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Tradition Versus Modernity in Orhan Pamuk's *The New Life*

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Letter of Recommendation

Yak Raj Paudel has completed his thesis entitled "Tradition Versus Modernity in Orhan Pamuk's *The New Life*" under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2069/11/15 B.S. to 2070/06/07 B.S. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

_____

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled "Tradition Versus Modernity in Orhan Pamuk's *The New Life*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Yak Raj Paudel has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Yak Raj Paudel

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Abstract

The present research analyzes the transformation of Turkish people from tradition to modernity illustrated in *The New Life* (*Yeni Hayat* in Turkish language) written by Orhan Pamuk. The central story revolves around the worthless and vain journey undertaken by the protagonist of the novel, Osman and other characters being influenced by a magical and all-impressive book written by Uncle Railman Rifki, which promises a new life full of freedom, autonomy and humanity, and free from narrow traditional constraints and restrictions. This journey is supposed to lead them towards civilization from barbarism but ultimately ends in apocalyptic bus wrecks and accidents aborting their main mission to reach their dreamland. The novel chronicles the mesmerizing events of the transcontinental country, Turkey – which lies in both Western Asia and Southeastern Europe - and its major towns thereby showing 'the Great Conspiracy' of the west to equate modernization with westernization and even with Christianization. The attraction and fascination of Turkish youths towards western and the so-called modern culture and civilization as illustrated in the mysterious book discarding their indigenous culture and civilization is paralleled and juxtaposed with the old people's objection of the same. The oscillation of the events and ideas between tradition and modernity and Pamuk's valorization of the Turkish original and indigenous culture and civilization are highlighted in *The New Life* leading him from the forefront of his country's writers into the arena of world literature.

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I. *The New Life* and Symbolic Journey towards Modernity

This research focuses on Orhan Pamuk's *The New Life*- a story of a symbolic journey of a nation into the modern era, an era free from religious fanaticism which criticizes the Islamic culture in Turkey. In particular, it explores the role of new generation especially Osman who is often overlooked in the Pamuk's scholarship. Osman, the narrator of the novel runs away with the heroine, Janan, after reading a life transforming book written by Uncle Railman Rifki. Influenced by the concept of new life as promised by Rifki's book, Osman and other characters forget their duties and responsibilities and leave their home and wander in different towns of Turkey in order to achieve their aim. Through the novel, the narrator Osman himself represents the new generation who supports freedom of life without any religious control, however it is quite sparse in comparison to a burning debate - Islamization versus westernization. This project excavates how Turkish people discard their traditional and orthodox behaviors and practices and adopt the so-called modern and advanced ones.

It not only makes a study of a particular character's journey but also makes an overview of a symbolic journey of a nation into secular and modern state. Pamuk is deeply concerned with the internal lives of individuals. His intermingling thought on characters, their actions and allegorical journey, is an original organization of the novel. Islamists' orthodox believes are transforming toward secularity though they do not have innate longing for this. Since Pamuk was influenced by global issues such as secularism and freedom, he makes his protagonists celebrate anti-Islam ideas against Islamic Turkey. The traditional and orthodox Muslim culture of Turkey is heading towards the o-called modern, secular and civilized culture influenced by the western culture in general and American culture in particular.

Demonstration of anti-Muslim ideas and support of western culture by the young generation in *The New Life* highlights the fact that there is craze towards western and especially American culture and life style in contemporary Turkey. The negative gaze of western countries on the culture and civilization of Turkey and their attempts to influence through different ideologies and strategies is dramatized in the novel. Moreover, Muslim's traditions and cultures are waning due to the encroachment and intrusion of western tradition and culture. In the light of ideas of George Holyoke and George M Marsden, it is most fascinating to get an understanding of Islamic culture within the encroachment of westernization. Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* argues: "Islam is articulated as terror, devastation, demonic and hordes of hated barbarians by the west" (34). Fundamentalist states regard religion as supreme authority that guides rule where as secular state excludes religion and paves an alternative path beyond religion. George Holyoke in his book *Principle of Secularism* argues: "it's principle could be sustained by the intellect as principle of reason and intelligent equally applicable to all humanity. In the context and ideas of these critics, *The New Life* can be analyzed as Pamuk's thrust of secularism, freedom, modernization and civilization.

The New Life is a review of another book – extremely long and metaphysical – a review in which the protagonist is highlighted more than the book itself to show in what way the book affected him. A young student named Osman reads a book that erases his past, transfigures his present and reveals to him a new horizon of his future. The light of the book surges through him, revolutionizing his entirety. Osman feels so close to the book as if the book was written only for him. He reads the magical book again and again and again, abandoning his studies. The dream is just around the corner; all he needs to do is walk to it. Lured by the dream of that new life with a

mysterious angel, Osman begins to wander. Janan, a beautiful student of architecture is Osman's object of obsession as Osman falls in love with her in the speed of light. However, Janan has a lover who has disappeared after reading the same book that Osman has read. The two of them together start their journey to achieve their lovers; Osman wishes to impress Janan while Janan wishes to find her lover. The ambiguous nature of love is exposed as even with an active helping hand Osman does not get closer to Janan; she ignores all his approaches.

This study aims to demonstrate the issue of transformation of nation from orthodox religious value to secularism. Through a critical analysis of Osman's transformation from his aims to subvert the absolute differences between west and east. It highlights the importance of inescapable transformation from religious fundamentalism to the secularism. To analyze the events and activities of transformation and change, the researcher views the text from the perfective of modernity. Moreover, the ideas of orientalism, fundamentalism and secularism also remain as the bedrock of the research. The ideas of the critics and theorists like Rochberg Halton, Charles Taylor, Chris Barker, Anthony Giddens, Jorge Larrain and others are used heavily in order to carry out this thesis.

Ferit Orhan Pamukwas born 7 June 1952 in Istanbul into a prosperous, secular middle-class family. His father was an engineer as were his paternal uncle and grandfather. It was this grandfather, who founded the family's fortune. Growing up, Pamuk was set on becoming a painter. He graduated from Robert College then studied architecture at Istanbul Technical University and journalism at Istanbul University. He spent the years 1985-1988 in the United States where he was a visiting researcher at Columbia University in New York and for a short period attached to the University of Iowa. He was awarded Noble Prize for literature in 2006.

As a resident of Istanbul, “a city that has for centuries been a complex amalgamation of East and West, empire and nation, tradition and modernity, faith and patriotism” Pamuk provides “compelling meditations on the encounter between European and Ottoman civilizations, between believers and infidels of various stripes from the 16th century to the early 21st” (Boyagoda 9). His books are “less about politics than they are about the longing to move beyond them — to transcend the limitations of history, culture and religion” (9). Pamuk is “singularly well positioned to become the chronicler of his country’s imperial neuroses” and “His novels -- erudite, formally experimental yet compulsively readable -- have won him an international esteem unprecedented for a Turk” (Eberstadt 34). The conflict between the east and the west; religious fundamentalism and secularism; and tradition and modern remain the crux of his novels.

Many of Pamuk’s novels, often autobiographical and intricately plotted, show an understanding of traditional Turkish Islamic culture tempered by a belief that Turkey’s future lies in the West. Pamuk drew criticism from some in Turkey for advocating the country’s integration into Europe and its accession to the European Union. Pamuk is one of the most talented and renowned writers in today’s world of literature. His original and rich writing style as well as intellectually stimulating ideas make him best-selling author in Turkey and abroad. He has said that growing up; he experienced a shift from a traditional Ottoman family environment to a more Western-oriented lifestyle. He wrote about this in his first published novel, a family chronicle entitled *Cevdet Bey and His Sons* (1982), which in the spirit of Thomas Mann follows the development of a family over three generations. The novel is the story of three generations of a wealthy Istanbul family living in Nisantasi, Pamuk's own home district. It was awarded both the Orhan Kemal and Milliyet literary prizes.

His second novel, *The House of Silence* (1998) uses five different narrator perspectives to describe a situation in which several family members visit their ageing grandmother at a popular seaside resort with Turkey teetering on the brink of civil war. The period is 1980. The novel tells the story of a week in which three siblings go to visit their grandmother in Cennethisar, a small town near Istanbul. The grandchildren's political discussions and their friendships reflect a social chaos where various extremist organizations compete for power.

