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Alienation on Move: The Postmodern Status of Estrangement in Elif Shafak's The Forty Rules of Love

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Abstract

Alienation is mainly conceptualized as being the sense of detachment from self and social groups, and also as a loss of sense of belonging. It is distancing oneself from experiencing crystallized totality both in the social world and within the self. This paper investigates how various discourses construct such sense of estrangement in ways of which they produce norms and limits as being original and essential to human existence. Therefore, individuals feel alienated when they lose belonging and membership for being exposed to such discourses. The paper, thus, puts postmodern theories in dialogue with these specific discourses to rethink and deconstruct the notion of alienation. In light of this, it analyses Elif Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* (2011), thereby exploring the postmodern portrayals of home, nation, culture, and religion. Consequently, this paper interrogates and demonstrates the method whereby this selected novel gives birth to a positive alienation by means of proposing transnationality, multiplicity, spirituality and global citizenship as alternatives to stagnant dogmatic discourses.

Keywords: Alienation, discourse, postmodernity, deconstruction, globalism, spirituality

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Section One: Introduction

1.1 General Background

The paper, which is entitled “Alienation on Move: The Postmodern Status of Estrangement in Elif Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love*”, questions the notion of alienation within postmodernity. It explores how postmodernity perceives home, nation, culture and religion as discourses and deconstructs them, which results in rethinking alienation. *The Forty Rules of Love* advocates spirituality and love as means of breaking up the tightly bordered enclosures of radical national, social, cultural and religious identities. It suggests global citizenship, multiplicity, hybridity and uncertainty as both alternatives to rigid unidimensional discourses, and as means of rethinking alienation, giving it a positive or acceptable connotation.

1.2 Paper Components

The introduction is the starting section of the paper, which is concerned with a general background of the article, its significance and its methodology. The second section familiarizes readers with alienation in different dimensions. The third section introduces postmodernity and its main features that help the researcher in building arguments around the paper's hypothesis. The fourth section is devoted to the practical analysis of *The Forty Rules of Love*. It demonstrates how the novel through deconstructing national, cultural, spatial and religious discourses rethinks estrangement and suggests a positive connotation for the concept.

The paper terminates with some conclusions, and a list of references registered according to the Harvard style of referencing and citation.

1.3 The Significance of the Paper

This paper, through analyzing the postmodern ideologies and theories, discusses that the postmodern alienation possesses an unstable notion. The paper illustrates that how *The Forty Rules of Love* as a postmodern novel rethinks and deconstructs the negative idea of alienation by deconstructing various discourses and their power in constructing a set of assumptions and a body of knowledge that shape human's representations and build a sense of belonging. The paper revisits alienation and gives it a positive connotation by questioning the originality of discourses and ideologies that are responsible for its establishment. Finally, the paper illustrates that *The Forty Rules of Love*, as a postmodern novel, does not reflect the typical negative connotation attached to alienation. Instead, it proclaims a different notion.

1.4 Methodology

This paper follows the critical analysis method to reach its hypothesis. It is a critique of the ideologies and discourses that produce polarity and detachment. Subsequently, it analyses Elif Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* (2011) to critique these parochial belief systems and demonstrate alienation from a different perspective.

Section Two: A Theoretical Approach to Alienation

2.1 Definition, Concept and Meaning

The first occurrences of the word belong to the 5th century B.C. in Greek and 3rd century B.C. in Latin. The Greek and Latin word “Alenato” which the noun is driven from the verb “alienare” to mean “to estrange”, the idea of not belonging or not fitting in. “[i]n Greek (απ)αλλοτιοῦν from ἀλλότριος (in English “foreign”) in Aristotle’s *Ars Rhetorica* and the Latin term of (ab)alienation” (Racolța, 2017, p. 20). Alienation is the sense of detachment and estrangement from self, someone or something. It is an individual’s loss of identification or participation in the community. Alienated self loses the sense of belonging and membership with the surrounding. Alienation for Kalekin-Fishman is “the distancing of people from experiencing a crystallized totality both in the social world and in the self ” (1998, p. 6). Experiencing crystallized totality is the sense of belonging and membership.

Robert T. Tally, in *Reading the Original: Alienation, Writing, and Labour* asserts that alienation is the condition of being estranged from somebody, the society and a system. Thus, the term has other technical meanings as well, for instance; “in social psychology, alienation refers to a person’s psychological withdrawal from society. In this sense, the alienated individual is isolated from other people; taken to extreme, psychological isolation expresses itself in neurosis. In critical social theory, alienation has an additional sense of separating the individual from his or herself, a fragmentation of one’s self through work” (2009, p. 2). Therefore, alienation can be a personal dissatisfaction, separation and withdrawal from a system; this system can be self,

society or a structural and ideological one, which deprives someone of being part of it.

3. Postmodernism; A Dominant Phenomenon and Alienation

3.1. An Introduction to Postmodernism

Abraham Mathew, in *Essays on Literary theory and criticism* (2011) asserts that postmodernism is a reaction to modernism; it is a movement that emerged under the influence of Western “disillusionment” brought by World War II. It is a cultural, intellectual, and artistic trend that lacks a clear central hierarchy, or organizing principle. It embodies an intensive contradictory ambiguity, uncertainty, multiplicity, interconnectedness and parody (p. 212). Generally, it is known as a movement of thought that rejects or reforms most of the central and fundamental ideologies and belief systems of modernism.

A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory (2005) observes how several scholars and theorists pay attention to the way that postmodernism discard elitism, superiority and the sophisticated experimental and tragic sense of alienation, experiences that have been detected in the modern era. For instance, Ihab Hassan provides a list of features that characterize postmodernism such as anti-elitism, anti-authoritarian, the decline of ego, while the art becomes optional and standard (p. 198).

Metaphysically speaking, postmodernism is an anti-reality movement that questions then refuses the absolute truth or an equitable reality. Postmodernism deems reality as a linguistic, social, and cultural discourse, a fact that is constructed and changed by individuals and groups. In other words, postmodernists celebrate

multi-reality, multidimensional worldviews, and multicultural societies. Postmodernism questions and deconstructs the ongoing conflicts that have constituted among different groups based on the binary oppositions such as masculinity vs femininity, black vs white, master vs slave, superiority vs inferiority, etc. Postmodernism blurs all clear-cut divisions that divide the world into unequal halves, placing one as superior or dominant, in opposition to the inferior or dominated “other”.

3.2. Alienation in Postmodern Perception

Poststructuralist's notion of alienation has emerged from the structuralist's critique of the traditional concept of alienation. There is a shift in the perception of alienation. With the emergence of postmodernity, estrangement moves from an epistemological dimension to an ontological one. Alienation implies an individual's departure or distance from an element which characterizes hi/her essence and true nature. Namely, the pre-modern and modern notion of alienation was linked to the discourses that determine the essence and originality of human identities, such as national, religious, racial, gender, cultural, and political discourses. This epistemological notion of alienation gives it a temporal nature, and its temporality depends on the progress of a single unifying principle. Therefore, estrangement is a withdrawal with the promise of the return of the origin. The conventional implication of the concept is devoted to the anthropocentric model of humanism, which is limited to illustrating the ultimate reference to the essence of the human being. Thus, the authentic quality of human being is a metaphysical concept which poststructuralist theorists strongly reject.

