identity. In other words, it can be said that Pamuk is also on a symbolic quest during *The Black Book*.

⁴⁵ Jale Parla. "Kara Kitap Neden Kara?" (Why is The Black Book Black?). 120.

Celâl. He stands before Celâl's mannequin and says "it's thanks to you I can't be myself . . . It's because of you that I believed all those stories that turned me into you" (BB 190). In this sense, it can be claimed that the disappearance of Celâl generates space for Galip to recreate his self. Confusingly enough, Celâl, who Galip aspires to turn into, suffers also from the problem of 'selflessness'. Celâl says " . . . This lost memory that pained us, reduced us to ruins, though still we struggled to be ourselves" (BB 64).

Just as some Ottoman sultans used to do, Celâl wanders the streets of Istanbul in disguise. He does this; because he feels the urge to escape from himself and to become another. Surprisingly, the BB character Celâl also pops in NL. The characters of NL remember him as a pitiful columnist, who could not manage to be himself: "it's all nothing but a misadventure . . . There is no way that we can be ourselves any longer, a fact that even the well-known columnist Jelal Salik realized, which led to his suicide; it's someone else who's writing the column under his name" (NL 94-95). The amnesia problem that Celâl suffers from is also a symbol of the problem of repressed unconscious. He takes medicine to recover from it, yet this does not seem to solve the problem. There is simply an implicit reference here to the deteriorating memory of the nation. Celâl is fascinated with the past, as well as with the dark and obscure streets of the city. He is deeply inspired by the mysterious underground paths of Istanbul, which have sunk in oblivion.

Galip follows the tracks of Celâl and starts visiting places that Celâl mentions in his stories. In the outskirts and the labyrinthine streets of Istanbul, he falls into a cosmos of stories which intoxicates his personal world, while his detective-like search for Rüya and Celâl takes the shape of a search for self.

Galip's selflessness and his fragmented identity can be related to Turkey's problem of a liminal identity crisis. The character Galip becomes a reflection of Turkey's contemporary identity problem. In his article "The Mystery of The Black Book", Kemal Atakay draws attention to the fact that none of the key characters of BB (Celâl, Rüya, Galip) are deeply

analyzed. In that respect, he argues, BB is not the story of these three characters; instead it is “a huge labyrinthine mirror”⁴⁶ which reflects the traces of our common unconscious.

Moreover, related to selflessness, Huddart argues that “the entire process of becoming an adult is an attempt to stop the circulation of signifieds, to give stability to the ego; to be involved in this process of stabilization is to wish return to an original unity [...], but in any case the stabilization always fails, the ego is always an illusion, and that original unity is inaccessible” (42).⁴⁷ Since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the young nation-state tried to gain a new identity. All the ‘signifieds’ – the previously mentioned reformative actions of Atatürk put into practice in order to make the country both modern and Westernized—were meant to fixate the new ego. This new identity, which is a fabricated one, operated as a fantasy and failed to measure up to the expectations to form an authentic identity.

The second book that is central to my dissertation is Pamuk’s fifth novel, The New Life, published first in 1994. In NL, university student Osman encounters *The New Life*⁴⁸ for the first time in the hands of Janan⁴⁹, the girl he is deeply in love with. In NL, the quest is structured by means of the bus journeys that Osman makes to different cities of Turkey. The life of the young protagonist turns completely upside down after he has read a random book which is presented almost as a sacred text: “I told her I’d read the book after seeing it in her hand. I had my own world before reading the book, I said, but after reading the book, I now had another world” (NL 19). Osman becomes obsessed with this book and yearns to know its writer. He starts believing that the book is about him (NL 6) and that it is his story which is told in there. Correspondingly, this assumption is confirmed at the end of the book: “So Uncle Rıfkı had addressed me directly. ‘I am going to write a book someday, and I will give the hero your name.’ . . . one where I will tell your story” (NL 267). Towards the end of the book

⁴⁶ Kemal Atakay. “Kara Kitap’ın Sırrı” [The Mystery of The Black Book]. 60.

⁴⁷ Huddart actually discusses the main issue of Lacan’s theory of ‘the mirror stage’.

⁴⁸ I hereby refer to the book within the novel which is also called *The New Life*.

⁴⁹ ‘Osman’ refers to the important historical characters such as founder of the Ottoman Empire Osman Gazi and the third caliph of the Islamic world. ‘Janan’ (originally Canan) means beloved woman and God and in the novel depicted as an angel, shows similarities with Dante Alighieri’s Beatrice from his La Vita Nuova.

the reader realizes that Uncle Rıfkı Hat⁵⁰, who is also a colleague and friend of Osman's father, and who is also portrayed as a person that "infect[s] us [Turkish people] with the plague of forgetfulness that blows here on the winds from the West, erasing our collective memory" (NL 132), is really the author of the book within the novel.

Osman's love for Janan is unrequited. Janan loves Nahit/Mehmet⁵¹, the person who discovers the book earlier and got even killed in the sake of the book and of Janan. After the unexpected disappearance of Janan, Osman immediately leaves Istanbul and starts his bus journeys to look for her. He takes buses randomly and has more than a few severe bus accidents. In one of these journeys Osman eventually comes across Janan. Realizing that Nahit/Mehmet is also lost, they decide to visit the father of Nahit/Mehmet, Dr. Fine.

Dr. Fine detests the book in question. He is convinced that it caused his son to run away from home. For that reason, Dr. Fine tries to destroy whatever copies of the book he comes across. He also hires agents to kill the writer of the book, Uncle Rıfkı, who works for the railway constructions and represents in some way the 'Westernization-modernization' project that Turkey undergoes. The anti-Western sentiments of Dr. Fine make him believe that killing Uncle Rıfkı will expurgate Turkey from the evils of Westernization.

Dr. Fine calls his agents the name of 'watch brands' such as Zenith, Omega, Movado, Serkisof. Referring to the issues of Westernization and the adaptation of international hour, Dr. Fine regards the watch as "'ours," given that they had been keeping our time for over a century" (139).⁵² Dr. Fine believes that watches and clocks are the only things that Turkish people succeeded to internalize. He utters his obsession about 'time' as follows:

For our people, the ticking of clocks is not just a means of apprising the mundane, but the resonance that brings us in line with our inner world, like the

⁵⁰ "Hat" means "railway" in Turkish.

⁵¹ The real name of the character is Nahit. He is the son of the conservative Dr. Fine (in Turkish, Dr. Narin). He changes his name first to Mehmet and then, oddly enough, to Osman. He is one of many Pamuk characters who constantly switch identities without being able to transcend any of them.

⁵² Pamuk here refers to another reform of Atatürk which is the adoption of international calendar, hours and measurements (1925-1931).

sound of splashing water in fountains in the courtyards of our mosques,” . . .
“We pray five times a day; then in Ramadan we have the time for *iftar*, the breaking of fast at sundown, and the time for *sahur* . . . Our timetables and timepieces are our vehicles to reach God, not the means of rushing to keep up with the world as they are in the West. There never was a nation on earth as devoted to timepieces as we have been; we were the greatest patrons of European clock makers. Timepieces are the only product of theirs that has been acceptable to our souls. (NL 159)

The novel ends with the murder of Nahit/Mehmet by Osman and Osman’s own death later on a bus accident. During his journeys, Osman interrogates his identity. When he is searching for Janan, Nahit/Mehmet, the writer of the book or the manufacturer of the New Life Caramels, he is at the same time looking for his own identity. This can be compared to Turkey’s identity problem which was constantly put into question ever since the detachment of Turkey from the Ottoman Empire.

