

**LIMINALITY AND DISSENT: A STUDY OF ELIF
SHAFAK'S NOVELS**

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

**in
English**

**by
POONAM SAREEN**

Registration Number: 41900126

**Supervised by
Dr Muzafar Ahmed Bhat (25623)
Department of English (Associate Professor)
Lovely Professional University**



L OVELY
P ROFESSIONAL
U NIVERSITY

Transforming Education Transforming India

LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY, PUNJAB

2022

DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that the thesis titled *Liminality and Dissent: A Study of Elif Shafak's Novels* submitted to Lovely Professional University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is a record of original and independent bona fide research conducted by me under the supervision and guidance of Dr Muzafar Ahmed Bhat, Associate Professor, Lovely Professional University, Punjab (India). The thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree/diploma/associateship/fellowship or any other title to any candidate by any university. I hereby confirm that the thesis is free from any plagiarised material, copyright issues, and does not infringe any rights of others.

The final version of printed and soft copies of the thesis is proofread. The submission of the final version of the printed copy of the thesis is as per the guidelines to upload in Shodhganga. I have completed the prescribed coursework of research and have incorporated all the valuable suggestions provided by the Doctoral Committees of the University during my end term presentations and pre-submission seminar held on _____.



Date: 1 – 9 – 2022

Signature of the Candidate

Place: Phagwara, Punjab



L OVELY
P ROFESSIONAL
U NIVERSITY

Transforming Education Transforming India

Certificate by Advisor

This is to certify that the thesis titled *Liminality and Dissent: A Study of Elif Shafak's Novels*, submitted to the Department of English, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is a record of original and independent research work conducted by Poonam Sareen (Reg. No.: 41900126) under my supervision and guidance. The thesis has not formed the basis for the award of any degree/diploma/associate ship/fellowship or any other similar title to any candidate by any university.

The candidate has pursued the prescribed coursework of research and has incorporated all the suggestions given by the Department Doctoral Board and Research Advisory Committee of the university during his end term presentations and pre- submission seminar.

Dr. Muzafar Ahmed Bhat

Associate Professor

Department of English, School of Humanities

Lovely Professional University

Phagwara- Punjab, India

Date: 2 -09 - 2022

Advisor

Abstract

This research thesis is an attempt to analyse liminality and its transitional effects on the characters in Elif Shafak's novels. Having an immense relationship with the author's own liminality and multiculturalism, the characters and their in-between situations are interpreted to explore their transitional process which impacts them either positively or negatively. The possibilities of interpretation are employed to understand their changes from normality to unusualness. Though some of the characters are able to cope up with their uncertain intermediate situations, there are majority of characters who often fail to withstand the negative aspects of liminality which lead to an unsatisfactory end. Transitions are common to human beings and a person in his everyday life passes through a number of anticipated or unanticipated transitions which are crucial in deciding the future conditions of his/her life. If he/she is able to recognize this process of transition he/she may be able to practice the strategies which can help to overcome its effects. This research thesis is an endeavor to trace the transitional trajectory of the characters in Elif Shafak's selected works by focusing on the intermediary state of the process of transition.

To effectively explore the transitional track of the characters, Arnold Van Gennep's and Victor Turner's liminality is applied. The 'processual framework' proposed by these theorists is utilized to distinguish the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases that become the core facet of the method to analyse the transition in the characters. As exploration of liminality in the novels of Elif Shafak is the major objective of the present research, these texts are examined to find the presence of any of the significant features of liminality such as uncertainty, anxiety, ambiguity, unusualness, deviation from normality, fear, loss of the previous state of mind, alienation, isolation, identity crisis and dilemma. The majority of these situational features implies the direct or indirect expression of liminality experienced by the characters.

The novels of Elif Shafak are the primary sources of the research in which liminality and transitions are explored. The qualitative approach is followed in the

thesis through the textual analysis, discussion and interpretation on the basis of the theoretical grounds. The methodological pattern is followed to analyse the novels and is maintained throughout chapters three, four and five. The research is conducted to investigate the passage of the characters from the previously normative existence to the intermediary liminal phase and thereafter to the post-liminal phase with transformation.

The objective of the research is to analyse the novels of Elif Shafak in the light of Victor Turner's Liminality investigating the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases of the major characters to distinguish the anti-structural characteristics exhibited during the intermediary phase. The psychological and behavioral changes are observed during the liminal stages and are differentiated from that of the previously normative phases and the reintegration phases. In analyzing the liminal experiences of the characters, the concepts related to liminality such as the liminal space, liminal entity, communitas, and anti-structure are also discussed and traced from the textual references. The focus is also made to discuss the coping strategies utilized by the characters during their challenging threshold conditions that have significant influence in deciding the post-liminal phase of the characters. Victor Turner's liminality is also applied to understand their experiences of being the victims of the domination exercised by the power structures in society. Their disagreement to the enforced subjugation, exploitation and oppression forcing them in the liminal conditions is also depicted in the form of their rejection and resentment. Reflecting a variety of social themes, the novels of Elif Shafak reveal a number of issues such as the Armenian genocide, deportation, war, gender conflicts, caste discriminations, refugee struggles, diaspora issues, political and social dominance. All these issues discussed in her works widen the scope of the research in applying liminality in these works and in real world situations also and hence, extends its limits.

The research outcomes of the thesis distinguish the causes which lead the characters to the liminal phase distinct from their previous pre-liminal and coming post-liminal stage. The result obtained help in understanding the reason why some of these characters act as anti-structure during their in-between stage. Due to their ambiguous identity belonging to neither here nor there, they become victimised by the dominant power structures. The research investigates the characters' experience of liminality due

to the altering situations and enforced dominance. Their coping strategies are also discussed to show the influences of the transition on the characters.

The analysis of the novels of Elif Shafak is done on the basis of the objectives of the study to attain certain outcomes. Firstly, the liminal characters, liminal places and liminal periods in these novels are explored through Victor Turner's point of view of liminality. Then the liminal trajectory of the characters in the novels are analyzed discussing their tripartite structure to distinguish the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases. Upon identifying the tripartite structure, the intermediary phase of the transition is examined to understand the direct or indirect expression of liminality experienced by the characters. In the final chapter the responses and strategies followed by the characters to these liminal situations are observed to comprehend their dissent towards the dominant socio-political structures. It helps to trace the influence of dominant external forces and subsequent ideologies in producing liminality in these characters. The thesis concludes by stating the fact that transitions and liminal experiences are inevitable and essential for the gradual development of humankind due to the reason of the vital dynamicity that occurs in life.

The interpretations conducted in the chapters are utilized to explain Elif Shafak's motifs to symbolically display the real situations of Turkey in her fiction. Moreover, the correlation between literary fiction and the real world in her novels showcases the relevance of liminality and transition in understanding various socio-political problems prevalent in Turkey after the establishment of Turkish Republic in 1924. The liminal status of Turkey between Asia and Europe, its ambivalent national identity lying between Europeans or Middle Easterners can be explained using the applicability of liminality. Furthermore, the research intends to assist the readers to provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of Elif Shafak's novels through the lens of liminality and transition and its significance in the real world as the literary fiction discussed in the thesis is connected to real-world scenarios. Hence, the timeless relevance of the research lies in applying processual framework and analysis method of liminality in interpreting historical, contemporary and futuristic records of situations and events.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the outset, I would like to thank the Almighty God for providing me will power, wisdom, skill, and opportunity to carry out this doctoral thesis. Without the blessings of God, I could not accomplish this task. The journey of writing the thesis would have been very arduous for me if I hadn't been supported by many irreplaceable persons whom I wish to thanks for their ceaseless guidance. Firstly, I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr Muzafar Ahmed Bhat for his scholarly guidance, timely support and sagacious insights at different stages of my research. It has been an honour to be his PhD scholar. Dr. Bhat has guided me consciously and encouraged me with his confidence in my hard work. I am greatly indebted to his contribution of time and immense knowledge to make my PhD experience productive and stimulating. His patience, sincerity and sympathetic attitude and continuous motivation never allowed me to slacken in pace of my work or feel hopeless or disheartened at any stage in the course of my studies. He helped me to cope up the gloom and uncertainties by imparting both moral and emotional support.

I am deeply grateful to Dr Pavitar Parkash Singh, (Head of the Section, School of Humanities), Dr Ajoy Batta (Head of the Department), and other faculty members in the department of English for extending their moral support, encouragement and academic help to me during the course of my research studies. I am also thankful to Dr Digvijay Pandya, Dr. Sanjay Prasad Pandey and Dr. Balkar Singh for asking me relevant questions which led me the right track of research. Their interest, time and helpful comments helped me at every step to improve the content.

I express my thanks to the librarians of Punjab University, Chandigarh, Punjabi University, Patiala and Lovely Professional University, Phagwara for providing me research books, journals, and articles related to liminality and Turkish literature.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. My husband (Sh. Vijay Kakkar) who took keen interest in my education and always supported me throughout the research work. My parents, who always prayed for and blessed me, have a valuable place in finishing my research. I feel indebted to my daughters Anjali and Ananya who never complained for not giving them proper time and concentration because of my busy schedule and

research pressure. I am grateful to all my friends, near and dear ones for providing me support to complete my research work. I express my deep sense of appreciation for the doctoral committee members, fellow research scholars, friends, publishing houses, conference organizers, and journal editors/reviewers for enriching my perspectives and helping me to get well-acquainted with the research.

Date of Submission: 1 – 09 – 2022

Poonam Sareen

Table of Contents

Sr. No:	Chapter Name	Page No:
1.	Title	1
2.	Declaration	2
3.	Certificate by Advisor	3
4.	Abstract	4-6
5.	Acknowledgements	7-8
6.	Table of Contents	9
7.	List of Tables	10
8.	Introduction	11-25
9.	Chapter 1: Liminality and Transition: A Theoretical Framework	26-56
10.	Chapter 2: Elif Shafak: Life and Achievements	57-77
11.	Chapter 3: Liminal Personae and Communitas	78-105
12.	Chapter 4: Betwixt & Between of Liminality: Process of Being and Becoming	106-139
13.	Chapter 5: Liminality and Anti-structure	140-178
14.	Conclusion	179-193
15.	Bibliography	195-202

List of Tables

Sr. No:	Table Title	Page No:
1.	Liminality Contrasted with Status System	52-53
2.	Liminality/ non-liminality	38-39

INTRODUCTION

“In the universe, there are things that are known, and things that are unknown, and in between them, there are doors.”

William Blake

Literature provides us a unique aesthetic experience by putting together various contrasting forms and concepts such as life and death, love and hatred, joy and pain, fact and fiction, the individual and society, and many more. It combines imagination and fantasy to escape us from the world of problems laden with restricted rules and principles, duties and repetitive routines. In doing so, it leads us to undergo transformational developments by providing a transitory space between real and factual world and the world of imagination. Hence, “literature performs the function of a transit coach between the force-driven, chronologically ordered world restricted by technological, bureaucratic reality and a world imbued with faith, free ideas and fantasies” (Ratiani 2). In other words, literature act as a mirror to show liminality or a transitory phase of the human beings in their real passage of life. While undergoing these transitions, sometimes they are unable to manage these changes and find themselves stuck in a state of in-betweenness. This qualitative research focuses on the state of in-betweenness during the process of transitions in the characters of Elif Shafak, their rites of passage and the characteristic features of the phases related with them with the help of the theoretical insights on liminality shared by Victor Turner. Though the Turner’s theory of liminality has been expounded in the first chapter of the present study, it has been briefly discussed in the introductory part of the thesis what the theory is basically about.

Liminality can be described as a period or stage of uncertainty, ambiguity or change in boundaries relative to social structure. Liminality arises from the Latin word *limen* meaning, “threshold”. In liminal stage the previous nature of identity and structure held by the participants is lost leading the person in transition to be at the threshold. The study of ritual marks the beginning of the theory of liminal space. Arnold van Gennep in *The Rites of Passage* (1960), laid the foundation for the study of threshold ritual. In his study of rituals, he was concerned with, “ceremonial patterns which accompany a passage from one situation to another or from one cosmic or social world to another” (Gennep 11). He proposed a category of rituals to cover all individual

life-crisis ceremonials associated with birth, puberty, marriage, death, etc. and has called these “rites of passage.” He explored two kinds of rites of passage: first, the rites that involve the passage of either individuals or the entire groups from one status to another and the second that involves the temporal passage such as passage from one season to another. These passages intentionally create what he calls ‘liminality’, or liminal space. It is a form of threshold between one space and another that leads to authentic transformation while passing through these transitional moments. Gennep described that these rituals accompany every change of place, state, social position, and age that is followed by a certain pattern of separation, transition and reincorporation. He divided this transitional process into three different phases as “preliminal rites (rites of separation), liminal rites (rites of transition), and postliminal rites (rites of incorporation)” (Gennep 11). Consequently, he introduced the term ‘liminality’ to describe the second stage ‘the liminal stage’ and its related concepts in his book *Rites de passage* (1960).

Victor W. Turner rediscovered the tripartite system proposed by Gennep to give importance to the middle liminal stage. He suggested liminality, a threshold state, as a state of in-betweenness and ambiguity.

Van Gennep has shown that all rites of passage or ‘transition’ are marked by three phases: separation, margin (or limen, signifying ‘threshold’ in Latin), and aggregation. The first phase (of separation) comprises symbolic behaviour signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a ‘state’), or from both. During the intervening ‘liminal’ period, the characteristics of the ritual subject (the ‘passenger’) are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state. In the third phase (re-aggregation or reincorporation), the passage is consummated. (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 94–5)

He deepened the discussion of the middle stage or liminality, which due to its ambiguity and instability, makes the ‘liminars’ free from any boundaries set by their society and/or culture. According to Turner, liminality is often characterized by ideas of invisibility, absence, wilderness and a fluid identity. The presence of this intermediate space between the corresponding pre and post stages is considered to be important for the development of the human beings. It is this in-between stage that leads

to their progress and growth. Therefore, in order to understand the necessary ebb and flow of life we need to know the experiences we get while standing on or passing through these threshold spaces. Turner liberated the concept of liminality from its original use in small scale societies and pre-industrial cultures by applying it to modern ones in contemporary world. Turner's "Variations on a Theme of Liminality" (1977) gave new depth to the concept of liminality by applying it in the study of social process in general. He called those people who become the part of liminal phase by experiencing liminality as "Liminaries" marked by "neither-this-nor-that, here-nor-there, one-thing-not-the-other" and described them as, "betwixt-and-between the established states of politico-jural structure" (Turner, "Variations on a Theme of Liminality" 37). Turner's ideas on the concept of liminality can be comprehended through his various works such as *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969), "Betwixt and between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage" (1970), "Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbology" (1974), and *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (1982).

Turner was the first one who freed the concept of liminality from its anthropological implications as he suggested that the liminal could take place at various moments and in various situations in the (post)modern world. He adapted the concept of liminality to the context of modern societies and their way of life. He described that the altering structure of the middle phase in the rites of passage creates disequilibrium in the normality of life leading to suspended emotional variations in the state of mind of a person in the process of transition. He explains in *Blazing the Trail: Way Marks in the Exploration of Symbols* published in 1992, that the essence of "of being both this and that" (Turner 49) transpires as it is a state where "the past has lost its grip and the future has not yet taken definite shape" (133). And this situation of neither here nor there gives rise to a state of limbo where the transition takes place. Turner elucidates the change in the behavioral patterns of a person while interacting with this in-between situation in his work, "The Uses and Meanings of Liminality" (2009).

As liminality is a part of the rituals, understandings of the ritual processes are necessary to trace the course of transition in the rites of passage. The research will study the notion of the threshold and its creative potentiality during such transitions. The present research would identify the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases of characters in Shafak's works to understand the nature of transformation the characters

endure under the influence of liminality. Drawing on the other concepts which are associated with liminality and borrowed from anthropology and cultural philosophy, this study will henceforth focus on applying and tracing the function of these terms (liminality, liminoid, liminal entity or liminal personae, *communitas*, undecidability, temporary and permanent liminality) in the texts of Elif Shafak. Thus, the research interlinks various works of Elif Shafak through the perspective of liminality.

Different phases of liminality through which these characters pass during their rites of passage can be utilized to infer their development and to understand their views on society or their interaction with society. It will help to comprehend the personal, moral and social choices they make to attain their status in society which allow these characters to either remain in the state of liminality or return to a previous position or move beyond such a state into a new position. Utilizing the responses of the characters of Shafak regarding their status quo i.e., denial, rejection or participation, their exhibition of transformation can be deduced. The state of uncertainty inevitably correlates with the concept of liminality (Gennep, 1960) which Shafak portrays in her works by challenging the roles of the narrator and the author in creating a complex relationship of many voices. She situates her characters in the liminal space where their transition gets affected due to the in-betweenness of that particular situation in confronting with the uncertainty of what is unknown, unrecognised, and unclaimed. Consequently, they sometimes find themselves in liminal status thrust upon them against their own free will that hinges on the choices that they would exercise with regard to their responsibilities. Thus, utilising the three phased structure of liminality in the textual and interpretive analysis of Elif Shafak's works to understand the experiences of the characters in their intermediate phase of the rites of passage, the gradual process of their transition is analyzed. Turner redefines Gennep's concept of liminal existence as being "against, with, towards, above, below, within, outside, or without one another" (Turner, "Variations on a Theme of Liminality" 122). His understanding of liminality 'as a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise' assists in asserting liminality as a state of in-betweenness and ambiguity in the liminal characters in the novels (Turner, *The Forest of Symbols* 97).

Elif Shafak, a writer who commutes between cultures and cities, also likes to commute between languages as she writes both in English as well as in Turkish. As a

transnational writer, she occupies a gap between the worlds and becomes a sort of medium between alternative structures of 'here' and 'there'. She is one of the prominent voices against the cultural amnesia and distorted history in Turkey. Her works include wide variety of topics on multiculturalism, women's empowerment, cosmopolitan encounters, honour killings, Armenian genocide, LGBT rights and other basic human problems which she symbolically represents through her characters and the situations in which they are caught suspended. She has a reputation for outspokenness. A fierce advocate for equality and freedom of speech, her views have brought her into conflict a number of times. The recipient of numerous awards, her bestselling books have been translated into dozens of languages.

Elif Shafak has published nineteen works which have been translated into various languages and been nominated for several literary awards. She has been described as 'Turkey's leading female novelist' with several of her works have been bestsellers in Turkey and internationally. Out of these she has written eleven novels. The present research will explore eight of her novels as her debut novel *Pinhan* is unavailable in English and *The Architect's Apprentice*, *The Island of Missing Trees* does not come under the criteria of study. All the other eight novels reflect the presence of liminality and its subsidiary topics in one way or the other according to the change in the characters and their environment. These are *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* (2004), *The Gaze* (2006), *The Flea Palace* (2007), *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2007), *The Forty Rules of Love* (2010), *Honour* (2011), *Three Daughters of Eve* (2016), *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* (2019). All these novels are important from the perspective of the study as it is utilized to interpret the spatio-temporal liminality in them.

Review of Literature

Elif Shafak is known for her beautifully crafted books that can be found everywhere from airports to libraries. Her books have been translated into more than forty languages and she was awarded the honorary distinction of Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters. Her novels deal with variety of themes ranging from serious socio-political issues like gender discrimination, sexual harassment, child abuse, Armenian genocide, philosophical issues as Sufism, personal ones as love to global crisis like climate change. Known as the voice of the voiceless she often takes the common problems in communities with multicultural backgrounds, colonialism, marginality, alienation,

trauma etc. as the issues to be discussed in her stories. Her novels are sourced from both European realism and Turkish magic. Therefore, her literary works have become a source of research for academicians and scholars. A well-renowned author of the contemporary period, Shafak has received many critical reviews about her writing styles, her selection of taboo subjects for her novels and her portrayal of cultural amnesia through novels. A few research works have been done based on the works of Elif Shafak reflecting on these themes that are socially relevant. Some studies have compared her works with other Turkish writers and other female Muslim writers.

(i) Cultural Memory and Amnesia

The ideas, novels and speeches of Elif Shafak have been criticised for being bold and revolutionary. Socio-political instability of Turkey in the name of westernisation has always concerned Shafak and she efforts to bring back the memories and culture of her nation through her works. Nasir Faried Butt (2018) studies the cultural memory in the novels of Orhan Pamuk and Elif Shafak. He analyses their selected work through postmodern perspective to discuss their voices against the reconstructed history and the reoriented cultural memory of Turkey. He critically examines the selected works of both the novelists focussing the ideas of history, cultural memory and identity. Pamuk and Shafak use history and collective memory in their novels to unearth the lost culture of Turkey. Analysing Shafak's, *The Bastard of Istanbul*, *The Architect's Apprentice*, *The Forty Rules of Love* along with selected novels of Pamuk, Butt deduces that the two writers base their fictions on Ottoman history and challenge the imposed identity juxtapose the past is to the contemporary period in postmodern narrative style to and selective cultural memory history.

Touati Malika (2020) discusses a fictive representation of the processes and the outcomes of social remembering and forgetting in two particular societies: the Turkish and the Armenian in Shafak's novel *The Bastard of Istanbul*. The researcher undertook a detailed sociological inquiry to explain that the importance of the social memory of injustice to the Armenian characters and state of social amnesia that pervades among the Turks could have tragic ramifications on the country.

Elham Mohammadi Achachelooei (2019) has tried to explore Elif Shafak's stand on the notion of amnesia and identity in *Three Daughters of Eve*. He addresses sociocultural conflicts in Turkish society as a Muslim one depicted in Shafak's novel

and claims that, despite her Western secular stand, Shafak is aware of the importance and advocates the preservation of traditional, Eastern, spiritual heritage for social growth in Turkish context.

The Bastard of Istanbul has been explored through the problem of contesting spaces and conflicting memories by another critic Nabanita Chakraborty (2019) in her article where she has discussed the politics of tenuously holding onto the cultural memory of the genocide by the Armenian refugees in their resettled lives as American diaspora and she simultaneously critiques the collective amnesia of the Armenian massacre by the Turks. The issues of contested memory, fractured identity, home and exile are explored in the novel.

Elif Şimşek (2016) deals with politics of fiction, re-negotiating secularism, decolonial feminism and decolonial aesthetics in Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul*. According to her viewpoint, Shafak's nomadic life from colonial/modern Aesthetics to decolonial aesthetics is reflected in her novel. She describes Shafak as 'Turkish feminism's disappointed daughter' as she highlights the issues of domestic violence against women and minority rights in her fiction.

(ii) Feminism and Patriarchy

As Shafak was raised by two women (her mother and grandmother) she has been able to understand sufferings of the women of colour on the receiving end of racism, how sexism and the patriarchy worked and how homophobia or transphobia worked on LGBTQ and how class hierarchy worked on women who come from disempowered backgrounds. Therefore, her novels have been widely explored through the lens of feminism and feminist theories.

Her latest novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World* has been investigated to draw the socially expected gender roles in a patriarchal Turkish society as presented in the novel. Mariam Atta ullah et. all. (2021) have used the insight of Simon de Beauvoir's feminist stances and social role theory to find the theme of gendered power, passivity of women and subjectivity of men in the Turkish society presented in the novel. socio-cultural and traditional patriarchal norms encourage discrimination and prejudice against women and how has been depicted in the novel. The article focussed on the portrayal of socio-cultural and traditional patriarchal norms which encourage discrimination and prejudice against women.

Author Kader GÜZEL investigated novel *The Bastard of Istanbul* with a feministic approach in an optimistic way. He discussed the character of Zeliha who in spite of being raped does not succumb to the patriarchal society. Rather, she demonstrates how a woman can stand on her own legs without submitting to rules of society by gaining her own money and raising her daughter without a male counterpart.

Gazala Gayas, on the other hand gives the negative side of society with patriarchal dominance and discusses the plight of women characters in the novel *Honour*. He describes the similarity in the mind set of society in the Turkish village and in England and tells the theme of the novel about the so-called male- ego, where a son kills her mother for the sake of his family “honour”. The major female characters in the novel (Naze, Pembe, Jamila and Esmâ) are the victims of male dominating society and their sufferings have been explored by the author. Fatima Al Zahra also discusses the similar issues of psychological and physical violence, anxiety of masculinity, and the role of society and tradition in the construction of gender, female reaction to the gender issue in the novel.

Begüm Tuğlu has tried to give a comparative view of Shafak’s *Pinhan* and Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*. She highlighted the repressed society founded upon the sacred bonds of marriage and the institution of family cut out roles for both men and women which defined their gender roles. She focussed on the two androgynous protagonists of the novels who express the uniqueness of identity formation in terms of gender in spite of the differing repressive societies they live in.

Charu Singhai (2017) explores the works of Elif Shafak along with some other female voices of the 21st century Middle East to understand the struggle and issues of these women in their own societies woven in their fiction. The thesis points out that in spite of the invention of Internet, the encouragements of social media and the freedoms of social networking sites, women writers of the Middle East are yet to achieve the liberty, freedom and equal rights due to the harsh religious theocracy and bloody dictatorships of these nations.

(iii) Multiculturalism and Identity Crisis

Elif Shafak often describes her life and work as being infused with cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism and incorporate this issue in most of her works. Pourgharib, Kiani and Ziadbakhsh (2018) examined Elif Shafak’s novel *Honour* based on Bhabhaian

concepts of hybridity and unhomeliness. Their article discussed that within the social and cultural structures and discourse of their 'new' country, diasporic characters feel homeless and struggle to fill gaps and redefine their identities.

S.A.Doğangün, (2014) viewed Elif Shafak's *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* with a cosmopolitan outlook. He investigated Omar (the protagonist) and two other international doctoral students with the bitter feeling generated by the loss of confidence and of isolation due to his migration to another country. As isolated migrants who tries to survive daily life in America, they are traced for the possibilities and limitations of cosmopolitanism in the different characters.

Elena Furlanetto (2014) searched for a hybrid post-Ottoman identity in Elif Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul* discussing the representation of two cafés, as a way of Shafak's criticism of Kemal's obsessive Westernization and historical revisionism. Both the cafes are located in the heart of Istanbul, is populated by customers who embody the long-term effects of Kemalism on Turkish citizens. They appear amnesiac, displaced, incapable of self-representation, and hopelessly detached from their cultural reality.

The article "Who is the Other? Melting in the Pot in Elif Shafak's *The Saint of Incipient Insanities and The Bastard of Istanbul*" by Özlem is an attempt to interrogate the themes of 'migrancy' and 'transculturalism' undermining the essentialized boundaries of 'home', 'nation' and 'identity' in both these novels. It discusses the multicultural experiences and interactions of the characters, migrant groups or individuals' processes of coming to terms with their past and its marks upon their identity

In addition to above discussed themes, the presence of Sufism, Mysticism, love, religious devotion and secular doubt add the variety in her works. The present research has tried to join the novels of Elif Shafak with thematic and contextual dissimilarities in a single thread of liminality. This interconnection of the liminal existence of the characters in Shafak's novels is highly significant to identify the presence of liminality in the stories.

Investigating the works of Elif Shafak through the lens of liminality, the study is conducted focusing on the three major goals. They are connected with each other to make the study cohesive. The first aim is to critically analyse Elif Shafak's works in the

light of Victor Turner's theory of Liminality. Though Arnold Van Gennep introduced liminality which Victor Turner extended in studying ritual and cultural studies, he liberated it from its anthropological connotations and suggested its application at various moments and in various situations in the (post)modern world. This research extracts the meaning of the experience of liminality and then to investigate its application to literature and literary studies. It undertakes the aspect of liminality to study the novels of Elif Shafak to understand the author's use of liminal spaces to challenge hierarchies, redraw subjective boundaries, and return voices to people who have lost them. Therefore, this study would explore a wide potentiality for its applicability in literary studies as well as in the societal level.

The second aim is to highlight the impact of liminality on the actions and behaviour of the characters and their dissent to power structures as depicted in the Shafak's works. Elif Shafak who consider herself as a liminal writer who belongs neither to the East or West or to both, crafts interstices for her characters in which they are able to articulate seemingly difficult experiences. In doing so she advocates the taboo subjects in her novels such as the Armenian Genocide, child abuse, women's role in society, transgenders and human rights. She establishes liminal spaces in which her characters can challenge their bodies' boundaries and can temporarily dissolve conventional social hierarchies. The research reveals those liminal spaces, moments and incidents where her characters abandon the conventional limits to open themselves to the radical transformation. The exploration of the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases of the characters helps to understand the dramatic change in their actions and their responses to capitalist authoritarianism in society. It can assist in identifying their reactions while facing varying degrees of repression in the society.

The third objective is to examine the effect of liminality on the characters' experiences and their identity. Recognizing the changed behavioral patterns during the rites of passage of the characters in Shafak's works would explore their experiences during their identity formation. While passing through 'neither here nor there' liminal phase they encounter certain transitions which indicate their final identity formation. Therefore, tracing the sequence of various liminal conditions in these novels, an inevitability of liminality and its relevance in making the personality of the characters can be drawn. Thus, the understanding of liminality affecting the lives of these

individuals would provide a clearer picture on the transitional nature of living that facilitate change and dynamic nature to the world.

As the present study is qualitative research, the most suitable methodology is to analyse the objectives is through textual analysis, discussion and interpretation. The focus of the research is to trace the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases experienced by the characters which would help to identify their intermediary phase. The transitional effect of liminality is explored in the characters in various environments with the analysis of the other aspects of liminality at various stages of transition experienced by the characters such as transitional process, liminal events, liminoid, anti-structures, permanent liminality, liminal hotspots and liminal affectivity. It has assisted in discovering the liminal space and the nature of the liminal existence of the characters along with the anti-structural aspects of their situation the development of their bond as *communitas*. Comparison of the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal stages of characters has also been conducted to explore the transitional effect of liminality and to understand other issues such as gender and class struggles, marginality and racial conflicts, sense of alienation, ambiguity and indecisiveness. Utilising the analytical framework of Victor Turner's liminality, the content has been analysed.

The primary data has been collected from the novels of Elif Shafak and Victor Turner's available works on liminality which are enlisted in bibliography. The secondary data has been accumulated from the online resources, from various University libraries such as from Punjab University, Punjabi University and Lovely Professional University. Resources like various indexed journals, approved theses and dissertations, reviews and critical appreciations are consulted to gather information related to the selected study. The MLA handbook for the writers of research papers 8th edition is consulted and followed for writing the thesis.

Turner's Liminality is applicable to interpret the novels of Elif Shafak as the writer herself witnesses the stage of in-betweenness in her life and reflects the same in her works. Born in France, she has travelled to various countries during her growing years and experienced the 'neither here nor there' status. Having grown up in a dysfunctional family with non-patriarchal environment, she has felt the presence of 'in-betweenness' in between her family and other neighbouring families. There are several characters in her novels who suffer the same sense of liminality and ambiguity in their passages of life. In her novels, many characters such as Asya Kazanci in *The Bastard*

of Istanbul, Pembe in *Honour*, Leila in *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* live through the liminal spaces in their effort to explore the veiled traumatic past and associate it with their present and future conditions. Similarly, there are instances in Shafak's novels where those characters who are passing through the same liminal situations forms an association among themselves which Turner defined as *communitas*. Exploring these entities in the light of Turner's liminality helps to understand their transition.

Secondly, liminality is also helpful to analyse its ambiguous effect on the actions and behaviour of the characters. A 'neither here nor there' effect of liminality created by the power structures in the character victims where they neither can completely adhere to their individual identity or the self nor is completely ready to admit the new forced identity or the other provided by the dominating structures drive them to dissent their prevailing authority. Their oppression by the authoritarianism and power leads these characters into the liminal subjugated group where they show the conflict with the previously established order which Turner called as 'anti-structure'. Thus, they form a structure-less group of liminals which is opposed to normative social structure. Liminality helps to describe their identities and therefore, the research focusing on the factors leading to liminality and its transitional effects provides a scope to understand presence of 'in-betweenness' in the works of Elif Shafak in particular and in the whole of literature in general.

Being in-between home and a host land, the author experiences a 'sense of passing' through a liminal state, a form of rites of passage, as a transient beyond borders and cultures. As the author transcended the vulnerable state, she found her sense of belonging by connecting with her memory.

The thesis consists of five chapters besides the introduction and conclusion. The first chapter titled "**Liminality and Transition: A Theoretical Framework**" draws attention to the meaning and history of the term liminality, its introduction by Arnold Van Gennep and its development chiefly by Victor Turner. The chapter puts light on their life and social conditions, their backgrounds, their works to understand their process of development of liminality and its related concepts. It explicates how Victor Turner re-discovered liminality and applied it to various modern situations to observe the in-between conditions. The discussion of other major contributors who extended the scope of liminality is also included in this chapter. Bjorn Thomassen, an Associate

Professor at Roskilde University in Denmark in his *book Liminality and the Modern: Living Through the In-Between* traced the development of liminality from Genep to its recent studies. He discussed various other aspects of liminality such as spatial and temporal dimensions of liminality, types of liminal experiences and their effects on an individual, group and society in his number of works. Paul Stenner elaborated liminality and its affective nature. He highlighted the socio-psychological nature of liminality and introduced ‘liminal hotspot’ and ‘liminal affectivity’ in his work “Liminal hotspots: Conceptualising the dynamics of suspended transition” which includes his findings of a workshop with Monica Greco, and Johanna Motzkau. Arpad Szakolczai in *Permanent Liminality and Modernity: Analysing the Sacrificial Carnival through Novels* elaborated Victor Turner’s Permanent liminality by providing examples. All together the second chapter endeavours to discuss the development of liminality and other connected concepts to make a framework to analyse the novels of Elif Shafak in the light of liminality.

The second chapter entitled “**Elif Shafak: Life and Achievements**” introduces the author whose works have been taken for the purpose of research in the thesis. The chapter sheds light on the early life, occupations and works of Elif Shafak. It presents her works viewed from vantage point from various critics and writers. Elif Shafak’s early life full of travels to different nations made her a writer of multiple belongings. Born in France, she moved to Turkey, Spain, Jordan, Germany, USA and UK. All these cultural encounters have made her a person who is boundless and contains multitudes and who calls herself a ‘world citizen and a global soul’. Spending a significant part of her formative years outside her native country transitioning from one culture to the next, makes her life a nomadic one which she openly admits and which gets reflection in her writings. As she belongs neither to the East nor to the West, Elif Shafak can be labelled a ‘liminal’ figure according to Victor Turner. Her works also reveal the themes of fluid identities and class and gender struggles of people who have the ‘in-between’ statuses. Her literary profession began in 1998 with her first novel *Pinhan*, though she started writing at an early age to cope up with the loneliness brought to her by the divorce of her parents and lack of her family’s acceptance by the conservative patriarchal Turkish society. With this she commenced her journey as a writer which is still going embracing nineteen books with eleven novels in her lap. Shafak has been a prominent speaker advocating women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights and freedom of expression. The chapter

will cover the themes of her novels, her ideologies that influenced her writings and the analysis of her works by different critics and authors.

The third chapter is titled as “**Liminal Personae and Communitas**”. It identifies the liminal personae in the novels of Elif Shafak by implementing Victor Turner’s liminality. Next, the chapter explicates the liminal spaces occupied by the characters in these novels and analyse their liminal identities. Most of the major characters in these novels feel themselves stuck in a space where their previous identities and statuses have been lost and their new identities are yet to be achieved forcing them to be in state of uncertainty. Some of Shafak’s novels for instance *The Saint of Incipient Insanities*, *Three Daughters of Eve* and *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* present these liminal entities forming a group of equals among themselves which Turner define as ‘Communitas’. The chapter, therefore, recognises the liminal characters and communitas while analysing the novels of Elif Shafak.

The fourth chapter titled “**Betwixt & Between of Liminality: Process of Being and Becoming**” traces the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases of above identified liminal characters in the novels of Elif Shafak giving prominence to the middle liminal phase. The chapter then explains how they undergo change in their rites of passage. Their transitional process is analysed to find out the conversion in their statuses and identities into a different being after passing through the liminal phase. The novels of Elif Shafak deals with the liminal importance of change in physiological and psychological behaviour of the characters. The settings in these novels also help to interpret the transitional processes in them. The opening of the novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* introduces the readers to Leila who is lying in an intermediary phase of life and death at the time of dawn which also is related to a liminal time between day and night. Similarly, many of her novels present liminal spaces, time and situations which help to understand the process of the transition in their characters. Hence, the chapter would analyse these settings and situations to explore the changes in the characters due to the presence of liminality in them. As liminal phases are transitory in which identities are shaped, here the emphasis is placed on the outcome of these liminal processes.

The fifth chapter titled “**Liminality and Anti-Structure**” details those liminal conditions which are formed due to the prevailing dominant power structures. This chapter then explains how the characters in Shafak’s novels who have been a prey to

authoritarianism, which is responsible for their state of uncertainty, deals with the situation. The chapter gather the incidents from these novels where the characters individually or in groups disagree with the truth provided by the power structures. It highlights their experiences of indecisiveness, alienation and absurdity by being the victims of the power structures during their liminal stage. Characters such as transgenders, prostitutes, lesbians, mystics, drunkards, maids, artists etc suffer the 'neither here nor there' ambiguous effect of liminality created by the power structures. They find themselves stuck between their real identity and the forced identity provided by the power structures. They make certain decision which are against the prevailing norms to show their anger against such uncertainty. This chapter details all those instances to explain their ambiguity, identity crisis and hostility.

The conclusion of the study brings together liminality and its transitional effects analysed in the novels of Elif Shafak in the above chapters. It assembles the findings discussed in above chapters to emphasize the fact that liminality is an inevitable phase of human life. Applying liminality to interpret the novels of Elif Shafak brings the generalisation that every human being in his rites of passage passes through the liminal phase with varying degree, time and situation where he feels himself in a state of limbo. The experiences of liminality by the characters of these novels can be correlated to real human experiences of in-betweenness. Thus, the concluding part of the thesis highlights the accomplishment of research objectives, its relevance and contribution to the society and its bright scope for further research in the field of literature as well as in societal level.

CHAPTER 1

Liminality and Transition: A Theoretical Framework

The chapter discusses the meaning and origin of the term ‘liminality’. It also explores its philosophical roots and review of the literature in which liminality has been given a literary application. It endeavors to explain various aspects of liminality that will serve as themes of next chapters. The chapter also introduces Victor W. Turner focusing on his background, education, medical career as an anthropologist, and works to depict how Turner developed his concept of the liminality under the influence of Arnold Van Gennep and how the Turner’s idea of liminality has been further interpreted by several literary critics and anthropologists such as Arpad Szokolczai, Paul Stenner, Bjorn Thomassen, Dr. Nancy K Schlossberg and Agnes Horvath. It is an attempt to understand the achievements and limitations of Victor Turner in his study of rituals and liminality to enrich the knowledge about the concept on which the present study is based. Arnold Van Gennep’s threefold structure of rites of passage is studied as Turner’s theory of liminality has got its origin from Gennep’s notion of separation, marginality, and incorporation in any life crisis. Finally, it explores diverse usages of the concept of liminality by different theorists in various disciplines to show wider application of liminality for further studies.

2.1. The Origin of ‘Liminality’: Threefold structure of Arnold Van Gennep

All human societies undergo certain series of actions performed according to the tradition or set of rules known as rituals. These actions or a series of actions are fixed and symbolically laden with norms according to a given context within a particular community. They are often synonymously used with rites of passage, dedication ceremonies, worship rites, marriages, funerals, coronations, and many more. As analytical tools, rituals can be applied to variety of situations or events for investigation. Émilie Durkheim in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1915) focuses on religious ritual as an action in a social process, which attaches the individual to society by the means of symbolic actions of believers toward their gods. He describes

that ritual is the fundamental mechanism that holds a society together. French anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep investigated formal structures in a ritual in his seminal work *Les rites de passage* in 1909. In his study of rituals, he is concerned with, “ceremonial patterns which accompany a passage from one situation to another or from one cosmic or social world to another” (Gennep 11). He has proposed a category of rituals to cover all individual life-crisis ceremonials associated with birth, puberty, marriage, death, etc. and has called these “rites of passage.”

Arnold Van Gennep, “one of the most under-rated social scientists-ever” (Thomassen, *Liminality and the Modern Living through the In-Between* 3), introduced the concept of ‘liminality’ to describe threefold process of transitivity in the context of rites in small-scale societies. A distinguished German born French ethnographer and folklorist, Gennep is best known for his studies of the rites of passage of various cultures. Due to his incredible language skills (he could speak eighteen different languages), he started his career as a diplomat. With the purpose of personal research, Gennep left this job and started teaching ethnology at the University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland 1912 to 1915. After being expelled from the university on his criticism of the Swiss pro-German politics during World War 1, he started writing articles and periodic reports.

As Gennep’s basic interest was in ethnology and folklore, he began the intensive study of French folklore in 1920. In his dissertations *Tabou et totemisme a" Madagascar* (1904) and *Mythes et Idgendes d'Australie* (1905) he demonstrated the interrelationship between myths and legends which are imaginative products of any culture and its social functions in physical and tribal organisation. But his study of totemism in early societies brought him into conflict with the views of his contemporary Emile Durkheim that ran into a debate over totemism, taboo, and the classification of narratives. Another reason of their dispute was that Van Gennep was a fierce critic of Durkheim. His criticisms of Durkheim’s *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* led to his exclusion from French intellectual life. In spite of this he published numerous books and articles covering various topics in the area of ethnography and folklore and lectured in different universities around the world.

Van Gennep's main contribution remains the idea of "rites of passage," which he put forward and developed in the book of that title *The Rites of Passage* (1960) first published in French as *Les rites de passage* in 1909. He coined "Rites of passage" to describe rituals of passing from one stage of life to another and emphasized the "ceremonial sequence," in this passage that accompany the way from one 'world' to another. He divided these sequences into *rites de separation*, *rites de marge* and *rites d'agre'gation* (Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* vii). He introduced the concept of 'liminality' to describe threefold process of transitivity in the context of rites in small-scale societies.

Van Gennep coined the term 'liminal', which is taken from the Latin term meaning 'threshold' (1960). He employed 'Liminality' to describe the events that accompany shifts in social status. It describes the experience of an in-between position, limbo or suspension, between two states, places, or things. It refers to a transitory, in-between state or space, which is characterized by indeterminacy, ambiguity, hybridity, potential for subversion and change. As a transitory space it foregrounds the temporal border and in narrative is often associated with life changing events or border situations. In his work Gennep provided both the theoretical and practical example of liminality in the process of seasonal transformations and changes in individual lifestyle. According to him rite of passage is a necessary feature of any type of transition and it represents the dichotomy which is present between the 'fixed' and 'transitory' structures. To weigh the importance of this process, Gennep divides the rite of passage into three components: "rites of separation", "transition rites", and "rites of incorporation" (Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* 11). He calls these as pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases. In the first phase of separation known as pre-liminal phase an individual detaches himself from the fixed social or cultural structure. In this process he breaks the previous practices and routines. In the second liminal phase of transition, he passes through the social phase as 'limbo'. It is the phase where his identity becomes fluid and obscure and he is on the threshold of encounter with a new culture. Here the passenger is temporarily stripped of group privileges and attributes. Third phase of incorporation is the post liminal phase where the passenger assumes a new identity consummated by

the rituals of new culture or re-emerges into same social structure with enhanced status or functions.

Gennep further elaborated those liminal spaces and moments that are key to personal and social development. They constitute an essential stage in individual's psychological and ethical development, thus leading to moral growth of a society. Every culture and human being pass through the moments of transition living in this brief space of in-between and they use rites to demarcate this transition. He explains that in the process of separation and reunion there are, "always new thresholds to cross: the threshold of summer and winter, of season or a year, of a month of a night; the thresholds of birth, adolescence, maturity and old age; the threshold of death and that of the afterlife -- for those who believe in it." (Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* 189) These phases of transition are a mixture of happiness and nervousness, weird combination of liberty and homelessness, with openness of possibilities. Their importance is not confined to any particular society rather it elaborates universal human experiences. In *The Rites of Passage* Gennep describes the spatial dimension of thresholds, doors, gateways and other transit zones to be fundamental for the cultural elaboration of ritual transitions and cultural transformation. These moments of transition play an important part in shaping their personalities. He observed various tribal groups in Australia, Africa, America and Asia such as Todas of India, the Masai of Africa, Borneo, Samoa of America to explain the ceremonies accompanying their rituals of birth, puberty, marriage, parenthood and death in order to understand their transition while passing from pre-liminal to post-liminal stages. Van Gennep mentions that the liminal phase is marked with experiences that an individual undergoes during the passage from a predecessor to a successor. He argues that "transitional period is the time which elapses between the predecessor's death and the accession to the throne. It is marked by a suspension of social life" (Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* 111). He stresses that liminality represents the non-possession and "waver[ing] between two worlds" (Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* 18).

The *Rites of Passage* further explains the characteristics of each sub-category, and all the numerous rituals and ceremonies that are considered rites of passage. He explains that special acts and ceremonies follow the rites whenever there are

movements from one age to another, one occupation to another and one status to another and these ceremonies depend upon the particular culture. He provided the sub-divisions and categories to these rites. According to Gennep there are various types of rites such as sympathetic, contagious, direct, indirect, positive, and negative rites. Sympathetic rites are those rites which are based on belief in the world and dead and animistic basis and dynamic whereas contagious rites are based on a belief that natural or acquired characteristics are material (Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* 7). There is then a division between direct and indirect rites. Direct rites produce results immediately whereas indirect rites are initially slow, which set into motion some type of autonomous power (8). He further gives a distinction between positive rites which are equivalent of positive decisions and negative rites which are also known as taboos and are considered prohibitions (9).