3.2.1 Deconstruction and Alienation

Deconstruction is one of the fundamental features that characterize postmodernism. The prominence and popularity of deconstruction is not that deconstructive ideology that has the power to turn a text's logic against itself by examining how the idea that located in a text can work against the author's claims. The deconstructive system is significant because it questions, rethinks, examines the ideologies, discourses and belief systems that are located in the core of texts, and legitimate the power system. Deconstruction is a method towards destroying and reforming pre-taken images of every single phenomenon and peoples' worldviews. It blurs the stability and certainty of every discourse encoded in language and defies pre-given perceptions and acceptances. J. A. Cuddon and C. E. Preston in *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* comments on deconstruction noting:

A text can be read as something quite different from what it appears to be saying[...] it may be read as carrying a plurality of significance or as saying many different things which are fundamentally at variance with, contradictory to and subversive of what may be seen by criticism as a single 'stable' meaning. Thus a text may 'betray' itself (2000, p. From the Entry of Deconstruction).

Derrida (1930_2004) argues that binary oppositions are hierarchies; they are ideological, cultural and discursive productions; one term in the pair is always privileged, centred, and deemed as superior. Therefore, binary oppositions divide the world into two unequal halves; they classify the components into different groups. Consequently, based on such classifications, systems

produce discourses and assumptions that legitimize ruling, discriminating, and empowering another group. Tyson explains Derrida's notion about binary oppositions; he argues that finding binary opposition at practice in any cultural and ideological productions, like literature, movies, classrooms, cartoons, etc. and determining which member of the pair is privileged over the other member, one can understand the ideology encouraged by this specific culture or ideology. (Tyson, 2015, p. 240).

Derrida's thoughts emerged by the end of 1960 within a broader theoretical context in which the critique of the concept of alienation was in the air. Derrida's deconstruction questions the way alienation initially conceived, and his theory of *Différance* gives birth to a new connotation of the concept. Deconstruction revisits binary oppositions, which lead to rethinking the alienation that is framed as an undesirable separation form of an element that is original to human essences, such as self, nature, identity, etc. Derrida's deconstruction breaks the sense of totality through blurring the division between self and other "the speaking subject breaches totality by exposing itself to the Other" (Skempton, 2010, p. 167). Hence, he encourages man's departure from his totality and his exposure to the 'Other', as this totality was never his essence but constructed for him as his originality. Consequently, Derrida finds alienation auspicious, as it dissects the self's ego and ceases the binary oppositions.

Derrida's *Différance* gives termination to the givenness of presence; it enacts the force of irreducibly singular acts, events and decisions. When alienation is the suppression of alterity and othering, then de-alienation is welcoming the other in its unique otherness instead of vanishing opposition. Skempton asserts that

Derrida's *Différance* is de-alienation itself rather than a mere means to a de-alienated end, as he states:

The de-alienated social condition is a community without commonality, a community of absolvable strangers, and an intersubjective field where singular alterity is maintained and effectuated in the transcendent praxis of communicative encounters. *Différance* is the praxis of perpetual othering and separation. This praxis thus dissolves the singular-alterity suppressing realm of the same, a praxis that deconstructs the reified, objectified and alienated phenomenal totality of given presence (2010, p. 192).

Deconstruction does not work on debunking dealienation by asserting the always-already nature of alienation. On the contrary, deconstruction itself is a critique of alienation as a metaphysical constitutive; in this regard, deconstruction is a doorway towards dealienation. Derrida reveals that any authentic, unalienated condition is confirmed to be always and already alienated. Therefore, the alienating conditions that are announced by metaphysics of presence are discursively constructed myths that direct the society's mindset.

Postmodernity revisits alienation and attaches a different connotation to the concept. Derrida and his contemporaries assume the constitutive permanence of alienation as the opposite of 'the myth of origins,' as Simon Skempton in *Alienation after Derrida* explains:

An unalienated condition implies the originary simplicity of an essence, fully present to itself in the proprietary wholeness of an identity. This condition is a myth because it is already marked by

the trace of the other, always and already alienated from the fullness of self-presence (2010, p. 3)

According to Derrida, alienation is the loss of loss, loss of something man never had in the first place. Human identity is already marked as 'the other'; therefore, the human being is already and always an alienated figure. What is previously called alienation, is the structure of alienation without alienation. Namely, there is no alienation and no making alien; everything is already alien. Alienation, in Derrida's worldview, is a constitutive and an essential permanent sense, rather than the temporal feeling constructed in departure with discourses and metaphysics of presence. Derrida states that the notions of originality, essence, and what is proper to humanity are fundamental constructed myths and govern an individual's method of thinking. Consequently, the artificially created alienation is the outcome of losing this mythical originality.

3.2.2 Alienation in the Age of Questioning Essentialism

Discovering *The essence of human nature* is the primary plank of modernist ideology. Modernist thinkers and philosophers worked to grasp the nature of human in terms of its *essence*. Kant and Hegel, among others, have banished all spaces and possibilities for human contingencies. Darwin's Taxonomy gave scientific legitimacy to essentialism. Thus, postmodern thinkers prevent the commitment to this metaphysical anthropological essentialism. The notion of 'the essence of human species', according to Geyer and Schweitzer is a utopian philosophical category, an ideal state of non-alienated man which is discarded by most of the contemporary authors because it is conceptually obscure or subject to metaphysical speculations. This mode of thinking cannot match

with the principles of empiric-analytical science (1976, p. XIX). Heidegger's ontological phenomenology and Sartre's existentialist phenomenology became the ground of Derrida's Deconstruction. Derrida challenged the validity of the law of existence, one always equals one, or a thing equals itself. For Derrida, the unstable and ambiguous nature of the object deconstructs essentialist mindset and suggests multiplicity and multidimensionality of objects. Derrida's deconstruction of origin, essence and presence caught the attention of postmodern thinkers who called themselves anti-essentialists.

Louis Althusser's (1918_1990) notion of alienation is a critique of the originality of human essence. He asserts that modern alienation is an organic concept that its development relies on the unified simplicity of an original essence. He questions Marx, Feuerbach and Hegel's ideology of alienation, presupposes them as the myth of origin. Therefore, according to Althusser, the modern perception of alienation has no place in the anti-organic era of complex structurality. Althusser in *For Marx* illustrates that "there is no longer any original essence, only an ever-pre-givenness. However far knowledge delves into its past.[...] There is no longer any original simple unity (in any form whatsoever), but instead, *the ever-pre-givenness of a structured complex unity*" (1985, p. 200). According to Althusser, the organic categories cannot survive, particularly those categories that are dependent on the original simple unity. Consequently, alienating conditions become unsubstantiated when there is no original simple unity to be alienated from.

3.2.3 Trespassing Limits towards Hybridity

Hybridity is at the core of the postmodern era and postcolonial analysis. It refers to the ambivalent conceptual space between adversarial, separated ideologies or belief systems. Hybridity challenges any political thinking that claims for the superior position or metaphysical power; it rejects metaphysics of presence and the opposite binaries which divide the world into two distinctive aspects. It suggests building third space, a space of in-betweenness which all cultures, identities, religions and ideologies can be placed into with respecting their history, religion, ethnicity, identity and language. McLeod, on the significance of postmodern hybridity and the process of hybridization, states: “the subject produces from the process of hybridization. His or her subjectivity is deemed to be composed of variable sources, different materials, many locations- demolishing the idea of subjectivity forever as stable single or pure” (2012, p. 253).

Emmanuel Levinas (1906_1995) is another postmodernist thinker who reaccesses alienation by giving it a positive connotation. Levinas, through deconstructing the rigid identity of the subject, revisits alienation and its pre-given notions. Levinas breaks with the subjectivism expressed by Descartes’ Cogito “I think therefore I am”. He challenges this anthropocentric nature of the self, who is self-sufficient, lives by itself, everything happens inside it, filled with sufficient and absolute knowledge. This self is the centre which alone has the capacity of thinking, which suppresses the Other. According to Levinas, subject(self) cannot be an enclosed narcissistic identity suppressive of otherness; instead, it is the opening within the totality and the acquaintance to otherness itself. Levinas describes this subject as:

The I is not a contingent formation, by which the same[self] and the other as logical determinations of being can, in addition, be reflected *within a thought*. It is in order that alterity is produced *in being* that “thought” is needed and that an I is needed.[...] “Thought” and “interiority” are the very break-up of being and the production(not the reflection) of transcendence (1979, pp. 39-40).