Turkish literary critic Yıldız Ecevit states that “contemporary novelist has to seek ‘reality’ in different platforms: maybe in the bends of fantasy, maybe in the dreams of Freud, maybe in the unconscious images of Jung or in the labyrinths of the consciousness” (Ecevit 20) (My translation). In both novels, Pamuk makes his protagonists start a quest in order to confront their uncanny past, which lies dormant both in the streets of Istanbul as well as in the unconscious of its inhabitants.

In terms of identity switch, double identities and the juxtaposition of real and surreal, BB and NL have several things in common. First, both protagonists Galip and Osman are in love with a woman and they both start their quests for the sake of this woman. Second, their lives completely change at a random day without their awareness of the coming of this change. Pamuk puts Galip’s experience of the change as follows: “On the morning of the day his wife left him, with the newspaper he’d just finished reading still tucked under his arm, Galip was

thinking about the green ballpoint pen he and Rüya had dropped into the depths of the Bosphorus . . .” (BB 21). Galip is immediately driven by memories. He feels an immediate urge to go back to the past in order to retrieve Rüya.

For Osman, the change comes at the very beginning of the book: “I read a book one day and my whole life was changed. Even on the first page I was so affected by the book’s intensity I felt my body sever itself and pull away from the chair I sat reading the book . . .” (NL 3). In both cases there is the issue of abandonment after leaving a piece of paper or a whole book behind. The content of the note or the book is never revealed to the reader. I argue that the note of Rüya and the book in NL work as symbols of the limited past that Turkish people can no longer access. The immediacy of change in the lives of Galip and Osman refers also to the immediate transition from the Ottoman Empire to Turkey. In BB Galip will look for Rüya -- that is the repressed history which people now only remembers as much as they do a *dream* -- in tunnels, basements, wells and in the puzzled writings (limited history) of Celâl. In NL, one book is presented as having power enough to make Osman (and many others) change his life. Osman’s journeys to Turkey’s different towns make us witness the suffering of Anatolian people from this repressed and (increasingly) lost memory caused by the Westernization-modernization reforms.

A third feature that Galip and Osman share is that they both end their quests with a defeat. They could neither come together with the women they love nor could they reach the illuminating and promising meaning of life they were looking for. A full recreation of self can also not be mentioned. Both ends are dark and pessimistic. Osman explains the last moment of his life:

I remembered the anticipation of peace following the accidents I had lived through years ago . . . the feeling of *transition after an accident* which seemed filmed in slow motion. I remembered the passengers who were *neither here nor there* stirring blissfully, as if sharing together time that had come out of

paradise. Shortly all the sleepy travelers would be awake, and the stillness of the morning would be broken with happy screams and thoughtless cries; and on *the threshold between two worlds*, as if discovering the eternal jokes existent in a space without gravity, *we would collectively discover with confusion* and excitement the presence of bloody internal organs, spilled fruits, sundered bodies, and all those combs, shoes, children's books that spilled out of torn suitcases. (NL 295) (My italics)

If the collapse of the Ottoman Empire was an accident than the first fifteenth-year of the young republic was the period of transition after this accident. The citizens, who suddenly became members of another country which profiled itself in a complete different way, were the passengers who are neither here nor there. They were sleepy travelers who stand on the threshold between two worlds and who collectively experienced the confusion and the perplexity that this transition brought. Their suitcases were torn, because they were full of old, repressed, unwanted memories.

Both in BB and NL, the multilayered plotlines develop as love stories. Inspired from the thrilling soul of the detective novels, Pamuk makes his protagonist pursue the tracks of his self. Pamuk's "distanciating and convoluted" (Stokes 233) plotlines should be thought of nested boxes. The outmost box is the superficial reading of these novels which tells the love story of a helpless male protagonist to a woman and his thorny and intricate search after her.

Yet I am more concerned with the inner boxes by which I refer to the sub-stories, symbols and motifs which exemplify the liminal identity crisis. In what follows, first, I will discuss the issue of the schizophrenic fragmentation of the self in relation to past-present and East-West dichotomies. Second, I will focus on my first key motif, the uncanny. I will show the link of this motif to the repressed past and will analyze its manifestations in BB and NL. In addition to this, I will talk about in a more focused manner the significant sub-stories -- the negative

reception of the Westernization-modernization project conducted by the Turkish republican intelligentsia, the consequences of this imposed ideology and quest for 'self' -- and metaphors -- the dark air shaft, the depths of the Bosphorus, Bedii Usta's underground mannequin atelier -- in connection with the motifs of the uncanny and the journey-quest.

4.2. The Schizophrenic Fragmentation of the Self

The identity problem in these novels, which I want to characterize as ‘the schizophrenic fragmentation of the self’⁵³, appears more in the form of a past-present clash (between the memories of an Islam-oriented decadent empire belonging to the past and the fabricated-dictated history of the secular republican nation-state belonging to a closer past) and the trauma of transition in the form of disrupted identity. In that respect, the main aim of the quest can be regarded as coming to terms with this clash. Stressing the themes of ‘embedded unconscious’ and ‘loss’ which dominate these two novels of Pamuk, Ülker Gökberk⁵⁴ argues, “[I]t is the consciousness of this irrevocable loss that reverberates in Pamuk’s construction of individual and collective selfhood”.⁵⁵ The reality of the character is constructed through the relation between the repudiated past inherited from the Ottomans and the dictated identity manufactured by the Westernization-modernization project of the state as part of nation-building.

Pondering Pamuk’s approach to the stance of Turkey and its problems in terms of definition of identity and designating its position in the contemporary world, Turkish literary critic Erdağ Gökknar⁵⁶ argues that the problem of in-between identity can best be explained as a follow-up of four phases: “Ottoman history in a European context, the transition from Ottoman Empire to modern Middle East, the early-twentieth-century Kemalist cultural revolution, and the legacy of all three on present-day Turkey”.⁵⁷ Gökknar points out that Pamuk construes his narratives as juxtapositions of past and present. In other words, he reflects contemporary events with its past doppelgängers. According to Gökknar, it is not Pamuk’s priority to make use of the Ottoman past “as a repository of historical source texts,

⁵³ Walter Armbrust. *Mass Mediations*. 17.

⁵⁴ Ülker Gökberk is a Turkish academician who works now as professor of German and Humanities at Reed College.

⁵⁵ Ülker Gökberk. “Beyond Secularism: Orhan Pamuk’s *Snow*, and the Contestation of ‘Turkish Identity’ in the Borderland.” *Konturen* [Online], 1.1. (2008). 3 May 2012. <http://konturen.uoregon.edu/vol1_Gokberk.html>.

⁵⁶ Erdağ Gökknar is also the award-winning translator of the 6th book of Pamuk, *My Name is Red* (1998).

