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Mysticism Meets Life Styles: Elizabeth Gilbert

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The impacts of postmodernism have been observed on individuals as well as society and several fields of social construct. Besides influencing and transforming individuals, postmodernism is reflected in their identities. Postmodern individuals focus on experiential consumption rather than concrete one and enriching their daily lives with mystical experiences. They consider the New Age Trend as a leading tool. This study examines the postmodern consumer's relations with mystic experiences. Elizabeth Gilbert, who is a main character in the movie: *Eat, Pray, Love* was chosen as a case study. This movie was examined using descriptive analysis on postmodernism, individualization, mysticism and New Age trend.

Keywords: Consumerism; Media Arts; Mystical Places; Eat Pray Love; Postmodernism; Mysticism; Life Style; Individualization.

INTRODUCTION

Today in the so-called postmodern era, which is an age of complexities, with the settlement of the global system and contrary to the collective good/acceptances there is a transition towards individualism. After the Industrial Revolution along with modernism the idea that the "individual is worthful", which was strengthened by the Renaissance humanist discourse, leaned towards collective and plural identity. Formation of postmodernism first emerged in the fields of architecture and philosophy. Given the prominent factors such as developments in information technologies, information sharing platforms and flexible production, postmodernism revealed a social settlement. No doubt, the minimal scale of this social transformation can be observed through the individual. Rationalist, intelligent and thrifty individual of the modern era draws self-centered framework in a more flexible platform.

CONSUMERS CHANGE, INDIVIDUALIZE AND BECOME POSTMODERN

Within the context of postmodernism the change particularly in individual's reasoning, feeling and behavior patterns can be evaluated as an indicator of differentiated identity formation. Characterized as the intersection of oppositions, postmodernism leads the individual to have the joy from the acts of deciding and acting autonomously far beyond the rule, habit, tradition, and structural norms. Accordingly, it is possible to argue that individual's life of art is comprised of two concepts: "I" and "self-reliance". With reference to the motto: 'I am me as long as I am me; and you are you, as long as you are you' (Funk, 2009), it is possible to argue that there are postmodern value based new life style and individual attitude in terms of the individual itself. This new I-centered attitude provides extraordinary social-psychological, political and economic responses and reveals independent and substantial philosophic, architectural, literal, and artistic infrastructures. Funk discusses this postmodern type of personality within the concept of "I-centeredness":

I-centeredness prioritizes to support rather than to oppose on the consciousness level. One the one hand it includes amazing opportunities to produce reality itself, and on the other hand signifies an independent and spontaneous 'I' emphasis as a response to life experience which seems to have a reasonable reaction vis-à-vis dissolution of social forms and values (Funk, 2009: 12).

Reflection of postmodernism towards this new individual formation is similar to its content, which is composed of opposed ideology and opinions. In other words, contradictions can survive without causing any conflicts. What is remarkable here is the fact that the individual does not perceive his oppositions as contradictions. Funk argues that the desire to be free and spontaneous, does not exclude the sense of belongingness and the desire to be in a team (Funk, 2009). From another view, reflection of postmodernism towards individual profiles shows that there is a suspicion on unconditional trust of rationalism. As a result, it is possible to define new opportunities, which enable digitalized scientific and technologic developments to flow without restraint, as inextricable dimensional. On the one hand, these dimensions provide advantage and perspective towards individual benefits, while on the other hand they pose danger, which creates risk parameters. Within these opposite conditions the postmodern individual tends to re-build his genuine life over and over again. Although this re-building process contains certain risks, still the postmodern individual is open to the possibilities. Even when this person is ready to leave behind everything about the past, still he has the flexibility to convert and adapt these experiences to his life style.

Surrounded by all contrasts and contradictions, the postmodern individual continues onward to his original being, the essence of the individualism here is *differentiation*, which supports the idea that each individual has unique potential. It is not important whether this newly becoming individual has an understanding of individualism or not, the point is to become what he has formed. As Giddens claims with this re-building process, postmodern individual reaches a satisfactory point of individualism including full awareness. The desire and fulfillment of differentiation are inclusive and perpetual. Thus the individual constantly tends to question his own re-building process as well as the external world.