Therefore, for Levinas, ‘I’ is not a self-sufficient subject that its knowledge and the process of thinking make it Narcissistic. Instead, thought must be a productive site where the self is connected to the other and hybridity is produced. Thinking is needed in ‘I’ to make it the exposure to alterity. Levinas understands subject (self) as referring to the breach of totality and opening to alterity.

Levinas emphasizes the significance of the self’s absolute separation from its totality. Separation, according to Levinas is necessary, because ‘Self’ gains its ethics in the process of separation from its group and connection to the ‘other’. Self and Other maintain themselves in a relationship and absolve themselves in this relation and remain absolutely separated. Separation for Levinas leads to non-totalize multiplicity. Separation gives one a radical distinction from a homogeneous numerical multiplicity. In separation, one does not coagulate into the abstract and objective unity of a closed totality. A totality is categorized by the homogeneous space of general regular and equal relations. Separation is necessary for the sake of the heterogeneous community, qualitative multiplicity or plurality. Separation as a synonym to alienation used to have a negative connotation; thus for Levinas, separation is not only a means of transcendent relation to the Other.

3.2.4 Rethinking Alienation in Revisiting Discourse

Discourse in postmodern ideology is defined as a productive, constructed site in which power and knowledge meet. This contemporary meaning, which is attached to discourse, changes people's perception and thinking about most of the discourses such as cultural, social, national, racial and religious discourses. It makes people rethink and revisit their awareness about each of the mentioned discourses, and that causes rethinking alienation.

Poststructuralist thinker Michel Foucault (1926_1984) conceives discourse as “a productive site, where power and knowledge become intertwined” (McLoad, 2012, p. 45). Foucault argues that discourses by producing a body of knowledge constitute a set of rules and assumptions present them as truth. Moreover, people perceive them as an absolute truth by which they govern themselves and others in society. Foucault illustrates that discourse is an era instated of reflecting pre-existing entities; bring into existence some concepts, oppositions and orders that it speaks. Consequently, in the core of each discourse, there is a power which produces any piece of knowledge and announces it as a truth. In this process of knowledge-making, one is claiming power and determines what is humanely reasonable as against what is considered to be criminal, insane or sexually deviant.

Commenting on the characteristics of discourse, Foucault puts: “a series of discontinues segments, whose tactical function neither uniform nor stable” (Foucault, 1978, p. 100) Based on this interpretation of Foucault, nothing is original and essential. Thus everything in the universe is discourse as they are neither stable nor uniform. Thereby discourses continuously change over time, and they differ from a culture to another. Although he does not reject

the physical objects in the world, he does not claim that there is nothing but discourses. Still, for him there is nothing *perceived outside the discourse*: ‘we can only think about and experience the material objects and the world as a whole through discourse and the structures it imposes on our thinking’ (Mills, 2003, p. 56). According to Foucault, humans can think about things only through discourse(s), thereby knowledge is continuously constructed and reconstructed.

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault pitches his ideology against humanism and human’s original essence; he bounds up alienation to anthropocentric *episteme*. Episteme is a historical arrangement and construction of knowledge in the historical period of modernity. According to Foucault, episteme is responsible for man’s alienation. Foucault states that alienation and its attendant concepts disappear with the disappearance of the modern episteme simultaneously. Conforming to Foucault, alienation deconstructs, if the contemporary anthropocentric episteme is replaced with a different structural configuration of knowledge. There is a secure link between alienation and discourse, according to Foucault modern discourses of anthropocentrism and subjectivity (everything exists and happens inside the subject) produce various episteme, and such episteme become estranging conditions. Therefore, the deconstruction of discourse is the deconstruction of alienation. As he notes:

For the entire modern *episteme* – that which was formed towards the end of the eighteenth century and still serves as the positive ground of the order of things our knowledge, that which constituted man’s particular mode of being and the possibility of knowing him empirically – that entire *episteme* was bound up with

the disappearance of discourse and its featureless reign. (Foucault, 2005, p. 421).

Accordingly, Foucault assumes that the knowledge produced about man's representations and modes of being are constructed, managed, and controlled by discourse. Therefore, rethinking discourse is an immediate rethink of its knowledge and the alienation it produces.

Postmodernists assume that de-alienation, which is produced by deconstruction is an ongoing process, as alienating conditions are continuously created. Warren Fredrick Morries in *Escaping Alienation: A philosophy of Alienation and De-alienation* asserts that if alienation is conceived as an ontologically based process (which is a postmodern perception of alienation), then de-alienating is an endless aim of humanity. "[a]s long as life and history continue, there would always be some forms of undesirable separation, an alien Other(s) to be confronted, limits presented. So, dealienation would be a perpetual aim with no termination" (2002, p. 236).

Section Four: The Postmodern Conceptualization of Alienation in Elif Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love*

4.1 A Brief Introduction to Elif Shafak and *The Forty Rules of Love*

Elif shafak, born in 1971, is an award-wining British-Turkish writer. She is one of the most widely read female novelists, whose books have been translated into more than 50 languages. Shafak holds a PhD in political sciences, and she has taught at various universities in Turkey, the U.S. and the U.K., including St. Anne's

College, Oxford University, where she is an honorary fellow. She is also a women rights activist and an inspirational public intellectual and speaker. She writes in both Turkish and English languages. She has published seventeen books, eleven of which are novels. Her final novel was shortlisted for the Booker Prize and chosen Blackwell's Book of the Year. She is a member of Weforum Global Agenda Council on Creative Economy and a founding member of ECFR (European Council on Foreign Relations). Shafak is an activist for woman rights, LGBT rights and freedom of speech. She is an inspiring public speaker and twice TED Global speaker, each time receiving a standing ovation. Shafak contributes to major publications around the world, and she has been awarded the title of Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. In 2017, she was chosen by Politico as one of the twelve people "who will give you a much-needed lift of the heart". Shafak has judged numerous literary prizes, and chaired the Wellcome Book Prize and is presently judging the Orwell Prize (Shafak, 2020).

Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* (2011) was chosen by the BBC among 100 Novels that Shaped Our World. The novel celebrates multiplicity, and it avoids the sense of choosing one between two options and suggests multiplicity. *The Forty Rules of Love* tells two tantalizing parallel narratives. One of those narratives is set in the thirteenth century when Rumi met the wondered Darvish called Shams of Tabriz, and the other one is contemporary when Ella the reviewer of a Literary Agent reviews Aziz Zahra's novel *Sweet Blasphemy* and she falls in love with him.

The novel narrates the religious clashes, power struggles and tribal disputes in the 13th century. In the west, battlers colonized

Constantinople, leading to the partition of the Byzantine Empire. Mongol armies under the military of Genghis Khan had expanded their power in the east. Different Turkish tribes fought among themselves while the Byzantines tried to recover their lost land, wealth and power. In the time when members of different groups, religions, ideologies fought against each other, everywhere was fire and anger. During this chaos lived Jalal Al-Din Rumi, the Islamic scholar who was known as Mawlana. Thousands of dervishes and admirers followed him. Rumi meets Shams; the wondered unconventional Darvish, who had deemed religion in an open-minded way. Their relation has changed the lives of both of them. Rumi has transformed from the mainstream to a committed mystic passionate poet, an advocate of love and inventor of the ecstatic dance of the whirling dervishes, daring to break free of all conventional rules.