⁵⁷ Erdağ Gökknar. “Orhan Pamuk and the ‘Ottoman’ Theme. (*World Literature Today* 80.6 (2006): 34-38) 34.

but rather as an intertextual model of literary form”.⁵⁸ In other words, Pamuk employs the Ottoman themes to be able to scrutinize “identity subversion or new understandings of selfhood” (Göknar 37). Martin Stokes also claims that Pamuk considers it necessary to benefit from the past; yet there is no such claim of looking for closure with the past (Stokes 231). Pamuk uses the past in order to give meaning to the present and to find answers for today’s trauma. This pursuit for a united and fixed identity could better be explained as “not the so-called return to roots but as coming-in-to-terms-with our ‘routes’” (Hall 4). Pamuk’s protagonists are looking for the lost meaning, yet they also doubt its existence. BB’s protagonist Galip explains this feeling with these words:

Once upon a time they had all lived together, and their lives had had meaning, but then, . . . they had lost that meaning, just as they’d also lost their memories. Everytime they tried to recover that meaning, every time they ventured into that spider-infested labyrinth of memory, they got lost; as they wandered about the blind alleys of their minds, searching in vain a way back, the key to their new life fell into the bottomless well of their memories; knowing it was lost to them forever, they felt the helpless pain known only by those who have lost their homes, their countries, their past, their history. (BB 194)

As seen both in BB and NL, the textual framework of Pamuk is equipped with temporal juxtapositions, futile quests and the deconstructed postmodernist and post-Orientalist⁵⁹ binary oppositions. Göknar accordingly claims that Pamuk has made it a characteristic of his novels

⁵⁸ Erdağ Göknar. *Orhan Pamuk, Secularism and Blasphemy: The Politics of the Turkish Novel*. 99.

⁵⁹ Erdağ Göknar. By focusing on the “multilayered aestheticization” of Pamuk’s narratives, Göknar argues eloquently that “[A]ssociated with the conditions, paradoxes, and dilemmas of postcolonialism, “post-Orientalism is a critique of the historical function of orientalism (and nationalism) in the construction of identities. Furthermore, post-Orientalism foregrounds political and cultural representations that are not delimited by the forces of colonialism per se. Thus, as the late Ottoman state fell into the position of being semi-colonized, the legacy of this semi-colonization, or colonial encounter with Europe, informed the breadth, scope, and severity of the Kemalist cultural revolution that gave shape to the Republic of Turkey. And though it is a commonplace to hear modern Turks boast that Turkey – meaning both the Ottoman state and the republic – was never colonized, history presents us with quite a different account. It is by subverting the orientalist-national binary through new practices of narration and intertextuality that Pamuk establishes what I term “a post-Orientalist aesthetic.” The motif of the incomplete, failed, or “absent text” of the Pamuk novel, for example, is redeemed by the very text Pamuk has written. Read together, these narratives identify, critique, and subvert the processes of overdetermination articulated by discourses of orientalism and nationalism. The “Ottoman” theme is none other than this, a process of hermeneutic triangulation.” 38.

to “destabilize fixed identities” (34) -- which also recalls the concept of “postulated identity” (Bauman 19) -- meaning that the structure of identity is convertible and substitutable.

Pamuk, in a similar vein to Bhabha, leads through a “life lived precariously on the cultural and political margins of modern society” (Huddart 112). Locating Pamuk on the margins of the two cultures, the East and the West, it can be claimed that Galip’s and Osman’s identities are also placed in the margins. Galip and Osman suffer from the sentiments of insecurity, perplexity, hopelessness, which is emanated from the need of the ontological questioning.

4.3. 'Uncanny': The Return of the Repressed Past in the Form of Trauma

"To be born again," sang Gibreel Farishta tumbling from the heavens, "first you have to die."

Salman Rushdie -- The Satanic Verses

He must abandon his past totally if he was to become a totally new being. So he cut off all relations with his father and his family . . . But it was not easy to become free of them.

Orhan Pamuk – The New Life

As I explained in my first chapter, the problem of liminal identity crisis of Turkey emanates from the incapability and the impossibility of 'killing' the past. As the Ottoman heritage could not be entirely effaced, Turkey cannot possibly reborn.

Turkish sociologists Zeliha Etöz and Nuran Erol Işık claim,

When modernity, idealized as being 'civilized', has itself become a target; the burden and the severity of the act of remembering -- which has an ideological facet -- increases. Moreover, when the relationship between the modern and the past wears oriental colors; history turns into a burden which is even more difficult to bear. [Therefore] the past functions as the frame of reference [...] and accordingly becomes a *hindrance* [...] when interpreting today's identities, mentalities, and conflicts. (173) (My translation)

In the case of Turkey, we witness the antagonism between a repressed unconscious and an imported identity. If the past functions as "the frame of reference" as mentioned above and if

the past is an unwanted repressed one, then it turns into a “hindrance” when the nation aims to create a new imago.

As I argued in the first chapter of this dissertation, Bhabha promotes the Third Space as a vague space which functions as an uncanny zone (*das unheimliche*) which he uses in order to psychoanalyze postcolonial identity. In this dissertation, the uncanny stands for what Bhabha explains in relation to Freud’s ‘repetition compulsion’. This is the feeling one gets when he has a problematic past which he avoids, yet has to confront. This refers also to the “[...] repressions of a ‘cultural’ unconscious; a liminal, uncertain state of cultural belief when the archaic emerges in the midst of margins of modernity as a result of some psychic ambivalence or intellectual uncertainty” (Bhabha 206). In that respect, I would argue that the representation of liminal in BB and in NL should be brought in relation with Bhabha’s understanding of the uncanny. Bhabha once said in his article “DissemiNation” that people in exile⁶⁰ live “retroactively” (Bhabha 199). They gather “the past in a ritual of revival” (*ibid*). The new culture that they have to adopt and adapt is a “half-life, half-light” (*ibid*). According to Bhabha, “denial is always a retroactive process; a half acknowledgement of that [historical] otherness has left its traumatic mark. [...] “Remembering is [...] a painful re-membering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present” (88-90). Already the second chapter of BB starts with a direct reference to uncanny. “When the Bosphorus Dries Up” is actually a column written by Celâl. He apocalyptically fantasizes that the water of the Bosphorus would drain and all the embedded ruins and the buried history under water would come into sunshine as a heap of junk:

Amid the doomsday chaos, [...] we shall find skeletons of Celts and Ligurians,
their mouths gaping open in deference to the unknown gods of prehistory. . . .
this new civilization grows up amid mussel-encrusted Byzantine treasures, tin

⁶⁰ Turkey’s exile can be considered as a cultural exile whose past is inaccessible and present-day identity does not really make one feel home.

and silver knives and forks, thousand-year-old wine corks and soda bottles, and the sharp-nosed wrecks of galleons (BB 17)

Starting history from Ligurians, the prehistoric inhabitants of Turkey, Pamuk attempts to mention some of the civilizations who once happened to live and to pass by Istanbul. By mentioning Byzantine treasures, he refers to the reign of Byzantine Empire who ruled over Istanbul more than a millennium. Celâl keeps on mentioning objects and names that recall different inhabitants and historical periods that Istanbul once hosted:

As I plunge into this silent darkness and make my way through the stench of rotting corpses, I'll stumble across the palace intriguers of yesteryear, still doubled over in the sacks in which they drowned, and the long-lost skeletons of Orthodox priests, still clutching their staffs and their crosses, their ankles still weighed down by ball and chains. I shall see . . . the old periscope from the [British] submarine that tried to torpedo the S.S. *Gülcemal* as it was carrying troops from Tophane Wharf to Gallipoli, only to sink to the sea floor after its propeller got tangled up in fishermen's nets . . . ; it will be immediately apparent that our own citizens are drinking tea out of Chinese porcelain cups in their new home . . . as they sit in velvet officer's chair once occupied by English skeletons gasping for air. In the darkness just beyond, there will be the rusting anchor from a warship that once belonged to Kaiser Wilhelm I shall see the remains of a looted Genoese treasure . . . and images of lost and forgotten peoples (BB 19-20)

Celâl's list is quite long and it includes galley slaves, the skeletons of the Crusaders and many other historical figures somehow connected to Istanbul. 'The palace intriguers' remind us The Ottomans. Mention of "Orthodox priests" calls both the Byzantine Empire and the once-Christian identity of Istanbul to mind. References to the last German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm, the battleship 'Gülcemal' and the British submarine, remind us of the First World

War and more specifically the battle of the Dardanelles.⁶¹ “The remains of a looted Genoese treasure” refers to a seabattle between the Venetian and the Ottoman armadas.

