

LITERATURE AND NATIONALISM: ORHAN PAMUK, AS A GREATEST TURK

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Abstract

Over the course of the 19th century and well into 20th, with the rising tide of nationalism led to an eclipse of interest in world literatures. In World literature in English, this paper would like to talk about Middle-Eastern Literature – this includes Turkish Literature with special emphasis on the writer Orhan Pamuk, Turkish Nobel Laureate in literature. Orhan Pamuk as a global writer in Turkish Literature, is the first one ever to emerge from his country, known for his epic, multifaceted stories in which the protagonist is often caught between two worlds. This paper would like to show Pamuk's use of secularism as an analytical lens to the politics of Turkey through his selected novels under the contexts of historical, cultural, social and Turkish fiction. He also talks about line between realism and fantasy that is a hallmark of the greatest work of Arabic literature. Pamuk is the greatest Turk of the present age; in fact, one of the greatest Turks of all time. He is very patriotic Turk, who loves his country but more importantly is a good human being who prefers to look at the truth. The only reason is because he chose to speak the truth, he wanted to defend the freedom of speech which was Turkey's only hope for coming to terms with its history. This is a courageous decision to stand up for the freedom of speech and for the truth by a man whose contribution to Turkey and world is enormous.

Keywords: Nationalism, Secularism Literature, Culture, Realism, Freedom.

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Ferit Orhan Pamuk, a Turkish novelist, screenwriter, academician and recipient of the 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature. One of Turkey's most prominent novelists, his work has been sold over thirteen million books in sixty three languages; making him the country's best selling writer. Currently he is working as Professor in Humanities at Columbia University, New York, teaches Writing and Comparative Literature. Pamuk, born in Istanbul; grew up in a wealthy yet declining upper class family - an experience he describes in passing in his novels. He describes himself as a cultural Muslim, who associates the historical and cultural identification with the religion while not believing in a personal connection to God

Orhan Pamuk gained international recognition for his innovative novels and his status as a dissident author. He and his work have become symbols of intense cultural and political change as Istanbul and Turkey emerge into and become legible in - the global arena. Pamuk's transformation from national to global author, takes a journey of cultural translation. He mediates between Ottoman past, the Turkish national tradition and an international canon represented by his works. Despite living in Istanbul for more than six decades Pamuk still finds that the best way to nourish his memory and imagination is to explore the city. He said that the background research he conducts for his novels (generally) included interviewing people, especially enjoyable as he took great pleasure in combining these firsthand-accounts with his own experiences. In Istanbul, ultimately Pamuk observed writing traverses the space between the author's memories and his imagination. This paper would like to show Pamuk's use of secularism as an analytical lens to the politics of Turkey through his selected novels under the contexts of historical, cultural, social and Turkish identity issues. Also, Pamuk's literary technique as a mode of political engagement; as passion and politics combine the voice of Istanbul.

The objectives would be to study World literatures in English with special reference to Turkish literature and its relevance today. At the context of globalization, which is fast becoming the preferred term for describing the current times comprising the political, economical, socio-cultural and literature aspects. Orhan Pamuk has gained international recognition for his innovative novels and his status as a dissident author. As such, he and his work have become symbols of intense cultural and political change in Istanbul, Turkey. In this context, analyze the concept of `Dissidence`, in world literatures. And how literature and politics continue to define cultural production in Turkey. To study the selected novels of Orhan Pamuk, as an introduction into the politics of world literatures examining his role as an author who mediates between Ottoman past, Turkish national tradition and international canon represented by his works.

In tracing Pamuk`s transformation from national to global author, as an exhilarating novelist who embodies world literature today in real sense. To understand Orhan Pamuk`s writings, it`s essential to examine transformations in Turkish history, identity, society and culture through his works. Studying of Orhan Pamuk`s writings on taboo topics and its political impact on Istanbul in particular, and Muslim countries in general. Also, how these experiences solidified him as a controversial literary figure within Turkey.

The relevance of reading this paper on Pamuk and his contribution to world literature is very intriguing. As earlier pointed out, Pamuk`s novels actually should be read as an introduction into the politics of World literature. He writes about Turkey`s difficult balance with roots in the orient but aspirations to join in the European Union. His `quest for the melancholic soul of his native city` of Istanbul saying that he has `discovered new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures`. Pamuk is politically outspoken, his Nobel award for literature is for sure to focus attention on Turkey, currently struggling with its identity as it works toward European Union membership. It is eager to modernize but continues to struggle with the role religion should play in the country`s society.

