

In or Between the Cultures: Hybridity in *American Dervish*

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Abstract

This study analyzes *American Dervish* in the light of Homi Bhabha's cultural theory. As a post-colonial theorist, Bhabha who also had a colonial past has made significant contributions to cultural studies. He conceptualizes hybridity, third space, in-betweenness, or mimicry to shed light on the cultural interactions in the shade of colonial traces. His theory which draws attention to the impossibility of pure culture is used in this study to discover Shah family's migrant life. Pakistani descent-American author, Ayad Akhtar depicts immigrant Muslims' life in America based primarily on his own multicultural experiences. This study tries to shed light on Shah family's life in America through multicultural perspectives. The primary aim of this study is to depict how Hayat, the protagonist of the book, constructs his hybrid identity to cope with his dilemmas between two separate cultures at the crossroads of cultures, religions, and social norms.

Keywords: Homi Bhabha, Hybridization, Identity, Ayad Akhtar, American Dervish, Islam

KÜLTÜRLER İÇİNDE YA DA ARASINDA: AMERIKAN DERVİŞ'TE MELEZLİK KAVRAMI

Öz

Bu çalışma Amerikan Derviş adlı romanı Homi Bhabha'nın kültürel teorisi ışığında irdelemektedir. Postkolonyal bir kuramcı olarak, sömürge geçmişi de olan Bhabha'nın kültürel çalışmalara önemli katkıları olmuştur. Bhabha, sömürgeciliğin izlerinin gölgesinde kültürel etkileşimlere ışık tutmak için melezlik, üçüncü alan, aradalık ya da taklitçilik gibi kavramları somutlaştırmaktadır. Salt kültürlerin olanaksızlığına dikkat çeken kuramı, bu çalışmada Shah ailesinin göçmen hayatını keşfetmek üzere kullanılmıştır. Pakistan kökenli Amerikalı yazar Ayad Akhtar, aslında kendi çok kültürlü deneyimlerinden yola çıkarak Amerika'daki göçmen Müslüman yaşamı resmetmektedir. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, kitabın kahramanı olan Hayat'ın kültürler, dinler ve toplumsal kaideler kavşağındaki iki ayrı kültürün arasında ikilemeleriyle başa çıkabilmek için nasıl melez bir kimlik oluşturduğunu göstermektir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Homi Bhabha, Melezlik, Kimlik, Ayad Akhtar, Amerikan Derviş, İslam

INTRODUCTION

What does need to be questioned, however, is the mode of representation of otherness.

Homi Bhabha

With globalization, physical distances have lost their importance and the shrinking world has opened different gates to people. Due to compulsory or arbitrary reasons, the co-existence of people regardless of time and space has affected the societies' social and cultural structures. Social issues such as migrations, political matters, cultural interactions, or ethnic conflicts have become the triggers of essential changes and transitions for ages. Emerged from such a cultural ground which is open to continual interaction, postcolonialism lies at the core of cultural studies. It, simplistically used as the transition from colonialism to self-de-

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termination among formerly colonized nations (Smith, 1996, p. 292), is regarded as a controversial issue. With the end of the first and second world wars, postcolonialism is considered to indicate the new post-colonial period but with the effects of colonial experiences. As Bhabha associates, "the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourses of "minorities" within the geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South" (1994, p. 171) pave the way for postcolonialism. In this regard, it can be considered as a reaction to colonialism which argues for the West's superiority trying to legitimize Others. Hence, it would be an inadequate approach to view postcolonialism as a process independent from colonialism. For a better understanding of postcolonialism, as Loomba mentions, it should be regarded not just as coming literally after colonialism and signifying its demise, but more flexibly as the contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism (2015, p. 32). Accordingly, some scholars treat postcolonialism as "symbolic of a liberating emancipation for new nations" while for others "it has become emblematic of continuing, and often veiled, oppression by the West over the rest of the world" (Smith, 1996, p. 292). In this sense, postcolonialism critically scrutinizes the relations notably dominated by the economy between the West and the East as part of ideological and hegemonic factors. As Ashcroft et al. remark, all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day is linked with postcolonialism (2014, p. 2). Postcolonialism's role to clarify the relations perpetually reshaped during and after the colonial period seems to "render non-Western knowledge and culture as 'other' in relation to the normative 'self' of Western epistemology and rationality" (Gandhi, 1998, p. x).