Another phase of the novel is Ella and Aziz Zahara's love story. Ella is an unhappy married old-fashioned woman; she encounters exclusion by her surroundings. When she becomes an employee in a literary agent, her first assignment is to read and review *Sweet Blasphemy*, a novel about Shams of Tabriz and Rumi, written by a man named Aziz Zahara. Ella is mesmerized by the tale of Shams's and Rumi. She is fascinated by dervish's role in transforming the successful but unhappy cleric into a devoted mystic and a passionate poet. Finally, she realizes that Rumi's story has mirrored her life. Zahara, like Shams, has come to rescue her from the old-fashioned thoughts; Zahara came to set her free.

4.2 Rethinking Alienation in The Forty Rules of Love

Elif shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* is a postmodern novel in which the rigid, original, unalloyed notions of home, identity,

culture and language is unhesitatingly disturbed and deconstructed. By means of fictional tools, Shafak proposes an alternative reality; she suggests blurring the borders and predicting the whole universe as one package. Shafak's fictional and non-fictional writings are attempts towards multiplicity, hybridity and adoption of global identity or citizenship. The novel's literary depictions deconstruct and reconsider the notions of home, identity, culture, and religion, whereby the sense of alienation is reflexively deconstructed and reimagined.

4.2.1 Exposure to The Other: Deconstructing Mythical Clusters and Recuperation of Alienation

The figure of "*the Other*" is that stranger who does not belong to society's mainstream. S/he is a person who lives with a sense of unbelonging. S/he is not a member of the established groups and does not seem to share the same ideology and conventions with his/her surroundings. The stranger, for Alfred Schutz, is *the*

Other who attempts to assimilate into the host group; thus, s/he fails and finds it difficult to share the underlying assumptions or worldviews of mass members. Correspondingly, the stranger "becomes essentially the man [or woman] who has to place in question nearly everything that seems to be unquestionable to the members of the approached group" (1944, p. 502). *The Other* or the stranger is an alienated figure who fails to share norms and assumptions with the majority. Meanwhile, s/he questions life aspects that seem to be unquestionable for other social members.

In *The Forty Rules of Love*, the image of the other or stranger is reviewed, throughout the holistic discourse of the novel; Shafak deconstructs orthodox religious perspectives, spatial and cultural conventions, and assumptions that constitute the sense of being

other and alienation. By animating characters like Shams, Rumi, Ella, and Aziz, Shafak delivers her message of freedom of choice, freedom of thought and liberation of the soul. She encourages the differences and defies presumptive norms and mainstream flow: “Do not go with the flow, be the flow” (Shafak, 2011, p. 136). In 2010, Shafak delivered a talk in TED where she focused on the danger of building closed circles and imagining that everything out of this circle is dangerous, empty and strange. In her remark, Shafak spoke of her grandmother, who used to “cover mirrors with velvet or to hang them on the walls with their backs facing out. It’s an old Eastern tradition based on the knowledge that it’s not healthy for a human being to spend too much time staring at his own” (Shafak, 2010). Ironically, people may look too often and too much at their reflection in the mirror; therefore, they generally interact only with people who think like them, vote like them, worship like them, and are a copy of them. Therefore, they feel alienated in exposure to ‘The Other’, or to a member out of their cluster. According to Shafak communities of the “like-minded” is one of the greatest dangers of today’s world. She notes that “it is happening everywhere, among liberals and conservatives, agnostics and believers, the rich and the poor, East and West alike. We tend to form clusters based on similarity, and then we produce stereotypes about other clusters of people” (Shafak, 2010). Since someone is not like the rest, and s/he is different, it does not mean that s/he is dangerous, or a threat to the community. Shafak, therefore, rejects this exclusionary discourse and fights such marginalization based on stereotypical ideologies.

Ephraim Meir in *Dialogical Thought and Identity: Trans-different Religiosity in Present Day Societies* (2013) asserts that an open society is needed in which the Other is not out of “our circle”

who causes alienation. "Human beings had to become strange to themselves, in a positive alienation brought about by their selfless openness to the other. Self-accomplishment is replaced by the recognition of the other" (p. 104). According to Meir, the alienation that results from tan exposure to the other is a positive alienation as it creates "a society of an always inclusive 'we' " (Meir, 2013, p. 103). *The Forty Rules of Love* dismantles the sharp distinction between groups that makes 'The Other' alienating factor. When the alienated harlot in the novel feels unaccepted and un-listened by the community, she talks to Shams. Shams replies: "there is no such thing as 'them,' just as there is no 'I'. All you need to do is keep in mind how everything and everyone in this universe interconnected. We are not hundreds and thousands of different beings. We are all One" (Shafak, 2011, p. 135). Shams' statement gives birth to the disappeared, oblivious, notion of humanity as a whole one single package.

The psychoanalytic discourse of stranger connects strangeness to the unconsciousness of mind. According to psychoanalysis, "the other" is not an external counterpart of the self, but a part of the self. Sigmund Freud changes the meaning of the self and the other. For him, the self and the other are no longer counterparts; they co-exist inside individuals. "[t]he other is part of the self; we are our own others, the other is always the other within" (van Alphen, 1991, p. 11). *The Forty Rules of Love* suggests blurring the limits of binary oppositions such as self vs Other, insider vs outsider, acquaintance vs a stranger. It deconstructs the ideology that deems a stranger as an external being, who does not belong to someone's social, cultural, racial and religious circles. Thus, it predicts a Freudian treatment with the concept of stranger and demands

viewing stranger as someone who might be located inside of the self or might be a member of someone's community.

According to Shafak, the figure of the stranger is an internal product which is constructed based on feelings and personal ideology rather than a mythically produced notion erected based on social, cultural and religious borders and limits. Ella, the self-estranged character in *Forty Rules of love*, finds herself unhappy with her internal self and her surroundings. She feels trapped and possesses no "survival techniques to help her cope with life's hardships on her own" (2011, p. 3) While she reads and reviews the *Sweet Blasphemy*, the novel by Aziz, she gets acquainted with the forty rules of love "it occurred to her that perhaps she, too, should write her own set of ground rules. She could name it The Forty Rules of Sedentary, Suburban, Earthy Housewife" (2011, p. 44). Ella's stranger was inside herself, and she lost connection and communication with herself and her inner feelings. Once she told her daughter that she is unhappy, "Ella's Heart was constricted with the shock of what she'd just said. Was it possible to feel unhappy and not know it? ...she hadn't been feeling much of anything lately" (2011, p. 44). Ella has lost the sense of connection with her husband and her children as well; they became strangers to her. She says: "twenty years marriage, twenty years of sleeping in the same bed, sharing the same shower, eating the same food, raising three kids, and what it all added up to was silence" (p. 248). She felt alienated among her own family and circle. Thus, when Aziz, "the complete stranger in the remote corner of the world" prayed for her well-being"; she closed her eyes and wanted to experience the sense of connecting and belonging. "She imagined her name written on a piece of paper tied to a wish tree, dangling like a kite in the air free and happy" (2011, p. 55). The alienated

Ella regained the sense of belonging and freedom in contact with 'the Other'. Accordingly, Aziz as 'an Other' proposes another connotation to Ella's alienation. According to Levinas, meeting 'the Other' causes 'I' to live a mobile existence, not as an escape from self, but in faithfulness to the highest self. Levinas notes that 'the Other' brings difference to the self, and this difference does not cause double life and alienation, rather, it causes "self-difference", a being other to oneself. 'The Self' in connection with 'the Other' does not forget its culture, values and identity. Instead, according to Levinas, a successful realization of self lies in becoming different to oneself, not remaining the same, in the same cluster. "Stepping out of a closed identity in favour of non-identical 'I' in recognition of the otherness in oneself" (Meir, 2013, p. 148). Therefore, this alienation is positive and leads to self-realization.