Within the historical process individualism as a personal attitude emerged long before postmodernism. Escaping from dominant religious norms with humanist discourses of Renaissance, the individual faced liberty and equality problems of the period in intellectual and physical manners. The natural meaning of individualism became more important due to the despotic pressures of the church and guilds' strong effects in the 18th century. Simmel emphasizes that, actualizing individualism in this way reveals that it relies on the concept of natural equity, the idea that all restrictions are artificially produced inequities, and the understanding that once people disburden from all historical variations, then perfect human being may become (Simmel, 2009). Even if the individual aims to stop contradictions within the framework of liberty and equity, still the fact comes into question that establishing indefinite freedom will create a new pressure. Hence, at this point it is possible to assume that individualism has expressively changed destination. It has gained a new dimension and differentiation based infrastructure after the removal of the related restrictions of church and state. Although individualism's new discourse of rejection of derivative is exposed to a semantic change through the rational period caused by modernist collective expression, still it reverted to its original and unique theme when postmodernism proves itself. From another point of view, in our global world the individual seeks for his own self. Developing technology,

growing trends, digitalizing the most private part of daily life, and enlarging intellectual and practical perspectives are the effects of shaping individuals' belief systems in a way that the individual's self is the only place where to find anything.

The fact that the individual improves on a sense of belonging for a certain plural structures, from which he disintegrates himself, is one of the basic parameters to annotate postmodern individual aiming to be different and unique. As Simmel puts it, each and every individual is a synthesis of the forces constituting the universe, though each individual creates purely unique configuration. Individual's moral duty is to fulfill this incomparability (Simmel, 2009: 216).

Postmodern individual is the creator of this collection of contradictions. According to Funk this character started to establish his own life freely, spontaneously, and independently, without limitation of any rules. Accordingly, individual exists in the reality that he produces. As Funk argues, individual is the reality itself, a reality created by the principle: "you are something, if you produce anything from your own" (Funk, 2009). Postmodern individual finds it reasonable to get passion, joy, short-term expectations, and sudden happiness in relationships. As Çubuklu describes, these relationships are short-term, volatile, and temporary in character but at the same time based on pleasure, experience and senses (Çubuklu, 2004 in Odabaşı, 2004: 57-58). Odabaşı also claims that postmodern doctrine rejects the concept that individual should get over the past; rather it supports the idea to gather different aspects of past eclectically.

THE POSTMODERN CONSUMER

Life style and its extensions flourish within the framework of existing conditions, just like the production systems. Although mass production continues to exist at some point, production systems are defined more flexibly and adjusted to the profits of postmodernism. While the new consumer within the conditions of postmodernism is defined, capitalist market economy comes to the front as an important asset of the process. It is possible to define current postmodern consumer's changing profile along following factors: technological revolutions, virtualization of daily life within the context of globalization, transition of multiple media channels' reflections on daily life practices, and new advertisement strategies targeting the individual. Within the context of capitalist market economy, marketing becomes more important and the exchange of commodity increases. Funk argues that, goods are not evaluated only for the value in use, but also for the value of exchange (Funk, 2009). As a consequence, this so-called postmodern consumer notes down the benefits of the products. That is to say, in the showcase, where the product's meaning and value are exhibited; features like image, design, and originality are dominant, whereas functionality and utility lose their significances. The new consumer is alienated from the temporal rationality and collective discourses. Postmodern consumer uses singular and individual ways of expression and objectifies this tendency with the concept of consumption. Özbek claims that postmodernism forms a weary and puzzling style for the consumer (Özbek, 2005) in which consumers put emphasis on variety, specialty and marginality rather than uniqueness, uniformity, and simplicity. Also, they prefer the relative one rather than the objective one, they are sentimental and intuitive instead of being objective; and they are decisive, precise, and normative since the new consumer tends to refrain from the pragmatic logic of modernism, re-interpret routine life, and destroys the boundaries modern-day imposes.

Savings and investment are not top priorities for the postmodern consumers; rather, they describe themselves, individually within the present time and pay attention to their present consumption actions. In other words, a postmodern consumer updates the individual consumption acts according to her/his daily life conditions, in which the sense of these conditions is consumed as happiness and satisfaction, emphasizing the individual self. Contrary to the modern consumer, who is autonomous, conscious, disciplined, planned and committed; the postmodern consumer seeks different, ephemeral, volatile, and superficial relations to the point that every single act is about consumption. Even though there is no direct relation, postmodern consumer associates all acts with consumption. As the global information sharing channels develop quantitatively and qualitatively, the postmodern consumer perceives the cultural phenomena (i.e. religion, education, art, and health) as life designated for the consumption experience of certain products, which have emotional images and meanings; triggering as 'value' the postmodern consumers' consumption (Odabaşı, 2004).