Pamuk's international breakthrough came with his third novel, *The White Castle* (1992). It is structured as an historical novel set in 17th-century Istanbul, but its content is primarily a story about how our ego builds on stories and fictions of different sorts. Personality is shown to be a variable construction. The story's main character, a Venetian sold as a slave to the young scholar Hodja, finds in Hodja his own reflection. As the two men recount their life stories to each other, there occurs an exchange of identities. It is perhaps, on a symbolic level, the European novel captured then allied with an alien culture.

Pamuk's writing has become known for its play with identities and doubles. The issue appears in his novel *The Black Book* (1995) in which the protagonist searches the hubbub of Istanbul for his vanished wife and her half-brother, with whom he later exchanges identities. Frequent references to the mystic tradition of the East make it natural to see this in a Sufi perspective. *The Black Book* represented a definite break with the governing social realism in Turkish literature. It provoked debate in Turkey not least through its Sufism references. Pamuk based his screenplay for the film *Gizli Yuz* (1992) on the novel.

My Name is Red (2002) themetizes the relationship between East and West, describing the different views on the artist's relation to his work in both cultures. It is

a story about classical miniature painting and simultaneously a murder mystery in a period environment, a bitter-sweet love story, and a subtle dialectic discussion of the role of individuality in art. The novel explores themes central to his fiction: the intricacies of identity in a country that straddles East and West, sibling rivalry, the existence of doubles, the value of beauty and originality, and the anxiety of cultural influence.

Snow (2004), which focuses on religious and political radicalism, was the first of his novels to confront political extremism in contemporary Turkey and it confirmed his standing abroad even as it divided opinion at home. Pamuk's another book *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2005) is a largely autobiographical memoir and a double portrait of himself—in childhood and youth—and of the place he comes from. It is concerned with his deep melancholic childhood; lose of joint family system in Turkey, influence of Western culture and loss of religious faith in the youngsters. It presents a breathtaking portrait of a city, an elegy for a dead civilization and a meditation on life's complicated intimacies.

The New Life (*Yeni Hayat* in Turkish language) was originally published in 1994 and translated by Guneli Gun and published in English in 1996. It is a novel about a secret book with the capacity to change the life of any person, who reads it. After its publication, it is analyzed differently by different critics and scholars. It is generally interpreted as postmodern text, secularism, and fundamentalism and for and against Turkish national identity. Jai Arjun Singh describes *The New Life* as "an example of meta-fiction – self-referential literature that is constantly drawing attention to itself rather than allowing the reader to sink into its world" (Singh 17). It is taken as "Suspended in the gap between life and death, *The New Life* expresses longings and raptures that owe more to Sufism than any Western tradition . . . Like

Orhan Pamuk's earlier novels, it offers many thoughts on the paradoxes that come with being a Westernized Turk" (Brottori 26). It involves many paradoxical and contradictory elements of Turkish identity. Carmen Nge interprets it as a postmodern novel as:

> *The New Life*, an earlier work, is the exemplar of the kind of postmodern text Pamuk has been praised for. It is complex and challenging, demanding a reading rigor that frustrates as much as it satisfies because the book is not a fast-paced, Dan Brown-esque page turner, even though it contains all the necessary elements of a bestseller: murder, mystery, mercenaries. Pamuk intentionally leaves gaps in the narrative, questions without answers, confusion that remains rather than gets resolved . . . highly enigmatic and symbolically rich novel. (Nge 1)

The main features of postmodern novels like self-reflection, self-awareness, auto-reference and questioning of truth are found the present novel. Moreover, *The New Life* dismantles centre, genre and subjectivity, which are the constructs of language.

Analyzing the book as detective story, Pico Iyer says that *The New Life* takes the urgent issues of the day and presents them as "detective stories that race past like footfalls down an alleyway has made Pamuk the best-selling writer in the history of his native Turkey and the deserving winner of last year's Nobel Prize in Literature, at the un-venerable age of 54" (1). Though the issue of Secularism in *The New Life* is often left at the margin of the text, it is worth noticing because this better represents the issue of Secularism under the Islamic rule. Another critic D.M Thomas writes:

> Mr. Pamuk's fiction, it has been suggested, is like a Borges story expanded into a novel. But the great Argentine was not to overexpose

> his metaphysical conceits; in his brief pages he was able to create an apparently solid world, coherent enough for the reader to suspend disbelief. Borges would have been content, one feels, with the first sentence of this novel to establish the premise: “I read a book one day and my whole life was changed.” We have all had that experience. Mr. Pamuk labors the point for several pages, to the extent that I do not believe the narrator; he protests too much. I don’t believe in his book that “illumines” his face. Nor can I believe in the equally luminescent Janan. A girl who can say (of Mehmet), “he unconsciously wished that we could enter together into that life which was still viable in some corner of his mind” lacks conviction as a heroine . . . Men and women are not “identical with one another”; it is one of the glories of fiction to explore and rejoice in their differences. (3)

For Thomas, *The New Life* expresses the ideas of metaphysical conceits and includes the overall cultural activities of Turkey. The protagonist is so thrilled by this novel that he sets off in search of the new life it describes, finding a number of other readers who have become similarly consumed as well as a few people who seek to destroy the book because of the effect it has on its followers. In the then context of Turkey, people have suspicion towards their religion they are attracted towards modern system. These things are shown beautifully in *The New Life*.

Attraction towards both Eastern and Western values are shown in the book. The young people are against their tradition and become blind followers of the Western while the old people are doing their best to save their culture from the attack of the Western culture. It is about “the intermingling of East and West and adds a brilliant new chapter to Pamuk's ongoing investigation of the enigmas of individual

and national identity" (*Kirkus Reviews*). Moreover, the book incorporates the debate between East and West regarding religiosity and other concepts. In this regard, Nebenzahl comments:

> *The New Life* certainly touches on the eternal conflict between East and West, a theme that has run through all of Pamuk's work . . . it can be seen in more general terms, as an allegory about the different ways in which people respond to work of art and how they appropriate certain works for themselves, bringing their own hopes and desires to them and in the process often setting themselves up for disillusionment. (1)

Turkey is presented as a hanging country between Eastern and Western values. People are confused regarding which values are superior and better. This dichotomy is presented everywhere throughout the text highlighting the dilemma of people. *The New Life* is about the overall social system of Turkey and it describes about the cultural, social and religious transformation of Turkish people. This transformation is the transformation from tradition to modernity, from Eastern values to Western values and from religious orthodoxy to secularism. *The New Life* is "littered with cultural, political and religious references which are very relevant to the debate of Islamization vs. Westernization" (Mango 15). The traditional people in Turkey are doing their best to save their indigenous Muslim culture from being polluted from Western values of Christianity. Being influenced from the Western open system, the young people, especially college and university students become rebellious of their own religion and culture. *The New Life* is a metaphysical thriller which makes it hard to read. Moreover, it is heart-wrenching and endearing and it professes the notion of happiness and the idea of pursuit of happiness as the ultimate goal of human existence

(Yagcioglu 95). Thus, *The New Life* is concerned with the overall search of happiness and pleasure of Turkish people discarding traditional way of life.

The New Life is a book about a book. The life changing book is a reference point throughout the novel. This magical book changes the life of many people who happen to read the book. This book leads them to a journey throughout the country in search of new life which is full of freedom, happiness and unbiased from religious dogmas. The journey undertaken by the readers of the book is presented as an allegorical journey from reality to disillusionment as:

> *The New Life* can be seen in more general terms, as an allegory about the different ways in which people respond to works of art and how they appropriate certain works for themselves, bringing their own hopes and desires to them – and in the process often setting themselves up for disillusionment. In this context there is great poignancy in the narrator's ultimate discoveries about the book and how it came to be written, and his uncovering of the mundane truths behind the little signs that have come to mean so much to him. (Yagcioglu 93)

The New Life serves as a parable for modern Turkey. It is an exploration of how issues of Turkish identity and social reality set up allegorical events guide the story. Orhan Pamuk evokes the contemporary problem of national identity in Turkey by managing the main characters to enter the world of the mysterious unnamed book. *The New Life* doubts about all ideological doctrines surrounded Turkey between the tragic absurdities of its own past and present, like the clash between Eastern historical values and Westernization by criticizing of globalization and multinational corporate expansion which characterizes Turkey today. The book mentioned in the present novel, attract the attention of many people thereby changing their whole life.