By means of drawing a detailed image of Ella, Shafak shows a depressed, imprisoned and unhappy sense that other social members instill in Ella. She afterwards wins her happiness and freedom in stepping to Aziz, who is 'the Other', a person that belongs to another culture, society, religion and nationality. Namely, Shafak demolishes the image of a typical stranger or *the Other* as an external figure who causes separation and negativity. Instead, In Ella's experience meeting *the Other* and stepping out of closed identity and cluster leads to both, self-realization and happiness. To conclude, *The Forty Rules of Love* portrays *the Other* as a positive inspiration, a figure who sets Ella free and makes her recuperate her alienation.

4.2.3 Hybridity and Universality: Reconceptualization of Estrangement

Transnationalism and multiplicity can be understood as a resistance method to the alienating discourses. Postmodernity challenges all the discussions attempting to introduce fixed identities, cultures, nations, homelands, and racial superiorities and purities. It, therefore, critiques the pre-assumptions of the values mentioned above and formulas and reintroduces them as multidimensional and individualized products. In her fictional and non-fictional works, Shafak focuses on the importance of moving beyond the erected boundaries. In her speech at the TED conference, she deals with the significance of storytelling in changing the world views and reimagining pre-given perceptions. She tells the story of her grandmother (a wise-woman), who used to treat the skin warts of patients by taking a red apple and encircle it with as many rose thorns as the number of warts on the skin. Finally, the patient went back home happy and healed. Shafak concludes her story by noting that it is not academic to believe in such superstitions. Thus, “from her, I learned, among many other things, one very precious lesson; that if you want to destroy something in this life, be it acne, a blemish or the human soul, all you need to do is to surround it with thick walls. It will dry up inside” (Shafak, 2010). Through reciting the story of her grandmother’s traditional treatment for skin warts, Shafak highlights the wisdom behind unloosing the sewing circles and opening towards hybridity in the world.

In *The Forty Rules of Love*, two types of hybridity are determined. Shafak in one hand works to haze the created line between binary oppositions such as Orient vs Occident, Black vs White, Muslim vs Christian, Self vs Other; melting them in one

another to become one, and to form a unity. In addition to this, she celebrates crossing the limits and encourages producing a site or space in between that gathers different cultures, religions, identities and ideologies. Both models of hybridity are outlined in the novel to trespass the discursively constructed limits that produce the sense of being other and alienation. *The Forty Rules of Love* employs love as a metaphor to negotiate globalism and reassessing the spatial, racial, religious and cultural limits. The friendship between Shams and Rumi, which led to Rumi's lifetime transformation, raises feelings of affection between Ella and Aziz Zahara. Ella's love for Zahara, the "a relentless nomad at heart" (2011, p. 158) also transforms Ella from an unhappy stereotypical conservative, white, Jewish woman to a global soul that quests for universality. The alienation that is generated in meeting 'the Other' and in the process of leaving closed groups and rigid identities becomes a liberating force for Ella; it works to collapse dichotomies, her separation gives her self-recognition and self-realization.

Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity critiques the notion of purity of cultures and identities that have been instilled in social members from one generation to another. Bhabha contends that hybridity disturbs the purity of discourses. Hybridity, for him, does not mean rejecting the given traditions or surrendering to assimilative operations in the host culture. Thus, it is enriching traditions and giving them unexpected meanings through crosshatching other cultures, locations and histories. Accordingly, hybridity is a productive site where noticeable polarities are reconciled and new identities formed. It is the construction of "the stairwell", the liminal space of in-between oscillating between two modes of existence. This proposed space by Bhabha connects

differences, giving birth to plurality and coexistence. As in *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha states:

The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, presents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. (Bhabha, 1994, p. 4)

At this moment, alienation steps forward and dislocates those notions demonstrating that *belonging to specific values and sharing formalities with specific social groups* are ways of identity creations. Alienation is thus a status of positive reflection; thereby “unbelonging” to specificities is a new celebration of existence. Discourses of nationalism, ethnicity or ‘race’ appear as models of belonging that try to root individuals with clearly defined borders and groups. Those models of metanarratives and belongings are no more valid to a world in which migration has taken place. Multifaceted identities and living in-between different nations, cultures and races are therefore established. Love in *The Forty Rules of Love* becomes “stairwell”, space in-between, the liminal place that combines two different identities.

Love combines Ella with Aziz. Ella, who “separated issues into clear-cut categories, organizing her world pretty much as she organized her house, neat and tidy. Her mind operated with two mutually exclusive and equally lengthy lists: the things she liked versus the things she hated”: Aziz “the professional photographer

and an avid globe-trotter who found navigating his way through the farthest corners of the world as natural and easy as taking the stroll around the neighbourhood park” (2011, p. 159). The two have stepped towards hybridity, and through their journey of transformation, they have left their pre-given identities behind, giving the space of alienation – the sense of unbelonging – an acceptable intention. That is to say, *The Forty Rules of Love* demonstrates the sense of belonging and membership as an anarchical construct based on inner feelings, rather than involvement in mythical established clusters. Ella lives among her family members and circle; thus, she is alienated, detached from her husband and children, and loses the sense of belonging and interest in everything around her. Hence, in the process of approaching hybridity, she enjoys a change, an improvement, a fulfilment, stability and belonging:

“A strange calm has descended upon Ella, she felt more stable than ever been, even she was gliding away from the life she’d known. In the morning, she looked at the mirror long and hard to see if there was a visible change in her face. Did she look younger? Prettier? or perhaps more full of life?” (2011, p. 176).

In *The Forty Rules of Love*, there is a conscious focus on the fluidity of any discourse, belief system, subjectivity, and the Spatio-temporal aspects of knowledge built on authoritarian and demagogical discourses. The novel proclaims that globalism demands people to wind up with the search for authentic existence. To achieve a state of happiness, one must choose coexistence and multiple belongings. Stepping out of pre-given rigid identity gives birth to alienation, but according to postmodernists, this alienation is positive, as it causes self-recognition. Levinas asserts that separation must be accomplished in I. “this separation of the I with

regard to the Other must result from a positive movement” (Harasym, 1998, p. 94) Individuals must travel beyond the singular, tribal and national categories. As Shams says “east, west, south, or north makes little difference. No matter what your destination, just be sure to make every journey a journey within. If you travel within, you’ll travel the whole world and beyond” (2011, p. 86). The inner journey that Shams celebrates becomes a bridge towards understanding and accepting the other, who is known as the stranger. Maria Lugones in *“World”-Travelling, and Loving Perception* states:

Through travelling to other people’s ‘worlds,’ we discover that there are ‘worlds’ in which those who are the victims of arrogant perception are really subjects, lively beings, resisters, constructors of cisions even though in the mainstream construction they are animated only by the arrogant perceiver and are pliable, foldable, file-awayable, classifiable[...] only when we have travelled to each other’s ‘worlds’ are we fully subject to each other (1987, p. 18).

The inner journey of the main characters in the novel enables them to take spatial journey regardless of social, cultural, religious and racial identities. As Shams “hunts everywhere worth living and a knowledge worth knowing” (Shafak, p. 39), Aziz Zahara is a global soul that “nothing could hold him back from travelling east and west, north and south” (p. 158). Both Shams and Aziz Zahara are two wanderers respecting no fixed borders to take on their inner and spatial journeys. The journey of the two dervishes turns them not to feel estrangement in connection with host countries, host cultures and host identities. Shams and Aziz’s inner and spatial journeys have altered the entire lives of Rumi and Ella. Rumi is transformed “from local cleric to a world-famous poet and mystic” (p. 190) breaking all conventional rules. Ella, the conservative

white Jewish women, is transformed into a universal traveller and boundary breaker. Shafak rethinks alienation by interrogating those boundaries that are responsible for constructing this sense. None of these fictional characters feels estranged by leaving their old identities, cultures and nations by dwelling in the newly introduced space, space imagined as alienation for many modernity discourses, such as national, social and cultural discourses.

