



SIGNIFYING THE HISTORICAL CONCEPT OF TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

The well-known Turkish author Orhan Pamuk, who was born on June 7th, 1952, is a significant figure in the contemporary literary world. One of the significant international honours he has received is the Nobel Prize in Literature, which he won in 2006, making him the first Turkish author to do so. Pamuk was nurtured in an ageing Istanbul aristocratic family. He has been writing his entire life and initially intended to get into the arts. His art was significantly impacted by growing up in a Muslim family that was secular and westernised. He creates a realistic portrayal of human society through the immaculate Turkish backdrop of his works. In his writings, Istanbul and Turkish culture are both important themes. However, the genuine tone with which he writes and the enduring themes he tackles make his books approachable to a broad readership. One of the main goals of this study is to comprehend the idea of Contrapuntal and Geocultural Memories in Orhan Pamuk's writings.

Keywords: - Pamuk, Turkish, Turkey, Human, Orhan.

I. INTRODUCTION

This study analyses the fundamental ideas presented in Orhan Pamuk's books, the first Turkish author to win the Nobel Prize in literature. Pamuk, as he is often referred to, is a major character in modern literature who has been publishing books for almost forty years. On June 7, 1952, he entered the world in Istanbul, to a wealthy but fading Muslim family. Cevdet Bey and Sons, his first work, has connections to his family background. In the enormous Pamuk Apartment in Nisantasi, a rich suburb next to Istanbul, he grew up with his extended family of uncles, aunts, and cousins. The events of his youth inform the protagonist and other characters in his book *The Black Book*. In *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, he recounts his life in great detail from infancy until the age of twenty-two. He writes in Turkish, but

several well-known translators, including Maureen Freely, Victoria Holbrook, Guneli Gun, Robert Finn, Ekin Oklap, and Erdag M. Goknar, have brought his works into English. There are several works by this author, but some of the most well-known include: *"Silent House"* (1983), *"The White Castle"* (1985), *"The Black Book"* (1990), *"The New Life"* (1997), *"My Name Is Red"* (1998), *"Snow"* (2002), and *"The Museum of Innocence"* (2005) (2008). More than sixty languages throughout the globe have adapted his works. He has become one of the most popular authors working today. Numerous important accolades and honours from throughout the globe have been bestowed upon him, including the Nobel Prize in literature in 2006. Pamuk identifies as a cultural Muslim but does not have faith in a direct relationship with God. When he



made an outspoken speech on the massacre of Armenians and Kurds in Turkey in 1915, he sparked widespread controversy. The nationalists pounced on him, and he was charged with insulting the Turkish nation. Due to security concerns, he was prevented from entering his nation for many days. In 2005, charges were eventually withdrawn. He was a professor at Columbia University on a temporary basis. He has always been a dedicated supporter of secular philosophy, the bedrock of the Republic of Turkey.

Given that every author reflects the values and concerns of his day in some way, it's fair to say that Pamuk is a product of his generation. He was born and raised in the Republic of Turkey, a secular Muslim country that was founded by the great leader Ataturk. A new secular and contemporary Turkish identity replaced the old Ottoman one. Since Pamuk was raised in a nonreligious household, he doesn't have to deal with religious issues on a regular basis. He openly acknowledges in his writings that he is not a believer, but that he identifies as a cultural Muslim. His heroes are heavily influenced by his own personal biases as he portrays them.

Many of the topics explored in Pamuk's writings are ones he has experienced himself. This study aims to examine the three primary themes of conflict, identity, and love and its inevitable disappointment that run throughout his fiction. These themes are the most significant ones that keep popping up throughout his books. Pamuk is a postmodern author who aims to investigate global topics against the backdrop of idealised local life. Although his stories centre on Turkish characters, the people they portray are global. He

discusses many facets of contemporary culture, from the spiritual to the political to the social and cultural. Some of his books centre on the search for self. At every level of human existence—personal, spiritual, social, cultural, and national—identity is crucial. Pamuk often presents terrible endings to his love story narratives. These are topics that often appear in Pamuk's works. This study aims to analyse Pamuk's works via various lenses.

