A FUNNY AND POSTMODERN NARRATIVE IN A STRANGENESS IN MY MIND AND THE WHITE CASTLE BY ORHAN PAMUK

ORHAN PAMUK’UN KAFAMDA BIR TUHAFLIK VE BEYAZ KALE ROMANLARINDA EĞLENCELİ VE POSTMODERN ANLATI

Ulvi BABAYEV

Baku Engineering University, Department of Azerbaijani Language and Literature, Baku / Azerbaijan

ORCİD ID: 0000-0001-8250-7830

Abstract: Aim: This article focuses on the narrative mode of A Strangeness in My Mind and The White Castle written by Orhan Pamuk. Postmodern criteria exist in novels of Orhan Pamuk. Funniness and seriousness, frivolity and elite are peculiar to postmodern novels. Pamuk determines the borders of cult literature with popular literature. Method: The article analyzes the way of Orhan Pamuk in keeping both values of serious art and literature and their popularities in the center of attention in details. Results: The postmodern interpretation of the history of the Ottoman Empire in The White Castle and the modern Turkish life in A Strangeness in My Mind has been given. Conclusion: The common feature of these novels is their being in a narrative mode that attracts attention of readers. Postmodern peculiarities of these two novels are brought to the end with parallel and comparative analysis on the base of the effect power of narratives over readers.

Key Words: Popular Literature, Postmodern Novel, Cult Art, Funny Narrative

Doi: 10.17361/UHIVE.2017.3.3
INTRODUCTION

The funny and postmodern narrative style in *The White Castle* and *A Strangeness in My Mind* written by Orhan Pamuk¹, the only recipient of Nobel Prize in the literature of Turkic Nations, bases on criteria that are interesting and global from art and literature criticism perspectives. It is interesting and global, because we live in a postmodern society. Novels that both amaze and amuse readers attract more attention in this period. The conversion of a postmodern narrative into an actual life event by writings of Pamuk has been witnessed in the last 30 years. The postmodern narrative style that is observed in all his novels starting from *The White Castle* written in 1985 (Pamuk, 2010) until *The Red Haired Woman* written in 2016 (Pamuk, 2016a) turns into multisonous and funny esthetic in the first postmodern novel of the writer entitled *The White Castle* and in *A Strangeness in My Mind* written in 2014 (Pamuk, 2014). The funny introduction of the time in which “elitist and populist people, kitsch and so called respected literature exist together and bow ties are worn with blue jeans” (Ecevit, 2014: 59-60) is a detailed, informative, and actual event in two mentioned novels by Orhan Pamuk. Not depending on topics Orhan Pamuk chooses, he can arouse curiosity of readers and have their attention. *The White Castle* is a comic and postmodern novel written about the mixture of binary personalities, slave and owner, “I” and “others”, and other themes that are peculiar to XVII century Ottoman period. *The New York Times Book Review* wrote on *The White Castle* novel: “A new star has risen in the east – Orhan Pamuk? A Turkish writer.” (Ibid, 2014: 59-60) The Black Book, written in 1990 (Pamuk, 2013a: 476), is the story of magic city and love woven with intertextual relations and intellect. It was not a coincidence to see the approach of the *Times Literary Supplement*: “The Black Book is Pamuk’s masterpiece” (Pamuk, 2006: 466).

Reading this novel, every reader can write and interpret it again with self-excitement, feelings, and intellect. It is possible to say that Pamuk uses the esthetic of “high technology” period – postmodern esthetic- in all his novels. For the very purpose, the information about the features of all novels by Orhan Pamuk is given in the introduction part of the article. Pamuk’s novel entitled *The New Life* (1994) (Pamuk, 2012: 282) introduces melancholic situation of Istanbul in a lyrical tone. *My Name is Red* (Pamuk, 2013d: 555) is a “carnival-esthetic” (Bakhtin, 2001: 398) novel of those who want to live “among portraits and texts” (Ecevit, 2014: 153). *Snow* (1993) (Pamuk, 2013b: 464), written in the realist style, is the novel that reverses inside of Tur-
key to outside and vice versa. Orhan Pamuk assessed this novel as “My first and last political novel” (Ibid, 2013b: 464). The Museum of Innocence (Ibid, 2013c: 465) reminds Istanbul nostalgia in a way similar to “Old Turkish films”. The Red Haired Woman is the conversion of Eastern and Western texts into a postmodern saga. Shahnameh (The Book of Kings) (Firdovsi, 2004: 432) by Firdausi and Tsar Edip (Sophocles, 1992: 126) by Sophocles are deconstructed from father and son, freedom and despotism aspects. In short, The White Castle and A Strangeness in My Mind reflect the events and period in a funny and postmodern situation.