Political relations are always based on the struggle of holding power and in order to maintain the 'gained' or 'deserved' power, suppression, or oppression is used as a control mechanism for keeping the weak side called as 'others' under control. Postcolonialism, at this point, brings these relations inherited from colonial order into question. For Ashcroft et al., "European territorial conquests, the various institutions of European colonialisms, the discursive operations of empire, the subtleties of subject construction in colonial discourse and the resistance of those subjects, and the differing responses to such incursions and their contemporary colonial legacies in both pre-and post-independence nations and communities" (2007, p. 169), are of the core pursuits of postcolonialism. Beyond being about static ideas or practices, postcolonialism, as a literary theory, is pivotally about the relations between ideas and practices such as relations of harmony and conflict, generative relations between different people and their cultures (Young, 2003, p. 7). It, in other words, takes a stance against the dominant power which always tries to establish rules by ignoring the differences based on race, color, religion, or sex in society. In this regard, as pointed in Young (2003, p. 7), in an attempt to change the way people think, the way they behave, to produce a more just and equitable relation between the different peoples of the world, postcolonialism critically seeks to intervene, to force its alternative knowledge into the power structures of the west as well as the non-west. More than that, "postcolonialism is about a changing world, a world that has been changed by struggle and which its practitioners intend to change further" (Young, 2003, p. 7). Considering the factors that triggered the birth of postcolonialism; the ultimate goal, and bare bones of the theory, it is possible to claim that postcolonialism devotes itself to the critique of colonialism and its undesirable and devastating effects; to the traumatic and unstable aspects of identity; to the troubles, conflicts and representations of minorities.

Postcolonialism, with eminent representatives such as Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Aime Cesaire, Homi K. Bhabha, Ania Loomba and Gayatri Spivak, is a process-oriented theory which entered the literary scene through poststructuralism, postmodernism, and Marxism. As this study is primarily based on Bhabha's postcolonial theories, only his arguments will be discussed. As a postcolonial theorist, Bhabha who also had a colonial past has made significant contributions to cultural studies especially with his reference guide, *Location of Culture* (1994). He introduced the new concepts such as hybridity, third space, in-betweenness, or mimicry to shed light on the cultural interactions in the shade of colonial traces. The multicultural order as an irresistible result of the global world has forced the concept of identity to be discussed and depicted on an unstable ground. For Bhabha, this has led

to questioning of fixed or pre-given identity, which is open to negotiations between different cultural contexts. More importantly, he claims that there is a tension between the apparent pre-giveness of culture and the necessity of its ongoing production, so this tension must be marked thematically and formally in our critical language (Huddart, 2010, p. 61). Postcolonial literature, needless to say, tries to touch on what Bhabha raises awareness. In this regard, this study aims to analyze Ayad Akhtar's first novel *American Dervish* (2012) in the light of Bhabha's arguments related to hybridity and third space.

BHABHA'S POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

Cultural interactions based on migrations are constantly taking shapes within pivots of differences. Resistance and submission against new or unexpected positions reflect two paradoxical aspects of human nature. In other words, human psychology is notably designed to seesaw between embracement and disavowal of changing conditions. Such dilemmas are noticeably more tragic for immigrants. Psychological tides between two cultures become inevitable for them, who left behind their cultural, social and linguistic components of their 'self' and 'soul' as well as their homeland. Indicating the adaptation struggles of minorities, hybridization, in this regard, is considered as a process in postcolonial studies and some scholars primarily feature unfavorable reflections of this process while others reclaim that it is an irresistible final regardless of why two or more cultures come together. Bhabha reviews that such cultural difference, as a form of intervention, addresses the inharmonious of meanings and values generated in-between the variety and diversity associated with cultural plenitude. The process of cultural interpretation formed in the perplexity of living, in the disjunctive, liminal space of national society is represented by it, which articulates the difference between representations of social life without surmounting the space of incommensurable meanings and judgements (1990, p. 312). Accordingly, for Bhabha, all forms of culture are continually exposed to a process of hybridity. Similarly, as Young remarks, "it changes as it repeats, but it also repeats as it changes" (2005, p. 25).