Almost every one of Pamuk's books centres around a fight of some kind. The word "conflict" is used interchangeably here for many distinct meanings. The author tackles issues ranging from personal to societal to religious to cultural to political strife. He addresses the tensions between opposing poles, such as the polarities of east and west, theism and atheism, secularism and fundamentalism, tradition and modernity, and so on. The tension between East and West is a recurring motif in Pamuk's writing. Tensions arise when the traditionalist East and the progressive West come into conflict. In *The White Castle*, Pamuk strives to find common ground between two seemingly incompatible settings. In his youth, he saw his country's fight to defend the Bosphorus from Western invaders. He took note of the Turkish people's admiration for Western culture and values. Yet he also saw how his countrymen were let down by the West. He saw his relatives' disillusionment with the promise of westernisation even as a little kid. His paintings are heavily influenced by the Turkish people's disappointment with westernisation.

Identity is another major topic that is explored in this study. His works *The White Castle*, *The Black Book*, *The New*



Life, and The Museum of Innocence all explore the concept of identity from many perspectives, including personal, religious, political, national, sexual, etc. A few of his protagonists go through an existential crisis and try to find a new identity. In *The White Castle*, the concept of switching identities is explored in depth. By switching places, our two protagonists flip the eastern and western identities on their heads. The book *The Museum of Innocence* explores how a woman's sexuality might shape her sense of self in a conservative nation like Turkey.

Love, another fundamental concept, is central to both human existence and the stories told in Pamuk's books. He investigates the issue of love from a sad rather than a romantic perspective. His characters experience instantaneous romantic attraction, only to have their relationships terminate in heartbreak. Not only does he capture the joys of love, but also its seemingly more potent anguish. Pamuk elaborates on both the platonic and the physical perspectives of love. His male characters are shown as physically engaged, passionate lovers, while his female characters are portrayed as practical thinkers.

II. TURKEY: SUBJECT MATTER OF PAMUK

Orhan Pamuk is a product of the Turkish Republic of today. The social, religious, political, and cultural climate of Turkey are central themes in all of Pamuk's works. Some of his books take place in Ottoman-era Turkey. His works *My Name Is Red* and *The White Castle* both take place in Ottoman Turkey. Erdag Goknar notes that "each of Orhan Pamuk's seven books (the eighth, *The Museum of Innocence*, is forthcoming), has a portrayal of unstable

identity within a distinct Ottoman or Turkish historical background" (Erdag). The books written by Pamuk are set in a realistic and authentic Turkish environment. Also, his works always centre on Istanbul and the Turkish culture. When asked whether he follows in the tradition of Turkish literature or Muslim writing, he said, "I am just working in the tradition of the novel" in an interview. New developments, intriguing experiments, and the whole evolution of my field fascinate me. I am writing about Turkey since I am now residing there (Mirze, Esra Z. and Pamuk, Orhan: 176-80). Understanding the issues of Orhan Pamuk's works requires some familiarity with Turkey's recent past and its literary tradition. His works' local themes, nevertheless, have managed to find an international audience. Pamuk identifies as a cultural Muslim, yet he does not adhere to the tenets of his faith in his daily life. His writings reveal his strong religious convictions. His extensive reading of both Turkish and Western literature served as a solid foundation for his writing career. Pamuk's writings are required reading for anybody interested in learning about Turkey and Turkish literature.

Turkey is a transcontinental nation straddling both Europe and Asia. About 97% of the nation is located in Asia, whereas just 3% is in Europe. The Bosphorus, a waterway 30 kilometres in length, the Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles divide Asia from Europe. The Aegean Sea is to the west, the Black Sea is to the north, and the Mediterranean is to the south; these three waters completely enclose Turkey. There are eight countries that Turkey borders: Syria and Iraq to the south, Iran, Armenia, and the Azerbaijani



exclave of Nakhchivan to the east, Georgia to the northeast, Bulgaria to the northwest, and Greece to the west (<https://en.wikipedia.org> Retrieved _28/5/2016 3:59 pm). A republican parliamentary democracy governs Turkey's government. The three branches of power in Turkey's government are the executive, the judiciary, and the legislature. More than 99.80% of the population identifies as Muslim, with the vast majority being Sunni. About 70% of the population is of Turkish ancestry, with the balance being Kurdish or members of other minorities.