The Nobel Academy noted Pamuk`s own experiences with both the ancient and the modern in its citation. Pamuk is an exhilarating novelist who embodies world literature today in a double sense; all his literatures are deeply rooted in Turkish history, culture and society but in their complex yet engaging mode of narration they appropriate the best of the transnational modernist tradition. Pamuk seemingly without effort blends love story, murder mystery, historical novel and political narrative to produce one page turner after another captivating the

readers across the world. His approach is of literature through his global thoughts. Pamuk had become his `country`s most famous writer, but was also becoming a spokesperson on the International stage for human rights and the growing conflict between the Islamic world and the democratic ideas, in both the Middle-East as well as parts of the world where large Muslim immigrant communities had risen`.

This paper argues to study Orhan Pamuk as a political dissident writer through historical, cultural, social and Turkish identity perspectives from his selected eight novels which have been translated to English. As Pamuk has a typical way of depicting these issues, `story` is the hero in all his novels. In *The Black Book*, through historical and Turkish identity perspectives Pamuk blends mystery and detective story which is intriguing and intellectually stimulating. In *The Museum of Innocence*, the cultural perspective centers around; well crafted through a love story blurring the lines between fiction and reality. *The New Life*, is a postmodern work, in which Turkish identity is narratively and politically engaged.

Reading Pamuk consciously, one can use the award`s noble reputation to focus the world`s attention on literature, reading and an incorruptible literary voice. All of this has now come about by Pamuk being recognized globally; literature as such has been pushed into limelight because he is not a politician or a do-gooder in the guise of a writer, but a genuine and let`s tell it like this- truly ingenious author. One reads his book not because he voices the right opinion, but because he indulges oneself into reading his stories and immersing themselves in it. His stories are always much more than excitement and suspense; they are conquests, conquests of this world that somehow have something to do with the everyday world in which one live, let somehow manage to hide themselves from our view.

Pamuk used the freedom that his reputation as a writer gave him to remind his fellow citizens in Turkey to start the self-critical process of coming to terms with their past and addressing the issue of the Armenian genocide. While this earned him the fierce animosity of Turkish nationalists, it certainly didn`t awe him. Pamuk proved when he accepted the Peace prize of the German Book Trade in Frankfurt, and said that he has no intention of dancing to the West`s tune and no desire to run down Turkey, on this occasion. The critic of Turkey surprised many by speaking passionately about his homeland and it as an integral part of Europe and supporting the accession of Turkey to the European Union. This being the case, the decision turns out to be not only literarily sound, but also eminently political. Speaking out in favour of

the accession of Turkey, against narrow-minded Turkish nationalism and supporting the forces of balance and reproachment on both sides. But the cultural symbolism is that Pamuk is well versed in the ways of the world and as fluently as he speaks in English, it is no coincidence that he writes in Turkish.

The single minded Pamuk examined vagaries of love and obsession in his 2009 novel *The Museum of Innocence*. It centres on the relationship between wealthy businessman Kemal and a young woman Fusan. Few authors could be able to create the world crafted between their pages, yet Pamuk opened a museum in Istanbul in 2002, blurring the lines between fiction and reality. The book treats love as a general thing; it's something that happens to all of us or most of us! He says that sitting among the relics of the fictional relationship but on the other hand our class, history, religion, culture... all forms various ways we enjoy love or suffer for love. The influence of culture is something that Pamuk touches upon often in his work. In *Snow* he tackles between Islamists, secularists, Kurds and nationalists Turkey.

Pamuk has also taken on taboo topics in Turkey, like the alleged Armenian genocide in the 1990s and the massacre of Kurdish separatists that led the government in 2005, to sue him under Article 301 of the constitution for defaming the Turkish state. The charges were soon dropped but the experience solidified his position as a controversial literary figure within the Turkish psyche. He has written about deep-rooted tensions between East and West and how Istanbul and Turkey have changed over the last few decades. In tracing Pamuk`s transformation from national to global author, as an exhilarating novelist who embodies world literature today in real sense.

In today` era of globalization- People around the globe are more connected to each other today than ever before in the history of mankind. Information and money flow mere quickly than ever! International communication is common place. We live in an intensely interdependent world in which all the earth`s people with their immense differences of culture and historical experience are compressed together in instant communication. To understand Orhan Pamuk, as a spokesperson on the international stage for human rights. And to support this argument, it is essential to examine transformations in Turkish history, identity, society and culture through his works.

Studying of Orhan Pamuk`s writings on taboo topics and its political impact on Isatanbul in particular, Muslim countries in general. Also, how these experiences solidified him as a

controversial literary figure within Turkish psyche. Pamuk had become his `country`s most famous writer, but was also becoming a spokesperson on the International stage for human rights and the growing conflict between the Islamic world and the democratic ideas, in both the Middle-East as well as parts of the world where large Muslim immigrant communities had risen`.

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