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AUNTY ZARİFE AS A CULTURAL FIGURE OF TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATION: RECONSTRUCTION OF MODERN LIFE IN TURKEY AS REFLECTED IN AHMET HAMDİ TANPINAR'S *THE TIME REGULATION INSTITUTE*¹

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Abstract

Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar mainly focuses on the efforts of modernization and the adaptation of Western time concept in Turkey through the establishment of the Time Regulation Institute in his novel entitled in the same way as The Time Regulation Institute (1961). In his novel, Tanpınar draws attention to the socio-cultural changes, the changing roles of women and their changing perceptions of life in modern Turkey with the help of the unforgettable female character named Aunty Zarife. Tanpınar depicts the transformation of Aunt Zarife and how she becomes the master of her life and her destiny by determining to lead an active and independent life after her experience of lethargy. Meanwhile, Tanpınar employs the character of Aunty Zarife to illustrate "the death of Ottoman Empire and the rise of Turkish Republic" in The Time Regulation Institute (1961). Thus, in this study, the character of Aunty Zarife and her adventures will be analyzed to show the socio-cultural changes and transformations that happened in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire and in the first decades of Turkish Republic by giving examples from the novel. Moreover, Aunty Zarife's transformation or rebirth will be put under the lenses by providing examples from the novel. The paper discusses the possibility of a synthesis or consensus between traditional ways of life and modernity in detail concerning the issues raised by Tanpınar in The Time Regulation Institute.

Keywords: Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, The Time Regulation Institute, transformation, socio-cultural changes, Westernization/Modernization

INTRODUCTION

¹ This study is complied with the research and publication ethics specified in the 8th article of the 2020 TR Index Journal Evaluation Criteria.

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Though, Aunt Zarife is one of the minor characters in Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's novel, namely the Time Regulation Institute, she manages to attract the attention of the readers since the first print-out of the novel in 1961 and despite the many years passed, many readers find her unforgettable due to her unique or eccentric rebirth /transformation, which might even be considered as a miracle. Before giving more detail on her lethargy, let us give some information about Aunt Zarife.

Aunt Zarife is the aunt of the protagonist, Hayri İrdal, who is also the narrator of the novel. In English, "Aunt" is often employed to describe women of one's parents' generation, but in Turkish, actually there are two words corresponding to Aunt; these are *teyze* and *hala*. *Teyze* is employed to address maternal aunts. *Hala* is used to refer to paternal aunts (see "Türk Dil Kurumu Sözlükleri"). Aunt Zarife is the sister of Hayri İrdal's father. The narrator states that

[m]y aunt was the only family my father had in the world. And perhaps it was this enforced intimacy that led them to become so dramatically different in temperament, disposition, and even appearance. (Tanpınar, 2014, p.79)

Aunt Zarife and his brother have totally different characters and different stances towards life; she lacks joy of life, whereas his brother is full of the joy of life as given in the following passage:

My father was a vigorous man, the kind who could devour a stone. He had a colossal and consuming appetite for life. For him the universe was like a heap of grain to be threshed and sold, or at least that's what those who knew him liked to say. But my aunt, she had been sickly since childhood. She was feeble, malicious, and self-absorbed. Though reasonably devout, my father had a cheerful disposition and a taste for music and conversation. My aunt, however, was dark and moody, fervently pious, proud, yet fragile—she was a miserable little woman who loved nothing more than to descry the work of the devil in the sensual. These two had but one thing in common: each lived under the weight of a terrible depression. (Tanpınar, 2014, p.79)

As expressed by Hayri İrdal, she was feeble, malicious, and self-absorbed as well as being moody and fragile. To put it simply, she was depressed and in times of depression, people might feel like their world is falling apart and therefore, they do not know what to do in life and can not trust what life would bring to themselves. Similarly, Aunt Zarife seems to be afraid of life and what it might hold for the future and she was trying to feel secure by saving money and by living on minimum expenses, despite being a very wealthy widow; she is the bride of the warden of the street sweeper's trade guild. Nonetheless, she has scarcity consciousness. Her case is defined in the following words in The Time Regulation Institute:

... my aunt was burdened by a meanness that propelled her into an existence so frugal she could barely make ends meet, despite a good-sized fortune accruing interest in the hands of money lenders, an assortment of stocks and bonds, her grand villa in Etyemez (left to her by her late husband, the warden of the street sweeper's trade guild) and several Ottoman hans and hamams. In fact she never risked remarriage for fear she might lose her fortune, preferring to live like a lonely owl in her monstrous sixteen-room villa with no one save the half-crazed chambermaid she'd adopted as a child and an old servant who was just as fervent and mean as she was, not to mention a terrible busybody. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 80)

In the passage below, it is revealed that Aunt Zarife is also afraid of fortune-hunters, whom are fond of old wealthy widows. As a result of this fear, she avoids from marrying again and in the words of her own nephew, Hayri İrdal, she is defined as "a lonely owl" (Tanpınar, 2014, p.80) after her husband's death.