"Apparently this book is the fastest selling book in all of Turkish history. That piece of information was what made me get the book - here is a chance to see into the heart of the modern Turk" (Mango 355). It deals with the cultural change of Turkish and talks about living in a westernized fashion in a country that is essentially not western. It subtly engages with the past of the characters and their societies. An aggressive westernizing agenda has been the dominant official force in Turkish life for more than a century, and Pamuk is a product of a ruling class that has benefited from this regime. So, fascination towards western culture and rejection of indigenous culture are the main themes in Pamuk's writing.

Explaining the as "a wondrous marriage of the intellectual thriller and high romance," John Von Heyking argues that "with *The New Life*, Pamuk himself vaults from the forefront of his country's writers into the arena of world literature" (92). It is the magical presentation of the events as:

> *The New Life* is Orhan Pamuk's fabulous road novel about a young student who yearns for the life promised by a dangerously magical book. This is a wondrous odyssey, laying bare the rage of an arid heartland. In coffee houses with black-and-white TV sets, on buses where passengers ride watching B-movies on flickering screens, in wrecks along the highway, in paranoid fictions with spies as punctual as watches, the magic of Pamuk's creation comes alive. (Wroe 5)

The New Life is a 'wondrous odyssey' of the readers of the magical book in different places of Turkey in search of new life as promised by the book. It on one level renders homage to the power of books, as the narrator is caught in a fellowship of people who had read, been enchanted by, and ultimately entrapped by the same book—a book we later learn is but a reflection of other books. This plays out against the background of

the Turkish countryside and steppe, which are gradually and sadly disappearing into the world of Coca-Cola and other products from the West—a new and somehow more insidious crusade that erases the past.

The New Life is the story of Osman, an engineering student, who reads a book that leads him to wander aimlessly with Janan, the girl who leads him to the book and love. Journey after bus journey through obscure towns in Turkey, the two obsessively search for the new life promised by the book. The story of youth and its belief in an elusive new life promised to them, the story of heartsick traditions giving way reluctantly, belligerently to inevitable westernization, the story of unrequited love, the story of the power of printed word.

Turkey is a transcontinental country, located mostly in Western Asia and in Southeastern Europe. Turkey's location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia makes it a country of significant geostrategic importance and amalgamation of different cultures as well as civilizations. The setting of the novel includes different places of Turkey – bus journey for many places especially major towns of Turkey –covers wide spread ideas. To show the effects of modernization throughout the country, the writer deliberately has incorporated the multi-places location in the novel. This location at the geographical and cultural places of Turkey emerges in the novel as a complex site of contested ideological, political, and metaphysical positions pertaining to the question of Turkish identity. Due to the attraction of western culture and civilization, the social stratum is changed and there is a vacuum of spiritual values. The novel oscillates between Turkish indigenous culture and civilization and the so-called-modern western ones thereby permeating the author’s critique of the modernist ideology of the Republican era. This critique sheds light on the valorization of Turkish original and indigenous culture and civilization.

Modernity refers to the overall societal process by which previously agrarian and contemporary societies have become developed. The term includes industrialization but incorporates a wider range of processes besides. Changes towards modernity are seen as the result of an increasing differentiation of social structures. Thus, in traditional societies many different areas of life are merged, for example home and work. In modern societies, it is argued, different areas of social life become increasingly separated from each other. Modern means ‘happening now’, a ‘now’ that for us encompasses the roughly years since people in the West began questioning long established political, religious and intellectual authorities in the name of autonomous human reason” (Gutting 2). Secularism and industrialization are the tenets of modernity. There is “general agreement that modernity involves both rapid and all-encompassing change and that the origins of this process go back several centuries” (Haferkamp 15). Modernity in this sense includes a leap towards progress, growth, evolution and advancement. Modernity means "new possibilities for the expression of human subjectivity" (17). It is the break away or departure from the traditionally established norms and values in the society.

Thus, *The New Life* is a portrayal of a journey undertaken by the main characters under the influence of the great magical book written by Uncle Railman Rifkito search a fantastically wonderful and modern world which lack religious and traditional constraints of Turkey. The journey is a symbolical journey towards civilized, modern and secular world from their traditional limitations and restrictions. The novel oscillates between modernity and tradition vis-à-vis old and young people with their concepts and beliefs. The young generations are in the state of confusion that modernization, secularization, westernization and Christianization are same and head over heel to follow the imported culture as described in the magically impressive

book. To explore such condition of clash between modernity and tradition in the book, it is viewed from the perspective of modernity as a primary tool and secularism, fundamentalism and orientalism as a supportive tool to some extent. The research has been has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter is the introductory section, which provides basic concept of the theory, themes and approaches to the study, purpose of study, limitations of the research, literature review, brief biography and novels of the writer and so on. The second chapter is the thorough analysis and interpretation of the text with the theory in embedded form and logical conclusion is drawn in the third chapter squeezing the crux and kernel of the overall research.

II. Tradition versus Modernity in *The New Life*

This research examines the transition of Turkey from narrow traditional parochialism and religious fundamentalism to the broad, liberal, unrestricted and modern culture and tradition influenced from the western countries especially America as demonstrated in *The New Life* written by Orhan Pamuk. The journey made by the main characters of the novel being influenced by the life-changing book by Uncle Railman Rifki is the symbolic journey indicating the journey from tradition to modernity. Though the characters do not get their ultimate destination – the dreamland full of happiness, freedom, and having modernized and secular culture and tradition mentioned in the book–they are able to change their traditional concepts regarding life, death, religion and love. This never-ending journey towards fanaticized and fabulous world, however, makes them free from religious fanaticism and able to incorporate blessings of western and modernized world. Despite the objection of some of the people like Dr. Fine and Dr. Mehmet, who even launch ostracism and assassination of those who read the book, Turkey leads towards globalization and secularization discarding limitations and restrictions posed by Islamic rules and regulations.

A young boy, Osman, the protagonist of the novel reads a book that influences him strongly. At college, he meets a beautiful girl, Janan and her lover Mehmet, who have read the same book. Osman then witnesses the assassination of Mehmet, which no one else seems to notice. This raises Osman's suspicions of a wider conspiracy so he goes to find Janan, and together they embark on an indefinite journey around Turkey to meet people who are involved with the book. While they are journeying, they watch Western movies on buses, and witnesses many brutal accidents. Somehow, they end up in a town where a man by the name of Doctor Fine lives. Doctor Fine

believes that his son died as a result of reading the book. So to stop this 'Great Conspiracy', he appoints several spies to find, monitor, and assassinate all those who read the book. At the same time, while reading all the reports written by the spies to Doctor Fine, Osman realizes that Mehmet had not died. So to rid the world of Mehmet and get Janan, Osman goes on his own quest to kill Mehmet, which he does mid-way through the novel. Again Osman goes to his main mission to find out what the book promises – a modernized world free from all kinds of limitations and restrictions.

The debate between the East versus the West, tradition versus modernity, religious fanaticism versus secularism get along with the main storyline of a never ending journey of the main characters. They embark “great journey that would take them to unique experiences” and help them to reach to the threshold of modernity (44). The main characters in the book spend a lot of time on buses watching replays of Western movies, which solidifies the concept that the Western countries are imposing and controlling the Eastern people even in their leisure time. Moreover, there are several references to products and brands of the West, which attract of the people. What Pamuk is trying to say is that Turkey is so lost in the middle of modernization and Westernization that it has really assassinated itself despite all the attempts of maintaining its ancient identity. The main characters are divided in their ideas, concepts and thoughts regarding modernity and tradition and try to adhere in the same at the cost of their lives.