Cultural hybridity is another dimension of being global that Shafak depicts in *The Forty Rules of Love*. Cultural Hybridity describes those cultural identities being produced through interacting more than one culture without assimilation or melting the local cultures in other ones. Shafak uses cultural hybridity to celebrate the uniqueness in identity as a hybrid. In *The Forty Rules of Love*, Kerra, the Christian wife of Rumi, explains the coincidence and hybrid experience people in Anatolia experienced. She is noting:

Anatolia is made up of a mixture of religions, peoples, and cuisines. If we can eat the same food, sing the same sad songs, believe in the same superstitions, and dream the same dreams at night, why shouldn't we be able to live together? I have known Christian babies with Muslim names and Muslim babies fed by Christian milk mothers. Ours is an ever-liquid world where everything flows and mixes. If there is a frontier between Christianity and Islam, it has to be more flexible than scholars on both sides, think it is (Shafak, 2011, p. 178).

The Forty Rules of Love demonstrates how demagogies spoil worldly relations. They benefit from unbendable and unidimensional sentiments. Demagogies teach individuals to draw divisive lines between “us” and “them”, keeping us on “the safe

side” thought erroneously enjoying likelihood. Kerra, in the novel, shows the significance of heterogeneity, the possibility of peaceful coexistence between different tribes, religions and races by abandoning nationalist, racist and religious demagogies. Kerra’s vision of hybridity does not predict a space where everyone is one and the same. It is not a vision of assimilation; instead, it is a dream of intimate coexistence of both differences and similarities.

According to Michel Foucault, discourses are forms of knowledge or powerful groups of assumptions, expectations and explanations, leading mainstream social and cultural practices. They are systematic ways of making sense of the world by inscribing and shaping power relations within all texts, including oral communications (1972, p. 49). Given Foucault’s perception, every discourse is a piece of knowledge that coincides with a constant power censoring mainstream and social relations. Therefore, knowledge coincides with power, and both of them together construct discourse. Shafak supports this poststructuralist mode of perception and deliberates how knowledge has the power to build discourses of hybridity. For her, if knowledge does not take us beyond ourselves, it is far worse than ignorance because the knowledge that doesn’t handhold us beyond ourselves makes us elitist, distant and disconnected (Shafak, 2010). Constricted and incommensurable knowledge that obliges individuals to stay long inside their cultural cocoons is more dangerous than ignorance, causing disconnection, isolation and alienation. *The Forty Rules of Love* is the site where Shafak illustrates the struggle and conflict between knowledge and feelings, Intellect and love:

Intellect and love are made of different materials[...] Intellect ties people in knots and risks nothing, but love dissolves all tangles and risks everything. Intellect is always cautious and advises,

‘Beware too much ecstasy’, whereas love says, Oh, never mind! Take the plunge! Intellect does not easily break down, whereas love can effortlessly reduce itself to rubble (Shafak, 2011, p. 66).

Accordingly, “intellect” is a metaphor representing national, cultural, social, racial and religious knowledge that divide the world into different parts and bound individuals to clusters and spaces. “Love” is thus used as a metaphor to act as the liminal space where hybridity is experienced. In this space of in-between, the differences interact with each other to construct one single whole.

4.2.3 The World as Home

Home is a stable geographical location that folds groups together. According to Judith Sixsmith, home is a profound centre of meaning and a central emotional and physical reference point in an individual’s life that encapsulates in security, belonging and attachment. Individuals do not deem these items as ‘things’ they possess but as essential features of their sense of being (1986, p. 290). Postmodernity converts home from a specific stable location to a more fluid and shifting space. It re-conceptualizes this regional geography of us-them alterity; it challenges the time-space systems of social and cultural organizations. According to Fredric Jameson, “the time-space system is altered to accommodate the emigrant realms of global capitalism; consequently, a new postmodern hyperspace has emerged” (Dear, 1994, p. 6). Postmodernity is the trend of liberating locational barriers.

Thinking about the borders between homes as fabrications, as constructed sites, rather than birth-given destinations is a postmodern phenomenon, as it was previously discussed. John

McLeod in *Beginning Postcolonialism* states that the world nowadays is mapped as different nations, and borders separate them; these borders are not original or happened by accident. Those borders are constructed, defeated, defended and contested by different groups (2012, p. 68). Home in postmodern perception represents a larger depiction than a rigid, stable, original and robust geographical place of birth. Instead, home is hyper-space, an individual can have more than one comforting zones. For postmodernity, home is often an ideology, a feeling or a discourse that always requires adding, deleting, shaping and reshaping. More than 250 million people are not from their birthplaces, and they are successful figures, less separated and more connected. They give their sense of alienation a positive or at least an acceptance notion causing coexistence.

In *The Forty Rules of Love*, Shafak interrogates and undermines the essentialist and solid boundaries of home. She reimagines home by giving it various definitions different from the unbendable orthodox one. The comforting zone is not produced based on history and similarities; instead, the sympathetic region is the contacting and interacting zone. "I am a strong believer in the possibility of having multiple belongings, rather than a strict frozen sense of identity. I am more interested in belongings; you can have multiple belongings, you can have multiple homes, sometimes you can even have portable homelands" (Shafak, 2013). In her novel, Shafak predicts hyper-homes, hyper-belongings. According to Shams, home is an ideology, a site where the heart is settled, and the dream is fulfilled rather than a rigid geographic space where roots dug down. As Shams notes:

I have been a wandering dervish ever since, not sleeping in the same place more than once, not eating out of the same bowl twice

in a row, every day seeing different faces around me. [...] In this state I roam east and west, searching for God high and low. I hunt everywhere for a life worth living and a knowledge worth knowing. Having roots nowhere, I have everywhere to go (p. 39).

McLeod elucidates that the sense of mutual belonging is constructed and guaranteed by the performance of different traditions, narratives, rituals, and symbols that generates a sense of membership for individuals. According to McLeod, the central idea of the national discourse is collectivity and belonging, a mutual understanding of the community that an individual imagines that s/he shares (2012, p. 82). Shafak, as a postmodern writer, portrays her critical views about clusters deciding on individual's belongings and identities through the character of Shams. She criticizes those mythical discourses that define individuals as the representatives of a broader community or group, rather than subjects of their own. Thus, worldliness crashed down those mythical belongings and proposed the world as home. Shafak depicts home as somewhere one can feel comfortable and safe, rather than being the place where one is born. Shams does not feel home at his birthplace:

Father, I am from a different egg than your other children. Think of me as a duckling raised by hens. I am not a domestic bird destined to spend his life in a chicken coop. The water that scares you rejuvenates me. For unlike you I can swim, and swim I shall. The ocean is my homeland. If you are with me, come to the ocean. If not, stop interfering with me and go back to the chicken coop (Shafak, 2011, p. 39).