(...) For the modernists the value of the product is related to functionality and exchangeability. For the postmodernists, on the other hand, together with these two values connection value (can be named as: identity, indicator, and signal) has become more and more important. The meanings of products are as important as their functions. It is possible to go a step further and argue that these meanings are not certain and are subjected to change by consumers (Odabaşı, 2004: 110).

In our global consumption environment, particularly described as the society of the spectacle (Debord, 2010); consumer structures his identity – includes more than one self - and constitutes them eclectically by using symbols in the methods of meaning exposition and self-expression. Once again within the context of postmodernism, it is obvious that the categorization of social classes has lost its significance. Instead of this categorization life styles and the identities representing them have become more important for consumers. At this point, the consumer uses or consumes either products or services (apart from their social and communal meanings) as a tool to express personal statements. In the current consumption practices, where each and every Meta fulfills message transfer symbolically; 'self-concept' comes to the fore. From this point of view, consumption of products and services promotes the exposure of personal message and contributes to the construction of self. Studies about the self mainly describe three types:

The Real Self

The Ideal Self

The Social Self

The real self, answers the question: 'who am I?' While the ideal self, answers: 'what I want to become?' Social self, on the other hand, asks: 'how am I known?' and 'how {do} I want to be known?' Odabaşı asserts that, self-concept is about how individuals perceive themselves (Odabaşı, 2004: 133). Consumption objects are of prior importance particularly in the building of self and identity. Knights and Morgan remark that these objects are free indicators that consumers use to build self and identity (Knights and Morgan, 1993).

For those consumers who want to be perceived as trendy and imponderable, manifest themselves in a fragmented profile and individual differentiation to use the act of consumption as a tool to express personal statements, social restrictions and stereotyped notions are out of

the question and there is no one identity. In postmodern discourse this structure is described as the 'multiple identity', to give an example, postmodern consumers wear casual clothes in the mornings, while in the afternoons they wear expensive and fancy ones. The postmodern consumer who is able to adapt to more than one style in a day expresses himself with the following motto: 'as I like, when I like'. The main point here is the postmodern consumer's ability to experience his or her independence, feelings and passions through products and services; and express himself/herself as a different individual. For these people (new consumers) social approval becomes meaningful with respect to the acceptance of individual differentness and uniqueness in all sorts of social surroundings. As a result, with the increase of this differentiation in quality sharp notions and dogmatic attitudes are melting day by day, and the postmodern trend's main idea of tolerance based discourses is supported. The new consumer considers everything describable - from fashion to value systems - according to form and image rather than the content. In consumption, there is no desire for balance in actual sense, but a tendency towards building original and unique individual style, which cannot be substituted with such concepts as eclectic structure, pastiche, collage, and combination, all of which are at stake. The determinant characteristic of this irrational, inconsistent, and I-centered postmodern consumer is defined as multiple consumption behavior.

ENRICHING UNIQUE LIFE STYLES MYSTICALLY

With the settlement of postmodern trends into the daily practices, and removal of monopolist control of traditions and oppressive cultural habits, life styles have gained a sustainable actuality. In addition, free movement of knowledge, developments in cross boundary communication and increase in the activities towards local and global scale sharing have resulted in the association of life styles with the consumption concept. Here the individual is free to create his own personal discourse and – understands this creation as an artistic process - fictionalizes his unique life style by 'consuming'. These life styles provide a detailed preview of individual's social life and they are one of the main complementary elements of the structuring process of the unique identity. Giddens argues that because of the 'openness' of our current social life, the plentitude of the action milieu, and a variety of 'authorities', the choice of life styles has become more important in developing individual identity and daily activities (Giddens, 2010: 16). This is because individuals can benefit from the concept of life style during analyzing and systemizing their own and other individuals' status, attitude and behaviors; 'life style' defined as distinctive behavior patterns of individuals. It is therefore possible to claim that life styles have solution and definition oriented effects on personal discourse building, speechless message transfer, concrete and abstract entities leading the daily life (Chaney, 1999: 14) making life styles action and behavior patterns that become meaningful within special contexts (Chaney, 1999: 15). They are related to cultural systems however, regarding their contents, forms, selected materials and their unique structures eclectically characterize them as composition and practice of individual life.

Although at first sight Chaney's idea of life style shows similarity to Kephart's definition, the life style of a community – values, attitudes, norms - is the common understanding which holds them together as a society (Kephart, 1982: 93), still the difference is obvious considering the individual scale value. Life styles at the individual level, support individuals to understand the reason and the meaning of their acts as emerged in their consumer identity, and help to

evaluate the process from their and others' point of views. As a result, on the one hand life styles produce new formations by using the common materials with different form and content; but on the other hand they reveal the attitude and style differences in the use of symbolically dominant materials.