It is also stated in the novel that only time of the year she spends some time with her relatives is the time of Ramadan. This time of the year, Ramadan is considered as a special time for Muslims, it is perceived as an opportunity to spend some time with one's family and friends. This might

reflect that despite all of her self-absorbness, she still cares about traditional religious values and culture. Hayri İrdal informs the readers that

[i]t was no more than a week after her husband's death that she put an end to my father's visits, he being inclined to probe into her affairs. This is why we saw her only on religious holidays such as Ramadan and Kandil, when we would visit to pay our respects and kiss her hand. (Tanpınar, 2014, p.80)

She pays family visits on religious holidays like Ramadan and Kandil, but on other occasions, she seems to be fond of her independence and tries to draw a border between herself and her brother since he seems to be inclined to interfere with her life, especially with her financial decisions too much. So to have some privacy in her life and not to lose contact with her family,

[Aunty Zarife] also made it her custom to come and stay with us on the second week of Ramadan, as we lived closer to various mosques [says Hayri İrdal]. Whenever we went to visit her, we were offered the cheapest refreshments, cakes, and cookies Istanbul could provide, and, along with mountains of advice and admonishments, we would be given tawdry little presents of nominal value. Yet when she came to visit, she expected us to observe full decorum in what we offered her, and when displeased she would fly into a gruesome rage. (Tanpınar, 2014, p.80)

She has high expectations from the host and if she cannot get the treatment she hopes for, she gets into rage and her self-centeredness makes everyone uncomfortable at the household as it is expressed below:

The prospect of having to host this bilious guest and her two servants would strike fear into our household a full two months before their arrival. Our aunt would never have been able to change her eating habits so dramatically from the moment of her arrival—suddenly she became ravenous—had she not followed a diet beginning on Şaban, the eighth holy month of the Muslim calendar, which became ever stricter with the approach of the holy month of Ramadan. But nothing was more difficult than enduring the barrage of advice and criticism she dispensed over the course of the holy week. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 80)

Interestingly enough, being very stingy, she does not spend enough money on qualified food at her own house, but when she comes to visit her brother, her appetite increases and she expects to be provided with the best food and drinks during her stay in her brother's house. Luckily enough, the month of Ramadan comes very soon and she begins to fast and she goes back to her strict diet. The reasons behind her strict diet may be listed as not only being stingy, but out of not loving herself and her body too. She might be punishing herself with a poor diet for being old and ugly as it will be expressed later by Hayri İrdal (see Tanpınar, 2014, p.86). She also has a strong fear of future and poverty. Therefore, having been conditioned to have a scarcity mentality, she tries to save as much money as she can for the potential troubles in the future. Her scarcity mindset might be a result of the wars in the previous decades such as the World War I (1914-1918) and the War of Independence (1919-1923) in sequences and the harsh life conditions in the war and postwar period.

From the religious point of view, having a diet or fasting aims to learn how to control one's desires and to mortify the flesh. However, in the case of Aunty Zarife, it seems to aim at cutting the budget on the food expenses at home, it does not seem to be out of being pious and out of the necessity of taming one's desires. After the negligence of her body for a very long time due to the scarcity mentality, her body can no longer function properly as stated below:

Toward the end my aunt lost control of half her body. My father just could not understand how she could carry on living semiparalyzed, especially since she continued to harangue him as vigorously as ever, and he put it down to rancorous sentiments she must have harbored for him since childhood. According to my father, she continued living only to spite him. After suffering a

day of malicious torment at the invalid's bedside, he would return from the villa in Etyemez and whimper: "Is it really possible? Who would continue to live like that? The miserable creature is tormenting me, just out of spite. But God is great ...". (Tanpınar, 2014, p.81)

After her semiparalyzation, she begins to be even more rageful and becomes a burden for both herself and the people around her. She is perceived as someone to be got rid of soon; the sooner she dies, the better it will be for everyone.

Character Development

Yet having experienced a very rare occasion named lethargy, Aunt Zarife happens to be "the one person out of a million to taste such happiness" (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 86), which might be considered as a second chance given to her in order to have a critical stance towards her own way of life; a chance to recover and to renovate her life just like she did in her house. Aunt Zarife appreciates her resurrection and she begins to take important steps for reshaping her life:

Despite the unexpected manner of her return from the cliffs of eternity, on the surface she was still the same old aunt we had always known. But deep down she had undergone a profound change. This might be better understood as a revolution, seeing as my aunt's return from the grave overturned what we, along with all her acquaintances, saw as the regulated order of her life—and in my view it rests on the following three fundamental points:

First, my aunt no longer despised the body that had carried her back in such a miserable state from the world beyond, following a death that had proved temporary. Confronted by the faults she was incapable of changing—her age, her malformations, her overall unseemliness—she no longer condemned herself.

Having accepted her body as her sole source of support in this game of blindman's bluff that we call life, she came to appreciate its value. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 86)

Thus, she gives up disdaining her body and denouncing herself and begins to show respect to her body and physical needs by taking baby steps in order to take care of it and to sustain and preserve its health and well being. In addition to it, her stance towards the material world also changes as narrated below:

The second change could be seen in her regard for her wealth. Her fortune (to which formerly she had been so attached, thinking herself its sole custodian) had, if only for a few hours, found its way into her brother's hands and pockets, and although her brother was in some way dear to her, he was still another human being; having seen how easily a fortune could change hands, she set about changing her relationship to it. Until then my aunt would have said, "I'll hide it whatever the cost—it can only increase in value." She had transformed her coal cellar into a kind of bank vault. But that day it was as if suddenly she had decided, "No, I shan't keep a penny of it, and I shall no longer worry about the return. I shall sit right here and eat my way through it!". (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 86)

Aunt Zarife has recognized and has awoken to the fact that if she does not enjoy the opportunities that her fortune might provide her with, then other people will enjoy it after her death and she should seize the day to make the most out of it. Eventually, rather than saving money, she decides to spend it in order to increase the quality of her life and enjoy the life while she can:

Having turned against all those she assumed had their sights set on her money, my aunt now turned against her own fortune.