Bhabha's colonized and migrant background has led him to question identity in different cultural contexts. He asserts that hybridity and migrant experiences play a vital role in defining and understanding postmodern life. Disparate cultures are beyond being pre-existent rather they are an effect of historical change. Hybridity, hence, indicates an empowering condition that rejects both cultural purity and cultural diversity. Hybridity is described by Bhabha as a place between two conflicting cultures, or moments, when identities are destabilized and deconstructed. More than one identity category, such as being Islamic (religious) and Turkish (national) indicates hybridity. In other words, these categories are always challenged and subverted by hybridity, which pushes people to locate in the "in-between" spaces of cultures called as 'third space' by Bhabha. In his interview with Rutherford (1990, p. 211), he pins down that "the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge" (Bhabha, 1994; Huddart, 2010; Nayar, 2015; Klages, 2012).

For Bhabha, migrants' experiences are closely related to third space. Third space is the place where hybridization process started and finally led to the construction of hybrid identities. In it, cultural borders lose their importance leading to a new hybrid culture, which is primarily based on differences. Accordingly, new and old, traditional and modern, national and international meet in a new ground considerably shaped mutual interactions. Bhabha defines it as, "a way to conceptualizing an international culture based not on exoticism of multiculturalism and diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (1994, p. 38). Third space provides favorable ground for hybridization process which is inherent to migrant struggles to survive.

Cultural and social conditions pave the way for new identities in third space. Third space, in this respect, is the fixed station of an ambivalent, paradoxical and slippery journey of identity. For Bhabha, it constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation ensuring that the meaning and symbols of cultures do not have primordial unity or fixity and that even the same signs can be appropriated,

translated, rehistoricized and read anew (1994, p. 37). This indicates an ambivalent process and a position of “in-betweenness”. The term, liminality may be used to describe an ‘in-between space’ in which cultural change may occur (Ashcroft et al., 2007, p. 117). For Turner “liminal entities are neither here nor there” (1969, p. 369) as Bhabha’s hybrid identities “neither the one nor the Other” (1994, p. 25). These in-between circumstances lead immigrants to question their stances, their positions, their attitudes and their identities shaped by relevant factors. Having benefited from Renee Green’s museum metaphor, Bhabha defines liminal space as;

“in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. [...] The interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed and imposed hierarchy” (1994, p. 4).

All in all, Bhabha’s theories shed light on understanding and deciphering migrants’ experiences in postcolonial studies. The most striving challenging issue for the immigrants is immanent to their identities. Third space, liminality and hybridity, used to draw attention to a flexible aspect of identity as an inevitable part of multicultural practices, display immigrants’ in-between conditions based mainly on differences and polarities in the dominant culture. All the situations such as acceptance or resistance; contradiction or harmony; past or present; old or new that immigrants have to cope with are experienced in the third space and open the doors of hybridization process for them.

AMERICAN DERVISH by AYAD AKHTAR

As a Pakistani-American prolific writer, Ayad Akhtar, like Bhabha, has connections with the colonial order. Being born and raised in America and having intellectual doctor parents, Akhtar is the first generation immigrant. Minority issues such as ethnicity, identity, racism, discrimination, Islam-related matters, and social conflicts in post-9/11 America are primary concerns of the author who is the winner of the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for the best drama with *Disgraced* in America. Akhtar, however, remarkably notes that he does not feel “obliged or responsible to depict Islam in a way that will correct Western misapprehensions” (cited in Asif, 2015, p. 10). Rather, he tries to display challenges of being different from the majority of society.

Akhtar draws attention to the West’s perception of Muslims especially after 9/11 disaster in an interview with Gabriel Green in 2013. He especially highlights that West’s dominant discourse defines the Muslim as “other”, which allows the West to justify its political practices and its sense of moral superiority. Accordingly, the author reflects immigrant Muslims through the lenses of his own experiences. In this way, he embodies not only the meaning attributed to Muslims by the West but also the milestone around their necks to cope with. Asif also mentions that point, “in an attempt to grasp the internal essence of his life as an American Muslim, perhaps Akhtar has been forced to approach his own existence through an external viewpoint—the Western perspective that associates Islam with hostility and aggression” (2015, p. 10).