I-centered postmodern individual becomes prominent in the social group(s) he belongs to and from similar acts and attitudes by pointing out his uniqueness in his choices and actions. This differentiation is objectified by preferred consumption products and services, and integrated into certain life styles, which can be defined as: 'personal showcase'. Therefore, life styles act as a tool to address semantically distinguishable details; and support the individual in composing his different personal story within the context of 'global' consumption practices. Featherstone draws the portrait of 'life style' as follows:

"Life style" is one of the popular concepts. The term has a sociologically limited meaning if it is used for certain status groups' different life styles; within contemporary consumption culture it evokes several meanings such as individuality, the way of self-expression, and self-consciousness. It is necessary to evaluate an individual's body, clothes, speech, leisure activities, food habits, house, car, holiday, and others as specific elements reflecting the consumer's personal taste and sense of style. Although the 1950's were designated as a monotone collective consumption period, changes in production techniques, market division, and consumer demands towards wide product range have led to increase in the 'alternatives'. There was a plethora of alternatives, not only for the post 1960 youth, but also for the middle aged and elderly people. We are moving close to a social structure within which no stable status groups exist. In current communities the idea {of} attribut{ing} specific life styles (including: clothes, leisure activities, consumption products, and body language) to specific groups is diminished (Featherstone, 2005: 83 in Bockock, 2009: 39).

For the current postmodern individual, life style is not a personal tradition building process, daily routine or sum of habits. It is accepted as a life project rather than a personalization act. Featherstone claims that within this project everything, from trademarks of personal care products to Far East originated doctrines can be manifested (Featherstone, 2005). Surely, this manifestation process cannot always be actualized on the basis of materialist scheme; this reveals the fact that 'life style' concept contains abstract and intellectual dimensions as well. In a consumer society where aesthetic concepts are more important in establishing life styles the way of self-expression keeps its significance, and creation of new tendencies and interests provides the continuity of originality. Within the framework of this continuity, defining new expression styles from emotional forms, which everyone experiences on a common ground, may result in the structuring of certain social competition. Consequently there is a presentation process within which life style building on materialistic base, aesthetical and emotional expressions are dominant.

The abstract part of the concept can be described thus:

(...) Because this experience is associated with Meta and it is a consumed experience, confirmation of product's feature loses its importance (although for some consumption products functional knowledge is still necessary). This experience has a psychological dimension in relation to actualization of the fantasy; however, it has a social dimension for

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the products to act as communication tools, too. This general tendency towards marketization and commoditization should be accentuated regarding the products and experiences as well (Featherstone, 2005: 145).

Life style, for postmodern individuals is not defined in terms of habits, traditions or life practices; rather, it is generally attributed to a life project more than an embracement act. Featherstone claims that the concept: *metropolis* has a supportive role in making the life styles more definable (Featherstone, 2005). In metropolis that includes postmodern elements like other social formations, it is possible to trace tendencies towards individualism and differentiation. Although at first glance it seems a hardline argument, still in the light of previous parts, it is possible to assume that the emphasis on individualism is a stance reformed against metropolis as individuals living in the metropolis are usually confronted with apathy (Frisby, 1984). As a result, differentiation and originality do not take place in individual's extraordinary attitudes or behaviors, but exist in the uniquely designed content of the messages that she/he is transferring. The main reason is the fact that, the individual living in metropolis has limited time to interact with others. In other words, within the metropolis boundaries, individual bases all his created identities on the framework of '*who to be perceived*'. Bocock argues that an individual's attempts to be different (like the different clothes that he wears) should also be understood by other individuals. That is to say, individual can differentiate himself as long as he shares the same cultural symbols with others (Bocock, 2009: 27). Obviously, the metropolis acts as a type of channel for the common ground.

HARMONY OF NEW AGE AND MYSTICISM

In the current postmodern conditions, the individual who finds it more important to live 'at present', tends to create a mystical point of view by putting traditional nostalgic values and scientific facts side by side. For Odabaşı, the main reason for the popularity of Far East philosophies and life styles in addition to the understandings like astrology and fortune telling is the curiosity to already guess the future, rather than embracing a planning and preparation process. Hence, for such individual what is important is the quality and content of the 'present'. The main point for that individual is to satisfy personal desires in the present time and never feel regretful of past experiences. Odabaşı mentions that postmodern spiritualism, in which individual discovers himself, does not compose of any kind of comparison regarding the discussion of: 'my religion and my faith is better than yours' (Odabaşı, 2004). He further describes this search for self-spirit, dominated by postmodern spirit as:

Postmodern spiritualism means a journey from historical and prioritized realities to mystical and emotional experiences. Purifying modern era's souls and providing inner peace have become two of the preeminent activities of unhappy and lonely people. Spiritual one turns towards the inner look, imagination, and spirits. Search for inner beauty and meaning has resulted in increased demand for personal development, and mental change and development programs (i.e. yoga, exotic foods, meditation types and places) (Odabaşı, 2004: 85).