But whatever the peacemakers among us might have insisted, this did not lead to a dramatic change in the way she treated it. My aunt and her fortune had long lived in opposition to one another, like two radically different spheres, coexisting as polar opposites, and it was the conflict

itself that brought about a certain equilibrium. At the time of her provisional death, my aunt had relinquished everything, but following her miraculous resurrection she took possession of her fortune most forcefully. (Tanpınar, 2014, p.86)

After her temporary death, during the journey from the graveyard back to her home, Aunty Zarife begins to discover how was it like to be alive once, how beautiful life was with its simple but miraculous ingredients like the falling snow pellets and the sun in your cheek. She owes this consciousness to her provisional death and that scene is given in the passage below in an atmosphere reminiscent of pastorals:

In making that outlandish journey from the graveyard back to her home, in drawing upon the strength of her will to subdue all those around her—for the crowd surely would have preferred the serenity of a burial to the fated resurrection—in embarking on this adventure, my aunt had at last discovered this thing called life. Swayed by a soft March sun shimmering behind a thin curtain of gently falling snow, and by the biting wind blowing over the old city walls, not to mention the ever-multiplying, weeping crowds and the faces looming over her, she was beset by emotions that until then had lain dormant. Life did exist after all! Both the rich and the poor were alive. They laughed, shouted, cried, worried, loved, and grieved, but above all they lived. (Tanpınar, 2014, p.86)

The fated temporary death and the fated resurrection naturally has a real impact on her, to be more precise it creates the effect of a life-changing shock and she awakens to the fact that

[w]hy would she not do the same? Especially now, when she had so much of what these people most desired. She had discovered life on her journey home; crossing over her hearth to watch my father remove precious stones from under his shirt and out of his pockets, she discovered the true value of her fortune. (Tanpınar, 2014, p.86)

The last, but not the least, change is observed in her physical condition as it is put in the following passage below:

The third and final change was physical. The fearful joy she'd felt at eluding death and the surge of panic she'd endured while recapturing her fortune combined to jolt my aunt out of illness and paralysis.

The result, you might well ask? It was this: my aunt, who was taken home in a victory chariot like Caesar, accompanied perhaps by a third of the city, woke up the next day from a long and peaceful sleep in perfect condition, and she bounded right out of bed. (Tanpınar, 2014, p.87)

Awakening to a new day, Aunty Zarife "hopped in a carriage and set off to visit a financier who took her to the finest seamstresses in all of Beyoğlu" (Tanpınar, 2014, 87). In other words, Aunty Zarife's negligence of her body has become a thing of the past after her lethargy experience, she has realized that her body is her sole source of support in this life and eventually, she begins to take good care of it:

First, my aunt no longer despised the body that had carried her back in such a miserable state from the world beyond, following a death that had proved temporary. Confronted by the faults she was incapable of changing—her age, her malformations, her overall unseemliness—she no longer condemned herself. Having accepted her body as her sole source of support in this game of blindman's bluff that we call life, she came to appreciate its value. (Tanpınar, 2014, p.86)

All this goes back to the day, Aunty Zarife's chambermaid goes to her brother's house with tears in her eyes that "aunt[y] [Zarife] had passed away" (Tanpınar, 2014, p.81). Aunty Zarife's nephew narrates the details of this day as follows:

My father (Tanpınar, 2014, p.81) rushed off to her villa to take the required preliminary measures. Funeral prayers were performed in Lâleli. My father delegated the burial to our

neighbor Ibrahim Bey, so he could return directly to the villa in Etyemez after prayers, to watch over its contents so that nothing might go missing. To my mind, this was his gravest mistake in the whole affair. For if he hadn't been swept away by the fear of losing her estate and its property, my aunt would have been buried in a timely fashion, thereby reducing the likeliness of her resurrection. And—even if she had been destined to rise again from the dead—my father would have been standing at the head of her grave, desperate and aggrieved, beating his head with his hands and tearing at his clothes, with tears flowing from his eyes—all of which would have ensured a happy outcome. Instead we were met with a very unhappy outcome indeed. Ibrahim Bey had arranged a pauper's funeral, entirely unbecoming the bride of the warden of the street sweeper's trade guild, just so he could skim from the money my father had given him for the burial proceedings. And because it proved difficult to locate her late husband's tomb—not a soul from the family was there to watch her burial beside it—the grave diggers began late: from start to finish, the entire operation was marred by infelicitous delays. (Tanpınar, 2014, p.82)

Aunty Zarife's brother seems to be more interested in his inheritance rather than the funeral of his sister, which requires the enactment of some of the end-of-life rituals. Aunty Zarife's brother's lack of interest in her funeral was his gravest mistake as uttered by his son, Hayri. Having not a family member during the funeral causes some delays in the burial process and provides Aunty Zarife with the time to awake from coma, from lethargy. The worst is that she recognizes that her brother fails to attend her funeral and instead, he prefers to remain in her villa, which clearly shows that he is in pursuit of her property. Meanwhile, the readers become the witness of a very unusual scene of resurrection and it is given in the following sentences in the novel:

When at last the coffin lid was cut open to tip the corpse into the freshly dug grave, my aunt awoke from a deep coma, and because she was the type of creature who was never caught unawares, even in the most extraordinary of circumstances, she heaved the coffin lid aside and assessed the scene, and with what she later viewed as her eternal powers of perspicacity, she grasped the situation immediately, shouting out to the only person she recognized there, the imam from Etyemez: "Quick, hurry up and take me home!". (Tanpınar, 2014, p.82)

Surprisingly enough, despite the most extraordinary circumstances, she grasped the situation without delay and took a patronizing attitude and give orders to the people in the cemetery to take her back to her home:

As Ibrahim Bey told me later, most of the mourners were terrified, and at once took to their heels, thus making the task of returning the casket from the cemetery in Merkezefendi to my aunt's villa all the more difficult. Had she not given a ferocious scolding to those who had not been so quick off the mark, it's unlikely she would have made it home at all. (Tanpınar, 2014, p.82)

Seeing her alive and giving orders, some people were so terrified that they immediately ran away. Yet, she keeps her composure and

[f]irst she ordered the imam to give her a coatlike cape that had been abandoned by one of the diggers at the graveside, and after wrapping it tightly around her, she proceeded to direct the procession from the stretcher that held the coffin. With half her body jutting out of the casket, and shouting out instructions to the luckless souls charged with carrying her back to her villa. (Tanpınar, 2014, p.82)

Tanpınar describes this resurrection in a funny way and it provides the readers with comic relief for a while and we learn that Aunty Zarife even buys some food to eat in her casket, and the appetite for food might be taken as a sign of the appetite for life, which might also foreshadow her desire to live, rather than to die as she leads a ghost-like existence prior to the lethargy. In

other words, it seems that Aunty Zarife's life drive proves to be more stronger than her death drive as depicted very vividly in the passage below:

With half her body jutting out of the casket, and shouting out instructions to the luckless souls charged with carrying her back to her villa in (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 82) Etyemez (she had the gall to order them to take her all the way back home in the very manner they had brought her to the graveyard—no less would have been expected of her), she even managed to stop off at the first pastry shop they came across after entering the city, purchasing a savory bun to relieve her hunger. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 83)

Literally, she returns from the world beyond and she holds onto life with all of her strength. Her nephew, Hayri resembles her to the important commanders like Caesar in history and he describes her victory march to the readers in the following passage below:

This bizarre return from the world beyond, and the fantastical death of my aunt, now alive in her coffin and nibbling on her savory bun, attracted much attention in the backstreets of various neighborhoods as they lumbered along, so that by the time they reached the home my aunt had once entered as a bride, they had almost half the population of the district behind them; the procession had taken on the aura of a victory march. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 83)

Hayri was impressed by the glorious appearance of Aunty Zarife at the door of villa, but regretfully, he could not find the opportunity to express his admiration in front of Aunty Zarife herself:

I was the one who opened the door. My aunt brusquely ordered her removal from the casket they had by then lowered. There cannot have been a commander in recorded history who, after seizing victory in the battlefield, showed as much composure as my aunt when her coffin was lowered to the ground. She was in complete command, calling to mind the pictures of Caesar I'd seen in history books. Sadly, she didn't afford me the chance to express my admiration. In fact she hardly even gave me the chance to applaud. Thrusting me aside, she stepped into the foyer, whereupon, without even looking me in the face, she cried: "Where is that brute of a man, your father?" (Tanpınar, 2014, p.83)

Having seen that her brother was not at her funeral, Aunty Zarife got very disappointed and was full of rage. Unfortunately, her brother's financial problems forced him to make the safety of her property his main concern; not the funeral procession. Given the circumstances; his huge amount of debts and shortage of money, he prefers to keep an eye on Aunty Zarife's villa, not on her corpse and he tries to take everything, which is light in weight, but heavy in worth. Hayri puts all these events beautifully in the following passage below:

Meanwhile my father, knowing nothing of the resurrection, was still at the villa. He had seized the premises and terrorized its servants before extracting everything that seemed of any value, including items buried in the coal cellar, light in weight but heavy in worth, and he had strewn it all in the middle of the floor; his pockets were stuffed with jewels, bonds, and gold that he had rustled out from the drawers of my aunt's bedside table, and his eyes were still searching as if to say, "Where's the rest?" In the meantime I had dismantled the dining room clock, which had captured my imagination as a child—and always been kept well out of my reach—and was busy fiddling with its pieces in a vain and furious attempt to repair it. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 83)

Having opened the door to Aunty Zarife, Hayri himself was paralyzed for a short while and in his very own words:

Awestruck, I could only indicate with a trembling nod that [my father] was upstairs. "Well then take me upstairs. At once!" she cried. But without waiting a moment for assistance, she flew up the stairs. The crowd stood stunned. My crippled aunt, who had been at death's door, who had

(Tanpınar, 2014, p.83) in fact just returned from the dead, was now walking unassisted—indeed she was bounding up the stairs! (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 84)

His crippled aunt, who had just returned from the dead, was now walking unassisted; actually, she was bounding up the stairs very quickly just to discover that her brother is seizing whatever is in her possession. Hayri cannot help pitying his father when he is caught red handed by Aunt Zarife. The passage below describes the encounter of Aunt Zarife with his brother for the first time after her resurrection:

I had never loved my father in the same way after his second marriage [confesses Hayri to the reader]. Unable to distinguish the genuine man among his many masks, I was rarely convinced by his shows of suffering. But I shall never forget his face that day. The moment he saw his sister in her funeral shroud—his stingy and cantankerous sister, whom he thought he had sent off to heaven just a few hours ago—the poor man was rendered speechless by shock, or rather fear. His face trembled, white as waxed cloth, and his whole body shook. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 84)

His father felt as if he had seen a ghost or been struck by an evil spirit (jinn) and has never recovered from the trembling inflicted on him at the day of resurrection:

Not a word passed between them [between Aunt Zarife and her brother] until my aunt calmly intoned: “Put everything down.” Trying his very best to mumble something along the lines of “Welcome home, sister,” my father pulled out the various items he had stuffed into his pockets and down his shirt, his hands still trembling with fear. Five minutes later he resembled a leech dipped in ash. He had given back all he had taken, in fact even more. He’d given back more because he had, at just that precise moment, given up all hope for the future. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 84)

