

I. Orhan Pamuk and the Issue of Cultural Hybridity

This thesis will track the issue of Hybridity in Orhan Pamuk's *The White Castle*. Pamuk in his fiction reacts against the distortions in the cultural thought process of East and West. His novels frequently explore the conflicts between European and Islamic aspects of Turkish society and the crisis of identity attendant upon that conflict. The language in the translations of his work has a strange and unfamiliar, almost disturbing quality which presumably reflects something powerfully original in his usage of Turkish. It is the tension between East and West, the pull of an Islamic past and the lure of modern European manners and materialism.

This research explores the issue of the relationship between two opposite culture and tradition. It discusses the issue of hybridity in the novel. On the face of it, *The White Castle* is a rather straight forward story set in 17th century Istanbul and narrated by a young educated Venetian, who falls into the hands of Turkish enemy at sea to become slave and assistant to an Ottoman scholar of approximately same age and presumably striking physical resemblance. The story proceeds to describe the relationship of the two as they explore not only bases of science and technology, but increasingly also what makes them each what they are, or what makes the fools around who they are.

The issue that we explore here is did the two men entirely exchange each other's places in their respective worlds? Or even, had there ever been two distinct individualities to start with? Where did fiction become reality and where did reality melt into fiction? Do cultures and man-made boundaries make men different? Are not human beings basically the same everywhere? Pamuk seems to be addressing these questions and artistically registering his reaction to the omnipresent question of the identity of man. His journey through the labyrinthine tangle of east-western identities

is the issue of exploration in this thesis. This story is a work of historical and philosophical fiction set in the 17th century. The characters in the novel are in the process to exchange their identities. Pamuk seems to be addressing the issue of registering his reaction to the omnipresent question of the identity of man.

The Turkish novelist is the first Nobel laureate in literature ever to emerge from his country. He has become his country's most famous writer, but is also becoming a spokesperson on the international stage for human rights and the growing conflict between the Islamic world and the democratic ideals, in both the Middle East as well as parts of the world where large Muslim immigrant communities have arisen. He has portrayed the complex interaction between the traditional values of Islam and the European world. He writes from a small Istanbul apartment he uses as an office, with a view of the Straits of Bosphorus, the waterway that divides Turkey's European half from its Asian one, and is considered both the geographic and symbolic meeting point of the two continents. Known for his epic, multifaceted stories in which the protagonist is often caught between two worlds, Pamuk interweaves elements from the West's pantheon of postmodern prose into his fiction while also blurring the line between realism and fantasy that is a hallmark of the great works of Arabic literature. Many of his works show an understanding of traditional Turkish Islamic culture tempered by a belief that Turkey's future lies in the West.

Pamuk writes about Ottoman Turkey and Islam. Though he is not a practicing Muslim, he is deeply rooted in his native city, Istanbul. Being born and brought up in a city that spans Europe and Asia, he is torn between loyalties to his Asian roots and his European upbringing. He represents the typical Turkish paradox, of European ambition and its Ottoman culture, its scientific aspiration and its religious conservatism, its democratic establishment and its Islamic law, its old morality and its

new economy. The East-West polarity, which is predominant in the Turkish consciousness, is deftly delineated in his major novels. He addresses from various angles a crucial issue of the day, the problem of culturally conditioned identities, especially those along the dividing lines of East and West, Islam and Christianity, tradition and modernity. He does so with a degree of complexity which can probably only assume the form of a story. He does so from the perspective of a man firmly rooted in the past and present of his country. Beside that, Pamuk frequently resorts to interesting formal experiment in building up his story.

The White Castle has provoked mixed responses ranging from extreme revulsion to excessive adulation. Some have debunked it as extremely boring, dull, flat, while others have praised it sky-high. Eliot Marshall feels that it is a short, dialogue-free novel about modernization and its ironies:

The ambiguity of its theme is truly ambitious in its conciseness. It can be read fleetingly without giving any kind of impression or it can rekindle the fire of one's own enthusiasm for discovery that could be both painful, as well as exhilarating, as it magnifies the differences in all of us. At the same time, signifying the unseen identical aspects that are present in all of us. (107)

It is also a story of grandiose schemes, incessant desires of mind and flesh, set against the resplendent backdrop of Ottoman Istanbul. It is also a historical tale of an unhealthy relationship of love and loathing between two men who cannot part from each other, one because he is the other's slave and fears punishment for trying to escape more than he desires freedom, and the other because he is obsessed with his slave-companion. The interplay of the two central characters and their overt influences on each other William Veeder points out are also interesting because:

Both recognize the similarities in appearance, desire and intellect but cannot reconcile themselves to the character flaws which they observe in each other. They are like physical windows into the souls of each other with each man looking deeper and deeper for answers but only growing more despairing when they find things that they do not like.

(61)

Pamuk is acutely conscious of qualitative differences between the Turkish and Western minds. Not only are the compartments different, but also what's stuffed inside of them. The inter-play between slave and owner, a conflict that is brutal and terrifying and yet a rare treat for the reader. The psychology of this conflict, E. J. Graff says is extremely profound and realistic, showing the effect that each had on the other as the years passed:

The fusion of individualities, the isolated detachment from the rest and the ultimate quest for realization appear as the thematic key points that reverberate throughout. As perhaps, Pamuk is trying to illustrate the different pathways of man in search for the mystic answers, leading him towards the impenetrable interior of the unknown, symbolically represented by the unconquered presence of *The White Castle*. (47)

The novel is a captivating work of historical fiction and a sinuous treatise on the enigma of identity and the relations between East and West. It is set in a world of magnificent scholarship and terrifying savagery, with a colorful and intricately patterned triumph of the imagination. Robert Bohemer further adds that:

The white castle in the title is something of an enigma, but seems to represent a European ideal, which seemed strange in a Turkish novel.