In the age of globality and mobility, the home has taken a mobilizing characteristic. Globality should smash down the spell of

the romantic enchantment of one stable home, language, identity and nation. As Doris Sommer notes: “Today, home often means not a here, but a there, a somewhere else” (2007, p. 4). According to Sommer, strangeness within globality becomes a norm worldwide, and the world possesses dynamic and heterogeneous qualities. Shafak thinks of herself as a universal soul, a world citizen. In her essay *Opinion: Home Sweet Homes*, Shafak elaborates the possibility of having more than one home and belonging to more than one place. She states that Turkish people criticize her for not having roots, though she thinks she has roots: “but they are up in the air”. She points out that in this era of movements and globality, people have the opportunity to live like air planet, or the tree that mentioned in Sufi mythology; the wrong-side-up tree somewhere in heaven, with multiple roots, extending in every direction. “Survive without being rooted in the soil. Instead of a single rigid identity, we can have numerous belongings. Ours is the age of migrations, movements and cosmopolitan encounters. Ours is the age in which an increasing number of people, when they go to sleep at night, dream in several languages”. (Shafak, 2017). Shafak’s ideas are conspicuously reflected in her literary works; for her, fiction is not an autobiographical manifestation, but it is an intellectual journey into other lives and other possibilities. Fiction, for Shafak, is a site where new realities and possibilities may emerge. In other words, Shafak’s *The Forty Rules of Love* is a transcendental journey into the life of dervishes who have roots in the air and expanded in every direction. Ella defines Aziz as:

[A]n avid globe-trotter who found navigating his way through the farthest corners of the world as natural and easy as taking a stroll around the neighbourhood park. A relentless nomad at heart, he had been everywhere, equally at home in Siberia, Shanghai,

Calcutta, and Casablanca. Travelling with only a backpack and a reed flute, he had made friends in places Ella couldn't even find on the map. Uncompromising border guards, the impossibility of getting a visa from hostile governments, waterborne parasitic diseases, intestinal disorders due to contaminated food, the danger of being mugged, clashes between government troops and rebels—nothing could hold him back from travelling east and west, north and south (Shafak, 2011, p. 159).

The Forty Rules of Love encourages contact with the parts of each place that call out the best in individuals, instead of anchoring in one place or one identity. Not being entirely at home anywhere, one can be at home everywhere and become a world citizen. Shafak celebrates the loneliness and alienation that she experiences in her nomad life and finds it positive. In an interview made by 52 Insights, she asserts that in her motherland she is both an insider and an outsider simultaneously: “That is a very lonely position to be in, but I think that kind of loneliness is the right thing. You have to be alone. You shouldn't” (52Insights, 2017). Consequently, a nomad life is what Shafak celebrates, which gives the sense of estrangement a new connotation.

4.2.4 Spirituality: an Alternative to Religiosity

Love and spirituality in *The Forty Rules of Love* are also metaphors for trespassing presumptive social, cultural and religious discourses that run the society. They are used as a symbol of hybridity, multiplicity, coexistence and globality. Shafak treats spirituality and love as keys to open all those gates that have once been closed by parochial discourses. They de-center the sense of localized certainty and sitting on the throne of racial and spatial fixity. Shafak moves beyond the limits of religiosity. She questions

the manner that specific religious interpretations have also contained the construction of discursive discrepancies resulting in “us” vs “them” formula. Religious discourses may also attempt to produce clusters and groups causing ‘otherization’; they lead to installing the sense of fear, unlikely connotative alienation and insecurity. *The Forty Rules of Love* proposes love as an alternative:

In many ways, the twenty-first century is not that different from the thirteenth century. Both will be recorded in history as times of unprecedented religious clashes, cultural misunderstandings, and a general sense of insecurity and fear of the other. At times like these, the need for love is greater than ever (Shafak, 2011, p. 15).

The world of parochial and dogmatic discourses is the world of divisions and othering; such discourses, through their norms and limits, produce clusters and exclude individuals who do not belong to these groups and are outside drawn boundaries and rules. When Shafak criticizes religion as being an exclusionary discourse, she does not replace it with secularism. For her, secularism is likely to be an exclusionary discourse as well. Talal Asad in *Is Critique Secular? Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech* (2009) interrogates different aspects of secular discourses that share the same symbolic and institutional characteristics as religious discourses. Asad explains that the religious symbols applied with authority to control the truth in specific spaces “have a long history of transcending the distinction between the religious and the secular. Like iconoclasm and blasphemy, secular critique also seeks to create spaces for new truth, and, like them, it does so by destroying spaces that were occupied by other signs” (p. 33). Shafak, therefore, suggests spirituality and love as an alternative to religiosity, as the rescuer of humanity. In a letter to his beloved Ella, Aziz Zahara tells the way

neither religious neither discourse nor secular ideology could help the human soul and liberate humanity. Thus, spirituality suggests a different mode of living, which leads to a different interpretation to the deep sense of isolation, and gives alienation another connotation:

I am spiritual, which is different. Religiosity and spirituality are not the same thing, and I believe that the gap between the two has never been greater than it is today. When I look at the world, I see a deepening quandary. On the one hand, we believe in the freedom and power of the individual regardless of God, government, or society. In many ways, human beings are becoming more self-centred, and the world is becoming more materialistic. On the other hand, humanity as a whole is becoming more spiritual. After relying on the reason for so long, we seem to have reached a point where we acknowledge the limits of the mind [...]. But though they intend well, their methods are often inadequate. Spirituality is not yet another dressing for the same old dish. It is not something we can add to our life without making major changes there. I know you like to cook. Did you know that Shams says the world is a huge cauldron and something big is cooking in it? We don't know what yet. Everything we do, feel, or think is an ingredient in that mixture. We need to ask ourselves what we are adding to the cauldron. Are we adding resentments, animosities, anger, and violence? Or are we adding love and harmony? (Shafak, 2011, p. 146).

In *Migration: A Meridian's interview with Elif Shafak* made by Myriam J.A. Chancy, Shafak reflects on her childhood days by referring to unilateral and mythical pronouncements of religious discourses. While she was moving between two cities, she was encountering two grandmothers embodying two different

worldviews. A grandmother taught her “fear” because her God was *Jalal*, a masculine, oppressive and watchful, who monitors every single movement individuals take: “I had internalized the Gaze and developed an inner eye—an eye that would take me too long to transform into a nonintrusive nonjudgmental Gaze” (J. A. Chancy & Shafak, 2003, p. 56). The other grandmother introduced Shafak to a very different God; her God was *Jamal*, a feminine, beautiful: “one that was based on love and with whom you could always negotiate” (p. ibid) Given this, different religious discourses divide people into groups; a group prioritize *Jalal*, the other prioritize *Jamal*. Shafak correspondingly gives credence to the reality that different religious interpretations often create contradictory reflections, but not a harmonious world. *The Forty Rules of Love*, therefore, established the empire of spirituality through love, liberating the human soul. Spirituality falls the walls down that impoverished religious interpretations build between humans and God.

The novel tells the story of Moses and the Shepherd. One day the prophet Moses was walking in the mountains saw a shepherd on his knees with his hands spread out to the sky, and expressing his love to God: “Oh, my Beloved God I love thee more than Thou can know [...]. I will wash Thy feet and clean Thine ears and pick Thy lice for Thee” (Shafak, 2011, p. 51). The Shepherd is interrupted by Moses because for Moses the Shepherd says “sheer blasphemy”. Moses taught him ordinary prayers. The Shepherd feels dazed, different and alienated from God. Moses hears God blaming him for scolding Shepherd and breaking their connection: “I was pleased with him, his words might have been blasphemy to your ears, but to Me, they were sweet blasphemy” (p. ibid). In *The Forty Rules of Love*, “sheer blasphemy” and “sweet blasphemy” are

two concepts used to indicate the distinction between presumptive pronouncements and the spirituality declarations. In consonance with Shafak, 'sheer blasphemy' belongs to those limits and norms that religious discourses make to develop differences, that leads to individual's separation from God and from other fellow men who belong to another sacred circle. 'Sweet Blasphemy' is a spiritual love between people and God, and works beyond parochial religiosity, social and cultural discourses; it leads to avoiding differences:

We were all created in His image, and yet we were each created different and unique. No two people are alike; no two hearts bit the same rhythm. If God wanted all to be the same, He would have made it so. Therefore, disrespecting differences and imposing your thoughts to others is tantamount to disrespecting God's holy scheme" (Shafak, 2011, p. 140).