His father, not having any option, gives everything back to Aunt Zarife and he leaves the villa even much more poorer as it is highlighted by Hayri, because of losing all his hope for the future and he is likened to “a leech dipped in ash” (Tanpınar, 2014, p.84), which might be seen as a fascinating metaphor to describe the situation Hayri’s father finds himself in. What is more, he is ordered to prepare her bed and to serve some linden tea to Aunt Zarife, which reflects her newly gained consciousness about her physical needs and her tender care of her body after her resurrection as expressed below:

My aunt waited patiently, clocking my father’s every movement until she was sure there was nothing left on his person save his soul, and then said: “Now leave. And take all these people and that dimwit son of yours too. But at the very least you can make my bed before you go, and brew me some linden tea. Hurry up now, I seem to have caught a chill. It is rather cold outside.” Father and son, we stumbled out of the house in a daze [says Hayri in the novel]. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 84)

Even many years later, the nephew of Aunt Zarife remembers the day of resurrection and he could not help expressing that despite the fact that they had some material lost on that day, he still derives pleasure and joy out of remembering Aunt Zarife’s resurrection and calls it a miracle unfolding before their eyes:

Now, I must confess that this ghastly business did not have the same effect on me as it had on my father. Undoubtedly my aunt was being entirely unfair with us. But I had never believed I had any right to her fortune in the first place. Like so many others born aggrieved, I tended to weigh any misfortune that befell me against those tragedies I had been able to avoid. It was never a matter of right or wrong. It was more complicated than that. Looking back on my life—and I am of course of an age to be doing such a thing—I see I have always had a spectator’s frame of mind. My concern with the welfare and demeanor of others has always distracted me from my own woes.

This was certainly the case that day. For despite all we lost on the day my aunt came back to life, I still found enchantment in the miracle that had unfolded before my eyes. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 84)

Having experienced a miracle, Aunty Zarife has also decided to make some changes in her life to improve her quality of life:

The first thing she did was send for the imam, to whom she gave her late husband's entire wardrobe, along with personal effects she had kept as memento mori. Then she hopped in a carriage and set off to visit a financier who took her to the finest seamstresses in all of Beyoğlu. For days, she busied herself with the latest fashions. Meanwhile she had the villa of the warden of the street sweeper's (Tanpınar, 2014, p.87) trade guild cleaned, restored, whitewashed, and renovated. And she even bought herself a small carriage with black rubber wheels. The day the new carriage arrived, a butler, a male cook, and a new team of chambermaids began working at the villa. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 88)

From this passage, it can be deduced that Aunty Zarife focuses on reconstructing her life and she begins it with changing her clothes and with renovating her house. She even buys a small carriage with black rubber wheels, which is prestigious and which may also be associated with the freedom of women, which is newly gained after the declaration of Republic in Turkey. And those were the days, only very few women might enjoy these facilities. Hence, Aunty Zarife might be one of the pioneering women, who dare to go out in her own carriage as a woman in İstanbul (See Noyan, "Tarih Boyunca İstanbul Faytonları"/ "İstanbul Carriages throughout the History").

This shows that Aunty Zarife has a free spirit and is determined to enjoy the pleasures of life and the reforms of Atatürk, which provides women with more freedom and hence more participation in public life. From time to time, she might be resembled to Chaucer's famous widow in the *Canterbury Tales*, who is known as the Wife of Bath; after Hunter Naşit Bey-her second husband- dies, Aunty Zarife intends to get married again as expressed in the following words, "[a]nd when Naşit Bey died, freeing my aunt to plan her third foray into marriage" (Tanpınar 185); just like the Wife of Bath does, by having the upper-hand in her relationships, she also breaks the social norms of her time in relation to gender patterns.

Tanpınar draws another aunty character, who, unlike Aunty Zarife, does not have the chance to seize life, but who spends her life by saving money for the sake of her relatives. She is referred as Aphrodite's aunt in *The Time Regulation Institute*. Aphrodite feels guilty due to some sacrifices her aunty does for her family, including Aphrodite herself. In the passage below, there is a juxtaposition of Aphrodite's and Hayri's aunts:

If she [Aphrodite] could just about convince herself of this possibility, then she could be sure that her auntie was at peace with the world. She would laugh and sing and hug and kiss the men she fancied. But this free spirit could never forgive herself: she was the reason her aunt had never married, and she blamed herself mercilessly for having kept her aunt from living a full life. She believed that women should marry at all costs. Any other course was [an] utter catastrophe, which is why she was delighted when my aunt [Aunty Zarife] made her late marriage. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 185)

Aphrodite believes that women should have company, should not isolate themselves from the outside world. Thus, she appreciates Aunty Zarife's remarriages and her stance towards life, her efforts to adapt to the present circumstances; her resilience. Naturally,

"But of course!" she [Aphrodite] exclaimed. "Why wouldn't she? We all must live!" My aunt had remarried for her own selfish reasons, with no consideration for anyone but herself [declares Hayri], but Aphrodite chose not to notice how mean and unjust the woman had been to us and

gave the union her full blessing. And when Naşit Bey died, freeing my aunt [Aunty Zarife] to plan her third foray into marriage, Aphrodite measured one aunt against the other, and, finding a greater exuberance of willpower in mine, she judged her aunt to have lost the contest, brooding over her fate (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 185).

Aunty Zarife seems to be determined to live her life fully and she even seems to adapt herself to the secularization, which comes along with the new adaptations and reforms in Turkey as stated below:

The Turks were the first Muslim people to attempt some study of the West and to devise or adapt terms for Western notions and artifacts. The earliest Turkish discussions of secularism use the term *ladini*, literally 'non-religious.' This is easily confused with irreligious, and Turkish secularists soon realized (Lewis, 2002, p. 116) that the term they had chosen was unnecessarily provocative. They therefore replaced it with a loan word from French-*laïque*, which in its Turkish form *laik* remains in use to the present time (Lewis, 2002, p. 117).

