



07

TURKISH LITERATURE: AN INTRODUCTION

Dr. Nagnath Ramrao Totawad

Associate Professor & Research Guide

Department of English

Vivekanand Arts, S.D. Commerce & Science College,

Aurangabad, MS, India

Abstract:

Turkish literature has a rich and glorious past. Its oral convention in poetry and narration, including its written history in all genres, bear witness to the nation's imagination and creativity. It stretched from Central Asia to the Caucasus, the Middle East, the Balkans and points beyond a thousand years. It incorporated elements from the East and West, and also the North and South. As a result, it developed its synthesis, which eventually included European and American aesthetic techniques. Its explorations and successes are diverse and admirable. As a result, when Orhan Pamuk won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2006, a Turkish universal work was "certified." Turkey's diversity of talent in the fiction genre, as well as its virtuosity, is astonishing. From stark realism to the stream of consciousness, from historical adventure to magical realism, from psychological suspense to sweeping sagas, Turkish writers have compressed nearly the entire history of European, American, and Latin American fiction into half a century. Their achievement is noteworthy because they could imitate and imbue their works with a unique Turkish personality while emulating the prestigious legacy.

Keywords: *Turkish, Identity, Significance, Comparison, Similarity, etc.*

Orhan Pamuk is a Turkish novelist, screenwriter, academic and winner of the 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature. One of Turkey's most prominent novelists, his work has sold over thirteen million books in sixty languages, making him the country's best-selling novelist. Pamuk has written several novels, including *Silent House*, *The White Castle*, *The Black Book*, *The New Life*, *My Name is Red*, *Snow*, *The Museum of Innocence*, and *A Strangeness in My Mind*. He is the Robert Yik-Fong Tam Professor in the Humanities at Columbia University, where he works as a lecturer in writing and comparative literature. He was chosen to the American Philosophical Society in 2018. Of partial Circassian descent and born in Istanbul, Pamuk is the first Turkish Nobel laureate. He is also the recipient of several other literary awards. *My Name is Red* won the 2002 Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger, 2002 Premio Grinzane Cavour and 2003 International Dublin Literary Award.

Pamuk is a master writer whose work combines intelligence, Sufism, logic, and intense emotions uniquely. He is regarded as a leading representative of the Turkish and the postmodern novel because he influences world literature. He has established himself as undisputed expertise on the East-West theme in literature due to his outstanding depiction of cross-cultural collision and collaboration issues. In short, Pamuk is a one-of-a-kind novelist whose work combines intelligence, Sufism, rationality, and powerful feelings in an unusual way. He is also a leading representative of the Turkish and postmodern novel because of the impact on world literature today. Through his remarkable cross-cultural confrontation and collaboration depictions, he became an unquestionable expert on the East-West subject in literature.



The White Castle and the signature of the miniaturist as in *My Name is Red* are significant elements of Pamuk's oeuvre. This absence ascribes to the turmoil concerning the identity of the narrator. Through the style, readers recognize the identity of the murderer, and through repetition, we allocate the identity of Venetian or Hoja in the narrative. On many occasions, the appearance of 'Orhan the author' as in *My Name is Red* draws a comparison with Pamuk's use of mirror images. Pamuk considers the mirror as space where the concept of identity can be achieved by shifting.

Pamuk skillfully unfolds the physical resemblance of Hoja and the slave in *The White Castle*. This similarity is debated at various points throughout the story. As a result, there is an apparent exchange of personalities, leading to confusion about the narrator's identity. The way one's identity as a representation is formed by representing these incidents Hoja and the Venetian experienced in this narrative. The narrator's distinction between "who can know why a man is what he is" is essential in terms of Hoja and the Venetian's knowledge exchange and the process of identity forming. The striking resemblance between Hoja and the slave can cause the reader confusion in some parts of the novel to understand who is talking. Pamuk's constant sense of uncertainty which he creates and expands throughout the story is much more important than the similarity between the two characters.