Though, it is a glimpse of 17th-century Istanbul, a meeting of Italian and Turkish cultures, a murky confusion of identities, a project to build a revolutionary new weapon, these elements of philosophy and adventure leave no desire to contemplate its message and no hangover of excitement. (13)

Pamuk writes about the Ottoman Turkey and Islam. Though he is not a practicing Muslim, he is deeply rooted in his native city, Istanbul. Karen Steele says that Pamuk is a truly unique voice, with the additional interest of being a Turk steeped in the mores and traditions of his country and yet able to view them with some satirical distance because:

The historical details are fascinating and often very funny. The reader witnesses the limits of proto-science in a more or less Medieval Islamic culture, which is viewed as half magic but also as full of potential power. Then there is the Ottoman court, in which the slave and his owner become key players through guile and some scientific accomplishments, in particular during the plague. (63)

The worst way of reading or misreading the book would be to take very seriously the ideologies, false consciousness, the stupidities that one has. Pamuk used Ottoman history as a means to interrogate self and society. Though the novel is set in the seventeenth century, Jackie Gropman argues is allegorical rather than historical, and relies on the slippage between multiple narrators and narrative to establish its themes and plot:

At times, the narrator hints that the book is a diary of sorts. Yet, unlike a typical diary, the narrator seeks less to describe his thoughts and feelings, then to lay out his life events in linear sequence. It is as if the

narrator wants to document the events in his life for posterity; as if he deems them important. This goes hand in hand with a sense the reader gets throughout the novel: there is depth that is belied by length and narrative style. (68)

Pamuk seems to be artistically registering his reaction to the omnipresent question of the identity of man. Working on this theme, he constantly explores a language that corresponds to the texture of life in Istanbul. Alice Bere notes that it is not a book that is easy to understand but is rather complicated. While the setting is very interesting, and has a strong character, this novel presents a minimal dialogue as:

Pamuk's narrative is complex and multi-layered. He is writing about the very act of storytelling and his narrative is nested in a way that makes easy summary difficult. There is very little dialogue, none of which is off-set. It is not so much a back and forth but rather a lot is reported or summarized. A lot of the events are summarized too rather than shown. (942)

This thesis will track the issue of “Hybridity in Orhan Pamuk’s *The White Castle*.”

Pamuk reacts against the distortions in the cultural thought process of East and West. The novel echoes the basic polarities of Istanbul. It is the tension between East and West, the pull of an Islamic past and the lure of modern European manners and materialism.

The term ‘Hybridity’ has been most extensively articulated and theorized by Homi Bhabha. He introduces the term first within the colonial arena and has since transported it to other fields of analysis in post-colonial contexts, where hybridity has now become a central term in discussions of multiculturalism and diaspora. It is, within Bhabha’s theoretical lexicon, closely related to terms such as ‘mimicry’ and

‘ambivalence’, and is embedded within a wider framework of concern with what he calls the ‘Third Space’. Within this Third Space, Colonizer and Colonized negotiate their cultural difference and create a culture that is a hybrid, which is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity of both Colonizer and Colonized. So, in a sense, their negotiation is dialectic, but a dialectic that still remains ambivalent and as Bhabha stresses that:

To grasp the ambivalence of hybridity, it must be distinguished from an inversion that would suggest that the originary is, really, only an effect. Hybridity has no such perspective of depth or truth to provide. It is not a third term that resolves the tension between two cultures in a dialectical play of recognition. (113)

This ‘Third Space’ allow us to conceive of the identities of cultures in terms that transcend the binary dialectic between ‘us/them’, ‘insider/outsider’, ‘inclusion/exclusion’. It also enables discussion of cultural difference in terms that do not exoticize it for in such exoticism Bhabha detects an Othering principle that distances difference and disavows the constitution of the Self by the Other.

Bhabha sees this ‘Third Space’ as having a ‘colonial or postcolonial provenance’ precisely because hybridity emerges specifically from colonial encounters that have resulted in today’s ‘multicultural’ or diasporic societies. It is within the Third Space of the hybrid that culture-as-art, culture-as-narrative, emerges as visions of community and versions of historic memory. The art and narrative does not resolve the historical fact of inequity nor antagonism. Such a resolution would be an injustice to the real difference amongst cultures as horizons of meaning. But such art and narrative emerging from the Third Space of the hybrid will emerge with a different perspective on the postmodern world, an interstitial perspective.

That is, the legacy of the colonial past echoes in a post-colonial present that has been profoundly shaped by encounters between colonial discourses and cultures deemed 'Other', so that the 'location' of culture in such heterogeneous societies exists in-between, as opposed to 'inside', cultural formations that are ideologically reified and rendered static. This is particularly true of nations and nationalisms, and so Bhabha conceives of the Third Space as 'international'. Bhabha sees the binary relationship as slippery and illusory such that the fixed identities of the parts in the binary division cannot hold during the process of colonial discourse. He says in his introduction to *The Location of Culture* as:

The move away from the singularities of 'class' or 'gender' as primary conceptual and organizational categories, has resulted in an awareness of the subject positions of race, gender, generation, institutional location, geopolitical locale, sexual orientation that inhabit any claim to identity in the modern world. 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. (1-2.)

Hybridity and liminality, are the positive values Bhabha opposes to a retrograde historicism that continues to dominate Western critical thinking, a linear narrative of the nation, with its claims for the holism of culture and community. He argues that rather than emphasizing the opposition between First World and Third World nations, between colonizer and colonized, men and women, black and white, straight and gay, we might more profitably focus on the fault lines themselves, on border situations and thresholds as the sites where identities are performed and contested.

In an effort to deal with the in-between categories of competing cultural differences, Bhabha attempts in his introduction to *The Location of Culture* to shed light upon the liminal negotiation of cultural identity across differences of race, class, gender, and cultural traditions:

It is in the emergence of the interstices, the overlap and displacement of domains of difference, that the inter-subjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated. How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable? (5)

Bhabha concentrates on describing and explaining the process of cultural discourse when two seemingly simple, opposing groups clash and articulate their differences from each other. The boundary where the two groups clash, the “in-between spaces” is where and when new signs of identity, i.e., culture is created, a culture which is a hybrid of the two opposing cultures. Thus his body of work speaks of the process of creating culture from the perspective of the in-between spaces, a liminal or interstitial perspective, especially as seen in postcolonial discourse.

In other words, Bhabha argues that cultural identities cannot be ascribed to pre-given, irreducible, scripted, ahistorical cultural traits that define the conventions of ethnicity. Nor can colonizer and colonized be viewed as separate entities that define themselves independently. Instead, Bhabha suggests that the negotiation of cultural identity involves the continual interface and exchange of cultural

performances that in turn produce a mutual and mutable recognition of cultural difference. As he argues in the passage below, this liminal space is a hybrid site that witnesses the production, rather than just the reflection, of cultural meaning:

Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively. The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. (4)

Bhabha argues that a national culture can never be holistic and pure because its meaning, like other products of language, is open to ambivalence, open to interpretations by the audience which is different from the originator's intent. So, in the postcolonial discourse, the Colonizer's culture, far from being the simple, oppressive force upon the Colonized culture, is open to ambivalence. He feels that even for the colonizer the construction of a representation of the Other is by no means straight-forward. The Colonizer, in trying to objectify the Colonized, creates a stereotype of the Colonized in order to reject it as inferior. The Colonizer creates an image of the Colonized and thinks that this image is holistic and pure, i.e., not open to ambivalence. But confrontation with the Colonized causes the Colonizer to see that this stereotype, dramatizes the impossible desire for a pure, undifferentiated origin.