As in line with the socio-cultural changes, Aunty Zarife relinquishes all concern with the world to come (*ahiret* means the world to come after death) as expressed in the passage taken from The Time Regulation Institute:

Once this team [of servants] was in place, my aunt relieved her ward, Safinaz Hanım, of the title *ahretlik*, thus emancipating her from indentured service. In severing this immortal bond, she relinquished all concern with the world to come [since *ahretlik* means "from *ahret*, meaning the afterlife; a pious man; an adopted maid committed to a lifetime of service" (Tanpınar, 2014, p.402)]. The poor woman left the house in a hired carriage with two trunks and a few pennies in her pocket. In the space of a week (seeing as human beings always need companionship), Naşit Bey had taken her place, moving into the villa with his son and daughter to become my aunt's second husband and our new relative. Six months later they went together to Vienna to take the cure, and not long after their return, Naşit Bey became a deputy member of the Committee for Union and Progress. Thereafter he embarked on a significant business venture, availing himself of my aunt's fortune. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 88)

What is more significant is that her newly wedded husband, Naşit Bey enters into the arena of politics by becoming a deputy member of the Committee for Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*). Hence, her husband and she begin to show a keen interest in contemporary political events rather than remaining passive and silent in the face of recent developments at home and in the world. They try to contribute to the modernization of Turkey by helping to sustain the new political system founded by the nation builders very recently. Thus, she does no longer resist against change in her life, but she even welcomes the granting of the suffrage rights. In relation to women's suffrage in Turkey, Gökçe Başaran İnce states that

For the peripheral modernisation projects, women have oftenly been the face of a rapidly modernising nation, shifting it from one civilisation to the other...[In] the case of modernisation [of] Turkey, [...] women took part and represented a vast transformation towards a Western and a secular society. Granting of the suffrage rights [(btw the years of 1930 and 1934 through acts of Parliaments)(see "5 Aralık")]] was a historical moment in this process, [making it possible for the women to become] public personalities vested with political rights. Women became the face of a modernising and Westernising society by becoming more visible in public life, attaining "men's professions" or voting, yet meanwhile they were expected to act not as individuals but as the missionaries of the nation-building process... being [wives and] mothers [...] for the nation [...] growing with the Kemalist reforms... (2015, p. 6413).

As in line with İnce's statement, Aunty Zarife also does not put herself in the foreground in politics, but just supports her husband as a wife in all fields of his life and she creates a life full of social activities for herself and she pursuits her own happiness.

Moreover, she begins to mentor her grand-niece, Hayri's daughter, named Zehra. She decides to leave her wealth and property to Zehra so that she can lead her life as an independent woman as she herself does. Here, we see the intergenerational exchange of culture and property. In other words, Aunty Zarife acts as a cultural and financial gate-keeper in her relationship with Zehra and the audience happily observes the transformation; how she begins to display a strong personality after her resurrection by becoming an autonomus person in the remaining days of her life. In relation to the bond between her and Zehra, it might be suggested that after having being self-sufficient and competent in her life, Aunty Zarife might realize some of the lacks in her spiritual world such as the love of a child and therefore, in some ways aunting Zehra might appeal to Aunty Zarife's motherly instincts. Thus, we can say that having found in Zehra, in her grand-niece, a substitute for the daughter she has never had might make Aunty Zarife feel happy and content in the remaining days of her life.

In her daily life, Aunty Zarife is seen to have combined some aspects of Islamic-Ottoman culture and secular-European culture in her costumes and make-up style. For instance, she tinges her eyes with kohl and wears face-powder as well as a hat. Wearing face powder and hat is a European habit, whereas tinging kohl is an Eastern habit especially of the Muslims living in the Eastern part of the world. Mustafa Karataş in his book entitled Hz. Peygamber'in Beden Dili/The Body Language of Prophet Mohammad also states that Prophet Mohammad had a box of kohl of himself and every evening he tinges his eyes with kohl named ismid as it is good for eye health and eyelashes (see 2018, p. 117).

On the other hand, face powder (see for further information "The Surprising History of Face Powder") is a Western cosmetics product, which Aunty Zarife likes to wear in her daily life. In relation to the westernization of some of the Eastern countries in clothes, costumes or in make-up may be defined as "cultural submission" (see 154) if we put it in Bernard Lewis' words. Moreover, he informs us that "[t]he Turks were the first Muslim people to attempt some study of the West and to devise or adapt terms for Western notions and artifacts (Lewis, 116). And especially after the foundation of the Turkish Republic, modernization or Westernization efforts gain a momentum. When we look at the charcter of Aunty Zarife in The Time Regulation Institute we see that Aunty Zarife neither denies her Islamic-Ottoman origin, nor rejects modernization and Westernization injected by the new Republic; she finds a middle-way and combines tradition with modernization as it is observed in her outlooks. For instance, in the scene, where Hayri and she meet in the Time Regulation Institute after many years, Hayri describes her outlooks very minutely in the following words below:

The door flung open and my aunt stormed into the room, clutching a pile of papers and a great suitcase of a purse under her arm, furiously brandishing her umbrella above her gray head, itself embellished with such extravagant black plumes that it was more ostentatious than an eagle. She seemed more awesome and otherworldly than when she returned from the cemetery in Merkezefendi.