As suggested above, Pamuk sums up a long history of Istanbul by giving a panorama of the depths of the Bosphorus. What is interesting in this chapter is the conclusion of Celâl about what would happen, if the Bosphorus dries up. He writes, “. . . in this accursed cesspool watered by the dark green spray of every sewage pipe in Istanbul, we can be sure that new epidemics will break out among the armies of rats this I must impress upon you: The authorities will seek to contain the epidemic behind barbed wire, but it will touch us all” (BB 17). This “epidemic” is a telling sign of the traumatic selflessness (liminal identity crisis) emerged in the dark rooms of unconscious or “behind barbed wire”. Pamuk here awakes “the ghost of the stories” (Bhabha 224) concealed within the linear, homogenized national narrative which envisages to efface the past and to rewrite a new (national) history. Huddart says that uncanny “opens a space for us to reconsider how we have come to be who we are” (83). In other words, who we are now (our identity) is reformed by what we have undergone in the past. Turkey has generated a new identity which was truly reformed (or fabricated), yet disrupted under the ideological shadow of the Ottoman Empire. An indicator of the past, the uncanny is “not locked in the past, but is instead located firmly in the present” (Huddart 33). We witness the existence of uncanny in Istanbul, in BB and in other Turkish towns in NL. The past strikes back and disturbs the present. That is why the protagonists tend towards interrogation of their present-day identities. Their memories are not kept in the unconscious, yet they retaliate in their present mind.

Galip (and the city, Istanbul) suffers from “the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history . . .” (Bhabha 15). In the case of Turkey, the shadow of the past, which is in this context the period of post-World War I and the Ottoman identity, “splits [nation’s] presence,

⁶¹ The battle of the Dardanelles was one the uppermost important battles of the WWI. It occurred in 1915-1916 between the Ottoman Empire and The Allies. The military forces under the command of Atatürk won the battle in this front.

distorts his outline . . . [and] disturbs and divides the very time of his [subjects'] being[s]"
(Bhabha 62).

5. CHAPTER IV: Symbols of the ‘Uncanny’ and the ‘Journey-Quest’

5.1. ‘Bedii Usta’s Children’ and ‘The Dark Air Shaft’

In this chapter, I aim to draw a picture of the manifestations of the unconscious in BB and NL. Transition, Turner argues, necessitates “a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate” (Turner 103).⁶² By this, he means that transition urges the erasing of memories, traditions, attitudes, values and even the facial expressions and gestures. In this respect, in this chapter, I will analyze the specific symbols of the uncanny in BB and NL.

The story starts with Celâl’s discovery of a forgotten – actually hidden -- underground museum of mannequins. It is actually an atelier. The mannequin-maker, Bedii Usta, is a figure who is banned from society because of his desire to portray the inherent gestures, facial expressions and gestures of ‘his own people’. He can be described as a non-conformist who resists the fabricated identity which was imposed on the country. In the novel, we witness that his art was rejected twice. When he for the first time presented his mannequins to Sheikh al-Islam⁶³, this close-minded man claimed that “to replicate God’s creations so perfectly was to compete with the Almighty” (BB 60). Celâl reflected this in his column as “one of thousands of examples of the prohibition fever that has ranged throughout our . . . long journey westward” (BB 60). However, Bedii Usta was given another chance. Celâl told in his column that

twenty arduous years later, in the great westernizing wave of the early years of the Republic, when gentlemen threw aside their fezzes to don panama hats and ladies discarded their scarves in favor of low-slung high heels, mannequins began to appear in the display windows of the finest clothing stores . . . These, however, were brought in from abroad, and when he first set eyes on these

⁶² Ibid. Victor Turner. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. 103.

⁶³ Sheikh al-Islam was the title for an authorized religious leader during the Ottoman rule.

foreign mannequins, Bedii Usta was sure that the day he'd awaited for so long was upon him. (BB 60)

At that time Bedii Usta was confronted with another problem. This time he was rejected, because "his mannequins did not look like the European models to which we were meant to aspire; they looked like us" (BB 61). One of the shopkeepers told Bedii Usta that customers desire "a coat worn by a new beautiful creature from a distant unknown land, so he can convince himself that he, too, can change, become someone new, just by putting on this coat" . . . Turks no longer wanted to be Turks, they wanted to be something else altogether" (BB 61).⁶⁴ Puzzled by the enthusiasm for westernizing and the change, Bedii Usta and his son discover that it is the golf of Western movies which destroy the expressions, gestures and bodily movements of our people (BB 63). However, Bedii Usta is not convinced and he says: ". . . a nation could change its way of life, its history, its technology, its art, literature, and culture, but it would never have a real chance to change its gestures" (BB 62). For this reason, he decides to keep on making "his sons" (BB 60) and to hide them in his basement until they are rediscovered again. Later in the book, Galip, with a group of people, happens to pass by this basement called "Mars Mannequin Atelier" which is now owned by the grandson of Bedii Usta. Cebbar Bey, who brings the group to the basement, tells Bedii Usta's grandson that "these people have not come to see the showroom; they would like . . . to see what you keep downstairs, underground: the malcontents, our history, the things that make us who we are" (BB 187). The showroom stands actually for the city life, painted in Western colors. Yet, these guests wish to see the original faces and to listen to their real stories.

Bedii Usta's concern about the Western movies is mentioned in the chapter called "We Lost Our Memories at the Movies". Here, Pamuk mocks the effects of Western music and cinema on Turkish people. Their enthusiasm for Western languages (the Ottoman language included

⁶⁴ Pamuk used this "coat" metaphor as a metaphor of identity-switch also in his controversial book Snow. The protagonist poet Ka has a coat which he buys in Frankfurt and which makes him feel 'different' than others.

many Arabic and Persian words, Turkish has now several French and English words), pianos (that almost all Turkish upper middle-class families once had as a proof of their becoming Westernized; yet these pianos mostly remained as part of the furniture in Western-designed living rooms), foreign nannies and Western-styled clothes, Celâl writes, all emanate as a consequence of Western cinema. And all this was made in order to “rip away our memories, our past, our history, leaving us with nothing to share but our misfortunes” (BB 127).

Another explicit metaphor representing the uncanny in BB is the dark air shaft. The dark air shaft is representative not only for movings from old wooden Ottoman mansions to the soulless concrete buildings but also for the heap of junk which is thrown to this specific part of the building by its residents. This heap of junk, I argue, can be considered as the pile of memories, pushed down far in the unconscious. Pamuk portrays his disapproval for concrete buildings as follows: “The sky was darkening . . . I could see lights in only two apartments; the dim and soulless glow coming through their windows told me they were not homes but offices, . . . How cold this building looked, how forlorn and insipid! . . . It was almost as if the building were being punished for the sins of its youth . . .” (BB 205).