Bhabha argues that Hybridity, subverts the narratives of colonial power and dominant cultures. The series of inclusions and exclusions on which a dominant culture stands is deconstructed by the very entry of the formerly-excluded subjects into the mainstream discourse. The dominant culture is contaminated by the linguistic

and racial differences of the native self. Hybridity can thus be seen as a counter-narrative, a critique of the canon and its exclusion of other narratives. Hybridity is one of the meeting points between postmodernism and post-colonialism. It has attracted considerable controversy with critics attacking it for being part of panoply of ideas that textualize and aestheticize power struggles between unequal forces, peoples and cultures, and which overlook the economic dimensions of colonial and post-colonial modernity. Particular concern has been expressed at the ways in which hybridity privileges culture as the most important field of resistance to domination and reading as the appropriate form of political practice. Bhabha has throughout his career been susceptible to charges of elitism, Euro centrism and bourgeois academic privilege. He has encouraged a rigorous rethinking of nationalism, representation and resistance that above all stresses the ambivalence or hybridity that characterizes the site of colonial contestation. It is a liminal space in which cultural differences articulate and, actually produce imagined constructions of cultural and national identity.

Bhabha's literary theory seems very far away from literature itself such that he seldom cites literary texts within his own essays. It could equally be argued, however, that the cultural frameworks that hybridity seeks to dismantle have material effects in the institutional contexts of power. It seeks to draw into question those very contexts within which political and economic practices take place, contexts which are formed and reformed by culture and ideology. By destabilizing 'pure' cultural identities, and by dismantling the hierarchies between them, concepts, such as hybridity contribute to a reconceptualization of the very basis of what is at stake in political struggle.

Bhabha has introduced a dialectic model of ambivalence which describes the process of creating culture along the clash of two cultures, two discursive fields. By stressing the importance of the Third Space in cultural and artistic discourse, by

arguing against essentializing nations into homogeneous identities, and by explicating the interstitial perspective in both postcolonial studies and poetics while discouraging relativistic notions of cultural and poetic interpretation, he has depoliticized postmodern theory such that disparate sides of the argument can meet on neutral ground. In such concepts as ambivalence, mimicry, interstice, and hybridity, Bhabha has shown that one can discuss problematic and even painful issues while being constructive and even hopeful.

The primary motif of *The White Castle* is an assertion of the oneness of humanity that triumphs over racial, cultural and ideological diversities. Likewise a thorough study of this novel helps to find out the characters and their exchange of identities. It compels us to pause and ponder over the question, are not human beings basically the same everywhere? The study makes significant contribution to gain knowledge about the West and East culture, its sameness and differences that is always a matter of concern and debate. This research highlights the fact that two different cultures can exist in a new form without degrading the other. This research shows that there is very little difference between people from different geographical locations of the world.

The White Castle has been interpreted from different perspectives. Some have talked about Pamuk's hatred for the West in this novel. Other critics have appreciated it and raised questions about the comparison of Eastern and Western culture in the novel. A single research work cannot do justice to the richness of the text. Therefore, the present research will be limited to an analysis of the concept of hybridity in the novel. Pamuk in his fiction seems to react against the distortions in the cultural thought process of the East and West. The novel echoes the basic polarities of

Istanbul. It is the tension between East and West, the pull of an Islamic past and the lure of modern European manners and materialism.

This study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter deals with an introductory aspect of the study. It incorporates the thesis title clarification, hypothesis elaboration, and claim of the research. The second chapter deals with the analysis of the novel. Here hybridity as a concept is applied along with textual evidence to prove my claim. The concept of Hybridity has become a master trope across many spheres of cultural research, theory, and criticism. It is presently one of the most widely used and criticized concepts in postcolonial theory. At the start of the 21st century, it is clear that the two terms which should be at the centre of media education work across a broad range of topics are hybridity and globalization. These two concepts are central to the way our popular culture is changing, as well as our sense of identity, both national and personal. The final chapter concludes the research work. With the analysis of the text done extensively in the second chapter, it tries to prove my hypothesis stated in the thesis proposal.

II. Hybridity and the Implication of the Third Space in the White Castle

The White Castle is an assertion of the oneness of humanity that triumphs over racial, cultural and ideological diversities. The fact that the characters in the novel exchange their identities so successfully compels us to pause and ponder over the question, are not human beings basically the same everywhere? Pamuk's novel dismisses the ideological thought that divides human beings as stupidity. It is a rather straightforward story set in 17th century Istanbul. It is told by a young educated Venetian who falls into the hands of Turkish enemy on the sea. He becomes slave and assistant to an Ottoman scholar of approximately the same age and very close striking physical resemblance.

The White Castle is a fable of identity. It is a tale that explores the murky and recessive byways of self-consciousness. The story begins as a first-person narrative about the misfortunes of a young Italian scholar. The scholar, en route from his native Venice to Naples sometime in the 17th century, is captured by Turkish pirates. He is brought to Istanbul and is imprisoned. Later, having convinced his captors that he is trained in Italy as a doctor, he finds himself called upon to heal everyone from fellow prisoners to a pasha. The scholar is a man of high intelligence and common sense and thus he manages in most cases to affect a cure, as he proudly says:

Yet still I was no ordinary slave. People had heard I was a doctor, so now I was not just looking after the slaves rotting away in the prison, but others as well. Before, when I protested that I was a doctor, with knowledge of medicine and science, they just laughed: there were walls to be built around the pasha's garden, men were needed. I reflected that Istanbul was indeed a beautiful city, but that here one must be a master, not a slave. (9)

Gradually, he wins the admiration of the pasha. The pasha presents him as a slave to his friend, an eccentric scientist called only Hoja. Later establishing himself in Turkey though never converted to Islam, the scholar does not reveal either his name or that of the man to whom the pasha gave him as a slave. The two explore bases of science and technology. They also discuss the theme of what makes them each what they are. Therefore, their interaction is a loss of identity caused by the conflict between Western and Eastern cultures. This is seen in the figure represented by Hoja. He admired Western culture and knowledge and so he wanted to take all the science that is at the head of his slave. The scholar is also the narrator of the story.