American Dervish which was written in 2012, as understood from the title, represents American-Muslim experiences under the social and cultural climate of the West. As Helen Rogan states in the section of praise for *American Dervish*, “a particularly fresh and touching coming-of-age story that illuminates the everyday lives of Muslims in America and brings new resonance to universal questions of belief and belonging” (2013). The novel voices a Muslim-American teenager, Hayat Shah’s story. The reader witnesses his struggle to position himself in American society. Migrated from Pakistan, his parents lead a secular life in America. Being Muslim is a heritage but living in a Christian society alienates them from Islamic traditions. With the arrival of a close friend of Hayat’s mother, Mina who is dignifiedly competent on both religious matters, and the Western ideology and culture, Islam becomes the main concern for the family, especially for Hayat. The young boy finds himself getting into Islam and he primarily aims to become a Hafız who can recite Quran after Mina passionately enlightens him about Islam. During their conversations related to Islam, Mina becomes the

first love of Hayat. Even Mina seems to undermine their harmony; the dominant culture manages to captivate Mina who fell in love with a Jewish man, Nathan. Nathan admits converting to Islam until he witnesses radical discrimination against Jews in a local mosque. However, Mina's determination to engage with Nathan is disrupted by Hayat's telegram to Pakistan informing Mina's family about her relation to a Jewish man. This leads to an unhappy marriage of Mina with a Muslim man. In the prologue, the readers learn that Hayat as a university student gets shocked with the knell of Mina.

The book is the representation of in-between tides of Muslim characters. Mina, on the one hand, is evocative of Islam for Shah family, on the other hand, she finds herself in-between circumstances. The situations they face lead them to a hybridization process which radically changes their life fluency. In the section of praise for *American Dervish*, Manil Suri precisely touches on this point: "Ayad Akhtar creates characters who experience the rapture of religion, but also have their lives ripped apart by it" (2013).

HOMI BHABHAN ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN DERVISH

The title of the novel astonishes readers in the same way immigrants vacillate between cultural diversities. It obviously indicates that readers will witness a dynamic process of hybridization. The name of dervish comes from one of Mina's stories about Islam. However, combining the dervish- as the representation of East- with American- as the representation of West- the author draws readers into contradictions of the third space. In other words, the name of 'American Dervish' points to a new identity construction process as a result of the characters' cultural interactions materialized in the third space. As Bhabha claims, having intact, monolithic identities that are based on class, gender or religion are no longer possible (1994, p. 2). Hence, the title, *American Dervish*, is the most crucial hallmark that enables readers to accompany hybrid experiences of the characters.

The book starts with a prologue in 1990 and finishes with an epilogue in 1995. The events between the prologue and epilogue include the childhood of the novel's protagonist, Hayat. Through his childhood, readers witness the hybridization process with the characters' in-between situations. Even if Hayat and his family have a secular life in America, some strict rules of Islam that are also well known by the West show their in-betweenness: "This was the menu Mother consulted each night before school to see if pork was being served the following day- and if, therefore, I'd be needing a bag lunch" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 21). They do not follow Islamic rules like regular praying, or Islamic clothing but his mother, Muneer is so strict about eating pork, as it is forbidden in their religion. Their Western lifestyle does not annoy Muneer as well as the possibility of eating pork. Hayat has the following conversation with his mother upon his wish to join the annual ice cream organization- Lutheran Parish Ice Cream Social-held by Lutheran church: "We don't go to church, Hayat. We're not Christians. We have to draw the line somewhere. It's not church, Mom. It's playing games and eating ice cream" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 46). Muneer tries to make clear the distinction based on religious differences between 'them' and 'others'. Her attempts to verify her reaction to such a social event is related to being in an organization held by Christians: "The sign in front says the proceeds go to the parish. Proceeds from what? From free ice cream? We don't need to be giving money to Christians" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 46). In this way, she can designate their limits in third space. But Hayat's response directly remarks unsteadiness experienced during hybridization process: "As I saw it, we gave money to Christians every day. At the mall, at the grocery store, at the post office. What was the difference?" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 48). For Hayat, their life is not under the control of Islamic pillars. Therefore, it is challenging for Hayat to understand his mother's only sensitivity related to Islam. As seen in the following quotation, Muneer does not rigorously react to her husband's alcohol drinking: "He gets drunk and runs his mouth, and probably doesn't remember a thing he says.[...] Give a Muslim man a drink and watch him run after white woman like a crazed fool!" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 31). While Hayat's insistence to join an ice cream event which is just a childish fun, overtly leads to indignation at home, her husband's incompatible routines with Islam are reflected as an inherent part of their life. Hayat informs that she gets used to her husband's drinking and adultery: "And she was with a man who