The Esthetic Summary of the Funniness in A Strangeness in My Mind

History is a literary-esthetic decoration in Pamuk’s novels. The past is the collection of facts that show the formation of today- how and in which way a daily life takes shape. A Strangeness in My Mind by Orhan Pamuk parallelizes the history of Istanbul in the last half century with the life of Mevlud, the street vendor who sells boza- traditional Turkish beverage (Pamuk, 2014: 3). Contradictory highlights of the social life enlarge theme scope of the novel and the life of boza seller turns out to be the mirror of Istanbul; Istanbul turns out to be the mirror of the entire country-Turkey. Pamuk uses history to express a daily life and enrich the novel with amusement elements. Addressing readers, the author of A Strangeness in My Mind states, “I would be happy if you regarded this history as a daily life history rather than political history, military coups history, or history of any powers” (Pamuk, 2016b). Scale scope and dynamism of the events in the novel become similar with poetic and dramatic Istanbul atmosphere. Difficulties of daily lives and social deprivations are visual means to throw light on Mevlud’s character and a sub layer of the text content. Therefore, funniness in A Strangeness in My Mind has a polyphonic meaning. Funniness, interpreted as shallow and vulgar embodiment of social life in the first stage, is a very important and essential esthetic factor in postmodern novels. Novels that amuse readers and are interpreted in more than one way are classified as a postmodernist art and we should avoid sudden conclusions in literature and literary comments and analyses. The art that modernists considered unavailable and elective, is in progress to be popular. They do not serve for one thought, one system, or one ideology. Multisonous, dynamic, and strange informative esthetic is observed in descriptions and a narrative in A Strangeness in My Mind. Istanbul is generalized as a multicultural city and turns into the city of people with different thoughts. A Strangeness in My Mind is an “open text” that equally emphasizes the values of rightists and leftists (Eco, 2005: 12). Mevlud, the hero of
A *Strangeness in My Mind* is also a flaneur (Korkmaz, 2015: 831-844). While writing about poet Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin called him a flaneur (Benjamin, 1983: 35). In fact, flaneurs are idling intelligent people. However, Mevlud, the hero of Orhan Pamuk is a school graduate and street vendor. It is worth mentioning that, living in the information age, an ordinary person can know more than an educated and university graduate person. Mevlud knows a lot, observes around him, and sees everything. He becomes familiar with Istanbul after he comes there from a village. At the beginning, Istanbul is a hard place for him. Gradually he becomes accustomed. Naturally, his father’s advice and his information about Istanbul help Mevlud a lot. Ferhad Korkmaz assesses Mevlud’s being a new and postmodern flaneur in this way: “Mevlud, who started to work with his father as a street vendor, receives advice from his father about flaneurism and this advice can be regarded as postmodern” (Korkmaz, 2015: 838).

Although *A Strangeness in My Mind* is the most realist novel of Orhan Pamuk, it has funniness, not serious, trivial, and postmodern features. Reality bases on avant-garde esthetic that is beyond a traditional narrative and description borders. Colorful and irreplaceable atmosphere that is peculiar to Pamuk makes readers more attached to it than other novels.

Eccentricity, drollery, and different expression styles that are peculiar to novels by Orhan Pamuk serve social functions and funniness motifs in literature. What is a funniness notion? As we all know, rapid development and instability have been observed since the 60s of 20th century in all spheres of the society. In short, innovations after what French philosopher Jean Francois Lyotard named “postmodern situation” affected literature as well (Lyotard 1983, :108). Being different from architecture and other fields, the transition of literature to postmodernism was multifunctional. Even a new postmodern era started in the publications of literary texts. Relations between publishing houses and university departments were established. However, these relations could not reach large scale, as literature is a field of deep meaning and large scale. Consequently, the modern literature theory was replaced with postmodern thought. Modern thinking of Pound, Eliot, and Woolflar were replaced with postmodernity (Ibid, :108).

---

2 Jean-François Lyotard. The postmodern condition. Published in the United Kingdom by Manchester University Press. Page 108.

3 Jean-François Lyotard. The postmodern condition. Published in the United Kingdom by Manchester University Press. Pages 108.
New technological inventions such as “personal computers”, “mobile phones”, and “Internet” (dates back to the research made in 1969 for the first time) in the 1980s reflected development dynamics of the period (Gromov, 2016). New methods and means were needed to prevent technological inventions, charm in Hollywood films, and youth passion in rock music from defeating literature in that period. For example, novels and theoretic approaches of Umberto Eco, Italo Calvino, John Fowles, Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Milan Kundera regulated a new polyphony of esthetic ideals and literary statements. Many writers used different literary “funniness” methods in their works in order to adapt consecutive and changing atmosphere of the period and attract readers. The article entitled Cross the Border, Close the Gap (Fiedler, 1972: 148) by American critic Leslie Aaron Fiedler not only serve as the theoretic-esthetic manifest of the postmodern literature, but also it determined the development direction of funniness in literature. The gaps between not serious literature and cult and serious literature are filled. Borders are passed. Fiedler was one of the critics that directed esthetic development of the new period. Christina Phillips, one of the modern critics, explains the meaning of postmodernism in the world and west, “Fragmentation, temporal distortion, metafiction, the problem of knowledge and the past, the blurring of boundaries (memory and imagination, art and life), hyper-reality and scepticism are common themes in discourse on postmodernism in the West” (Phillips, 2011: 83). Christina Phillips explains the postmodernism as a whole. Theoretic approaches of John Barth, Fredric Jameson, Jacques Derrida, and others on literature and novel art co-incide. Of course, enough writers use theoretic thoughts of scholars and philosophers in their works. Orhan Pamuk has a special place among these writers. The main theme of the subject is funniness and a postmodern narrative in The White Castle and A Strangeness in My Mind by Orhan Pamuk. As The White Castle was written earlier, let us pay attention to a funny narrative mode in this novel. Then we will be able to analyze similarities and differences of the narrative style of Orhan Pamuk during 30 years on the base of The White Castle and A Strangeness in My Mind.