III. A BRIEF HISTORY:

Turkey's cultural, religious, social, and literary life have all seen significant changes throughout the course of its history, yet the country has managed to hold on to its core values and traditions. Turks have seen many religions come and go, including Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Manichaeism, and Zoroastrianism (Halman, 1). After resisting for more than a thousand years, they finally converted to Islam. In Anatolia, the Seljuk State emerged, and afterwards the mighty Ottoman Empire. Throughout the majority of the Middle Ages and into the early decades of the twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire dominated Turkey. In 1923, father of the nation and first president Ataturk Kemal Pasha ushered in a period of revolutionary upheaval in Turkey, declaring the country a secular and modernised Republic. When it came to writing the Turkish language, the Republic adopted a distinct script based on the Latin alphabet, distancing itself from the Arabic and Persian scripts. Turkey is home to one of the world's oldest civilizations. The Hittites were the

first to establish a culture in what is now Turkey. Roughly around the year 1650 B.C., King Labarnas of the Hittites unified the several clans into a single nation. Hittite forces quickly overpowered Babylon's defences and clashed with Egypt. The Hittites reigned over parts of modern-day Syria and Palestine during the reign of King Suppililiumus (ca. They had a polytheistic religion in which the natural world itself was venerated. Around 1200 B.C., however, people from the Aegean Sea region conquered the mighty Hittite Empire. Following their demise, the Phrygians (of whom Ruler Midas was the fabled king) and the Lydians ruled over sections of modern-day Turkey. Cyrus the Great established the Persian Empire and subjugated most of the neighbouring nations in the sixth century BC. He had a lengthy reign over what is now known as Minor Asia. In 334 BC, the ambitious Alexander the Great seized the realm of the Persians. However, following his death, his empire was split up into several petty competing kingdoms. The mighty Romans came to dominance later in the second century and eventually conquered all of Turkey.

Radical shifts occurred in both European and Middle Eastern societies in the first century. Paul, a Christian missionary, visited Turkey was largely responsible for making Christianity the state religion there. In the fourth century, Roman Emperor Constantine adopted Christianity and relocated the imperial capital to Byzantium. Following the accession of Emperor Constantine, the city was rechristened Constantinople (now known as Istanbul). In later years, the Roman Empire was cut in two, with the Western half becoming the modern-day Roman



Republic. The eastern portion, known as the illustrious Byzantine Empire in Turkish history, thrived.

During their reign, the Byzantines imposed their strict order on Turkey. Under their dominion, the arts and architecture thrived. The Hagia Sophia, originally a church built by Emperor Justinian in the sixth century and subsequently converted into a mosque and now a national museum, is widely regarded as a masterpiece of Western architecture. The Arabs rose to prominence as a new world force in the seventh century. They attempted to take Constantinople twice, but both times they were unsuccessful. The Seljuk State of Turkey arose as a new empire in the 11th century. They took over Baghdad and expanded their empire. Later, they drove the Byzantines out of Turkey and conquered the country. During this time, Islam became the dominant religion in the Middle East and the region as a whole saw profound changes. Spreading rapidly over eastern and central Asia, Islam eventually became the dominant religion in the region. Almost 300 years passed between when the Seljuks took over and when the Ottoman Empire arose in Anatolian territory.

IV. A BRIEF HISTORY OF TURKISH LITERATURE:

Even before Islam was introduced to the region, Turkey had a thriving literary culture. The Turkish literary tradition is among the world's oldest and richest. It's been around for more than 1200 years. Turkish literature is organised by academics into periods and genres according to their own perspectives. In the words of Halman:

“The simplest approach sets up two stages: early (eighth to nineteenth century) and

modern (nineteenth to twenty-first century). Another Breakdown involves three periods: pre-Islamic (Until the eleventh century), and modern (mid-nineteenth century to the present). A different three-pronged categorization is: preOttoman (until the thirteenth century), Ottoman (thirteenth to twentieth century) and twentieth century to the present day. A more elaborate-also more meaningful-approach sets up five stages: pre-Islamic (until the eleventh century), pre-Ottoman Islamic (eleventh to thirteenth century), Ottoman (thirteenth to mid-nineteenth century), and transitional (mid-nineteenth century to the 1920s), and modern 1920s to the present (Halman, 2).”

Although Turkey has seen many changes in the previous thousand years, its culture has remained mostly unchanged. It has seen several faces throughout history, both religiously and politically. Turkish intellectuals of the Middle Ages modelled their terminology after that of Arabic and Persian. The common people managed to keep their folk literature and slang alive. This means that the Turkish language has not changed in the intervening centuries. To put it simply, Yusuf Has Hacib was the first Turkish poet. The melodic and lyrical possibilities of the Turkish language is immense.