Rites of Passage is divided into different chapters explaining various categories of rites depending upon different cultures. For instance, the chapter titled “Pregnancy and Childbirth” discusses the rites of pregnancy, childbirth, and childhood. It explains the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal stages of a pregnant woman. The chapter describes the ceremony of childbirth from the isolation of a woman at the onset of pregnancy for the sake of impurity due to pregnancy which marks her preliminal stage to her postliminal stage on her social return from childbirth. It also highlights the ceremonies of the new born child that also involve a sequence of rites of separation, transition, and incorporation which may vary according to culture and time.

Next chapters discuss the initiation rites such as “the rite of passage” between puberty and adolescence including the physiological transitioning (physical changes among girls and boys at the age of puberty) from childhood to adolescence. It describes the rites of passage that celebrate puberty (transition) in different cultures. He stresses the point that physiological puberty is essentially different from social puberty which varies in different societies. Gennep further states that in a discussion of initiation rites, classes, castes, and professions should also be considered (101). He exposes the processes of hierarchal membership in the caste system, which according to him is hereditary and discusses the ceremonies of incorporation of a child into the caste that occurs under specified conditions.

Rites of Passage then elaborates the rites of betrothal (engagement) and marriage that involves the phases of separation, transition and reintegration. “Betrothal” is an important transitory period in marriage as Gennep calls it a state between independent unmarried state and the status of marriage. Depending on different cultures and communities, marriage ceremony and its rites differ in their forms. Gennep also considers the funerals to be rites of passage as it states a journey to the other world, a moment of separation between the living and the dead. He states that the funeral rites vary widely among different people depending on the sex, age and social position of the deceased (146). The funeral ceremonies mark the tripartite states of separation, transition and incorporation. It comprises a series of ceremonies accompanying the dead into the other world which vary from one culture to another.

In the next chapter of *Rites of Passage* Gennep addresses the other types of rites of passage which are not so profound and demonstrate a rite of either separation, transition, or incorporation. These includes rites pertaining to hair, rites of the veil, to the use of special languages, sexual rites, practices of flagellation, seasonal rites, and some others. All these rites are associated with initiations of various kinds and with different transitions in the life cycle. The study of these rites gives an insight into Gennep’s idea of tripartite structure and its significance in a ritual process. The book concludes Gennep’s research about the ceremonies associated with the process of rites of passage where an individual passes through a transitional period of liminality in order to acquire a new status or to get incorporated into a new situation. It is developed with the aim of systematizing the rituals and rites connected with change in the status of the individual in homogeneous primitive societies. He describes their order and the typical pattern in which they occur.

Whoever passes from one [zone] to the other finds him physically and magico-religiously in a special situation for a certain length of time: he wavers between two worlds. It is this situation which I have designated a transition, and one of the purposes of this book is to demonstrate that this symbolic and spatial area of transition may be found in more or less pronounced form in all of the ceremonies which accompany the passage from one social and magico-religious position to another. (Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* 18).

Genep stressed that individuals must pass through several phases to advance from one level to the next. He goes on to say that it's only natural for the shift from one age group to the next to be marked by a rite of passage. According to Van Genep: "birth, social puberty, marriage, parenthood, progress to a higher class, occupational specialization, and death." (3) are often accompanied with rites of passage.

Despite getting positive reviews in various journals Genep's *Rites of Passage* could not get the deserved credit due to his contemporary anthropologist Durkheim who saw him as a competitor. Genep was ostracized from French sociology and anthropology. He got recognition only when the translated work of his *Les rites de passage* in 1960 by Monika B. Yizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee was published.

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

The research utilizes the theory of Liminality as its primary tool of analysis based on the foundations of the concept of liminality by Victor W. Turner for exploring the phenomenological characteristics experienced by the characters under liminal stages. In *The Anthropology of Performance* Turner mentions that the word 'threshold' "is derived from a Germanic base which means 'thrash' or 'thresh,' a place where grain is beaten out from its husk, where what has been hidden is thus manifested" (Turner, *Anthropology* 92). The current research hopes to "thrash" out or explicate the meaning of the experience of liminality in the novels of Elif Shafak and then to investigate its application to understand the process of transformation of the characters in these novels. It also argues that most of the characters of these texts cross a psychological threshold that takes them through a process culminating in a rebirth of the self, and that to the extent they are in-between identities and involved in a process of initiation, they can be considered 'liminars' (Turner *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* 7).

Liminality is a transitional process that is accompanied with uncertainty. It is a condition of probability in several directions. In this study, some transformations which occur to individuals during their in-between stages and their reactions to those transitions is the focus of the investigation. Their emotions and fears of indefinite future and their self-assurance and hopefulness in those liminal phases is emphasized.

Victor Witter Turner (1920- 1983), a British anthropologist elucidated the theory of liminality in his works. Born to a theatrical actress mother, he had an inborn interest in art and literature particularly in Greek and Latin classics. He studied English language and literature at University College London (1938–41). His interest in anthropology began on his encounter with Margaret Mead's book *Coming of Age in Samoa*. So, he decided to study anthropology at University College of London. Max Gluckman, the leading member of the Manchester School, sent Turner to Zambia as research officer to carry out the fieldwork among the Ndembu tribe to study their ritual.

Victor Turner reached at the concept of liminality in his study of Ndembu tribes in Zambia. He studied the Ndembu people of Central Africa along with their rituals or rites of passage they practiced. During his course of study, he observed that the whole ritual activities spin around liminality. Turner uses the concept of the liminal to explore the crossing of boundaries in the sacred rites of a number of different cultures and groups. According to Turner, the importance of these rites is that they "indicate and constitute transitions between states" (Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* 4). By "state" Turner means "a relatively fixed or stable condition, [that] would include in its meaning such social constancies as legal status, profession, office or calling, rank or degree" (4). In his doctoral thesis *Schism and continuity in an African society: A study of Ndembu village life* (1957), he had introduced the concept of '**social drama**' to understand these rites. He explained that social dramas exist as a result of the conflict that is inherent in societies and sensed that much of social life was clearly theatrical. He developed this concept to study the dialectic of social transformation and continuity. He defined it as, "a spontaneous unit of social process and a fact of everyone's experience in every human society" (Turner, "Social dramas and Stories about them" 149). It facilitated him to understand the social irregularities, disagreements and outbreaks of conflict in the Ndembu tribal social structure. He studied the process of their social drama and explained that it consisted of four phases. (1) **Breach** – norm governed social relations between persons or groups with liminal characteristics that represent a break from the prevailing law of conduct (2) **Crisis** – it is the extension where the breach increases in intensity and the conflict persists until it can be resolved quickly. (3) **Redressive actions** – to sort out the situation of the crisis,

some actions and process are initiated by the leading members of the social group. Liminality here makes sense as they unfold. It is the liminal stage in traditional societies and liminoid phase in large scale societies. (4) **Reintegration** – the disturbed societies and structures into irreparable breach or schism (Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* 91–94). The notion of ‘social drama’ gave the way for another means of approaching social life.

Turner wrote further on Ndembu rituals during his tenure as a senior lecturer at Victoria University of Manchester from 1957 to 1963. Turner had concisely encountered Genep’s work through the works of Henry Junod (E. Turner, *On the Edge of the Bush: Anthropology as Experience* 159) but he read Van Genep’s *Rites of Passage* thoroughly during the summer of 1963. Turner himself was in-between situation at that time as he was offered a professorship of anthropology at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York and he had already resigned from Manchester and had sold his house, but he was still waiting for his US visa. His visa was delayed because he refused to serve in the armed military during World War II. He along with his family was staying at Hastings on the English Channel, living in ‘a state of suspense’ (E. Turner, *On the Edge of the Bush: Anthropology as Experience* 7). Borrowing the two-dimensional categorization of liminality by Van Genep, Turner elaborates the first categorization which is “separation, transition, and incorporation” (Genep, *The Rites of Passage* 11) as ‘structural aspects of passage’ and the second categorization which is “preliminal, liminal, and postliminal” (Genep, *The Rites of Passage* 11) as features signifying spatially and temporality. As his own life was in a spatio-temporal threshold when he encountered Van Genep, so he recognized Genep’s insight of liminality deeply.

Inspired by Genep’s *Rites of Passage*, Turner wrote his breakthrough essay, “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage” (1964), where he explained liminality as, “transition as a process, a becoming, and in the case of rites de passage even transformation” (94). He used the phrase “Betwixt and between” to apprehend his theory of liminality he developed in the late 1960s to analyze rites of passage within tribal, sociocultural systems. He made liminality its way back into anthropology and the social sciences. He isolated the middle stage out of the tripartite

system proposed by Genep and transferred this concept of liminality to western societies. Turner stressed the fact that middle stage in a ritual passage has its own spatial reality and its significance in personal and social aspects cannot be denied. Focusing on the importance of liminality for an individual he suggested, “Liminality may perhaps be regarded as the Nay to all positive structural assertions, but as in some sense the source of them all, and, more than that, as a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of idea and relations may arise” (Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* 97). According to Turner, liminality frees an individual from laws and norms of social conduct and his disunion from fixed social structure leads him in an ambivalent and obscure status. “In liminal state a person is neither “here” nor “there” but “in-between” the juridically, traditionally, conventionally and ceremonially established positions” (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 95). Thus, the individual finds himself in an undefined position as a conceptual medium between the alternative structures of ‘here’ and ‘there’. Turner points out that the liminal personae are, “being reduced or grounded down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new station in life” (95). As they are suspended in an interspace, they lack ‘status, property, insignia, secular clothing indicating rank or role’ (95) and hence are forced to deal with the perplexities of the liminal phase. Thus, reading of Genep’s *Rites of Passage* acted as a catalyst for Turner who conducted exploration of liminality in his later years.

The essay later became the famous chapter in his 1967 publication, *The Forest of Symbols*. His study of liminality originated in the observation of tribe-internal, social structures of personal development. Turner observed that all the Ndembu rituals were not the mere expansion of ‘social structures’ as described by other contemporary anthropologists but they consist of the three-phased processual form of rites of passage (13–14). He described liminal phase as “interstructural situation” existing in a society made of positional structures. Turner described that the first phase or ‘rites of separation’, “comprises symbolic behaviour signifying the detachment of individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure or a set of cultural condition” (94). This period includes the separation of individual from the old and the standard position, a metaphorical “death” (94). In the intermediate phase of transition

or rites of transition an individual faces a condition where, “the state of the ritual subject (the “passenger”) is ambiguous; he passes through the realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state” (95). He is in-between the old and the new social position. During the post-liminal stage or rite of incorporation, “the passage is consummated” (95). This new or elevated status of the individual provides him new moral and structural norms to follow. Therefore, Turner’s elaboration released Genep’s concept of liminality from the clutches of the functionalist and structuralist paradigm as he redirected liminality at the level of empirical application to make it more relevant to modern society.

Liminal phase according to Turner performs the function of threshold, delimiting various stages in life. In Turner’s view, the temporary detachment of an individual from the hardened social structure leads to his transition enhancing his capability of forming alternative structures. Irma Ratiani in article “Liminality and Liminal Theory of Conceptualizing Time and Space in 20th Century Eschatological Anti-Utopia”, claims that M. I. Spariosu noted ‘Liminality for Turner is a form not only of transitivity, but of potentiality as well’ (Ratiani, 2012). Turner differs from van Genep in that he concentrates on the middle stage, liminality, and hence on a single aspect of van Genep's rites of passage. He refers to it as a “middle ground” or a “interstructural condition” (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 93). He alludes to the fact that a person in a transition ritual, particularly in the liminal phase, is in-between or interstructural when he says that the liminal being had previously left his prior position in the tribe when he says that a person in a transition rite is in-between or interstructural.

Through a ceremony of separation, the liminar has severed himself off from his prior status in the community. He’s in this transitional stage, but he hasn't returned to the community yet. He isn't a member of any single place or group. “Liminal personae's structural ‘invisibility’ has a two-fold character. They are both classified and unclassified at the same time.” (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 96). He goes on to say:

A further structurally negative characteristic of transitional beings is that they have nothing. They have no status, property, insignia, secular clothing, rank kinship, nothing to demarcate them structurally from their fellows. Their

condition is indeed the very prototype of poverty. (Turner, *Betwixt and Between: The Liminal period in The Rites De Passage* 237).

Turner expands on this idea elsewhere, claiming that the sense of liminality is always simultaneously a feeling of humility.

From all I infer that, for individuals and groups, social life is a type of dialectical process that involves successive experience of high and low, *communitas* and structure, homogeneity and differentiation, equality and inequality. The passage from lower to higher status is through a limbo of statuslessness (Turner, "Liminality and *Communitas*" 97).

This statelessness limbo' entails being a blank place, where the past is wiped and the future is unknown. It is, at the same time, a period of total equality.

The neophyte in liminality must be a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate, on which is inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group, in those respects that pertain to the new status (103).

In this phase, all liminal personae are equal. They all have the same starting position from which they must assume responsibility for their own careers and future lives. It is, in some ways, an abstraction process, an invitation to actively modify or re-create oneself and reevaluate one's place in society. To put it another way, the *tabula rasa* stage allows the liminar to provide fresh meaning to their personal aims, ambitions, and positions. Everything is open and undefined, that is a fantastic opportunity for a fresh start, but it also exposes the individual to the fear of the unknown, of a fresh start.

The crucial feature, is that the way a ritual is done reveals a lot about how the social system of the group in question works. This research can be used as a filter to learn more about how a group communicates and how it is made up. Turner emphasizes that the isolated liminal period provides the most relevant information for his aim, the study of the rite of passage in the Ndembu tribe, which is why he ignores the other two stages:

We are presented, in such rites, with a "moment in and out of time," and in and out of secular social structure, which reveals, however fleetingly, some

recognition (in symbol if not always in language) of a generalized social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of ties (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 96).

These linkages are cultural categories that classify people according to caste, social rank, and economic status. The unorganized communitas is revealed during the liminal phase. The importance of the liminal in exposing the quality of social institutions cannot be overstated. “The high could not be high unless the low existed,” it indicates (97). As a result, liminality is a dialectical process, a debate over social structures, positions, and categories. “The path from lower to higher status is through a limbo of status lessness,” (97). Thus, Turner concentrates solely on the events of the middle stage, whereas van Gennep concentrated on the progression and development of the liminar over the three stages.

Turner states that liminality has certain qualities that are designed to encourage creativity. The following table provides a comparative list of the characteristics of liminal and non-liminal space which can help us understand what these qualities are.

Liminal	Non-Liminal
Communitas	Structure
Equality	Inequality
Anonymity	Systems of nomenclature
Absence of rank	Distinctions of rank
Absence of status and property	Status (property)
Silence	Speech
Sacredness	Secularity
Unselfishness	Selfishness
Total obedience	Obedience only to a superior rank

Sacred instruction

Technical knowledge

(Turner, "Frame, Flow and Reflection: Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality", 106)

Thus, the middle liminal section is something quite different where the transformations to which Turner and van Gennep allude take place. It functions to break down an individual's normal sense of his/her connection with the world and emphasise instead a combination '... of lowliness and sacredness, of homogeneity and comradeship' (96).

For various reasons, liminality, whether solitary or as part of a rite of passage, is relevant to my research. It is a stage in which there is the potential for great growth. It is a period of self-examination and communal reflection. At the same time, it's a low-key epoch. Having nothing equates therefore to nothing, at least in this rite. Being nothing necessitates a significant amount of work on the part of the liminal persona in order to become someone. They must redefine themselves in the context of their society and their own capabilities.

Though Turner offered no systematic comparison of modern societies to the tribal ones, yet his work identified the relevance of liminality for the Ndembu ritual as well as for the modern societies parallelly. He applied the concept of liminality to describe socially and culturally 'betwixt and between' experiences and circumstances of the people of 'tribal and early agrarian societies' but to describe similar experiences and circumstances in modern post-enlightenment societies he introduced the notion of the '**liminoid**'. He mentioned the distinction between liminality and liminoid for the first time in his article, 'Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbolology' (1974) to analyse certain features of the modern world. The essay published in the year 1974 by Rice University Studies describes the application of liminoid is more in terms of modern consumer society, as represented by art, theatre, and the broader leisure industries. Novels, short stories, poems, films, paintings, gaming, gambling, carnivals, and other liminoid activities can all be classified as liminoid. According to Turner 'liminoid' is categorically different from the liminal.

Though both the liminal and the liminoid represent the in between period where the norms of everyday life are suspended and when alternatives that may be inversions are practiced, the liminal provides an opportunity to an individual to return to the society in an elevated or new status whereas the liminoid has the potential to produce the change in the individual. It is a phase where creativity and ambiguity reveal together in art and leisure activities. Liminoid experiences have the characteristics of liminal experiences but they do not result in change of status. The liminal is part of society, while the liminoid is a disruption from society. The activities that arise in liminoid spaces or liminoid periods are potentially socially transformative. Turner explains in his article that liminal spaces or periods are, "natural disjunctions in the flow of natural and social processes" (Turner, "Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, Ritual" 85), whereas Liminoid spaces or periods move around the interest of individuals with or without impacting the society or specific social group. Liminoid experience is thus, "closer to the personal-psychological than to the 'objective-social' typological pole" (86). It originates outside the boundaries of the economic, political, and structural process and is the product of individual or particular group efforts.

Turner's notion of the liminoid had a huge influence on other fields such as literature, performance and theatre studies and made him known in wider circles. Turner then introduces a new dimension to liminality. Victor Turner developed the concept of the liminoid in order to extend the theories of folk culture and ceremonial practices to so-called semi-civilized societies to his own so-called civilized society. The liminoid, to put it simply, is liminality applied to a modern, hedonistic twentieth-century culture that he encountered and studied in the 1960s. While the liminoid refers to culture as consumption, it is founded on the concept of the liminal. This means that the new notion takes a step back from the anthropological approach to tribal cultural engagement. In truth, it is a significant departure from the original phrase. He sees art, theatre, film, and leisure centers as the in-between phenomena of modern times, with people gambling, gaming, and enjoying other forms of pleasure. These can be done in the same fashion as rites of passage, but without the cleansing, maturation, and progression that rites of passage imply. In the Turnerian tradition, he is one of the scholars. Bjorn Thomassen distinguishes between the liminoid and the liminal:

The former involves voluntary experiences of transition, whilst the latter involves a significant, personal transformation. The liminoid, unlike the liminal, does not include a persona crisis or a complete rupture from normalcy (Thomassen, *Liminality and the Modern* 84).

To put it another way, the liminoid is merely a quasi-liminal occurrence, a fun as-if-liminality that does not necessarily include a transitional phase. Furthermore, Thomassen claims that the liminoid is ineffective as a tool for analyzing human development because it does not focus on personal advancement. However, Turner had also argued that in post-industrial society such liminal rites would largely be supplanted by the liminoid, i.e., “by 'out-of-the-ordinary' experiences in leisure, arts, and, indeed, sports,” (Turner, “Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, Ritual” 166). He goes on to say:

In short, the liminoid develops outside that framework of ritual passage which was so fundamental to the very concept of liminality as proposed by van Gennep. Cultural performance in the ritual-liminal mode therefore stands in opposition to the industrial liminoid forms of entertainment and performance. Liminality has survived, but is has changed; and thus, Turner argued, we need a different term to capture this ‘as-if-liminality’: what he termed the liminoid. (186)

Though Turner’s idea of both liminal and liminoid constitute the period of ‘Betwixt and Between’ where the norms of day-to-day life are suspended and where spaces/times within social existence are alternated, yet there is a distinction between the two on the basis of certain characteristics. In comparison to liminal experiences, liminoid experiences are optional as they are a break from normality and hence, they do not involve transition which is the key feature of liminality. Thus, Turner’s idea of the ‘liminoid’ is the liminal state which in modern society no longer need be associated with theology, cosmology or rites of passage in the conventional sense of the phrase. Bjorn Thomassen, an Associate Professor at Roskilde University in Denmark, further differentiated the liminoid from the liminal as, “The liminoid is a break from normality, a playful as-if experience, but it lacks the key feature of liminality: *transition*.” (Thomassen, *Liminality and the Modern* 56). Unlike liminality the liminoid does not involves a personal crisis nor a total break from normality (84).

Another term related to liminality which Turner defined in his exploration of liminality is “**Communitas**”. He describes ‘communitas’ as, “society as an unstructured or rudimentary structured and relatively undifferentiated community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders.” (Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* 96). According to Turner, communitas is a type of social aggregation that is characterized by a transient, liminal state that mixes a variety of contradictory characteristics (temporary and permanent, close and distant, essential and fleeting), in which individuals come together as one, are transformed, and returned to society renewed, reinvigorated or even dramatically transformed. *Communitas* is a Latin term borrowed by Turner to represent such kind of communities and “distinguish the very modal quality of their social relationship from an area of common living” (96). In his work on the Christian pilgrimage titled *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978), Turner argued that pilgrimage shares aspects of liminality because participants become equal, as they distance themselves from mundane structures and their social identities, leading to a homogenization of status and a strong sense of communitas. Turner employed this Latin term “communitas” instead of “community”, to differentiate this modality of social relationship from an “area of common living” (Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* 106). He sees this community of liminars in a positive light which according to him presents the possibility of freedom, spontaneity and creativity as required in a vital social order. He described it as a form of social “anti-structure, “ where there is a “liberation of human capacities of cognition, affect, volition, creativity, etc., from the normative constraints incumbent upon occupying a sequence of social statuses” (Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* 44). In this form of communion ‘fellow liminars’ treat each other as equals irrespective of previous status differences. This group of temporarily extricated participants from their social statuses invokes a symbiotic counterpart of social structure. Their solidarity expresses the possibility of moral growth for a society and development for humanity. They develop an intense comradeship and egalitarianism where no distinctions of rank and status appears. Turner explains:

Communitas breaks in through the interstices of structure, in liminality; at the edges of structure, in marginality; and from beneath structure, in inferiority. It is almost everywhere held to be sacred or “holy,” possibly because it transgresses or dissolves the norms that govern structured and institutionalized relationships and is accompanied by experiences of unprecedented potency (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 127-8)

According to Turner communitas occurs in three forms. He differentiates between these types:

1. **Existential or Spontaneous communitas:** This type of communitas is formed among concrete individuals within liminal situations when their social structure has been abandoned.
2. **Normative communitas:** This occurs when existential or spontaneous communitas is organized into a permanent social system. It stems from spontaneous communitas to develop the social control among the members of the group in order to mobilize and organize resources.
3. **Ideological communitas:** This is a utopian model based on existential communitas that can be expressed as an outward form of an inward experience of a happening.

Spontaneous communitas happens where liminal beings confront each other without such dividing factors as social position, private property, rank, age, often times sex or race, instead embodying universal principles of justice, solidarity, and equality before a deity. Normative communitas becomes structural when it becomes routinized. Expressions of structured communitas include monasteries, convents, initiation camps, and communes. Ideological communitas consists of utopian characteristics such as, “universal human values as peace and harmony between all men, fertility, health of mind and body, universal justice, comradeship and brotherhood between all men, the equality before God, the law or the life force of men and women, young and old, and persons of all races and ethnic groups.” (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 143). Here the connection is maintained within marginalized and structurally inferior liminal entities who may have lowermost status.

These three iterations of *communitas* illustrate the complexity of the relationship between structure and *communitas*. *Communitas* may be fleeting, it may be normalized with social structures, or it may be facilitated by utopian social models. Despite sharing the same cognate with *communio*, *communitas* is not the same as communion because there is no merging. Turner argues that *communitas* is not being realized because “individuals and collectives try to impose their cognitive schema on one another” (Turner, *The anthropology of performance* 16). *Communitas* is both a place and a moment in time. *Communitas* is a critical phase in a community’s development, allowing all members to share a common experience, usually through a rite of passage, trial, struggle, or mission. Whereas community is concentrated inwardly, *communitas* is a social connectedness that occurs outside of society. Whereas community is something that must be formed, *communitas* must be experienced, frequently through liminality. *Communitas* refers to a shared experience or journey that brings individuals together. It is fleeting and illusive by its very nature. It isn't anything that can be mass-produced. Therefore, *communitas* is a strong and meaningful bond that develops through time as people rely on one another. *Communitas* is a concept that extends beyond community. It ‘occurs through the readiness of people - perhaps from necessity - to rid themselves of the concern for status and dependence on structures, and see their fellows as they are’ (E. Turner, *Communitas: The Anthropology of Collective Joy* 1). A dedication to, and appreciation of, *communitas* is the source of collective belonging.

Thus, *Communitas* is an acute point of community. It takes community is taken to the next level to share a common experience, usually through a rite of passage. This brings everyone onto an equal level irrespective of his social status. It is an occasional abandonment of structure for a powerful experience of direct, egalitarian encounter with others. It refers to the direct confrontation of concrete, particular individuals with one another. Turner mentioned that *communitas* can be institutionalized. He explained it with the example of the Benedictines, who are essentially a community with liminal qualities, such as the poverty that always characterizes their order. Chiliastic movements are also a manifestation of *communitas* and have many of the traits of *communitas*, such as equality, anonymity and simplicity. (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 109-112).

Turner suggested that *communitas* is closely associated with the lowering of status. He extended this concept metaphorically to cover such themes as: the relationship between those undergoing ritual transition; ‘religions of humility’ (e.g., Franciscan, Vaisnavism); institutionalized poverty (such as that taught by Buddha or Gandhi) and other monastic and mendicant states (these states are described as “permanent liminality”). In that it represents a community, *Communitas* is objective. *Communitas* is extremely close to the ideal concept of community in that it has a sense of common purpose and communion (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 372). *Communitas*, on the other hand, is not the same as community. *Communitas* is a concept that extends beyond community. It symbolizes the moment when people meet in a fresh and meaningful way. It alludes to a deeper sense of unity, a journey that brings individuals together while negotiating liminality.

Turner defines ‘*Communitas*’ as a shared ritual experience in which people accept each other as equals regardless of any hierarchical disparities that existed before to the liminal state transition (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 238). While claiming a situational absence of hierarchical divisions may be problematic, most of the study on *communitas* reveals social settings that exists ‘outside the structure of roles, statuses, and positions.’ Therefore, it can be surmised that *Communitas* is a loosely organized community in which everyone is treated equally. They may develop a sense of sharing and intimacy among those who experience liminality as a group at the same moment. It isn't anything that can be mass-produced. *Communitas* is a strong and meaningful bond that develops through time as people rely on one another. *Communitas* is a concept that extends beyond community. A dedication to, and appreciation of, *communitas* is the source of collective belonging. A threshold is a physical barrier that must be crossed to access a new location. When people cross a threshold, they are subject to the new space’s norms and obligations. It is symbolic to cross a threshold. Throughout her works the characters frequently enter and exit a liminal space, which exists between their shared responsibilities and their normal social context of family and friends. The experience of *communitas* that is formed and held in this liminal area is explored in this study.

Victor Turner goes one step further than van Gennep by establishing a new notion of ‘permanent Liminality’ (Turner, “Liminality and *Communitas*” 44). At is only

complete for van Gennep when the final transgression occurs, leaving the liminal stage behind and entering the post-liminal one. Turner, on the other hand, claims that liminality might persist on its own and so become a permanent state. In other words, the liminal being would be trapped in an indefinite state of limbo, unable to evolve further. This also suggests that the individual's status would be unaffected by the other two steps. Turner tentatively suggested that a liminal state may become “fixed”, referring to a situation in which the suspended character of social life takes on a more permanent character (Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* 107)

Turner inspired a whole string of anthropologists who have put the concept of liminality as a social category to good use. Arpad Szakolczai, a Professor of Sociology at University College Cork in Ireland, elaborated Victor Turner's concept of 'Permanent liminality'. In permanent liminality, the social order is destroyed where there will be no stable framework and no effective control over one's own conditions. “Liminality becomes a permanent condition when any of the phases in this sequence (of separation, liminality, and reaggregation) becomes frozen, as if a film stopped at a particular frame” (Szakolczai, *Liminality and the Modern: Living Through the In-Between* 93). Thus, freezing of the condition of liminality occurs mostly in the modern condition of the world. Examples of permanent liminality that he gives are Monks in a monastery who are separated from the world where what they intend is only provided in the next world. Szakolczai identifies America in a permanent liminal condition in a way higher than other countries of the same nature as the majority are separated from their original homelands to create America as a frontier west. In his work *Permanent Liminality and Modernity: Analysing the Sacrificial Carnival Through Novels*, Arpad Szakolczai developed the proposition that modern novels symptomatically represent blurring of the distinction between the real and the unreal, the genuine and the fake that characterizes permanently liminal condition of modernity. He proposed that novels can be viewed as a cultural response to another cultural process or medium: theatre. His book argues that novels explore the reduction of human existence to a state of permanent liminality, in the form of a sacrificial carnival and offer special insights for understanding the thoroughly theatrical modern world. He analyses some of the most important novelists and novels of modern culture, including Rilke, Hofmannsthal,

Kafka, Mann, Blixen, Broch and Bulgakov Szakolczai uses various anthropological concepts such as 'trickster', 'schismogenesis', 'imitation' and 'liminality' to understand the dynamics of the modern world with its progressive loss of meaning. He has deployed the notion of liminality to understand the concepts of system, structure and institution in social theory. He recognized liminal experiences as transgressions that violate the normal state. Permanent liminality leads to 'affectivity' and problems of harmony as it is related to emotions (Greco & Stenner 2017). Liminal situations end up positively or negatively evoking reasons in search for a proper way out of the uncertainty and anxiety in the victim in a liminal situation. Losing harmony and stability, the victim's mind keeps circling absurdly in search of a solution to get out of the situation. Imitatively, affectivity and rationality jointly stimulate and somehow the problem is solved. If it does not, leads to permanent liminality. (Szakolczai, *Permanent trickster liminality* 234) There occurs a situation where the person is trapped, affected by emotional volatility for a burnout. This is referred to as an issue of 'liminal hotspot' (Stenner, Greco, & Motzkau 2017). Szakolczai suggests a solution by adopting Blaise Pascal's philosophy of heart that says heart knows better than reason by Pierre Bourdieu in his *Pascalian Meditations* (2000). He has published an article titled "Liminality and Experience: Structuring transitory situations and transformative events" (2009) and a book named *Permanent Liminality and Modernity: Analysing the Sacrificial Carnival through Novels* (2017) based on his perspectives on permanent liminality.

Arpad Szakolczai brings out a number of important points that help to define the meaning of the term liminality. The dilemma of whether liminality and marginality can be used interchangeably arises while defining the notion. Both concepts are frequently recognised as 'other,' according to Szakolczai (Szakolczai, "The formation of marginal and liminal identities" 189), but are rarely differentiated adequately. Both notions, according to Thomassen, require a border to define their properties (7). Nonetheless, liminality is neither outside nor excluded nor despised; it is just a state that exists 'in-between' two other states (8). In a liminal circumstance, the border excludes the marginalized subject or object, but it is crossed. This is an important element because it is part of the development.

This is why transgression is so strongly associated with rites of passage and, in particular, liminality. Szakolczai explains in his discussion that liminal experiences are usually transgressive. For example, sexuality, insanity, and disease can all become transgressive (Szakolczai “The formation of marginal and liminal identities” *Reflexive Historical Sociology* 187). It is vital, in my opinion, to emphasize Szakolczai’s position: which persuaded that liminality necessitates transgression; it does not just accompany the phenomena. The liminal state necessitates transgression. There can be no transition to the next step in a rite of passage without transgression, and hence the liminal concept does not work, at least not in van Gennep's original interpretation.

Szakolczai adds another layer to the concept of liminality by explaining why he is so cautious with his use of transgression. He concentrates on Turner's concept of 'permanent liminality,' which is less well-known. Turner says that liminality can become permanent if the third stage does not occur in order to bring the ‘in-betweenness’ phase to an end. Arpad Szakolczai proposes a new conceptual tool for social science based on this premise. Szakolczai takes up Turner's idea of this new concept of liminality by applying the concept of 'liminality that can become permanent' to everyday life.

Most importantly, a concept developed in small-scale ritual settings must be extended into a real-world large-scale liminality. This implies two fundamental changes to the original conceptualization. In a rite of passage, social order is purposely but temporarily suspended, and this very same order is solemnly reasserted at the end of the performance. In the case of real-world liminality, the previously taken-for-granted order of things has actually collapsed. It cannot therefore simply be restored. This means that the central task in a real-world largescale liminal situation is an actual search for order, with all the existential anxiety this entails. (Szakolczai, *Permanent trickster liminality* 218)

This means that when all order is lost, the chaos has “no stable framework, no effective control” (66). The liminar in real-world liminality cannot return to the old social context since the previous order has crumbled. As a result, van Gennep’s specified reaggregation method is unfeasible. On this basis, he believes that the only solution to this dilemma, the dismantling of all order and restoration of normal

conditions, is to make liminal situations permanent (89). In other words, order can be established by freezing a liminal state: permanent liminality is established. However, this raises a conundrum. A paradox that Victor Turner's descriptions likewise contain. According to Turner,

What appears to have happened is that with the increasing specialization of society and culture, with progressive complexity in the social division of labor, what was in tribal society principally a set of transitional qualities "betwixt and between" defined states of culture and society has become itself an institutionalized state. [...] Transition has here become a permanent condition. (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 107)

Turner considers the idea of institutionalizing a problem and therefore resolving it. Szakolczai, of course, draws attention to the terminology's intrinsic contradiction as liminality always indicates transition, a transient state rather than a permanent state. Nonetheless, he acknowledges that this process of liminality's 'stabilization' is possible:

Liminality becomes a permanent condition when any of the phases in this sequence becomes frozen, as if a film stopped at a particular frame. This can happen both with individuals undergoing an 'initiation rite' and with groups who are participating in a collective ritual, 'a social drama'. (Szakolczai, *The Genesis of Modernity* 220)

Szakolczai refers to the customary tripartite framework of a rite of passage when he says "phases in this sequence." It's possible to become caught in one of three states, each of which corresponds to one of the stages of a rite of passage. Certain people, such as monks and hermits, can become caught in the separation phase: "Monasteries are thus continuously liminal in the sense of forever conducting rites of separation and playing the preliminaries of a performance that will only be presented in the next world." (41). The same can be said for court culture. People are perpetually trapped in the second phase of a rite of passage, a drama, or a ritual. In turn, he identifies Soviet-style Bolshevism as the apogee of the third form of permanent liminality, because the concept is based on the need to finish a World War (223) and so rebuild a new order.

Szakolczai, on the other hand, characterizes the Turkey as being perennially liminal “par excellence” (200). He is persuaded that the majority of the country’s population is made up of people who have separated themselves from their ancestors and whose self-concept is based on pushing the frontier westward, as he says. What matters more for Arpad Szakolczai's alteration of Turner's theoretical foundation is that persistent liminality serves as a metaphor for the ‘modern condition’ for him.

The concept of liminality is useful in describing a variety of situations such as ‘a phase of in-betweenness’, ‘a stage of ambiguity’, a period of transition’, ‘a state of being during a transition’, etc. “Liminality is not just any concept, but a concept with which to think, and it points toward a certain kind of interpretative analysis of events and experiences. Liminality does not and cannot “explain.” In liminality there is no certainty concerning the outcome but rather a world of contingency where events and ideas—and indeed, “reality” itself—can be carried in different directions.” (Bjorn Thomassen, *Breaking Boundaries* 42) It pays attention to the ‘personal experience’ of a state of in between-ness that is related to the course of life. In recent years the idea of liminality (threshold) has been a focus of discussion by a number of critics.

Turner describes that these ‘threshold people’ experience the status of the outsiders as they are kept at a distance from the social reality. According to Turner, “attributes of liminality or of liminal *personae* are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space.” (Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* 95). He showed the importance of these in-between periods to understand human reactions to liminal experience with the and also suggested that liminality can become fixed or permanent. He pushed forward his argument by a number of dichotomies to illustrate differences between a state of liminality or transition and a more structured status system such as Transition versus fixed state, Homogeneity versus heterogeneity, Communitas versus structure, Equality versus inequality, presence of status versus Absence of status etc.

Liminality has been an area of study in many disciplines, including counselling, industrial and organizational psychology, human resources, education, and nursing. The concept has spread its applications within practically all branches of the social and

human sciences, and is now also widening its relevance to social media and popular culture. Turner extended applicability of liminality to new fields including religious pilgrimage and carnivals in 'complex societies', literature, film, images and theatre. (Thomassen, *Modern Living* 93).

The elaborations of Bjorn Thomassen provide a short review of the elements of liminality as a sociological and anthropological word. He begins by explaining that liminality refers to everything that exists between and between a circumstance or an object. To begin with, this indicates that people can be liminal or go through liminal processes. In contrast to previous studies, his concept is more exact in that it can affect entire societies or groups of people.

This sets him apart from van Gennep and Turner, both of whom were interested in people inside tribal institutions. Second, there is a time dimension to liminality. Moments, seasons, and entire epochs can all be considered liminal. This is a far more expansive interpretation of the original phrase. Finally, liminality has a spatial quality that is related to the temporal dimension. As we've seen, executing a rite of passage alongside a spatial violation is a common occurrence, as van Gennep has already noted. The wedding ceremony concludes with trespassing a gate or threshold, whereas funerals conclude with a march to the grave. Rites of passage frequently involve a physical passage as well: crossing borders, thresholds, or being symbolised by opening and closing systems - a phenomenon that Bakhtin and Foucault both discuss.

Bjorn Thomassen in his elaboration of Turner's concept of liminality has described that liminality can be applied to both space and time. He extended its applicability to single individuals, larger groups, and entire societies (Thomassen, *Modern Living* 57). He illustrated different dimensions of liminality as:

Time	Individual	Group	Society
Moment	-Sudden event in one's life (death, divorce, illness) - Individual ritual passage (baptism, ritual passage to womanhood, e.g., among Ndembu)	-Ritual passage to manhood (almost always in cohorts) - Graduation ceremonies	-Transitions in the passage of time (New Year celebrations) -A sudden event affecting a whole society (invasion, natural disaster, plague) and erasing social distinctions and normal hierarchy - Carnivals - Revolutions
Period	-Critical life stages like puberty or adolescence	-Ritual passage to manhood, which may last weeks or months in some societies -Group travels	-Wars - Revolutionary periods
Epoch (or lifespan duration)	-Standing "outside society" by choice or assignment - Monkhhood - Remaining "dangerous" because of a failed ritual passage - Being a twin (twins are permanently	- Religious fraternity - Ethnic minority - Social minority - Transgenderedness - Immigrant group membership (betwixt and between old and new culture)	-Prolonged war - Enduring political instability - Prolonged intellectual confusion - Incorporation and reproduction of liminality in social and political

	liminal in some societies)	-Living on the fringe of “normal structures,” often perceived as both dangerous and holy	structure - Modernity as “permanent liminality”
--	----------------------------	--	---

Table 1: Types of Liminal Experiences (Thomassen, *Liminality and the Modern: Living Through the In-Between* 90)

Liminality refers to anything that exists between and between conditions, a definition that allows for more applications of the notion than Turner initially proposed (Thomassen). Liminality can be applied to a single person or a group of people. Liminality is a term that can be applied to both time and space. In terms of time, liminality can be a single moment, a longer period, or even an entire epoch. Liminal places can be entered by exact thresholds, or they can represent a large area such as a borderland or country.

Bjorn Thomassen takes a more traditional approach to liminality. Thomassen takes a less provocative, less radical approach to liminal phenomena than Szokolczai in his recent work on the historical development of the concept of liminality. For the concept of liminality, he emphasizes the importance of boundaries, borders, and norms. Following van Gennep and Turner’s original concept, Thomassen sees the disintegration of norms and order as a prerequisite for the transgressing individual to get to the stage of liminality. As a result, the liminar must evolve into a nameless, ageless, and ‘unstructured entity (Thomassen *Modern Living* 92). This is what Turner means when he says the liminar must become a blank slate.

As a result, the liminal creature must necessarily defy the recognized social order, or the norms of the social group of which he was a member before to his rite. He or she also questions all previously held information and identity patterns, both personal and tribal. This non-order, this annihilation of knowledge, is fertile ground for re-engaging with one’s life.

Liminality is a fascinating concept in terms of globalization and modern culture. While the previous order and values are completely destroyed, Thomassen explains that the subsequent reaggregation step involves a “reformation of values” (Thomassen *Modern Living* 84). This is why the third stage, the transgressing individual who suffers a fundamental transformation, is critical for its commencement. The liminal personae have no social importance during this phase and must redefine themselves in order to prepare for re-entry into society.

The act of re-entering entails a symbolic breach of the previously established boundary. Thomassen examines themes such as globalization and the war on global terrorism in an everyday setting. The major problem is that borders have been dissolved; they have been crossed and broken down. Thomassen describes the phenomena of globalization with worldwide wars as an example: “Two essential features legitimized the claim to novelty here: that this war, in contrast to all previous ones, had no spatial or temporal boundaries. It is nowhere and everywhere, and it has no real end; it is boundless and essentially liminal.” (Thomassen, *Modern Living* 216)

However, this issue is merely one sign of globalization's far-reaching repercussions. It has infiltrated society. Simultaneous communication, mass and social media, economic linkages, and possibly also dependency – past limits, whether spatial or temporal in nature, have long evaporated. Of course, this is a drastic conclusion to draw from Thomassen’s statement. When society is regarded as liminal as a result of globalization, the question of what occurs next emerges. It's an issue of whether society can evolve, whether values can be rethought, or whether society will be stuck in liminality indefinitely.

As liminality is a part of the rituals, understandings of the ritual processes are necessary to trace the course of transition in the rites of passage. The research will study the notion of the threshold and its creative potentiality during such transitions. The present research would identify the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases of characters in Shafak’s works to understand the nature of transformation these characters endure under the influence of liminality. Drawing on the other concepts which are associated with liminality and borrowed from anthropology and cultural philosophy, this study will henceforth focus on applying and tracing the function of these terms

(liminality, liminoid, liminal entity or liminal personae, *communitas*, undecidability, temporary and permanent liminality) within the texts by Elif Shafak. Thus, the research interlinks various works of Elif Shafak through the perspective of liminality.

The study will utilize the concept of liminality in a sense which is allied to both Genep's and Turner's. It will analyse not only the liminal moments, but predominantly as a position (as a transitional phase) as well as a process. As the term describes the spatial relationship between a culture and its periphery, the characters of Shafak's novels who are identified as the liminal entities, can be discussed irrespective of their nature (an individual or a group) are the ones that in a given situation takes up position of eccentricity/ex-centricity. With the help of liminality their position can be labelled as that of the periphery with respect to certain contextually determined centre. Employing liminality an umbrella term, various phenomena such as marginality, transgression etc. which imbricate to such an extent that it is difficult to discuss any of them in isolation will be examined. As Turner has pointed out, liminality is "a semantic molecule into many components." The common points which the novels occupy with respect to history, self and language (their literary representations) are to be evaluated to understand their position of eccentricity with respect to established patterns and norms.

Different phases of liminality through which these characters pass during their rites of passage can be utilized to infer their development and to understand their views on society or their interaction with society. It will help to comprehend the personal, moral and social choices they make to attain their status in society which allow these characters to either remain in the state of liminality or return to a previous position or move beyond such a state into a new position. Utilizing the responses of the characters of Shafak regarding their status quo i.e., denial, rejection or participation, their exhibition of transformation can be deduced. This state of uncertainty inevitably correlates with the concept of liminality (Van Genep, 1960) which Shafak portrays in her works by challenging the roles of the narrator and the author in creating a complex relationship of many voices. She situates her characters in the liminal space where their transition gets affected due to the in-betweenness of that particular situation in confronting with the uncertainty of what is unknown, unrecognised, and unclaimed.

Consequently, they sometimes find themselves in liminal status thrust upon them against their own free will that hinges on the choices that they would exercise with regard to their responsibilities. Thus, utilising the three phased structure of liminality in the textual and interpretive analysis of Elif Shafak's works to understand the experiences of the characters in their intermediate phase of the rites of passage, the gradual process of their transition is analyzed.

CHAPTER 2

Elif Shafak: Life and Achievements

One image that is utterly difficult to put into words when writing in Turkey and in Turkish is the image of the threshold. A zone that belongs to neither 'here' nor 'there', neither 'inside' nor 'outside', neither "East' nor 'West'... a space of ambiguity and in-betweenness is the most difficult to describe for a writer.

(Elif Shafak: The gathering place of the djinni)

This chapter would like to briefly signal those aspects that grant Elif Shafak the ‘betwixt and between’ status and then proceed to show liminality in her ideology and thoughts which gets reflected in her works. Liminal life of the selected writer that navigates between her national culture and foreign influences reflecting upon the cultural divide between East and West, her ideologies, her unconventional themes reflecting the in-betweenness of characters would become the part of this chapter. Shafak’s own biographical experience as an exiled Turkish writer both modulates, and legitimates, her reflections on the disruptive capacities of the migrant mind. As a liminal figure she persists between languages and between homelands. Shafak might reside in UK, but she maintains an active participation in Turkish social and cultural debate, largely through readings and regular journalistic opinion pieces. She is a writer in constant flow with her fictions and other writings as channels through which the mobility of modern Turkish identity is trafficked.

