



ISSN NO. 2320-5407

Journal homepage: <http://www.journalijar.com>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL  
OF ADVANCED RESEARCH

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### Reinventing the Doctrine of Self in Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* & *The New Life*

S.P.Anuja<sup>1</sup> and Dr.K.Pramila<sup>2</sup>

1. Research Scholar Karpagam University, Coimbatore – 21

2. Head, Dept of English PSG Institute of Technology and Applied Research Coimbatore -62

#### Manuscript Info

##### Manuscript History:

Received: 15 September 2015

Final Accepted: 22 October 2015

Published Online: November 2015

##### Key words:

Identity , Doppelganger , Alter ego

##### \*Corresponding Author

S.P.Anuja

#### Abstract

Orhan Pamuk who gave a new identity to Turkish Literature has triggered the ignition for avant garde writing in Turkish main stream fiction. His novels have amplified the frame of reference on post modernism. The protagonist Galip in “The Black Book” and Osman in “ The New Life” discover their identity in their doppelganger. Galip a Lawyer goes in search of his cousin Celal and his wife Ruya takes on the identity of Celal and becomes a star Columnist. Osman goes in search of Mehemet who eventually takes on the identity of Mehemet and becomes a member in Mehemet’s family. During the search they confront lot of revelations and their real self which makes them identify themselves with their doppelganger. Both the protagonist learn the doctrine behind their identity, for Galip while reading the columns of Celal and for Osman the journey through the streets of Istanbul. It is the zeal to attain selfdom which assuages Galip and Osman to reinvent the doctrine of self in their doppelganger Celal and Mehemet.

Copy Right, IJAR, 2015., All rights reserved

## INTRODUCTION

Ferit Orhan Pamuk a forerunner in the Turkish literary circle became a renowned literary figure when he won the Nobel Prize for literature in the year 2006 and the IMPAC Dublin Award in 2003. In the altar of post – modernism Pamuk is one of the Apostles who cannot be ignored. He is an avant garde writer who has meticulously employed the narrative techniques with a good mix of allusions and symbolism. His painstaking effort in putting across the theme of “Identity Quest” has been widely appreciated. Pamuk’s works would stand the test of time as every work is a compendium of high voltaged literary masterpiece. Majority of his works portray the mysteries of the great conundrum ‘Identity’.

The novels of Pamuk project the concept of identity in different amplitude. The theme centers on regaining identity and the path taken by the protagonists in the novel “The Black Book” and “The New Life” in attaining it. Identity has vibrant connotations due to its density and significance as it is rooted to an individual’s culture and homeland. The identity of the protagonists in the “The Black Book” Galip and Osman in “The New Life” are dealt in the similitude of Istanbul’s identity. It is the journey of the cultural capital Istanbul and its protagonists longing to attain their desired self.

Galip the protagonist of the “The Black Book” is left aghast on seeing a letter written by his wife ‘Ruya’ who goes missing. She has written a brief note mentioning that she would get in touch with him soon which, never happens throughout the novel. Celal, a popular columnist and a cousin to Ruya and Galip too goes missing simultaneously. Galip begins his probe wherein too many skeletons emerge out of Celal’s closet. He takes part in an interview claiming him as Celal. Galip puts on Celal’s attire, sleeps on his bed, sips coffee in his mug and contributes to his columns under the pretext of Celal. From this moment he begins to contemplate on the writings of Celal where new revelation dawns on him about life and identity. He comes across a master mannequin maker whose mannequins do not fetch him any profit as they fail to resemble the Western models. Here, Pamuk comes

heavily on the society for aping the West. There is a direct bearing of Sufism which is felt predominantly in these novels. Galip while reading the columns of Celal comes across a mystical sect called “Hurufism” believed to have existed during the 17<sup>th</sup> century Turkey. It stresses on the divine signature encrypted on human face. An individual who is able to decipher the meaning of the signature is destined to know his true identity. Galip deciphers it in Celal. It is after reading the columns of Celal and taking up his role he understands that he is no more Galip but a transformed Celal. It is the journey of Galip, an unsuccessful lawyer who, from nothing has transformed in to a star columnist. The aspect of taking on the doppelganger is reiterated to stress on the resilience of identity that is to emerge. Pamuk being an architect student later took up the identity of a writer through which he was successful. Though the transformation of Galip appears to be a gradual one he eventually wins his original self Celal.