started cheating on her almost as soon as they arrived in America." (Akhtar, 2013, p. 29). Such contradictions inhere in hybrid experiences. Obviously, Shah family's life, between Islam and the social context of America, is constructed through third space experiences as Bhabha says, "not 'this' or 'that' but are both 'this or that' and neither 'this or that'" (1994, p. 227). For a better understanding of their situation, as a Muslim immigrant family in America, it is possible to say that they are, on the one hand, try to live as Muslim, on the other hand, they are captivated by the current cultural and social atmosphere. The author informs readers that Naveed's apathy towards Islam arises from his mother's strict behaviors about religious obligations, but it would be a pertinent remark to draw attention that their hybrid environment enables him to cope with his ambiguities.

Mina's arrival makes crucial changes in their life. Both Islam becomes more appreciable in their home, and dominant cultural factors turn out more adaptable: "Most Muslim kids my age would have already known the stories of Muhammad's life that she told me. But neither of my parents was particularly religious, and I heard more tales from Mother about Father's mistresses than anything else. [...] When Mina discovered how little I actually knew about Islam, she was delighted to fill the gap" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 58). Hayat, born into a hybrid world, has Pakistani parents living in America, and religion is never the primary concern in their home except for some religious taboos. But Mina opens Islam's door for Hayat leaving him in-betweenness: "And while I didn't doubt she might have been right, I remember thinking I didn't want to lose my parents-or Mina either- just to find out something that was true. No matter how true it was" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 60). Hayat's parents, especially his father, draws a line between Islam and the western lifestyle. Even though Hayat thinks that he is on the right way with Mina, he hesitates that Mina's rights may disrupt his relations with his parents. Essentially, the obvious fact that Hayat has to make a decision between his family and Mina indicates that he is in-between his cultural background and current secular life. His family shares the same cultural and religious background with Mina, yet their migrant life presents a new space that is the starting point of hybridization process. His hesitations may portray his ambivalence in this third space since "hybridity is the perplexity of the living as it interrupts the representation of the fullness of life" (Bhabha, 1990, p. 314).

However, Mina also becomes the part of this hybridization process in time passing with Shah family: "How else to explain what she was thinking when she decided to make her living in America by learning the very outward wiles so at odds with the feminine modesty central to our Islamic faith? But perhaps it was precisely in the contradiction where the appeal lay" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 81). In Bhabhan point of view, all forms of culture are always in a process of hybridity. Mina's change is an expected aspect of this process. Hayat's confusion arises from Mina's devotion to Islam, but this is the irresistible destiny of cultural involvements:

Barely two months into her training, she went all out and had her hair completely redone, coming home one evening in Sue Ellen's latest, her sensuous tresses gone, the hair on the top of her head spiked with gel. We must have looked shocked, for Mina turned red and immediately began to explain in embarrassed tones that one of her fellow students needed someone to practice on and that no one else had volunteered. But Mina didn't need to fear. Our shock was really just astonishment. The fact was: she looked incredible. With her new do, Mina was, if possible, even more beautiful. Or I should say, beautiful in an entirely new way. Her fashionable hairstyle made her a modern woman, an American woman, an astonishing prospect to folks like us who never would have thought we could look like that (Akhtar, 2013, p. 83).

Their cultural backgrounds challenge Mina's adaption to the Western social norms, but Shah's family reacts to these changes in a usual way, even Naveed expects similar Western touches from his wife: "Maybe you should try something like that. But Mother wasn't keen on the idea. At least not yet" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 83). All of these may be evaluated as favorable reflections of hybridization process based on Shah family's readiness, or their needs to be accepted and recognized in the host culture. Bhabha clarifies such positions as, "we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time

cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion" (1994, p. 2). Mina's decision to marry a Jewish man, Nathan who promised her to convert to Islam would be the most extreme aspect of Mina's hybrid world, but her fate is unbelievably changed by a telegram informing her ex-husband and her family in Pakistan that she would marry a Kafr (Hayat explains this word to the officer as "someone who doesn't believe in God" Akhtar, 2013, p. 292). Hereafter, Mina's hybridization process is disrupted with her marriage with Sunil who comes from a strict Muslim family. Her radical change has just started with Sunil's first visit her at Shah family's house: "I stood in the living room doorway, no less startled by Sunil's appearance, than by what Mina was wearing: a tightly fitted veil, like the ones we were seeing in Iran on the evening news. I had never seen her in anything like it" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 321). Even Mina's first date with Sunil brings her back to life in Pakistan. Sunil and her family disregard American life, and they are proud of such isolated life since they think the West is a threat to their faith. Their resistance against dominant culture may be one of their dealing ways to hold a position as a Muslim in American society and to cope with oppression, which arises from their instinct to preserve their culture as pure. Hence, Sunil directs his uncontrolled rage rooted in his in-betweenness on Mina by holding her feet to the fire after their marriage: "He had Mina dispense with the hijab and take up the full-body chador. Now she was forbidden to address a man, even at the local mosque, which the family started to frequent every weekend" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 400). It is clear that the hybridization process is only possible through routine contacts with another culture. More specifically, after the encounter of different cultures, languages or religions, hybridity has become more remarkable. When Mina has to close the doors to the host culture, she stays alone with her husband's impositions. Muneer's insistence and efforts to persuade her to divorce remain in veil.

As Mina's involvement in Shah family leads to undeniable influences on them, her farewell reverses the home's atmosphere. Naveed, who lost his best friend as a result of undesired events against Jewish, is fairly alienated from Islam. Even he exaggerates these unfortunate experiences, and he prohibits anything related to Islam including reciting Quran at home. His father's reactions, Mina's absence and his discouragement related to reciting Quran stimulate Hayat's hybridization process: "I could play merrily at becoming the sort of American boy- embracing a bright future unhampered by his Muslim apprenticeship in the necessity of pain- that my childhood would not have promised. I worried about my brand of jeans and my style of hair. I listened to the latest by U2 and R.E.M on my Walkman as I sat on the bus to school" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 403). Hayat's efforts to adapt himself to the American lifestyle are rather discernible here. Hayat's position between two worlds- Islam of which doors are opened by Mina- and Western society- in which he was born and grown up- depicts his quest to develop a hybrid identity. Kuortti and Nyman characterize this in-betweenness as a process in liminal space that recasts the individuals' fixed sense of identity (2007:8). Such a hybridization process enables the individual under the influence of both cultures to rethink, reevaluate and reinterpret. Accordingly, Hayat finds himself in a dilemma which pushes him to make logical associations between his background and dominant culture. What Hayat has learnt and witnessed about Islam, his family contradictions and the cultural environment to which he belongs have triggered him to find 'self'. In Bhabhan terms, at the end of this journey passing in alien territory, Hayat seems that he may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture with all ambiguities based not only on the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. At the beginning of his quest, Islam plays a more decisive role for him, hence pork and Jews are depicted in his world as: "Allah hated them more than pigs, even. More than alcohol, more than naked white woman, more than gambling, the pig was the ultimate taboo in Islam, the summary image of everything unholy to us" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 262). Hayat uses these descriptions for Jews to show why Mina should not marry Nathan, both a white and Jewish man. Such expressions of Hayat are actually reflections of radical Islamic thought. His position in a multicultural environment during his childhood seems to more stick to Islamic precisions. His quest to find himself reaches the following hybrid point: "[...] I lifted the sausage to my mouth, closed my eyes, and took a bite. My heart raced as I