Life History

Having the research focused on the transitional effect of liminality as portrayed in the Elif Shafak’s works, there are strong possibilities of such resemblances in the author’s life also. Elif Shafak, a British-Turkish writer, is a liminal figure: marginal as woman, marginal as writer and marginal as transnational person ‘betwixt and between’ nations. Born to parents of different cultures, Elif Shafak can be labelled a “liminal” figure according to Victor Turner. With her Turkish name, her French birth, her brief

stay at Spain, Turkey, Jordan and Germany with her separated mother and maternal grandmother in the early years of her life, and her interest in the Turkish Islamic world; she is nothing if not a woman in transition between different life worlds. Even Shafak's penname has a magic meaning. "Elif" (Arabic alif) is the first letter of the Arabic alphabet. According to Muslim symbolism each of 28 letters has its own hidden meaning and, in Turkish "Şafak" means "dawn", a liminal time between night and day.

Her scholarly life, too, has been a life of transit; she holds a degree in International Relations, a master's degree in Gender and Women's Studies and a PhD in Political Science focusing mainly in contemporary Western political thought, with a supplementary interest in Middle Eastern studies and gender-conscious re-reading of the literature on the Middle East and West, Islam, and modernity. There is no closure to his scholarly travels as she has taught at various universities around the world, including İstanbul Bilgi University, the University of Michigan, the University of Arizona, and Istanbul Bahcesehir University. Until today Shafak has remained liminal, remained in becoming. She has made her life to deal with the uncertainties and the danger that any social order ascribes to those who are in-between.

Elif Shafak has lived and taught in a number of countries with quite different cultural traditions and political experiences. All these experiences are reflected in her fiction. The device and motive she practices in her fiction include the themes highlighting liminality, inconsistent mode of narration, dissent and revolt. Unconventional themes are treated with certain twists, superstitions, prophesies, understatements or disillusionments. She offers the reader a journey into a spiritual world of words. This quality of paying the attention to form and aesthetic expression in her writings distinguishes her from others. Filled with many flavours, scents and whispers, her novels create a magical and multicultural atmosphere. Her themes involve the reflection of the situation of minorities particularly women, prostitutes, transgenders, etc.

Shafak writes fiction and nonfiction in English as well as in Turkish. She has published seventeen books out of which eleven are novels. Her works have been translated into more than forty languages. Her novels reflect the blending of Eastern and Western tradition of storytelling. After her parents separated, she has used her

mother's name Safak as her pen name in her publications, and Shafak in her international publications. Her non-fiction work includes wide variety of topics on multiculturalism, women's empowerment, cosmopolitan encounters and the art of coexistence. Her essays on these issues have been collected in three books, *Med-Cezir* (2005), *Firarperest* (2010) and *Şemspare* (2012). *The Happiness of Blond People* contains her thoughts on identity and is published as an e- book by Penguin.

As a cosmopolitan writer, Shafak includes and illustrates the different aspects of a 'global soul' and hybrid identities and multiple cultural connections in the post-modern age where there is an urge for the reassessment of any fixed boundaries in terms of nation, geography and culture. When talked about her belongingness, she reveals, "I would like to think of myself as a citizen of the world, a citizen of this planet, a global soul" (Shafak, *How to Stay Sane in an Age of Division* 23). She reflects a new understanding of identity in our present era. She truly represents herself as a nomad in this deterritorialised age for whom identity is fluid and so is the notion of home. As Shafak has spent a significant part of her formative years outside her native country transitioning from one culture to the next, she openly admits her nomadic life which gets reflection in her writings. She explains it in one of her interviews that, "Writing is the glue of my nomadic life". She rejects the categorizations and does not believe in being anchored to any particular nation or place. She explicates herself in her own words that she lacks a sense of belonging to a particular country and culture:

I believe it's possible to have multiple, flowing belongings, instead of a singular, solid identity. I am an Istanbulite, for instance, and I am also a Londoner. I am from the Mediterranean, the Middle East, the Balkans, Asia Minor, and from Europe. Inside my soul reside stories from the East and stories from the West, and I don't know exactly where the boundary lies. I feel attached to cultures, cities, peoples, always plural. There is a strong local element in my novels, and at the same time, a strong global element. To me these things are not mutually exclusive. They can co-exist. (Shafak, "Writing is the glue of my nomadic life")

Shafak owns a long list of awards to her name due to her unusual way of storytelling. A fierce advocate for equality and freedom of speech, she has a reputation for openness. She enjoys international critical acclaim and media visibility, and she regularly

contributes to *The Guardian* as a columnist on Turkish politics and social issues. All these qualities make a writer par excellence and she have been awarded a number of prestigious awards. Shafak contributes to major publications around the world and she was conferred with the medal of ‘Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres’ one of France’s most prestigious awards in 2010. Turkish Journalists and Writers Foundation awarded her “The Art of Coexistence Award” in 2009. In 2017 she was chosen by Politico as one of the twelve people who would make the world better. She judged numerous prestigious literary prizes, including Independent Foreign Fiction Prize (2013); Sunday Times Short Story Award (2014, 2015), Women of the Future Awards (2015); FT/Oppenheimer Funds Emerging Voices Awards (twice in 2015, 2016); Baileys Women’s Prize for Fiction (2016); Man Booker International Prize (2017) and The Goldsmiths Prize (2018).

Ideology

Elif Shafak is one of the prominent voices against the cultural amnesia and distorted history in Turkey. In her novels we find primitive themes and conventional beliefs incorporated with the contemporary ones because Shafak believes, “Literature is an attempt to bring back memory and responsibility and understanding and empathy.” (Shafak, “Turkey is a country of collective amnesia”) With this belief in her mind, we find the stories as well as the characters of her works wavering between the old and the new in liminal spaces where the practices within them are interwoven with social expectation, routines and norms. Generally, they belong to a space in-between the past and the present stage, ‘at the boundary of two dominant spaces, which is not fully part of either’ (Dale and Burrell, 238). Shafak believes, ‘In the name of hastened Westernization and modernization... countless cultural edifices have been razed to the ground throughout Turkey's political history’ and it is the responsibility of a writer to bring the stories or cultural legacy from the past. Even her own fiction is ‘manifesto of remembrance against the collective amnesia prevalent in Turkey.’ (Shafak, “Women Writers, Islam, and the Ghost of Zulaikha” 2010)

Like her symbolic biography, her prose is also multifaceted and can’t be perceived from one strict culturally defined point of view. Her constant movement and travelling allowed her to combine two worlds (the traditional and the ultra-modern) in

her works. She places the two totally opposite concepts of beliefs, rituals and folk knowledge equally in her novels synthesising different patterns and conventions of Eastern and Western literary styles. Her novels represent the characters with dual worlds. Their behaviour is permeated with the seemingly opposite values of the Eastern and Western worlds. In one of her interviews, she remarks, "I believe in the power of literature to help us transcend the boundaries of the Self and to build bridges across cultures, religions and nations. (Goodreads, "Interview with Elif Shafak." 2010)

While presenting the eroticism and sexuality in her writings, she follows a different path which is against the ideas of general Turkish women writers. She ignores the existing codes on gender and age which have led to the emergence of various tactics for women writers on the basis of time and age. According to Shafak, the Turkish women writers tend to refrain from writing on sexuality and related issues until they attain an age of maturity as this makes them safe and secure to write on these unmentionable issues. These writers choose to mature rapidly to attain respect as Shafak points out, 'In the Middle East women age quickly, leaping from the category of "virgins" to "old women," as if there is nothing in between.' They also 'defeminize and desexualize' themselves to maintain the balance between the erotic issues they discuss with their own chastity so that their reputation doesn't get stained. (Shafak, "Women Writers, Islam, and the Ghost of Zulaikha" 2010) But Shafak prefers to write on eroticism without postponing until she gets old. Her novels present the cases of rape, sexual assault of girls, prostitution etc. openly to the readers to understand the fear and trauma related with them.

Shafak's dissent to the prevailing rigidity of Turkish political society on the women writers can be realized by the language of her novels. She condemns that on the establishment of Turkish Republic in 1924, Turkey language has been distorted by the reformers for the sake of westernization. This has brought the literate in a liminal position where they can neither use the old Ottoman language nor understand the changed alphabets. When asked in an interview, she replies as reported in the article

Today in Turkey we have generations of people who cannot read their family's tombstones, let alone archival documents. You walk by a tombstone in Istanbul and you have no idea who that dead person is because you cannot read the

inscription. There was a huge rupture between the Ottoman time and the new regime.”

(Elif Shafak: *The Age of Despair*)

She feels painful to see this weakness as she as a writer believes in power of words and freedom of speech. She uses both the modern Turkish words blended with old set of words with Sufi expressions. She remarks, “Today in Turkey, language is polarized and politicized.” She believes that this polarization of language can be transcended. Therefore, she rejects, ‘the rationalized, disenchanted, centralized, Turkified modern language’ in her novels. (*Hürriyet Daily News* Feb. 20, 2005) She enjoys commuting between Turkish and English while writing her novels. when asked about it she explains,

“Strangely, over the years I have come to understand that sometimes distance brings you closer, stepping out of something helps you to see that thing better. Writing in English does not pull me away from Turkey; just the opposite, it brings me closer.”

(Hodgkinson)

According to Shafak, there are certain feelings such as sorrow, melancholy, lament which she finds easier to expressed in Turkish on the other hand Humour, irony, satire, paradox can be better exhibited in English. she criticises the removal of hundreds of words from the Turkish language in the name of 'linguistic purification' as it negatively influenced oral traditions and religious/spiritual aesthetic perceptions.

Apart from her most popular fiction and non-fiction works, Shafak contributes to major publications around the world including *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The Financial Times*, *Der Spiegel*, *El Pais* and *Die Zeit*. She is a member of *We forum Global Agenda Council* on Creative Economy and a founding member of ECFR (European Council on Foreign Relations). She is also an advocate for women's rights, LGBT rights and freedom of speech, Shafak is an inspiring public speaker and twice been a TED Global speaker. Raised in several countries, Shafak explains that having grown up in between the West and the East

motivated her to write about themes of identity, cosmopolitanism, migration and transnationalism but she rejects the notion of belongingness to any particular identity of a writer as expected by the society. In one of her TED talks entitled ‘The Politics of Fiction’, she comments, ‘When identity politics tries to put labels on us, it is our freedom of imagination that is in danger’. She criticises the categorization of the writers,

if you’re a woman writer from the Muslim world, like me, then you are expected to write the stories of Muslim women and, preferably, the unhappy stories of unhappy Muslim women. (*The Politics of Fiction*)

She denounces this expectation of writing only the informative, real and characteristic stories from the female writers of the Middle-Eastern Muslim countries and laments that in contrast to her western counterparts, they are expected to write similar stereotypical stories without any experimentation. According to Shafak fiction has the potential to take a journey into other lives and cultures and an identity politics can affect the creation and reading of contemporary fiction. She remarks:

We tend to form clusters based on similarity, and then we produce stereotypes about other clusters of people. In my opinion, one way of transcending these cultural ghettos is through the art of storytelling. Stories cannot demolish frontiers, but they can punch holes in our mental walls. And through those holes, we can get a glimpse of the other, and sometimes even like what we see.

(*The Politics of Fiction*)

Shafak enjoys her multiple belongings and transnational state i.e., her state of belongingness to everywhere and nowhere, a state which is subversive, yet also potentially restrictive. Shafak’s immigration to different nations and places either temporarily or permanently, which has influenced her socially, politically and culturally, has its effect manifested in her work. Her novels are based on multi nationalities, cultures and countries. We often find her revealing the characters of her novels from multicultural perspective. Her novels draw our attention to the liminal conditions of characters who have migrated from their native place either due to collapse factor of the Ottoman Empire and conflict between nations at the beginning of

the twentieth century, or for the higher education in the western countries. They are characterized by both Turkish and English language. Shafak's writing draws on diverse cultures and literary traditions, behaviours, cultural beliefs and values, motifs of thinking, and informative manners of Eastern and Western countries. In the process of moving from one social condition to another Shafak's characters frequently find themselves the transitional beings who are in a state of ambiguity, the initiates occupying a structural position of paradox, if not invisibility and seclusion. In their isolation where they are separated from their previous society, they find themselves in a time of reflection. Here they undergo an ontological transformation before gliding into new status as post ritual persons. Dealing with such taboo themes, she follows a path between being political and apolitical and discusses them without being polarized.

The novels of Elif Shafak work as bridges between elite intellectual perspectives and the opinions of ordinary readers. Her stories belong to both the East and the West and deny any single definition of home, nation, boundaries and culture. Her novels represent her attachment to cultures, cities and people. *The Irish Times* describes the themes of fictional works of Elif Shafak as, "Her stories offer a fusion of historical, geographical and political themes that brim with cross-cultural complexities, generational layering and gender issues." Most of her novels present the state of confusion and uncertainty created by the liminal statuses of the characters who are generally the outcasts, gypsies, Sufis, women, criminals, prostitutes etc. who are ignored and marginalised by the society. Be it *The Bastard of Istanbul*, *Three Daughters of Eve*, *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* or *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World*, her stories deal with the gaps created by political, cultural, social, and intellectual clashes and try to make these voids more visible in order to build bridges of empathy. As Shafak has experienced the disparaging and belittling attitude of the political and cultural elite of Turkish society, she finds it easier to express her feelings of sorrow, melancholy, satire and irony in her works to empathize with her characters.

The author also believes in multiple attachments along with multiple belongings. But she is also critical about growing populist nationalism and tribalism. According to her, the norms and beliefs which divides the people should not be encouraged. She feels

It is lovely and very understandable for people to feel attached to the land they come from, to feel connected to the traditions of their ancestors, the culture, the music, the food, the folklore.... That is beautiful. The trouble starts the moment we divide humanity into “us versus them” and start to believe that “us” is better than “them”.

(Saha, “In Elif Shafak's world.”)

She has been constantly working to remove the barriers that define these rigid identities. Though she celebrates the diversity which according to her is the only way to democracy, she also believes in bridging the different cultures and traditions. In explaining her latest novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World*, Shafak says,

I like to bridge written culture and oral culture in my work. I like to bring together the Western canon of the novel with Anatolian and Balkan and Middle Eastern techniques of oral storytelling.

(ibid.)

In one of her articles in *The Guardian*, Shafak explains her views about Turkish politics to a European public. Her political ideas are very open-minded. Politics as per Shafak is not about the party politics but about political ideas on the, “core fundamental issues, like human rights, rule of law, freedom of speech, women’s rights, minority rights” (Rolley “These Truths: Fighting Words with Elif Shafak and John Freeman.”). She stresses on speaking up about all these issues. She admits that she cannot ignore politics while writing a novel but at the same time the politics of her country is not the guiding force when she writes a novel. Her novels have ‘political repercussions’ due to the presence of themes such as Armenian-Turkish conflict or incest or rape, things that are taboos in her country. Dealing with such taboo themes, she follows a path between being political and apolitical and discusses them without being polarized.

Regarding the religious views Shafak reveals that she is not religious but ‘interested in spirituality and mysticism and inner-oriented spiritual journeys all around the world.’ Her works are incarcerated in Eastern and Western traditions and have to offer the reader a synthesis of mystical motifs, legends and beliefs of different cultures.

She writes about Sufism-topic which is usually considered as a men's field. Inspired by the Spiritual Poem (Masnawi-and Ma'nawi) by Rumi she takes the quotes and poems directly from the poem in her novel *The Forty Rules of Love*. Every chapter of the novel starts with one rule of love. These principles are woven into the plot of the novel as a commentary on the situation of emerging characters. She interprets the concept of Sufism as a kind of Universal Spirituality, which is devoid of religious restrictions. For her Sufism is not a philosophy or ritual but simply a way of life. It is universal and all-embracing. Spirituality provides an inner journey transcending the limits of the self. "Muslims, Christians and Jews debate about the outer form of their worship, while Sufism concentrates on the inner form as it perceives religions in terms of unity with God. What is really important is the essence." (Sulejman 2015). She wants to provide the Westerners a new meaning of Sufism, who have always been both fascinated and intimidated by the Orient. Her main aim of inserting it in her novels is to present a unique feature of Sufism as the way of contact between an individual and God, without intermediaries. She wants to portray its presence in our daily life. When asked about the major role of Sufism in her works, she replies

In my novels Sufism is not introduced as a theoretical, abstract teaching. It is a living, breathing, moving, peaceful energy. I am interested in what Sufism means for us in the modern world. I wanted to bring out what how Rumi's philosophy appeals to us today, even when we seem to be miles and centuries and cultures away from it.

(Mundo)

Having grown up in an Islamic culture has made a Muslim writer as a part of her identity, but she has also grown up with Christian and Jewish friends that has helped her to expand her mind beyond her religion. It has opened her mind to come out the cocoon to learn other cultures full of diversity through those little doors. The same is reflected in her novels. As a novelist she beautifully creates several conflicting and co-existing cultures together in a world, "where good/bad, beautiful/ugly, West/East, modern/traditional, masculine/feminine and many other dualities are taken for granted." (Mulkerns, 2015) She through her works challenges these dualities.

Elif Shafak often talks about Turkey's ambiguous positioning between East and West in her interviews as well as in her novels. Bjorn Thomassen describes such places as, "Liminal places can be specific thresholds; they can also be more extended areas like borderlands or, arguably, whole countries situated in consequential in-between positions between larger civilizations" (Thomassen, *Liminality and the Modern* 57). In this context Turkey is a liminal country situated between Asia Minor and (Eastern) Europe and has territory both in the continents of Asia and Europe. Shafak's works reflect upon this cultural divide between East and West that has shaped so much of Turkish history in particular since the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The cultural meeting and its reflection in the novels themselves are significant traits of Shafak's works and this appears to be important for her success outside of Turkey. The in-between realm of liminality of Turkey is represented both in her fictional and non-fictional works. On a smaller scale, the major city, Istanbul, where almost all of Shafak's stories take place; is a city literally divided. The cultural liminality from which Shafak and her characters suffer originates from a foundational historical transformation – from the Islamic imperial state to the secular republican nation-state – happened almost a century ago.

The author believes that literature has no boundaries and this belief creates a relationship between her works and her transnationalism. She remarks, "Literature should take us beyond ourselves, beyond our comfort zones and mental ghettos, catapult us so far and so forcefully that when we come back, we should not be the same person any more" (Hodgkinson). She likes to connect people to distant lands and different cultures. Her novels do this job very aptly. As she belongs to those writers who have faced migration themselves, she is able to write a lot about the experiences of people leaving their home country for better opportunities. Most of her characters migrate to different nations to earn education, better life and money.

Elif Shafak's works reveal the neglected conditions of the powerless groups and show their distortion by the dominant groups. At the same time her novels portray these marginal groups defending and guiding themselves against their control by their canon to protect their independence, their capacity to oppose and their integrity. Her characters who generally are ignored, opposed or neglected have their strength in their liminal positions which may provide them the source of possibilities. Social disparaging

views of these characters are based on their intrinsic qualities. Some of the protagonists in Shafak's novels resist the marginalisation of women as she creates by allowing them to discover their own views about the society, the world and their statuses by drawing out their own point of view. Her novels do not limit themselves but tend to go deeper. Most of the protagonists are women so her novels fulfil a particular function of feminism as they are written by a woman for another women. They are full of information and act as an instrument in changing the principles of patriarchal society and according the central importance to what is generally considered peripheral and marginal.

Through her works, she revisits the past and interrogates it to better understand the way we live today, discussing the Armenian genocide of 1915 by Ottoman authorities in *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2006) to the life and philosophy of Rumi in *The Forty Rules of Love* (2010) to female identity, Islamic thought and the dangers of ideological dogma in her novel *Three Daughters of Eve* (2017). Her stories contain a wide internationalism and they drove across liminal spaces and identities. Even if politicians are erecting physical borders in our present day, Shafak's words show that their imaginative and intellectual borders are porous, open, forever shifting and hybrid.

The concept of liminality is pervasive in literature, most noticeable when characters grow, change, and learn about themselves or the world around them. As is the case in the "real world," when Shafak's characters in a text undergo a liminal experience, they experience real change. They become something so different from what they were before their liminal experience that they enforce us to re-evaluate our general expectations of them. These sorts of transformations signal the resolution of any narrative segments in which the maturation of a given character to the point of transformation is of central import. As we re-evaluate our expectations of the transformed character, our general expectations of the text become modified. Hence, the liminality present in her novels has the capacity to transform the readers also. Her narrative method is both surprising and interesting, as it tries to articulate that has not yet existed, which liminality always calls for. Shafak places the greatest degree of emphasis on the effects of liminality on her characters. As a result, the transformation of the character appears to drive the other effects of liminality.

Shafak negotiates the spaces between local and global while cutting across traditional gendered identities to pave the way to a discourse that aims to weave a transnational narrative of feminism. This attempt at transnationalism does not exclude the possibility of allegiances to groups or communities: “As members of a world community, [women] can think transnationally while retaining deep connections with a specific place, whether it be of birth, of choice or of compulsion” (Miriam Cook xxii). Cook adds that in this way “feminism is not bound to one culture. It is no more Arab than it is American, no more Mediterranean than it is North European” (ix).

Fictional Works Under Study

Being a daughter of a diplomat and having grown up in between the West and the East motivated Elif Shafak to write about themes of identity, cosmopolitanism, migration and trans-nationalism. She rejects the idea that ‘if you’re a woman writer from the Muslim world, like me, then you are expected to write the stories of Muslim women and, preferably, the unhappy stories of unhappy Muslim women’ (*Politics of Fiction*). Rather, she objects to this emphasis as she does not feel comfortable in a box to live a life of a ‘hermit and solely write novels.’ Shafak focuses on issues of female identity, history, politics and spirituality in her popular fiction. Her novels both adapt to and counters the dominant discourses in Turkey as well as in the Western world. On the one side they confront the hedonist and consumer reality of many Western European readers and on the other side they challenge the polarised, patriarchal and nationalist reality in Turkey. The novels under study are discussed to understand their narrative style, experimental ways of writing, use of colloquial language, settings, and themes.

Elif Shafak published her debut novel *Pinhan*, written in Turkish and translated as ‘The Mystic’ in 1997, for which she was awarded The Great Rumi Award in 1998 by Kombassan Trust. This award is given to best works in mystical/transcendental literature. *Pinhan* is the story of a hermaphrodite mystic who is in search of his/her own true identity. The novel presents the unification of time and gender in the process of construction of individuality of the protagonist who often find himself/herself on the threshold of identification. Presented as “double headed” in the opening of the novel, *Pinhan* forges into single headed woman passing through transformations transcending

space and time. As the English translation of the work is not available the present research does not include this work.

The Flea Palace (2004) (originally published in Turkish as *Bit Palas*) presents characters of various cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, and nationalities stranded in a “once grandiose”, now run-down, roach-infested apartment building called Bonbon Palace (76). These characters are migrants of a kind and inhabit Istanbul as spiritual or geographical exiles, like strangers in a city of strangers. The novel presents the alienation and liminality of the characters by negotiating their trajectories and troubles within the historical context of modernizing Istanbul. It represents Istanbul as analogous to the cultural history of its respective Turkish society. The diversity of characters compels the reader to think about the ‘Bonbon Palace’ not only as a witness to the history but very much of a living part of it and discloses one layer after another from the history of the city and the country.

The Saint of Incipient Insanities was published in 2004 and it is the first novel of Elif Shafak written in English. In Turkish it is titled as ‘Araf’ which means ‘the space of in-between’ or borderland between heaven and hell which aptly defines the characters’ emotions they feel in threshold. It is a narrative of three international characters that have come to the United States for Education and their stumbling relations with their American friends. As the title explains, it explores the themes of their fragmented existence in-between multiple languages, cultures, identities, nationalities and belongings. Fernanda Eberstadt, author of *The Furies* reviews the novel as, "Elif Shafak offers us an indelibly haunting portrait of contemporary America, in all its sexual/ethno/religious contortions. Goofy, sad, wise, and heartbreakingly funny, her novel is a bittersweet delight to read." The novel is divided into four interwoven parts telling the tales of characters who are on the verge of dichotomy of belongingness to either ‘here’ or ‘there’ or sometimes nowhere. Omar who is student from Istanbul, Turkey is on the margins of estrangement feels "oscillating madly between non-presence and omnipresence" (Shafak *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* 4) whereas his girlfriend Gail, a marginal American, finds herself unable to cope up with her hallucinations feels, “there always be a cavity, a loss, something missing from each and every entirety" (65). Abed, a restrictive Moroccan is unable to adapt American

culture. In the process of interiorizing the stereotypes of western culture, he always finds himself on the verge of irresolvable tension with his dichotomous identity. Piyu is a Spaniard, who on the other hand has fear of sharp objects but willing to become a dentist. Thus, the novel *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* portrays the characters on the transition across time, space and identity.

Shafak in her interview says, "I do have roots, but my roots are not in one place, neither in the ground nor in the air. I'm connected to different cultures, and that's, I think, part of the reason why I believe it's possible to be multicultural, multilingual and multifaith ". (Puranik, *Linguistic Cleansing*) The novel also offers the clear and complete patterns of these postmodern elements (multiculturalism and multilingualism) when dealing with the theme of migration, displacement and hybridity, projecting a postcolonial framework onto the Turkish context. It presents the two-sided identities of migrant characters, composed of assimilated front and attachment to their repressed ethnicity. While portraying it Shafak makes abundant use of expressions drawn from history to show their split identities on the verge of change. *The Publishers weekly* describes it as, 'This is a brave attempt at a post-9/11 story about immigrants in America, but Shafak flails in the 21st-century melting pot.' (2004). The novel addresses the interrelated issues of migration and trans-nationalism in a postcolonial, globalized and multicultural society.

Mahrem is Elif Shafak's third novel (entitled *The Gaze* in the English translation) which is published in 2000 in Turkey, and in 2006 in the UK. It offers a fictionalized engagement with the notion of gaze in various spatial and temporal configurations and interrogates contemporary, non-Western relationship between perceptions of the female body/subject as other. The novel has been longlisted for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize in 2007 and won the Turkish Writers Best Novel Award in 2000. As the English title of the novel suggests, it engages with various complex social, cultural, and political implications ascribed to the gaze and the gazer, offering a multifaceted circular debate on ways of seeing and being seen. The novel conveys unnamed protagonist's real and imagined journeys in her passage of life. The residence of the protagonist is called "the Hayalifener Apartments" (*The Gaze* 77) which means "Dream Lantern," in English that describes elusiveness, fluidity, and re-

inventiveness of the narrative that oscillates between different temporal and spatial probes. The plot provides the readers a spectacle through which binary oppositions of self/other, East/West, colonizer/colonized, normal/abnormal, and even human/non-human are confronted and dismantled. The novel shifts in between the contemporary and late nineteenth-century Istanbul oscillating between early nineteenth-century France, and seventeenth-century Siberia, and between 'reality', dream, legend and myth. It shows the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire's Westernising project, with its contrary fascination with the Western and the "new", and the contemporary world, with its obsession with physical conformity.

The Bastard of Istanbul published in 2006 is Elif Shafak's second novel in English. It was translated into Turkish and became a bestseller. It was listed for orange prize. It describes the theme of trans culturalism that blurs the boundaries between nations. Set in both the United States and Turkey, it confronts the family history of four generations of Kazancı and Tchakmakhchian families and their connections through the events of Armenian genocide in 1915. The novel is about the search of fragmented identity of Armanoush, the youngest daughter of Tchakmakhchian family and the protagonist of the novel, who plan to reveal the secret about the remaining part of herself in Turkey. She meets her cousin Asya with whom she explores the history of her family in Istanbul.

Bringing the dichotomous perspective of identity between Asya, the youngest Turkish member of Kazancı family and her American Armenian cousin Armanoush, Shafak oscillates the story across the two nations passing through a point of intersection where they find themselves on identical threshold. Though they belong to different lands they act as a link between their present and their past. Asya, who does not know about her father as her mother likes to keep it as a secret, is highly influenced by the western culture. She is uninterested to know her country's history and traditions as her generation is provoked by westernization leading her to have the feelings of alienation in her own country. She reflects a torn character on the threshold of the split identity between modernization and loyalty to one's own traditions. On the other hand, Armanoush who is second generation Armenian in America is keen to explore the reasons behind Armenian genocide which gave birth to the hatred in her father's family

towards Turkey and its people. Unlike her cousin Asya, she is deeply interested to discover her past in Turkey. The other characters also revive their past in their personal relations and provide a view how these events draw their marks upon their identities. Intermingling the real and imaginary, assimilation and memory, Shafak investigates the in-betweenness of Turkish identity of these characters as a clash of opposites. The novel compares the Turkish citizens in the US with their Turkish counterparts and brings out the better understanding of the ways their lives changed in the post-Ottoman period. Their individuality is divided between an assimilated outer self and repressed traditional one. Thus, the characters are the victims of this dilemma. With the presentation of alternate version of history of the country in the background, the novel narrates the tale of these families who are in search of their identity. The use of Islamic folklore and superstition in the novel shows that Shafak is inspired by postmodern themes and she has integrated them in her novel to focus on liminal position of characters in their struggle for location. Through the eyes of her characters, she laments the loss of pre-existing Turkish culture but at the same time she signifies the growth of cosmopolitanism in Turkey. Thus, the novel offers many insights regarding the in-between status of these characters in the East-West conflicting spaces.

In *The Forty Rules of Love*, published in 2009, Shafak writes about Sufism - topic which was usually considered as a men's field. For her debut, *Sufi*, she has received the Award of Rumi, a distinction awarded in the circle of mystical literature and this novel also oscillates around this mysticism. The author presents Sufism as a kind of Universal Spirituality, which is devoid of religious restrictions. Shafak characterizes Sufism a universal way of life without considering one's background. She explains

In my novels Sufism is not introduced as a theoretical, abstract teaching. It is a living, breathing, moving, peaceful energy. I am interested in what Sufism means for us in the modern world. I wanted to bring out what how Rumi's philosophy appeals to us today, even when we seem to be miles and centuries and cultures away from it. (Shafak, "The Story behind the Forty Rules of Love")

It interprets great philosophy of love by Rumi and Sufi Mystic Shams of Tabriz of thirteenth century along with a parallel story of love between Ella and Aziz belonging

to contemporary world. Ayers argues in her review “Finding Harmony in All”, Shafak’s novel “cross[es] the bounds of time, culture and belief” (42). Moving between the 13th century Turkey and present-day United States and mingling the past and present, the novel shows the similarities between two eras by providing the feeling and understanding every detail of a story that is in no way an ordinary one. Although Shafak brings these contrasting characters belonging to diverse geographical and cultural distances yet she binds them together through a common mystic oneness called as love. The novel involves the readers in a type of mediation in a discursive process of understanding of the relationship between thirteen century Sufi Mewlana Rumi and Shams of Tabriz (his spiritual mentor) and its impact on the life of Ella, (a contemporary American housewife with a family of three children) and her love with writer of the novel *Sweet Blasphemy* at the age of forty. She provides us comprehensive understanding of feelings of both Rumi of historical times and Ella of present age. Throughout the novel, Shafak tries to oscillate us between Konya and Boston for intercultural interpretation of Sufi philosophy and its effects on us. *Sweet Blasphemy* brings out the impact of Shams of Tabriz – a wandering dervish on that of the philosopher and poet Rumi, turning him into a real Sufi. “The two become inseparable, and as Shams shares the liberating “forty rules of love”, Rumi becomes a rebel mystic, the inventor of the “ecstatic dance” of the whirling dervishes, and a fervent and cherished poet.” (Seaman) The novel reinforces us in placing ourselves within that historical situation to observe it more closely. The minor characters of the novel also entail a process of understanding the text that occurs across the different cultures. Though they belong to different centuries and places, their contradictory coexistence is helpful in finding the similarities between them. It became an all-time best-seller in both in France and Turkey It got the award with the Prix ALEF - Mention Spéciale Littérature Etrangère. It was also chosen for International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award in 2012. It has been listed as one of the one hundred most influential novels by BBC News in 2019.

Honour (2011) is Shafak’s ninth novel, her fourth written in English and her initially set in London. The novel traces three ages of the Turkish-Kurdish Toprak family from Istanbul and the Euphrates to London and the common factor of honour

which is prevalent throughout these three generations. The Telegraph (UK) aptly comments on Shafak's narrative techniques in *Honour* as: "Shafak is an unflinching writer.... this is vivid storytelling...a gripping exploration of the darkest aspect of faith and love". The novel relates the story of twin sisters Jamila and Pembe who are staying far from each other (Jamila stays in Kurdish village whereas Pembe migrates to London with her family) yet are bonded strongly through their nostalgic letters. When Jamila visits her sister, Pembe's son Iskender murders her in spite of his mother. Pembe after the death of her sister moves to Jamila's place behaving as her sister to suppress the pain of nostalgia. She looks her sister's world through her own eyes. Passing through various phases of in-betweenness in moving from Turkey to London and then back to Turkey Pembe undergoes the experiences of detachment and attachment.

The novel also deals with the misleading meaning of honour killing of females who the perpetrators of religion or society believe have brought shame to the family by violating the moral and ethical code preached by them. It explores this theme of honour killing not only from victim but also from perpetrator's point of view. But it goes into the psyche of perpetrator who out of his mental illness or perpetual cultural pressure commits this crime. Hence it deals with the psychopathic conditions of the executer and provides clues to understand the cause and effect of it to the readers. It also deals with the impact of the honour killing on other characters of the novel. It presents the psychological pressure behind the murder of a mother by a son who is worshipped by her, in the name of honour. It also offers clear evidence that violence goes hand in hand with the inherited traditional beliefs and practices. It asserts us to comprehend the factors behind man like Iskender responsible for committing the honour killing of his mother to resolve the problem of violence against women. Delving deep into the psyche of characters, the novel presents the fluidity of their identity when they are unable to locate themselves to anywhere.

Three Daughters of Eve (2016) also titled as *Confused Quest* is about mixing faith and doubt. The story focuses on protagonist Peri and her interest in matters of belief and uncertainty on religion. As the title of the novel portrays, it revolves around three young women Shirin the Sinner, Mona the Believer, and Peri the Confused and a common man between them, Professor Azur who teaches God. Since the beginning of

the story Peri is shown to rove across liminal spaces and identities. She belongs to the city of Istanbul with conservative society on the threshold of consuming western culture. Even her parents show dichotomy in their beliefs. Her father is secular whereas her mother is stern believer in God. Oscillating between her parents' ideologies, she finds herself stuck between belief and uncertainty. In order to search her true identity, she moves to Oxford and studies God from professor Azur but finds herself in liminal conditions of ambiguity.

10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World is Shafak's eleventh novel which was shortlisted for the Booker prize in 2019. The novel is about a prostitute Tequila Leila of Istanbul and her five outcast friends. It discusses difficulties they face in making their lives endurable in a city in constant flux. The novel starts as a flashback where Leila who is assaulted, tries to remember her past life in last 10 minutes 38 seconds when her heart stops but her mind continues to operate. She recalls her journey of life from her birth in the city of Van to her death as a prostitute. It is a captivating and daring novel confronting sexual violence along with "bringing Istanbul's underworld to life." Structurally the novel is divided into three parts: mind, body, and soul. Shafak has used food as an approach to study Turkish cultural values. She associated each of her memory with food and its taste and smell. Leila's transformation and Turkey's social conditions are juxtaposed in the novel. Cultural clashes and religious ideologies are of East and West and past and present are vividly portrayed.

The above discussed novels are investigated under the light of liminality given by Victor Turner to understand the themes, situations and effects of liminality on the character's physical as well as psychological transformation.

Conclusion

Shafak's novels combine two worlds: the traditional and the ultra-modern. Two totally opposite concepts function equally in her books, which are deep studies of beliefs, rituals and folk knowledge. She offers a synthesis of different styles and conventions by combining Eastern techniques of storytelling with a Western literary style. Genies and ghosts live next to ordinary people, as in ancient times. The characters represent dual worlds. Their behaviour is permeated with the seemingly opposite values

of the Eastern and Western worlds. This chapter of the research concludes at this point that the above discussed information related to the works of the author will be dealt with in the following chapters in further studying of her novels. The spatio-temporal phases of liminality and other related concepts would be explored in these novels to discuss the tripartite stages of liminality of these characters as suggested by Genep in his Rites of Passage and further explained by Victor Turner. The brief discussion of the author, her ideology and the various themes of her novels are necessary as they lay the foundation to the research for the application of Turner's liminality in Elif Shafak's works.

CHAPTER 3

Liminal Personae and Communitas

We always talk about identity, we fight for identity, sometimes we kill for identity. But why is that? Why can't we talk about belongings? Multiple belongings.

Elif Shafak

The present chapter identifies the liminal personae in the novels of Elif Shafak by implementing Victor Turner's liminality. It aims to explicate the liminal spaces occupied by the characters in these novels and analyse their liminal identities. Most of the major characters in these novels feel themselves struck in a space where their previous identities and statuses have been lost and their new identities are yet to be achieved, forcing them to be in state of uncertainty. It reveals how their liminal positions produce connection between people, society and nations and create changes in their social and cultural life. Liminality act as the transformers of their culture and their lifestyle which is a combination of both their native and adopted culture. Some of Shafak's novels for instance *The Saint of Incipient Insanities*, *Three Daughters of Eve* and *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* present these liminal Entities forming a group of equals among themselves which Turner define as 'Communitas'. Also, the setting of some of her novels presents the liminal spaces with the anti-structural situations which assist the characters to develop a sense of communitas among themselves. Thus. the setting of the novels provides the in-between space to the characters leading them to spatial and situational liminality. The chapter discusses the liminal entities, liminal spaces and presence of liminal periods in these fictional works.

Turkey witnessed a transition period beginning with the Turkish War of Independence in 1919 to 1923 when it established the republican nation-state and observed a change from the multilingual, hybrid and heterogenized Ottoman realm to a monolingual and homogenized nation-state. Even after that Turkey has undergone several reformations as part of the Westernization-modernization projects. These projects targeted to achieve the level of the contemporary West under the name of modernization resulting a dislocated liminal identity. It led Turkey to oscillate between two selves as the original self and the imposed other. In an effort to achieve

Westernization, Turkish original-self turned to the negative self and the Ottoman cultural heritage was rejected. In this process of transformation to accept the standards of the West, the memories of the Ottoman past lost their essence. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the first elected president of the Republic of Turkey, started fast westernization process immediately after the establishment of the Republic enforcing the traditional culture to feel rootless in Turkey. He denied the Ottoman heritage both culturally and politically. He focussed on the nation building project by forgetting the ancestral myths and traditions. Canefe considers Kemalist's strategy as "an alarming degree of amnesia institutionalized by the Turkish nation-state" (139) leading to shift and transformation from 'flavours of Ottomanism' to Ottoman modernisation and in order to do so, "Turkish nationalists have gone to great lengths to silence the Ottoman heritage of the new nation and its state in virtually every area of life, including memories of the previous demographic and cultural make-up of Asia Minor" (Canefe 148). Therefore, under the name of the nation-building project, Kemalist ideology settled on an effacement of past which caused a sort of liminal identity crisis in Turkey.

Having aimed to remove itself from the link with the past, the Turks were deprived of their centuries-long habits and rituals which were embedded deep in their unconscious. They experienced state of liminality which according to Turner occurs with, "the loss of their preliminal names, by the removal of clothes, insignia and other indicators of preliminal status" (*Variations on a Theme of Liminality* 37). They were placed in in-between situation where they were eradicated from their parent culture and were introduced to a quite unfamiliar Western Culture. The newly established identity that Turkey tried to attain identified the Ottoman cultural heritage as irrational, backward, exotic, superstitious and incompatible and which must be excluded to embrace modernisation. But it involved the distortion of their centuries old culture. Samuel Huntington, an American political scientist, in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996) refers Turkey as a 'torn country' standing on the threshold between Western and Islamic civilizations. He explains that in seeking to affiliate with another civilization, the political leadership of Turkey imposed Western traditions on the people which were deprived of their Islamic ethnicities (42). Huntington speculated that this effort for the affiliation increased the contact between the cultures and civilizations brought due to the forces of globalization and immigration

resulting in conflicts between them. The contradictions between the two cultures are so deep that they do not allow the crossing of the threshold making Turkey a ‘torn country’ in the effort to become part of the West. The ‘betwixt and between’ identity of Turkey does not permit it to belong to either Asia or Europe. Observing the bridge position of Turkey Huntington remarks that, “when Turkey’s leaders term their country a bridge, they euphemistically confirm that it is torn” (149). This argumentation stresses the problem of liminal identity of Turkey.

All these socio-cultural changes affected directly the Turkish literature also. Beginning with the Tanzimat reforms modern period in Turkish literature experienced the influence of Western thought and literature upon Turkish writers to transform Turkish literary scene. In the context of the Western cultural invasion, the fiction writers dramatized the conflict between traditionalism and new Western ideas. In the mid 19th century, novel emerged as a new genre in Turkish literature. Various literary movements before and after the official establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 made an impact on the novel writing in Turkey. Certain fiction writers imitated the literary style of the West whereas the other group tried to produce a unique Turkish variety of literature. Some of the Turkish novelists wrote on nationalism and modernization and focussed on raising social issues in their works. A great number of Turkish writers based their fictions on the theme of East-West encounter and illustrated the conflict in their ideologies and cultures. The translation of these works into different languages across the world brought them the recognition and helped them to carve a distinguished position for Turkish fiction in the world’s literature. Orhan Pamuk’s Nobel Prize for literature (2006) took Turkish literature to a new height at an international level.

Elif Shafak is a serious contender to Pamuk’s success as a writer, through her novels provides new insights on the tensions and conflicts between different groups within Turkish society while passing through the passage of transformation as well as on the way Turkish people are perceived abroad. Her novels function as cultural narratives that facilitate the understanding of the impact of globalization on the contemporary liminal identity of Turkey and Turkish people trying to settle abroad. Shafak does not believe in any certainties or categorical imperatives and presents a dynamic view of culture that is always evolving and subject to change in her works.

The use of liminal space in her works of fiction helps the readers to understand the literal and figurative dimensions of liminality. She beautifully crafts the cultural transformation as a result of the constant flow of objects, people, and imaginations. The cultural liminality from which her characters spring reflects the transitional memory of Shafak as well as of Turkey. Portraying the myths, memories and traditions of Turkish ethnic heritage she provides us the glimpses of traditions pertaining to Turkish way of life and memories and symbols of multi-ethnic and multireligious Turkish culture in her works.

The novels of Elif Shafak carries varying themes and settings that act as symbolic representation of socio-cultural problems prevailing in Turkey. She also captures the feelings of nostalgia of Turks who are understood primarily as Western Europeans in relation to their supposed glorious past and status in the discourse of their identity formation where they are neither this, nor that, neither here, nor there, having an in-between social category. Shafak gives her attention to those voices that were previously inexistent in the history of Turkish traditionalist community like women, sexual minorities, ethnic minorities etc and analyse from more liberal perspectives. Through her fiction she always tries to bring back stories and subjects that have been either forgotten or buried and often talks about political and sexual taboos. While portraying this she presents the characters torn between their traditional roots and present modernity. Elif Shafak's fiction will hence be analyzed based on Turner's liminality and liminal entities.

Liminal Characters in the Novels of Elif Shafak

Elif Shafak has portrayed the liminal existence of her characters and their unusual instability during the intermediary phase in most of her novels. They are the fictional beings who undergo changes, and change happens during their liminal phases where they experience dislocation from the world they knew followed by ordeals, setbacks, and revelations. As they progress through these stages they experience transition from immaturity to maturity, innocence to knowledge, or idealism to realism and finally they emerge changed people with changed values. The change infuses in them a sense of the unexpected which draws readers' attention to the decisions and actions such liminal characters make. In their process of change, Shafak represents them frequently at war with their competing nature in order to cope with the uncertainty

of change. To understand this, the liminal characters, liminal spaces and liminal periods in the novels of Elif Shafak have to be explored.

In *Mahrem (The Gaze)* (2006) liminality is represented through the characters as well as through the spaces. Though the novel is set in different time periods it carries a common theme of looking at people specially the deformed ones and judging them for their physical appearances. Using gaze as a tool Shafak depicts liminal situations of her characters exhibiting of their physical oddities and marvels. The unnamed protagonist who is an overweight woman, her lover B-C who is a dwarf, the Sable-girl, a hybrid character who is neither a human nor an animal, Mehmet who is born out of a normal womb but his birth is “extraordinary” (34), La Belle Anabelle who is inexplicably the product of genetic combination and a ghost from a legend causing the “shameful intercourse” (134) are some of the characters who are disabled and are viewed as being in a ‘liminal’ state, as in the liminal phases of *The Rites of Passage* (1960) proposed by Genep. They are persons having an undefined status they are neither ill nor normal, neither conventional nor socially removed.