Every human being, in addition to having their own personal identity, has a sense of who they are in relation to the larger community, the nation. To read literature from the perspective of postcolonial studies is to seek out that indigenous, representative voice which can inform the world of the essence of existence as a colonial subject, or as a postcolonial citizen. However, to claim to be representative of that entire identity is a huge undertaking for an author trying to convey a postcolonial message. Each nation, province, island, state, neighborhood and individual is its own unique amalgamation of history, culture, language and tradition. Only by understanding and embracing the idea of cultural hybridity when attempting to explore the concept of national identity can any one individual, or nation, truly hope to understand or communicate the lasting effects of the colonial process. Amilcar Cabral talks about the changing nature of identity that is:

An identity, individual or collective, is at the same time the affirmation and denial of a certain number of characteristics which define the individuals or groups, through historical (biological and sociological) factors at a moment of their development. In fact, identity is not a

constant, precisely because the biological and sociological factors which define it are in constant change. (58)

Postcolonialism is the continual shedding of the old skin of Western thought and discourse and the emergence of new self-awareness, critique, and celebration. With this self-awareness comes self-expression. But how should the inhabitants of a colonial territory, or formerly colonized country or province see themselves, once they have achieved their independence? With whom will they identify? In a country like India, prior to 1947, most people identified themselves as Indians, against the identity of their British oppressors. There was a strong feeling of communal, national identity, fostered by a shared resentment of the British colonial powers. However, after 1947, after being granted autonomy, India's populace slowly disintegrated into more and more divided factions, as the "national" identity shrunk, and people found other, closer groups to identify with. The ambiguous and shifting nature of national identity is thus integral to a discussion of postcolonial theory, as identification with one group inevitably leads to differentiation with others.

Hybridity is one of those contested terms finding favor in both liberal and radical academic circles, and has entered into popular cultural commentary. The term is used to describe and categorize contemporary British Asian and black cultural productions such as art, film and music. It marks a cultural state of mixing or syncretism. The future is one of fusion, different cultural elements coming together and producing something novel. Ossified cultures are being left behind, boundaries are fractured as new cultural practices, identities and ways of being enter into the world. It does seem to have the potential to challenge the invention of an exclusively white Britain, and racist ideas of cultural origins and national belonging. In a paper

relating to diasporic identity and transcultural literacy, Alex Kostogriz and Georgina Tsolidis say that:

Transcultural literacy is inseparable from social and cultural practices of meaning and identity-making on the fault-line between various and often competing cultures. This model of transcultural literacy uses theorizations of space to connect textual practices to the construction of hybrid identities. In so doing, it offers an alternative to models of literacy premised on liberal or neo-conservative understandings of cultural difference. (129)

Hybridity is often spoken of colloquially in terms of its use within horticulture as the combination of two kinds that produce a third. Such a way of thinking reproduces the essential difference between the kinds involved and so reinforces the notion that each element possesses a self-identity that is sufficient in and of itself. In post-colonial studies, however, the intention is to deconstruct the apparent self-identity of cultures that perceive themselves to be whole but are in fact constituted by a lack that requires supplementation by the Other. In order to facilitate colonialism, there is a desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite.

The term hybridity emerged within post-colonial studies as a response to static and essentialist notions of identity of race and nation promoted by colonial discourses, and also such anti-colonial discourses as nationalism and negritude. Ironically, however, the term hybridity is itself formerly deployed within colonial discourses on mixed race offspring and thus constituted a central term in discourses of colonial racism. Cultural movements which transgress fixed boundaries and have the potential to re-draw a nationalist and exclusionary Englishness do need to be embraced. The

disruption of cultural fixity allows the ethnically defined Others into the game of the politics of presence as well as recognition. Hybridity, nevertheless, has more than one politics and trajectory, and it is the hegemonic project of liberal cultural diversity which renders its utopian gestures rather suspect.

One of the most disputed terms in postcolonial studies, hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. Hybridisation takes many forms including cultural, political and linguistic. The colonizer's language cannot escape and one sees the many loan words in the English language today. Hybridity in terms of personal identity needs a slightly different approach but also deserves to be celebrated. The idea of nation is often based on naturalized myths of racial or cultural origin. Asserting such myths is a very important part of the imperial process and therefore an important feature of much imperial writing and postcolonial writing. The need for commonality of thought to encourage resistance became a feature of many of the first postcolonial novels. Mike Featherstone points out the problem of immigrants seeing for their roots as:

It is the unwillingness of migrants to passively absorb the dominant cultural, mythology of the nation or locality raises issues of multiculturalism and the fragmentation of identity. In some cases this provokes intensified and extremist nationalist reactions, leading to a complex series of reactions on the part of immigrants. (353)

Hybridity is a term which has begun to change its meaning dramatically. Originally from biology and referring to the selective breeding of plants to produce new varieties with specific qualities of improved performances, its initial use in wider discourse is as a stigma in association with colonial ideas about racial purity and a horror of miscegenation. In the colonial experience the children of white male

colonizers and female native peoples were assigned a different and inferior status in colonial society. They were often shunned by both the colonizer and colonized. The same process is evident with language, food and other aspects of culture. The term Creole is used, initially in the Spanish and French Caribbean, to describe mixtures of European and African culture and again this is deemed inferior. The fear of hybridity is found in the metropolitan centre when the postwar migration of people from Africa, the Caribbean and Asia began to reach Europe.

These attempts to maintain the purity of English culture is both disturbing and futile. Englishness is essentially a social construction based on a reality of cultural mixing over centuries. The hybridity on offer means those people which cling to their ossified cultures cannot seek entry into the modern world, being unable to negotiate the spaces of progressive multi-culture. It is an insidious liberal notion of cultural diversity which is increasingly becoming pervasive in representations of hybridity. As the cultural critic Homi Bhabha highlights, in this construction of diversity, an invisible white centre still persists which measures and locates other minority cultures. They represent a kind of avant-garde, at the cutting edge of cultural innovation while leaving elements of their traditional and unassimilable parental culture behind.

Bhabha put forth his idea of hybridity to explain the very unique sense of identity shared and experienced individually by members of a former colonized people. He maintains that members of a postcolonial society have an identity which has been shaped jointly by their own unique cultural and community history, intertwined with that of the colonial power. Bhabha feels that these hyphenated, hybridized cultural conditions are also forms of a vernacular cosmopolitanism that emerges in multicultural societies and explicitly exceeds a particular national location.

His ideas are very interesting, in regard to contemporary issues of migration and globalization especially. Bhabha develops ideas of other scholars such as Freud and Fanon to explain various problems of migrants in foreign countries. For instance he focuses on their otherness and what impact being the Other has on their identity. Placing the issue of identity in a socio-historical location, Linda Martin Alcoff says that:

Identities need to be analyzed not only in their cultural location but also in relation to historical epoch. The constellation of practices, beliefs about identity, the lived experiences associated with various identities, and legal or formal recognitions of identity not only undergo constant change but can produce truly new forms of identity. (3)

Hybridity is visible everywhere nowadays. Popular music since the 1950s has been energized by the merging of folk or root styles from Europe and Africa to create virtually new music from rock and roll to contemporary dance culture. The street language of Europe and North America has developed similarly. These seemingly flippant observations disguise what is an important shift in cultural habits for much of the population in the last many years. But the modern celebration of hybridity is something else. Hybridity is a fundamental feature of what is now commonly termed the postmodern condition.