Osman and other characters, who read the mysterious book by Uncle Railman Rifki, wander throughout Turkey in order to obtain the life mentioned in the book but instead of getting freedom and happiness, they only get accidents and mishaps resulting the death of many people. These characters forget their duties and

responsibilities towards their family and adopt western lifestyle free for love, marriage, divorce and other cultural constraints. They are guided by western philosophy of individualism and secularism and do not want to follow rules and regulations directed by their religion. In other words, religious codes and conducts become matter of hatred to them. Against the direction of the old people, they enjoy wandering different places and searching impossible and unachievable modern world and the lifestyle equivalent to western standards.

The New Life shares the themes of almost all books of Pamuk including the war between East and West, between Islam and Christianity, between the newly built republic and the new imperialism and colonization by the West. The mysterious strange book is like the symbol of the Westernization which, for some conservative Turkish people, cannot be tolerated. The Westernization eats them, tries and finishes Turkey little by little by any means, yet they owe many things from them. Many of the characters engage in reading and rereading the book and change themselves as per the book. The book is taken as catalyst to change people, their culture, civilization and even their religion. Osman, 22-year-old narrator, declares at the outset as:

> 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 where I sat reading the book that lay before me on the table . . . the book worked its influence not only on my soul but on every aspect of my identity. It was such a powerful influence that the light surging from the pages illumined my face; its incandescence dazzled my intellect but also endowed it with brilliant lucidity . . . and my whole life was changing as I read the new words on each new page . . . It was with dread that I became aware of the

> complete transformation of the world around me, and I was overtaken by a feeling of loneliness I had never before experienced--as if I had been stranded in a country where I knew neither the lay of the land nor the language and the customs. (3)

The book has magical power to change the life of people who read it. After reading the book, people are completely changed and they are alienated from their earlier world as the narrator says, “I was overtaken by a feeling of loneliness I had never before experienced--as if I had been stranded in a country where I knew neither the lay of the land nor the language and the customs” (4). Osman, the narrator is thrown into the world of loneliness and seclusion. His language, custom and civilization all are different. This modification is the modification from the traditional values from the modern ones. It is the changed from the religious orthodoxy to the secular world free from every kind of bonds and restrictions, which is clear from the remarks: “I was reading a guidebook which would lead me through a strange and savage land . . . helps me find the new life, safe and unscathed by any mishap [and] I knew the new life was built on words in the guidebook” (4). But there is also possibility that, it may lead towards uncertainty and confusion as “to my own amazement, wonders upon wonders which would surely lead me astray” (4). This type of confusion regarding the destination is observed throughout the book. All the readers do not doubt the intention of the book. On the other hand, the traditional and religious-minded people are against the philosophy taught by the book.

Modernity explains the global process through which traditional societies achieved modernization. While there are important variations between different authors, there are some main threads in theories of modernity. Modern society is contrasted with traditional society which is seen as hindering economic development.

Changes occur through evolutionary stages which are broadly similar for all societies. Political modernization entails the development of key institutions political parties, parliament, voting rights and secret ballots which support participation by all in decision making. Cultural modernization typically involves the decline of religion as an explanation for events and the rise of secular scientific explanations. Modernization is believed to involve the development of nationalism. Economic modernization is seen to involve profound economic changes an increasing division of labour, the use of management techniques, and improved technologies. Social modernization is believed to involve increasing literacy and urbanization, among other things. Charles Taylor further says:

> Modernity is not that form of life toward which all cultures converge as they discard beliefs that held our forefathers back. Rather, it is a movement from one constellation of background understanding to another, which repositions the self in relation to others and the good . . . Modernity involves the coming to be of new kinds of public space which cannot be accounted for in terms of changes in explicit views, either of factual belief or normative principle. (24)

Modernity incorporates attraction to new and innovative ideas and rejection of old and traditional ideas. Charles Pierre Baudelaire is credited with coining the term "modernity" to designate the fleeting, ephemeral experience of life in an urban metropolis, and the responsibility art has to capture that experience. Conceptually, modernity relates to the modern era and to modernism, but forms a distinct concept.

The traditional norms and values of people are broken immediately after reading the mysterious book. The book provides new outlook to observe the world and new concept regarding the truth. After reading the book the narrator and other

people “accepted with joy and wonder the possibility of a new life in the new world” (4). They feel that they are in “the process of being transformed” (41). Moreover, this transformation is illustrated by the narrator as “I was the person who oriented himself on the road leading to the new life he sought by sitting down and copying the book sentence by sentence into his notebook. I was the person who had read the a book that changed his whole life” (41). This new world in completely departed and different from that of the old one, which is full of traditional barriers and restrictions to develop personality and career as the readers consider. The new life is taken as synonymous to progress and development:

> I knew I was slowly making progress on a road that had no return, aware that my former interest in and curiosity for things were now closing behind me, but I was so excited and exhilarated by the new life that opened before me that all creation seemed worthy of my attention. I was shuddering and swinging my legs with the excitement of this insight when the wealth, the multiplicity, and the complexity of possibilities turned into a kind of terror. (5)

Here, ‘making progress’ refers to learning new culture and civilization discarding the old ones. This shift from tradition to modernity caused due to the influence of the book is presented in the allegorical form of the journey, which is a series of terrifying, accident-prone, angel-haunted bus trips across a desolate landscape. Osman's goal is to discover the unknown author's vision of a new world. Janan's aim is to find Mehmet, her former lover, who disappears after being shot. As the journey progresses, the passengers or the readers of the books are overwhelmed by the fantasy and dream, as said by the narrator, “I had been totally overtaken by the world the book described, that I actually saw death appear in the half-light before dawn, radiant

as an angel. My own death" (6). The narrator sees both his life and death in the journey and the world envisioned by the book.

There is conflict between tradition and modernity in *The New Life*. Dr. Mehmet and Dr. Fine represent traditional ideas of religion and culture. Similarly, Osman, Mehmet and Janan represent modern ideas of revolution and rebellion against narrow and traditional constraints and restrictions. Both of these groups are head over heel in their concepts and do not ready to accept the ideas of other group. Due to their extremist ideas, there is conflict, inconsistency and disharmony among these groups. Dr. Fine's idea that children should follow footsteps of their parents is clear from the narrator's statement:

> Dr. Fine generously offered me a choice between the two alternative lives, both of which I wanted. It is entirely coincidental when fathers seem to know, as if they were gods in possession of an infinite memory and books of records, the thoughts on their sons' minds. In reality, they are merely projecting their own unrealized desires on their sons, or on perfect strangers that remind them of their sons. (122)

The contemporary Turkey is in the verge of change – change from tradition from modernity, change from religious fanaticism to secularism, change from social restriction from freedom and so on. People have two options to select on e of them. The educated people are in favour of the later and want discard the former. Dr. Fine, the diehard traditionalist provides these options to Osman.

Modernity is the breaking away from premodernity. The idea that anything new is necessarily good and desirable because we live in an era of progress is fundamental to the ideology of modernity (Grossfoguel 361). Thus, modernity welcomes positive and progressive change. It is characterized by more than new

values, new institutional structures, new patterns of inequality, and new social movements. Because the societies of the world are growing increasingly interdependent along economic, political, and cultural lines, modernity is also characterized by increasing globalization and internationalization" (Haferkamp 22). These new values and new social structures can sometimes create conflicts and contradictions among people. The traditional people of Turkey blame the west to loot the happiness and satisfaction of the eastern people. They accuse them for ruining and bringing pollution the indigenous culture of Turkey. So, they see Great Conspiracy in the policy of the west:

> It was a state of true happiness, but Satan was displeased by our happiness; and he who is Satan conceived of the Great Conspiracy. One of the pawns of the Great Conspiracy was a man named Gutenberg, known to be a printer and emulated by many, who reproduced words in a manner that outstripped the production of the industrious hand, the patient finger, the fastidious pen; and words, words, words broke loose like a strand of beads and scattered far and yonder. Like hungry and frenzied cockroaches, words invaded the wrapping on bars of soap, on cartoons of eggs, on our doors and out in the street. (107)

The lovers of tradition of Turkey warn the youngsters of the Great Conspiracy in the activities of the west and particularly of America. Gutenberg is being reprimanded for the publication of the book called by *The New Life* written by Uncle Railman Rifki, which changed the lifestyle and culture of Turkey. The so-called modern culture is widespread everywhere in Turkey and consequently people feel that they have nothing of their own and now they are mere copy of the west as "miserable losers we

were, it obvious that we had lost the gamble called history; now we were reduced to bombing each other for centuries to come, hoping to convince ourselves that we are winners and get a taste of victory" (107). As the title suggests it is a symbolical journey of a nation into the modern era, an era free of religious fanaticism. The narrator, Osman, runs away with the heroine, Janan, after reading a life transforming book, *The New Life*. The book promises a new life which will give voice to the new generation. Naturally the Kemalists, the Communists and most zealously, the Islamists are against them and trying to kill them. That is why Osman and Janan are trying to flee from the religious fundamentalists. Janan loved Mehmet who was shot at by the Islamists but escaped. These Islamists are against everything produced by the West, including Coca-Cola. According to them there is a Great Conspiracy which aims to undermine the Islamic culture and destroy it at last. This is the reason the Islamists are against the books and everything printed, as they are the mass producers and carriers of the Great Conspiracy.