Correspondingly, Sevda Şener argues that the act of piling memories of the past is also reflected through the local shop of Alâaddin in BB. She states that

We can . . . speak of a similarity between the complicated cultural heritage which includes piled up and intertwined realities, [and] values . . . and the little local shop of Alâaddin where buttons, pins, toys, newspapers, socks and clothes are sold. It has become our characteristic that our heritage has taken the shape of a stack . . . All these dusty boxes, drawers, randomly stacked clippings, photographs, scrapbooks, annuals, merged yet utterly different remnants in the depths of the Bosphorus, the odds and ends in the shop of Alâaddin, and even the untidy room of Rûya and her kitchen stand for this “hit-

and-miss” mass. However, it is this dusty, muddy and dark stack which embeds the meaningful truths. (129) (My translation)

Celâl points out that in these gloomy air shafts, janitors of apartments, from time to time, would find objects that are intentionally thrown ‘there’. But when the janitor asks for the owners of these thrown objects, none of the apartment residents would own them. They ask, “It fell all the way down *there*, did it?”(BB 208) and they say “it’s not ours” (ibid). Apartment residents, Celâl writes, pronounce “the word there as if it were a fear they were desperate to escape and forget forevermore . . . they spoke of the air shaft as one might speak of an ugly and contagious disease . . .” (BB 208).

The air shaft metaphor actually stands for the undesirable memories, rejected identities and many subjects and objects that Turkish people do not want to be identified with any longer. The air shaft is the place where they collect the memories of the discarded history. In the symbolic meaning of the word, it is a scrap heap.

5.2. Stuck in the Liminoid Space: The Urge and the Impossibility of Becoming Yourself

The last column of *Celâl* is about the obsession of an Ottoman Crown Prince. This prince is profiled as a person who is fond of reading all sorts of literature and is impressed by the ideas of all the writers that he reads. However, as a consequence of reading quite many books from both Western and Eastern literature, he, unwittingly, takes over ‘selves’ from these books he reads. Realizing that he has good chance for the enthronement, he starts thinking that it will not be himself who would sit in this throne to govern millions of citizens of the empire; instead it will be the authors he has read and the novel characters he identifies himself with. As a consequence, he decides to destroy the books in his bookcase:

. . . the Prince gathered up all the volumes of Voltaire in his lodge and burned them, because whenever he read this author, . . . he believed himself to be cleverer than he really was . . . and so failed to be himself. He went on to remove all volumes of Schopenhauer from the lodge, because . . . he’d identified with its pessimistic author to such a degree that the man who ascended to the Ottoman throne would not have been the Prince but a German philosopher. . . . He had *The Thousand and One Nights* burned, for though he had identified with all these sultans wandering around their cities in disguise, they were not . . . the sort of sultan he should aspire to become . . . “I had Bottfolio burned because he made me see myself as a Westerner who longed to be an Easterner, and I had Ibn Zerhani burned because he made me see myself as an Easterner who longed to become a Westerner, and because I have no wish to see myself as an Easterner, a Westerner, . . . or a character from the book.” . . . *All I wanted was to be myself; all I wanted was to be myself; I wanted to be myself, that was all.* (BB 425-426)

The Prince believes that he should get rid of all the voices, egos and extensions of himself in order to become himself. These authors and characters from novels, whose ideas he takes over and internalizes, become extensions of him. The experience of the Prince with Voltaire can be compared to Galip's experience with Celâl. Galip was reading so many of Celâl's writings that he started to believe that he could write the way Celâl does. Moreover, Galip was convinced that he was becoming Celâl through reading and internalizing his columns.

The story of the Prince ends with his withdrawal to his lodge after he realized that it was impossible for him to get rid of all these selves that he took over. Celâl then asks:

Had the Prince not watched the streets of Istanbul change before his eyes, the better to imitate the ghost city of a foreign land that did not even exist? Had he not seen his wretched, luckless subjects change their very clothing, in slavish imitation of Westerners they saw in photographs . . . ? Had he not seen the miserable inhabitants of the city's poor neighborhoods gather around the stoves of coffeehouses, not to tell the stories that had been passed down to them by their fathers but to edify one another stories written by second-class columnists . . . so that the heroes looked to be Muslim? (BB 430)

The impossibility of becoming your-self, as depicted in NL, also emanates from the fact that the subject is continuously exposed to different identities. On the one hand, there is this fabricated identity which the subject takes over through imposition; on the other hand there is this urge to come to terms with the past and the memories related to it. In BB, Rüya's ex-husband, who receives a visit from Galip, complains that “. . . becoming a new person, and then another and another and another” (BB 129) is a painful thing. The more he shifts, the less happier he will be. For such people it will be even more difficult to go back “to the happiness they had known as the people they'd been at the beginning” (ibid). The urge and the impossibility of becoming your-self, in my opinion, explains many things in BB and in NL. Following each bus accident, with the urge to become someone else, Osman steals a random

passenger's identification card. This, for instance, refers to the abandonment of his former self. It also reminds the reader of the previously mentioned 'coat' image which makes people believe that they will transform into a new person, a Western one, when they put it on. Thanks to such symbols, Pamuk also proves that the Westernization-modernization process was completely not internalized. Instead it turns into material fad, and could not go further than being an obsession for objects and appearances which would make the person feel 'another'.

5.3. The Reception of Westernization as a Negative-identity: The Plague of Westernization

This clock automatically settles the Westernization-versus-Islamization question through a modern device: Instead of the usual cuckoo bird, two other figures had been employed, a tiny imam who appeared on the lower balcony at the proper time for prayer to announce three times that “God is Great!” and a minute toy gentleman wearing a tie but no mustache who showed up in the upper balcony on the hour, asserting that “Happiness is being a Turk, a Turk, a Turk.”” (NL 88).

Turkish sociologist Emre Gökalp discusses national pride in Turkey and the negative and positive reactions that Orhan Pamuk received in the Turkish media after he had received the Nobel Prize for literature (2006). Gökalp argues that

The historical paradox of Turkish national identity stems from the tension between the emulation of the West/Europe that is regarded as the unique address of civilization, modernization, wealth and prosperity, and the hostility towards the same West/Europe that is, at the same time, considered as the cultural/political ‘other’, or at times the ‘enemy’. In other words, the sentiments for Europe oscillate between two extremes: on the one hand the West/Europe is admired as the ideal or level of contemporary civilization which is in the core of Republican ideology; on the other hand resentment is nourished against the West/Europe as an insidious political enemy.⁶⁵

For Turkish people, the West is white,⁶⁶ positive and ideal as well as it is black, negative and alien. For that reason, the West has become Turkey’s both negative and positive other with

⁶⁵ Emre Gökalp. “Pride and Anger: Orhan Pamuk’s Nobel Prize and Discourses of Nationalism”. 175.

⁶⁶ By ‘white’ and ‘black’, I metaphorically refer to the colors; not to any race.

which Turks compare and identify themselves. In her book National Identity Reconsidered: Images of Self and Other in a “United” Europe, Triandafyllidou makes use of two notions in order to define the construction of identity from within and outside. She calls them ‘internal significant other’ and ‘external significant other’. Concerning Turkey’s relation to West, I am most interested in the latter. Triandafyllidou argues that the external significant other may switch its position as inspiring and threatening significant other in the eye of a nation. She asserts that this inscription of the external significant other as threatening or inspiring is mostly determined “during the periods of social, political or economic crisis. The positive significant other may . . . be seen as a model to follow for resolving the crisis, while the threatening other may serve to overcome the crisis. Because it unites the people before a common enemy, it reminds them ‘who we are’” (Triandafyllidou 44). The post-WWI period was still not the end of war for contemporary Turkey. The Independence War lasted till 1923. The country was then an amalgam of the leftovers of a decadent empire and the springs of a newborn nation-state. Suffering from instability and also a geographical in-betweenness, the republican intelligentsia of Turkey had decided to follow Europe as their inspiring significant other which was during the WWI the threatening significant other.