The Flea Palace (originally published in Turkish as *Bit Palas* in 2002) presents characters of various cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, and nationalities stranded in a “once grandiose”, now run-down, roach-infested apartment building called Bonbon Palace (76). They are the migrants inhabiting the place as strangers. These refugees/migrants as ‘liminars’ navigate between their past and future. Agripina Fyodorovna Antipova and General Pavel Pavlovich Antipov, owner of Bonbon Palace are the Russian refugees. They are dispossessed by the Bolshevic Revolution and come to Istanbul, but due to the loss of their daughter they move to France. But they return to Istanbul to substitute their loss with owning a home in Istanbul. Oscillating between their experience of loss, suffering, fragility, and violence in search of a better life they experience many challenges while facing their communities of origin, transit and destination. Another character Madam Auntie, who rents Pavel and Agripina’s apartment, is a liminal character who mourns the death of her husband along with the decline of the old city. She symbolizes a relic of Ottoman times who even “didn’t belong to this age” (Shafak *The Flea Palace* 412). She remains withdrawn to solitude due to her uncertain state of melancholy. In the Liminality’s point of view, the liminal personae are separated from their previous life, values and sentiments and are

alternatively forced to think about it. In the text, "Betwixt and Between: Liminal Period in the Rites of Passage," Turner describes liminality as a "stage of reflection and is a realm of primitive hypothesis, where there is a certain freedom to juggle the factors of existence" (53). Madam Auntie as a liminal persona is at that stage of reflection of her memories and events. She is at a threshold, "Unlike the others, she had not popped up out of nowhere, turning her back to a future that never came and a past that was never left behind" (Shafak 90). And being in that phase exposed a vulnerable and lonelier side of her. The narrator of the novel, the professor of political philosophy, is another ambiguous character. He, an unreliable alcoholic, is the tenant of Bonbon Palace who is detained for his participation in May 1st protests. By mixing truth and deception to make up his characters' joy and misery for the sake of narrating a story makes him an unreliable narrator who keeps his readers in a state of limbo. Deeply unhappy with his life the narrator he is portrayed as an ambiguous character transitioning between atheist philosopher and believer whose art of storytelling act as a cure for himself.

Victor Turner associated liminality with 'Communitas' which he described as a feeling of kinship with others that comes from shared experiences. The tenants of Bonbon Palace that range from Turks and foreigners, Muslims and non-Muslims, illiterates and educated living together sharing their experiences of pleasure and grief in that liminal space form an association which can be regarded as Turner's Communitas. Their permanent integration in the city which provides them a temporary home at the apartment building brings them together as a community to settle for a while after their transnational migrancy. Thus, *The Flea Palace* is a novel which brings these liminal people from different nations, languages, and religions, together emphasizing the importance of their coexistence as Communitas. It reveals a sense of collective belongingness within the microcosm of buildings' residents. Their connection presents the readers with a particularly unfettered form of relationship, but one that occurs primarily in liminal environments. They can be seen as a community in a dichotomous relationship with society.

The Saint of Incipient Insanities (2004) is also full of instances of liminality in its characters. It is the first novel of Elif Shafak written in English. In Turkish, it is titled as 'Araf' which means 'the space of in-between' or borderland between heaven and hell which aptly defines the characters' emotions they feel in threshold. As the title

explains, it explores the themes of the fragmented existence in-between multiple languages, cultures, identities, nationalities and belongings of its characters. It tells the story of three foreign Ph.D. students and their American friends in the United States experiencing the common problem of estrangement in a foreign land. Ömer is an alcoholic, sex and drug addict student from Istanbul, Turkey studying Political Science while Abed, a strict Muslim from Morocco studying biochemistry, unable to adapt American culture, and Piyu (Joaquin) is a cleaning addict Spaniard studying dentistry who is ironically afraid to hell of sharp objects such as knives. Despite their differences, they share a quite common issue: being a stranger on a strange land. Omar who is on the margins of estrangement feels "oscillating madly between non-presence and omnipresence" (Shafak 4). His confusion in identifying his place and identity reflects his liminality where, "'Lost" was precisely what he was, and what he had been more than anything for the last five, ten, fifteen years of his life" (Shafak 14). Abed always finds himself on the verge of irresolvable tension with his dichotomous identity. His identity as an Arab always keeps him in a constant stream of thinking that something bad will happen anywhere he goes. Piyu whose name is actually Joaquin as 'likes' to be called Piyu as he does not want to deal with the struggle of spelling his name to every American, he meets. Due to their ambiguous identities all three of them find themselves in the liminal space where they are temporarily exempt from the usual strictures of their social roles, in effect they 'evade ordinary cognitive classification' (Turner 1977, 37)

Omar's girlfriend Gail is a marginal American, who always finds herself unable to cope up with her hallucinations feels, "there always be a cavity, a loss, something missing from each and every entirety" (Shafak 65). She suffers from manic-depressive disorder, and paces between the extreme poles of human emotion. She is earlier known as Zarpanit (the name of a Babylonian Goddess). She like Omer (whom she later marries) experiences the similar 'betwixt and between' conditions of liminality. Various illustrations from the novel reflect her state of ambiguity and anxiety. She tries several unsuccessful suicide attempts which show her "undecidability" and "uncertainty." Finally, she accomplishes her goal by jumping from the bridge in Istanbul. Her death shows a characteristic that Turner defines as essential to the liminal state and finally attain the ultimate assimilation that comes at the end of liminality. He

linked liminality to, “liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness.” (Turner, 1969, 110).

Turner in his *Social Drama* describes that in the redressive stage liminal spaces encourages both reflective and reflexive activity within the group of liminal personae where their meaning can be rediscovered - or discovered anew - rather than imposed. The characters of *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* ‘take stock of their current situation: the nature and strength of their social ties, the power of their symbols, the effectiveness of their legal and moral controls, the sacredness of their religious traditions’ (Turner, 1985, 40). Together they pass through the phase of uncertainty about their future as ‘Communitas’ whom Turner describes as, ‘essentially an unmediated relationship between historical, idiosyncratic, concrete individuals’ (Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* 45). Their union arise from the experience of their dislocations and deprivations. They see each other outside of any usual social indicators to do with hierarchy, class, role expectation, age or the like They do not have a sense of belonging neither to the country they live in, nor to their homelands they left behind.

The Bastard of Istanbul portrays traumatic cultural memory of the Armenian Genocide in 1915 by the survivors who are relocated as American diasporas after the Armenian massacre. The novel presents their in-between situations and conditions of culture where their earlier established structures are dislocated, and they are yet to assimilate the future culture. They are unable to both forget the trauma of their families and forgive the perpetrators of the massacre. Oscillating between Turkish-Armenians and American-Armenians as two conflicting identities, they find themselves belong to ‘neither here nor there’ but in between their restless traumatized past and alternative future. The novel deals with the historical reality of systematic mass murder and expulsion of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire during and after the first World War. Shafak discusses these events and the agony these atrocities caused to the Turks and Armenians through the story of two families, one American-Armenian- the Tchakhmakhchian family and the other one is the Kazanci family from Turkey, both having their ancestors who used to live together peacefully for centuries as one big family. Both these families in the novel have their dark secrets in their past which are revealed in the novel to present the characters on a threshold between their

connectedness and their disjuncture. These families are portrayed as 'liminal entities' who are the ethnic communities separated by a historical conflict and are now at the intervening period of transition. Armenians who are scattered in Tucson, Arizona, and San Francisco after their dispersal both accept and reject the cultural values of these places. As they have left their homeland behind, they have to renounce their one part to accept the other. During this passage of transition, they pass through a situation that Victor Turner described as 'betwixt and between' (Turner, *The Ritual Process*).

Armanoush Tchakhmakhchian, a younger member of the American- Armenian family, is portrayed as a link between the Tchakhmakhchian family and the Kazanci family. She is a daughter of Armenian father Barsam and American mother Rose. Her mother gives divorce to Barsam and marries Mustafa, a Turk. Therefore, with Armenian father and Turkish step-father, Armanoush is the character who suffers from her liminal multicultural position the most. She is ambivalent of her true identity and is presented as a focal point around which the liminality of other characters revolves. Struck between these dichotomous identities she feels,

-- being torn between two clashing states of existence. On the one hand, the remnants of the past pile up-a womb of tenderness and sorrow, a sense of injustice and discrimination. On the other hand, glimmers the promised future-a shelter decorated with the trimmings and trappings of success, a sense of safety like you have never had before, the comfort of joining the majority and finally being deemed normal. (Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul* 116)

Rose is another character whom Shafak portrays as a 'liminal entity' who undergoes the transition while passing from one stage in her life to another through marriage as 'rites de passage'. She is. "-repeatedly accused of being a slipshod housewife and a terrible mother" (36) by her mother-in-law, 'Shushan-the-Omnipotent-Matriarch' (36). Belonging to a simple American family, she finds herself unable to cope up with the mammoth Armenian family of her husband Barsam. She begins to feel that she has entered an in-between space where her former way of being is challenged or changed. Her culture collides with that of her husband's, "Rose had always felt like an outsider there, always aware of being an odar-this gluey word that had stuck on her from the very first day" (ibid.).

Tchakhmakhchians have moved to America as a refugee family, but they still carry the burden of the Turkish violent history and their rootlessness. Langdon in his book *Ritual Passages and Narrative Structures* (1991) describes liminality as a catalyst that, “both initiates and becomes the process of change” (20). Liminality initiates the change by making the individual free from the earlier structures of custom and routine and it brings the change in the individual through this process by allowing them to be other than they have been. He further asserts that the individual emerges as a different person after passing through this phase of ambiguity and uncertainty with a new status. The indifferent attitude of Turks in general and Kazanci family in particular is an example highlighting the change that Langdon described. After so many years of the Genocide have passed, they still negate their participation in it. Unlike the Tchakhmakhchians who are possessed and captivated by their traumatized memories of the past atrocities and are still under the transitional phase, the Kazanci family have assimilated and shared a sense of nihilism and have passed the liminal phase and have emerged out of this process of change. They believe in present life and have obliterated the memory of stained history of violence.

A few characters in the novel *The Forty Rules of Love* are important for the analysis as they are subject to liminality and liminal events. The novel is a narrative in which past, present, and space are enfolded together in confronting the traditional and the postmodern while describing the two periods (thirteenth century and twenty first century). Through the protagonist Ella Rubinstein, Shafak portrays the loneliness and isolation of the post-modern society. And to cope with it she presents another protagonist Shams of Tabriz, a teacher of Sufism whom Ella encounters while reviewing the manuscript of a novel entitled *Sweet Blasphemy*. Both the characters pass through liminal stage in their passage of life where they undergo transitions and transformations. Ella is introduced as a person in desire of her own space, reality, identity, and transformation. She is on the verge of emotional breakdown due to her frustration and depression as her marriage lacks love and compassion. She is in want of inner peace and often thinks, “One day she would abandon it all: her kitchen, her dog, her children, her neighbors, her husband” (*The Forty Rules of Love*, 64). In the liminal phase of her life, she feels the tiresome and the spiritual emptiness in her. She is mentally weakened which is reflected in her activities like her passive and docile

attitude towards her family and her sense of vulnerability in her quest of love. The life in the liminal phase of Ella is perplexed and shattered. Her transformation begins when she starts reading *Sweet Blasphemy* by Aziz Zahara. The manuscript acts as a catalyst for her as it helps her to escape from her emptiness and leads her to a world of inner peace and love.

Sweet Blasphemy reveals the story of spiritual relationship between Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi, a famous Persian Sufi poet, and Shams of Tabriz, the 13th century wandering Persian Sufi Dervish. Both these characters become liminal personae when they meet each other. The affinity between Rumi and Shams leads Rumi to another phase of his life by slowly separating the previous phase of his being a preacher. This is the phase where he achieves spiritual transformation. While passing through a spatial journey of religion and love, Rumi acquires a new meaning of his life.

With the parallel portrayal of the two protagonists (Ella and Rumi) Shafak describes how they both as the liminal beings grow estranged from their ordinary lives and meet their true selves in those in-between stages of their life. Both of them in their want of a spiritual companion meet their partners whom they can open their heart and embrace a more spiritual lifestyle with. Shams of Tabriz can also be categorized as a liminal character because he also undergoes transformation and experiences the transition while living with Rumi. His bond with Rumi has therapeutic function for both. In order to liberate Rumi from his old self, Shams himself becomes the reincarnation of Rumi. In the same way Aziz undergoes drastic changes in the process of uprooting Ella from her stagnant self. He is amazed to see his love for Ella at this stage of his life when he is about to die. He embraces Ella to reach their completion as soulmates.

Desert Rose the harlot in a brothel in Konya reaches her liminal period where she has to struggle physically and emotionally. She as a liminal figure in the novel faces in-between situation where she feels she neither belongs to her past nor has any future left for her. She is on the threshold where she is rejected by the society as being the whore which makes her think, “Why is it that although people say they hate seeing women prostitute themselves, the same people make life hard for a prostitute who wants to repent and start life anew? It is as if they are telling us they are sorry that we have fallen so low, but now that we are where we are, we should stay there forever.” (116)

Trapped in the brothel she feels that her liminal phase of the whorehouse would be her eternal liminality. Prolong existence of a person in a temporal liminal phase arises a situation of permanent liminality. Rose starts thinking the life in brothel is her only way of living until Shams guides her to come out of this phase and to follow the path of God. He makes her realise that life is not shameful as she thinks of and rather, she should respect herself if she wants respect from others. The words of Shams cast a magic spell on her and she decides to exit that place and move beyond her limits. Thus, the liminal phase of her life results in her transition.

Liminality discovered in the characters and settings in the novel *Honour* is mainly concerned with the community of migrants who try to create their own spaces in the new country and who as the wanderers find their integration to a new society much harder. The novel covers an intertwining story of a half Kurdish and half Turkish family in London in the late 1970s where their past and present are knitted together. It contains many characters in their movement in-between time and space that reroutes them in cross-border reformulations. These characters are on the verge of change of in between two identity constructions bringing the notion of 'betwixt and between' developed by Turner. They as the liminal entities experience their transformation while living in London to settle permanently abandoning the Kurdish village beyond the banks of the Euphrates. Their displacement makes them liminal who belong neither to their native land nor to their host country. The difference in their methods to cope with their struggle mark the distinction between the elder generation and the younger generation who find their own way to deal with the part of struggle with their own tools. Pembe Kader and Jamila Yeter, the twin daughters, protagonists of the novel, portray liminal beings in the story who pass through their rites of passage and undergoes transformation. Both the sisters are much attached to each other in spite of their differences. Pembe is shown as a bold character who loves to learn Turkish but couldn't complete her studies because their society is against female education. On the other hand, Jamila is a sober and contented with what she has received from destiny. She never questions God even when Adam who has earlier proposed her for marriage marries her sister Pembe for the sake of honour. Both of them enter their state of liminality due to Adam who rejects the one who loves him for the other whom he never loves. The incident makes a deep impact on their psyche turning them transitional

characters whom Turner calls, “betwixt and between’ all the recognized fixed points. They meet their ends differently due to another character Iskender who confuses his mother with his aunt Jamila, and stabs his aunts by mistake for the sake of family honour. Iskender is imprisoned for his crime that begins his liminal phase where he introspects his life and undergoes the transformation that liminality results in. Esma, his sister, on the other hand is a balanced character who believes in education and equality. She is an in-between character between his elder brother Iskender who is dominant and aggressive and Yunus, who as the embodiment of the trans-nationalism and the representative of the young generation believes in forgiveness. “While Iskender wanted to rule the world, Esma wanted to change it totally, Yunus had only one wish – to understand it. That’s all.” (120)

Three Daughters of Eve (2016) is a novel where the presence of liminality is much evident and where the setting and the situational existence of the characters can be significantly explored through the lens of Liminality proposed by Victor Turner. The protagonist Nazperi Nalbantoglu- Peri has the betwixt and between status the characteristic feature of liminality in the novel. She is a torn character divide between her mother Selma, a strict devout and zealot Muslim and father Mansur, a petulant and atheist. Everyday she is exposed to religious and political dissonances at home. These conflicts make a deep impact on her psyche making her a ‘confused’ character. Moreover, there are differences in Peri’s brothers which further make her a split personality. Her elder brother Umut is a Leftist while her younger brother Hakan is an “irredeemably religious and excessively nationalistic” (27) journalist. In order to keep herself neutral to both her parents she remains in a state of dilemma. Her situation becomes similar to the “Mute Poet’, a famous Ottoman poet who has resided in that area and has decided to keep himself mute until he gets suitable reward from the Sultan for his work. The street where Peri lives is named after the “Mute Poet”. Peri remains a liminal person throughout the novel. When she moves to London for higher studies, she meets Shirin, a faithless Iranian-British Muslim woman and Muna, devout Egyptian-American woman. They echo her parents Mensur and Salma who belong to opposite poles constantly arguing with each other to proves themselves correct. Here also Peri remains divided between the two. Shafak has aptly labelled Shirin, Mona and Peri as “*Three Muslim women in Oxford: the Sinner, the Believer and the Confused*”

(315). They are the leading characters who are liminal beings by virtue of being in the process of change, or agents of change. And peri one of them who is at war with opposing natures. As liminal entities they have the power to influence readers by assisting us cope with the uncertainty of change and the insecurity of not knowing what comes next in our lives.

10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World (2019) is another text for analysis to identify those characters involved in liminality. It throws light on how under the lens of liminality Shafak's protagonist Leila attains a liminal status in those final moments of her life and how she takes on the "betwixt and between" characteristics that Turner defines as essential to the liminal state and finally attains the ultimate assimilation that comes at the end of liminality. The Booker prize short listed novel of British-Turkish writer Elif Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* vividly highlights various characteristics of liminality: the threshold, death and uncertainty. The novel traces the passage route of dead but not yet departed protagonist Leila from the pre-liminal stage to the stage of consummation. Her transformation from being a daughter of a conservative household in Eastern Turkey to a sex worker and finally to a brutally murdered corpse gives the idea of her passage of life full of efforts of her making a way through an unreceptive strange world. In her liminal state Leila finds herself in a state of 'limbo' where none of the attributes of the preceding or subsequent social or cultural states exists (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 24). It is identified with its major characteristics as ambiguity, social changes, uncertainty and suffering. Her identity along with her name undergoes a change, "as Tequila Leila." (Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*, 28). The novel also explores other characters with life experiences as outcasts and marginals as liminals as they remain in the peripheries, where their voice is not heard and they are not often noticed but they retain their humanity despite a world bent on crushing them at every turn. They are Leila's five friends whom she calls as her chosen family. The five friends, Nostalgia Nalan, Jameelah, Zaynabi¹²², Sabotage Sinan and Hollywood Humeyra share a common characteristic of those who are socially unacceptable people as they refuse to play the norms of society. Turner considers them to be an innate capability for humans, one that could arise in 'the workshop, village, office, lecture room, theatre, almost anywhere' (Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* 45). All of them have

their past full of cruelty and the harshness which has hardened them into cynicism and bitterness. But in spite of being the outcasts, they enjoy their marginalisation and apartness from the society together.

Nalan, Leila's bravest friend, is a transgender whom Leila meets in prison. A liminal person who remains somewhere in-between the binary categories of female or male, Nalan represents the marginal character. Jameelah, another member of Leila's chosen family, is a young slim African girl who suffers clashes with her stepmother and joins the congregation to remain connected to her dead mother. But she finds herself unable to be a part of the family of believers. At this stage she finds herself 'Betwixt and Between' the family she has left for attaining peace in church, "Once again she found herself alone, without family or church" (Shafak *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*, 145). To escape from this uncertainty, she along with forty more people mostly women move to Istanbul to get a job. Like Leila she also gets entrapped and soon realises, "it was a sham – a pretext to bring people in as cheap labour and for sexual exploitation – it was too late for her to escape" (76). She enters the stage where she feels that her life is going nowhere, that she is invisible, everything seems ambiguous, and she goes through a death-like experience as she has to say goodbye to her past identity and status. But her yearning to get freedom never stops.

Zaynab, a short Arab with a height of mere 122 centimetres is a cleaning worker at brothel who is often mocked at due to her short height. She moves to Istanbul with big dreams that get shattered and she gets a job in brothel, and enters into Tequila Leila's life as another liminal character. In a striking contrast to Leila's other friends, Sinan, the only male friend among the group, is portrayed deliberately a coward to show a liminal figure, a mediator who stands between the category of male dominant society and the world of these female outcasts. Humeyra is a singer at a music hall near Leila's brothel who runs away from her husband and his cruel family stealing her mother-in-law's bracelets and moves to Istanbul. She gets herself a fake ID and changes her physical appearance and identity and join the group of her friends. All of them have distanced themselves from their earlier identities leading to the homogenisation of their current status as undesirables and a strong sense of structure of 'Communitas'. The novel presents a strong bond between these marginal characters and this bond act as a

motivational factor to resist the social injustice they face. Turner calls such a bond as ‘spontaneous communitas’,

when compatible people - friends, congeners - obtain a flash of lucid mutual understanding on the existential level, when they feel that all problems, not just their problems, could be resolved, whether emotional or cognitive, if only the group which is felt (in the first person) as ‘essentially us’ could sustain its intersubjective illumination (Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* 48).

Liminal spaces in the Novels of Elif Shafak

Place can be liminal too ‘neither here nor there’, thresholds to a new existence, portals between one place and another. Bjorn Thompson in his work *Liminality and the Modern* (2014) proposes that the spatial dimension of liminality can be classified into three types of places. The first type of spaces are generally the restricted spaces such as a doorway or a stairway in a house, thresholds or specified spots as waiting halls, a line separating holy from sacred in a ritual and other in-between item. The second category consist some more broader areas such as international border areas, airports and sea resorts. The third group of liminal spaces include larger areas such as Countries and continents (91). This section of the thesis identifies those liminal spaces in the novels of Elif Shafak.

The Flea Palace symbolically presents the settings or situations or temporary or permanent spaces into which the characters pass through during their transitional stage. The apartment building in the novel called as ‘Bonbon Palace’ denotes a liminal space as it is erected on the desecrated site of two former cemeteries, one Armenian Orthodox, the other Muslim, which were sacrificed in the flurry of urban renewal but has now become “placeless” (Shafak *The Flea Palace* 67) due to dilapidation and crowdedness. It accommodates Istanbul’s foreign, non-Muslim residents and various migrants with turbulent transnational biographies and as the victims and agents of change are at the state of uncertainty regarding their existence. Bonbon Palace resembles an “insane asylum” (404) where the tenants find a continuous sense of fear, insecurity, invisibility and a highly controlled existence as they are not at ease with the past or the present. Thus, the apartment provides them a threshold place where they are

left in indefinite periods of liminality for which there is no resolution. Through microcosmic representation of contemporary Turkey, Bonbon Palace embodies the social, political and economic transformation of its society by revealing the tensions and fragmentation in characters' life and space. Away from the usual rhythms and rules of society this space encourages both reflective and reflexive activity within the group.

Shafak creates liminal spaces in her novels to situate the uncanny. In *The Saint of Incipient Insanities*, the Bosphorus Bridge is used as a symbol to show the transitory state of being in the middle of life and death. It is employed metaphorically for the representation of the space that lies in-between the East and the West as it is a cultural conceit of Turkish self-depiction as a connector between the East and the West. In the present novel it is identified as the bridge between Heaven and Hell which Gail decides to end her life by jumping into as, "she knew with certainty that this in betweenness was the right place, and this very moment was the right moment to die" (Shafak, *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* 347). Shafak also portrays the United Kingdom as the space that lies in-between various perfect constructions such as foreign and native, settled and nomadic, sane and insane in her novel to understand the liminal existence of the characters and their cultural identity crisis. The country where the three friends come for higher education indicates the threshold, a transitory space or state of ambiguity, hybridity and indeterminacy for them.

As an author, Elif Shafak frequently uses the Bosphorus as symbol for the repressed past, unconscious and confused identity in other novels too. Presenting it as a place both familiar but at the same time unrecognizable, Shafak employs it as a tool to understand the characters' liminal states. In her latest novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* (2019) also she uses it as the transitional space through which the protagonist Leila crosses a threshold from the confines of the Cemetery of the Companionless to being "free at last" (185). It acts as an intermediate space between death and the afterlife and hence, comes under the category of liminal space as described by Turner in his interpretative studies on Liminality. It acts as a threshold space between separation and reintegration of Leila where she gets separated from the previous life in the world to spend few moments before moving to the next world. Reflecting the features of liminal space, The Bosphorus Bridge's spatial setting in the novel echoes the emotional and psychological aspects of liminality in the characters.

Liminal spaces in the novel *The Bastard of Istanbul* are depicted through Café Constantinopolis and Café Kundera, places where the group of characters experience their deprivations and dislocations together as a community. Café Constantinopolis is a chat room with a group of members having one fundamental thing in common that is their “common” history. “Café Constantinopolis was a chat room, or as the regulars called it, a cybercafe, initially designed by a bunch of Greek Americans, Sephardim Americans, and Armenian Americans who, other than being New Yorkers, had one fundamental thing in common: They all were the grandchildren of families once based in Istanbul” (Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul* 28). They use this café as a platform to discuss their common ancestry and common “enemy”, the Turks. Their mutual uncertainty of their identities and their joint hatred for the Turks whom they consider responsible for the genocide bring them together at this liminal space where they share a collective cultural memory of carrying a psychological burden of dislocation and shame. Unlike the Café Constantinopolis, the members in Café Kundera are more rational as they believe that Armenians have taken the genocide in an exaggerating way. They use this transitory place to assimilate their traumatised past and put them to rest. The group who come here portray the structure of “communitas”, an equalitarian relationship between the participants based on common humanity and equality rather than recognized hierarchy.

Both the Cafes represent Turner’s ‘ideological communitas’ where the ‘cultural elements drawn from the debris of past models’ (Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* 48). They signify an attempt to describe the nature of spontaneous communitas and can lead to a theoretical basis for a utopia that has the continued presence of communitas at its core. Their members bear a particular relationship among themselves which brings certain permissions to liminal space.

Liminal spaces are the places of transition and passage to the alternate world the writer has created. They are sites of creation and creativity and can feel a bit unreal, even unreliable, at times. *The Forty Rules of Love* (2010) gives the instances of these spaces. Shafak has divided the novel into four sections and has subdivided into multiple parts to narrate the story by different narrators. These parts juxtapose the past and present to restore the liminality of the characters and their experiences in those spaces. Projecting the world of Rumi and Shams through multiple places such as Samarkand,

Baghdad, Konya, and Damascus, Shafak provides the glimpses of temporal liminal phases before their incorporation into post-liminal stage. Similarly, the liminal spaces of Ella ranges from modern Northampton to South Africa to Boston and then to Konya to get an idea of her liberation from her binary self in these spaces. These spaces are generated to show her metamorphosis in her quest of her real self and true love. Liminal space in this novel, wherein these characters temporarily pass through in their passage of life, describes both physical and state of mind of the occupants. This spatial area having the characteristics of liminal space denotes the intensity of liminality prevalent among them.

Honour (2011) when analysed through the lens of Victor Turner's theory of liminality sheds light on a spatio-temporal stage and a state of in-between-ness and ambiguity through which the characters of the novel pass. Stretching the setting of the novel from the Euphrates River to London, Shafak depicts the various in-between spaces for her characters through which they pass before their reincorporation into their final selves. Being the part of these liminal spaces, they develop an attitude of being 'betwixt and between'. The liminal phases present in the novel consists of three transformative places. The first place is a small village in the south-eastern town of Turkey, Urfa where Jamila and Pembe are born in a family of another six daughters. This place changes the life of both the protagonists when Pembe gets married to Adam and Jamila decides to remain single. The second transitory place for the family of Adam and Pembe is Istanbul where their children Iskender and Esmâ are born. Being the mother of a son is one of the greatest achievements in her life. Their life in London where the family migrates to live permanently is their third liminal space. It is the place where most of the major characters discovers their true selves and adapt themselves to settle in their post-liminal stage. Prison also acts as a place which throws Iskender into a state of mental liminality. From an aggressive person, he becomes gentle and pacifist. Prison provides him a space where he repents for his past actions. He reassesses the values and ideals that he has believed in so far. The setting of these liminal spaces in the novel brings the behavioural and situational changes in the characters. Their state of liminal is often connected with ambiguity, as in liminal space they slip through the network of classifications that normally locates states and positions in a cultural space.

The analysis of the novel *Three Daughters of Eve* (2016) with the application of Liminality help to identify various in-between spaces which are important to understand the liminal statuses of the characters in the novel. These spaces facilitate to know their journey through unexpected situations which bring their transformation. Reading of the novel *Three Daughters of Eve* makes us observe the liminal status of Turkey. Just like the central character Peri, Turkey also suffers the historical, political and religious conflicts. The unsettling situation of Turkey is shown through the capture of Peri's elder brother Umut, a Marxist, for betraying his country. Stuck in the clashes between the left and the right-wing groups, he is targeted by the Turkish government and is beaten, stripped and tortured. The novel explores the secular doubt and political upheaval in the country which leads to the uncertainty among the characters regarding their social status. It also presents the liminal social position of Muslim women lying in-between society of the gender inequality and the oppression of women and social group representing free female perspective of Turkish capitalism and Western culture. These women characters are divided into the groups of women emphasising the existence of religious Muslim headscarved women and alternate category of women who believe in modernization and globalization. For instance, the dinner party of the aristocrats where Peri and her family also becomes a part represents the betwixt and between place. Just like café in *The Bastard of Istanbul*, it is an intermediary phase of ambivalence where the characters are brought together to discuss the prevailing condition of their country in the process of getting Westernised. The 'half Oriental, half European' (Shafak *The Bastard of Istanbul* 91) decoration of the place also reveals its liminal status.

Oxford university where Peri, Shirin and Mona move for higher studies is like a spatio-temporal space for them. it contains the essential qualities of a liminal space that provides the characters with the quality of a liminal entity as they become engrossed in their liminal phase producing the qualities of liminality. The transience of the place shapes their personality. Moving through this space of transit, their perception commutes between what the place is and what it signifies to them. Shafak describes their experiences of indefinite liminality as the transit migrants in the University with unstable identities negotiating different places and border zones. They encounter a new phase of their life living in this in-between place which is different from their previous

life. Hence, the Oxford University as a liminal space which these three characters temporarily occupy describes both their physical and state of mind and provides them a place where they get opportunities for developing the solidarity among themselves.

Shafak's *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* describes its characters while moving through threshold spaces not only transition from one place to the next but also experience different stages of liminality in pursuit of identity. According to Arpad Szokolczai the movement from one phase to another through liminal space involves uncertainty as it leads "to both the destruction of previous stability and the possibility of failure". (Szokolczai, "The formation of marginal and liminal identities" 189). The characters in the novel suffer and experience their suspended existence in Istanbul (their threshold place) where they lack the right to legal recognition. Constantly transitioning through different thresholds, Leila and her friends struggle to find a respectable place in the society. They find themselves unable to get home and belonging here. Istanbul denies their identities and they are considered as outcasts. The city act as a border zone for them that poses physical and metaphorical hindrances for them.

The novel describes the journey of Leila crossing the threshold from known to unknown, from life to death passing through the social space of uncertainty. The novel acts as a symbol to portray the liminal zone between her social and biological death. Rubbish bin where Leila is lying in those last minutes of her life is a liminal space for her as it represents her social and emotional threshold space where she has experienced loss and has not yet reconstituted herself. The bin provides her a space of between-ness between dying and death. The characters present in such liminal spaces are "temporarily undefined, beyond the normative social structure. This weakens them since they have no rights over others. But it also liberates them from structural obligations" (Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* 27).

Liminal periods presented in the Novels of Elif Shafak

Probably the most peculiar form of liminality is liminal time period. It may be the threshold of change between the old and a new year, change of season, twilight, adolescence. *The Flea Palace* cover the time span from 1920 to 2002, covering the period from collapse of the Ottoman Empire, emergence and development of the Republic of Turkey to the Neo-Ottoman era to present the transformation of Turkey. It

does so by exploring the disintegration of the apartment building Bonbon Palace to make visible the development of complex, contradictory social relations in contemporary Istanbul of modern Turkish political history. Shafak portrays the transitional period of fictional Bonbon Palace which also loses its allure like the real palaces of both the Ottomans and the Turkish Republic. The dilapidated condition of the old wooden house marks what was lost in the transition from Ottoman to Republican.

The novel *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* portrays the characters on the transition across time. The novel is divided into four parts titled as, The Crow, The Stork, Birds of a Feather, and Destroying Your Own Plumage. All parts are significant in understanding how Shafak explores the paradoxical journey of her characters' intercultural identities and their transformation while passing through the liminal period in their rites of passage. The first part introduces us to Omer and Abed trapped in the dichotomy of being 'different' and 'same' at the same time. Their feelings of aloofness, estrangement and alienation in a foreign land reveals their liminal state of mind. Gail also exhibits multiple liminalities at the same time wavering between the optimist - pessimist duality. Her numerous suicidal attempts reveal her uncertainty to choose between life and death. As Turner states that during liminal period a person becomes ambiguous and confused, Gail also becomes puzzled as she finds herself unable to be confined to a particular identity and frequently changes her names.

The second part of the novel entitled 'The Stork' reflects the period of vacuum for Omer which exposes his instability and rootlessness. It marks his depressing sense of time passing without any notable event which persuades him to take a nomadic identity giving him the liberty of having multiple identities. 'Birds of a Feather' gives the picture of psychological distortion of the characters due to phase of liminality they are spending at that time of confusion. During the liminal period, the attribute of the participant is "ambiguous" (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 94), which means the cultural space through which he passes has few or none of the characteristics of the past or the coming state.

This transitional liminal period of existence helps them to recognize the existence of world concepts different from their own. In spite of their existing conflicts (external and internal) they develop empathetic attitude towards each other sharing a

bond that brings them closer sharing their worries and frustrations. The final part of the novel 'Destroying Your Own Plumage' provides an escape to the characters from the period of instability. Gail commits suicide by jumping into the Bosphorus Bridge as, "Suddenly it occurred to her, and the next second she knew with certainty that this inbetweendom was the right place, and this very moment was the right time to die" (Shafak, *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* 347). Whereas Omer disappointingly cannot save her from doing so and remains in a state of permanent liminality.

The Bastard of Istanbul also provides instances of period of threshold where the characters with suspended identities are stuck. The time Armanoush spends in Turkey to know about her father's family act as a liminal period for her where she understands the relationship between her Turkish and Armenian family. Suspended between her pre-liminal phase of her life in US and post-liminal phase after her return to US, she lives in-between her two identities (the American and the Armenian one). During this time of transition, she searches for her roots by making, "a journey into my family's past, as well as into my future". (Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul* 116-117) Similarly Auntie Banu, a soothsayer and seer, spends time in communing with her djinni (Mr. Bitter and Mrs. Sweet) and practicing the magic gathers the knowledge of the past can be considered as the liminal period. It connects her to the mystic world that allows the revelation of counter-memories buried beneath the dominant narratives.

The Forty Rules of Love (2010) describes the liminal period of Rumi and Shams of Tabriz which begins after they meet each other. It marks a phase where they self-realise themselves and change interiorly. With the help of his master, preacher, and guru Shams of Tabriz, Rumi undergoes a spiritual journey that leads to his transformation as an entirely different person. He feels, "I know that there are no words that can express this inner journey of mine" (Shafak, *The Forty Rules of Love* 341). In the liminal phase, he has to struggle with his own emotions as well as the envy, ambition, and attack of the society. He has to face rejection even from his own family. He is found struggling to cope with the hatred of his followers and his family who misunderstand his relation with Shams. They decide to confine themselves in the library for forty days and this period of liminality helps Rumi to move forward to his afterlife as a changed man. These forty days of retreat into a solitude transforms Rumi into a

different person. The progression of the liminal period of Rumi and Shams can be identified as the journey from unknown to known about their inner self.

Ella during her liminal period realises the lack of fulfilment in her relationship with her husband. In spite of having everything a person can ask for she feels that she wants something more than her husband, her children and her home. Her quest for true love intensifies on finding her husband David's infidelity which marks the beginning of her transition period. Her sense of alienation starts at this point and in order to escape from the situation her husband David finds her a job as a reader in a literary agency where she gets the manuscript of the novel *Sweet Blasphemy* which turns her attitude towards life. Reading the novel provides her another liminal phase where she can celebrate her independence and selfhood. These liminal moments reveal her the meaning and the importance of passion and love. Desert Rose's life in brothel also act as a liminal period for her where she understands her desire to attain salvation by moving on a spiritual path. Shafak describes it as, "the day [Desert Rose] left the brothel was the coldest in forty years" as it marks her journey from her liminal to post liminal phase rejecting her old self. Her duration spent in brothel leads her to a transformed person who reaches to a higher level of spiritual awakening.

As readers we get various instances of liminal time in Shafak's another novel *Honour* (2011) where we find the characters standing at the threshold unable to go back and indecisive to move forward. At this stage they no longer hold their pre-ritual status. While for Pembe it denotes the time after her marriage to Adam, the birth of her first child, her migration to London that marks her journey through the unknown, for Jamila it is the time when she chooses living alone in a wilderness as the healer, the virgin-mid-wife who spoke the language of birds, reptiles and insects. But for both of them the outcome of this liminal period is uncertain. As far as Iskender is concerned the duration of his liminal period was for those years which he spends in gaol and they can be considered as temporary liminality for him. He suffers from the effects of these in-between moments that change his psychological status. He tries to overcome the challenges of liminality in these moments.

The initially organised and differentiated society when emerges from the liminal period becomes unstructured or rudimentarily structured, and somewhat unequally differentiated (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 96). Likewise, the liminality and the liminal

period experienced by the characters in the novel *Three Daughters of Eve* can be recognised by comparing the structural, normative and differentiated phase to the unstructured, unusual and relatively undifferentiated liminal phase. Liminal period in the novel can be understood by dividing it into two parts, Liminal period of Turkey standing on the threshold between Islamic and Western civilizations as discussed in the novel and the floating state of being of the three women characters (Peri, Shirin and Mona) during their stay in London where they are transformed before they re-enter their society. The novel covers a period almost thirty-five years of Istanbul from 1980s to 2016. Shafak has divided the chapters mentioning the years on it moving in the forward and backward directions. It features three distinct moments in Peri's life, her pre-liminal phase as her childhood in the 1980s, her liminal period depicting the events that occur in Oxford between 2000 and 2002 and her post-liminal stage presented as in the dinner party in 2016. Along with the Peri's life the novel also discusses the nation's prevailing conditions, displaying the Turkish nationalism wavering between faith and doubt and modernism and secularism. The discussion at the dinner party shows the conflict among the various characters regarding their views on Turkish socio-political status oscillating between its Islamic roots and the prospects of Western modernity. While discussing this issue they highlight the newly emerging Islamic capitalism, the spread of corruption, and the deterioration of democracy in Turkey in its attempt to attain modernisation. In effort to project moderately Islamic image of Turkey, it has resulted a fragmented identity belonging to 'neither here nor there'. Peri's liminal period begins with her relocation at Oxford University from 2000 to 2002. She came here to clear her religious doubts that she has been carrying since her childhood but the life-changing seminar of her professor Azur pushes her into deep inquiries about the nature and the philosophical meaning of God. Thus, the liminal period of Peri mirrors the liminal period of Turkey, its identity, religion, and history.

The grim opening of novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* introduces the readers to those liminal moments, alternately lucid and surreal where the central character Leila finds herself stuffed in a rubbish bin on the outskirts of Istanbul realising, "with a sinking feeling that her heart had just stopped beating, and her breathing had abruptly ceased" (Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 1). As the duration of the liminal period is only for a few seconds, it can be considered

as temporary liminality. The time of dawn itself presents as the threshold period between day and night i.e., that moment when something changes from one state to another. She discovers that her brain is still in a position to recall her life, from her birth all the way to the tragic death she receives. These last few minutes reflect Shafak's interpretation of that particular time as a charged liminal zone where Leila remembers her past life before her mortal existence is almost over. It is that state when she moves from wakeful consciousness into her final sleep. She as an edge walker walks between her two worlds.

Liminal period consists of those threshold moments where an individual might be out from one liminal situation to enter another, whether willing or not, contributing to the liminal existence of that individual. There can be many liminal moments in one's life for example birth of a child, wedding day, death of a loved one, new year day, first job and so on. Shafak's latest novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* give instances of these liminal times. The time where Leila, the protagonist, while lying in a rubbish bin remembering her past life in those final minutes of her life between dying and dead are the liminal moments for her. The title of the novel also denotes the same. ten minutes and thirty-eight seconds are those few moments where Leila recalls her entire life before her death. This is the time where she feels, "Time became fluid, a free flow of recollections seeping into one another, the past and the present inseparable." (Shafak novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 11). The chapters in the novel are also divided three sections (Mind, Body, and Soul). The first section includes all these minutes one by one describing the life of Leila which she remembers at the time of her death. Every minute depicts different phase and show her own perspective of her life after she's placed in the dumpster. The second section describes the unique friends of Leila who are all outcasts of one sort or another. They reveal the marginalized outskirts of Turkish society. The last section illustrates her moments of attainment of her eternal rest. Her body is thrown into Bosphorus bridge where her identity is re-established, seen as self-transcendence where she meets the old Ottoman writers and poets in the deep sea, "each cast into the deep for their treacherous words or contentious beliefs" (303). Her body starts decomposing, but her soul gets a rebirth which is as bright as a new flame. Eventually, she gets reincorporated into a new world of peace where, "There was no reason to rush anymore and nothing to run away from" (304).

Conclusion:

Bjorn Thompson in his book *Liminality and the Modern* (2014) declares that liminality entails both the spatial as well as temporal phase in rites of passage. He claims that liminality is not restricted to individuals only but can be applied to bigger communities also. The above discussion highlights the existence of liminal characters and situations in the novels of Elif Shafak along with the spatial and temporal aspects of liminality. It also presents the solidarity built between the some of the liminal entities as 'communitas'. Applying Victor Turner's concept of liminality, the conditions of ambiguity and confusion among these characters are understood in order to comprehend their circumstances of the changes or transitions that have affected them mentally as well as physically.

In her novels Shafak has created liminal settings where the characters undergo the transition from their previous phase of life to a post-phase through a temporary phase of existence. Her novels describe the effects of liminality on these characters and trace the altered peculiarities of being in the liminal phases. While analysing these works of fiction numerous liminal entities are identified who are trapped in this situation of uncertainty and ambiguity. They can be broadly grouped into various categories of migrants, outcasts, physically deformed, prostitutes, lesbians, transgenders, saints, refugees, prisoners, survivors of the war and exile and many others. All these fictional personae come under the category of 'liminal entities'. Shafak also speaks about her selection of stories and characters belonging to minorities victimised by the power politics and silenced voices suppressed by the society. While talking to The London Book Fair, she states about her selection of stories, "it could be anything, you know, ethnic, sexual, religious minorities, but also, any, anyone kind of pushed to the margin of any social or cultural context. I am interested in hearing that person's voice, and if possible, bringing that voice to the center of attention" (Shafak 2013). They are presented in a way where they belong to 'neither here nor there' situations which is in-between the normal social identities. Shafak portrays the space that lies in-between the various perfect constructions such as foreign and native, settled and nomadic, sane and insane in her novel to understand the liminal existence of the characters and their cultural identity crisis.

The novels of Elif Shafak also point to the liminal phase of Turkey and its people after the establishment of Turkish Republic in 1924. They mirror the transformation Turkey experiences in an attempt to get the modern Western status. The conflicts and differences in the society due to cultural globalisation of Turkey is also reflected in these fictional works. Shafak's novels and her portrayal of Istanbul are characterized by an encounter and contact between East and West. Istanbul prominent in most of her novels present the movement of people and ideas has helped to shape discourses in modern Turkey and its relationship with modern world. The cultural liminality from which Shafak and her protagonists suffer emanates from a foundational historical transformation – from the Islamic imperial state to the secular republican nation-state – happened almost a century ago.

Analysing the characters in the novels of Elif Shafak through the perspective of *communitas*, several instances of together can be seen where these characters share solidarity among themselves. They are seen as having a bond between them as they experience the same liminal situations. The friends in novel *Three Daughters of Eve*, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*, *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* and group of migrants/ refugees in *The Flea Palace* and *The Bastard of Istanbul* come under the category of Existential and spontaneous *communitas* who come together in their effort to overcome the entrapment of liminality with respect to their specific situations. They all experience liminality in their liminal phase together.

The chapter of the research concludes at this point that the liminal characters discussed above from the novels have a state that is different from their preliminal phase while being in their current situation, which is again different from the post-liminal phase. Their passage is full of experiences and include overarching narratives of transition, and transformation. Shafak has created a space in her works that would easily describe the effects of liminality on the characters that undergo the transition from their previous phase of life to a post-phase through a temporary phase of existence. The intermediary state of transition that has been identified in the major novels to traces the altered peculiarities of being in the liminal phase of these characters. The next chapter would discuss these discovered characters and settings in the novels to distinguish the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases of the characters so as to discover the unusual instability in the characters during the intermediary phase which is responsible for the

transformation of their identities. It would further enhance the understanding of the essence of liminality in Elif Shafak's works.

Chapter 4

Betwixt & Between of Liminality: Process of Being and Becoming

This chapter is focussed on the employment of the threefold process of liminality defined by Arnold Van Gennep and Victor Turner in the analysis of Elif Shafak's novels highlighting the transformation of the characters while passing through the intermediary liminal phase. The pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal phases of the characters are studied to understand the change in their physiological and psychological behaviour. The unusual instability in the characters during the intermediary phase assist in tracing the transitional trajectory of the characters. These brief phases of transition are a mixture of joy and anxiety, a strange combination of cultural memory and obliviousness. The various other concepts given by Turner in explaining liminality are applied to explore the variations in their state of mind and the resultant behavioral actions of these characters which is different from that of the previously normative phases and the reintegration phases.