As *Snow* is the only political novel of Orhan Pamuk, as he described it as the first and last 'political novel', he realized a literary expression based on religion and political relations in Turkey. Pamuk has regarded religion as an epiphenomenon veiling reality. Nevertheless, it carries a functional significance representing the desperations of the lower classes and forming ideologies and identities. *Snow* takes a stand on religion-politics issues through heroes, irony, and critiques while also reflecting essential images of the religious and political symbolism of the period from a pluralist standpoint. The novel portrays religion as a convenient tool for conservatives who use politics to exploit the public for their gain. Through the protagonist, Ka, Pamuk exposes the central issue of *Snow*. The primary subject matter is identity in terms of social changes and politics. The author raises this topic right from the start of the work when the protagonist dislikes his name and prefers to be called by Ka's initials. The characters are torn between a sceptical Western secularist perspective and a religious quest for local authenticity; Ka is one.

A Strangeness in My Mind depicts the contradictions between urban and family life and the frustration and helplessness of women confined in their homes. The novel traces how it weaves a realistic depiction of a decidedly familiar central character, a modest street vendor called Mevlut Karataş, by exploring the social and political forces that have influenced modern Turkey. Since boza is lightly fermented, many Turkish Muslims believe it contains no alcohol, representing some of the conflicts between Turkey's official secularism and the country's majority religion. Mevlut represents the hardworking typical person's quiet independence. He has supposed to reflect a steadfast, grounded, native, and (one would assume) crucial Turkishness. Pamuk uses Mevlut to represent all aspects of Ottoman culture. Pamuk believes that the evolution of the metropolis and the corrosive effects of its materialistic culture have alienated Mevlut from his former surroundings, implying that the process has alienated Istanbul from its rich history and traditions.

My Name is Red documents the lives of Turkish women in 16th-century Ottoman society and how these conditions have changed due to women's struggles for self-discovery and female identity exploration. Even though the novel delves into the cultural and religious circumstances of 16th century Turkey, it also paints a vivid picture of the social conditions and roles of men and women in this culture. Pamuk portrayed Shekure as a spokesperson for all Turkish women at the time. She dares to raise her voice to be heard and seen by all. She informs her readers that she is the sort of character who strives to have a respected and valuable female identity in society. A woman in such a society cannot have her own chosen location and live her life. Therefore, she is the female figure. Pamuk decides to break the male-centered ideology. In this way, Shekure has some aspects in common with Virginia



Woolf so that both are preoccupied with women's right to speak out about their lives and experiences publicly. Though men cause many troubles to her, she keeps striving for asserting her female identity.

Pamuk tries to emphasize women's important position across the globe. He believes that a woman must have the right to be free, respect her privacy, and enjoy her tenderness and beauty. The society members are responsible for protecting her from violating her rights. Marriage should not connect her to a man and turn her into the maid of the house. Pamuk, through Haykira, refreshes the readers' memories of the type of master-slave relationship that is permitted under Islamic law. She is a human being with no rights or opportunities for a good life. In this novel, Pamuk employs his narrative to those viewed as outsiders, migrant workers from Anatolia's small towns searching for work in Istanbul.

Pamuk utilized the three sisters to represent the Turkish women in the period between 1969-2012. The Turkish woman does not have the authorized freedom to choose her career, so they run away from their families. All girls in this society marry after primary school, as Pamuk depicts *A Strangeness in My Mind*. Pamuk portrays the familial relationship between the elder sister and the widower father in the Turkish community, where she is responsible for the younger sisters and serving her father. Pamuk believes that these women, regardless of whether they are dads, spouses, or brothers, suffer significantly under the authority and power of men in such a society. Orhan Pamuk portrays the character of the Turkish woman at the time and the extent to which she is held accountable for wrongdoings and actions for which she is not responsible. They are considered products for money exchange. Nevertheless, love and marriage for Samiha are based on her free will of choosing the man she loves. It is a case of exception.