**“The book worked its influence not only on my soul but on every aspect of my identity.”(3)**

“The New Life” revolves around three main characters Osman, Mehemet and Janan. Osman accidentally spots a peculiar book in the hands of Janan at the canteen who is prompted to read and finishes it in a sitting. As the fascination for the book keeps growing day by day he begins to pour himself much in to the enchanting spell of the book. The mystic incandescence infiltrates his soul which begins to revamp the concept of self in him. His life takes a different stand from here on and progresses towards the final promising destination. He falls in love with Janan and the book but Janan is seriously in love with Mehemet. Mehemet an ardent disciple of the book has managed to return from the World of the book successfully, seems to be an inspiration to Osman. It is after the meeting with Mehemet the meteoric space between Osman and his new identity begins to converge. Mehemet is gunned down and his body is not to be found. His presence is very intense in rest of the novel. Janan means ‘soul mate’ in Turkish and she guides Osman in the search for Mehemet. Though they are beleaguered by blood curdling circumstances and series of bus collisions, they emanate with great fortitude to carry forward their expedition. The mysterious book’s presence is experienced, and it overpowers the characters like a towering personality. Osman and Janan take the search with utmost sincerity. They meet Dr.Fine Mehemet’s father who invites Osman to take the place of his son. He willingly obliges to accept the invitation at heart not being carried away by the thoughts of his former life. Dr.Fine is the representation of the conservative class who are against the concept of Westernization and the changes imposed on Turkey today.

**“So it was that as I read my point of view was transformed by the book, and the book was transformed by my point of view.”(6)**

Osman is taken aback when he experiences the oneness in Mehemet’s presence in the beginning which he carries it till the end. It is this oneness which assuages him to come alive after several bus collisions. Dr.Fine’s invitation is the significant one after which even the simple things come to life for Osman. The photographs and the objects in Mehemet’s bed room make him to walk down the memory lane. In the light of the book, his journey merges with his real self in taking on the identity of Mehemet.

The journey of both the protagonist begins with the help of their confidant Ruya in “The Black Book” and Janan in “The New Life”. Galip and Osman understand that their mission in life is to play a substantial role than the existing ones, hence they are not complacent. It is this search which propels the plot in these novels. Galip indulging in reading the columns of Celal, rummaging his belongings and the search on the streets of Istanbul reveals Galip’s acumen to get absorbed in the new gospel of life. Galip exhibits great aplomb in taking the place of his doppelganger Celal Salik and Osman on Mehemet which is a quantum leap for the personal angst of Galip and Osman. It is the amalgam of the protagonist’s calling to ordain their true self. The search for the missing duo in “The Black Book” and Mehemet in “The New Life “ brings in a cure up their sleeve which the protagonists chance upon to accentuate. The columns of Celal have articles on the imminent coming of the Messiah, The Bird King allegory where many birds go in search of their king but, what they finally come across to their amazement is their own reflection on a huge mirror at the end of their journey which is the best analogy that justifies the title. Galip gets acclimatized with the new identity of a star columnist and starts contributing articles. He emerges as a victorious man only through the persona of Celal synonymous to his former name Galip which means victorious.

Osman and Janan’s search through the series of bus collisions strengthens their clairvoyance to progress in the search. The meeting with Dr.Fine seems to be a reunion to Osman. He is able to connect to Mehemet’s past through all the objects in his room. After Dr.Fine’s invitation Osman whole heartedly agrees to take the place of his doppelganger Mehemet. Galip taking on the identity of Celal and Osman on Mehemet is the real journey unto their self.

The phase of reinventing identity is a cathartic one that expedites Self exploration. It is the course of reading in both the protagonist that makes them go through self absorption which incapacitated the former self and stems out in to a note worthy personage. Galip on reading the columns of Celal and Osman on reading the book

enables them to shrug off the miasma of ignorance and take on their alter ego. The understanding through reading is not methodical but an empirical one which helps the protagonists to foresee their new life. It opens the way to a new realm of Elysium.

**“I Must be myself, I Must be myself, I Must be myself “(180)**

The city of Istanbul is another protagonist which yearns for the rich cultural and historical restoration of the Byzantine glory. A city tattered by Westernization suffers dejection in the nullified life of modern advancements and envisions to take on the identity of the past which is the other dimension of these novels. Istanbul longs for a panacea in its perilous journey towards Westernization. The schizophrenic agony of Istanbul is caught up in the cusp of centuries old warfare between Secularism Vs Fundamentalism and is covetous in attaining the former self. Will Istanbul again sail back to Byzantium? Only time can answer. Galip is able to reinvent his identity through Celal and Osman through Mehemet which enables them to understand the doctrine of self and emerge triumphantly. The aspect of reinventing identity is a phenomenal one in the ambit of reality as it embarks on an individual's dexterity to lead a steady life and exercise their volition to take on their desired self which has become a testament in the lives of Galib and Osman.

**Works Cited:**

- Anadolu-Okur, Nilgun. Essays Interpreting the Writings of Novelist Orhan Pamuk: The Turkish Winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2009. Print.
- Dufft, Catharina. Turkish Literature and Cultural Memory: "multiculturalism" as a Literary Theme after 1980. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009. Print.
- Pamuk, Orhan. The Black Book. Trans. Gueneli Gun. New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1994. Print.
- Pamuk, Orhan. The New Life. Trans. Güneli Gün .Farrar Straus Giroux, 1994. Print.
- Orhan Pamuk - Nobel Lecture: My Father's Suitcase". Nobelprize.org.