Victor Turner used the phrase 'Betwixt and Between' in his study of liminality to denote a situation neither the one nor the other, in a middle or unresolved position. It describes the in-between conditions of the persons who have passed their previous stage and not yet entered the next. The phrase 'Being and becoming' used in the title of the chapter denotes a process where 'being' portrays the status of existence and encapsulates such notions as nature and essence about true self and 'become' shows the notions of transformation and self-actualization. In combination being and becoming describes the process of transformation and its outcome. The phrase denotes the development of the characters in the novels of Elif Shafak while they move from their three (pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal) stages of liminality. Therefore, discussing Elif Shafak's novels one by one, the chapter discusses the transition of the liminal characters present in these novels.

The essence of liminality and betwixt and between condition of characters in the novels of Elif Shafak is unique as it reflects the in-between condition of the author and her country too. While discussing the transformation of the characters, the changes

that occurs in Turkey after its establishment of Turkish Republic and its current liminal status indicated in the novels are also exhibited. The socio-political problems have polarised the society of Turkey into various dichotomies Asia versus Europe, Muslim versus non-Muslim, Turkish versus Kurdish, man versus woman, and centre versus margin. Wavering between these oppositions the Turks sometimes feel that they neither belong to here nor there. Their uncertainty and ambiguity are portrayed in the novels of Elif Shafak. The novels cover the themes that revolve around minorities and their discrimination, feminism, immigration and identity negation, subcultures cosmopolitanism and Sufism. The problems related to historical, philosophical and religious aspects are also present in her works. Shafak in her fiction portrays these themes and settings to symbolize cultural and identity issues between east-west and tradition-modernity in the living situation in Turkey. In an interview with BBC, Shafak explains that, the ‘cognitive gaps, cultural gaps, intellectual gaps’ are responsible for generating the minorities and sub-cultures. (Shafak “Turkey politics: ‘Women are almost non-existent’”). She presents the dilemma and the fear of unknown of the people being marginalized to the opposite and pushed to the liminal zones. Her characters have blurred boundaries of culture, religion, gender, and nationality. She includes magic realism with mystical elements in her works to distinguish between the normal and the surreal. She considers that love is also ‘the biggest mystery’ and states that, “As a storyteller, I am interested in the personal, political, sexual, philosophical, social and historical aspects of love” (Shafak, 2011). She uses love to evince a deep spirituality and compassion in her works. Her novels, too, lack the sense of belonging to a certain culture, nation, or society and the fluid time zones and landscapes in them demonstrate that there are no rigid borders between nations. Her characters are the liminal personalities with shifting identities of culture, religion, and nation. The chapter would now conduct the critical study of the novels of Elif Shafak through the lens of liminality to analyse the pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal phases in them to understand the characters’ transition, especially during the liminal phase.

Mahrem (The Gaze)

As discussed in the previous chapter, *Mahrem (The Gaze)* contains many characters involved in liminality. Not all of them are humans. Some characters are

hybrid who fall between human and non-human, normal and strange, and human and animal. Such complex and yet simple, fictional yet life-like characters are powerful enough in their inner significances and possibilities of interpretation. Shafak has experimented a new style in her writing through this novel by putting two plots flowing side by side but cannot be called as parallel plots as they have meaningful links between them and intersect at certain points. Even the narration technique is quite remarkable as it involves alternative first-person narration and third person narration in these plots. She shifts from the normative plot structure to evoke the feeling between love and cruelty, pleasure and pain human gaze can induce in past as well in present. *The Guardian* describes the novel as, “Shafak blends historical fiction, urban politics and youthful curiosity in an elaborate map of Turkey whose key is the book itself”.

The first plot is about a couple of an overweight woman and her lover B-C, a dwarf, who are sick of being gawked at because of their physical abnormalities and want to change things for themselves. The unnamed protagonist thinks herself as a human with imperfection and becomes the victim at the hands of people’s judgmental eyes. In her pre-liminal phase of life, she is shown as a woman who is extremely fat and disturbed by the gaze around her as she deviates from the society’s expectations. Constantly seen as a spectacle, she struggles to save herself from people who look at her out of love, sometimes pity and fear. Her big body is the cause of her embarrassment in society. She does numerous efforts to get rid of her fatty body by going to different aerobic saloons, taking diet foods and weight-reducing pills and visiting doctors but all goes in vain. Feeling uncomfortable she isolates herself from the people and chooses to be alone. The actual reason for her obesity is the incident of her sexual harassment in her childhood when a man in coalshed tries to molest her while she is playing hide and seek with her friends. The incident marks an impact on her mind and she starts eating excessively to overcome the shame and guilt. During this phase of life, she is shown irritated due to her objectification in society because of her obesity, and then she meets B-C a dwarf man of about eighty centimetres of height with whom she can relate herself.

Here she enters phase of liminality. The common point of physical abnormality brings them together and with B-C as her boyfriend she enters a phase of comfort.

Fascinated by his appearance she starts enjoying his company, “I watched how as he enthusiastically explained something, it came alive in his eyes, he explained it with enthusiasm” (Shafak, *The Gaze* 237). The in-between stage is romantic for both as it deviates their focus from other’s gaze to their intimacy with each other. Life becomes lovable for them. Despite their deformity, they start building interest in each other and taking pleasure in each other. In his article *Physical disability and social liminality: A study in the rituals of adversity* (1988), Robert Murphy describes physically impaired as liminal, “The disabled are viewed as being in a ‘liminal’ state, as in the liminal phases of rites of passages They are persons having an undefined status they are neither ill nor well, neither socially alive and active nor socially expunged and removed.” (Murphy et al. 1). Though they find solace in each other but their identity the society is ambivalent. They are fixated in their passage through life that has left them socially ill-defined. To cope up with this liminal situation they come up with a solution. They decide to reverse roles. The man goes out wearing make-up and the woman draws a moustache on her face. B-C deals with the gaze of people by compiling his own ‘Dictionary of the Gaze’ to show the powerful effects a simple look can have. Changing their appearances and their identities is their unique way to protect themselves from the social gaze, but this does not work for them. They realise, “No matter what we wore, how much could we hide from the eyes of others, and for how long? We didn’t please anyone’s eyes. Even if we were in disguise, and even at night, we didn’t suit each other” (Shafak, *The Gaze* 98-99).

Their disguise intensifies their liminal process. Victor Turner explains it in the “reversals, inversions, disguises” (Turner, “Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow and Ritual” 85) about the disguised as, “They differ from preliminal or postliminal collective representations in that they are often reversals, inversions, disguises, negations, antitheses of quotidian, "positive," or "profane" collective representations.” Both the protagonist and B-C in an attempt to get rid of their true identities find themselves free of the gaze and start behaving strangely. This led them to more troubled phase. B-C begins drinking and fighting in public and the narrator starts behaving dangerously.

The post-liminal phase of the nameless protagonist begins on her realisation that B-C is using her only as visual material for his dictionary. She gets transformed after the disclosure of the fact she is a mere object of the gaze for his dictionary. She observes, “When he’d finished observing me and found what he was looking for, I might have been the most interesting item in the Dictionary of Gazes. I was the fatty whose childhood he was going to research” (Shafak, 242). Her entry in the dictionary as ‘sisko (fatty)’ hurts her and this perception made her loose herself all over again. It leads to her suicide at the end. When her life experiences are considered from birth to death, she deviates from linearity in order to experience a change from the prior condition of affairs. Death takes her to incorporate into the next world in her post-liminal stage where she merges the society of people without any gaze and sufferings. Therefore, the transitions in both these characters give rise to both ordinary and extraordinary changes in their lives.

The Flea Palace (Bit Palas in Turkey)

The Flea Palace describes the complexity of intercultural human relations. Alev Adil in his review of the novel highlights the blending of, “the old and the new; Orthodox Christianity, secularism and Islam; the rich and the poor; the East and West; the ancient and the postmodern – all co-exist in an urban kaleidoscope” (Adil, 2004). The numerous intertwined stories of the characters living in Bonbon Palace situated between two cemeteries (the Muslim cemetery and the Armenian cemetery) give a picture of the correlation of the old and new. Their close coexistence despite of their rivalries shows that their interreligious correctness and understanding is behind the formation of the *communitas*. The residents of the house with various religious, cultural, and community backgrounds represent a group that exhibits the same existential qualities. They are identified by Turner as ‘*communitas*’ who, “distinguish the very modal quality of their social relationship from an area of common living” (Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* 96). And Bonbon Palace, a microcosm of contemporary Istanbul, is the area of common living where these characters exist with their contrasts and contestations.

The Bonbon Palace belongs to Agripina Fyodorovna Antipova and General Pavel Pavlovich Antipov who are an aristocratic Russian émigré based in Paris. Their

displacement from Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution marks the onset of their liminal phase. Istanbul, a city of ambiguity, where they took shelter raises their uncertainty even more. Pavel feels, "Until now, he had lost many things one after another, his property as well as goods, influence, privileges, esteem, friends, relatives, orderlies, the army he belonged to, the cities where his past was, the country where he had presumed his future would be..." (Shafak, *The Flea Palace* 42). The refugee camp where they stay provided by the French Red Cross is in dilapidated conditions with small space, "wherein they slept with fifty people on stained, shallow mattresses." (42). They struggle between "what is" and "what will be." Their unclear future parallels the uncertain future of Turkey which is also in transit from its previous identity as Islamic country to the becoming of Modern city. Their previous disintegrated state of living follows them to another state of fragmentation. Pavel's employer remarks on his condition, "You escaped from a collapsed empire to seek refuge in one about to collapse." (43). His descent from a high rank soldier to a checkroom attendant in a café shatters his dreams and spirit. In their common experience of loss, suffering, fragility, and violence the couple responds differently to their liminal phase. Agripina accepts this condition as a testing time believing, "She would sooner or later receive what was her due. 'This is a test,' she assured herself with a smile. 'The more arduous it is, the more exalted the outcome will be.'" (46). But the death of her new-born child breaks her faith and transform her to an entirely different person. Ever smiling lady turns to a silent pessimist. The couple understands that now, "they had to leave this city of mourning as soon as possible." Hardly they have an idea that, "Istanbul, initially a port of escape enabling people to run away from everything, would herself become a reason for escape." (50). They move to Paris where Agripina gets an eye disease that disable her to identify colours and hence her life is changed to black and white. She gets permanently trapped in a fear that she cannot give birth to another child as her baby died before her first birthday and new baby would not disconnect its existence from the dead sibling. Pavel Pavlovich marries another French woman tired due to the indifferent behaviour of his wife but is unable to leave her as she been his partner in his ups and downs. She has now become a 'logbook' for him who, "had been the closest witness of his personal history." (52). Agripina enters a double liminality phase when she becomes insane due to her deteriorating mental health and submitted to a clinic. Pavel becomes

very old and loses his second wife and child. He is told that Agripina has started behaving weirdly and the physician wants him to see her. He visits the clinic and finds that his wife still remembers Istanbul, a city where she has been, “so scorned, trampled, belittled and defeated.” (61). Thus, in their second liminal phase they suffer as deportee or refugee with their uncertain identities and without any roots which they can call as their home.

Finally in their post-liminal stage they return to Istanbul not as strangers or guests but as the homeowners of Bonbon Palace. When Agripina enters their building and the balcony of their flat, she feels that not only they, but the city has also transformed in its passage of time.

The city was spread out right in front of her. It had changed...and how... She looked at Istanbul with the malicious pleasure of a woman who years later encounters the rival whose beauty she once secretly envied, now aged, decrepit and shrivelled. Then a strong northeast wind blew, her own image confusedly crossed her mind, and her eyes became misty, but she still continued to smile. At that moment, Pavel Pavlovich Antipov watched from afar with pleasure the smile that had settled on his wife’s face. She looked so content! There, it had been worth it, worth returning to this city after all this time. Men, especially those like Pavel Pavlovich Antipov who expect life’s uncertainties to confirm their truths, relish in the satisfaction of their women as proof of their own success. (Shafak, *The Flea Palace* 65)

Pavel and Agripina experiences various kinds of anxieties, dilemmas, indecisiveness, tension, and uncertainty while being in their communities of origin, transit, and destination. Finally, they meet their deaths (Agripina dies two years before Pavel) to exit and move into their afterlife.

Madam Auntie of flat number 10 is an ambiguous character as her manners are unusual and different from others. The only character who is born in Istanbul, Madam Auntie, an Armenian lady, is the most senior resident of Bonbon Palace. She is called as Auntie because she has witnessed the journey of Turkey from pre-Republican era to its decline in its attempt of modernisation. She mourns the fall of its culture and heritage

as much as the death of her husband. She is such a character in the novel that bridges the past and the present time. She has a strange habit of collecting things discarded by others making, “Her flat, “the Castle of Garbage” (Shafak, *The Flea Palace* 385). Her pre-liminal phase comprises of two major losses in her life before she moves to Bonbon Palace. During her childhood her mother throws away all her books and when her husband dies, her brother removes all the belongings of her husband from her house to make her comfortable. Both these incidents make a deep impact on her mind, and she becomes a hoarder. Collecting the discarded stuff provides her psychological relief as it compensates her loss. Her liminal phase makes her suffer from disposophobia. Her habit of excessive acquisition makes a strange person afraid of losing her possessions. So, when she is exposed of collecting the garbage in her apartment which gives a foul smell, she gets anxious of losing it and starts eating anything. Her mental condition becomes worse. The moment her flat is emptied for fumigation, Madam Auntie is found dead in her apartment. Her final stage of incorporation is marked by her death. While analysing her character through the lens of liminality, it is clear that Madam Auntie passes through the tripartite structure of liminality given by Genep in her passage of life and undergoes transformation to a compulsive hoarder and this leads to her final incorporation into another world after her death. According to the classification by Victor Turner, life crisis rituals mark the transition from one stage of an individual's life cycle to the next at milestones such as birth, puberty, marriage, and death. His concern in developing liminality was to study how people experienced major life transitions and coped with them. He tried to understand the role of liminality in tribal communities and contemporary societies (Bigger, “Victor Turner, liminality, and cultural performance” 212).

The Saint of Incipient Insanities

Focusing on Shafak’s first novel written in English and the second novel in English by any contemporary Turkish writer counting her to a group of international writers who write other than their mother tongue, we find that the presence of liminality in *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* is evident. The novel is centred on the theme of migrancy and gives the glimpses of liminality in migrated characters and their transition in those in-between places. The title of the novel describes the journey of the central

character Gail towards her development of absurdity due to her ambiguous past and uncertain identity. She is an eccentric Jewish woman who since her childhood struggles with her broken identities and often changes her names as she does not believe to be, “anchored in a world that fixes names forever” (Shafak, *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* 58). Interestingly, Shafak includes surrealism to the character of Gail through her game of words she believes in. She in her childhood plays a game of words which her mother tells her. The game says that God cooks an alphabet soup in heaven and let it cool and a devil drops that bowl in the sky scattering all the letters. These letters create confusion and void in her mind, ““there always be a cavity, a loss, something missing from each and every entirety” (65). She is unable to construct a fixed identity of herself and fills her life with hallucinations, fragmented memories, and fantasies. She tries to commit suicide numerously in her life. Öğr. Gör. and Dr. Özlem GÖRÜMLÜ in their article *Elif Shafak's The Saint of Incipient Insanities: An Issue of Identity* describes her condition as, “in the rest of her life, wavering between life and death due to her bipolar mood, the hypersensitive Gail cannot help herself committing suicides in trial-and-error procedures that end with the proof of her mortality. Paradoxically, in all these attempts, Gail realizes how close she is to death, and how difficult it is to die.” (Gör. and GÖRÜMLÜ, 2009) In order to adjust in her liminal state, she calls herself with number of names such as Zarpanidit, Debra Ellen Thompson, Gartheride, Ilena, and finally as Gail. It represents the chaos of her mind and her unsystematised behaviour. Her constant struggle between her identity as Jew and an American proliferates her ambivalence in defining her true self. The failure of Gail in search of herself presents her in the betwixt and between, the characteristic feature of liminality, of normal situations. Unable to cope up with this fluid identity she chooses death as a solution and when Omer takes her to Turkey, she jumps from Bosphorus Bridge that connects the West and the East, from in-between to reveal that she belongs neither to the West nor to the Rest.

Omer, Abed and Piyu are other characters who experience the switched identities and find themselves frequently lost in the maze of classifications that generally identify states and their place in cultural space (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 95). The pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases of these characters portray, “the

ambiguous nature and indeterminate attributes” (95) of liminality in them. They fluctuate between sense of belonging and non-belonging in US and can be identified at the point of separation of the pre-liminal phase here. Most of the story describes their in-between threshold condition in US which includes separation from the previous culture which has not yet been reintegrated with the post-situations (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 94). They sense the devastating personal crisis as these characters do not have a sense of belonging neither to the country they live in, nor to their homelands they left behind.

Omar who is student from Istanbul, Turkey is on the margins of estrangement feels "oscillating madly between non-presence and omnipresence" (Shafak, *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* 4). He is an alcoholic, sex and drug addict Turk and is a student of Political Science. Abed, a restrictive Moroccan is unable to adapt American culture. In the process of interiorizing the stereotypes of western culture, he always finds himself on the verge of irresolvable tension with his dichotomous identity. Piyu is a Spaniard, who on the other hand has fear of sharp objects but willing to become a dentist. Though all of them have differences between them, yet they share a common issue of being strange on a strange land that binds them together. Omar the protagonist and the narrator of the novel, experiences the similar problems as his friends face in the US. Omer and Abed who have come to America for higher education from Muslim countries are distinctive in their habits. While Omer is "drunk as a skunk, the other as sober as always" (3). Ömer's addiction to alcohol, coffee, cigarettes and pork products causes the disappointment in pious Abed who is his roommate. Both of them struggle to find ways to accommodate both modernity and tradition in their lifestyles to get accommodated in foreign land. In their continuous fight in between the bipolar schema of 'familiar' versus 'foreign', they undergo a rapid transitional phase. Omer, the central character describes this interstitial stage as, "When you leave your homeland behind, they say, you have to renounce at least one part of you. If that was the case, Ömer knew exactly what he had left behind: his dots. Back in Turkey, he used to be ÖMER ÖZSİPAHİLİOĞLU. Here in America, he had become OMAR OZSIPAHILIOGLU. His dots were excluded for him to be better included." (5)

Omer's confusion in identifying his place and identity reflects his liminality where, "'Lost" was precisely what he was, and what he had been more than anything for the last five, ten, fifteen years of his life" (14). In these brief phases of transition are a mixture of joy and anxiety, he feels a strange combination of cultural memory and obliviousness, "a graduate student of political science unable to accommodate himself either inside the torrent of politics or on the little island of scientists; a new-to-the-job husband finding it hard to breathe amid the flora and fauna of the marital institution; an expatriate who retained a deep sense of not being at home here, but not knowing where that home was anymore" (ibid.). He suffers deep moral and psychological problems of personal identity crisis that are a result of the confusion and the inconsistency of human existence. His position as a privileged cosmopolitan mingles with his being a lonely migrant who tries to survive daily life in America.

Here he was surrounded by hundreds of faces of dazzling variety, and not even one of them looked familiar. None of these individuals had any idea who he was. Not even one single soul. He was a nobody to each and all of them, so pure and immaculate – absolutely nameless, pastless, and thereby, faultless. And because he was a nobody, he could be anybody. (Shafak, *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* 82)

Abed, who calls himself a pious Muslim, is another character who suffers the same cultural crisis as Omer. He is from Morocco and is Omer's roommate. Both of them have problems with the necessity of leading their lives in USA using English which they consider as a foreign language but try to communicate in it, " Just like patients still feeling their amputated limbs long after the surgery, people who have been entirely and brusquely cut from their native tongue, and have henceforth learned to survive in a foreign language, somehow continue sensing the disjointed words of their distant past, and try to construct sentences with words they no longer possess" (11). Their third friend Piyu is from Spain. Together they pass through the phase of uncertainty about their future as "communitas" Whom Turner describes as, "In liminality, communitas tends to characterize relationships between those jointly undergoing ritual tradition. The bonds of communitas are anti-structural in the sense that they are un-differentiated, equalitarian, direct, extant, nonrational, existential, I–Thou relationships." (Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* 272). Their union arise

from the experience of their dislocations and deprivations. They do not have a sense of belonging neither to the country they live in, nor to their homelands they left behind.

Oztabek-Avci's in his article, "Elif Şafak's *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* as an 'International' Novel" states that the novel is "... both a celebration and a critique of a search for connection especially beyond national identities" (97). The novel captures twice-torn and displaced characters in liminal conditions wavering between home culture and alien culture. On the one hand, they are fascinated by the sophisticated culture of the Westerners but on the other hand they seek their belongingness to their native land. According to Victor Turner they belong to neither "here" nor "there" but "in-between" the juridically, traditionally, conventionally and ceremonially established positions. (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 95).

The Bastard of Istanbul

The novel's critical reading offers insights to Shafak's personal liminal position as she commutes between cultures. She frequently talks about her role as a storyteller to connect people and cultures across borders. The novel provides a list of characters on the threshold of two visions of history and reality. When asked about if a writer should be apolitical, she replies in one of her interviews that, "If you happen to be a writer from a "wounded democracy", such as Turkey, -- you do not have the luxury of being apolitical. There is always a political edge to my writing". (*The Jakarta Post*) Swimming against the tides, she elegantly shatters the silence over the Armenian Genocide of Turkey's wounded history presenting the peacefulness and rebelliousness side by side. The Armenian survivors who are standing on the "inter-structural situation" where they are isolated from the previous or fixed social structure as Armenians and ready to be assimilated into alternative social structure of Americans. Shafak is always interested in bringing up the stories of the marginalized and the forgotten.

In *The Bastard of Istanbul* also, she presents the passage of life of the ignored group of people who are the victims of historical injustices. The novel demonstrates the dilemmas of modern Turkish citizens split between awareness of their past and their assimilation in the United States as Armenian Americans. The two families, one

American-Armenian- the Tchakhmakhchian family and the other one is the Kazanci family from Turkey, are caught between their adaptation and memory of a loss that is beyond healing. Standing on the threshold, the novel presents both the burning hatred of Tchakhmakhchians towards the late Ottoman Empire whom they consider responsible for the catastrophe and indifferent attitude of Kazanci family (Turks in general) to these holocausts. Shafak says, “The Kazancis were a family inclined never to forget other people’s stories but, to blank when it came to their own.” (Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul* 60). Tchakhmakhchians have moved to America as a refugee family, but are unable to forgive the Turks who are responsible for their exile. In America they are the marginals segregated from their native place and still in an effort to get integrated here. Turner describes the position of otherness in them as, “marginal who are simultaneously members of two or more groups whose social definitions and cultural norms are distinct from, and often even opposed to, one another” (*Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* 233).

Armanoush Tchakhmakhchian, a bridge between the two families explores the liminality of Tchakhmakhchians and their feelings of uncertainty, displacement, and alienation. They have accepted the fact that their memories would never return to them but are not ready to be the amnesiac citizens in US. Armanoush who is a daughter of Armenian father Barsam and American mother Rose, attempts to fill the gap between the two families and therefore, moves to Turkey to find her roots and reasons of her family’s exile before getting assimilated in US, “to be able to become an Armenian American [...] I need to find my Armenianness first. If this requires a voyage into the past, so be it” (Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul* 118). She passes through the three stages of liminality to come out as a transformed person who explores not only her true self but the other characters too. Her pre-liminal phase is her life in US where she spends her time with her mother and her Turkish step father Mustafa and her real father’s Armenian family settled in US. Her stay in Istanbul with his Kazanci family can be regarded as her liminal phase as it is a period of ambiguity and uncertainty for her where she unearths her family history and trauma related to it. She understands the situation of Tchakhmakhchians as marginal individuals whose mind and emotions are confused in a way as they belong to the two different worlds. She also discovers that Turkish

people are quite different from the kind that haunted the memories and stories of her family and gets their point of view about the 'genocide'. Through Armanoush Shafak tries to show Turkey's dichotomous selves and points that the integration of plurality of histories and voices are required to obtain a more complex understanding of the homeland. Armanoush relation with Asya as a step-sister symbolically represents Turk connection with the Armenians.

Mustafa, step father of Armanoush, is the only male member of the Kazancı family. He moves to US to dispose of his past and marries American Rose to create, "a home with its backdoor closed to the past" (284). In his effort to remove every trace of Turkishness in him he tries to assimilate in the foreign soil so that he can be a, "a foreigner with no ancestors, a man with no boyhood," with "no native soil to return to, or [...] memories to recall" (ibid.). He always wants to banish his past from his life forever but somehow could not do so as it keeps haunting him. His secret of raping his own sister Zeliha out of lust always disturbs him. His pre-liminal part of life in Turkey disturbs him in US. By trying to erase his past and imitating American accent, ways, and habits, he hopes to unburden himself of his own memories and 'become someone else.' He becomes a different person in the America and when he has to come back to Istanbul along with Rose to find his daughter Armanoush, he finds his home a strange land. He confronts his past here and when aunt Banu, who also knows the incident of rape, gives him a bowl of poisonous *ashure* he accepts it and meets his third phase of liminality,

All these years, a harrowing remorse had been gnawing him inside, little by little, without disrupting his outer façade. But perhaps the fight between amnesia and remembering was finally over. Like a sea plain stretching as far as the tither from the ebbing waters. He reached out to the ashure. Knowingly and wilfully, he started to eat it, little by little, savoring each and every ingredient with every mouthful. It felt so relieving to walk out on his past and his future at once. (Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul* 337)

Barsam, real father of Armanoush is an Armenian-American. Like Mustafa he is also in dilemma between his Armenian and American identity. The tripartite structure related to Turner's Liminality is identifiable in his life also. His pre-liminal stage

includes his childhood phase full of stories of Armenian genocide told by his relatives, keeping alive its memory, convincing him that the past influences the present and that it mustn't be forgotten. But when he marries Rose his liminal phase starts where he desires to get rid of his Armenian identity to achieve American personality, "All he really wanted was to be like them, nothing more, nothing less, to be American and to get rid of his Armenian dark skin" (278). His in-between position makes him disappointed as, "Barsam Tchakhmakhchian couldn't help but feel guilty for rapidly unlearning what little Armenian he had learned as a child" (279). He strives to find his identity through a process of erasure and imitation. His divorce from Rose marks his post-liminal phase where he introspects his relationship with Rose and his daughter after he loses them. Unlike Rose he does not remarry and remains single till the end left with only two things between them, "mutual resentment and a daughter." (266)

Armenians who are scattered in Tucson, Arizona, and San Francisco after their dispersal both accept and reject the cultural values of these places. As they have left their homeland behind, they have to renounce their one part to accept the other. During this passage of transition, they pass through a situation that Victor Turner described as 'betwixt and between'. Shafak depicted these situations through a group of characters who experience the deprivations and dislocations together as a community through Café Constantinopolis and Café Kundera.

Café Constantinopolis is a chat room with a group of members having one fundamental thing in common that is their "common" history. "Cafe Constantinopolis was a chat room, or as the regulars called it, a cybercafe, initially designed by a bunch of Greek Americans, Sephardim Americans, and Armenian Americans who, other than being New Yorkers, had one fundamental thing in common: They all were the grandchildren of families once based in Istanbul" (Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul* 28). They use this café as a platform to discuss their common ancestry and common 'enemy', the Turks. They experience liminality together and forms a cyber community which Turner labelled as 'communitas'. The mutual uncertainty of their identities and their joint hatred for the Turks whom they consider responsible for the genocide bring them together. All of them share a collective cultural memory of carrying a psychological burden of dislocation and shame.

Café Kundera, a peaceful place for Asya as here, “no one forced you to change since human beings were thought to be essentially imperfect and uncorrectable” (Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul* 86). Unlike the members of Café Constantinopolis, the members of Café Kundera are more rational as they believe that Armenians have taken the genocide in an exaggerating way, "The claims of the Armenians are based on exaggeration and distortion. Come on, some go as far as claiming that we killed two million Armenians. No historian in his right mind would take that seriously." (210). They belong to the group of people who assimilate their traumatised past and put them to rest. So, these groups portray the structure of *communitas*, an equalitarian relationship between the participants based on common humanity and equality rather than recognized hierarchy.

Thus, *The Bastard of Istanbul* standing on the border draws the attention of the readers to both the Armenian side and Turkish side and provides a list of characters on the threshold of two visions of history and reality. It presents the change of identities of the characters while passing their passage of life through the process of separation and integration.

The Forty Rules of Love

Elif Shafak believes that a novel is, “a free, egalitarian space where a diversity of voices can be heard, nuances celebrated, and the unsayable can be said” and a novelist works, “to rehumanise those who have been dehumanised” (New Statesman, 2018). Her next novel *The Forty Rules of Love* justifies the statement where she has provided the voice to number of characters who are generally unheard such as Suleiman the Drunk, Desert Rose the Harlot and Hasan the Beggar along with the primary characters like, Shams and Rumi, Ella and Aziz to understand their dilemma of being in the places of opposites such as brain versus heart, discipline versus spontaneity, and reason versus love. The novel beautifully captures the transformation of these characters in their effort to choose between the two extremes and to understand what matters them the most. Analysing two different centuries, thirteenth century and twenty-first century, Shafak juxtaposes the past and the present to show that they are welded in one spatial construction and ‘deserves to be a global publishing phenomenon’ (Independent). In her interview to Nazli Demiroz, Shafak tells, “This novel went

through many stages. I wanted to discuss “love” with its divine and human dimensions. East and West, past and present” (2009). Despite the oscillation between the two stories separated by centuries and told through the voices of many narrators, the novel perceives that love firmly holds all of us together.

The two parallel love stories, a contemporary love story and making it mirror Rumi’s story, the novel can be explored for the presence of Turner’s Liminality by dividing it into pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases in the life of most of the characters. The protagonist of the first story is Ella Rubinstein in her pre-liminal phase is a forty years bored housewife with a distant and unfaithful husband and has teenage children who are growing away from her. Despite her gracious suburban life in Northampton, New England, Ella sees her life as stale and wasted. Her job as a reader in a publishing house brings the liminal phase of her life. She gets a manuscript titled ‘Sweet Blasphemy’ written by Aziz Zahara about the 13th Century Sufi poet Rumi and Shams of Tabriz, and his forty rules of life and love. It makes ripples within the predictable precincts of her comfortable life. She begins to get attracted towards the mysterious author of this work. The manuscript initiates her passage of life towards her spiritual growth. Her transformation begins and from an immature and emotionally lost woman, she turns into a bold and decisive woman. She rediscovers herself by opening to love something which has been conspicuously missing in their conjugal life. From a woman who believes, “Love is only a sweet feeling bound to come and quickly to go away.” (Shafak, *The Forty Rules of Love* 14), to a lady who realizes that, “Love hits everybody, even a middle-aged house wife in Northampton named Ella Rubinstein.” (17-18), Ella evolves as a new woman. She becomes determined to fill this void in her life and files for divorce. She becomes clear about the choices she is going to make, and the inevitable sequels that ensue afterwards. She realizes that she wants something more than her husband and her children and her home. The unexpected liminal event in her life has induced uncertainty, ambiguity and anxiety which is the characteristic features of liminality. Ella’s courage to leave her family to spend time with Aziz is the solution that she finds to escape her liminal phase. She enters her post liminal phase as a transformed person who can rebel against all the barriers that stand between her and her ideal. Finally, she gets incorporated in a post-liminal phase by leaving her family

and moving with Aziz to achieve what she always wanted but has been afraid to embrace. Though her days with Aziz are numbered as he dies afterwards, her journey of true love transforms Ella into an independent and self-reliant woman capable of beginning her life afresh and alone. She remembers Aziz's words, "...you can be Rumi. If you let love take hold of you and change you, at first through its presence, then through its absence—" (327). Following her heart, she feels dissolving into a free cloud like a whirling dervish. Therefore, it can be vindicated that the character of Ella describes the possibilities of inner transformation provided by the liminal zone where the accepted structures and truths are abandoned.

Mavlana Rumi also passes through the tripartite phases of liminality. His life before he meets Shams of Tabriz is his pre-liminal phase where he is a mainstream cleric who, "was regarded as a beacon to all Muslims" (Shafak, *The Forty Rules of Love* 19), but who is lost in an empty void of darkness, and loneliness. "I am here and I am not here—a ghost among people" (288). The transition and transformation in the psychological aspect of the character of Mavlana Rumi happen from that particular moment when he encounters Shams and enters into a phase of uncertainty filled with a wave of sadness. Shams, a wandering dervish, finds a companion in Rumi whom he can hand his knowledge to. With their confrontation the inner transformation process begins in Rumi through a spiritual journey. His transitional journey turns him into a liberated person due to the religion of love shown to him by Shams.

By meeting this exceptional companion, Rumi was transformed from a mainstream cleric to a committed mystic, passionate poet, advocate of love, and originator of the ecstatic dance of the whirling dervishes, daring to break free of all conventional rules. (Shafak, *The Forty Rules of Love* 19)

He loses his confinement to his family and his followers only and gets transmuted to a person with no definite religion and culture. Shams observes Rumi as, "Rumi is right. He is neither of the East nor of the West. He belongs to the Kingdom of Love. He belongs to the beloved" (183). With the death of Shams, Rumi now comes out of his liminal phase with a new conscious and new inner knowledge. He becomes a passionate poet, "...opening his doors to people of all backgrounds." (19). At this stage he realises a fundamental spiritual realignment in him. He feels, "Until he forced

me to look deep into the crannies of my soul, I had not faced the fundamental truth about myself” (192). In a liminal passage, there isn’t any going back possible as the tripartite structure is linear in one direction with the possibility of a transition from the pre-liminal to the post-liminal phase. Either the person involved in the liminal passage can be stuck in the intermediate phase or can even escape to the final phase of reintegration with a possible transformation. Rumi, who finally realises his true self, is a perfect example of the transition and transformation due to liminality.

Other minor characters are also affected by the liminality. The Prostitute, the Drunk and the Leper also experience the feelings of desolation, loneliness and lovelessness in their lives. They exhibit quest of true love denied to them by the society. Desert Rose, a prostitute in the novel, suffers due to the tainted profession. She in her betwixt and between place longs for the God and spiritual healing. After meeting Shams, she feels the positive change in herself. He makes her realize the importance of self-love, “How can you blame others for disrespecting you when you think of yourself as unworthy of respect?” (135) Feeling rejected by the normative structure of the society she gets boost up by Shams’ words and in her post-liminal stage, she quits her profession and begins her journey of spiritual growth. She could get out of her liminal phase through a positive transformation which is reflected in her decisions after that choice.

Suleiman is a Muslim poet whose dependence on alcohol makes him offensive in the eyes of devout. He is also excluded from the society and is often beaten harshly due to his offense. His intermediate phase starts when Shams protects him from them and provides him with soothing words to prevent him from regret. Shams explains him,

When a true lover of God goes into a tavern, the tavern becomes his chamber of prayer, but when a winebibber goes into the same chamber, it becomes his tavern. In everything we do, it is our hearts that make the difference, not our outer appearances. (Shafak, *The Forty Rules of Love* 141)

Sham’s kind gesture turns Suleiman and he becomes an empathetic person who tries to protect Shams against the conspiracy of his murder. Despite his effort of telling Shams about his murder the later gets killed. But the incident changes his heart forever.

Desert Rose, the harlot is another liminal persona in the novel who gets transformed by the wondrous touch of love. Born to a Christian baker's family, she loses her mother while she is giving birth to her brother. Her father remarries and both her parents ill-treat her brother. He kills them by rat poison and runs away leaving Rose all alone in her house. The liminal phase of Rose begins when she decides to leave her house to go to Constantinople to stay with her old aunt. During her journey her carriage is looted and the robbers take her along with them to a forest where they have made a small village. She is sexually assaulted there by the chief of the village and her life changes after the incident. During her intermediary phase, she encounters a ruthless world full of sufferings, "Suddenly I was in another world altogether—a world of malice, rape, brutality, and disease. I had successive abortions until I was damaged so badly that I stopped having periods and could no longer conceive." (83). These atrocities change her and finally when she reaches a brothel in Konya, where she gets a new name 'Desert Rose', desert due to her barrenness and Rose due to her fondness for roses. Victor Turner in the rites of passage explained that the person who goes through the rites of passage as a liminal being takes on a new identity and is identified by a whole new set of symbols and he called it as an, "interstructural situation" (Turner, "Betwixt and between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage" 46). The interstructural situation in the brothel makes Rose to introspect and she realizes that to recover from the depth of misery, she must fight for liberation. She runs away from the brothel and reaches to Shams who assures her that, "You won't go back to that place ever again. That stage of your life is completely over. May God make your journey toward Truth a fruitful one". (176) Liminality metamorphosis her from helpless young girl who is destined for prostitution to a courageous woman who is ready to bear the consequences of running away from a brothel. In her post liminal stage Desert Rose becomes a Sufi and starts living a solitary life. Such transitions in her life helps her to exit from her past identity and she enters into a new one as a transformed persona.

Honour

The novel *Honour* like other novels of Elif Shafak demonstrates the threshold positions of the characters and the in-between places which influence their lives. Through the relationships between the characters Pembe and Jamila, and their families,

Shafak describes the struggles and incidents in their liminal spaces in Turkish Kurdistan, Istanbul and London. When analysed through the lens of Victor Turner's theory of liminality shedding some light on a spatio-temporal stage and a state of in-between-ness and ambiguity, the novel portrays these characters on the verge of change of in between two identity constructions bringing the notion of 'betwixt and between' developed by Turner.

Honour is a story of a Turkish family in London in the late 1970s. It covers the three generations of the Turkish-Kurdish Toprak family that move from Istanbul to the Euphrates and finally to London. The factor that binds the three generation is codes of Honour. The novel introduces us to Naze, the mother of twins Pembe Kader (Pink Destiny) and Jamila Yeter (Enough Beauty) who has already six daughters and is sure that God will hear her prayers and will bless her with a boy. A normal mother with love, care and affection for her family suddenly becomes numbed as she is not able to bear the shock of giving birth to two more daughters, "Thus Naze pursed her lips like a folded hem, determined not to say a word until Allah had explained, fully and convincingly, the motive behind His actions. Even in sleep her mouth was clamped tight. During the next forty days and forty nights she did not speak a word." (Shafak *Honour* 11). Passing through the transitory liminal spaces where her peacefulness and rebelliousness go side by side, she questions God, "why he had given them two more daughters when they already had six, and still not a single son." (12) but her yearning to get the honour of being a mother to a son leads her to another painful experience of conception and forced delivery and finally to a pathetic death. Her transformation from a well-behaved wife and mother who used to teach her daughters the general feminine rules of a patriarchal society to a psychopath in her longing for a son to a mad lady reveals what Gennep describes as pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases. Finally, she reached at the zenith of her madness when she asks her midwife to,

Cut me, you bitch! Take him out,' Naze ordered and then laughed, as if she had already crossed a threshold beyond which everything was a joke. 'It's a boy, don't you see? My son is coming! You spiteful, jealous whore. Take a pair of scissors! Now! Cut my belly open and take my son out! (Shafak, *Honour* 24)

The twin sisters Pembe Kader and Jamila Yeter, born in the strictly patriarchal family of Berzo and Naze as the next two in the row of already six daughters are other characters who suffer, struggle and survive in their liminal spaces while passing through their rites of passage. Pembe and Jamila's spatiotemporal relationships in the novel act as a mirror to reflect the ambiguous associations that can occur between two extreme characters who are connected through the same blood. Pembe's life of fulfilment with her family and Jamila's life of barrenness and the in-between relation among the two represent the liminality and unusuality. Jamila who is liked by Adam suffers rejection because years ago she has been kidnapped by the suitor's family of her elder sister Kamila but is brought back when the families agreed for their marriage. When she returns, she is examined for her virginity by the mid wife. When Adam hears this, he refuses to marry her. The incident makes a deep impact on her psyche and she decides to remain unmarried throughout her life. She is uncertain and ambiguous about her status in the society and portrays a transitional character whom Turner calls, "betwixt and between" all the recognized fixed points in space-time of structural classification" (*The Ritual Process* 97). Her state of being is beyond the normal social categories. She knows that she, "...was not angry with her twin or with anyone else. And yet Jamila was also aware that the question had to be asked over and over, like a wound that needed to be dressed regularly." (Shafak, *Honour* 38). She decides to stay in her homeland to become a mid-wife. Unlike her sister who is more open to diversity and understandings, Jamila is reserved who refused to move to other place as she, "found big cities suffocating, and was daunted by the thought of unknown places – the buildings, the avenues, the crowds pressing on her chest, leaving her gasping for air." (32). She passes through this liminal phase of transition as 'limbo' where her identity becomes fluid and obscure. Living alone during this middle stage of disorientation she feels herself belonging to nowhere as she finds herself incapable to separate herself from previous cultural identity and unable to get assimilated to the new culture. When she comes out of her state of in-between-ness and ambivalence, she enters into the 'post-liminal' phase that Gennep defined in his tripartite system. She gets a new identity, "They called her Kiz Ebe – the Virgin Midwife." (38). She becomes popular in her village and from the girl who has been once rejected for her chastity, she is now sworn for her purity, 'May she carry your name and be half as chaste as you,' prayed the fathers of the girls she

brought into this world.” (39). This is how her identity is transformed while passing through rites of passage of her life. She has managed to survive on her own in the wilderness and transformed into a woman, “

Who was no woman; a witch who paced the tights. rope between two worlds . . .
.when Jamila was in the cellar, she stepped outside of her body, becoming a conduit for an arcane energy that coursed through the universe, healing mending and multiplying. (Shafak, *Honour* 173)

Pembe also passes through a phase of liminality and transitional dynamics where she finds herself on the threshold of losing her core identity in search of a new identity. After her marriage with Adam who never loved her as their marriage was just a compromise, she moves to London. She gives birth to three rebellious children, Iskender, Esma and Yunus. Her identity is portrayed with a split self, divided between two homes, one in London and the other in her Kurdish village. As a prey of the honour codes of the patriarchal society, she is always under the criticism of the male dominating society. When her husband Adem starts gambling and flirting with his mistress Roxana, she begins to work to run her family. But she has to leave that job to protect her honour when she is molested by her master’s husband. She gets a new job in a salon. At this stage of her life where she has three children and where her husband has left her for another woman, she finds herself on the verge of a limit where she belongs to, “betwixt and between the position assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial.” (Turner, “Variations on the Theme of Liminality”). Her status in the society became uncertain.

Turner in his theory of Liminality analyses that liminality is useful in theorizing the reaction of humans when exposed to these liminal and extra-ordinary experiences. Pembe who is brought up under the strong influence of patriarchal society discovers herself in an ambiguous condition when she is left to understand the fact that from now, she has to manage her family without the protection of her husband. Even her relatives disapprove her for this condition. Tariq (Adem’s elder brother) said, “what do you expect, if she’s not woman enough to keep her husband home...’ (Shafak, *Honour* 153). While working in a salon she meets Elias, a Greek chef, who like Pembe, “thought of himself as a man who lived on the shores of other cultures. Yet in one fundamental

way, he differed from them. He could survive anywhere, having no attachment to any particular piece of land” (227). Turner calls such relationships as ‘Communitas’ which signifies any collective experience in which people distance themselves from social structures and their identities and may attain a sense of equality. (“Variations on a Theme of Liminality.”). Their relationship provides them peace and support they were longing for as their love was above sex and immorality, “A friendly exchange. Nothing else.” (Shafak, *Honour* 131). The chasteness of their relationship offers the transition in their identities as they pass through the liminal period of friendship. Elias silently finds the qualities he is looking for in his companion and Pembe fearfully tastes the true essence of that love which she never finds with Adem. She discloses this secret relation to her sister Jamila who comes to visit her in London. She is surprised to see the changed behaviour of her sister, “Pembe couldn’t help but feel a sense of bliss. Her sister’s presence had renewed her faith in life and given her fresh hope.” (296). As Genep suggested that a liminal persona comes out of the state of liminality as a changed person to be incorporated with a new or updated status, Pembe thinks that, “Things would be different from now on. Pembe didn’t know how, but she trusted that it would be so.” (296). In these transitory moments she imagines life with Elias and her children together living happily, but her transformative identity is short-lived. Her son Iskender could not resist her affair with Elias as he is already under the impact of patriarchal influence to protect the family honour. So, he kills his aunt Jamila in disguise of his mother Pembe. The incident gives a shock to Pembe who does not believe that, “Her sultan, her lion, the apple of her eye” (337) could do this. Finally, Pembe meets her death in the village not long afterwards Jamila’s murder as a transformed person as Genep says that liminality always dissolves the existing structures to create more stable ones. Thus, *Honour* describes the archetypal journey of Naze, Pembe and Jamila crossing the threshold from known to unknown, from life to death passing through the social space of uncertainty.

Three Daughters of Eve

The process of liminality as suggested by Genep is clearly evident in Shafak’s *Three Daughters of Eve* as the pre-liminal and post-liminal phases which are comparatively normative in its characteristics, and the liminal phase with its

unusualness can be easily identified in it. Shafak in her tenth novel *Three Daughters of Eve* invites the readers to understand the confusion created by the threshold spaces between past and present, between faith and belief, and between Eastern and Western ideologies. In the view of *Independent*, *Three Daughters of Eve* is “A fascinating exploration of faith and friendship, rich and poor, and the devastating clash of tradition and modernity.” The novel examines aspects of conflicts in identity, religion, and history along with Turkey’s unique geographical and political position, its Islamist and modern religion, and its arduous yet rich modern history.