The main problem emanates from the immediacy of the revolution (supported by the republican elites) and the incapability of Turkish citizens to internalize it. In this context, NL should be read as a book which illustrates Turkey’s negative experience in the course of the Westernization process, regarding the effects of this forced change in Anatolian towns. It also deals with the arrival of capitalism to these towns and it portrays how local brands (Cola Cola, Pepsi and Schweppes instead of Branch soda pop) were replaced by their Western (mostly American) equals. The protagonist of NL, Osman, is worried about this increasing popularity of Western brands. That is why he became happy to see that a local drink, Branch

soda pop, is still popular in this small Anatolian town called Viranbağ:⁶⁷ “I observed without too much concern that Branch soda pop still persisted here against all sorts of assaults from Coca-Cola, Pepsi, and Schweppes” (NL 287). The existence of Branch soda pop is inspiring for Osman. This drink, just as the New Life Caramels, represents the last traces of the indigenous culture. The indigenous culture of Turkish people living in these Anatolian towns is getting slowly assimilated to Westernization. Besides, Pamuk juxtaposes an Islamic figure, Sheikh, with Pepsi-Cola, the drink which is strongly identified with West. In a mountain town called Alacaelli, Osman visits the Sheikh and tells about his so-called miracles in a sarcastic way: “the miracles of the Sheikh performed, such as curing the sick or bestowing fecundity on barren women, his real talent was . . . opening a Pepsi-Cola bottle by simply touching the cap” (NL 181).

Osman also mention people who try to turn their backs to their roots in an attempt to escape from the plague of Westernization (under the name of globalization) in big cities of Turkey: “Like people who used to flee the plague once upon a time . . . they were trying to escape from the gaudy consumer products with foreign names which, thanks to the support of advertisements and TV, arrived from the West and infected the whole country like a deadly contagious disease” (NL 272).

Osman’s dialogue with the manufacturer of the New Life Caramels, Süreyya Bey, about the chess game reflects again the confusing relation of the East with the West from a sarcastic perspective:

He [Süreyya] stirred in his chair, his face turned to the gray light that came in through the shady garden, and he asked me out of the blue if I knew German. Without waiting for an answer, he said “Schachmatt.” Then he explained that the word “check-mate” was a European hybrid made of the Persian word for *king*, “shah,” and the Arabic word for *killed*, “mat.” We were the ones who had

⁶⁷ Viranbâğ means ‘ruined vineyard’.

taught the West the game of chess. In the worldly arena of war, the black and white armies fought out of good and evil in our souls. And what had they done? They had made a queen out of our vizier and a bishop out of our elephant; but this was not important in itself. What was important, they had presented chess back to us as a victory of their own brand of intellect and the notions of rationalism in their world. Today we were struggling to understand our own sensitivities through their rational methods, assuming this is what becoming civilized means. (NL 281)

Moreover, in another chapter, Pamuk tells the story of a man who had showed him “the face cards on which he had drawn with his own hand, changing the king into “sheikh” and the jack into “disciple,”” (NL 91). This is an example of Islamization of a Western object. It is meant to be a sort of defense mechanism and reaction against Westernization.

In BB, the criticism for the blindfolded Westernization comes from the ex-husband of Rüya. Galip pays a visit to the ex-husband of Rüya, hoping that he can find her in his flat. Rüya’s ex-husband invites Galip to his flat and these two have some words together. Galip never reveals that he visits him for Rüya. The ex-husband starts talking about a conspiracy theory⁶⁸ planned against Turkey which aims “ripp[ing] away our memories, our past, our history” (BB 127). Describing the negative effects of the movies and television on people, he further tells that Turkish people were “so entranced by the streets and clothes and women they’d seen on the silver screen that they’d been unable to go on living as before” (BB 128). Back in the days, when he was still with Rüya, they both “devoted their lives to the propagation of ideas; this had meant taking manifestos from a distant country they’d never visited . . . all they’d wanted all along was to be someone other than the people they were” (BB 128). After the ex-

⁶⁸ The theme of conspiracy is also mentioned in NL. Nahit/Mehmet’s father, Dr. Fine, and some other people that Osman met in different Anatolian towns are all convinced of the existence of such conspiracy against Turkey. An old man in an Anatolian town says to Osman that ““today we are all defeated,” . . . “The West has swallowed us up, trampled on us in passing. They have invaded us down to our soup, our candy, our underpants; they have finished us of. But someday, someday perhaps a thousand years from now, we will avenge ourselves; we will bring an end to this conspiracy by taking them out of our soap, our chewing gum, our souls . . .”” (NL 290-291).

husband realizes that he cannot manage to ‘become another’ only through distributing the leftist manifestos of unknown lands, he decides to adapt the Turkish middle-class family lifestyle, which he assumes as his original self. However, these middle-class families, living in the suburbs of Istanbul, usually with two kids, having more or less same sort of furniture and knickknacks in their flats, build a lifestyle that is based on what they see on TV. As they all watch the same channels and see the same stuff on TV, from the inner decoration of their flats, their ideas till their daily talks start to be fashioned all by TV. As a result, this middle-class Turkish family prototype, Gregor Vetter argues, turned into a ‘kitsch’ (Vetter 109). Therefore, it can be claimed that the ex-husband of Rūya lives in a dream. His desire for a local-original identity cannot go far than imitating what he has seen on TV. Through the ex-husband character, Pamuk makes also a reference to the fact that identity, in the case of Turkey, cannot escape from being an adaptation.

It is maybe because of this impossibility that this ex-husband finally acknowledges that “after becoming a new person, and then another . . . , there was less and less hope of returning to the happiness they had known as the people they’d been at the beginning” (BB 129).

At the end of their conversation, the ex-husband of Rūya feels sad for Galip, as he returns to Istanbul. He states, “Istanbul was the touchstone; forget about living there. Just to set foot in this city was . . . to admit defeat. What had begun in a handful of darkened movie houses had now spread far beyond; the frightful city was now awash with images of decay: hopeless crowds, old cars, bridges sinking slowly into the sea . . .” (BB 130-131).

5.4. 'Accident' as Transition and Cataleptic Experience

Our identity is at once plural and partial.
Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures;
at other time, that we fall between two stools . . .

Salman Rushdie -- "Imaginary Homelands"

This was life in its essence; it was neither one
thing nor the other, neither in heaven nor in hell.

It was right here, in the present, in the moment,
life in all its glory.

Orhan Pamuk -- The New Life

In the previous paragraphs of my dissertation, I mostly mentioned the journey-quest motif implicitly. I have tried to make it clear that it is thanks to this journey-quest motif that Pamuk can construct the backbone of his plotlines both in BB and NL. As I previously explained, BB and NL have two dimensions. The superficial plotline revolves around the chase after a woman, while a more deep-seated (identity) problem, embroidered with different motifs and references to this problem, is placed in the center of the story.

In this final paragraph of this chapter, I will show the presence of journey-quest motif in BB and NL more explicitly. This motif provides Pamuk with the opportunity to analyze the central problems revolving around the problem of liminal identity. It is actually the starting point of both plotlines. Besides, adding the detective-story effect, this motif enables protagonist and reader wander in the text simultaneously. Moreover, it refers to duality and dividedness in the sense that both protagonists go through two different adventures. While they search for the woman they love, Galip and Osman simultaneously seek for the meaning of life and their 'true' self. In this paragraph, I will try to stress the two-dimensional

adventures of Galip and Osman while laying emphasis on the metaphysical-surreal aspect of their quests.