Considering the eclectic structure of postmodernism several thoughts, doctrines, and attitudes can be used supportively regarding their reflections on life styles. New Age is one of the streams of thought. Particularly throughout the recovery from stereotyped rational individual

model and transformation into a more independent, indulgent, spleenful postmodern shape, the New Age movement plays an important role in clarifying individual's life style, belief systems, attitudes and philosophy of life. New Age developed as a generic term in 1980s, just like the general patterns of postmodern movement it cannot be described within a single frame. It is widely known that the term addresses a variety of practices and belief systems within the boundaries of modern Western culture. From the points of religion and religion sociology, New Age cannot be limited by absolute dogmatic rules. The term comes into existence in Literature and life practices. Considering life practices New Age becomes significant as a certain part of postmodern individual's (who carries philosophical, metaphysical, and mystical concepts within a semi-religious character) personal enlightenment and search for the 'self' processes. Accordingly, the individual in metropolis culture becomes isolated and tries to construct a discourse of his individual life style by using time efficiently; inclines to make sense of his spiritual reality at an upper level. New Age movement is the total of beliefs, philosophies, and rituals that will provide the individual the fulfillment of this process. In his study entitled: 'The New Age: Finding one's Bearings' Tremblay describes the movement as a huge shopping mall that offers everything to everyone (Tremblay, 1994). For him ecology, nutrition, psychology, astrology, science, and spiritualism are some questions discovered by different groups of people. New age was developed in deep transformation of socio-cultural values and it is an effect of strong impacts towards all stratum of modern society.

On the eve of the third millennium, the New Age movement beckons the reconsideration of the psychosocial, spiritual and religious realities from cosmic and earthly perspectives.

Although New Age feeds from intellectual templates of classical religions, still it differs from this classical structure by personal interpretation of mystical elements at the individual level. Modern period's reason-result based positivist thought, which was developed around intelligence, science and rationality axis, gave place to new scientific theories and flexible philosophical discourses. This situation has caused the emergence of the idea that there is no absolute truth in global view and only relative realities are possible. New Age movement takes place on postmodern philosophy's slippery slope. Like postmodern movement, it can be described, as a reaction against modernism's uniformed and mechanical understanding of ignorance towards individual's intellectual, emotional, and spiritual needs. Similar to the postmodern movement, New Age movement does not have a clear definition as well. In order to shape the best perception, Ecevit explains the situation as follows:

New Age is a consciousness of a period in which human beings (who developed scientific breakthroughs, dreamed to rule over nature with the power of rationality, and destroyed the planet) reckon with themselves. Value criteria of human beings were shackled by materiality at the end of the century they were in search of more transcendent/mystic/cosmic/ and supreme value systems. Marilyn Ferguson, one of the pioneers of the movement, defines New Age as: '*direct actualization of a higher reality*', for her this is a mental phase of the human being, a kind of evolution, the start of the real birth of humans (Odabaşı, 2004: 210).

Famous naturalist Fritjof Capra describes New Age as a bridge between science and mysticism. According to Capra, in this relationship between science and mystical elements a dynamic game between mystical intuition and scientific analysis is necessary. New Age contains both similar and contrast elements within it and from pluralistic point of view it is in a close relationship with those elements. That is to say, New Age movement has developed

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itself as a reacting alternative towards modern thought's ignorance to individual's emotive life and has been supporting its arguments with postmodern movement's intellectual motives. Ecevit explains this relationship between New Age and postmodernism as:

New Age takes a stand against the last couple of centuries' rationalist/determinist worldview; it supports the idea to include emotion/mysticism/transcendence to current paradigm; and mixes science with Far East philosophies. Postmodern pluralism appears in New Age as an attempt to bring together both science and mysticism, two distinct cultural areas that were literally restricted by the 18th century's enlightened thought (Odabaşı, 2004: 210-211).