Pamuk portrays the shattered identity of Turkish women who obey Islamic laws while yearning for a more cosmopolitan Westernized culture. She assists her husband with rice preparation, child-rearing, and holds the blissful ignorance and widespread illiteracy of Turkish women at the time with great care. *Snow* behold duties. Her entire life has been devoted to her children and husband. Orhan Pamuk depicts wearing a head-scarf as an act of liberation and assertion of their identity as women in the novel, even though it puts these girls in opposition to the government authorities and involves tremendous stresses and sacrifices. ; Somewhere in the narrative, Ka refers to them as "Islamic Feminists".

In the novel, *The Silent House*, the Darvinolu mansion represents 1980s Turkey, and each character represents a political, social, religious, or other ideology. Women in the novel live on the verge of death, and men often turn to violence against them. Pamuk also depicts the female generation of red-haired women as a means to be exploited in advertisements on television. Since there are no rules and people are afraid of being convicted of adultery, men kidnap and sleep with poor girls. They promise to marry them later or marry them off to subordinates when they become pregnant. This woman in this time is entirely concerned with her dignity and honour.

Pamuk's writing style has been compared to Kafka, Marquez, and Paul Auster, Turkey's best-selling global author, with over seven million copies sold. His works have been translated into more than fifty languages, except his first novel and one screenplay. Pamuk, as an author, addresses the difficulties and problems that Turks face as they attempt to rediscover their cultural roots in a modern state. He is a significant figure in Turkish culture, trying to rise from its ashes due to a lack of identity in an age of globalization. With each book, Pamuk experimented with and explored various literary genres, evolving his writing style. Living in the West led him closer to the East and encouraged the development of his writing style. He says, "In his own words, "a writer's style is deeply related to the way a writer thinks", and the experience of living in the West changed his way of thinking.



References

- Pamuk, Orhan. *Strangeness in My Mind*. Translated by Ekin Oklap. Penguin Group. 2015. Print.
- -----*My Name is Red*. Translated by Erdag Geknar, Faber and Faber, 2001. Print.
- -----*Silent House*. Translated by Robert Finn. Penguin Books. 2013. Print.
- -----*Snow*. Translated by Maureen Freely. Faber and Faber. 2004. Print
- -----*The White Castle*. Translated by Victoria Holbrook, penguin group, 2015. Print
- -----*The Red-Haired Woman*. Translated by Ekin Oklao. Alfred A.Knopf, Newyork. 2017. Print.
- Jain, Sunaina. "Negotiating History and Literature in Orhan Pamuk's *A Strangeness in My Mind*." *Abi- Annual Peer- Reviewed Journal of Dept. Of English Cultural Studies, Punjab University, Chandiharh, Issue-34, 2019. Print.*
- Joseph, Dennis And S. Nagesh. "History And East-West Dilemma in The Novels of Orhan Pamuk" *International Journal Of English And Literature. Vol.5, issue-5, 2015. pp.91-96. Print.*
- Kuleli, Mesut. "Intertextual Allusions and Evaluation of Their Translation in The Novel *Silent House* by Orhan Pamuk." *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences 158 (2014): 206-213. Print.*
- Makandar, Maulasab A. "Orhan Pamuk's *Snow*: A Symbol of Feminist Struggle." *Epitome: International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research. Vol. 3, Issue 11, November 2017. Print.*
- Marinković, Mirjana. "Orhan Pamuk's Istanbul." *Journal of Literature and Art Studies 4.10 (2014): 802-809. Print.*
- Muhammed Noufal K. Continuing Confrontation between Secular Modernity and Religious Conventions:A Reading of Orhan Pamuk's *Snow*, *International Journal of English and Literature (IJEL), Volume 7, Issue 4, July-August 2017, pp. 173-182. Print.*
- Murshed, Ahmed H. "Orhan Pamuk, An Intellectual, Pioneer, and Nobel Prized Turkish Writer." *Journal of English Language and Literature (Joell, Vol.7 Issue 3, 2020. Print.*
- Oruc, Firat. "Pamuk, Orhan." *The Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies (2016): 1-3. Print.*



This is an Open Access e-Journal Published Under A Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

To Cite the Article: Totawad, Nagnath, "Turkish Literature: An Introduction". *Literary Cognizance*, III - 4 (March, 2023): 35-38. Web.