chewed, my mouth filling with a sweet and smoky, lightly pungent taste that seemed utterly remarkable-perhaps all the more so for having been so long forbidden. I felt at once brave and ridiculous. And as I swallowed, an eerie stillness came over me" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 5). The reader witnesses this vital moment of Hayat in the prologue. It is the first step of his self-recognition. Beyond the religious bounds, Hayat feels more liberated than ever, and it becomes the turning point of his hybrid identity: "[...] My shoulders looked different. Not huddled, but open. Unburdened. My eyes drew my gaze, and there I saw what I was feeling: something quiet, strong, still. I felt like I was complete" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 5). His childhood that passed in the shade of his efforts to expound Islam is obviously a burden on him. Breaking taboos and adopting himself prevailing conditions represent his identity quest which is perpetually open to cultural and social changes. Hayat's hybrid position is stiffened by Edelstein's Islam lecture, which claims that "the bedrock Muslim belief in the Quran, as the direct, unchanged, eternal word of God was a fiction" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 9). Unlike the other two Muslim students who left the class, Hayat seems unaffected by Edelstein's claims about Quran. Furthermore, he asserts that he is "a true and tried Mutazalite" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 10). After the lecture, Hayat explains Rachel, his Jewish girlfriend, 'Mutazalite' as, "A school of Muslims that don't believe in the Quran as the eternal word of God" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 10). But he is not able to desist from saying that it was just a joke. Following the conversation, Hayat learns that Rachel has not believed in God since ever and he says: "So you don't know what it's like to lose your faith" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 13) and Hayat depicts his third space contradictions: "[...] It's freeing. So freeing. It's the most freeing thing that's ever happened to me..." (Akhtar, 2013, p. 13). Although Hayat's intercultural experiences lead to vacillation and fluctuation, it is an inevitable aspect of hybridization. Both Mina and his Western experiences parallel to his family's touches determine his 'self-perception'. Differently put, Hayat constructs a new identity, which is neither Muslim nor American in his third space that "emerges as the others of our selves" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 38). As seen, Hayat finds the 'other' of himself in his Jewish girl friend's arms: "It was in Rachel's arms- and it was with her love- that finally discovered myself not only as a man, but as an American" (Akhtar, 2013, p. 416). Hayat's disorders and contradictions experienced in the third space, as well as many immigrants, pave the way for his hybrid identity. Throughout the book, pork and Jewish are reflected as proofs of staying Muslim in a Christian society, yet both taboos dominate Hayat's hybrid world, as Ali suggests that the essential message of the novel is to display how hard to adhere to one's belief once they find themselves with people from different religious and cultural backgrounds (2015, p. 85). This is exactly what triggers the emergence of third space resulting in hybrid identities.

CONCLUSION

This study has focused on hybridization process reflected in *American Dervish*. It has primarily been concluded that a sense of unsteadiness, turmoil and dilemma became the vital aspect of Shah family's intercultural experiences. They, hence, feel in-betweenness due to differences between the cultural, social and particularly religious norms. Bhabha deals with such situations on cultural perspectives that intercultural struggles of immigrants bear new meanings in a fictional site called third space. These individuals who can neither remain pure nor precisely belong to the host culture are exposed to a dynamic process of construction and transformation. During their hybridization process, Islam has played a decisive role. Islam, for Muneer, consists of keeping away from the church and not eating pork, while it for Naveed, is like a cultural heritage belonging to Pakistan, as his approach to Islam is not different than the Western white man. Although Naveed's apathy cannot be solely explained by multicultural factors, it is obvious that migrant life provides a favorable environment for him, which disregards otherness. Mina incontrovertibly penetrates Shah family. She both takes an evocative role for Islamic practices that fall into oblivion at Shah family's home, and she becomes a role model for them with her adaptation efforts to the modern American life. As an expected result of this, Mina embodies in-between fluctuations of migrants in a most distinctive and striking way. However, she would not complete her self-recognition. In other words, had Mina sustained the

chance of contacting host culture, readers would have met a disparate Mina, presumably with a hybrid identity. Their contradictions can be explained by Bhabha who suggests that “the subjects are not at home in themselves and never do they arrive there so they are caught up in the position of “in-betweenness” between cultures because hybridity lies in their very root of subjectivity and culture” (cited in Tyson, 2006, p. 421).

Hayat has managed to cope with his dilemmas through hybridization process which enables him to construct a hybrid identity. He finds himself in a hybrid world as a result of both cultural diversity and unfavorable experiences of Islam. His efforts to recite Quran from the English version, which becomes fun among other Muslim groups, along with his mother’s daily routines or conversations or his father’s white world reinforce Hayat’s hybridization. Ayad, in parallel to Bhabha’s theories, suggests that immigrants usually struggle with what views to live with and what views to discard. Regardless of whether they are defined by their religion or by their nationality, every immigrant community goes through this process of wrestling with what to hold on to and what to leave behind (2012, from an interview with Anita Montgomery). Both Hayat’s family harmony deprived of Islamic practices and his relationship with Rachel contributes to his hybridization process, and evokes vital changes in his self-perception. Hayat’s quest to find ‘himself’, which starts with the aim of being ‘hafız’, ends in his Jewish girlfriend’s arms after breaking the ultimate taboos of Islam. Hayat finds the meaning of his life in a Jewish comfort, as his mother always advises him to behave like a Jew.