Her heavily powdered face was contorted by rage, and her kohl-lined eyes flashed like lightning. Jewelry dangled from her wrists, her fingers, her neck, her ears. Her beige raincoat—an Ottoman cloak by another name—billowed as she entered, as if she were flying. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 303)

She has a great suitcase of a purse under her arm, an umbrella and she wears a Ottoman cloak and a hat as well as jewelry in her wrists, fingers, neck and ears. What strikes Hayri's attention is that with her heavily powdered face and kohl-lined eyes, she seems to be breathtaking. If we have a look at her costumes and accesories one by one we can see that she combines the Eastern objects with the Western ones. To exemplify, plume is described in the dictionary as "[a] large feather, cluster of feathers, or similar ornament worn on a helmet, hat, or horse's harness" (see "Plume") and Aunty Zarife's hat has "black plumes that it was more ostentatious than an eagle" (Tanpınar, 2014, p.303). The smart hat may be a reference to the "Hat Revolution" in Turkey in

1925. "On November 25 of that year, the parliament passed a law that made it mandatory for all men [but not for women] to wear Western-style hats in public places" (Genç, 2013, Turkey's Glorious Hat Revolution). The founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk wants his people to wear modern clothes and accessories to catch up with the modern world and in relation to the modernization efforts in the East, Bernard Shaw states that

Clothes also show the influence of Western visual conceptions. Clothes of course serve a double purpose; on the one hand to keep out the cold and the damp, on the other as a recognition signal to indicate identity. When people change the clothes that they wear and adopt the clothes of another society, this represents a significant cultural choice, and was both adopted and resisted as such. (Lewis, 2002, p. 154)

After her resurrection, Aunty Zarife does no longer resist the changes in life, actually she embraces them and as observed in the scene above, she creates a nice combination of Eastern and Western style of clothes. She wears face powder as well as eye-kohl. She wears a hat with an Ottoman cloak. Besides, she has a bag to comply with the Western manners and fashion. For men,

Shoes and hats are particularly important. Shoes were seen by many Western travellers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as one of the key distinctions between Middle-Eastern and Western habits. When somebody is being Westernized or, in Middle-Eastern terms, is becoming Frankish in his habits, the wearing of leather shoes or boots acquires an almost emblematic quality. The supreme emblem is of course the headgear, which can indicate religion, allegiance, and sometimes occupation, and crowns the wearer even in death, as the carved headstones in an old-style cemetery attest. (Lewis, 2002, p. 154)

And for women, it is shoes and bags, that are particularly important. Accordingly, Aunty Zarife carries a western style bag with herself and she seems to be happy with the clothing reform done by Atatürk.

In the novel, Aunty Zarife is situated in a specific time period that is the transition period from the old manners of life to the new ones in Turkey and therefore, within this context; the figure of Aunty Zarife requires us to think with historical specificity about how particular models of gender and kinship are constructed by political and socio-cultural projects in wars/postwar periods. As in line with the new socio-cultural projects and reforms in Turkey, "Mustafa Kemal Atatürk [is proved to be] a leader who made himself known not only with his victories at the battle front but also with his impressive clothing style. Along with the declaration of the Republic, Atatürk started to work for the modernization of his people. Clothing reform became one of these areas and changed the way of fashion in Turkey" (see Mercan, "Türkiye'nin Dünya Modasıyla Tanışması: Atatürk'ün Öncülüğünde İlerleyen Alamod Kıyafet Serüveni"/"The Introduction of World Fashion to Turkey: Alamodality under the Leadership of Atatürk"/ HIST 200-12 Project (2017-2018 Spring)). Through reforms and reconstructing the established systems, including the system of clothes or the fashion in Turkey, Atatürk tries to implement modernization in every field of life. Therefore, instead of chador, chadri, çarşafs or veils, we happen to see other fashionable items such as umbrella, black leather bags, black hats and jewellery among Aunty Zarife's properties.

Another important reform, which is at the heart of Tanpınar's novel, of The Time Regulation Institute, we should mention here is "the replacement of existing traditional measures of length and weight with the International measures of length and weight in March 1931" (for further information see Ünsal, "Atatürk's Reforms: Realization of an Utopia by a Realist", p.32). The significance of the reform in the measures of length and weight can be grasped better if we have a look at Bernard Lewis' ideas expressed in his book entitled What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle East Response given below:

The precise measurement of passing time is of course a prerequisite of modern science and technology – both scientific research and working technology. It is also an essential characteristic, so obvious as usually to be taken for granted, of both private and public life in a modern society. The timetable – the tabulation of a sequence of events taking place at predetermined intervals, defined and demarcated with meticulous exactitude – is basic. In many ways the least dramatic and most powerful instrument of change in the (Lewis, 144) whole process of modernization, it seems to have begun with the railway – the earliest form of organized public transport covering fixed distances at fixed times, and available to all who buy a ticket. The railway was followed by numerous other forms of public transport, covering ever greater distances at ever greater speeds. ... The railway brought the timetable to the Middle East, and was followed by all the other modalities of modern transport and hence of modern life. (Lewis, 2002, p. 145)

In one of the scenes in *The Time Regulation Institute*, the importance of the measurement of passing time and the importance of the Institute is questioned when Aunt Zarife is depicted questioning the importance of The Time Regulation Institute in İstanbul and utters the following words, “Service? And just what kind of service is that? You’re going to regulate clocks, now, are you? You think I’ll believe that? I am Zarife the Veil Shredder/Kefen Yırtan, not one to be so easily deceived by such words!” (Tanpınar, 2014, p.305). However, having grasped its importance she is later convinced by Halil Ayarç, the founder of The Time Regulation Institute, to be the head of the Clock Lover’s Society, which is another branch of the Institute. She accepts to work with them by saying, “It always happens like this, the real work always falls to me. This will be the fourth time I’ve headed a society. It’s been like this ever since the days of the Committee of Union and Progress” (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 307). Then, she and Halit Ayarç begin to identify members for their board and make sure that their society must also have female members as expressed in the following sentence, “Then my aunt recommended Selma Hanım. And so, after jotting down a dozen names, the meeting was adjourned, with the next meeting to be held in a week’s time, at my aunt’s home” (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 307). Aunt Zarife becomes not only the head of Clock Lover’s Society, but she also donates a significant amount of her land to the Society:

One day Halit Bey gave me the news: “We’ve reached an agreement with your aunt. She has donated her plot of land on Freedom Hill to the institute. That’s where we will erect our new building!” A few days later, I learned that my aunt had donated yet another even larger plot of land, beyond Suadiye, to the Time Regulation Institute—providing that its value would be returned in installments. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 308).

As time goes by, Aunt Zarife makes connections with many other women, including Hayri İrdal’s new wife Pakize and his daughter, Zehra -from his late wife- and she tries to heal the wounded ties between herself and her nephew’s family as observed and narrated by Halit Ayarç in the words below:

Halit Bey was in quite a jolly mood on the day he gave me the news. “Don’t you see? How could you ever be angry with your wife again? A woman as intelligent as Pakize Hanım! I saw her at your aunt’s place just the other day. You wouldn’t believe how well the two are getting on. ‘If this woman isn’t elected member of the society’s management board, I’m packing my bags,’ were your aunt’s very words.” Pakize had already told me all about it. As for Zehra, she hardly ever left my aunt’s house. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 308)

As mentioned before, it might even be said that within time Aunt Zarife begins to see Zehra as a substitute for the daughter she has never had. She loves her so much that she even takes Zehra with her on her travels abroad as expressed by Hayri in the passage below:

Halit Ayarlı's prediction came true. Within just a few months of my aunt's cocktail party, we had received telegraphs from several agencies informing us that independent chapters of the Clock Lover's Society had been established in six South American cities. It was not long before those groups were in direct communication with our own Clock Lover's Society, requesting information on our charter, official rules, and regulations. Similar requests came in from all parts of the Middle and Far East, as well as from several countries in Europe. In the space of just two and a half years, three institutes and more than thirty Clock Lover's Societies were established abroad. ... My aunt, meanwhile, became a storm of industry. She did not miss a single one of the International Clock Lover's Society's frequent congresses. For a time, she kept her packed suitcase ready in her bedroom, only to decide that it would be easiest to simply leave it ready in the entrance hall. On most of these trips abroad she was accompanied by my daughter and also (on occasion) her husband. When passing through customs in Istanbul, she was among those who could count on being recognized. She renewed her passport every year without fail. In addition to the ornamental treasures and jewels left to her by the street sweeper's trade guild, she was awarded medals by seven or eight foreign powers. (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 371)

As the events unfold in the novel, we see that Clock Lover's Society is only one of the other many societies, she attends. She also attends another society, whose people are fond of Sufi mysticism. Aunt Zarife herself begins to show a keen interest in "Sufi mysticism". Sabriye Hanım, another female character in the novel describes Aunt Zarife to Hayri in the following words:

"Why, do you know who I recently befriended? Your aunt. What a wonderful woman, so vibrant and alive, and what vigor for her age! To be honest I feel bad you two have drifted apart, for your sake that is. Such an open-minded, clear-sighted human being... And do you know she has a keen interest in Sufi (Tanpınar, 2014, p.278) mysticism too? In fact she's even written several ecstatic love poems. Tomorrow I'm invited to her house for tea." (Tanpınar, 2014, p. 279)

We, as readers, are informed that towards the end of the novel, Aunt Zarife begins to write even love poems and she is perceived to be a very open-minded person as opposed to her image given in the novel before the lethargy experience, when she was observed to be very narrow minded and gloomy. This situation can also be likened to the last days of the Ottoman Empire and the birth of modern Turkish Republic. Thus, Aunt Zarife rises like a phoenix from her ashes as it is also observed in the case of Turkish Republic.

CONCLUSION

In the novel, Aunt Zarife is situated in a specific time period; that is the transition period of Turkish society from an old and decaying Empire (Ottoman Empire) to the birth and sustainance of a new modern nation state (Turkish Republic). Within this context; the figure of Aunt Zarife requires us to think about the socio-historical and cultural changes as well as gender patterns within the contexts of socio-cultural projects such as modernism in war/postwar periods. We can assume that Aunt Zarife might have witnessed World War I (1914-1918) and The War of Independence (1919-1923) and then the progressive reforms of Atatürk (reforms and reconstructions of the established systems in the late Ottoman Empire). Thus, the figure of Aunt Zarife is used to reflect the changes brought by the Turkish Republic concerning women's status and women's roles in society. Thus, sometimes in the novel, she herself comes to represent the young Republic, as explained previously in detail. Hence, Tanpınar suggests that pursuing a cultural synthesis between past and present, East and West, or old and modern lies at the heart of Turkish modernisation, and Turkish people should not completely deny the very deep-rooted cultural heritage nor entirely rely on foreign cultures. The novel represents how modernisation takes time and causes resilience to digest all the things brought by modernity. Fairly enough, this is also shown with the help of the character of Aunt Zarife; she transforms from an old mumbling ghost like woman to an independent energetic and active woman both

physically and psychologically by combining her old cultural heritage with the opportunities of modernization, which is also illustrated in her outlooks in some scenes of the novel. In conclusion, it can be suggested that both Aunty Zarife and Turkish Republic have risen from their ashes.

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