Theories of modernity have always held a prominent position in social theory. They are both known for their theory of the transition between feudal and industrial society. They are hence early proponents of institutional theories of modernity and of the transition of the pre modern to the modern period. Social changes and transformations are incorporated in modernity as "modernity is itself deeply and intrinsically sociological" (Giddens 39). Positive and progressive changes occurred in the society refers to modernity. Therefore, "the emergence of modernity would lead to the formation of a happier and more secure social order" (Giddens 10). In this sense, modernity is the development or a leap that a society takes towards progress:

> Modernity is marked by transformation . . . the major transformative force shaping the modern world is capitalism. With the decline of

> feudalism, agrarian production based in the local manor is replaced by production for markets of national and international scope, in terms of which not only an indefinite variety of material goods but also human labour power become commodified. The emergent social order of modernity is capitalistic in both its economic system and its other institutions. (Giddens 11)

Modernity is the result of change in social system. Capitalism, scientific and technological development and other developmental activities are incorporated on it. Moreover, it is multidimensional and is observe is every aspects of human life (Giddens 12). "The era of modernity is the revision of convention radicalized to apply (in principle) to all aspects of human life, including technological intervention into the material world. It is often said that modernity is marked by an appetite for the new" (Giddens 39). Something new is added in the existing tradition of the society. *The New Life* captures the increased industrial activities conducted by Western countries. Big Coca Cola, Pepsi and other wine companies are run by these countries and they control the economic activities of Turkey.

The major characters in *The New Life* go on a surreal and violent bus journey which at last has a horrible accident. In a surrealistic scene they see headless bodies and severed limbs, but the TV screen is intact and the hero kisses the heroine long. They reach the house of Mehmet's father, who himself is against everything new. The book drifts off into more dreamy scenes and the protagonist tries to find the real writer and the real meaning of the book, *The New Life*. The main attention is the struggle of Islam and the West, a topic which is immensely interested. Pamuk is a diligent student of history. *The New Life*, like other of his novels, is littered with cultural, political and religious references which are very relevant to the debate of

Islamization vs. Westernization. This is what makes it a compelling and captivating. The treachery of the westerners to spread Christianity and their domination in the name on modernization and civilization is clear from the following statement:

> Some people are apparently oblivious to the fact that they are in our town as our guests. What is it that they want? Are they here to insult everything that is held sacred in our town? Our devotion to our religion, our prophet, our sheiks, and the statue of Ataturk has for centuries been demonstrated amply in our mosques and on our holy holidays. Not only do we refuse to drink wine, we will not succumb to drinking Coca-Cola. We worship Allah, not the Cross, or America, or Satan. (102)

The conscious people of Turkey are aware that the western countries are present there with certain purpose to dominate, control and even to capture in the name of modernization and they are ready to fight against such activities, which is clear from the statement of Dr. Fine as “we prefer death to life without honor” (103). They want to save their civilization at any cost. But, the young generations are against the ideas of the traditional people and they accept the change in the civilization, and argue: “civilizations come and civilizations go” (95). In spite of their conflict, people of both groups attempt to live “a meaningful life” though “the innocent [people] suffer more than others” (95). The traditional people declare that “happiness is being a Turk, a Turk, a Turk” (88). In this sense, these two groups of people present themselves as hardliners and are not ready to accept the proposal of other.

When the youths are deviated from the course of their original civilization, there raises a question in the future of that civilization as “there were some among the children who perpetrated petty theft, and that the downfall of all great civilizations

and the disintegration of the young. The young had the capacity to forget the old as quickly and painlessly as, they could imagine the new" (124). The old generations are anxious and worried about the deviation of the youth and their support of the western culture. They feel that "they had lost their collective memory, which was 'our greatest treasure,' so that despite having suffered through all the misery and oblivion foisted on us, we might establish victoriously anew 'the sovereignty of our own unadulterated annals of time which were in danger of being annihilated'" (130). They try their best to protect their culture and civilization and even announce the assassination of those who read the book, which has the power to change youths. Dr. Fine's words are important in this fact as he says, "Considering that the pawns and tools of the Great Conspiracy assail us, either knowingly or unknowingly, through books and literature . . . we ought to take precautions against printed matters" (131). He further says that "the culprit is not only that particular book, the book that snared my son, but all the books that have been printed by printing process; they are all enemies of the annals of our time, our former existence" (131). These books attract the youths towards the so-called modern and western culture because "they are deprived of the rituals of some commonplace habit . . . become addicted without being aware of . . .[and] are gripped by the sorrow of a feeling that life is not what it used to be" (180). Reading these books means being attracted towards western culture and following their culture and civilization. Attacking the Western culture and praising the culture of Turkey, Dr. Fine says:

> 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*, the meal taken just before sunup. 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 products of theirs that has been acceptable to our souls. That is why clocks are the only things other than guns, which cannot be classified as foreign or domestic. For us, there are two venues, which lead to God. Armaments are the vehicles of Jihad; timepieces are the vehicles for prayers. (159)

There are some strict rules and regulations in Muslim religion that its followers must follow. They should be completely devoted towards their God. Unlike the culture and civilization of the west, there is not excessive freedom in Turkey. For females, there are even more restrictions and limitations and “the virtue of living an ascetic life is considered shameful, and ladies who put henna on their fingers are belittled” (188). They reject almost all goods produced in the west thinking that they are against the system and culture of Turkey. According to them, watches and guns are the only two useful products ever invented by the West.

Modernity is the historical condition that characterizes modern societies, cultures and human agents. Theories of modernity aim to describe and analyze this historical condition. A distinction can be made between cultural and epistemological theories of modernity. Modernity aimed towards "a progressive force promising to liberate humankind from ignorance and irrationality" (Rosenau 5). Modernity leads people towards rationality and reason. Blind faith and wrong concepts are rejected by people and they move towards what is good and rational. All the characters in *The New Life* are in search of perfection and good culture. They reject their traditional culture and head over heel to get modern one. The book that they read may fulfill their wish. The fantasized world imagined by the book is taken as modern as and

better than that of the Turkish traditional world. The first person narrator presents a discussion of how a book is regarded as a good one:

> A good book is something that reminds us of the whole world . . . The book is part of something the presence and duration of which I sense what the book says, without it actually existing in the book . . . Perhaps it is something that has been distilled from the stillness or the noise of the world, but it's not the stillness or noise itself . . . A good book is a piece of writing that implies things that do not exist, a kind of absence or death . . . But it is futile to look outside the book for a realm that is beyond the worlds. (208)

This world is surrounded by another world, which includes the first one and is also outside it, where the implied author, who prevents the reader from being hypnotized by the illusion of the make-believe exists. The world that includes all is the world of the real author and also the reader, who is transformed into a writer at the end of the text. These worlds within worlds inevitably overlap to some extent and reflect each other. However, this does not mean that they are identical. On the contrary, all these three worlds embedded within each other are similar to each other but at the same time different from each other.