Following the above discussed theory, the East-West encounter, the flux of identity is well developed and portrayed in *The White Castle*. The novel purports to tell the story of a young Venetian scholar. After being taken prisoner by Turkish pirates and put in a slave camp in Istanbul, begins his odyssey of slowly losing his identity. The mutual fascination between the Christian-dominated West and the Islamic-dominated East is no small or simple thing. It is so powerful that people

sometimes do want to abandon their own identity in a fit of self-loathing or desire for the other. The Venetian scholar refuses to be treated as an ordinary slave. He uses his European ingenuity and claims knowledge of medicine and astronomy. He asserts that his services could be better used as a doctor than a slave. The novel intricately plays on the theme of East-West encounter with rare delicacy and subtlety. Even as the end approaches, the reader finds himself left with more questions than answers. Bernard Koshmin tells that, Pamuk has created the enigma of identity and the relations between East and West:

But the actual events recede into background and the stage is fully taken by the disquieting amalgamation of the two main characters with their respective universes of individual experience and religious and cultural background. There is little attention to the particulars of the setting of the story, there is minimum use of description of the scenery, characters or circumstances, and the language seems to effectively increase the claustrophobia of being caught, as it were, inside the mental world of the two partners. (18)

To demonstrate his knowledge of medicine, the Venetian treats some injured Turks using his commonsense, “after I had treated a few Turks, using my commonsense rather than knowledge of anatomy, and their wounds had healed by themselves; every one believed I was a doctor” (8). Though he still lives in the slave prison, the misconception that he is a doctor gives him a little preferential treatment. He treats the prisoners and collects fees. He spends a large part of these fees on bribing the guards, who smuggle him outside and brings him food. With the rest of the money, he takes lessons in Turkish. Recollecting his initial days in prison, the Venetian slave says that:

I had to give a large part of the fees I earned for doctoring to the guards who smuggled me outside. With the money I was able to hide from them, I paid for lessons in Turkish. My teacher was an agreeable, elderly fellow who looked after the pasha's affairs. It pleased him to see I was quick to learn Turkish and he'd say I would soon become a Muslim. (14)

Later, from the most horrible humiliations and labor, the young Venetian rises to the top of Ottoman society. He is all the time battling to maintain an identity independent from his owner. Perhaps not everything in Hoja's exploitation of his slave fails so utterly. There is the psychological exploration of the West. Hoja conceives the notion that Western difference from the East consists of something deeper than technical or scientific knowledge. It is possibly a different sense of identity, a species of self knowledge that is unknown in the East. It is also a consciousness of sin and shame. So he obliges his slave to reveal his every dream and memory.

Seasons pass, and once he is summoned to the Pasha's mansion. There he is shocked to see a person who is his mirror-image, his double. "The resemblance between myself and the man who entered the room was incredible! It was me there, for the first instant this was what I thought" (11). This man, whom the Pasha calls Hoja, is given custody of the Venetian scholar. From here Hoja, the master, wants his European slave to instruct him in Western science and technology, medicine and pyrotechnics. But his curiosity is not satiated at that. He wants to know more from him. He even contemplates whether, giving and sharing knowledge of each other's most intimate secrets, they could exchange their identities. He further says with confidence that:

Since I was accustomed to treating him as an inferior, even if only in secret, I thought they would consist of a few petty, insignificant sins. I must say that I brought Hoja to make a discovery without his realizing it, that I exposed him to his own weak points and those of people like him, even if not entirely decisively and frankly. (59)

During this time it is not at all clear who is the slave and who is the master. While the slave dutifully recalls his childhood and youth in Italy, Hoja responds by recalling his own dreams and memories. The two men sit at a table, “like two bachelors telling each other's fortunes to pass the time on endless winter nights” (53), writing memoirs called “Why I Am What I Am” and sharing them with one another. The sharing of memories entails a certain blurring of identities, too.

Their conversations, their scientific enterprises, their lives together become a sort of mutual demolition. It tears down what makes each one distinct. This yields very little about the secret inner strength of the West. It generates somehow a quiet ecstasy. For the exchange of identities, the mutual introduction to a new life and a new way of thinking. The narrator says that his race and culture is far superior as:

I was extremely curious about these confessions that made him feel such self-hatred. Since I was accustomed to treating him as an inferior, even if only in secret, I thought they would consist of a few petty, insignificant sins. I must say that I brought Hoja to make a discovery without his realizing it, that I exposed him to his own weak points and those of people like him, even if not entirely decisively and frankly.
(59)

Hoja is obsessed with restoring the superiority of the Ottoman Empire over the Europeans by mastering their science. He forces the narrator to teach him science

and astronomy. From there they proceed to the construction of weapons on mass destruction, fireworks for the infant Sultan, and the head-games and mutual moral abuse. Over the years, their relationship changes. The master and the slave alternate domination of each other. Pamuk takes full advantage of the look-alike character and cunningly plays them against each other. The master-slave duo becomes fairly popular as scientists in Istanbul, which draws the attention of the Pasha. Once Hoja tells the pasha that:

I was a well-read fool. As he narrated this he gave no thought to me, his mind was still on what had happened in the pasha's mansion. He'd insisted that everything was his own discovery, but the pasha had not believed him, he seemed to be looking for someone else to blame and his heart would not allow that his beloved Hoja was the guilty party.

(28)

Later, Hoja insists that his counterpart sit opposite him at a bare table, With paper and pen in hand they plan to write the stories of their lives for each other in a protracted and narcissistic ritual of self-exposure that probes the inner workings of that great conundrum, truth versus reality. "Thus in the space of two months, I learned more about his life than I'd been able to learn in eleven years" (31). More enticingly, he notes, "I encouraged him, perhaps because I already sensed then that I would later adopt his manner and his life-story as my own" (36).