Nazperi Nalbantoglu or Peri, the central character of the novel, from the beginning of the novel is shown as a split character wavering between two extremes. During her rites of passage, she passes through the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phase which transforms her to an entirely different personality. During her childhood and teenage which can be considered her pre-liminal stage, she is presented as character oscillating between Selma and Mansur, her mother and father who are opposite in their beliefs. Her mother is an ardent religious whereas her father is an atheist and Peri is left in the middle trying to keep her neutrality. Similarly, her brothers differ in their ideologies, Hakan, her elder brother is religious and nationalistic and Umut her second brother becomes a leftist. The split in her family occupies Peri mind all the time fighting this awkward situation. Peri’s role as a mediator between her mother and her father, and between Hakan and Umut reflects the geographical location of the novel in Istanbul, squarely at the crossroads between Western and Islamic civilisations. Her childhood witnesses a household divided into two zones, “Religion had plummeted into their lives as unexpectedly as a meteor, and created a chasm, separating family into two clashing camps” (Shafak, *Three Daughters of Eve* 20). With peri on the threshold between the two zones. The conflict between her father and mother and their firmness regarding their religious views made her thoughts regarding faith and belief uncertain. She feels, “there was no fight more hurtful than a family fight and no family fight more hurtful than one over God” (21). She writes in her God diary, “I’m perpetually in limbo. Maybe I want too many things at once and nothing at once and nothing passionately enough” (86).

Peri's decision to go to Oxford University for higher studies marks the beginning of her liminal phase. She wants to clear her confusion about God who is a mystery to her because she herself is perplexed. Here she meets the other two daughters of 'Eve', as in the title of novel, *Three Daughters of Eve*. Shirin and Mona, like Peri are different in their views and appearances. Shirin is a British-Iranian faithless wanderer, whom Shafak calls as 'the sinner'. When Peri interrogated By Peri about her religion she simply asserted, "Oh sister, I'm just a wanderer. I don 't belong anywhere" (114). On the other hand, Mona is an Egyptian-American Muslim, who belongs to a religious family. She follows the rules of Islam strictly. Like Peri's mother, Mona also believes that, "Allah gave us five prayers a day to structure our lives". (128) The three friends make a perfect triangle and are most likely of friends; Three Daughters of Eve: The Believer, The Confused and The Sinner.

The period Peri spends in Oxford leads to her transformation. Her liminality is affected by her friends and Professor Azur who teaches 'God' and whose words influence Peri's thoughts and her personality. In his seminar on God Azur explains, "We have seen, all too often, that neither theists nor atheists are ready to abandon the Hegemony of Certainty. Their seeming disagreement is a circle of refrains. Where there is no possibility of change, there is no real ground for a real dialogue." (178) Azur develops another way of looking to God in Peri which is outside the rigid dichotomies of good and evil, God and Devil, light and dark, theism, and atheism. Agnes Horvath argues that "liminal situations can be, and in fact in the modern era are, rather quite different: periods of uncertainty, anguish, even existential fear; a facing of the abyss or the void" (Horvath, *Modernism and Charisma* 2). Peri gets confused while listening to Azur's ideas. During her liminal phase, she realises that the best way to approach God is neither through religiosity nor doubtfulness but through solitude. She recognises that the existence of God's presence is through knowledge and reason.

After Peri returns from Oxford her post-liminal phase begins. She has escaped the liminal phase of uncertainty, ambiguity and anxiety about the unusual happenings around her. She is a mature and wealthy Turkish woman now. Her transit to post-liminal stage makes her realize that human beings suffer at the hands of a God that they themselves create. Her confusion between mortal love and divine truth finally ends and

thus, begins Peri's spiritual journey towards God. From a confused person which she admits, "I was always in that limbo between yes and no. no stranger to faith no stranger to doubt, undecided, vacillating. Never self-confident. Maybe it made me who I am, all that uncertainty. It also became my worst enemy." (Shafak, *Three Daughters of Eve* 364), she becomes a bold and decisive personality who is neither confused nor uncertain. The above description of the protagonist character gives a hint to the uncertain and ambiguous situation that she faces in her liminal phase and the transformation she experiences as she comes out of it. Finally, Peri's change helps her to get over her confusion and internal identity conflicts.

10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World

Elif Shafak has been investigated by Turkish authorities for obscenity for confronting sexual violence in latest fictional work *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*. The reason behind this allegation is that Shafak has portrayed the story of Tequila Leila, an Istanbul prostitute and her group of friends living outside social norms who are abused, displaced, judged, held back, hurt and ignored. Through the eyes of the protagonist Leila, a sex worker, Shafak brings into sharp focus all other characters who do not fit into the confined parameters of the society. Their sufferings and experiences due to their in-between statuses are vividly expressed. While investigating under the lens of liminality the novel shows how Shafak's protagonist Leila attains a liminal status in those final moments of her life and how she takes on the 'betwixt and between' characteristics that Turner defines as essential to the liminal state and finally attains the ultimate assimilation that comes at the end of liminality.

The Booker prize short listed novel, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* highlights various characteristics of liminality: the threshold, death and uncertainty. It traces the passage route of dead but not yet departed protagonist Leila from the pre-liminal stage to the stage of consummation. Her transformation from being a daughter of a conservative household in Eastern Turkey to a sex worker and finally to a brutally murdered corpse gives the idea of her passage of life full of efforts of her making a way through an unreceptive strange world.

The grim opening of novel introduces the readers to those liminal moments, alternately lucid and surreal where the central character Leila finds herself stuffed in a rubbish bin on the outskirts of Istanbul realising, “with a sinking feeling that her heart had just stopped beating, and her breathing had abruptly ceased” (Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 1). She discovers that her brain is still in a position to recall her life, from her birth all the way to the tragic death she receives. These last few minutes reflect Shafak’s interpretation of that particular space as a charged liminal zone where Leila remembers her past life before her mortal existence is almost over. She finds herself in a state of ambiguity and anxiety where she cannot understand that few minutes before, “She was still part of this world, and there was life still inside her, so how could she be gone?” (2). But her mind and her thoughts are still intact and working. She wishes, “She could go back and tell everyone that the dead did not die instantly, that they could, in fact, continue to reflect on things, including their own demise” (3).

Within this intermediate space between dying and death, Leila memorizes her past life before her next stage of afterlife. She is on the verge of detachment from this volatile and cruel living world and on the edge of moving into the new one of freedom. David A. Hogue describes this phase as liminal period, as the period of separation human beings undergo before, during, and after major life or social transitions; it helps explain the sense of ‘time out of time’ or ‘betwixt and between’ that human beings commonly experience between leaving one status in life and moving into a new one (Liturgy 21). Leila realises that soon after her death, her friends will come to fetch her dead body to give her a proper funeral as her last rite which according to Hogue carries the soul through the liminal space into the afterlife.

The pre-liminal stage of Leila is marked with her separation from her family and from her city of Van. Genep describes this stage as a state where, “the initiate is forced to leave something behind by breaking with previous practices and routines.” (Genep, *The Rites of Passage* 21). Leila’s parents disown her on her disclosing the fact that her uncle has sexually abused her. To save their family honour they make an arrangement to marry her with her uncle’s son Tolga who is younger than her. So, she decides to leave her family and finds this occasion on her brother’s death when

everyone is busy with the funeral. She thinks of the temporary death she receives in losing her accustomed relations with her family and her last phone call with her father declaring, “We don’t have a daughter called Leyla. Leyla Afife Kamile: you don’t deserve those names” (Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 115). After losing her foundation that her family constituted, Leila also loses the bond between her and her family and reaches at such a stage which is beyond the boundaries of the normal social structure, its values, norms and obligation. Leila moves to Istanbul and gets entrapped by a man and a woman who are actually the agents, “- who sold her to a stranger the same night, and within a week to several others” (113). This is how Leila enters the seamy business of sex trafficking. In brothel, she undergoes a symbolic death, the death of her identity, and is separated from the community and is now considered as an outcast. Thus, Leila’s period of pre-liminality is pronounced with her entering a phase of a life transition that begins with her working as a sex worker in one of the ‘oldest licensed brothels in Istanbul’ (1).

Leila finds herself in a state of ‘limbo’ where none of the attributes of the preceding or subsequent social or cultural states exists (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 24). Thus, begins her liminal phase identified with its major characteristics as ambiguity, social changes, uncertainty and suffering. Her identity along with her name undergoes a change, “as Tequila Leila.” (Shafak *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 28). On the one hand, liminality provides her the freedom from any kind of structure but on the other it leads to an unsettling situation where nothing really matters. She experiences the condensed feeling of freedom and anxiety. Her life passes through ‘passage’ that indicates a displacement where a process of transformation is undertaken, but not yet finished. Her marginal state which starts from the rites of separation induces her to an abnormal condition, outside society which deviates from the normal social structure and its conditions. Here she starts using her identity as ‘Tequila Leila’ to engage herself in the cosmopolitan life in Istanbul. However, subjected to the brutal realities and cruelty of her life in the brothel as an outcast, she realises that, “Istanbul was an illusion. A magician’s trick gone wrong.” (202)

While passing through the phase of uncertainty about her future, Leila meets her group of friends who (like her) are on the fringes of the society and whom she calls

as her 'Chosen Family'. The five friends Sabotage Sinan, Nostalgia Nalan, Jameelah, Zaynabi¹²² and Hollywood Humeyra share a common characteristic of socially unacceptable people as misfits and are shunned by the society. They have distanced themselves from their earlier identities leading to the homogenisation of their current status as undesirables and a strong sense of structure of 'communitas'. Leila recalls how all of her friends share a strong bond to compensate the deprivation of their childhood. The cruelty and the harshness have hardened them into cynicism and bitterness. Leila's friends fit into Turner's category of 'communitas' that arise from liminality which is, "spontaneous, immediate, concrete—it is not shaped by norms, it is not institutionalized, it is not abstract." (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 272). Their solidarity upholds the transformative power of friendship.

Nalan, Leila's bravest friend, is a transgender whom Leila meets in prison. A liminal person who remains somewhere in-between the binary categories of female or male, Nalan represents the marginal character. Jung Young Lee in his book *Marginality* describes the marginal people as, "The new marginal person can be a reconciler and a wounded healer to the two-category system" (1995). Lee describes the concept of marginality from a new perspective as, "Just as "in-between" and "in-both" are one "in-beyond," the margin and creative core are inseparable in new marginality" (Lee). Nalan's identity falls somewhere between the conception of female or male and woman and man. Born as a son Osman to a farmer's family in Anatolia, Nalan has never been happy being a male as he always dreams of being a female, "All her life she had been trapped in a body that felt as unfamiliar as a foreign word on the tongue" (Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 34). He runs away from her house to Istanbul on the wedding night to fulfil his dream for sex change treatment, "she had come to this city to correct the mistake that God the Almighty had so blatantly made" (35). This is how he enters a liminal space in his transition from one gender identity to the another. After her first sex reassignment surgery, she undergoes a number of complications and she starts drinking. She does find any job even in the brothels also as, "Trans women were not allowed in licensed brothels either. Otherwise, the customers felt cheated and complained." (145). She becomes a split personality, "With an invisible blade, she divided herself into two Nalans" (146). Dianne Dentice and Michelle Dietert suggest

about the temporal liminal state that is experienced by individuals having physical transformation from one gender identity to the other. They also discuss the liminality in the transgenders who are not transsexual. The liminality in gender issues is the key aspect of their research through the lens of Liminality (*Liminal Spaces and the Transgender Experience* 69-96).

Jameelah, another member of Leila's chosen family, is a young slim African girl who suffers clashes with her stepmother and joins the congregation to remain connected to her dead mother. But she finds herself unable to be a part of the family of believers. At this stage she finds herself 'Betwixt and Between' the family she has left for attaining peace in church, "Once again she found herself alone, without family or church" (Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 75). To escape from this uncertainty, she along with forty more people mostly women move to Istanbul to get a job. Like Leila she also gets entrapped and soon realises, "it was a sham – a pretext to bring people in as cheap labour and for sexual exploitation – it was too late for her to escape" (76). She enters the where she feels that her life is going nowhere, that she is invisible, everything seems ambiguous, and she goes through a death-like experience as she has to say goodbye to her past identity and status. But her yearning to get freedom never stops.

Zaynab, a short Arab with a height of mere 122 centimetres, is a friend with whom 'Leila liked to spend time with'. She is a cleaning worker at brothel who is often mocked at due to her short height, "Dwarf, Pygmy or Thumbling – she had been called such names and worse." (80). Her constant encounter of harassment, staring and teasing has made no impact to break the spirit of optimism and hope in her as she believes, "You could traverse deserts, climb mountains, sail oceans and beat giants, so long as you had a crumb of hope in your pocket" (82). This makes her to learn the art of fortune telling and a source to earn money as 'People seemed fascinated by the idea of having a dwarf predict their futures'(ibid.). But after saving enough money she moves to Istanbul with big dreams that get shattered and she gets a job in brothel, and thus, she enters into Tequila Leila's life.

Sinan is a son of 'the Lady Pharmacist' whom Leila considers, "her sheltering tree, her refuge, a witness to all that she was, all that she aspired to and, in the end, all

that she could never be” (44). Timid and taciturn by nature, he could not make friends and Leila is his only friend. He loves to read about wars and Leila calls him ‘Sabotage Sinan’ as, “Sinan was particularly curious about codes and code-breaking” (55). Due to his reserved nature, he always regrets that he could not express his love for Leila. He always finds himself responsible for Leila’s ruin as he feels that he should have stopped her leaving him behind for Istanbul. His liminal condition arises when he finds himself oscillating between his wife and her ultra conservative family and his affection to Leila. In a striking contrast to Leila’s other friends, Sinan, the only male friend among the group, is portrayed deliberately a coward to show a liminal figure, a mediator who stands between the category of male dominant society and the world of the outcasts. Though he is a nervous and weak character but he is a valued and essential member of the group.

Humeyra is a singer at a music hall near Leila’s brothel, “the woman who knew by heart the most beautiful ballads of Mesopotamia, and whose life resembled somewhat the sad stories many of them told” (98). She runs away from her husband and his cruel family stealing her mother-in-law’s bracelets and moves to Istanbul. She gets herself a fake ID. She is in a constant fear of getting murdered by her husband, “Awake or asleep, Humeyra was terrified she might become a victim of an honour killing” (Shafak, 99). Therefore, she changes her physical appearance and identity and join the group of her friends.

Acting as an antithetical to existing social structure Leila and her above discussed group of friends form a different quality of bond among themselves that Turner described as ‘Anti-Structure’. Their union arise from the experience of their dislocations and deprivations. In the second part of the novel this chosen family of Leila fights against the norms of society to undertake a challenge to dig up Leila from the ‘Cemetery of the Companionless’ which is, “reserved for three types of dead: the unwanted, the unworthy and the unidentified” (155). As Leila’s family refuses to claim her body, these five friends take the charge to provide Leila a proper funeral which is a final rite that carries the soul through the liminal space into the afterlife. Therefore, they together make an effort to fulfil Leila’s wish to meet the blue betta fish in the sea when she dies,

the day she was born, someone in their house had freed the fish they kept in a glass bowl. She seemed to like that idea very much. She said that when she died, she would go and find that fish (Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 179).

The second part of the novel focuses on their attempt to perform rituals to honour her death.

In her penultimate stage of ‘active dying’ Leila’s soul prepares itself for its journey, her soul wanders in and out of the body in that “in-between” space. She is on the verge of moving from one socio-cultural status to another and finds herself, “in a special situation for a certain length of time: wavers between two worlds” (Genep, *The Rites of Passage* 21). She has visions and conversations with her family and her friends who are not present there. Furthermore, she remembers the sights, sounds and smells that were all so familiar to her. The novel maintains the ambiguity of her two identities (past as Leyla and present as Tequila Leila) and highlights how both have functioned as two compartmentalised identities which have found a new space to fully coexist. This gradually leads her to nothingness which is an instance of liminal state. Following Paul Stenner’s idea it can also be read as some kind of homogenisation with Leila who has become a nobody for the society. (“Introduction to the Special Issue on Liminal Hotspots.” 48). Through these visions Elif Shafak provides an extraordinary window into her liminal space.

The *post-liminal* stage of Leila, during her *rites de passage* is marked with her body being dropped from the Bosphorus bridge into the sea by her friends. She becomes a different person where, “She felt light. She felt content. And with every yard she dropped, she shed another negative feeling: anger, sadness, longing, pain, regret, resentment, and its cousin, jealousy. She jettisoned them all, one by one” (Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 303). During this time, she meets the blue betta fish that was once, ‘released into the creek in Van on the day she was born’ (ibid.). Her identity is re-established, seen as self-transcendence where she meets the old Ottoman writers and poets in the deep sea, ‘each cast into the deep for their treacherous words or contentious beliefs’. She finds herself free of all pains, struggles and cruelties and feels the comforting harmony with the vast blue sea. Her body starts decomposing,

but her soul gets a rebirth which is as bright as a new flame. Eventually, she gets reincorporated into a new world of peace where, “There was no reason to rush anymore and nothing to run away from” (304).

Conclusion

While analysing the novels of Elif Shafak through the lens of liminality it has been identified that the characters in these novels are in a way “neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned” (Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* 95). They pass through the liminal stage of their ritual processes where they experience instable identities. during their passage of life as Victor Turner explains, they are neither able to stick to their self nor is willing to completely accept the other identity provided to them by force. Their personal experiences in these pre-liminal and liminal situations often leads to their transformation which help them to exit their liminal phase and enter into the phase of post-liminality as new personae. In many of Shafak’s novels we observe that the characters are seen as having a bond between them as they experience the same liminal situations. Their experiences can be considered as those of an existential or spontaneous *communitas* as per the insights shared by Victor Turner.

The study of pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal phases of the characters helps us to understand the change in their physiological and psychological behaviours. The novels analysed above show the transitions of the characters in these novels while moving from pre-liminal to post-liminal phases and describe how liminality act as a triggering factor in their transformation. Liminality leads to the change in their roles and statuses which further alter their psychological statuses. The process of liminality discovered in these characters and settings in the novels are not only confined to the limits of the setting and situations of characters in the novels, it is also connected with the spatial and situational liminality of the author as well as that of Turkey. The application of the processual framework of liminality and transition helped to understand the liminal phase and its peculiar behavioural and situational changes expressed by the characters. The next chapter would focus on the exploration of liminality in these novels based on their interpretational derivations such as liminality

due to authoritarian and totalitarian dominance and the resistance of the characters to their subjugation.

Chapter 5

Liminality and Anti-Structure

As a creative writer and social analyst, Elif Shafak internalizes and absorbs the rich socio-cultural and religious distinctiveness of Turkish tradition. She through her works seeks to move beyond the set of discourses such as radicalization vs. secularization; Islamism vs. liberalism to highlight the Turkish writers' alternative positionalities of in-between. Through the portrayal of marginalized characters, including immigrants, Muslims, women, and LGBTQ community, Shafak stresses the crucial role of literature in challenging dichotomies that perpetuate a perception of differences as threatening. As Elif Shafak herself lacks the luxury or privilege to feel safe, or secure, or rooted; she desires to create homes for her characters in their journeys across the borders. Her novels are charged with historical and cultural issues such as the Armenian genocide, the ideology of honour, the roles of women, and the spiritual tradition of Sufi. And while discussing these complicated societal issues in her novels she criticizes the oppressive activities of dominant power structures in the society on these vulnerable groups of society. Her fiction includes issues of female identity, history, politics and spirituality to reflect the effect of dominant ideologies of power structures on the victims leading to their physical and psychological instabilities.

Having identified and analyzed liminality and its tripartite structure in the novels of Elif Shafak in the previous chapters, the present chapter is focused on discussing the unsatisfactory attitudes of the characters against the domination of the ideologies of power structures. It is aimed to discover how these characters show their dissent against the authoritarian domination which is somehow responsible for their liminal situations. In order to overcome the effect of liminality these characters can either follow the path of submitting themselves to the reality of the particular situation faced by them or reject the subjugation provided to them. Shafak in most of her novels has revealed their dilemma to choose between the two. This chapter discusses those incidents and events where the characters during their liminal phases respond to the authoritarian and totalitarian structures in the society that subjugate them vulnerable to the repression and exertion of power. Shafak takes it as her responsibility as a writer to

provide voices to these groups of people who have victimized by the political structures of Turkey. In one of her interviews, she argues,

Turkish history is a good case to study because we were once a multi-ethnic empire and then in the name of creating a supposedly monolithic nation state all those ethnic religious minorities have been discarded and their voices have been silenced. Part of my job is to bring back these voices. (Shafak, 2005).

Therefore, she explores the problems of minorities that fall victims of the extreme practices of the majority and eventually, they suffer being marginalized and treated as “the other”. But being the voice to the voiceless and exposing the taboo issue of Armenian Genocide in her novel *The Bastard of Istanbul* has brought Shafak accusations. She was prosecuted under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal code for ‘insulting Turkishness’ by a fictional character’s statements about the Armenian diaspora in the novel. Her prosecution was condemned internationally and under the pressure of members of the European Parliament and the International PEN, an international association of writers campaigning for freedom of expression worldwide, the case against Shafak was dropped.

Elif Shafak is also generally accused of using the words of Arabic, Persian, and Sufi origin which were banned from the purified Turkish language in 1932. Her refusal of using the refined Turkish in her novels is criticised by Turkish authorities. But the novelist resists the forced assimilation and coloniality/modernity rhetoric of their mother tongue. Journalist Richard Lea writes about Shafak,

As a writer who happens to be a woman and attached to Islamic, as well as Jewish and Christian heterodox mysticism, she rejects the rationalised, disenchanted, centralised, Turkified modern language put in front of her. Shafak declares. "Today in Turkey, language is polarised and politicised. Depending on the ideological camp you are attached to, for example Kemalists versus Islamists, you can use either an 'old' or a 'new' set of words." It is a choice she refuses to make, filling her writing with both "old" and "new" words. (*The Guardian*)

Shafak’s novels remain open questions to the state violence, blood thrust of power mongers, neglected voices of voiceless and raise the collected hands of poor and exploited against authorities. The intellectual and emotional attention of the characters,

situations and the feelings closely reflect the multiple styles of suppression of the authorities over the common man through sentiments and by power structures. Offering complex portrayals of ostracised characters, she penetrates into the problems of the exploited who were denied all their human rights.

The existence of liminality in Elif Shafak's novels guides the readers to comprehend the significance of the author's viewpoint on certain social issues and concerns. The in-between states of mind created in the characters that are forced to experience the features of liminality, assists to interpret the influence of forced liminality experienced by the characters as a result of the dominance exerted by various power structures in society. The scope of interpretation of her novels can be enhanced by exploring the presence of such specific in-between situations in the characters developed by the author. Her attempt at portraying relatable fictional situations in the stories with that of the reality of the world opens the scope for further discussions on the topic. She calls for abandoning conformity with the patterns of stereotyped social conducts. Portraying the increasing number of marital rapes, domestic violence against women, discriminations, marginalisations and denial of equal freedom of rights in the novels help the readers to understand how the suppression led the victims to a coercive liminal experience.

Shafak in her attempt to dissolve the differences of the liminal group of communities especially regarding women, adopts a subjective orientation that cares for all details on equal basis, whether these details are positive or even negative, in order not to view someone as the other. Her ideological standpoint that supports the vulnerable groups of the society gives the opportunity to perceive the intended meaning of the expression of liminality that affects them. Eventually, she explains her ideology, saying that "there is no such a thing as absolute good or absolute evil," and that these problems of colour, race, religion and ethnicity are all part of othering the opposite part as a result of the "cognitive gaps, cultural gaps, intellectual gaps" that set one as the "us" and the second as the "other." (BBC)

In discussing the liminal status of the characters due to the domination of power structures and their resistance to the authoritarianism, the novels are analyzed from that point of view where the expression of domination and subjugation is perceptible. In most of the novels of Elif Shafak the two popular concepts of hybridity and

cosmopolitanism are frequently used. Elif Shafak articulates both her own liminal identity and liminality of Turkey in her works to show the themes of multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, and multiple belongings. She employs cultural hybridity as a mechanism for resistance against the discourse of globalization. And this hybridity she uses as a site where her characters' transformations occur. As a liminal space between the two cultures, its hybridity makes them undergo a process that recasts their identity. This in-between space makes it possible for them to confront the contradictions and internal differences in the making of their identity.

Social Structure and Anti-structure:

Victor Turner in his work *The Ritual Process* conceives of societies as involving a mutually implicated or entangled dynamic of structure and anti-structure (or hierarchy and levelling equalitarian dynamics). Structure for Turner is another word for hierarchy, order, authority and different cognitive forms of organizing human society whereas anti-structure is a liminal and existential revolt against structure that imposes set rules or traditional attributes. Anti-structure is a deviation from the normal social structure. There are number of instances in the novels of Elif Shafak where the anti-structure positions of opposing the identity and structural existence of characters are present. These structures are free from the constraints and boundaries fixed by the society.

In most of her novels Shafak reveals criticism against social structure system shown by the practices of men's actions that put women in the second position or inferior beings. Her works discuss the patriarchy prevalent in contemporary Turkish society and its influence on women. In a patriarchal society like Turkey, men have more privileges than women. Sylvia Walby in her work *Theorizing Patriarchy* defines patriarchy as, "system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (20). She discusses that patriarchy not only dwells on the domestic sphere, but it manifests in all parts of social life. Patriarchy can occur in two arenas; private and public. The form of private patriarchy makes household and family production as the main arena of woman oppression; meanwhile, public patriarchy is a domination practice of patriarchal ideology in public arena, such as occupation, state, culture, education, and mass media. (Walby 24). The novels of Shafak expose the presence of both private and public patriarchy and demonstrate how women are told that they are passive and are relegated to roles of wives, mothers, daughters or sisters,

instead of being active individuals capable of free-will, but her writings speak and encourage the women to understand, recognize and raise their voices for their status in a society.

10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World portrays the central character Tequila Leila born in a family with a deeply rooted patriarchal ideology. Her dominating father Haroun controls over his two wives and Leila. He gives her name, Leyla Afife Kamile; Leyla the honorable woman, Afife-the unattained, chaste and Kamile- perfection which shows that she is expected to be “modest, respectable and pure as water.” (Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 26). Her father always believes that she will raise into a woman of honour, “you’ll make me so proud, true to your religion, true to your nation, true to your father.” (27). Leila develops an image of women in her mind as a person bearing children, being a good mother and an ideal devoted wife. Sometimes she pictures herself as, “a toddler hanging on her leg, a baby in her arms, a husband to obey, a house to keep shipshape this would be her life.” (38).

The novel presents Turner’s anti-structure and communitas and the liminal statuses of the characters struck between the two along with the six structures of patriarchy discussed by Sylvia Walby. She describes that patriarchy exists as a system of social relations that shape gender relations. These include the patriarchal relation in household, patriarchal relation in paid work, patriarchal relation in the state, male violence, patriarchal relation in sexuality and patriarchal relations in culture. In *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*, we find patriarchy in number of situations. Leila’s mother and her step mother are the victims of patriarchy at home. Haroun controls his wives in the bonds of marriage and domestic relations. On the birth of Leila, he gives the baby to Susan, his first wife, without the consent of Binnaz (the real mother and his second wife). That decision of her husband affects her emotionally, physically and psychologically and she starts living with the mental illness. The unending desire to have a son overpowers her husband so much that he believes, “old whoever cared to listen that he was going to have four sons, whom he was going to name Tarkan, Tolga, Tufan and Tarik.” (Shafak 16). Family’s honour is also more important for him and when comes to know about Leila’s pregnancy due to her rape by his own brother, he tries to cover up the things to protect their family honour. Without paying any sympathy

towards his own daughter he decides to marry her with his brother's son Tolga who is younger than her against Leila's will. Leila on the other hand, leaves her house and her forced marriage shattering her father's expectation of her being modest, honest, chaste, humble, obedient and silent who does not speak rather just listen and obey whatever she is told. She moves to Istanbul and gets entrapped in another social structure of the prostitution. She enters a society of permanent liminality by accepting marginality of the brothel as her home and choice. Leaving the old world of her house and family she finds herself into this "nowhere land" where the social rules are suspended. (Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*). Her new dwellings 'oldest licensed brothels in Istanbul' (Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 1) is a wild, liminal space divided between the world of her family and relatives and that of the street people. Though it has its own rules, logic, ethic, and aesthetic but she refuses to accept these rules and this ethic as her own, so the brothel remains a liminal space where she is imprisoned, a space of emptiness and lack of rules.

The death of Leila and the process of her burial is another instance of anti-structure and liminality. As Leila belongs to a society of sex workers she is considered 'dirty' and after her death the doctor refuses to give her body to her friends. She reasons for this by saying, "We'd never be able to trace who is who" (118). She orders to bury her in 'The Cemetery of Companionless' 'the loneliest graveyard in Istanbul' where the outcasts such as thieves, migrants, psychopaths, prostitutes etc. are buried who have no identities. They are not given any headstones but the numbers only. According to Van Gennep the funeral rites facilitate a temporary and crucial liminal space away from the structures and pressures of reality, wherein the bereaved can come to terms with their loss so that they can be reincorporated into society again afterwards (*The Rites of Passage* 147). He argues that all societies are nervous of those who cannot be laid to rest and who may thus remain behind to haunt or wreak vengeance (160). Leila's friends on knowing about Leila's burial in 'The Cemetery of Companionless' feel humiliated when they are denied of their right to decide their friend's burial without looking at her social class. The novel reflects that state as the regulator and controller have a significant role in determining people's burial which is actually a very personal matter. They decide to do the funeral rites is to ensure that their friend move on from the world

of the living with proper ritual. When they are told that Leila has been buried in that cemetery, they could not believe that

No Islamic burial rituals would be performed for this woman. Nor of any other religion, for that matter. Her body would not be washed by the next of kin; her hair would not be braided into three separate braids; her hand would not be placed gently over her heart in a gesture of eternal peace; her eyelids would not be closed to make sure that from now on her gaze was turned inward. There would be no pall-bearers or mourners in the graveyard, no imam leading the prayers, and not one professional weeper hired to cry and wail louder than everyone else. She would be buried the way all the undesirables were – silently and swiftly. (Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 190)

The way these cemeteries are organized and the dead are treated is one of the most striking gender-biased regulations in Turkey, especially on women as the concern of this novel. The resistance of the friends is shown when they dig the body of Leila from the grave and manage to take her to the Bosphorus bridge to unite her to the betta fish as per Leila's last wish. Victor Turner focuses primarily on the potential for resistance present in the liminal stage of the ritual. He argues that as people pass from one known state to another known state, they temporarily find themselves in a space which is not defined and thus not controlled, becoming what he calls: "an unstructured or rudimentarily undifferentiated communitas [...] of equal individuals" (*The Ritual Process* 96). These liminal beings get the benefit from the suspension of normal social structures and hierarchies and become sites of significant resistance to authoritative narratives. The water family of Leila's friends together as communitas present their struggle in navigating their marginal spaces, crossing the threshold while passing through the social space of uncertainty and are finally able to get Leila reincorporated into a new world of peace where, "There was no reason to rush anymore and nothing to run away from." (Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 303).

Kader Guzel (2016) states Elif Shafak in *The Bastard of Istanbul* depicts a male dominant and patriarchal society where women are forced to direct their lives according to the defined norms of the society. The novel also portrays the resistance and dissent of the characters against the prevailing norms that segregate the genders. There are

certain characters who are rebellion enough to get away from these set societal norms to chase their dreams and demonstrate that women are capable enough to stand on their own without submitting themselves to these biased patriarchal norms of the society. Zeliha is the one such character who stands against these prejudices by wearing outrageously short skirt and high heels and showing her denunciation of God, “Among all the Kazancı women she was the only one who was openly irreligious.” (Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul* 17). She dwells in the space of in-between, apparently revealing herself as never giving into religion: “She lived as an agnostic, and she will die as one. Sincere and pure in her blasphemy” (222). Her resentment towards God is due to her rape by her own brother making her pregnant with Asya, the bastard in the novel. In spite of this traumatic incident, Zeliha decides to give birth to her illegitimate child. As a strong woman, she boldly faces the social oppression especially from her mother Gülsüm who appears to be the voice of patriarchal authority and who is irritated by Zeliha’s rebelliousness,

Shame on you! You have always brought disgrace on this family... Look at your nose piercing... All that makeup and the revoltingly short skirts, and oh, those high heels! This is what happens when you dress up... like a whore! You should thank Allah night and day; you should be grateful that there no men around in this family. They would have killed you (Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul* 29).

But all this criticism does not stop Zeliha’s obstateness and her way of living that depicts, “her own way of protesting the moral codes” (221). Despite the fact that society will react disapprovingly, she pierces her own nose showing her own volition. Shafak describes Zeliha’s boldness as, “there was no power on earth that could prevent Zeliha, who was taller than most women in this city, from donning miniskirts of glaring colors, tight-fitting blouses that displayed her ample breasts, satiny nylon stockings, and yes, those towering heels. (3). Her being a tattoo artist is another example of resistant subjectivity which refuses to provide her a legitimate identity within a highly patriarchal milieu. It disappoints the prevailing power structures of the modern gender system and her whole practice adheres “to the ancient shamanistic practice of simultaneously internalizing and externalizing one’s totems”, (72).

Shafak's erasure of all the male characters from the novel is another instance of anti-structure as it does not involve the patriarchal authority and narratives. Mustafa, the only male character, who rapes his own sister Zeliha is also killed by his sister Banu. But Banu shows no regret for this murder, "I am ostracized forever from the world of the virtuous. I will never go to heaven. I will be thrown directly into the flames of hell. But Allah knows there is little regret in my heart" (355). The incident reveals the deviation from the social Islamic structure where the females are stoned to death for their adultery and on the other hand if a man rapes a woman and agrees to marry her, his sentence is lifted. It agrees the fact that liminality facilitates the rejection of the rules and regulations of ordinary society. Thus, Banu as a strong woman punishes her brother for the heinous act.

Asya, daughter of Zeliha and Mustafa is another rebellious character like her mother, "She was burning fire inside without the slightest faith in the righteousness of the divine order" (125). She is an angst-ridden and nihilist young Istanbulite who constantly complains of being the member of the Kazancı family. As she is born out of the wedlock, her lack of knowledge about her father triggers restlessness in her. She discloses this to Armanoush, "I mean, if my father were deceased, this vagueness would be over once and for all. That is what infuriates me most. I cannot help thinking he could be anyone" (174). She calls her mother Zeliha as "aunt" because of her distant and aloof manners towards her and to render her mother's sin, "less visible in the eyes of the society." (62). But like her mother who protests, "the moral codes she was born into", Asya also keeps her hair wild and frizzy to show herself sexual and so uncontrollable. Her aunts give Asya all their support and care to display women's capability in raising a child without the presence of a patriarch, in charge of his family's social conduct and moral propriety. They construct an anti-structural space in which prescribed narratives can be challenged and overturned so that alternative perspectives can be accommodated. Thus, they provide an alternative social structure where the ladies being equally in charge of Asya's life question the essentiality of a domineering male figure in a household.

Ella in *The Forty Rules of Love* sees her house not only as a physical structure, but as an intersection between her solitude and society. She examines her episodes of depression, anger, and frustration while living here which deviates from the idea of the

true image of her life. Therefore, while reading the manuscript of *Sweet Blasphemy*, she builds a temporary anti-structure for herself where she can balance her emotions without thinking of her false public self. The space provides her a distraction from inner turmoil. Though she knows the fact that she needs structure in her daily living, she frequently enters into the anti-structural zone to hold together the emotional fragments and works hard to maintain a balance between the two. In a society where women are urged to devote themselves to their children and husbands, she tries to maintain her responsibilities towards her family. But a question which keep on troubling her is, “Was she an unhappy house wife? A washed-up mom trapped in a failing marriage” (Shafak, *The Forty Rules of Love* 10). Her self-sacrifice in being a domestic worker has drained all her energy and she has reached a stage of her life where she could only achieve a silence in following the conventional social norms given to her by the society. She observes, “Twenty years of marriage, twenty years of sleeping in the same bed, sharing same shower, eating the same food, raising three kids-and what it all added up to was silence” (239). Therefore, when she finds Aziz (author of *Sweet Blasphemy*) she chooses to withdraw herself from the normal modes of social action during this particular time of its liminal phase of liminality. (Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* 167). She decides not to settle into the static structure of society any more. Aziz unlike Ella spends his life travelling around the world and has a great interest in the great philosopher, mystic, and poet Rumi and his beloved Shams of Tabriz. He does not possess a stable identity and as liminal personae enjoy his phase of uncertainty. But when he comes in contact with Ella, he makes her feel free from instability and binary self. He supports her fragmented identity and helps her to come out of her profound grief and a sense of loneliness and vulnerability. Both of them are congruent with their transformation context for possessing a modern conception of changing that differentiates them in the society. From their normative and organised pre-liminal status where they have some specific roles to play in their home and society, they enter into unstructured phase of liminality. They leave their previous state of specificity in hope of better, contented and fulfilled life.

Ella embarks on a journey to escape the life of emptiness to enter in “a no-man's-land betwixt and between the structural past and the structural future” (Turner, *The Anthropology of Experience* 41) to be complete and happy thereafter. Shafak titles this

part of the novel 'Fire: The things that damage, devastate and destroy' to reveal Ella's impending destiny while following the path against the social norms. She faces the fiery questions of people, "Are you going to leave your husband for a man with no future?" her friends and neighbours had asked her again and again. "And how about your kids? Do you think they will ever forgive you?" (Shafak, *The Forty Rules of Love* 227). She could feel the difference that society expects from her and the way she is showing them against the will of her family and friends while following her heart making herself a person of their criticism. She realises the disappearance of homogeneity and status in her journey, a characteristic of liminality (Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* 95). Also, she feels the detachment from mundane life, humiliations and anonymity which the society ascribe to her during her liminal state (Turner, *The Anthropology of Experience* 295).

Alaa Walid Malak (2016) in his study on *The Forty Rules of Love* describes that "how female creativity collide with marriage and motherhood". Isam Shihada (2019) in *Elif Shafak's Forty rules of Love; A Critique* mirrors two parallel stories depicting two different cultures. Ella Rubenstein, the central character of the novel, a wife and mother, calls off her marriage that seems stifling for her both spiritually and emotionally. Shafak here demonstrates that there is always a price to pay for living a desired happy life. Ella pays that price by abandoning her own family but she meets herself, and she is happily satisfied. Azra & Fatemeh (2019) in their study on *The Forty Rules of Love* describes that Shafak depicts the character of Ella Rubenstein in the novel by adapting the definition of equality of Rumi that 'the process of female and male sexes can be expedited by opening up one's heart to universal love.

Cultural Ambiguity and Resistance

Elif Shafak belongs to those group of writers who write about marginalized, othered and subdued individuals in an attempt to reveal to the world that they do exist and that they have voices they want to convey to the world. She functions in her writings to be the voice of the figures who are kept in the shadows regardless of their religious; ethnic or cultural affiliation (Mohammed Nihad, 2019). She has always resisted the straight narrative path with a linear rise and fall, instead she chooses a narrative consisting of a series of circles and a rhythm. As she defies this male pattern, she is often labelled as a dissenter. She is of the opinion that a novel facilitates stories that,

“connect us across borders, and help us to see beyond the artificial categories of race, gender, class” (“Why the Novel Matters” 43). Therefore, she tries to explain the conditions of individuals who suffer confusion and conflict of identity and who are under the threat of losing any sense of identity and belonging. She believes that in a process of getting a cosmopolitan identity, Turkish society has split into several marginalised minorities divided by the “us” and the “other” ideology. In order to adjust themselves in the society these groups follow a defence mechanism which she explains as

Even if you were Kurdish, you were still expected to say aloud, “I am a Turk.” It was assumed that we all shared the same nationality (Turkish) and the same religion (Muslim) -- even those students who were Jewish or Armenian. The school system was based on sameness. We were treated as a mass of undifferentiated beings rather than individuals with diverse backgrounds and varying talents (Shafak, “Opinion: Striving for ‘sameness’ Turkey stifles progress,” 2015).

These circumstances make the people of the same culture unable to see what is shared by two subcultures as a result of their focus on the differences making each of the two parts as the other. For instance, her novel *The Bastard of Istanbul* throws light on the problem of Turks, being the “us,” and the Armenians, being the “other.” It narrates historic events of Armenian Genocide in the early twentieth century when Turks murdered millions of Armenians and eventually refused to accept their actions. The novel delicately touches the subject of Armenian deportation for which Shafak has been harshly criticised but it is her own way of showing the dissent against the the domination and subjugation from the powerful class. The cultural ambiguity the Armenians face while living in other country is also highlighted to understand their resistance to the Turkish authorities. Though both Turks and Armenians are shown coexisting as opposite entities in one world, Shafak creates certain characters who act a bridge joining the gap between the two. Asya and Armanoush, the two 19-years-old cousins, connects the two families while exploring their divergence and hate for one another.

Armenian Genocide is a taboo issue which Shafak discusses in the novel *The Bastard of Istanbul* and explores the exiles and exterminations caused by the genocide

which produced a sudden shift in the people from their previous state of existence. As said by Turner, their situation can be regarded as a liminoid condition. Their liminal effects can be identified through the tripartite division. The novel expresses the deportations due to Armenian Genocide which are responsible for the liminal experience in the people who are affected by it and which may lead to the characters' resistance against the anti-human policies of the dominant groups. Due to the domination and subjugation from the Turks, the Armenians have to lose their motherland to take shelter in other countries. Their resentment is clearly visible in some of the member of Tchakhmakhchian family living in America. They call Turks, "an enemy from the history". They question, "...What happened to the millions of Armenians who were already there? Assimilated! Massacred! Orphaned! Deported! And then forgotten!" (Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul* 55). Their collective memory of the holocaust does not allow them to perfectly adapt the new culture forgetting the old one making them liminal belonging to 'neither here nor there'. As they have always been a part of Turkey for many years their culture in America is influenced from Turkish culture unconsciously and simultaneously. Also, they have inherited too many things from Turkish culture such as clothing, customs, words of daily life and etc. which keep on haunting them their life spent in Turkey adding to their anger. Though the novel presents the readers too much mutuality that makes Armenians and Turkish alike, the Armenians are cultural ambiguous as they carry a cultural identity that cannot be clearly assigned to them by a certain country. Their cultures are deeply affected from each other. Whatever the difference is, they have some sort of relation that Shafak describes that "we are all interconnected, our faiths, our stories, our destinies are interconnected," and that "no nation, no culture, no sub-culture exist in isolation anymore." (World Literature Festival 2015)

Assigning the women characters the main role as the builders of a complete story in the novel is another way to encounter and break free from an oppression of the dominant social groups and portray their resistance to the normal social structure that determine the status of women in Turkish society. Asya a nineteen-year-old girl who challenges the virtuous Turkish female identity by smoking joints and having an affair with a much older married man. She criticises the strong emphasis that is led on virginity in Turkish folktales and rebels against patriarchal discourses that control the

female body by representing extramarital sex as a shameful act, and stands up for her right to have boyfriends as a young single woman. To express her dissent against this patriarchal domination she keeps herself engaged in extramarital relationships while pretending to be virtuous. Her mother (Zeliha) runs a tattoo parlour. Like Asya, Zeliha also protest of moral codes which show the limitations of Turkish nationalism in maintaining the gender difference where the women are attributed to chastity and men are given the right to control female sexual conduct. Though she is judged as a disgraceful woman by the society for being a sinful mother, she is determined to fight against social pressure, “To her way of thinking, anyone who cannot rise up and rebel, anyone devoid of the ability to dissent, cannot really be said to be alive. In resistance lies the key to life.” (Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul* 221) Her nationalist relatives condemn her for wearing miniskirts and for not respecting Atatürk’s dress reforms. She is often labelled as impure. Even she struggles to prove herself confident in the eyes of her mother Grandma Gülsüm who appears to be the voice of patriarchal authority in the novel. She is only Kazancı woman who is the epitome of the completely secular female images and who names Zeliha’s unborn baby a bastard. Despite the fact that her mother and society will react disapprovingly, Zeliha pierces her own nose of her own volition. Thus, piercing her own body, behaving against the societal norms and deciding to give birth to a child without a wedlock is Zeliha’s ways of showing the dissent from the prevailing male-oriented culture. Because of this dissenting consciousness, she is thrust into a state of liminality.

Elif Shafak has been writing and speaking in several newspapers, interviews about the tension regarding women’s liminal role within Turkish society and about the increasingly authoritarian and un-democratic practices imposed by the government. In 2013, She became an active speaker in the Gezi protest against these policies that had been threatening women’s welfare and reinforcing ‘marriage, reproductive, motherhood, homemaker, and nurturing functions for women’. The protest gave the images of Turkish women resisting and intersecting and interacting together against the marginalizing, anti-Islam, and anti-Kurdish hysteria of the Kemalist ideology. Through her novels also she attempts to provide a fictional response to the pitfalls of the dominant structures colonizing and polarizing the women into ready-made identities (i.e., mystic, religious, minority, diasporic). As a public speaker Shafak addresses many

different people and audiences in Turkey as well as in the Western world. Therefore, she as an educator bridges the gap between cultures and perspectives, explains and criticises ideas and traditions from the one (sub) culture to the other. Her novel *Honour* is a representative story of the immigrants in the 1970s and their experiences of the clashes between modernity and the traditional environment from where they came from. Merging her role of a public intellectual and a fictional author, Shafak presents before us an issue of honour-killings both in the East and the West. In her article in *The Guardian*, she discusses that honour killing is not only restricted to Islamic countries.