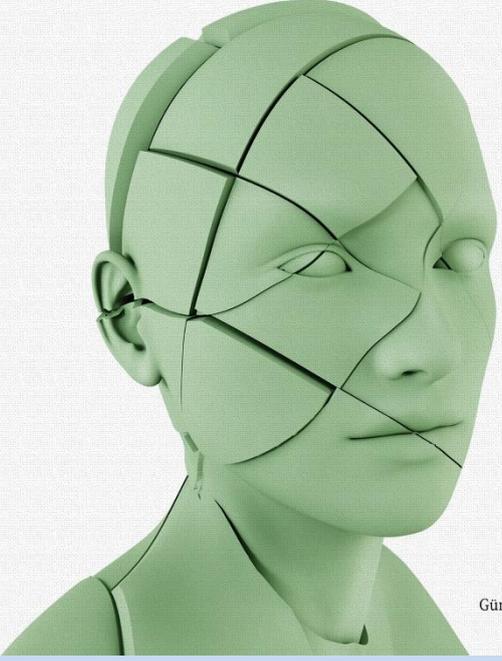
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TÜRK BİLİMKURGU EDEBİYATI VE ARKETİPLER

DR. VELİ UĞUR



Günce Yayınları

Oktay Yivli

Öykü Nasıl Okunur

modern öykü ve yöntem



Günce Yayınları

MAKSUT YİĞİTBAŞ

Edebiyatın Ebemkuşağı

Halit Ziya Hikâyeciliğinde

Renklerin Dili

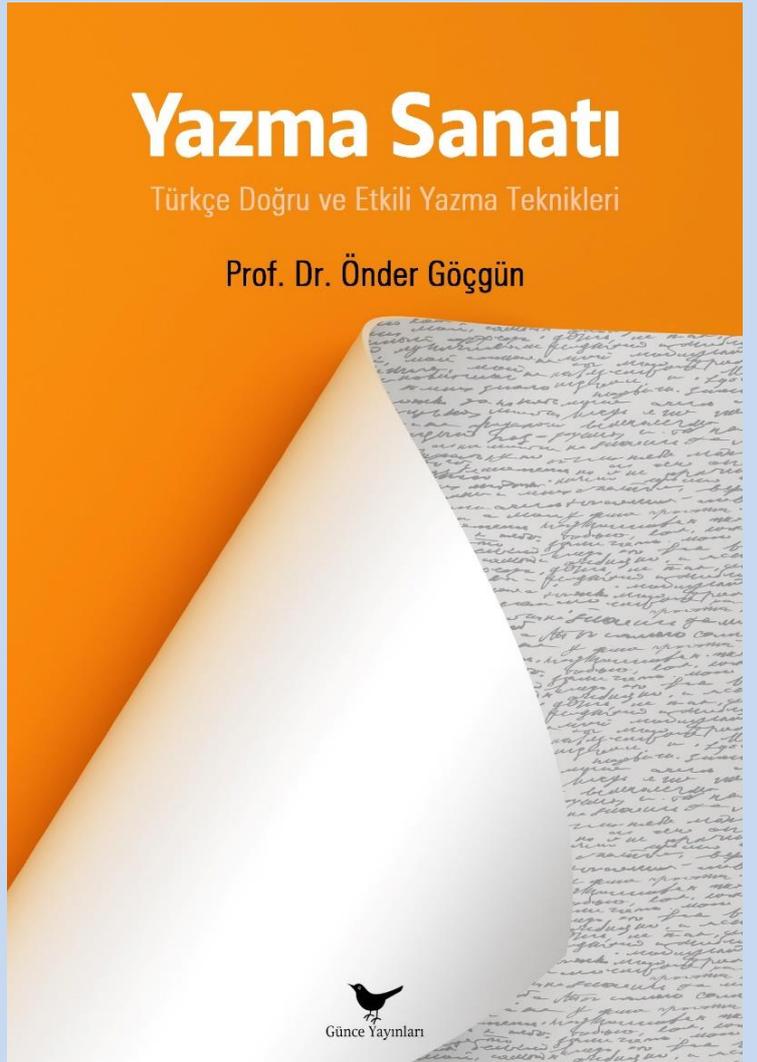


Günce Yayınları

Yazma Sanatı

Türkçe Doğru ve Etkili Yazma Teknikleri

Prof. Dr. Önder Göçgün



Günce Yayınları