From another angle, New Age feeds itself from contemporary scientific facts and theories. In recent years, particularly the rise of quantum physics and its ideas of different energy centers have enriched New Age's content. As a result, an individual who shapes his thoughts in the framework of New Age has the flexibility to experience mysticism and science at the same time. From Buddhism, Sufism, Western Esotericism, and Shamanism to the physical and psychological theorems everything shows parallelism within New Age. In other words, New Age can be described as a populist philosophy and unity of ideas embracing new age belief systems and plural mystical elements like: mysteries of the universe and human being, mystery cults, personal development doctrines, meditation, telepathy, parapsychology, spiritualism, fortune-telling, astrology, and the search for the truth.

Although in current secular society New Age primarily causes religion based imagination attempts, still it has a universal perspective. No doubt, New Age is considerably practical in terms of the need to bring together postmodern movement's self-pursuits and new religious formations on a theoretical level. In light of recent studies, New Age is a movement that has become significant as the most important feature of postmodern societies. Contrary to the definition of New Age as an individual's eclectic approach towards spiritual topics (Davie, 2005, Naisbitt and Abordane, 1990), Arslan claims that rather than following one single religion, individuals create their own spiritual adventure by using universal religions, movements like Shamanism and Occultism, and mystical traditions of philosophies like Taoism (Arslan, 2006). Arslan elaborates:

New Age belief and practices include a variety of elements such as: Yoga, Zen Meditation, Christian Gnosticism, Hinduism, Reincarnation, Karma, Astrology, Theosophy, Positive Thinking, Taoism, Animatism, Astral Travel, Sufism, Paganism, and Myalism; also they contain paranormal concepts like communication with other world and mediumship, and alternative medicine, organic agriculture, ecology, peace movements and UFOlogism. Obviously, New Age is an eclectic system, which includes several different thoughts and practices. Despite this eclectic structure, there is an internal unity of different elements. In this sense it is possible to argue that New Age is a holistic system and builds a holy belief system including abovementioned elements. Religion is also accepted as a part of this system. In the end, New Age provides a different perspective and a holy life style embracing all the aspects of life (Arslan, 2006: 16).

For postmodern individual each and every religion uses different templates in order to reach the same reality. Accordingly, individual should benefit from any source as much as possible in favor of enriching his own original identity. In the final analysis, when individual accomplishes

his own unique personal template, this will be more precious than all other sources. Aupers and Houtman mention that although New Age sympathizes with mystical and intuitive tendencies on individual level, still it is criticized by rationalists for not providing reasonable truth, and described as: *'create your own religion'*, *'patchwork religion'*, *'quasi-religion'*, and *'spiritual supermarket'* (Aupers and Houtman, 2006: 201).

In parallel with the increase in individualism in postmodern society, New Age accentuates to the phenomenon of experience. In this way, the importance of individual needs is prior to religious dogmatic rules and search for the truth. From another point of view, due to his inclination towards his uniqueness and incomparability, individual is alienated to social groups that provide sense of belonging and concept of dependence. Considering religious norms the situation orientates individual to a need of belongingness and creation of a new domain and perspective to form original individual phenomenon. Consequently, it is possible to argue that religious norms can be categorized as individual forms. As Arslan points out, in postmodern movement individual is keen on individual discourse and desires to generate positive thoughts so as to fulfill his self-enlightenment, the individual is willing to actualize this progress oriented transformation as a whole. Surely in this desire irreplaceability should be of top priority. In this regard, Arslan claims that the movement is 'anthropocentric' and further discusses social spread of the movement as:

(...) All these approaches, therapeutic cults, and courses are tried to reduce to the society through press and media. Besides; meditation, yoga, astrology, tarot cards, crystalline, fortune telling and mediumship techniques are supported by the movement. In addition to visionaries and saints, 'Gurus' (mentor or guides), and Shamans are also offered special status. (Arslan, 2006)

With the effect of the New Age, the postmodern individual constitutes a new global worldview. The elements rooted in movement, like emotional satisfaction and holism, and postmodern contexts represent a rhythmic composition altogether. Because the main characteristics of the movement are composed of individual acts and self-enlightenment, the fact that universal change starts at the individual level becomes important.