In NL, the manifestation of journey-quest is depicted through bus journeys. Pamuk portrays these voyages as the main metaphor of transition in NL. During his random bus journeys, Osman always wishes for an accident to happen through which he can pass to a new life. He travels mostly at night which makes this journey more mysterious and causes him to feel melancholic. The half-lit interiors of these buses remind the reader of the image of 'twilight' that dominates both BB and NL. During his journeys, Pamuk writes, Osman goes into a world of twilight where the "faint light inside the bus" (NL 293) is lit up by the headlights of other buses passing by. This 'half-life half-light'⁶⁹ is always existent in Pamuk's fiction. In Other Colors, Pamuk asserts that BB and NL are books of 'twilight' where his personal fears, paranoia and mysteries coincide (Other Colors 139).

If I turn to Victor Turner's argument that liminaries (liminal beings or passengers) are in-between subjects who go through a "religious or quasi-religious state" (Turner 167), it will be more obvious that Osman's and Galip's quests do operate as a quasi-religious journey including several mystical, mythical symbols. In addition to that, elucidating the idea of Van Gennep about liminality and the position of liminal personae, Turner describes liminality as a state which is

ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude and slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. *Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions* assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. . . . liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in a womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun and the moon" (Turner 95) (My italics).

⁶⁹ Homi K. Bhabha. "DissemiNation". 199.

If the plotlines of BB and NL are seen from the vantage point of “death” (of Rūya-Celâl-Janân-Nahit/Mehmet-Osman), the characteristics of “invisibility and darkness” (of the labyrinthine streets, underground ateliers, wells, the depths of the Bosphorus, the dark air shaft, the black book), “womb” (beginning, birth of a nation, the origin, the new life) or “eclipse of the sun and the moon” (trance, hallucinations, twilight) can be listed as the common metaphors of these two books. After one of many bus accidents, Osman confesses that he is stuck in an in-between state of being: “Peace, sleep, death, time! I was both here and there, in peace and waging a bloody war, insomniac as a restless ghost and also interminably somnolent, present in an eternal light and also in time that flowed away inexorably” (NL 47).

Turner’s association of liminality with the abovementioned concepts makes clear that the process of quest is a blurred and nebulous period. During the experience of quest, happening in the form of a transition, the protagonist feels unclaimed and unpossessed.

The quests of the protagonists, Galip and Osman show parallelism. Both experience their lives in both physical and metaphysical dimensions. We witness one of the most striking cataleptic experiences of Osman, when he first encounters with “the book” within the novel:

This was the kind of light within which I could recast myself; I could lose my way in this light; I already sensed in the light, the shadows of an existence I had yet to know and embrace . . . as if I had been stranded in a country where I knew neither the lay of the land nor the language and the customs . . . In the light that surged from the book into my face, I was terrified to see shabby rooms, frenetic buses, bedraggled people, faint letters, lost towns, lost lives, phantoms. A journey was involved; it was always about a journey. (NL 3-5)

We witness this “moment of in and out of time” (Turner 96) already at the very beginning of the novel foreshadowing the other metaphysical moments that we will come across in the rest of the book. In that respect, it can be claimed that if bus journeys of Osman are the indicators

of his physical quest, the moments of accidents are the “moment[s] in and out of time” (Turner 96) or “momentary death[s]” (Van Gennep 110) during which Osman experiences a trance in its literal sense. He experiences the suspension of life in every moment of accident during which he goes through the temporary absence of the physical realm and the temporary presence of the metaphysical world. Van Gennep points out that “a man at home . . . lives in the secular realm; he moves into the realm of the sacred when he goes on a journey and find himself a foreigner near a camp of strangers” (12) In NL, Osman starts his successive journeys right after he plans to find the writer of the book. In the course of time, Osman’s physical journey transforms to a metaphysical pilgrimage. In Van Gennep’s terms, Osman moves from ‘the secular realm’ to ‘the realm of the sacred’. The more he travels, the more alienated he becomes from himself. This alienation is physical in the sense that he is far from his family and friends during his journeys. It is also metaphysical, as he becomes estranged from his inner world. At this point, Osman chases double meanings and existences of every person and object. Janan exists as a woman (and a desired sexual object) in the real world and also impersonates a superhuman and an angel. She supersedes God in the imaginary world of Osman. She is actually the reenactment of an earlier figure of the literature world. What Beatrice was to Dante Alighieri, is Janan to Osman. In other words, Janan operates both as a physical (profane) and as a metaphysical (sacred) character in NL.

As a consequence, we witness that the physical journeys of the protagonist Osman in NL turn into a metaphysical allegory. Osman wavers between physical and metaphysical realms. Following every accident that he experiences as a moment of trance, he switches his identity which is symbolized by stolen identification cards. At the very end of NL, in the very moment of the accident, an eventual chance for transition to a new life, Osman confesses to himself that he “absolutely had no wish for death, nor for crossing over into the new life” (NL 296).

6. Conclusion

In my dissertation, which is centered around the problem of Turkey's liminal identity crisis, I have aimed to bring the Bhabhian interpretation of the concept of liminality to bear upon The Black Book and The New Life by the Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk. My dissertation was an experimental analysis; because The Location of Culture and other works of Bhabha revolve around a critical point of view on the colonial texts. My reading of the selected Pamukian texts in the light of the concepts coined and developed by cultural theorist Bhabha was per se "a kind of reading against the grain" (Bhabha 250).

I have tried to emphasize the relatively similar situations in which Bhabha and Pamuk came to write. Pamuk – born and bred in a wealthy Istanbul family, studied in Robert College in Istanbul— was traumatized by the memories that filled his mind with the transformation of the city Istanbul from the glamorous old-wooden mansions to the murky concrete buildings; from wealth to poverty; from a world capital to leftovers of the past. On the other hand, Bhabha was the member of a Parsi family and studied both in Indian and English schools. As they both were widely acknowledged in the Western world (and Pamuk somewhat cursed in his homeland), they can be seen as the hybrid products of the contemporary world, who have harvested the fruits of their hybrid heritage. It is a fact that both Pamuk and Bhabha are subjects situated in the Third Space of Enunciation and they are looking for ways to smooth the borderlands of cultures.

In my dissertation, I have presented the interpretations of liminality by the French ethnographer and folklorist Arnold Van Gennep, the British cultural anthropologist Victor W. Turner and Indian-British cultural theorist Homi. K. Bhabha. I have grounded my main argument on the Bhabhian approach of liminality in order to discuss the problem of liminal identity crisis depicted in BB and NL. Pamuk as a writer, who draws his identity from tradition as well as from modernity; from the ruins and memories of a fallen empire as well as

from a young republic; from his Western education as well as his Eastern roots; his admiration both to West and to East as well as his critical eye on both cultures, is himself a living example of the past-present and the East-West clashes, and therefore he stands for the problem of liminal identity crisis.

Although the abovementioned scholars use the concept of liminality as a betwixt and in-between state of being, each of them deploys the concept in a different context. Van Gennep makes use of liminality in order to explain life-crisis rituals and ceremonies of passage that semi-civilized societies practice. In The Rites of Passage, Van Gennep developed a three-fold structure through which he explained life-crisis rituals of tribes. His schema was based on separation (or preliminal: detachment from the former state of life), transition (or liminal: threshold, liminal zone) and incorporation (or postliminal: liberation from the in-between space, rebirth). For the ritual subject, the in-between phase of transition involved the rejection of the old realm and the entrance into a new one. Van Gennep observed that the phase of transition is experienced as a depressing process by ritual subjects.