To understand the concept of modernity, it is viable to relate it with the similar terms – modern, modernism, and modernization. 'Modern' refers to something pertaining to the present and recent times, as distinguished from the remote past; pertaining to or originating in the current age or period (Hall 27). The word modern is not very new. It comes from the Latin modo, implying now in opposition to the past of a tradition, and it emerged in the medieval period, in which traditional values in art and thought were opposed to more contemporary, or modern, ones. So, since this

time modern has generally described a state of affairs characterized by innovation, experimentation and certain kinds of distancing from the past. The word 'modernization' comes to describe powerful tendencies of manifesting advances in technology and science, as well as the development of nation states, democratic political systems and the expansion of capitalist modes of production. Modernization is usually taken to denote the complex constellation of socioeconomic phenomena which originated themselves in the context of Western development but which have since manifested themselves around the globe in various forms: scientific and technological innovation, the industrialization of production, rapid urbanization, and ever expanding capitalist market, the development of the nation state, and so on (Felski 13). It is an evolutionary transition from a pre-modern or traditional to a modern society.

The word 'modernism' is used to describe certain trends in art, writing, criticism and philosophy that have had a powerful influence on the development and experience of the 20th century. It is not a period in itself but it describes a wide range of textual phenomena that exerted a profound influence on the way we all think and experience our world today. Rita Felski defines modernism as "a specific form of artistic production, serving as an umbrella term for a mixture of artistic schools and style which first arose in late-nineteenth-century Europe and America" (Felski 12). Characterized by such features as aesthetic self-consciousness, stylistic fragmentation, and a questioning of representation, modernist texts bore a highly ambivalent and often critical relationship to the process of modernization. Similarly, 'Modernity' refers to a number of momentous shifts in attitude, historical processes and dramatic technological changes that can be observed to have occurred during the period, roughly, between 1500 and 2002 i.e. about 500 years of social, historical, cultural and

political development (Kolb 46). It includes our assumptions about time, space, people, individuals, groups, histories, truths, facts, myths, superstitions and lies that are associated with the break from the past. The decline of the traditional social order, with its fixed social hierarchies and overlapping allegiances, and the appearance of a dynamic social and sexual division of labor, a new class formations, and distinctive patriarchal relations between men and women are the characteristics of modernity.

The New Life presents Turkish people's fascination towards modern culture and civilization but old people are attached tightly towards their own culture and force their children towards the same culture. Due to blind following of the western culture young people "have their lives disintegrate" and are "afraid of isolation" from their society (13). Just like the crow in the fog, the educated people in Turkey are lost in the world fantasized by the book and believe that "the world has been utterly changed" (17). As a result of such fascination towards so called western and modern culture "the familiar old world was intolerably hopeless" (19). After reading the mysterious book named *The New Life* written by Uncle Railman Rifki, the readers make harmful journey to different places in order to search their new life – which is modern, happy, out of problem and free from traditional constraints – but this journey leads towards nowhere except accidents and evil events as "at the end there is nothing but death" (24). The main characters get inexpressible problems due to their journey.

Characteristics of modern societies that have capitalistic economies and democratic political structures, and are highly industrialized and divided into social classes based on economic status. These characteristics include regular pattern of everyday life, urbanization, influx of women at all levels of employment and business, secular outlook, sexual freedom, sharp reduction in birth rate and death rate,

centralized bureaucratic government, standardized education system, and pervasive use of technology especially in communications. Modernity can be taken as:

> Modernity is post-traditional. A society cannot be fully modern if attitudes, actions or institutions are significantly influenced by traditions, because deference to tradition - doing things just because people did them in the past - is the opposite of modern reflexivity. Because of this, Giddens suggests that societies which try to 'modernize' in the most obvious institutional sense - by becoming something like a capitalist democracy - but which do not throw off other traditions, such as gender inequalities, are likely to fail in their attempt to be successful modern societies. (Gauntlett Introduction)

The overall societal systems are supposed to be changed in modernity along with their traditional concepts, thoughts, actions and institutions and so on. In *The New Life*, there is conflict and clash regarding these things as Osman and his friends are against traditional restrictions imposed upon them by their religion and they involve in the activities of free and open culture like smoking, love wandering and so on. On the other hand, Dr. Fine, Dr. Mehmet and others are against the influence of Western culture and civilization. They try their best to protect their culture and even appoint different spies and detectatives to find out and punish the youths who read the book written by Uncle Railman Rifki, which teaches Western culture and civilization to the youths.

The imaginary *The New Life* mentioned in the book is written from western perspective undermining Turkish culture and valorizing the western one thereby attracting the Turkish people towards western culture as modern. Turkish people are confused about modernization, westernization and secularization and they perceive

these terms as same. In order to be modern, they discard their traditional culture and civilization. Meanings the words ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ are entangled in the Turkish public sphere. Modernity, or the Modern Age, is typically defined as a post-traditional and post-medieval historical period (Heidegger 66-67). Central to modernity is emancipation from religion, specifically the hegemony of Christianity, and the consequent secularization. Modern thought repudiates the Judeo-Christian belief in the Biblical God as a mere relic of superstitious ages (Fackenheim 272-73). While the modernists and secularists still adhere modern to a Western-oriented mentality and lifestyle, from which religion is excluded, and view the manifestation of religious symbols as traditional or backward, the new Islamist activists, especially women, perceive themselves as modern in a new sense. The new and modern life assumed by the book is presented as:

> It’s all because of the book, I said to myself and instantly knew that I loved the book and wanted to exist in its universe – so much that I thought for a moment tears would stream down my eyes. It was the book’s existence that kept me going, and I somehow knew the girl would surely embrace me once more. But right now I felt the whole world had pulled up and left me. (22)

Osman, the narrator and many of the readers of the book are head over heels with the western culture; they see their life in it and want to exist in it. The expression “tears would stream down my eyes” indicates confusion and uncertainty of the assumed happy life but Osman believes that “the girl [Janan] would surely embrace me” because she has also read the book and wants to live in the modern world. He has done “immeasurable measurement of [his] heart” and criticizes all those who “want to kill those who’ve read the book” (23). Thinking that “there is a whole world in there

[book],” Osman and other people decide to go into the world of the book and symbolically into the western world but soon they realize that they are “all alone in the world among all the vendors, vehicles, and stores around the square” (29). In this sense, their blink hankering of the so-called modern world brings alienation, aloofness and strangeness in their world.

The revival of Islam in Turkish politics since the late 1980s and its manifestation as a lifestyle that increasingly permeates urban environments, thus challenging the secular establishment, has occasioned a crisis of Turkish identity. Sociologist Resat Kasaba defines the Islamic resurgence in the broader context of Turkish people’s turning away from the modernization program:

> This reorientation of the social compass spread to all segments of the society, not only affecting people’s political outlook but also influencing the way they dressed, which music they created and listened to, how they built their houses and office buildings, and how they thought about the history of modern Turkey. (Kasaba 19)

Scholars who take issue with the modernization model have argued that the old binaries of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity,’ ‘backwardness’ and ‘progress,’ applied to Islamic versus Western modes of living and asserted by the secularist ruling elites and by theorists of modernization prove insufficient to explain the novel phenomenon of Islamist identity politics. Such teleological narrative that portrays the transformation of Turkish society as an evolution from ‘rural’ to ‘urban,’ from ‘less developed’ to ‘more developed,’ or from ‘traditional’ to ‘modern.’ Instead of offering such an unambiguous narrative, current scholarship focuses on the “messiness and complexity of social transformation” that Turkey underwent from its genesis in the 1920s to the

present (Kandiyoti 13). In this sense, Turkey has become a battlefield of traditional as well as modern concepts.

As Turkey is in transitional state between tradition and modernity, many people are in the state of confusion and dilemma. Neither they can adopt the new culture completely nor can they discard their tradition easily. This can be traced in the statement of the narrator, "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 night and also in time that flowed away inexorably" (47). Though Osman runs after Western culture and the so-called modern culture throughout his life, he later on realizes his mistake. His realization which proves his dilemma is traced from his words as, "I become something of bookworm from reading so much in order to forget Janan, to comprehend what befall me, to dream the colors of new life I never achieved, and to pass the time pleasantly and wisely – although not quite so wisely all the time – but I was never carried away by any intellectual pretentions" (243). This duality between tradition and modernity haunts the major characters, who run after Western lifestyles.