Hoja is also the unnamed narrator's exact physical double. He forces the narrator to teach him science, which he does, starting with the true, the Ptolemaic, astronomy. The pre-scientific world turns out to be a sponge. The elements of Western knowledge that he acquires out of his slave get sopped up like drops, and knowledge itself disappears. Gradually Hoja caves in to his own culture, as most

people would. He does try out a few prophecies, just for fun, and the prophecies happen to come true. After that, he rises to the office of Imperial Astrologer, which is not exactly his original intention. Narrating the event when his master receives a promotion in the court, the slave writes that:

In the weeks after the plague subsided Hoja was not only raised to the position of imperial astrologer, but also developed a more intimate relationship with the sultan than we had ever hoped for. So when the faction of the former Imperial Astrologer Sitki Efendi, who was said to have had a hand in the plot, was driven from the palace into exile or a change of position, their duties were left to Hoja as well. (87)

His quest for knowledge relates to his search for acceptance to fill the void within them. It relates in the fact that he is apathetic and sacrifices others in his personal quests to achieve his goals. Hoja moves from religious to secular values, while the Venetian scholar moves from secular values to obtaining religion. They also contrast, as Hoja learns more he becomes isolated. On the other hand, as the Venetian learns more he becomes more integrated with Pasha's society. Merely Rubin writes that the borderline between the two characters becomes increasingly blurred even while the contours of the world of actual objects and events grow hazier as:

It is, indeed, extremely good at what it sets out to do, and simply ignores what is beside its task. Hoja and the narrator spend a lot of their time trying to get inside each others heads and drive each other crazy and exchange places, which is supposed to complement the East-meets-West theme, but the mind-games are so much more vivid than the latter that they completely overpower it. (44)

One day the young sovereign summons them to his palace and orders them to develop a war-machine to aid him in his war against the Poles. Due to the malfunctioning of the war-machine, Hoja panics but maintains an outward posture of cool composure. He decides to escape to Italy, but guards the secret very closely. The Venetian slave could guess what is passing in Hoja's mind. "At the time he explained nothing to me, he was rushing like someone about to leave on a journey. He said there was a thick fog outside. I understood" (129). He even seems to feel intuitively what Hoja would need to camouflage his identity in Italy without rousing suspicion:

We exchanged clothes without haste and without speaking. I gave him my ring and the medallion I managed to keep from him all these years. Inside it there was picture of my grand mother's mother and a lock of my fiancée's hair that had gone white; I believed he liked it, he put it around his neck. Then he left the tent and was gone. I watched him slowly disappear in the silent fog. (130)

Taking advantage of the thick fog, Hoja escapes to Italy, where he successfully acts as a proxy for the Venetian. Later the Venetian receives reports confirming that Hoja is doing well in Italy. He is lecturing, writing books, and living a life of peace and prosperity. It was now the Venetian's turn to pretend as the Hoja in Istanbul, and to convince the sultan and the gossip-mongers that he is the real Hoja.

For the next seven years he keeps the secret close to his chest before he realizes that it did not really matter who he is. At times he suspects that the Sultan had discovered his secret, especially when he asked searching questions about his identity. But by now he is experienced enough to handle such questions without betraying the slightest sign of nervousness. In all these years he has amassed a lot of wealth as the

imperial astrologer. He has been happily married and fathered four children and happily says that:

I have no complaints, and I am not lonely: I saved a great deal of money during my years as imperial astrologer, I married, I have four children; I foresaw the troubles coming and gave up my position in time, perhaps with an insight gained from practicing my profession: before the sultan's armies left for Vienna, before the fawning clowns and the imperial astrologer who succeeded me were beheaded in a frenzy of defeat, I fled here to Gebze. (132)

But being in the profession of astrology, he has gained an insight into the future and foresees trouble. He therefore gives up his position in the court and moves to Gebeze. It is another Turkish town away from Istanbul. The Venetian migrates to live peacefully and pursue his favorite pastime, reading books and writing stories.

The process of creating the hybrid culture does not destroy the Colonized nor the Colonizer for a better culture. The process is not Hegelian, which resolves the two in some grand cultural synthesis. What the hybrid does is to make both Colonizer and Colonizer aware that culture cannot be mummified. Culture is alive, as seen in the hybrid, which Bhabha calls the contaminated yet connective tissue between cultures – at once the impossibility of culture's containedness and the boundary between. He further says that:

I have developed the concept of hybridity to describe the construction of cultural authority within conditions of political antagonism or inequity. Strategies of hybridization reveal an estranging movement in the 'authoritative,' even authoritarian inscription of the cultural sign. Hybrid agencies find their voice in a dialectic that does not seek

cultural supremacy or sovereignty. They deploy the partial culture from which they emerge to construct visions of community, and versions of historic memory, that give narrative form to the minority positions they occupy. (212)

As we approach the end of the twentieth century, Bhabha's liminality model engages culture productively in that it enables a way of rethinking the realm of the beyond that until now has been understood only in terms of the ambiguous prefix 'post: postmodernism, postcolonialism, postfeminism.' Liminality not only pertains to the space between cultural collectives but between historical periods, between politics and aesthetics, between theory and application. And yet Bhabha's model also introduces a number of potentially serious problems in its translation to the complicated process of collective social transformation. His formulation of an exilic, liminal space between national constituencies is problematic in that it fails to engage the material conditions of the colonized Third World.

The White Castle is also a study in the dialectical relationship between Hoja and the narrator. Alter egos and antagonists, they suggest the enigmatic oppositions of East and West, intuition and reason, nature and civilization, mysticism and science, fiction and reality. Self-knowledge and knowledge of the other become identical, and equally elusive. This is seen in the figure represented by Hoja. He very much admired Western culture and knowledge. Therefore, he wanted to take all the science that is at the head of his slave. The narrator says that once:

Hoja tried to work out to calculate the times of prayer and fasting in northern countries where there was a great variation in the duration of day and night and a man went for years without seeing the face of the

sun. Another problem was whether or not there was a place on earth where people could face Mecca whichever way they turned. (25)

Both Hoja and the narrator search for truths to fill their individual voids within their souls. Both use others in the past and have scorned and mocked those who have what they wanted. They eventually find what they are looking for, whether it was what they wanted or not. Hoja searches in the world for the answers to life and finds only death and disappointment. He is overcome with the urge to understand what makes people the way they are and he loses himself in the search:

But later he found in this very emptiness the new idea he needed; perhaps he was left to his own devices, perhaps because his mind, unable to be still, could not escape its own rampant impatience. It was then I gave him an answer – I wanted to encourage him – my interest too was aroused; perhaps while this was going on I even thought he cared for me. (48)

The novel reaffirms what is essential about human nature and points up the fictive aspects of personal boundaries. As the Sultan remarks to Hoja, “Was it not the best proof that men everywhere were identical with one another that they could take each other’s place?” (138). Hoja is convinced that the Italian youth’s European education is superior to his own and thus becomes the young man's pupil. He pursues studies in astronomy, zoology, geography and psychology with the narrator. Once the Hoja perceives the superficiality of the young man's knowledge, he insists that the slave tell him more, demanding details of his double's upbringing. Thus, Barbara Amiel points out that:

It is a study in the dialectical relationship between Hoja and the narrator. Alter egos and antagonists, they suggest the enigmatic

oppositions of East and West, intuition and reason, nature and civilization, mysticism and science, fiction and reality. Self-knowledge and knowledge of the Other become identical, and equally elusive. Hoja and the narrator agree that the ideal story should begin innocently like a fairy-tale, be frightening like a nightmare in the middle, and conclude sadly like a love story ending in separation. (119)