This reformulates the relationship among people by redefining the barriers that cause separation and distancing. It demonstrates spiritual love as a means of reconciling humans with the notion of alienation and topples down disconnections caused by insular attitudes. Every love relationship, in the novel, takes place between people belonging to different social, cultural and religious backgrounds, shows that love functions beyond the constructed divisive borderlines. Rumi marries a Christian woman, Kerra. Rumi was not concerned with the mainstream religious ideology; for him, the Beloved God is one. Religion must combine not separate:

"Kerra is Christian, even if she converts to Islam, she will never be one of us. A leading scholar of Islam should not marry a woman outside his faith, but Rumi took no notice of them, neither

then no later on [...] ours is an ever-liquid world where everything flows and mixes. If there is a frontier between Christianity and Islam, it has to be more flexible than the scholars on both sides think it is” (Shafak, 2011, p. 178).

By means of the novel’s discourse, Shafak notes that it is the authority and constructed discourses that build differences between peoples and develop a sense of otherization and estrangement. Otherwise, an individual’s world, out of discourse’s pronouncements, is more flexible and harmonious. Ella’s relation to Aziz Zahara is simultaneously a story of challenging all national, cultural, social and religious conventions and collective myths. Ella the Jewish falls in love with a Muslim novelist Aziz, who is eastern: “So maybe it was blasphemy for a married woman with children to write intimate e-mails to a stranger, but given the platonic nature of their relationship, Ella deduced, it was sweet blasphemy” (Shafak, 2011, p. 143).

In conclusion, *The Forty Rules of Love* reimagines the barriers that various discourses and ideologies have created for individuals. Those barriers have caused an in-depth segregation. Specific religious renditions are among those barriers for Shafak. For this reason, she puts spirituality and love as alternatives whereby humans can meet redemption. For Shafak, such spirituality might be constructed through alienation in ways that individuals probably face self-distancing from already mapped belongings for them.

Conclusion

Alienation is a means of distancing people from experiencing crystallized totality both in the social world and within the self. This paper has put various discourses that construct this sense of estrangement for individuals in question. Parochial discourses likely produce fixed norms and limits in the form of unchangeable realities and essences. Therefore, individuals feel excluded when they lose belonging and membership by experiencing such discourses. The paper has analyzed how the notion of alienation can be revisited, deconstructed, in postmodernity. By means of this, this paper has demonstrated the way postmodernity provides alienation with a different conception, conceiving alienation as being enjoyable and homely, thereby characters establishing their senses of selves.

The Forty Rules of Love deems home, nation, culture, and religion as myths. Discourses that divide the world into unequal halves are subject to harsh criticism in the novel. As discourses are critiques through novelistic depictions in *The Forty Rules of Love*, Shafak questions the dualistic frameworks that rely upon the distinctions between “Us vs them”. She disrupts the obstructions that various ideologies put around individuals to give birth to estrangement and separation. Consequently, the paper has discussed the way *The Forty Rules of Love* evokes transnationality, globality, multiplicity, spirituality and world citizenship as a means of creating harmony and coexistence, and as alternatives to stagnant dogmatic discourses that produce alienation.

Finally, this paper demonstrates that Shafak in *The Forty Rules of Love* rethinks the negative connotations attached to alienation

and separation from one's cluster and surrounding. Instead, she sheds light on the positive aspects of this separation.

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پوختہ:

نامۆبۇن بىرىتتىيە لە ھەستى دابىران لە خود و گروپە كۆمەلایىيەتھەكان و ھەروەھا بىرىتتىيە لە لە دەستدانى ھەستى پابەندىبۇن و مەرفۇھەكان دۇور دەخاتەوہ لە ئەزمونكردى سەرجەمىيەتھەكى قالدبار لەگەل خود و كۆمەلگا. ئەم لىكۆلئىنەوہىيە ئەوہ دەخاتە روو چۆن گوتارەكان بەرپرسىيارن لە دروستكردى ھەستى بىگنەبۇن. گوتارەكان كۆمەلىك رىسا و داب و نەرىت دادەمەزرىنن و وەكو ئامرازى بنچىنەيى و رەسەنايىيەتى بەسەر تاكەكانى دەسەپىنن، بەم جۆرەش مەرفۇھەكان لە دەرەوہى ئەم رىسا و ياساينەدا ئەندامبۇن و پابەندى لە دەست دەدن و بىگنە دەبن. ئەم لىكۆلئىنەوہىيە تىۋر و بنەماكانى پۆستمۇدەرنىتە دەربارەى ئەم گوتارە دىارىكرائوانە دەخاتە بەرباس بۆ ئەوہى ھەستى بىگنەبۇن دۇوبارە وينا بكاتەوہ و ھەلىبەدەشىنئىتەوہ. لەژىر رۆشنايى ئەمەشدا، لىكۆلئىنەوہكە رۆمانى "چەل رىساى عەشق" (۲۰۱۱)ى ئىلىف شەفەق شىدەكاتەوہ و لە رىگەى ئەم رۆمانەوہ چەمكەكانى نىشتىمان و نەتەوہ و كەلتۇور و ئاين لە دىدىكى پۆستمۇدەرنىيەتھەوہ رووندەكاتەوہ. لە ئەنجامدا، ئەم لىكۆلئىنەوہىيە ئەو مەتۇدە دەخاتە بەرباس و لىي دەكۆلئىتەوہ كە رۆمانەكە لە رىگەيەوہ بىگنەبۇنىكى ئەرىنى دىنئىتە ئاراوہ لە رىگای پىشنىياركردى بەجىھانىبۇون و فەرەھەندى و فەرەنەتەوہيى و رۆحانىيەت و ناسنامەى جىھانى وەكو جىگرەوہىك بۆ گوتارە چەقەستووە بالادەستەكان.

ووشە كىلىپكەن: بىگەنە بوون، گوتار، پۇستۇدىرىنە،
 ھەلۈە شاندەنە، بە جىھانىبوون، رۇحانىيەت

ملخص:

الاغتراب هو الشعور بالانفصال عن الذات والفئات الاجتماعية ، وهو عبارة عن فقدان الشعور بالانتماء. إنه يبعد الناس عن تجربة الكلية المتبلورة في العالم الاجتماعي وفي الذات. يحاول هذا البحث توضيح كيف أن الخطابات المختلفة مسؤولة عن هذا الإحساس بالاغتراب ، لأن الخطابات تنتج بعض المعايير و القوانين ، ثم تعلن أنها أصلية وجوهر الوجود الإنساني. لذلك ، يشعر الأفراد بالغربة عندما يفقدون الانتماء والعضوية في مثل هذه الخطابات. وهكذا ، يضع هذا البحث نظريات ما بعد الحداثة في حوار مع هذه الخطابات المحددة لإعادة التفكير في مفهوم الاغتراب وتفكيكه. في ضوء ذلك ، يحلل البحث رواية قواعد العشاق الاربعون للروائية أليف شافاق (٢٠١١) ، ومن خلالها يستكشف تصوير ما بعد الحداثة للوطن والأمة والثقافة والدين. وبالتالي ، فإن هذا البحث يستجوب ويوضح الطريقة التي تولد بها هذه الرواية المختارة عزلة ايجابية عن طريق اقتراح التعددية والروحانية والمواطنة العالمية كبدايل للخطابات العقائدية الراكدة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاغتراب ، الخطاب ، ما بعد الحداثة ، التفكيك ، العولمة ، الروحانية