The characters in *The New Life* live in the imaginary new world where they leave peaceful and satisfied life and this life is not other than that of American life. They are ready to discard their original culture that they practiced for long time. They damcare their religious practices, rituals and culture in order to change themselves, and to learn the western culture to be modernized. The glorification of modern culture can be observed:

> I proceeded fearlessly into the velvet night, convinced that this was the halcyon land which had for weeks wafted balmy as paradise in my imagination. It was as if I were sleepwalking, but I was awake,

> walking but with my feet not touching the ground. Perhaps I had no feet, but perhaps I no longer remember since I was there all by myself. I was there by myself and I was myself alone, my numbed body and my consciousness. I was brimming with my own being. (47)

The narrator valorizes the western and modern culture and he does not want to follow his Muslim culture feeling if inferior in comparison to that of the west. He gets pleasure in learning the new culture and does not like to stay in his own culture. He feels 'unbelievable pleasure' to adopt the new culture and sees his both birth as well as death in it as "it this be death, then I am born again. I am here in this brand new being with no memory and no past. I am like some new attractive TV star appearing in a new serial, or childishly astonished like a fugitive who sees the stars for the first time after years of being incarnated in a dungeon" (48). In this sense, it is his new role in new culture and he wants to forget everything of his previous culture.

In *The New Life*, Osman, the youthful narrator experiences an inner conflict. He looks for a way of fulfilling his life. The novel presents him with a new life in its quasi-scriptural pages. Osman stops attending classes and devotes himself more and more to reading the book. Osman starts on a journey and goes after Riki Hat, Nahit, Mehmet and Dr. Mehmet, since they, too were influenced by the book. The influence that the book exerted was "so powerful, so indisputable, and so right that talking about it would turn the book's content into a kind of prattling, idle chatter" (63). Analogous to a "labyrinth of mirrors" made up of "hundreds of pocket mirrors" which creates may visions, Osman is made up of many selves (88). Riki Hat, Nahit and Mehmet whom Osman traces are his potential selves, and his journey is his inner journey as a step towards self-recognition. The mirror image is used in Osman's case as a means of knowing one's self or coming to one's self. In order to put an end to the

restlessness in his soul, he has to achieve wholeness inside. This is possible only if he kills Mehmet, Janan's boyfriend, who is in many ways his other self. The moment he sees his own reflection in a store window (184). Osman decides to kill Mehmet. Before the murder, he catches a glimpse of himself once more in a "rearview mirror on a bright and shiny bicycle parked on the sidewalk (190). This rivalry is caused due to their common attraction towards Janan.

Osman "fantasizes that he might start life anew as another Nahit" and he wanted to become Nahit" (117). Nahit falls under the book's spell, too and leaves his family and friends behind, and sets out on a quest to discover his new identity in accidents' and changes to Mehmet (10). Nahit and Mehmet are Osman's alter egos. He becomes Mehmet and at the end settles at Viranbag. He "keeps rewriting the book without missing a single comma, a single letter, or a period" (198). He writes the book to earn his living and is happy with his life. This fantasy of Osman in *The New Life* seems to emphasize the ontological problem of the present age as well as of fiction itself. When Nahit becomes Mehmet and then Osman, the reader's attention is drawn in to the question – which one is real? Therefore, this transformation of the characters into each other causes to make distinction between the real and fiction impossible (96). In this sense, the main characters are changed into their new life in the new world provided by the book. The journey shows that not only few people but also many people in the country are changed and enter into the new world of transformation and change as:

> There are others who have read the book and who believe in it. I have met them walking around towns, bus terminals, shops; I know them; I recognize them from their eyes. The faces of those who have read the book and have faith in it are distinct; they all have the same

> melancholy desire in their eyes, as you too will understand some day, may be you already do. If you comprehend the mystery, and if you are making progress towards it, Life is awesome. (69)

The book has the power to change all people who read it. The more Osman reads the book, the more he realizes that the book is his life story; “So it was that I read my point of view was transformed by the book and the book was transformed by my point of view” (106). He sees his journey as a pre-requisite in reaching the new life where he will be transformed into a new human being. From the beginning to the end, it presents a series of journeys that the characters set out on hoping to rich new life promised by a book that the narrator-character, Osman read one day. There is always the book as the common point among all the characters, who are also authors. What is to be noted here is that all these author-characters reflect each other endlessly. Uncle Railman Rifki is the author of the book which changed the lives of the main characters as well as of Nahit, Mehmet, Osman and Dr. Mehmet the moment they read it. In their view, “The old man thought he’d write a book to entertain adults the same way he did children” (25). Moreover, “optimistic young men such as [themselves] who had read those comics in [their] childhood happened to read the book, and believed that their whole lives were changed from top to bottom” (212). According to Dr. Fine, one the other hand, “The writer of the book had been a poor retired bureaucrat, a weak personality who didn’t even have the courage of his own convictions” (127). Nahit, son of Dr. Fine, is an author character, who under the book’s spell devotes his life to the quest for a new identity in “accidents.” He becomes Mahmet and leads a peaceful life at Viranbag as Osman “rewriting the book without missing a single comma, a single letter, or a period” (198). As the book is the description of western culture and their civilization, rewriting of the book refers

indirectly to learning of the culture and civilization of the west which is regarded as modern.

Osman, on the other hand, is the main author-character in *The New Life*. Just like the character Mehmet who finds that his life and the book fit into each other when he "has met life in the book," Osman says that 'his soul is like a clean page of an open notebook," he "turns the pages and while his life changes, he reads new words and all the things on these pages" (41). He writes "all the imparted to [him] sentence by sentence, into the notebook" (42). Here it must be noted that what Nahit, Mehmet and Osman do is rewriting, not authorship. It is not creating something new, but copying the already written book word by word. For all author-characters, writing is the only means of achieving a whole self and the journeys they set out on are to find the writer of the book which influenced them. If the interrelationship between the book and new life, which involves the interaction between author and the act of writing, is reexamined, these characters read the book and interpret it in their own ways and participate in the creative process by creating something new as is expected from the readers of *The New Life*.

The word 'modern' was first employed in the late fifth century in order to distinguish the present, now officially Christian, from the pagan and Roman past. With a different content in each case, the expression 'modernity' repeatedly articulates the consciousness of an era that refers back to the past of classical antiquity precisely in order to comprehend itself as a result of transition from the old to the new (Habermas 39). Modernity is breaking away from the past and learning of the new things. "Modernity has introduced valuable new ideas into the repertoire of humankind" (Halton 37). A cultural theory of modernity is one that characterizes the

transformations that have issued in the West mainly in terms of the rise of a new culture:

> Modernity is the growth of reason, defined in various ways: as the growth of scientific consciousness, or the development of a secular outlook, or the rise of instrumental rationality, or an ever-clearer distinction between fact-finding and evaluation. Or else modernity might be accounted for in terms of social, as well as intellectual changes: the transformations, including the intellectual ones, are seen as coming about as a result of increased mobility, concentration of populations, industrialization, or the like. In all these cases, modernity is conceived as a set of transformations that any and every culture can go through – and that all will probably be forced to undergo. (Taylor 24)

Reason, logic and rationality are praised as the means of modernity. Modernity refers to "a post-traditional, post-medieval historical period, one marked by the move from feudalism (or agrarianism) toward capitalism, industrialism, secularization, rationalization, the nation-state and its constituent institutions and forms of surveillance" (Barker 444). Changes towards modernity are seen as the result of an increasing differentiation of social structures. Thus, in traditional societies many different areas of life are merged. Modern society is contrasted with traditional society which is seen as hindering economic development. Changes occur through evolutionary stages which are broadly similar for all societies.