In The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure, Turner examined a number of Central African rituals. Influenced by Van Gennep, he elaborated the meaning of liminality. In his studies, Turner emphasizes the in-between character of liminaries, whom he also calls passengers. Liminaries, who go through a set of tribal trials, are subjects stuck in their past. In order to pass to the postliminal phase where they gain a new identity, Turner argues, liminaries are supposed to isolate themselves from their previous life.

Subsequently, I discussed Bhabha's reinterpretation of liminality in the context of postcolonial studies. I explained that Bhabha interprets liminality within the borders of the Third Space of Enunciation which makes negotiation between cultures possible and provides the opportunity for the emergence of new meanings and identities. Considering the Third Space as an interspace or a passageway which frees the notion of identity from the yoke of binary oppositions, stereotyped antagonisms and other determining labels sealed on the

concept of identity, I discussed that Bhabhian liminality aims for openness, transformation and dissolution of fixed identities. It is a free zone which celebrates the dialogue, *mélange* and transition between cultures. I pointed out that the dwellers of the liminal zone go through a “moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity” (Bhabha 2) and subjects who dare to interrogate the dominant national narratives in order to write their own personal story. The quests of these characters indicate that the act of identity-seeking and -forming is actually the depiction of identity as a never-ending process. As a concept, liminality refers to a challenge against mainstream stories, predetermined and given identities.

The remarkable point about Bhabha’s approach is that he describes the Third Space of Enunciation as a space with a potential for the regeneration of uncanny doubles. By giving a historical account of the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey, I aimed to present a better understanding of the contemporary identity problem of Turkey and to show how the rejected past of the Ottoman Empire turned into Turkey’s uncanny double. I have examined the two novels of Pamuk in the light of this key concept. I have tried to discuss the preliminal phase in reference to the (denied) Ottoman history, the liminal phase in connection with the post-WWI years and the Westernization-modernization project and the postliminal phase in relation with the past-present clash and the contemporary problem of liminal identity crisis.

I characterize both Pamuk and Bhabha as writers of the Third Space who are themselves situated in this nebulous and ambivalent zone. Bhabha and Pamuk conceptualize the act of writing as a performance and as a tool for projecting the problems of identity. However, as I tried to show in my dissertation, the approaches of Bhabha and Pamuk to the concept of liminality differ from each other. I pointed out that Bhabha’s approach to liminality is positive considering the fact that liminal zone makes negotiation of cultural differences and the emergence of hybrid identities possible. On the contrary, the manifestations of liminality,

depicted in Pamuk's writings, make it clear that Pamuk considers the perplexity and the in-betweenness that liminality suggests negatively. Pamuk's protagonists are haunted by the traumatic experience of transition from the Islam-oriented Ottoman Empire to secular Republic of Turkey and they are unable to transcend their *take-over selves*. Hence, I argued that Turkey's liminal identity, stuck in the liminoid zone, turned into a permanent and institutionalized problem. In Other Colors Pamuk wrote that all "[my] books are made from a mixture of Eastern and Western methods, styles, habits, and histories, and if I am rich it is thanks to these legacies. My comfort [and] my double happiness comes from the same source: I can, without any guilt, wander between the two worlds, and in both I am at home".⁷⁰ However, in this same book, he also adds that he wishes to pull away from his characters such as Kara ('Black', from My Name is Red) and Galip (from BB); yet he cannot avoid observing the world "with the light of the oil lamp which these characters hold in their hands".⁷¹ As one can see, these sentences suggest a paradox. While he tries to "wander between two worlds" and benefit from both of them, Pamuk actually straddles between two worlds. He hopes to free himself from this in-between color of twilight that haunts his prose; yet as he stated, he is not able to transcend his obsessions about haunting memories of the repressed past that dominate his writings.

I also have tried to demonstrate that BB and NL function as liminal zones (third spaces) where protagonists are confronted with their incapability of negotiating their past and present identities. As I argued, Pamuk's protagonists Galip and Osman suffer from "*schizophrenic placelessness*" (Stokes 225). I suggested that the protagonists of Pamuk are wandering in in-between spaces. In other words, they are hovering in Bhabha's third space. Pamuk tells stories

⁷⁰ Orhan Pamuk. Other Colors. (London: Faber and Faber, 2011). 264. The original passage in Öteki Renkler (İstanbul: İletişim, 2010): "Bütün kitaplarım Doğu'nun ve Batı'nın yöntem, usul, alışkanlık ve tarihinin karışmasından yapılmıştır ve kendi zenginliğimi de buna borçluyum. Kendi rahatlığım, çift mutluluğum da buradan gelir, iki dünya arasında suçluluk duygusu duymadan, kendi evimde gezinir gibi gezinirim. Muhafazakarlar, köktendinciler benim Batı'yla kurabildiğim rahatlığı asla hissedemedikleri gibi, hayalperest modernistler de benim gelenekten rahat rahat yararlanabilmemi hiçbir zaman anlayamaz" (Pamuk 155).

⁷¹ Orhan Pamuk. Other Colors. (London: Faber and Faber, 2011). 160.

of people who walk out of lines, straddle between two edges and go through the feeling of non-belongingness. Both men, Osman en Galip, have started their journey – whether it is physical or metaphysical —with a prosaic search for a beloved woman. Yet, both journeys have turned into metaphysical quests in which the protagonists search for their selves. However, at the end of the stories, these protagonists could not “emerge[d] as the others” (Bhabha 56) of themselves.

I examined the problem of liminal identity crisis in accordance with two motifs, the uncanny and the journey-quest. I claimed that the uncanny represented the repressed (Ottoman cultural heritage) past of Turkey, which was discarded by the new nation-state, Turkey. I suggested that Pamuk depicts this repressed past through his references to the depths of the Bosphorus, air shafts, gloomy apartments with dim lights, forgotten underground ateliers, wells, tunnels and the murky and labyrinthine streets of the city, Istanbul. In The Black Book, I argued, the black color dominates the story by means of wells, caves dark streets and underground roads. Black becomes the synonym of the past, memory, unconscious, haunting memories of the past, forgetting and death. Black is also juxtaposed with the blue water of the Bosphorus. Blue symbolizes the dream (Rüya) and the lunar moments when Galip gets lost in the labyrinthine streets of Istanbul. In The New Life, I tried to show the disappointment of the protagonist Osman with his quest. After he discovered the book within the novel, which impressed him, he hit the roads in order to find a new life. At the end of the book, he faced the bitter truth that the new life was a lie and it was doubtful whether it has ever existed.

I tried to describe Pamuk’s obsession with the half-lit places, while I presented the juxtaposition of these murky places (repressed past) with light (present). As a result, I tried to show that both BB and NL are dominated by twilight and they should be regarded as liminal zones.

To conclude, in my dissertation, I hope to have presented the problem of liminal identity crisis resonating in two novels of Pamuk in the light of the Bhabhian approach to liminality. I

attempted to prove that Pamuk's protagonists, Galip and Osman, are stuck between the memories and the burden of the unwanted past and the ambiguous and dislocated contemporary identity. Therefore Bhabha's reinterpretation of liminality was supportive in order to reveal the underlying paradoxes depicted by the motifs, uncanny and the journey-quest, in Pamuk's selected works.

It can be concluded that on the way to Westernization and modernization; elimination and repression of the fundamental values of the native (parent, indigenous) culture and adaptation of an artificial, imported bunch of values from "other" did not really work out for Turkey. Located in the margins, Turkey holds an everlasting liminal position.

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