It is happening here, too, in the heart of Britain. According to the Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO), more than 2,800 honour-related cases were reported in the UK in 2010. Evidence from police forces reporting suggest an increase of 47% since 2009. Attacks are concentrated in London, the West Midlands and West Yorkshire. Women's organisations argue the real numbers could be four times higher because of the stigma of reporting. (*The Guardian*, 2012)

In order to make the readers aware of this social problem, Shafak writes her fictional novel on this topic. It can be viewed as, "well suited to the exploration of social ideas and social protest" (Johnson, and Johnson vii) to show author's protests on the damaging the concept of honour and the repercussions that follow it. It explores the effects of the codes of honour on a family through generations and spaces, affecting their choices at every step in their life. The concepts of dehumanization and gender-based violence give the realistic picture of Turkish society. *Honour* throws the light on the mental liminality of Iskender who kills her own mother to protect the family honour after his father leaves them for another woman. It explores the psychological forces behind the crime which may lead him to hurt whom he loves the most. Born and brought up in a patriarchal family where honour is associated with males and shame with females, Iskender is always fed with ideas of male dominancy since childhood. The story is told by British-Turkish Esmâ, Iskender's sister, who tells the tale of killing of her mother by her brother in the name of honour. She explains how Iskender becomes the focus of a protest against a barbaric "Muslim" custom after this murder. Even the journalist investigates this as a story, 'This is a typical case of Middle Eastern patriarchal tradition,' blah, blah, blah." (Shafak, *Honour* 122). His imprisonment pushes him into

liminal space invoking in him the liminal attitude of being betwixt and between, enabling him to see himself and his idea of humanity in a completely new light. Turner defines this state as, “temporarily undefined, [and] beyond the normative social structure” where, “[t]he initiands acquire a special kind of freedom, a ‘sacred power’” (*From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* 26). Being in a safe distance from the terrifying patriarchal society, Iskender experiences the solitude to test his familiar beliefs. Through the partaking in his inner thoughts and emotions, Shafak makes her readers understand why and how an ‘honour’ killing occurred. From an immature, self-righteous young man he gets transformed into the mature person who has experienced himself as condemned one full of regret and sorrow.

Reminiscent of *Honour* deals with the complex state of in-betweenness experienced by immigrants in familial and extrafamilial spheres with respect to their struggle for and against a new way of life that lies outside of their sociocultural codes and norms. The novel presents the cultural ambiguity the characters face due to their migration to a different nation. In London where the Toprak family moves to is just a liminal space for them where they feel that, “We Topraks were only passers-by in this city – a half-Turkish, half-Kurdish family in the wrong end of London.” (Shafak, *Honour* 87) they feel that they do not belong to this place. Encountering a different culture, they seem to call into question the very existence of the collectivities referred to as 'community' or 'society'. They perceive and respond to this ambiguity differently. Esma compares London and Istanbul as, “If London were a confection, it would be a butterscotch toffee – rich, intense and traditional. Istanbul, however, would be a chewy black-cherry liquorice – a mixture of conflicting tastes, capable of turning the sour into sweet and the sweet into sour” (152). The normative cultural ambiguity that they face is exacerbated by the adaptation to a new culture. The resistance they show to deal with the situation also varies with different characters. Iskender finds himself unable to adjust to western culture, Yunus who is ready to adopt it whereas Esma wants to change herself accordingly without leaving her past. Pembe, their mother, observes that her children have adapted in a different way with the challenge of growing up as Turkish Kurds in a foreign city. Iskender who is born in Turkey ceases to accept a foreign land its norms, “Nobody meddled in his life. He came home at irregular hours, left whenever he pleased, and seemed to owe no one an explanation” (214). Yunus is wiser and

practical and Esma who loves words and languages tries to keep peace in her family. Iskender on the other hand, with a passage of time finds that there is no meaningful way for them to assimilate neither with each other nor with London.

Through the story of Iskender, the author tries to portray the dissent expressed against the state which creates traditions of thinking that practice patriarchal masculinities. Born in a toxic environment where women are underestimated, disrespected and abused, Iskender takes the wrong path by adopting such harmful traditional practices of violence to protect his family honour but when realises his folly he starts hating the structure of toxic masculinity. He understands and realises the role of social and cultural assumptions that intensify the feelings of supremacy in him that leads to his killing of his beloved mother. His uncle misleads him to punish his mother as he believes she has brought shame to the family by violating the moral and ethical code preached by their religion. After his father leaves them for another woman, he suddenly becomes the responsible head of the family, “My father isn’t around,” Iskender heard himself saying. ‘I had to grow up at top-speed, if you know what I mean.’” (Shafak, *Honour* 363). This gives him “a warm sense of worth, almost liquid, a new thrill in his veins”. And her mother’s intimacy with another man in his father’s absence puts pressure on Iskender, the kind of pressure that a boy his age should not have to face. Finally, this urges to prove his superiority compels him to commit a crime of killing her. This is a price he has to pay for conformity to the rules. The novel goes into the psyche of perpetrator who out of his mental illness or perpetual cultural pressure commits this crime. Hence it deals with the psychopathic conditions of the executer and provides clues to understand the cause and effect of it to the readers.

Esma on the other hand has her own perceptions towards the patriarchal family she belongs to. She finds herself unfit to be a girl and sometimes finds a repressed wish to become transformed into a man. She hates her feminine body and imagines herself as a boy “I wondered, for the umpteenth time, what I would look like had I been born a boy instead. Grabbing a nut-brown pencil, I first thickened, then joined, my eyebrows. Next, I began to draw a moustache above my lips.” (Shafak, *Honour* 289). The incident her defying the norms made by a male dominating society with the preconception of girl as symbol of weakness. She considers her born as a female is some sort of a fault. She feels, “At times I felt like the odd one out, as if there had been a mistake in the

celestial records that had caused me to end up here in this setting.” (290). Esma believes she can be a writer, “but not a female one. I had even decided on my pen-name. John Blake Uno – an amalgam of my three favourite personalities, a poet, a writer and a performance artist” (298)

Even though Shafak’s story is fictional, by defining the text as a modern novel, one can still argue that she has written a story that sets out to change not only people’s minds, but society as well concerning the issue of ‘honour’ killings, through the freedom of her distinctive narrative. Iskender’s remorse for his actions in the letters from Shrewsbury prison shows how concepts such as honour and shame, controls different members of the patriarchal family structure. His feelings in the prison urges the need to challenge these cultures and the laws that gives him this punishment and Shafak stresses the fact that it is only when people speak up that other people change; that society changes.

Another tool Shafak generally uses in her novels defying the tyranny of prevalent norms for a Turkish writer is the use words of Arabic, Persian, and Sufi origin which have been banned from the purified Turkish language in 1932. Her choice of language is more than what it seems, as an attempt to resist the hegemonic official narrative and its tools ‘secularism’ and ‘modernism’ in Turkey. It clearly demonstrates that her language in her novels cannot be perceived as submission to the colonial logic of power but as a reaction to ‘pure’ Turkish language. Shafak belongs to a society where the deviation from a normative behaviour is usually ignored and an author’s heretical practices are scrutinized from the sociological lens. Elif Shafak’s own life course influences her language preferences. Nimet Seker (2008) argues that Shafak’s language is based on deliberately used “obsolete or long-forgotten words and expressions,” that is, “Arabic and Persian words which the Society for Turkish Language has chosen to replace with Turkish words.” She uses use Perso-Arabic words to express religious and spiritual issues in her works. Due to her resistance to “the Turkification of the Turkish language” and her insistence on including Ottoman words in her novels, she has been criticized by various Turkish writers to which she responds: "I find linguistic cleansing as dangerous as ethnic cleansing." (Seker, *The Muse of Mardin*). Her novel *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* is U.S. debut, in English. It was then translated in and published in Turkey. Shafak explains that the response of the viewers for the book was, “because

it had been written in English and come out first in America, they saw it as a cultural betrayal," and this 'betrayal' becomes severe on her using the Ottoman Turkish words. Therefore, Shafak's exposure to Ottoman Turkish can be seen as a way of changing the Turkish readers' perception of the words of Arabic and Persian origin. Speaking to the British Council's Ted Hodgkinson on her usage of English and Turkish for her novels, Shafak tells

There are, oddly. Sorrow, melancholy, lament... these are easier to express in Turkish. Humour, irony, satire, paradox... much easier to express in English. Each language is equipped differently. On the other hand, we have removed hundreds and hundreds of words from the Turkish language in the name of 'linguistic purification'. Words coming from Arabic and Persian have been purged. I am very critical of this linguistic cleansing and I use both old and new words in Turkish. It's a political statement. But it's also a declaration of my love for words. All words, regardless of their ethnic or national origin. (Hodgkinson, 2014)

Hence, as a novelist she resists the forced assimilation and coloniality/modernity rhetoric of her mother tongue but she also resists the Western epistemology dominating her stories. In most of her novels we find these words explaining the Turkish culture, cuisine and tradition. They present Turkish food and culinary activities as a symbolic language that addresses the issues of identity and cultural practices. Traditional Turkish dishes like 'Sucuk', 'simit', 'kahvalti', 'ashure', 'hummus' etc find important place in novels showing her fondness for Turkish tradition which is not much expected from her as she is generally considered as "free from many of the modernist literary and political orthodoxies that are part of Kemal Atatürk's legacy," since she spent her childhood abroad and she "has the advantage of viewing her Turkish culture from the outside looking in" (Adil 2004). Some loanwords which are which were officially replaced with their Turkish Language Association such as 'hayati', 'kader', 'agha' used in her novels show the author's love for old words and her interest in the multi-ethnic and multilingual Ottoman inheritance.

Presentation of city of Istanbul is another device that Shafak uses in her novels to illustrate the semantics of ambiguity and resistance. As a "a city of cultural ambiguity" (Esra Almas, 2016), Istanbul has always been a global city which has

witnessed the cultural history of urban transformation of Turkey. Shafak's fictional Istanbul as site of ambiguity and liminality between occidental and oriental identities has the multiple representations and diverse functions. The place of in-betweenness that resists ethnic, religious, or historiographical categorizations, Istanbul in her fiction exalts the coexistence of opposites of being foreign for some and place of seclusion for others. She tells an audience at the Frankfurt International Book Fair, "It is a city of dreams and is capable of making promises to so many of us," she says. "But then again, it also has its own scars and wounds." (Saeed, 2019). In the same way, the fictional representation of the city in most of her novels focus on construing the West and the East as both conflicting as well as reconciling place. She also seems to suggest that protest to derive a balanced position to accommodate diversity and heterogeneity in the city that connects Asia and Europe must be encouraged, and that she portrays through her characters. *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* (2004), *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2006), *The Architect's Apprentice* (2015), and *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* have the representations of Istanbul as a city of contradictory, ungraspable, and unstable construct. Alan Greaves posits that Istanbul is grounded on the existence of an imaginary "divide" between "two" cultures and the confidence in the ability to communicate across it ("Trans-Anatolia: Examining Turkey as a bridge between East and West" 3). He suggests that city's linking position as a melting point of cultures makes it an important part of the works of Turkish authors writing in English and projecting their work onto world-literature markets, such as Elif Shafak. (Greaves 4).

The suicide incident of an American protagonist Gail in *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* from the Bosphorus bridge illustrates Shafak's response to its dangerous proximity to nonplaces like the Bosphorus bridge. The threshold position of the bridge lends the American protagonist a platform to stage her death as its ambiguous and uncertain position matches her own status of confusion of her true identity, "Suddenly it occurred to her, and the next second she knew with certainty that this inbetweenness was the right place, and this very moment was the right time to die." (Shafak, *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* 245–247). The image of the Bosphorus Bridge as a space of in-betweenness marks that it is not a land of mere crossing and convenience, rather its transversality is in the state of permanent liminality. Representing Istanbul as "a world of shifting alliances and profuse ambiguities" Shafak tries to show its permanent

existence as a synthesis of opposites. (Shafak, "Safe Spaces of the Like-Minded" 2014). In *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* Leila observes, "The Istanbul Leila had known was not the Istanbul that the Ministry of Tourism would have wanted foreigners to see." depicting the ugly side of the city where the outcasts like her are worn down by harsh laws and prejudices (Shafak, 225).

Shafak's depiction of Istanbul as city of multiple and contradictory identities can also be seen in *The Architect Apprentice*. The novel describes the ambiguous city as a place with instable geological history where, "things are written in water" (Shafak, *The Architect Apprentice* 9). When Jahan, the protagonist, first enters the city he finds it a, "wen of opposites", with geographically incongruous, ascending and descending, giving and taking attributes. He observes the city as, "Denying herself at every step, changing disposition in each quarter, caring and callous at once, Istanbul gave generously and, with the same breath, recalled her gift." (31). Being the, 'home to the dispossessed but she herself owned by no one', it consists of not only the contrasts, but also impenetrability. (Shafak, *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* 326) Acting as an intermediary between "East" and "West," Shafak's construction of Istanbul in her fiction implies its negation of monocultural paradigms. In one of her articles, Shafak describes,

While crossing the Bosphorus Bridge in Istanbul, you see a sign: "Welcome to Asia." On the way back, you spot another sign: "Welcome to Europe." Yet despite that delineation, Istanbul famously blurs these boundaries, mixing Europe and Asia all the time. (*Four Seasons Magazine*)

For her Istanbul has always been a she-city reminding 'A strong, resilient, impressive, stubborn, and beautiful woman.' (*Traveler*, 2022). According to the author the city has been identified as Goddess since the Ottoman times but now everything has become patriarchal be it the names of teahouses, public squares or streets. Therefore, Shafak wants her women to reclaim the public place. In *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* the water family of Leila's friends struggle to get this space of their own. For instance, Nalan, a victim of the public patriarchal relations, suffers due to her ambiguous sexual identity. She is discriminated in employment and is not even allowed as a worker in registered brothel or bars. Being a transgender, she is only permitted to work in hairdressing and unlicensed sex industry. She is often humiliated by public and

police. The oppression converts her into a ‘Spirited and spunky, ferocious to her enemies’ person. (Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 36) Dianne Dentice and Michelle Dietert in their discussion about the liminality in transgenders suggest about the temporal liminal state that is experienced by individuals having physical transformation from one gender identity to the other. (*Liminal Spaces and the Transgender Experience* 69-96). The resistance of the transgender to the subjugation of society can be viewed in the novel when Nalan discards the accepted structures and truths. When she is told about Leila’s burial in the Cemetery of the Companionless’, she finds it hard to accept it and decides to dig her out the grave to provide her a proper burial against the norms of the society,

She would fight back, the way she had always done. Against social conventions, judgements, prejudices ... against silent hatred, which filled the lives of these people like an odourless gas, she would fight. No one had the right to cast aside Leila’s body as though she didn’t matter and never had. She, Nostalgia Nalan, would make sure her old friend was treated properly and with dignity (Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 124).

The transition and transformation in the psychological aspect of Nalan happens from that particular moment when she makes up her mind to secretly go to the cemetery to bring the body of her friend as, “Leila deserves a decent burial.” (123) Her resentment towards the people who hate the whores and transgender as they think these people pollute their environment makes her more stubborn and determined. Finally, she is able to protect her friend from being buried at the Cemetery of the Companionless, together with unwed mothers, pimps, transvestites, AIDS patients, and any dead person of no family claim.

The Forty Rules of Love also narrates the nonhomogeneous political, social, and cultural issues stressing the importance of transnationalism. Drawing the parallelism between the multireligious Anatolian society of the 13th century and a twentieth-century, liberal and cosmopolitan United States, Shafak tries to portray the unstable binaries of time, place and person in her novel. As Furlanetto points out the novel *The Forty Rules of Love*, “engages in an articulate cultural dialogue with American and Turkish cultures simultaneously” (210), positing Rumi’s Anatolia as “a most desirable

society, capable of redeeming both contemporary Turkey and the United States from their adherence to a ‘culture of fear’” (Furlanetto 211)

Comparing the East and the West, past and present and materialism and spiritualism, the novel highlights that the difference of cultures, time and concepts have a common crux i.e., love. Love occurs as part of the resistance initiated by the people who suffer from their dominant powers. The characters in the novel are forced to experience liminality due to the domination and subjugation from the powerful class. The permanent and temporary modes of liminality identified in the daily life situations of these characters help the readers to understand their confrontation against the extremities of political power in the name of patriarchy, development and security. Ella, the protagonist, is the victim of marriage and motherhood. An unhappy house wife with three children and unfaithful husband, she is trapped within the endless responsibilities of her house. These ceaseless domestic responsibilities make her a person whose, “life had consisted of still waters- a predictable sequence of habits, needs and preferences” (Shafak, *The Forty Rules of Love* 1). But after long years of this stagnant life her transformation and resistance begin when she gets the job of a book critic and starts reading the novel ‘Sweet Blasphemy’ which triggers her initiation into self-discovery. Her relationship with Aziz, the author of the novel, delineates the path of Ella to tread towards her true self. She files for a divorce after the encounter with her void-phase causing the effect of a, “stone . . . disrupt[ing] still waters” (2). Shafak here presents the bond between Aziz and Ella as *communitas* as they are bonded equally to one another in experiencing the same liminal situation. Together they protest of repressive conventional values and mores of experiences, to assist Ella to achieve a new self that gives her space in the humane sense. Ella challenges the notion of transformation that threatens the stable and conventional social order that Aziz tries not to support. Finally, she describes Ella’s transformation as a woman Ella risking it all in the name of love. Part four of the book called ‘Fire: The things that damage, devastate and destroy’ reveals Ella’s impending destiny. Leaving her family, city and the so-called blessed life, Ella embarks on a new journey with Aziz even though his days are numbered.

Kimya is another victim in a society where local customs and beliefs rule its individuals and whom Shafak links back to past. Kimya is Shams wife who experiences her gender as a “painful obstacle.” Shafak depicts Kimya as a gifted and an unusual girl

who loves Shams and marries him but her marriage is never consummated as Shams does not believe in any customary beliefs. On the other hand, he feels

It made my blood boil that society imposed such ridiculous rules on its individuals. These codes of honor had less to do with the harmony God created than with the order human beings wanted to sustain. People should mind their own business (Shafak, *The Forty Rules of Love* 307)

Kerra, wife of Rumi, is an example of disempowered woman who seems repressed due to her lack of education as she observes, “Nobody gives women books to open their eyes” (167). In spite of having interest in religion, history and philosophy, she is not allowed to enter Rumi’s library and read the books. But she violates the patriarchal code and enters Rumi’s library to dust the books and is scolded badly by her husband. The incident illustrates her resentment against the society that prevents women from entering the male literary world.

Shafak’s willingness to depart from convention is present in her fiction where her characters overcome both the difficulty of individual dissent and the oppression that is marked as their choice. Her efforts to represent characters from the margins of life in her novels to the centre of human experience and possibility has caused her to enter states of transition in her life and work. Her works focus on discussing the enforced subjugation, exploitation and oppression of the characters who are the victims of the domination exercised by the power structures in society. She describes many social issues such as gender conflicts, caste discriminations, refugee struggles, diaspora issues, political and social dominance, wars, genocide etc. to make the readers understand liminal situations caused by these atrocities in fictional and real-world situations. As a spokesperson of the struggles of the minorities who are in an ‘in-between’ state produced out of the oppression by the socio-political ideologies, Shafak critically examines issues concerning women, culture, identity, language and literature.

Three Daughters of Eve deals with Shafak’s defence of multiculturalism as an antidote for cultural bias. The novel explores the struggle, conflicts and frustrations of four culturally different characters’ experience in Boston, USA against the backdrop of multiculturalism and diversity. Their liminal phase showcases their in-between state of mind that often exist in their threshold status of neither one nor the other. Sameen Borker reviews the novel which, “revolves around a Muslim Turkish woman’s obtuse

internal conflicts with the Turkish bourgeoisie and politics, her warring parents, her identity in a Western nation, and, finally, religion, or, as copiously and laboriously garnished in the novel – god.” (2017). It deals with Peri’s tryst with her Islamic identity and feminism in the context of the increasingly polarised world that she lives in. The two other daughters of eve – Shirin (the Sinner) and Mona (the Believer), a much-hyped professor challenge the rift between the East and the West on account of modernity and religion. Stuck in between the passionate believers and non-believers, Peri raises questions about Islam and identity. Together they share ‘half Oriental, half European,’ home where they discuss a connection between the rigid and the moderate. In that melting pot of clashing cultures, Shafak positions her novel, putting faith against doubt, freedom against oppression, women against men, inside against outside, East against West. All the three daughters in the novel, being new to the West, have no idea about the new culture when they are introduced to the situation for the first time. They experience similar kinds of anxieties, dilemmas, indecisiveness, tension and uncertainty while being in the spatial condition of the Oxford University. Shafak gives voice to her women to elevate different aspects of diversity and to reveal various guises of discrimination against them. She also projects how they find their ways to project their unique voices and resist oppression. The female protagonists’ struggle (in their unique way) to break the stereotypes associated with gender, racial and religious based identifications repeatedly challenge religious and cultural stereotypes that intersect in the continual battle against discrimination. Peri’s aggression against the patriarchal society is incorporated in her since her childhood when she and her friends face a refusal to pray inside the mosque. She understands that the society violates their rights in the name of religion by preventing them from praying inside a mosque. Feeling disgraced and confused she asks a question to the man, “So mosques belong to men?” (Shafak, *Three Daughters of Eve* 121). Throughout her life Peri experiences hostile sexism. At another incident during her brother’s marriage, a man stares and flirts her and when she tries to tell him that he has no “right to bother her”, he feels offended and calls her an, “arrogant bitch” (220). The incident marks a deep impact on her and she begins to feel disgusted toward her body and considers menstruation a punishment. She wishes to be “born as the third son of the Nalbantoğlus. Wouldn’t life be easier had she been a boy?” (106). Another incident that fills her with rage is when her sister-in-law Salma is

forcefully made to undergo the virginity test on her first night and all the male members including his father are involved in the virginity test. Deeply affected, Peri “felt a seething rage inside ... at the ages-old tradition that determined a human being’s worth was between her legs” (231).

Shirin, on the other hand, is shown as ‘strong, stubborn. A natural-born warrior’ who challenges the stereotypes associated with being both a woman and Muslim. She struggles to be recognized as independent, powerful, and competent. Despite society’s mistreatment of her, she remains willing to maintain her autonomy. Shirin’s rebellion against the hijab, which is against the expectation from an Iranian Muslim woman, is her way of showing the rejection of all the stereotypes that restrict her within that framework. She chooses to be the girl with a “short skirt, high heels, [and] heavy makeup” (Shafak, *Three Daughters of Eve* 143). She seems to “disdain women who covered their heads—a disdain she felt no need to hide” (144). She hates the way the religion causes intolerance, hatred and directs violence. As a ‘free spirit,’ Shirin yearns to find her voice without barriers, so she battles the stereotypes that conceal her opinions and female identity. Called as ‘self-hated Muslim’, Shirin does not believe in religion as she thinks that the Islamic image is portrayed by, “the arrogance of so-called ‘experts’ or ‘thinkers’ or the self-serving platitudes of imams and priests and rabbis” (246). But like her other friends she also feels alienated at Oxford University, “I am as British as a treacle tart but as out of place as a stuffed date cake” because of her struggles to free herself from various forms of discrimination, aiming to rid herself of these vectors, and identify herself as a “free spirit.” (150).

Mona is an Egyptian-American Muslim called as ‘believer’ due to her strong faith in religion. although she is raised by liberal parents in US, she feels pride in her Muslim identity unlike her sisters. She wears hijab in a perfect way as it gives her ‘peace and confidence’ (Shafak, *Three Daughters of Eve*). She like Peri and Shirin also struggles in a foreign land to attain a true identity and often oscillates between the Eastern hegemonic imaginaries and women’s perceptions of themselves as free-willed subjects. Caught in the dichotomy she is bullied, called names, pushed off a bus, and treated as if she were dumb simply because of her headscarf. She expresses her challenges as, “Every day I have to defend myself when I’ve done nothing wrong. I’m expected to prove that I’m not a potential suicide bomber. I feel under scrutiny all the

time” (417). Despite social criticism Mona strongly stands against the assumptions that Muslim women are deprived, suppressed, and need to be liberated from the prison of their religion and the hijab. She opines,

If I, with my headscarf, don’t challenge stereotypes, who’s going to do it for me? People look at me as if I’m a passive, obedient victim of male power. Well, I’m not. I have a mind of my own. My hijab has never got in the way of my independence” (Shafak, *Three Daughters of Eve* 189).

Open to different experiences and diverse cultures, Mona does not consider religion or the hijab to be obstacles, and she reflects these values throughout her life. As a feminist, Mona is involved in a series of volunteer organizations: Help to the Balkans Society, Friends of Palestine Society, Sufi Studies Society, Migration Studies Society, the Oxford Islamic Society (where she was one of the leading members), and “she was also about to launch a “hip-hop society” because she loved the music” (179).

Gender, Liminality and Defiance

In most of her novels Shafak uses characters’ experiences to paint a general picture of Turkish life, pinpointing on the marginalized outskirts of Turkish society. Through these men and women, we see how the country’s politics and customs have made life (and even death) unusually hard and unfair, for some more than others. Her characters are the factual representations of the prevalent social conditions. The characters such as the prostitutes, LGBTQ, transgenders, physically deformed people, saints, jinns, superwomen etc. who do not find a fixed identity in the society or who are all outcasts of one sort or another are portrayed to understand their liminal positions and the situation of uncertainty, ambiguity, paradox, absurdity, despair, structural contradiction and identity crisis. The intriguing liminal people, dangerous liminal settings, and distinctive alterations in marginal characters are discussed to learn possibilities of inner transformation provided by the liminal zone where the accepted structures and truths are abandoned. The dominant ideals reinforce the power of certain groups; e.g., men and heterosexuals, over others. These others: women, gay people, trans and gender non-conforming people, those with differently abled bodies, or bodies differently shaped from the dominant ideal, are treated socially as outsiders, “the abject”, and subject to social punishments. (Butler, 1990: 112). Butler employs the

concept of 'the abject' to think of the instability of gendered and/or sexed bodies especially those occupied by transgender individuals which are at the centre of academic debates surrounding queer, feminist, and trans subjectivity and discusses the uncertain liminal embodiment of sexuality and gender by the normative heterosexual identities rejecting the transgender subjectivities who challenge heteronormative understandings of gender, sex, bodies, embodiment, and (dis)ability. In Shafak's novels we find the situations where the gender liminals try to break the boundaries of their gender femininity/ masculinity reinforcing the binary that creates inequalities and forces them into a liminal status of having to work very hard to maintain agency.

Having master degree in gender and women studies, Shafak is always interested to highlight the stories of the marginalised and subjugated section of the society. Her stories cover a vast range of the taboo subjects that are silenced by the society. In a conversation with Anusua Mukherjee she reveals

I think novelists are not only interested in stories, but also in silences. I am always drawn to silences — the things we cannot talk about easily in our societies. I am drawn to the periphery rather than the centre. There is a part of me that wants to give more voice to the voiceless, make the invisible more visible, bring the periphery to the centre. I think at the heart of literature there is a deliberate resistance to de-humanisation — the belief that through stories we can rehumanise those who have been dehumanised. Literature is the antidote to numbness, apathy (Mukherjee, 2021).

These voiceless people are a heterogeneous category of persons, who are variously positioned in the socio-economic structure and moral order. They are generally put in a potentially vulnerable positions by the stereotypes. They fall into a category of gender liminality i.e., in an interstitial space, a middle ground between stereotypical gender performances of masculinity and femininity. Elif Shafak frequently talks about them at every social level and about the human rights for women and people of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and queer (LGBTQ) community. Victor Turner states their position as, "The attributes of liminality or of liminal personae ("threshold people") are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space" (*The Ritual Process* 95).

This section of the thesis discusses the presence of the gender liminal characters in the novels of Elif Shafak and their plights in their struggle for rights and identity. Jules Vivid in her article, “Gender Liminality: How Gender Inequalities in College Hookup Culture Affect Female Subjectivity”, describes Gender liminality is an interstitial space, “a middle ground between stereotypical gender performances of masculinity and femininity” (2017). They challenge the notion that sexuality is directly connected to one's biological condition which determined whether the individual was a man or a woman, never leaving place for the in between. During a TED Talks presentation in New York, Shafak exposes the truth, “I have never had the courage to say in a public space that I was bisexual myself, because I so feared the slander and the stigma and the ridicule and the hatred that was sure to follow.” (TED Talks 2017).

The statement brings her the criticism from all over her country and abroad. She is condemned by the Conservative and mainstream columnists who blames that Shafak has deliberately declared herself bisexual to gain attention and declare it as her public stunt. Ahmet Hakan, one of Turkey's most-read columnists, in daily *Hurriyet* claims Shafak, A Champ of self-Promotion and Grabbing Attention’ whereas *Haberturk* columnist Oray Egin accuses her, “When a writer who has never expressed the least support to LGBT causes comes out in TED Talks, this can be nothing but a deplorable PR attempt.” (*Al Monitor* 2017). Another group of columnists call her ‘Traitor’ for insulting Turkish traditions, codes of conduct, honour and family values in front of an international audience. They call her declaration as patronizing and oppressive. But there is another group who support her being a bisexual as they believe it would help others to come out and speak instead of remaining quiet for the fear of being hatred. But such a distressing experience, however, has not succeeded in silencing Shafak. Bidisha, the journalist and broadcaster, when asks Shafak on the role of sex and gender in literature gets her response as,

where I come from, a male novelist is primarily a novelist. Nobody talks about his gender. But a woman novelist is primarily female, in the eyes of the society of the literary world. And then secondarily, she's regarded as a novelist. So, you will be constantly belittled, looked down upon, people will try to remind you of your 'limits', and it's very important for us not to let them pull us down. (*London Book Fair* 2019)

Rather than wincing Shafak strikes back in the most effective way she can by exploring these gender issues through her fiction. She considers novels as a strategy to question political, cultural, social and sexual taboos that have been suppressed, silenced and censored. She does not feel comfortable in a box closed off and dried up and objects to this determination.

The Gaze highlights one of such a simple yet experimental notion of gaze in various spatial and temporal configurations. It unravels the complex idea of seeing and being seen and implications of the gaze with respect to its controlling and manipulating functions. As the narratives of various liminal characters such as the obese woman, the dwarf BC, 'fearlessly ugly' half-animal, half-woman Sable-Girl of the seventeenth-century Siberia, and the facially disfigured Keramet Mumî Keşke Mehmet Efendi, the circus owner of the nineteenth-century Istanbul; the novel covers various deformed characters who do not fall into a category of normal ones. The physical appearance of the obese woman in *The Gaze* is highlighted by the society to marginalise her as a person who doesn't belong to the category of normal humans. She is constantly being judged and mocked at for being fat. This prejudiced and untruthful imposition of domination over the obese woman makes her the victim of deformation. Enveloped in a complex at the hands of people's judgmental eyes, the gaze places her in different temporal spaces with varying positions. She often finds being stared at an uncomfortable experience. "The way people looked at her made her so uncomfortable that she would eat even more and become even fatter." (Shafak, *The Gaze* 242). She prefers to make herself invisible by avoiding eye contact with others, and in this way sacrificing her own position as a gazer. As an object of the gaze, she is shown to serve the desire of the subject of the gaze (male, society,) and as she cannot challenge or change this structure, she begins to destroy her own body. Shafak emphasizes the impact of gaze on the protagonist as she, "internalizes the Gaze of the subject that locates her in the position of an object and scrutinizes her own body with the same Gaze" (Shafak, qtd. in Chancy, 67). She starts hiding herself from the society and experiences that she, "exist without existing, who are not seen in public because they are put on display; dwarves, cripples, fat people...all people who are strange to look at...Those who hide from outside eyes..." (233).

Mahrem the Turkish title of the novel *The Gaze* implies something that is kept secret which is private. Shafak relates it with gender and masculinity. She reveals it in an interview with Myriam J. A. Chancy, “Etymologically and culturally, the word is connected with ‘the private sphere,’ which is, in turn, associated with family, women, and femininity. Mahrem is also related to the word harem and [also] haram, literally ‘sin.’ As such, it has a sexual connotation and refers to that which must remain ‘unseen’” (“Migrations” 72–73). The novel exposes this influence of gaze on three main female characters with extreme forms of appearance in different time and space and marking the limit whereupon they should not be peered inside. These physically impaired can be considered to be in a liminal state, caught and fixated in a passage through life that has left them socially ambivalent and ill-defined. When compared with the able bodied they find them to dwell in a kind of limbo.

The gender disabled acquire their limitations through either birth or the misfortunes of life, but these physically disabled are often held partly responsible for their condition. Sable-girl defined as ‘fearlessly ugly’ exhibits half-sable and half-human body. She arrives in Pera and becomes a part of Memiş Efendi’s “westward-facing” (67) tent to perform in front of the spectators to display her ugliness and rage. “Suddenly, like a caged animal, she would let loose all her rage. With her tail straight in the air, and growling through her clenched teeth, she would crouch on all fours and prepare to attack, looking around wildly for a victim.” (73-74) Shafak pictures the outrageous performance of the Sable-Girl functions as a way of speaking back to the patriarchal economies that require no excuse to turn women’s bodies into profitable means. She views that in patriarchal societies women are also biased against other women and ill-treat each other. The Sable-Girl, for instance, performs to an audience of women who seems to be, “deeply pleased to see women uglier than themselves” (45). The experience for the obese protagonist is equally humiliating and devastating, yet more privatized and concealed than that of the Sable-girl in the circus. It may be argued that the experiences of those defined as ‘oddities’ by the normative regulations of physicality function as a critical means to relate identity to the physical form.

The Dwarf character B-C who is just 80 centimetres tall is recognised as being separate and detached from the main stream of the society. The normal people find him to be opaque and enigmatic. As he is neither sick nor ill, he falls into the in-between

category of liminality. As per Victor Turner he is in a, suspended social space without firm identity or role definition. (*The Forest of Symbols* 931) Like his girlfriend, the unnamed obese protagonist, he is also a victim of normal people's gaze but unlike her he compensates this by displaying himself naked for an artist and his students at a local studio. In displacing his own identity as exotic object of the gaze, he feels like a slave.

He looked hopelessly at the merchants and customers at the auction. It didn't make any difference who bought him; either that one or the other one. So, with indifference he posed for people he didn't know. He doesn't know why he goes to that miserable studio, or why he behaves this way (Shafak, *The Gaze* 77).

He experiences an undefined state of transition i.e., in a state of permanent liminality. Turner writes that liminals in their rites of passage are often regarded as dirty "they are allowed to go filthy and identified with the earth, the generalized matter into which every specific individual is rendered down" (*The Forest of Symbols* 961). Looked at from this frame of reference, B-C suffers a contamination of his status as culture-bearing creature in his society.

Similarly, Zainab 122 of *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* is a dwarf character of mere one hundred twenty-two centimetres. Like B-C of *The Gaze* she is, "Tired of people's intrusive gaze and with no prospects of getting married or finding a job, she had long carried her body like a curse." (Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 82). She suffers and being mocked at due to her short-statured. Her small size is captured by a photographer from Istanbul who thinks, 'Nothing beats female dwarfs,' he said with a coy smile. 'But Arab female dwarfs are a double mystery for Westerners. And I want this exhibition to be shown across Europe.' (81) His insensitive attitude changes the life of Zaynab who decides to move to her sister where she learns the art of 'the ancient art of tasseography – divination based on reading tea leaves, wine dregs, coffee grounds' (81). She is fascinated by the idea of being a fortune-teller which would be an apt option for her. But her dreams shattered when at last she is able to find a job at brothel of cleaning and brewing coffee. Being dwarf, she is relegated to the margins, and therefore is stuck in the liminal space without the opportunity of assimilation.

Shafak's characters are liminal and ambiguous, crossing borders between genders, ethnicities and historical periods in order to deconstruct received truths

concerning normality. She offers a reading which is against the grain of the rhetorical binary system, and looks at everything from the threshold. Her works in general are a combination of Turkish legends, folk tales, magic spells, jinn stories, epic tales and fables, written with a traditional as well as modern way of oral story-telling tradition. The magical realism of Elif Shafak provides the reader with a substantial aspect of supernatural elements and their association with real-world problems (poverty, discrimination and ecological issues) in an aesthetic dimension of liminality. She merges the boundaries between the magical and the real world and this union constitutes liminality.

The employment of Jinns in her novel *The Bastard of Istanbul* illustrates the merging of physical and non-physical worlds and the use of invisible world. Jinns are the ‘passengers’ in the liminal who can transgress and therefore are free from any boundaries set by their society and/or culture. Like ghosts in American literature, the jinn in Turkish literature occupy a special status and are, “liminal, metamorphic, and intermediary; they exist in/between/on modernity’s boundaries of physical and spiritual, magical and real, and challenge the lines of demarcation” (Zamora, 78). They possess qualities comparable to humans. They can be believers or nonbelievers. Shafak’s utilizes these qualities of jinn in her novel to show how they offer guidance and enlightenment and can be held for characters’ metamorphosis as they can travel beyond the physical world. The novel introduces us to protagonist Asya’s auntie Banu who is a soothsayer and who is able to communicate with two jinn named Mrs. Sweet and Mr. Bitter. Mr. Bitter, also called as Gullaybani, exposes the uncertain truths regarding the Armenian genocide. Shafak uses them as a powerful narrative device to reveal the dreadful incident of Armenian deportation and its impact on the two families. It is argued that Shafak employs supernatural elements to subvert reality, thereby defying conventional realistic narration. She creates them to intermingle Turkish and Armenian point of view on the genocide.

In postmodern literature, liminality ‘displays a creative if not aggressive tension with contemporary common-sense concepts of the “real”, the “possible” and the “probable”’ (Ruthner, 37). Therefore, the contemporary literature relates the liminal state to an intermediate position between stable classification, and embodies ‘a pure realm of possibility’ (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 97) for hybridity, which undermines

and overrules all hierarchies. Between the stories of the characters and those narrated by jinns, we find another embedded story in the novel. This postmodern technique of using multi-layered stories in the novel gives it another standpoint.

In front of the mirror, between the djinn and the master stands a silver bowl of consecrated water from Mecca. Inside the silver bowl there is silvered water and inside the water there is a story, similarly silvered” (Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul* 83).

Though the narratives by jinns are subtle and occasional in *The Bastard of Istanbul* yet their impact is blatant. They are able to create an atmosphere of superstitions, prophecy and clairvoyance. Auntie Banu’s art of reading “coffee cups to read the future” (33) with her jinnis makes her a famous soothsayer, “having worked upon and fleshed out her talent for clairvoyance over the years, Auntie Banu had started seeing customers at home and making money from it” (32). As the jinn bridge the realms of the mundane and the divine in that they are neither Gods nor humans their creation in the novel illustrates the gender liminality and defiance. Perin Gurel aptly defines the jinn as, “halfway between angels and humans, invisible and powerful like the former but capable of choice like the latter”, “able to shift shapes... can be either good or evil” and “capable of journeying between dimensions of existence” (2009, 65-71). They are the “ambiguous spirits” and “liminal creatures” who are believed to be inhabiting “threshold and doorways” (65).

Another category of characters who are at the high risk of becoming targets of hate crime in society and who find an important place in the novels of Elif Shafak are the transgenders. As Shafak has told a number of times in her interviews that she likes to write about the minorities and those group of people who are generally excluded from the mainstream, the transgender characters in her fiction proves her point. These individuals face widespread prejudice as they show different gender expression or behave the opposite to their assigned sex. But Shafak portrays the transgender in her latest novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* women assessing his resistance towards the attitudes regarding gender norms and roles that are common to prejudice toward the character. Nalan, a transwoman character, is previously known as Osman (son of a farmer in Anatolia). Since childhood, he always has psychological inclination towards female nature, “in his mind, he was always a girl, never a boy.”

(Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* 36). Therefore, he decides to transform himself into another sex. He decides to escape from home in his night wedding to Istanbul. After then, Osman loses his previous identity and becomes Nalan. She finds the freedom in Istanbul for which she has been searching for.

Nalan was a legend in Istanbul's underground circles. She had got into the habit of downing shots after she had her first sex reassignment surgery. Though she had happily ditched her old blue identification (given to male citizens) for a new pink one (for female citizens, the post-operation pain had been so excruciating that she could only endure it with help from the bottle (240).

But soon she finds this happiness an illusion and gets the true colours of the society. She faces exclusion and segregation wherever she goes in search for work as society considers her abnormal and problematic. Finding no other choice, she becomes an illegal trans-woman sex worker as, "Trans women were not allowed in licensed brothel either" (145). Due to her transgender identity, she is abused by her clients or by the police and suffers one humiliation after the other. Due to her ambiguous identity, she suffers discrimination in a homophobic culture with a low level of tolerance. She is often violated and taken into custody overnight once after the clean-up operation. Hence, in an effort, "to correct the mistake that God the Almighty had so blatantly made" (906) Nalan gets stuck in between the social inequality systems. She feels herself in a state of psychological liminality. In his very informative essay "Psychotherapy, Initiation and the Midlife Transition," Murrey Stein offer an in-depth, developmental, rites of passage, and Jungian perspective on what is often referred to in our culture as a mid-life crisis. He describes the situation of a liminal person as, "a person's sense of identity is hung in suspension. You are no longer fixed to particular mental images and contents of yourself or others" (9). Nalan also experiences a remodelling of her behaviour and mind in order to fit her gender of choice. She enters into a state of gender liminality where her gender conventions are temporarily suspended. She deviates from norms and traditional boundaries involving gender and sexuality.

Conclusion

Elif Shafak's fiction when analysed through the perspective of Liminality reveals that her works explore and portray the domination of the power structures such as political forces, authoritarian regimes and dominant groups who subjugate, repress

and exhibit their power over the powerless groups and minorities in the society. This domination can have a deep impact on the physical as well as psychological conditions of the marginalized, subdued and forgotten minorities. They present the voice to the repressed and criticise the role of power structures in creating domination and forced liminality in the neglected groups in society. In an interview with BBC, Shafak stresses

it could be anything, you know, ethnic, sexual, religious minorities, but also, any, anyone kind of pushed to the margin of any social or cultural context. I am interested in hearing that person's voice, and if possible, bringing that voice to the center of attention. (Shafak, "Turkey politics: 'Women are almost non-existent'")

She gives lots of details of her characters who belong to this 'other' category of people in her fiction to highlight their liminal situations, gender dimensions and resistance to the exploitive activities of dominant power structures in the society. Shafak's boldness has paid her a heavy prize. She has been accused of including the challenging subjects – such as child abuse and sexual violence in her works. Turkish ministry of culture and tourism has filed a complaint against the writer for inciting the criminal acts in her novels. Shafak criticises Turkish government for posing a threat to freedom of speech in the country. She answers the threats and accusations she received as,

This is a very new focus for them. And of course, the irony is that this is a country in which we have an escalating number of cases of sexual violence against both women and children. Turkish courts are not taking action, the laws have not been changed. So, in a country where they need to take urgent action to deal with sexual violence, instead they're prosecuting writers. It's the biggest tragedy. It has become like a witch-hunt. (*The Guardian* 2019)

Shafak boldly rejects these allegations as she belongs to the group of writers who tackle the challenging subjects that relate to women's rights, children's rights, minority rights, so on. She claims that this kind of accusation is so baseless as it hinders the writers to write about these subjects.

The above discussion reveals that Shafak's novels reflect the liminal elements such as anti-structure, cultural ambiguity, liminality due to gender dimensions and the response of her characters to the authoritarian administrations and dominant groups

who subjugate, repress and exhibit their power over the powerless groups. As these characters deviate from conventions, they have to suffer due to their dissent. Shafak is often unpredictable in her writing while presenting her characters. For example, Nalan, a transgender woman, in *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* is an offensive character ready to break any rules for providing a proper burial to her prostitute friend Leila. She follows a way to strip away restraint in an acceptable form and digs the grave of Leila who is buried in the 'Cemetery of the Companionless' meant for the silent burials of the undesirables. She being the most aggressive among her group of five friends takes this decision to do an Islamic burial ritual for Leila.

While reading Shafak's novels we learn about the problems faced by the vulnerable class due to the dominant attitude of the prevailing political structures, the more relatable people who are projected through the representation of the characters point to the neglected class with the characteristics of insecurity and inequality based on their physical appearance. The Physically deformed characters in the novel *The Gaze* highlight the struggles and suffering that result in their anxiety and resentment. The obese unnamed protagonist, the Dwarf B-C, the half-human half-animal sable girl and the facially disfigured Keramet Mumî Keşke Mehmet Efendi exhibit the characters suffering from, "anxiety, anger, anomie, and alienation produced by the spread of uncertainty, insecurity, and inequality" (Kalleberg and Vallas 2) due to their abnormal physical appearances. They have their own typical ways to show their antipathy to the society. The fatty protagonist, unable to overcome the gaze of the people, decides to hide in her house. She even exchange clothes with her friend B-C to hide her true identity. By assuming a male persona, she tries to reverse her position at attain the pleasure that has been denied to her as a fat woman in her social environment. Thus, cross-dressing arguably provides her with a playfully liberatory space where she can speak back to her doubly displaced (i.e., her gender and size) position.