Hoja and the narrator spend a lot of their time trying to get inside each others heads and drive each other crazy. They are supposed to complement the East-meets-West theme. Master grills slave. They discuss chemistry, the stars, and the relative merits of Ptolemaic and Copernican systems. They set out to build various contraptions in a spirit of scientific curiosity like a fireworks display, a model of the universe, a clock, a giant weapon. The mind-games are so much more vivid than the latter that they completely overpower it. This is perhaps just as well and leaves out the fact that, in the long run, Hoja is absolutely right. The narrator says that Hoja planned a lot and:

He talked about intelligence as much as he did about science; when the pasha returned he would gain favour by his plans, his theories of cosmography which he would develop further and then demonstrate by means of a model, and by the new clock; he would infect all of us with the curiosity and enthusiasm that burned in him, he would sow the seeds of a new revival: we were, both of us, waiting. (26)

The Ottomans lost first superiority over and then equality to the Europeans. They did not master or match the Europeans in their new sciences and practical techniques. We are also witness to the limits of proto-science in a more or less Medieval Islamic culture. It is viewed as half magic but also as full of potential

power. Then there is the Ottoman court, in which the slave and his owner become key players through guile and some scientific accomplishments, in particular during the plague.

The intrigues are full of tension and mystery, a world glimpsed but not wholly explained in a perfect balance of novelistic art. The two main characters in the story are translators. The Venetian slave translates his culture to his Ottoman master and vice versa. They mirror-gaze:

Come, let us look in the mirror together. I looked, and under the raw light of the lamp saw once more how much we resembled one another. The two of us were one person! This now seemed to me an obvious truth. For in those first days he continually scrutinized me as if he were learning something and the more he learned the more curious he became. But he seemed hesitant to take any further steps to penetrate the meaning of this strange knowledge. (15)

The character Hoja searches for something to fill the void inside of him. He searches because the curiosity within him fuels his burning desire to find knowledge, “He would infect all of us with the curiosity and enthusiasm that burned in him, he would sow the seeds of a new revival: we were, both of us, waiting” (35). Hoja wishes to attain knowledge about other people as well as himself.

However, he is fearful of what he would find. In this respect Hoja torments himself trying to understand the truth without truly knowing its meaning, “Only he could discover who he was, but he was not man enough to try” (60). This torment caused by his search for knowledge and his battle over his identity destroys Hoja like a disease, “Once infected by a fascination with science, a man could no more escape it than he could the plague; it was not hard to say that this addiction had taken hold of

Hoja” (76). Delinda C. Harley comments that *The White Castle* encourages, assists and celebrates leading and emerging writers who challenge conventional and comfortable views of reality, supporting writers who are endlessly curious and committed to enriching the consciousness of their readers through the excellence of their work because:

On the surface it appears to be a historical novel, but history remains obstinately at the backdrop, revealing only specters of the savagery and brutality of the Ottoman Turkish society. On a close reading one will find the tone of the novel is one of an importunate entreaty to treat man as man, Easterner or Westerner, which perhaps is also its thematic focus. (24)

Identity involves a link between the personal and the social relationships. Although as individuals we have to take up identities actively, those identities are necessarily the product of the society in which we live and our relationship with others. Identity provides a link between individuals and the world in which they live. Identity combines how we see our self and how others see us. Identity involves the internal, the subjective and the external. It is a socially recognized position, recognized by others, not just by us. There is some active engagement by those who take up identities and being the same as some people and different from others, as indicated by symbols and representations. There lies a tension between how much control we have in constructing our identities and how much control or constraint is exercised over us.

Other aspects of our personal identity are formed during our early years of development and continue to develop during our life as we grow, mature, make choices, forge relationships and build an evolving identity for ourselves. Richard

Handler argues that there are multiple factors that contribute to the making of an identity:

Identities need to be analyzed not only in their cultural location but also in relation to historical epoch. Identity is an utterly unproblematic notion. But since these can be restated without the language of identity they are not problems about identity. Identities affect not only external elements of one's interior life as well, in relations to patterns of affect, belief, desire and experience. There is no single problem of personal identity, but rather a wide range of loosely connected questions. (49)

We may share personality traits with other people, but sharing an identity suggests some active engagement on our part. We choose to identify with a particular identity or group. Sometimes we have more choice than others. Identity requires some awareness on our part. Personality describes qualities that individuals may have, such as being outgoing or shy, internal characteristics, but identity requires some elements of choice. We may be characterized by having personality traits, but we have to identify with, that is, actively take up an identity. We tend to have the same identity as one group of people and a different one from others. Identity itself seems to be about a question. Who am I? We tend to focus on three key questions when discussing about identity. How are identities formed? How much control do we have in shaping our own identities? Are there particular uncertainties about identity in the contemporary times? We need to think a bit more about what we mean by identity. If identity provides us with the means of answering the question 'who am I?' it might appear to be about personality. Identity is different from personality in important respects.

A person can have multiple identities and not be confined to a single one. In other words, throughout a lifespan of a person, he/she can have different forms of

identity. To distinctly confine a person to a single identity in a multi dimensional world would be foolish. Therefore, Linda Martin Alcoff writes about the dynamic aspect of identity stating:

Identities need to be analyzed not only in their cultural location but also in relation to historical epoch. The constellation of practices, beliefs about identity, and the lived experiences associated with various identities, and the legal or formal recognitions of identity not only undergo constant change but can produce truly new forms of identity. (3)

The link between our self and others is not only indicated by the connection between how we see ourselves and how other people see us, but also by the connection between what we want to be and the influences, pressures and opportunities which are available. Material, social and physical constraints prevent us from successfully presenting ourselves in some identity positions, constraints which include the perceptions of others. The subject, 'I' or 'we' in the identity equation, involves some elements of choice, however limited. The concept of identity encompasses some notion of human agency, an idea that we can have some control in constructing our own identities.

In fact, Hoja and Pasha are so adept at mimicry that they translate themselves out of fixed sites of identity. The master and slave engage in sessions of communal writing, and finally they begin to pass for each other such that we do not know which is which. The point is not whether they do, indeed, switch but rather that they are indistinguishable. There comes a moment in the novel when Hoja, clearly the "master" in the relationship and he who should have all the control, "seems" to ask of his

Western slave and other, “the most ordinary sort of question, ‘Why am I what I am?’”