Nearly all Turks adhered to Islam by the eleventh century. Several aspects of Turkish culture and literature were profoundly impacted by the conversion. During the time of the Ottoman Empire, poetry blossomed because it was written in a more natural, honest, and straightforward style. The first poems focused on romantic and spiritual topics like natural beauty, heroic deeds, and legendary figures from folklore. The heroic deeds of Oguz, the



hero of the ancient epic Oguz. The epics were about the early humans' fight for existence.

Poetry was composed for a wide range of reasons, from religious rituals and funerals to social gatherings and leisure time. These verses were both laments and songs. Divan-I-Hekmet (Wisdom Poems) was written by the poet Ahemet Yesevi in the 13th century. Atebet-ul-Hakayik (The Threshold of Truth), written by Edib Ahmed, is a theological and ethical treatise. The Islamic flavour and the movement of Turks from Asia to Asia Minor are major themes in the stories told by Dede Korkut. Anatolia were exposed to new ideas thanks to migration. There was a major turning point in Turkish history when the Seljuk State was founded in the eleventh century. The Seljuk State, an era before the Ottoman Empire, saw a flourishing of religion and the arts. Islam thrived across Turkey and became deeply embedded in the country's political and cultural institutions. Islam was the state religion, and the ruling elite proclaimed themselves to be the faithful saviours of Islam. In later years, Ottomans took pride in identifying as Muslims rather than Turks. In the second millennium, Islam became the dominant religion over most of the East. Both the east and the west may look at this era as a watershed moment.

The Book of Dede Korkut, an epic sometimes likened to Homer's Iliad, was composed some time in the ninth century. A mixture of prose and poetry, the book tells the story of the nomadic Turkish people known as the Oguz (a group of western Turkic people). Their journey to the Middle East began in Central Asia. After Turkey was Islamized, the epic gradually began to include Islamic themes.

Because so much Turkish literature has an Islamic tint, Islam's influence on the literary canon in Turkey has been profound.

V. CONCLUSION

The Turkish author Orhan Pamuk has been termed "the voice of his era" for the timely topics he explores in his books. In an interview, he says that his "whole subject matter is Turkish" (Mirze, Esra Z., and Orhan Pamuk. pp. 176-80). Because he paints such an accurate image of the postmodern world in his writings, they remain very relevant to current culture. His writing career is shaped by the ideals of his sophisticated Istanbul Muslim family with which he is a part from birth. He is a citizen of the secular Turkish Republic built on the principles of Sufi literature, including the ideals of international brotherhood and peace.

To put it simply, Turkey is a transcontinental nation that straddles both Asia and Europe. However, it is mostly an eastern nation because of where its landmass is located. With a history stretching back hundreds of years, Turkey can boast a rich and illustrious past. There were many changes in the country's governmental, cultural, and religious structures. The Byzantines, the Seljuk Turks, and the Ottomans all had a hand in governing the region. In the first century, Christianity was the dominant religion, but with the Arab conquests, Islam took over as the dominant religion. For almost 600 years, up until the early 20th century, the Ottomans were Turkey's rulers. In 1923, Turkey became a republic thanks to the war-ending reforms of revolutionary leader Kemal Pasha. The only other Muslim nation on this list, after Senegal, that is secular is Turkey. After the Republic was



founded and the reforms of 1925–1928, a new period of cultural growth and literary production began in Turkey. This marked the beginning of a new era in Turkey, bringing about profound shifts in the country's religious, social, political, literary, and other institutions (Karpas, Kemal, H. 29 02 2016 05:08).

The Seljuk and Ottoman dynasties saw a great flowering of Turkish literature. When the Islamic crusaders were at their worst, it was the Sufi master poets Rumi and Emre who spread the message of love, peace, and global brotherhood. In his own words, "I am interested in Sufism as a literary source," Pamuk reveals the extent to which the Sufi tradition has inspired his work (Pamuk, OC, 261). Turkey's rich literary history is the result of the work of many poets, novelists, and playwrights. Western authors had a significant impact on 20th century Turkish literature, which became more westernised. Emin Nihat, Halit Ziya, Huseyin Rahmi Gurpinar, Refik Halit Karay, Rasat Nuri Guntekin, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoglu, Halide Edib Adivar, Sabahattin Ali, Mahmut Makal, Fazil Husnu Daglarca, Yasar Kemal, Kemal Tahir, Sait Faik, and Orhan Pamuk all contributed to the book 'Despite his many years of deserving nominations, Yasar Kemal never won the Nobel Peace Prize. Orhan Pamuk was named the 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature recipient.

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