B-C however uses it as inspiration for his project on compiling a dictionary of gazes. His dictionary creates another world of fiction within fiction. He deliberately displays himself as a naked model for the artists who make fun of his short height. In displacing his own identity as exotic object of the gaze into the collective memory of the colonised other, B-C replicates the psychological consequences of imperialism, through which the enslaved is alienated first from his oppressors and then from himself.

Zaynab 122 of *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* also suffers the same plight of being dwarf. She falls in love with a photographer from Istanbul who captures her pictures but soon realises that he only wants pictures of ‘Arab female dwarfs’ to display in an exhibition. So, she moves to Istanbul only to find a suitable job of mopping the floors, scrubbing the toilets, vacuuming the rooms in a brothel. Being an unfortunate situation of being victimised in such situations, she becomes a part of group resisting the rules of society to provide Leila a proper burial by digging her out from the Cemetery of the Companionless.

Due to their uncompromising protests for rights and freedom inclusion of people having an affiliation to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) has been accepted in various countries but still there are certain societies that have the adamant social system based on traditional norms and are not ready to take a transition from them. Shafak’s employment of these characters in her works represents a refusal of the binary of sin and virtue, and corresponding legitimate and illegitimate spaces. Nalan, the transgender, in *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* and Desert Rose, the hermaphrodite, in *The Forty Rules of Love* advocates, and apparently practises a non-normative, inclusive and fluid model of religion rather than a normative, exclusionary and stratified religion associated with tradition. Both of them exist in the confusing flux between male and female features and represent the inability of their identities. They occupy an unstable space formed by intersections of various elements- religion, gender and society. Nalan’s loss of masculinity, specifically a claim to ownership of the female body and Rose’s position between binary patriarchal system – the male in whom power resides, and the powerless woman, indicates how their liminal status in natural order is met with anxiety, incredulity and dismissed as unnatural. It leads to their recklessness which is a result of their respond to heteronormativity that is perpetuated as the natural order.

From the analysis of the novels of Elif Shafak the most identical theme that can be found is the dissent of the characters to show their response to the forced liminality imposed on them by the power structures. The discussions on authoritarianism reflected in Shafak’s novels directs to the ways of exercising the extremities of political power in the name of patriarchy, development and security which gradually creates situations of having been dominated, exploited and repressed. These situations cause struggle,

trauma and victimhood in people forcing them to make an environment that is least welcome and unappreciated. They are denied of equal freedom of rights leading the victims to a forced liminal experience. They get struck into a state of “a no-man's-land betwixt and between the structural past and the structural future” (Turner, *The Anthropology of Experience* 41) because of pressure or force from the dominant groups. It produces anomie, alienation, and angst in the characters as they cannot find a stable position amid the “neither one thing nor another; or maybe both; or neither here nor there; or may even be nowhere, and are at the very least ‘betwixt and between’ all the recognised fixed points in space-time of structural classification” (Turner, “Liminal to Liminoid, In Play, Flow and Ritual” 78). This leads to the disagreement in the victimised groups as they do not possess the power to stick to either self or the other identity enforced by the power structures.

Conclusion

As fiction writers we love ambiguity. This feeling of being “in between things” is good for us.

Elif Shafak

Elif Shafak, a soul of cultural crossroads and cosmopolitan environments, always cherish thresholds. She always like to build bridges between academia and literature, and between written and oral culture to bring ideas from the real world into the world of fiction. Her passion of storytelling and love for bringing the tiny invisible power relations of daily life in her fiction has made her an influential writer in world literature. Her novels highlight the fact that the human beings in their passage of life pass through the state of liminality which is associated with recurring transitions with positive or negative effects on them. Anticipated or unanticipated, these transitions that occur to human beings can be crucial in deciding the following track of their life. In their efforts to adjust to these changes they sometimes fail to cope up with the negative aspects which lead to an unfortunate and unsatisfactory end. The experiences they get while moving through the intermediary phase can be considered as both challenging and empowering with influence that change their status.

In the present thesis, the causes and consequences of these experiences of transformation have been explored through the implementation of the Victor Turner’s Liminality in Elif Shafak’s novels. The study has detailed the identification of liminality in the lives of the characters and its subsequent repercussions on their lives in the third, fourth, and fifth chapters. Additionally, it has been explicated in these chapters how these liminal entities being the victims of exploitation, domination and subjugation by the dominant power structures, react and respond to their suppression. The changes they have to adopt to deal with the challenges in their transition from one phase to the other show their much effort and struggle. Gennep also remarks, “The universe itself is governed by a periodicity which has repercussions on human life, with stages and transitions, movements forward, and periods of relative inactivity” (*The Rites of Passage* 3) The discrimination these characters face as a repercussion of their

ambiguous identities has been discussed with the help of liminality in this thesis. The newness and the relevance of this study along with the scope for the future research have been detailed in the present part of the thesis.

Being the intermediate phase in the rites of passage, the liminal phase is also known as the transitional phase from the pre-liminal phase to the post-liminal phase. “The state and process of mid-transition is liminality” (Turner, “Variations in the theme of Liminality” 37). While passing through this tripartite structure of pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phase an individual undergoes certain transitions that may be social or psychological. This research has tried to identify those transitions and their nature in the novels of Elif Shafak under the lens of Liminality. As already discussed in the above chapters her novels deal with several themes ranging from serious socio-political issues like gender discrimination, sexual harassment, child abuse, Armenian genocide, philosophical issues as Sufism, personal ones as love to global crisis like climate change. These themes are discussed with the help of liminality in this thesis. These researches are conducted to understand the various levels of human interaction where the transition occurs as part of its transformation from one level to the other. Their liminal situations, spaces and periods are identified at various stages of their life.

According to Turner, Liminality is a threshold position between pre-liminal and post-liminal stage where an individual (also known as liminal entity) belongs to, “neither one thing nor another; or may be both; or neither here nor there; or may even be nowhere” (“Betwixt and between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage” 48). This ‘Betwixt and Between’ stage of the characters is analysed in the novels of Elif Shafak in this research. Their physical, social and psychological conditions while dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity in their ‘neither here nor there’ position is highlighted.

The view point of the researcher on the novels under study has been quite different from the points of view of a number of critics and writers. For instance, *The Forty Rules of Love* has been assessed from the different perspectives such as the aspect of Structure and Narrative Technique used in it (Dayekh), the experience of female anxiety (Malak), text within text (Amna et. all.), presence of Rumi Phenomenon between orientalism and cosmopolitanism (Furlanetto), Sufi spirituality and the teacher–disciple relationship (Gray), negotiation of space and time (Aladaylah), An

Analysis of Hope as Reflected in the novel (Annisa) and Islamic feminism (Shah). It has been observed that the above critics have not explored the novel from liminality point of view. The in-between situations of the protagonist Ella, Shams of Tabriz and Mevlana Rumi and their transformation into a completely changed personalities have not been discussed earlier. Their anxieties and uncertainties while passing through the liminal phase in their passage of life have not been investigated.

Another famous novel *The Bastard of Istanbul* has been evaluated by a number of writers from the different aspects such as Armenian diaspora and the problem of identity (Tufekci Can), Food as an expression of Turkish culture and tradition (Jawad), themes of migrancy and transculturalism (Yazicioglu), conflicting memories of Armenian diaspora (Chakraborty), magic realism (Alshehri). Though some of aforementioned writers have undeniably used multiculturalism in their research articles, but they haven't explored the internal and external transformations in the characters while moving from one culture and society to another. To fully grasp these perspectives the present research has identified the liminal existence of the characters. "The states of being or states of mind, as well as physical spaces, as we pass from a period of stability to one of ambiguity or undergo some kind of transformation" is referred as liminality (Jewkes 376). Different contexts and situations discussed in the novel have been therefore investigated with the help of Turner's liminality.

Elif Shafak's latest novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*, shortlisted for the Booker prize, has also been interpreted from the different literary angles such as the theme of death, discrimination, and social exclusion in the novel (Rehejeh), portrayal of patriarchal relation (Fajariyah), silenced voices and feministic study (Salami), abjection and marginalization of females (Muntazar Mehdi et. all.) But the present study has explored from a different point of view. Social problems depicted in the novel such as unequal statuses of different genders (males, females and transgenders), economic equalities of the characters due to socio-cultural norms, social marginality of the prostitutes and other outcasts, and anonymous death and punishment of the minorities are scanned under the light of liminality. Liminality was applied as a theoretical tool for exploring the dynamics of societal power and where this power intersects across the lived realities of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, and

class. The victims of patriarchy and inequality (Nalan, Leila and her mother, Humeyra) have been discussed to know how they are forced to move in spaces identified as liminal spaces. The study has illuminated alternative ways of understanding the social world from the perspective of those subject to power. The problems of alienation from the possible identities of the sex workers, powerlessness to the act of domination and the meaninglessness of the situation are reflected in the liminality experienced by the characters in the novel.

Number of writes have evaluated the novel *Honour* from the different aspects such as feministic perspective in the novel (Sethi), women characters and their sufferings (Gayas), concept of Inferiority complex in the novel (Ikram and Waheed), cultural politics and identity crisis (Akbar and Ahmed), perception of multicultural identity (Gurbuz), subversive masculinity in the novel (Al Zahra), hybridity and unhomeliness (Pourgharib) and cross-cultural negotiations in the novel (Tsoneva). But there has not been any research on the exploration of in-between status of the characters and their conditions while staying on the threshold. Life passage of the protagonist Pembe while moving from a Kurdish village to Istanbul and to London and her transformation before finally returning to Turkey is the novel research. Using Turner's Liminality, Iskender's transition while living in a prison, a liminal space, and his return to the society as a new man has been explored. Some other minor characters' journey is also investigated under the lens of liminality to grasp their actions and behaviours. Yunus, the embodiment of the trans-nationalism, Esma, a character between aggressive Iskender and practical and adaptive Yunus and Jamila, a victim of patriarchy who lives a life of permanent liminality, are viewed from the concept of liminality.

Similarly, Shafak's other novels have been explored through feminism, patriarchy, cultural politics, identity crisis, Sufism, mysticism and several other point of views but there is no detailed exploration of the various aspects of liminality in the characters that provides an increased insight to their state of uncertainty as they pass from a period of stability to one of ambiguity or undergo some kind of transformation. The investigation of *The Three Daughters of Eve* revealed the intervening of gender, religion, and culture and stereotypes in creating liminality and in-between experiences, values, beliefs, and challenges in the lives of women characters. All of these

overlapping aspects provided a basis for understanding the complex nature of identity and self-understanding among Muslim women characters. The study concluded that the novel, giving voice to her women elevated aspects of diversity and inclusion by revealing the various guises of discrimination against them and illustrated how these women entrapped in the liminal spaces found ways to project their unique voices and resist oppression. *The Saint of Insipient Insanities* on the other hand explained that the memories of the past (of the objects, images and relationships) that constitute a significant aspect of the novel play an establishing links between the past and the present and destabilize monolithic conceptions of history and identity of the characters. It highlighted that a group of international students in Boston (Omar, Abed and Piyu), as the liminal entities who have to leave their homeland behind, renouncing at least their one part to enter the space of uncertainty and ambiguity. The study explored their social, cultural and emotional experiences in their liminal phase. It helped to examine how migrancy, hybridity, and the ways in which they unsettle essentialized conceptions of nation, ethnicity, and identity constitute their transformation.

Historically and culturally charged issues such as the Armenian genocide, the ideology of honour, the roles women have to fulfil, and the spiritual tradition of Sufi make the important part of Shafak's stories. While investigating them from liminality point of view provide another insight to look into these issues. The role of socio-political structures of society in distorting these matters as per their convenience is what Shafak tried to point out while taking these conflicting themes. The thesis highlighted her resentment portrayed in her works where the characters are pushed to liminal spaces by the dominant authorities to silence their voices against these subjects. For instance, Shafak had been accused for raising the issue of Armenian genocide in her novel *The Bastard of Istanbul*. She was tried in court for insulting Turkishness as she spoke about the tale of an Armenian family forced to migrate to USA to save their lives during the genocide and express their liminal situations of belonging neither to Turkey nor to America. Shafak belongs to a country which is situated on the edge of Europe, and, so it seems, on the edge of freedom of speech where the writers have no right to choose the subjects freely since politics permeates the novel, and literary characters can influence the audience with regard to certain political issues. The concept of liminality

is therefore significant to discuss the position of the writers of Turkey whose texts are caught between cultural and literary studies. Analysis of Shafak's novels in the thesis has helped to understand the fact that she both adapts to and counters the dominant discourses in Turkey as well as in the western world. Rejecting the binaries her novels offer changeable perspectives to confront on the one side the hedonist and consumer reality in which many Western European readers are living today, and on the other side the polarised, patriarchal and nationalist reality in Turkey.

Shafak's novels provide the readers a real picture of the Turkish society and liminality in her characters aid to understand the in-between situations of people within the culture and society of Turkey. The liminal status of Turkey between Asia and Europe is reflected in her works which help to know Turkish culture and society oscillating between old Ottoman traditions and Western modern values. Presence of liminality in her works becomes significant to decipher the ambiguous status of women, lesbians, prostitutes, transgenders and other marginal groups in Turkish Islamic society. The examination of the novels from the perspective of the insights shared in the theory of liminality and transition has helped to find the uncertain situations wherein the characters experiencing liminality become anti-structural challenging the existing and established structures.

The present study has further explored other aspects associated with liminality such as permanent or temporary liminality, liminoid, communitas and anti-structure. It has been furthermore discovered how the liminal entities when witness the other liminal persons passing through the same phase of uncertainty come together as a group called communitas. As communitas as they all come under the same category that experiences the same kind of liminality by being in the liminal space. The characters such as Leila and her 'water family' of five friends (Nostalgia Nalan, Jameelah, Zaynabi¹²², Sabotage Sinan and Hollywood Humeyra) of *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*, Ella and Aziz of *The Forty Rules of Love*, Omer, Abed and Piyu of *The Saint of Insipient Insanities*, group of migrants/ refugees in *The Flea Palace* and *The Bastard of Istanbul* and Peri, Shirin and Mona of *Three daughters of Eve* comes under the same category of existential/ spontaneous communitas. They all experience almost similar type of liminal phase of the story and try to overcome the entrapment of liminality with

their efforts to concentrate on the most suitable action to be conducted before their transformation to the post-liminal phase. The indecisive and dilemmatic situation experienced by the characters in the liminal phase produces anomie, alienation, and angst among them. (Turner, “Liminal to Liminoid, In Play, Flow and Ritual” 78)

For the analysis of the liminal status of the major characters in the novels of Elif Shafak, their pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases are explored with the help of the insights provided by Arnold van Gennep through his rites of passage and Victor Turner on the intermediate phase of liminality. The characters are also examined through other concepts related to liminality such as the liminal space, permanent or temporary liminality, liminoid conditions etc. Such investigation and division of the circumstances experienced by the characters helped to differentiate the specific phase of liminality from that of the pre-liminal and the post-liminal phases. It has also helped in defining the liminal existence of the characters that pass through the rites of passage.

Victor Turner specifies the liminal space as a separate area or place that deviates from the usual and normative structure of life. It differs from the space located through the network of classifications by a normative society and culture. It is a condition where an individual's interaction with the environment decides his behavioral patterns. From the analysis of the situations of the novels, it is identified that the characters as a result of the domination or exertion of pressure from power structures suffered from liminality imposed on them. In their liminal phase they wavered between the self and the forced other identity. At this stage of uncertainty forced on them, the characters challenged the existing and established structures and this condition Turner identifies it as anti-structural. In this circumstance, liminality is perceived as a temporal interface whose attributes partially flip those of the previously established order (Turner, “Liminal to Liminoid, In Play, Flow and Ritual” 73). He describes in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* that

Liminal areas of time and space—rituals, carnivals, dramas, and latterly films - are open to the play of thought, feelings and will; in them are generated new models, often fantastic, some of which may have sufficient power and plausibility to replace eventually the force-backed political and jurial models that

control the centers of a society's ongoing life.

(Turner vii)

Bjorn Thomassen also discussed the consequences of liminal experiences and their impact on the liminal entities in his article, "The Uses and Meanings of Liminality" (2009). He is also concerned about the liminal experiences and uncertainty related to it. He proposed that liminality may be responsible for causing significant disruption. Thomassen elaborated Turner's ideas,

"Turner realised that 'liminality' served not only to identify the importance of in-between periods, but also to understand the human reactions to liminal experiences: the way in which personality was shaped by liminality, the sudden foregrounding of agency, and the sometimes-dramatic tying together of thought and experience."

(Thomassen 14)

The study has explicated in various chapters how various characters attained the liminal statuses and how the liminal entities as victims reacted to these conditions. The chapters have been designed as per the objectives of the study and have tried to bring the proposed outcomes.

The first research objective aimed at the critical analysis of Elif Shafak's works in the light of Victor Turner's theory of Liminality. Victor Turner defines the state of liminality as the intermediate transitional phase in the rites of passage, from the pre-liminal phase to the post-liminal phase. "The state and process of mid-transition is liminality" ("Variations in the theme of Liminality" 37). The novels of Elif Shafak are analysed to identify the transitional nature of the situation in which the individual experiences the liminal phase. The spatio-temporal situations in the novels are recognized under the lens of Turner's Liminality. Turner mentions the phrase 'Betwixt and Between' to describe the liminal situation where an individual experiences being "neither one thing nor another; or may be both; or neither here nor there; or may even be nowhere" ("Betwixt and between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage" 48). Apart from the identification of liminal entities, liminal spaces and liminal period in these novels, the novels are further studied for the socio-political causes that forces the

characters into the phase of liminality. Chapter three highlighted the liminal entities and their spatio-temporal liminal stages in almost all the novels of Elif Shafak. Different contexts and situations discussed in these novels assist in defining various aspects of liminality and in providing an increased insight to the application of liminality in literature.

The second and third research objectives intended to test the impact of liminality on the actions and behaviour of the characters and their dissent to power structures as depicted in the Shafak's works. Chapter four and five covered this objective. In chapter four the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases of previously identified liminal characters in these novels are studied while focusing on the middle liminal phase. These three phases in the tripartite structure or the rites of passage are introduced by Arnold van Gennep and modified by Victor Turner and are used for the analysis of the works of Elif Shafak in this research. In the study of ritual and ceremonies both Gennep and Turner stress the fact that the passage through the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases is transformative and transitory. Therefore, the nature of the transition that happens to the characters are analysed. The psychological impacts of liminality are also explored with the required details from their basic explanatory texts and other resources. As liminality is a suspension of the normal conditions, some characters of Shafak's novels get trapped in a condition of suspension of the social order and experience the permanent liminality. But there are certain other characters who feel the change in physiological and psychological behaviour when they enter into the post-liminal phase. They undergo the change in their statuses as well as their identities. These changes (positive or negative) are important to understand their transformation. The second part of the second objective is intended to explore the reaction and response of the characters in the phase of uncertainty and ambiguity. It is covered in the next chapter.

Turner explained that liminal personae during their liminal phase withdraws from the normal modes of social action. (*The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* 167) Their identities with other liminal entities are homogenised and together they stay as *communitas*. They follow a system of structure in society different from the hierarchical system of differentiation which Turner defined as anti-structure. In the

last chapter the anti-structures in Elif Shafak's novels are observed and their dissent to the normal norms of the society are noticed. Their statuses and roles within the societies are compared with other individuals to understand their plights of being the victims of society. Characters such as women, prostitutes, transgenders, physically impaired, jinns and other supernatural ones are explored to grasp their ways of dealing the liminal situations and to understand their disagreement and anger towards the society. Due to their opposition to the structure and as a product of anti-structure, they do not fit the previously established order. They fall into a category with, "the liberation of human capacities of cognition, affect, volition, creativity, etc. from the normative constraints" (Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* 44). As most of them are considered as marginals or outcasts, the study of their conditions is necessary to comprehend the situations of these characters in real world.

Through all these chapters the expression of liminality, its nature and impact on the life of characters in Elif Shafak's novels are discussed. The novels are explored for investigation of the entrapment of liminality and the overcoming quality of the characters. Situations of dilemma in the characters are selected from the novels for the analysis of liminality experienced in such situations by the characters. The coping strategy of the characters to deal with the liminal entrapment is studied to realize their actions and responses. Liminality is also applied to understand the problem of gender inequality, gender ambiguity, liminal status of physically disabled or abnormal persons, prostitutes, marginal characters, migrants, refugees, outcasts etc.

Therefore, the analyses of the novels of Elif Shafak demonstrated that characters and certain settings pass through their liminal phase displaying the aspects and impacts of liminality. The characteristic features of liminality such as uncertainty, anxiety and ambiguity are mostly prevalent in the characters of Shafak. Her novels highlight the unfortunate dilemma of characters facing inconsistent and conflicting situations, either formed naturally or due to the intervention of external forces. The present research traced the instable identities deviated from the normal flow of life in the novels of Shafak. The author's own life of liminality and ambiguous identity of Turkey reflected in her novels are traced. The settings of most of her novels depict the state of confusion caused due to the situations created between the heterogenous Ottoman traditions and

homogenous Turkish republic culture by the Turkish politicians. Shafak's very act of writing is a form of resistance against the past and hatching a new fertile space in which various identities become possible and can take form. This fertile space is created through writing: "through words and stories, newspapers and novels, we Turkish writers can uphold the cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity that was dismantled but never completely lost. We can create networks of activism, networks of words, to make sure that yet another generation will not be born in Turkey completely ignorant of the atrocities committed in the past" (Shafak, 2006, 26). The fictional settings mirrored the socio-political and cultural problems prevalent in Turkey such as ceaseless refugee displacements, racial conflicts, discrimination towards certain marginal sections, subjugation of women, oppression of writers and media, domination in the name of Westernization etc. which can be comprehended effectively through the lens of liminality. In one of her interviews published in *The Guardian* in 2017, she expresses

Istanbul is a place of collective amnesia. Our history is full of ruptures and every new establishment that comes to power starts by erasing the legacy of the previous establishment. I write about minorities and wanted to address the unspeakable tragedies of the past, to talk about the Armenian genocide, share the grief, try to build bridges.

(Kellaway)

In this study entitled *Liminality and Dissent: A Study of Elif Shafak's Novels*; main focus is on the liminal status of the characters and the impact of liminality on their behaviour and actions. All the major novels of Elif Shafak are examined and investigated relying on Arnold van Gennep through his rites of passage and Victor Turner's rediscovery on the intermediate phase of liminality. Gennep who propounded the theory of liminality in his seminal work *The Rites of Passage* (1960) and Turner who elaborated the state of liminality in his prominent works *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (1970), *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, (1969) and *Secular Rituals* (1977) are utilized to explore liminality in the novels. The major novels of Elif Shafak *The Saint of Insipient Insanities* (2004), *The Gaze* (2006), *The Flea Palace* (2007), *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2007), *The Forty Rules of Love* (2010), *Honour* (2012), *Three Daughters of Eve* (2016) and *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in*

This Strange World (2019) are analysed applying Turner's liminality. Shafak realised that in their ambition to attain Western status politicians of Turkey are trying to remove the old traditions and cultural values. This has created a situation in Turkey where its past ethics and rituals are not so far lost and new modern beliefs are yet to achieve. She portrays this liminal situation of her country (between multi-ethnic empire and monolithic nation state) in her novels through various themes. She depicts in her works the society which is quieting the liminal subjugated class and she as an author feels it as her moral responsibility to provide them the voice through her stories. In the study following observations are made:

1. Elif Shafak is a liminal transnational writer and in her novels, she depicts the plight of the marginals and voiceless whom she calls as the 'other'. She brings back the voices to the myriad minorities who have been discarded. The altering situations and dominance groups force them into the liminal situations.
2. To understand the liminal experiences of the characters of Shafak, the researcher has relied on Turner's Liminality who elaborates the liminal experiences of people in the intermediary phase.
3. The uncertainty, anxiety and ambiguity of the in-between stage is highlighted through analysis and investigation of the texts of Elif Shafak. She also speaks about the challenges she faces in the literary world which is so politicized and polarized, through her characters which is investigated in the study.
4. As per the methodology applied in the study to distinguish the tripartite structure of the characters, the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal stages are explored to understand their transitions and transformations.
5. The mode of liminality and coping strategies are studied in the characters to comprehend their behaviour and reactions. These actions decide their way to come out from the entrapment of liminality.
6. It is established through this study that the novels of Elif Shafak deal with the issues of multiculturalism, hybridity and cosmopolitanism frequently in her works to articulate her own liminal identity and to offer a syncretic cultural

flexibility and challenge in-betweenness. As a devoted writer she has closely observed the transformation of multi-ethnic, multilingual, multireligious Ottoman Empire to a homogenic Republic of Turkey. She has found the growing resentment in Turkish people against the process of Westernisation. Therefore, she has portrayed numerous liminal characters in her novels who are stuck between the Western Dominant culture and Armenian and Turkish Folk tales, songs and recipes.

7. It is substantiated that Elif Shafak is a radical novelist who is committed to bring improvement and peace in society. She takes up such themes that are universal in nature and her novels are a compelling study relevant to all people in all times.

The thesis traced the development of the process of liminality through the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phases of the characters, which gave the base to trace the transitional flow of the characters. The research question of what happens to the characters in their process of “being,” “nothing,” and “becoming” are described which gives the output that the transitional nature of liminality in the characters depend mainly on the liminal phase of the characters that can either be temporary or permanent in effect. As per the objectives of the research, the major finding was that Shafak’s novels have a space for the application of liminality through the identification, division and analysis of the rites of passage of the characters.

In this thesis the novels of Elif Shafak discussed a variety of situations in which liminality plays an important role in deciding the transition from the pre-liminal to the post-liminal phases. These discussions are applicable in many more relatable situations of liminal existence in real world scenarios. In daily life situations of people, the presence of the permanent and temporary modes of liminality can be identified. Her fiction is essentially "a manifestation of calm resistance" against gender violence and child abuse and relentlessly challenge the Turkish establishment. The investigation of her novels can be related to the debatable topics that come under these issues such as marital rapes, domestic violence against women, discriminations, marginalisation where there is always an existence of a victim. The state of becoming in-between happens to everyone at some point of their life with a difference in the context and

settings. Therefore, the analyses conducted on Shafak's novels, on the basis of certain selected objectives for the thesis have provided findings giving rise to outcomes that helped to understand the works through a different perspective unique to the discussions in the discipline of literature.

The present research has its novelty in the form of the exploration of liminality as a triggering factor responsible for the transformation of the characters which have been detailed extensively in the aforementioned chapters. Such a wide range of liminal experiences was not discovered in the earlier studies on the novels of Elif Shafak. Secondly, the present study not only has explored the factors leading to liminal situations of the characters but also has analysed the repercussion of living in in-between situations in the light of the Turner's liminality. Thus, the study has its uniqueness in the form of the investigation of the the impact of liminality in the characters which have been explicated widely in the above chapters. Shafak's novels were not analysed from the aspect of Turner's liminality by the earlier researchers, so the efforts have been made to interpret the novels in the light of the aforesaid theory. Thus, the study has perceptibly brought new observations in English literature and socio psychological studies.

The study significantly contributes to society and English literature. Since literature is the reflection of reality in the society, the different ways of the existence of liminality in the characters in the novels of Elif Shafak give the hint that liminality is present in the society in various forms. Liminality can be applied to interpret historical, contemporary and futuristic records of situations and events. The study increases the possibility of the research to interpret and relate with the existing societal problems related to discrimination, inequality, sexual harassment, child abuse and gender violence by the dominant social structures. The scope of the research is not confined to the limits of literature and literary works, rather it emphasizes the importance of liminality for the progress of the society because the liminal conditions lead to the substantial growth of both the discipline of literature and the challenging existence of human beings in the world. Bjørn Thomassen also stresses the significance of in-between spaces stating that the existence of humans cannot be progressed without the process of transition. He states that the in-between states and spaces of life are the

marking positions of our personalities and its development (*Liminality and the Modern* 4). Therefore, the universality of liminality makes this research more significant.

The research has abled to answer all the proposed questions of the study. It has managed to show that the characters of Shafak's novels experience liminality and how it affects them compared to their previous state and post-state to the liminal period. It has also succeeded to answer whether these liminal characters are able to escape from their liminal phases or not and what strategies they chose to come out of it. It also explained the reasons of permanent liminality in some of the characters who couldn't escape their liminal situations. Their entrapment and their responses to these conditions are briefly explained in the thesis.

The present thesis has reinterpreted the Turner's liminality, applied it in Shafak's novels, discovered the reasons for their transformation, analysed the repercussions of liminality on the lives of the characters and investigated how they as victims due to the dominant power structures resuscitate in the liminal space of uncertainty and come out of it. As per as the scope for the future research is considered, the study has proposed that the other novels which contain characteristics of liminality can be reinterpreted in the light of the Turner's liminality so that more factors and impacts of liminality on the life of characters can be explored. The study further suggests that the immediate reactions of liminal entities to the threshold moments can be unearthed. The future scholars can also investigate the different types of psychosocial experiences during the in-between situations. Therefore, this approach can also be used to explore the inevitability of various liminal conditions in human life and its relevance.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Shafak, Elif. *The Saint of Incipient Insanities*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.

---. *The Gaze*. Trans. Brendan Freely. London and New York: Marion Boyars, 2006.

---. *The Flea Palace*. trans: Müge, G. New York: Viking Penguin, 2007.

---. *The Bastard of Istanbul*. United States of America: Viking Penguin, 2007.

---. *The Forty Rules of Love*. London: Viking Adult, 2010.

---. *Honour*. New York: The Penguin Group, 2011.

---. *Three Daughters of Eve*. United States of America: Bloomsbury, 2016.

---. *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*. United States of America:
Viking Penguin, 2019.

Turner, Victor. W. "Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbolology." *Rice Institute Pamphlet - Rice University Studies*, vol. 60, no. 3, 1974.

- - -. "Betwixt and between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage." *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Cornell University Press, 1970.

- - -. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Cornell University Press, 1969.

- - -. "Variations on a Theme of Liminality." *Secular Rituals*. edited by Sally Falk Moore and Barbara G. Myerhoff, Uitgeverij Van Gorcum, 1977.

Van Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage*. Translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee, University of Chicago Press, 1960.

Secondary Sources

- Achachelooui, Elham Mohammadi. "Amnesia: Identity Conflict in Elif Shafak's Three Daughters of Eve" *Reconciliations of the disciplines Across English Language Studies*. TESOL. Translation and Interpretation (T&I). University of Isfahan's First International Conference 11-13, December, 2019.
- Adil, Alev. "The Flea Palace by Elif Shafak trans Muge Gocek" Culture Books Reviews, 2004. Web. <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/the-flea-palace-by-elif-shafak-trans-muge-gocek-733363.html>
- Ayers, J. "Finding Harmony in All". *Rev. of The Forty Rules of Love, by Elif Shafak. I Am Modern (n.d)*: 42-43.
<http://www.elifshafak.com/images/reviews/iammodern/index.html>. Accessed on 20 May, 2020.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. M.I.T. Press, 1968.
- Begüm Tuğlu. "Bodies (Re) Gained: Gender and Identity in Elif Shafak's *Pinhan* and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*". *International Journal of Languages, Literature and Linguistics*, Vol. 2, No. 3, September 2016.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge.
- Bidisha. "MeToo, identity politics, libraries and inequality". *London Book Fair*. 2019.
- Bigger, Stephen. "Victor Turner, liminality, and cultural performance." *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, vol. 30, no. 2, 2009, pp. 209–212.
doi:10.1080/13617670903175238. Accessed 10 March 2021.
- Butler, Judith, 1990, *Gender Trouble, Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London: Routledge.
- Canefe, Nergis*. "Turkish Nationalism and Ethno-Symbolic Analysis: The Rules of Exception". *Nations and Nationalism*. Vol. 8. Issue 2. 2002. 133-155. Print.
- Chancy, Myriam J. A. "Migrations: A Meridians Interview with Elif Shafak:

Feminism, Race, Transnationalism.” *Meridians*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2003, pp. 55-85, doi:10.1353/mer.2004.0006.

Chakraborty, Nabanita. “Contesting Spaces and Conflicting Memories: A Reading of Armenian Diaspora in Elif Shafak’s ‘The Bastard of Istanbul’”. *Migration and Diasporas: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. Vol 2, No.1, Jan-June 2019. ISSN: 2581-9437. 8-31.

Cooke, Miriam. *Women Claim Islam: Creating Islamic Feminism through Literature*. New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.

Dale, K. and Burrell, G. *The Spaces of Organization and the Organization of Space: Power, Identity and Materiality at Work*. London: Palgrave. 2008.

Francis, David. “Elif Shafak: The Age of Despair.” *noemamag.com*, 2020. <https://www.noemamag.com/elif-shafak-the-age-of-despair/>. Accessed 10 August 2021.

Furlanetto, Elena. “Imagine a Country Where We Are All Equal”: Imperial Nostalgia in Turkey and Elif Shafak’s Ottoman Utopia.” In B. Buchenau, V. Richter, & M. Denger (Eds.), *Post-Empire Imaginaries? Anglophone Literature, History, and the Demise of Empires* Boston. 2015, pp. 159-180.

---. “Safe Spaces of the Like-Minded”: The Search for a Hybrid Post-Ottoman Identity in Elif Shafak’s *The Bastard of Istanbul*.” *Commonwealth Essays and Studies*. Issue April 36.2, 2014.

Gör Öğr. GÖRÜMLÜ Dr. Özlem “Elif Shafak's The Saint of Incipient Insanities: An Issue of Identity”, *Journal of Faculty of Letters Year*, Seljuk University: Number: 21, 2009, pp. 269-279.

Greaves, Alan. “Trans-Anatolia: Examining Turkey as a bridge between East and West”. *Anatolian Studies*. Vol, 57. 2007. pp. 1-15.

GÜZEL, Kader. “A Feministic Approach to Elif Shafak’s *The Bastard of Istanbul*.” *The Journal of Social Science*, Year: 3, issue:6, March 2016, pp. 573-578.

Gurel, Perin. “Sing, O Djinn!: Violence, Memory, and Narrative in *The Bastard of Istanbul*”. Northeast Modern Language Association Convention, Boston, MA.

28 Feb. 2009.

Hodgkinson, Ted. "Elif Shafak: 'Writing in English brings me closer to Turkey.'"

British Council.org. 2014. <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/elif-shafak-writing-english-brings-me-closer-turkey>. Accessed August 2022.

Hogue, D. A. "Whose Rite is it, Anyway? Liminality and the Work of the Christian Funeral", *Liturgy*, Vol.21, Issue, 1. 2006, p. 5.

Horvath, Agnes et. al., editors. *Beaking Boundaries: Varieties of Liminality*. Berghahn, 2017.

Horvath, Agnes. *Modernism and Charisma*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Simon & Schuster UK Ltd. London 1996.

Kellaway, K. "Elif Shafak: When women are divided it is the male status quo that benefits" *The Guardian*. 2017, February 5. <https://www.theguardian.com>. Accessed 20 October 2021.

Kalleberg, Arne L. and Vallas, Steven P. "Probing Precarious Work: Theory, Research and Politics." *Research in the Sociology of Work*, vol. 31, 1-30. [dx.doi.org/10.1108/S0277-283320170000031017](https://doi.org/10.1108/S0277-283320170000031017). Accessed 14 January 2021.

Langdon, Elsbree. *Ritual Passages and Narrative Structures*. P. Lang. New York. 1991.

Lee, Jung Young. *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press. 1995.

Mariam Attaullah, Dr. Muhammad Ayub, Amna Kazmi, Aamer Raza. "Gender and Power: A Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of Elif Shafak's 10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World". *Psychology and Education Journal*. Vol.58, No 5, 2021.

Mulkerns, Helena. "Elif Shafak: 'Being an artist in Turkey is a constant struggle.'" *The Irish Times*. 2015. <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/elif-shafak-being-an-artist-in-turkey-is-a-constant-struggle-1.2229720>. Accessed on

August 12, 2021.

Mukherjee, Anusua. “‘Literature is the antidote to numbness, apathy’: Elif Shafak”.

The Hindu. September 11, 2021.

Mundo, Frank. “The Forty Rules of Love: An Interview with Bestselling Author Elif Shafak”. *LA Books Examiner*. 01 March 2010.

<http://www.elifshafak.com/images/interviews/examiner/index.asp>. Accessed on 17 April, 2020.

Stein, Murrey. *Betwixt and Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine*

Initiation. Open court Publications. 1987.

Nihad, Mohammed. “Elif Shafak: The Voice of The Other”. *Opicion*, Vol.21, April 2019.

Oztabek-Avci, Elif. “Elif Şafak's The Saint of Incipient Insanities as an ‘International Novel’.” *Ariel*, vol. 38, no. 2-3, 2007, pp. 83–99.,

journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/ariel/article/view/31226/25309.

Accessed 5 Feb 2021.

Pourgharib, Behzad et. all. “The Honour of Being Colonized: A Bhabhaian Reading of Elif Shafak’s *Honour*.” *The International Journal of Humanities*. Volume 25. Issue 3. 2018.

Puranik, Ashish. “Linguistic Cleansing”. *New Perspectives Quarterly*. Jan 1, 2005.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5842.2005.741_1.x. Accessed on 25 Nov.

2021.

Ratiani, Irma. *Anti-utopian Mood, Liminality, and Literature: From International Literary Experience to Georgian*, 2020. Print.

Raza, M. and Imran, U. “Magic Within the Ordinary – A Probing of Elif Shafak’s *The Gaze*,” vol. 2, p. 14, 2019 Review

Review Seaman, D. Rev. of *The Forty Rules of Love*, by Elif Shafak. *Booklist*. 15 Feb 2010. <http://www.elifshafak.com/images/reviews/viking/index.asp>. Accessed on 24 December 2020.

Robert F. Murphy, Jessica Scheer, Yolanda Murphy, Richard Mack. “Physical

- Disability and Social Liminality: A Study in the Rituals of Adversity.” *Social Science & Medicine*, Volume 26, Issue 2, 1988, pp. 235-242.
- Rolley, Chip. “These Truths: Fighting Words with Elif Shafak and John Freeman.” *PEN World Voices*. 2020.
<https://pen.org/these-truths-elif-shafak-and-john-freeman/> Accessed on August 2022.
- Ruthner, C. *Fantastic liminality: a theory sketch*. In: *Establishing Research on the Fantastic in Europe*. 2012. Available at:
www.academia.edu/1760560/Fantastic_Liminality_A_Theory_Sketch
- Saeed, Saeed. “Elif Shafak: 'Istanbul is a city of dreams.. but it also has scars and wounds’”. 2019. <https://www.thenationalnews.com/arts-culture/books/elif-shafak-istanbul-is-a-city-of-dreams-but-it-also-has-scars-and-wounds-1.927677>. Accessed on March 2022.
- Saha, Shreshtha. “In Elif Shafak's world.” telegraphindia.com. 2019.
<https://www.telegraphindia.com/culture/books/in-elif-shafak-s-world/cid/1694868>. Accessed on 10 February 2020.
- Şeker, Nimet. “Murathan Mungan: The Muse of Mardin.” 2008.
<http://en.qantara.de/The-Muse-of-Mardin/8945c9027i1p504/>. Accessed April 2021.
- Sethi, Sonika. “Spiritualism attained through Love for Humanity: A Study of Elif Shafak’s Novels.” *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*. Vol.8, 2017, pp. 623-628.
- Shafak, Elif. “The Story Behind the Forty Rules of Love”. *Elif Shafak Official Website*. <http://www.elifshafak.com/aboutlove.asp>. 20 April 2019.
- . “Accelerating the Flow of Time: Soft Power and the Role of Intellectuals in Turkey.” *World Literature Today*. Vol. 80, No. 1, 2006.
- , Elif Shafak: The gathering place of the djinni. *The Power of Culture*. 2005.
http://www.krachtvancultuur.nl/en/current/2005/february/elif_shafak.html. Accessed on February 2020.
- . “Popular Fiction,” in *Writers as Public Intellectuals: Literature, Celebrity,*

- Democracy*, O. Heynders, Ed. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016, pp. 160–181. doi: 10.1057/9781137467645_8
- . “Women Writers, Islam, and the Ghost of Zulaikha.” *Words Without Borders*. 2005. <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article/women-writers-islam-and-the-ghost-of-zulaikha/>
- . ‘Extremists polarize humanity, storytellers do exact opposite’: *The Jakarta Post*. London. 2019. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2019/03/13/extremists-polarize-humanity-storytellers-do-exact-opposite-elif-shafak.html>
- - -. “Opinion: Striving for ‘sameness’ Turkey stifles progress,” London: CNN Official Website, 2015.
- . “Why the Novel Matters in the Age of Anger.” *New Statesman*, 3 Oct. 2018, www.newstatesman.com/culture/books/2018/10/why-novel-matters-age-anger
- . “Under the Spell of Divine and Human Love: Taking a Long Journey into Yourself.” Interviewed by Nezli Demiroz, 24 Mar. 2009, www.elifsafak.us/en/roportajlar.asp?islem=roportaj&id=17
- . Interview by NPQ, vol.22, no. 3, 2005 http://www.digitalnpq.org/archive/2005_summer/05_shafak.html
- - -. *How to Stay Sane in an Age of Division*. Profile Books Ltd. London. 2020.
- Şimşek, Elif. “Elif Shafak and Emine Sevgi Özdamar: Politics of Fiction, Re-negotiating Secularism, Decolonial Feminism and Decolonial Aesthetics.” *The University of Salzburg & Ghent University*, 2016.
- Stenner, Paul, et. al. “Introduction to the Special Issue on Liminal Hotspots.” *Theory & Psychology*, vol. 27, no. 2, Apr. 2017, pp. 141–146, doi:10.1177/0959354316687867. Accessed 29 August 2020.
- Sulejman-Srokosz Filiz. “Sufi motives in Elif Shafak’s writing perceived as a bridge between East and West.” *Symbols of Contemporary Culture*. Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka. 2015, pp. 85-94.
- Szakolczai, Árpád. “Gennep, Arnold Van.” *Theory in Social and Cultural Anthropology: An Encyclopedia*, edited by R. Jon McGee and Richard L.

- Warms. Sage Publications, 2013.
- - - . “Liminality and Experience: Structuring Transitory Situations and Transformative Events.” *International Political Anthropology*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2009, pp. 141-147.
- - - . “Living Permanent Liminality: The recent transition experience in Ireland.” *Irish Journal of Sociology*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2014, 28-50.
www.academia.edu/16195087/Living_Permanent_Liminality_The_recent_transition_experience_in_Ireland. Accessed 02 February 2021.
- - - . “Permanent (Trickster) Liminality: The Reasons of the Heart and of the Mind.” *Theory & Psychology*, vol. 27, no. 2, Apr. 2017, pp. 231– 248.
doi.org/10.1177/0959354317 694095. Accessed 05 July 2021.
- - - . “Reflexive Historical Sociology.” *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 1, no. 2, Nov. 1998, pp. 209–227, doi:10.1177/136843198001002007. Accessed 20 November 2020.
- . *The Genesis of Modernity*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- . “Arnold van Gennep: Liminal Rites and the Rhythms of Life.” *From Anthropology to Social Theory*, Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Szakolczai, Árpád and Thomassen, Bjørn. “Arnold van Gennep: Liminal Rites and the Rhythms of Life.” *From Anthropology to Social Theory*, Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Thomassen, Bjørn. *Liminality and the Modern: Living through the In-Between*. Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014.
- - - . “The Uses and Meanings of Liminality.” *International Political Anthropology*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2009, pp. 5-27.
- “Turkey politics: ‘Women are almost non-existent’ says Elif Şafak - BBC News,” (London: BBC News Official YouTube Channel, 2015), n.p. –
www.youtube.com - Accessed on Jan. 14, 2022.
- Turner, Edith. *On the Edge of the Bush: Anthropology as Experience*. edited by Edith

- L. B. Turner, University of Arizona Press, 1985.
- - -. "The Literary Roots of Victor Turner's Anthropology." *Victor Turner and the Construction of Cultural Criticism: Between Literature and Anthropology*. Indiana Press University, 1990.
- *Communitas: The Anthropology of Collective Joy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2012.
- Turner, Victor. *Blazing the Trail: Way Marks in the Exploration of Symbols*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992.
- - - . *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Cornell University Press, 1974.
- - - . "From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play." *Performing Arts Journal Inc.*, 1982.
- - - . "Liminality, Kabbalah, and the Media." *Religion*, vol. 15, no. 3, 1985.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0048-721X\(85\)90011-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0048-721X(85)90011-9). Accessed 07 August 2021.
- - - . "Social Dramas and Stories about Them." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1980, pp. 141-168. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1343180. Accessed 01 March 2020.
- - - . *Blazing the Trail: Way Marks in the Exploration of Symbols*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992.
- Vivid, Jules. "Gender Liminality: How Gender Inequalities in College Hookup Culture Affect Female Subjectivity." *SocArXiv*, 18 Dec. 2017. Web.
- Zamora, Lois Parkinson. "Magical Romance/Magical Realism: Ghosts in U.S. and Latin American Fiction". *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Duke University Press. 1995. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822397212>. Accessed on 29 may 2022.