The slave then responds:

I replied that I didn’t know why he was what he was, adding that this question was often asked by ‘them’ and asked more and more every day. When I said this I had nothing to support it, no particular theory in mind, nothing at all but a desire to answer his question as he wished, perhaps because I sensed instinctively that he would enjoy the game. He was surprised. He eyed me with curiosity, he wanted me continue; when I remained silent he couldn’t restraint himself, he wanted me to repeat what I’d said: So they ask this question? (59)

The slave has no theory, no facts to substantiate that there is a difference between the two. The implication is that which separates one from the other are simply a matter of circumstance and not much more. Finally, at the very end of the novel, the lines that divide the two characters, and the two cultures, are completely blurred and collapsed, if only for a moment. Hoja and slave completely change identities and the Easterner goes to the West, and the Westerner remains in the East.

The biggest torment for Hoja is that of his religion versus his study of Western knowledge. By learning from the West he is going against his Islamic roots. Yet, he gains secular knowledge that fuels his passion, “Could anything be found in the customs of infidels but infidelity, anything that was worth knowing” (100)? This clash ultimately tears Hoja apart. His emptiness inside drives him but the battle between his Islamic values and his secular knowledge ravage him and create his own personal hell.

Thus he gradually came to feel he must begin anew with the thing he called ‘science’, this time in order to understand the nature of their

minds. Since it reminded me of those days I loved when we had sat at the same table and, despising each other, been so alike, I was as enthusiastic as Hoja to start again on our 'science', but after some initial attempts we understood that things were not as they had been. (94)

Through out Hoja's quest for knowledge he becomes more separate from others. He focuses only on work and his impossible search. He removes himself from the narrator, who is his closest friend and has practically become Hoja, "I had become separated from my real self and was seeing myself from the outside" (98). Hoja put blinders on and tune out everything that is not involved with his search for knowledge, "Now and then, trying to draw him back to our former happy life. I tried once to write; when I read him the pages. He didn't even listen to me" (102). Pamuk symbolizes Hoja's fate, how his quest is impossible and would destroy him, through the stories written to the Sultan:

Dark people pleading that everything might be as it once was while they recited prayers they didn't understand. Unhappy men whose lives were too short for them to pass on to us what had been accomplished. Souls whose eyes were moist from lamenting for the good old days wandering wildly through the city and ending in defeat. (110)

Hoja becomes so obsessed with the search that the knowledge he seeks begins to corrupt him, it is seen as evil, "It's genesis in this moment of truth! Then he would point out to me in a bizarre, obscure, ambiguous shape on paper with the tips of his trembling fingers. That black stain I will call the 'devil' (119). This search for knowledge ultimately damns Hoja.

The last chapter has the two men reuniting after a number of years during which they live one another's lives. Whether they continue to live the other's life is left to be decided. The novel very much calls into question the role that art plays as cultural inheritance and marker of cultural values. It also brings to light the question of artistic and historical representation. The two men, after so many years apart, find trouble communicating through a mutually understood language:

I heard his voice before he entered my room, he was speaking Turkish with His errors, though with not so many as He did, but as soon as he entered my room, he switched to Italian. When he saw my face go sour and that I gave no answer, he said in his bad Turkish he'd thought I would at least know a little Italian. (138)

Thus the novel depicts the relationship between the Venetian enslaved by Turkish pirates in the 17th century and his Turkish master. There is a strange resemblance between master and slave and their stories and adventures take them through the plague-ridden streets of Istanbul to the imaginary world of a child prince. They get involved in the construction of an incredible weapon and ultimately, to the question of their identity. Finally, based on the master's and his slave's personalities, the story reveals paradoxes, opposites and ambiguities between East and West.

III. The Assimilation and Substitution of Culture

The term culture generally refers to patterns of human activity and the symbolic structures that give such activities significance and importance. Cultures can be understood as system of symbols and meanings that even their creators contest, that lack fixed boundaries, that are constantly in flux, and that interact and compete with one another. Different definitions of culture reflect different theoretical bases for understanding, or criteria for evaluating, human activity. Culture can be defined as all the ways of life including arts, beliefs and institutions of a population that is passed down from generation to generation. Culture has been called the way of life for an entire society. As such, it includes codes of manners, dress, language, religion, rituals, norms of behavior such as law and morality, and systems of belief as well as the art. A culture, then, is by definition at least, a set of cultural objects.

The present research work has analyzed the novel *The White Castle* from the perspective of Bhabha's concept of hybridity. The term 'hybridity' has been used to describe those cultures arising out of contending cultural constituencies. Therefore the present study has looked into the relationship between the Venetian and Hoja. It has found that *The White Castle* through the Venetian and Hoja explores the Turkish culture. This culture is torn between national and religious greatness on one side and longing for European modernity and belonging to it on the other. Without giving away any secrets, the novel follows a young Venetian university graduate. He is enslaved and given to a Turkish, who wishes to learn from him as much as he can. Hoja and the narrator spend a lot of their time trying to get inside each others heads. They also drive each other crazy and exchange places, which are supposed to complement the East-meets-West theme. Hoja is obsessed with restoring the

superiority of the Ottoman Empire over the Europeans by mastering their science and winning the favor of the sultan.

First and foremost, many people think that culture developed in Europe during the 18th and early 19th centuries. This notion of culture reflects inequalities within European societies, and between European powers and their colonies around the world. It identifies culture with civilization and contrasts it with nature. According to this way of thinking, one can classify some countries and nations as more civilized than others, and some people as more cultured than others. But long before European cultural domination, other cultures were and are also present on this planet. It is only that they have not been documented and represented properly. Pamuk in *The White Castle* is trying to correct this fact. Since ancient times representation has played a central role in understanding literature, aesthetics and semiotics. Representation is the ability of texts to draw upon features of the world and present them to the viewer, not simply as reflections, but more so, as constructions. Representations are influenced by culture and in much the same way, have the capacity to shape culture and mould society's attitudes, values, perceptions and behaviors. Representation in literary theory is also sometimes referred too mimesis, the Greek word which means imitation or representation.

Secondly, the study has found that *The White Castle* is about modernization and its ironies. It resembles the situation facing Turkey when confronting the Western culture where a sense of mixed jealousy and anxiety arises. It is especially insightful at a time when Turkey is striving to become a member of the European Union but would inevitably be accused of not being her true self. This novel makes us think and explore on the meaning of our identity. Most often we unconsciously want to become someone else, especially, people we admire. We feel that their intellectual ability is

better than what we have. However the question, what if we become someone else can make us happy?

Therefore, despite the facial resemblance there was a great difference between both the Venetian and Hoja. The Venetian is a man of high intelligence and common sense, while the Hoja is obsessed with restoring the superiority of the Ottoman Empire over the Europeans by mastering their science. The Ottomans lost first superiority over and then equality to the Europeans because they did not master or match the Europeans in their new sciences and practical techniques. In the end, Hoja leaves the sultan's place altogether and goes to Venice, to resume there the life of his Italian double, and his slave takes over Hoja's life as a Turkish sage.

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