MYSTICAL JOURNEY OF A METROPOLITAN WOMAN

The book *Eat, Pray, Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert was adapted into a movie in 2010. Brad Pitt, starring Julia Roberts and Javier Bardem, directed by Ryan Murphy, and co-written by Ryan Murphy and Jennifer Salt, produced the movie. The movie is about Elizabeth Gilbert's self-exploration covering her last couple of years. In the movie Gilbert represents a character that attempts to get rid of the shapes of her standardized social and cultural life; and exposes her individual experiences, and the way that she feeds them in line with spiritual requirements. Married for eight years, journalist and novelist Elizabeth Gilbert lives a life of high standards within a prestigious social environment. The story starts in Bali, an Indonesian island, where Gilbert is on a study visit. During her touristic visit to local places she meets an old ninth-generation healer, who has grown up in a healer family, which has followed the Bali culture and traditions for generations. This old healer, Ketut, reads Gilbert's palm and predicts her fortune for the next two years. According to the prediction, two years later Gilbert will come back to the Bali Island and start living with Ketut, who will share all he knows about self-enlightenment with her. After this prediction Gilbert's self-enlightenment process starts.

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Elizabeth Gilbert is an intellectual and a successful individual who lives in a Metropolis. Her first step towards self-enlightenment is the process of divorce. Suddenly she realizes that she is compressing her real feelings about her marriage that seems good for a long time, and decides to divorce. Gilbert has now become a representative of the current postmodern individual and forms the point of dialectic personality that she now represents; divorce process is presented as Gilbert's attempt to be independent from her being exposed to the pressure of cultural norms. With regards to this story it is possible to give examples from the study: *Second Chance* covering a research on divorce and remarrying processes conducted by Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee in 1989 referred to in *Modernity and Self-identity* (Giddens, 2010):

According to writers divorce is a threatening crisis regarding the safety and peace of individuals' personal lives; still it offers new opportunities for individual's self-progress and future happiness. Separation and divorce and their subsequent negative effects may lead to long anxieties and psychological disorders; nevertheless, the changes that emerge with the marital breakdown offer what writers call: 'emotional progresses', 'developing new skills and promoting self-respect' and 'going beyond the former capacity and empowering close relationships' (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989 in Giddens, 2010: 23).

Especially the point: 'developing new skills' can be exemplified by Gilbert's intention and attempts to learn Italian. The way her marriage ends, subsequent disgust and bitterness support the development of these attempts. Elizabeth Gilbert's attempt at liberation is shaped under the influence of a young man, an Indian Guru, who comes into her life during his meditation activity with his disciples and her divorce process. As Gilbert starts experiencing mysticism in her daily life, she draws up a one-year plan for her self-enlightenment. At this point she is representing a postmodern individual model. According to this plan, she is going to live in four different countries and stay four months in each; and she is going to establish her own doctrine by using self-experiences gained in those countries. Considering divorce process is one of the most repressive and incomplete periods, this self-enlightenment content of Gilbert's plans and her attempts towards these can be described as the key of 'recovery' phase - a term in Giddens' book (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989 in Giddens, 2010). As a result, a person who can separate from his/her spouse successfully can also build a new self-perception and a new identity perception, and can start to look for new images and roots necessary for his/her self-fulfillment.

Elizabeth Gilbert's self-enlightenment process starts in Rome, Italy. The experiences that she will gain include: freedom from physical activities, softening concrete forms of individual status, constructing life styles according to emotional satisfaction, and consuming the 'present' time. In Italy Gilbert, first of all, relinquishes a basic need: appetite. From Elizabeth Gilbert's standpoint this liberation represents getting rid of her will to look thin and her desire to evoke admiration. Such that, she gains fifteen kilos after her four-month stay in Rome. Timeframe in Rome is planned mainly around physical comfort, artistic pleasure, and emotional satisfaction. Rome process, which emphasizes individual's hedonic attitude, teaches Gilbert not to postpone self-desires and satisfy them before they become needs. As a result, it is possible to claim that Rome represents the earthly part of her self-enlightenment story. Figure 1 shows that contrary to her comfortable and fancy house in America, Elizabeth Gilbert lives in an old flat reflecting Roman architecture and changing her standardized choices by eating on the floor.

Giddens postulates that food habit is an exposure ritual and a self-image developed by individual (Giddens, 2010). Therefore, Gilbert's self-liberation seen in her eating food in Rome provides the experience on how free she will feel after deactivating her obsessive control over her body. In figure 2 and 3 she experiences *eating* in Rome.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