By concentrating on the book and the chain of characters in search of the writer of the book entitled *The New Life*, Pamuk ensures that the reader's attention is drawn not to the story told but how it is told and what effects it has on the main

characters. For instance, the readers of the book while "[they] set out on the road by bus and travelled from town to town, read the book again and again" (81). The main character sees his journey and his life in the book as:

> 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 . . . I almost believed in my existence in that world. There was no necessity even to convince myself: I did in fact live there. Given that I lived there, the book must, of course, be about me. (9)

The New Life is about the journeys undertaken by the main characters due to the impression of the book. Along with the journey the characters not only turn into writers but also they change their way of life. The traditional norms and values of the characters are challenged and they learn western norms and values. They are attracted towards open culture and get rid of the limitation of their tradition, which for them is a barrier for the progress. Along with their journey, they feel change and progress in their life.

Osman gives hints at the beginning of the novel pointing out the fact that the book is his life story: "From the beginning I and known the book had been written for me . . . no, not because they were portentous phrases and brilliant words but since I felt like the book was about me" (10). He even sees his own death which occurs in the end of the book "appear in the half-light before dawn" (106). Moreover, the first person narrator strengthens his claim by saying that he is the young man who lives with his mother and devotes his life reading and rewriting the book in order to go on the same journeys the book relates (45). Another point is that when Osman visits

Uncle Rifki's wife Aunt Ratibe, he sees *The New Life* written by Uncle Rifki and this reminds him of the first time he read it and Uncle Rifki's words about *The New Life*: "I am going to write a book some day, and I will give the hero your name . . . I will tell your story" (249). The last sentence of the novel is "I knew it was the end of my life. And yet I had only wanted to return home, I absolutely had no wish for death, nor for crossing over into new life" (296). In this sense, there is change form tradition from the modern. The change in the process of the novel refers to the change in the characters. They forget many of their tradition guided by their religion and they turn into secular citizens who are not bounded by narrow religious walls.

Secularism may assert the right to be free from religious rule & teachings, and the right to freedom from governmental imposition of religion upon the people within a state that is neutral on matters of belief. In another sense, it also refers to the view that human activities and decisions, especially political ones, should be unbiased by religious influence (Merchant 1). For the Osman and others religion is not good for everyone as it suppresses the poor people. Osman says, "In my childhood, religion was something that belonged to the poor and to servants. My grandmother used to mock them. Now with the rise of the fundamentalist movement, it's the revenge of the poor against the educated, Westernized Turks and their consumer-society life" (195). *The New Life* is also a meditation on the way literature can affect — or afflict — a nation. Pamuk says that he and Dante "both have trouble with the religious life of their countries. In fact, my book was written more than two years ago, before the fundamentalists gained power. What the book depicts is the provincial anger, the fury that fundamentalists base their strategies on and grow with" (213). *The New Life* triggers secular ideas to the people who read it releasing them from narrow religious fanaticism and fundamentalism.

In the name of following western culture, which the young people of Turkey take as modern, they are ruining their traditional and indigenous culture. Many of the youth even the girls are involved in smoking and drug addicts (38). There is no charm of the Turkish films and American and other English films are getting popularity in Turkey. Throughout their journey for many months, the main characters do not watch even a single Turkish film however they watch many English films. These films are the means to popularize western culture. Moreover, TVs in Turkey are full of English and western advertisements. Turkish people make western culture and lifestyle as the models to be learnt meticulously and scrupulously, which for them leads towards "amazing feeling of freedom manifested in the electric sensation" (40). Objection of western values by some people throughout their life and realization of Osman and other deviants at last of their mistake questions modernity and highlights their traditional and indigenous culture and civilization.

Thus, *The New Life* presents the conflict between modernity and tradition in the transcontinental country, Turkey, which falls between its own indigenous culture and western so-called modern culture. The conflict is caused between the young and old generations, who represent innovative, creative and progressive ideas, and traditional and indigenous ideas respectively. The youths are attracted towards so-called modern culture of the west and forgetting their family responsibilities and duties, they leave their homes in search of the new life, which provides freedom, secularism, humanism and autonomy as preached by the life-changing book written by Uncle Railman Rifki. Old generations on the other hand, go against the ideas of the Western countries, relegating their ideas as Great Conspiracy and they fight against those imported ideas and culture in order to protect and promote their traditional and indigenous culture and civilization.

III. Modernity: Secularism versus Religious Fundamentalism

Engaging in long and deep analysis of *The New Life* through the perspective of modernity, the researcher concludes that the journey undertaken by the main characters of the novel under the influence of the life-changing book written by Uncle Railman Rifki is a symbolic journey of the whole nation towards modernity from the traditional constraints and restrictions. The involvement and attraction of the youths towards such culture justifies the permanence of the change and transformation. Though Osman and his friends are in dilemma and confusion, and realize their mistake at last of their blind following of the western norms and values, the Western countries seem to be successful in their project. Transformation is the need of time and a society or a nation should be transformed from tradition to modernity with the development in all sectors, but transformation of Turkey as illustrated in *The New Life* is forceful imposition by the West and analogous to the model of the west. Modernization, westernization and even Christianization are mistakenly and confusingly considered as synonymous to secularization.

The New Life presents the conflict and clash between young and old generations regarding tradition and modernity. Young generations represented by Osman, Mehmet and Janan are in favour of the change and transformation in their existing culture and tradition. They want to incorporate even Western ideas and read the books, watch films and copy other products of the west. The narrator, Osman reads the books and claims “I read a book one day and my whole life was changed” (3). He feels transformation in him due to that book. As “modernity is marked by transformation,” he is heading towards modern culture and civilization (Giddens 11). He sees both life and death in the book and within the new world promised by the book. He further says that, “My new life is ordered, disciplined, and punctual” (212).

Same is the case of Mehmet and Janan; they too feel change and achievement of new and good life in them after reading the book. On the other hand, the traditionalists "want to live the life they are accustomed to and keep their cherished objects" and they reject the domination and interference of the West as "cruel external powers that have proved to be in their determination to destroy their lives and memories" (234). They are against the influence of western culture and civilization upon theirs. Dr. Mehmet and Dr. Fine, the representatives of old generation, even announce assassination of those who read the book and follow western culture and tradition.

The so-called modern culture and civilization gets "the support of advertisements and TV arrived from the West and infested the whole country like a deadly contagious disease" (272). Western countries and particularly America use different techniques and ideologies to dominate, control and even change the culture and civilization of Turkey so "historical and conservative conspiracies that rendered this land resistant to change were going bankrupt" (273). The modernity project of the west is nothing more than propaganda and their attempt to spread their domination and hegemony throughout the world. The western countries focus on secularism and secularism is obviously relevant in a plural society. It is not "against any religion; it is one independent of religion. It does not question the pretentions of any religion, but maintains neutrality" (Holyoake 50). But for them secularism is related to movement from Muslim ideals to Christian ideals. Though Osman, Mehmet and Janan want to get rid of the limitations and boundaries of their tradition and want to be secular advocating all religions, they follow western tradition thereby proving their attachment and attraction towards Christian tradition.

Modernity is the rejection, leap and change of the past traditions, which are based on superstition, blind faith and unreality. In this sense, it uses reason and logic

to interpret, question and even reject the prevalent norms and values of the society. According to Habermas, the general characteristic of modernity is "the contradiction between innovation and decay, new and enduring, and also its conservation and treatment of time in the modern experience" (537). The decadence of old tradition demands innovation and foundation of the new ones. *The New Life* juxtaposes the concepts of young as well as old generation and conflict between them. Despite the old generation's objection and announcement that the children should follow their parents' footsteps, young generations are attracted towards modern culture and civilization. In this sense, the whole society of Turkey is heading towards modernity lead by young generation.

Thus, *The New Life* is the portrayal of the transformation of Turkish people from tradition to modernity symbolically presented in the form of a journey undertaken by the young generations under the guidance of an all-impressive book and under the influence of the culture and civilization of the Western countries in general and America in particular. The new life, free from religious constraints and restrictions as promised by the book brings untold and inexpressible sufferings to the young people of Turkey resulting in accidents and mishaps. The so-called civilizing and modernizing mission of the West is proved to be 'the Great Conspiracy' leading towards westernization and Christianization. Secularization process of the West is tainted with their vested interests and selfish motives. Their interference and encroachment in Turkey brings perpetual conflict and rivalry between young and old generation regarding the supremacy of modernity and tradition.

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