After spending four months in Rome, Elizabeth Gilbert's second stop is India. She will stay there for four months and learn meditation, yoga, and similar personal development methods; and create her own prayer form. After four months period of physical comfort and satisfaction in Rome, Gilbert has difficulties in adapting to rules and activities, including disciplined physical activities, time for bed and waking hour, and activities like meditation that requires concentration. Nevertheless, after the earthly pleasure she wants to complement self-thinking, self-pursuit, and finding God processes successfully. Accordingly, the long mantra meditations early in the mornings, which at the beginning she found difficult to get used to, become more important than inner peace activities, and turn out to be one of the crucial elements describing her life style. Obviously in Gilbert's character one sees a postmodern individual's attempt to create self-flexible prayer form, within the framework of the New Age movement described as a natural process. The second part of the study shows that the New Age movement is composed of an absolute structure including mystical entities. Gilbert's four months period in Rome was based on earthly pleasure and physical satisfaction. On the other hand, she spent another four months in India for her spiritual search; during that time she prayed and created her own prayer form by using several techniques, religious norms, methods, and movements. Therefore it is possible to argue that these are structurally opposite emotional processes. However, this opposition is necessary to postmodern movement and is 'natural' within this framework. Contrary to Gilbert's profile during the earthly pleasure experiences, in figures 4 and 5 she is shown as a spiritual character.

Figure 1: Gilbert eats in the old house in Rome.
Figure 3: She eats ice cream in Rome.

Figure 2: She eats pizza in Napoli.



Figure 4



Figure 5

Elizabeth Gilbert's mystical journey continues in Bali Island, Indonesia. Here the aim is to combine her earthly experiences in Rome and mystical experiences in India with Balinese Ketut Liyer, the ninth generation healer who initiated her self-enlightenment process. In Bali, where she will spend her last four month period of the enlightenment; healer and Gilbert programs her days in a way that she can pray and live in Bali like a tourist. The important mystical element of the Bali part is a herbalist healer named: Wayan. Different from Ketut's healing discipline, Wayan's healing includes herbal massage with particular oils produced from saps of the herbs. Compare to Wayan's herbal healing, Ketut Liyer's mysticism is more spiritual, self-enclosed, emotional and prophecy oriented. Figures 6 and 7 show Wayan and her herbal remedies, and Ketut Liyer sharing his mystical exhortation with Gilbert.

Elizabeth Gilbert, who fulfills her self-enlightenment in Bali and learns how to balance inner and external worlds by experiencing the island like a tourist, gets over her emotional and psychological tensions caused by her divorce process. Both the book and the movie put emphasis on the significance of mystical entities as effective tools in Elizabeth Gilbert's self-enlightenment. Considering the effects of postmodern and New Age movements, this story includes mystical attitudes and search for God; materialistic and concrete acts side by side.



Figure 6



Figure 7

Figure 4: The Ashram where E. Gilbert spent her four months and the view of morning meditation.

Figure 5: Gilbert meditates in Ashram's garden. Figure 6: Herbalist healer Wayan.

Figure 7: Ketut and Gilbert.

CONCLUSION

From another point of view, either in the book or in the movie the cultural values of countries in question are exposed as market objects. No doubt, the role of cinema in marketing life styles including mysticism and mystical elements is of vital importance as part of the mass media. Considering Hollywood cinema's accessibility at the global level, the story of *Eat Pray Love* not only offers new life styles but also plays active role in city, country and culture marketing. Especially in recent years when there has been an increasing interest in Indian doctrines. The parts in the Movie taking place in India were enlightening and inspiring for the presentation of rituals and accessories of Indian culture, and Indian cuisine. Similarly, the consumers meet the landscape of the Bali Island in Indonesia, which is way too polluted by industrialization. The movie reflects how natural officinal plants and sources are reduced to human skills consumption experience.

Consumers' choices, expectations and desires are separated within the ever-mounting sense of competition and varying global conditions. Movements like Postmodernism, New age and Mysticism contribute much to marketing strategies to support the individual who attempts to be different from others and is purposed to reach a consumer identity. These movements that are generalized by the mass media are also influential over individual's self-enlightenment and fulfillment processes.

Today's individual lives by chaos of postmodern flow. Along with postmodernism, way of thinking based on emotions and experiences replaces rational discourse. Thus, individual refuses the dominance of mind and develops daily living practices by experiencing the moment. In *Eat Pray Love* movie, Elizabeth Gilbert representing postmodern individual abandons the life style rooted on concrete and Meta and makes her own inner traveling real. But this intrinsic traveling is full of adversity and contradiction in itself. Gilbert's traveling to Italia, India and Bali yearlong follows from physical joy and satisfaction to spiritual enrichment. Contradiction of this progress in itself is consistent with Postmodernism and New Age trend. The instance of *Eat Pray Love* serves as an active tool promoting countries' local culture as well as telling the story of the postmodern individual who targets experience. With postmodernism emerging as an alternative to modernism, local cultures are being promoted as an experience channel. In this way, developing such countries and cities in terms of tourism become a commercial necessity.

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