Funny Narrative in The White Castle, the First Postmodern Historic Novel by Orhan Pamuk

Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk has turned intercultural differences on the history, personality, “I” prism planes into the subject of literature in a new format. However, the history notion of Pamuk encompasses mainly cultural and social lives. In the backdrops of history decorations, The White Castle evaluates Eastern and Western culture poles. In this
situation, the power of Orhan Pamuk’s pen and his narrative style become obvious. “The Triumph of a Narrative” (Fulford, 2001: 176) tendency by Robert Fulford coincides with *The White Castle*. The power and victory of narrative are measured in line with the ability of the author to persuade readers. Narratives in novels of Orhan Pamuk shows themselves in this way; the quality of the narrative must be considered as well. Pamuk used metanarrative in his first postmodern novel – *The White Castle*. Faruk Darvinoglu, the author of the preface of the novel and one of the characters in the novel, finds a manuscript that dates back to 17th century in the Ottoman Empire. The very manuscript is the entire text of *The White Castle*. When the story in the manuscript is compared with historic documents and sources, an interesting situation is observed. Great majority of events in the story are far from historic realities. “When I went through the basic sources of the period, I realized that events mentioned in the story did not reflect the realities thoroughly” (Pamuk, 2010: 8). The introduction part of the novel states that the very novel does not reflect historic realities; in contrast, it is a work of art and an esthetic event. However, it does not mean that *The White Castle* describes history as an exotic event.

Pamuk describes the period of Mehmet IV, the Ottoman Sultan who came to the throne at the age of 7 and spent majority of his time by hunting and having entertainments (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Ansiklopedisi, 2003: 414). Historic sources also prove that the novel falsified the history of the mentioned period. For example, it is under discussion whether people suffered from cholera or not in that time. According to some sources, cholera epidemic broke out when Mehmet IV was in the power. Nicolas Giysbreckty, the ambassador of Netherland to Istanbul died of it in 1654. The death of Giysbreckty, the ambassador of Netherland to Istanbul, because of the cholera epidemic once more proves the fact that cholera outbreak happened in Ottoman when Mehmet IV (1648-1687) was in power (Ibid, 2003: 414). Our aim is not to go details about history. Our main objective is to determine the viewpoint of Orhan Pamuk on postmodernism.

The cholera disease, which is touched upon in *The White Castle*, is the irony for history and moral diseases in that period. The writer mentioned it as a natural event that forms a colorful and dramatic aura in the novel. Orhan Pamuk’s approach to history is mainly the harmony of colors rather than description and interpretation of any disease. His intention is not to throw light on historic realities and write a text in a classic historic genre. What he wants is the introduction of daily lives within colorful, dramatic and excite-
ment framework. Color exotics emerges from the cholera disease: differences and confrontations of classical East and West, existence or non-existence of cholera on the one hand, fireworks and entertainments in the palace ruled by a child king on the other hand and so on (Ibid, 2003: 414). These are all esthetic tricks, postmodern interpretations, and explanations to arouse curiosities of readers. At the same time, these are esthetics of an orientalist approach to history and the address of directions where readers are obliged to rethink differently. Ahmet Oktay, one of the authors of the first articles written on *The White Castle* states, “Does cholera, the disease which has been used by many writers as the symbol of badness and inferiority and has earned the status of being the indicator of the period, call us to think? Does cholera separate us or make us come together against the common threats?” (Kılıç, 2006: 80)

Stressing that *The White Castle* has a “historic meaning” (Ibid, 2006: 80), Ahmet Oktay mentions that this novel has answers for the above mentioned questions. In this case, postmodern technics are employed. Historic postmodern undergoes interpretation.

Declining and weakening process of the Ottoman Empire reached the height under the reign of Mehmet IV (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfi Ansiklopedisi, 2003: 417). There are different reasons of declining of the Ottoman Empire. Interactions and relations between East and West, Sultan’s fondness for entertainment are stressed in a way that is peculiar to a modernist novel. Pamuk uses stream of consciousness and modern novel technics. In this situation, we can call Orhan Pamuk a modernist–postmodernist. Semih Gumush, a Turkish literary critic, wrote about this issue in his novel entitled *Understanding Postmodernism*: “In fact Orhan Pamuk is a writer with modernist features, however, he writes postmodernist novels” (Gümüş, 2015: 119).

In postmodern way of thinking, no unique thoughts or ideologies are supported. Elasticity is observed in postmodern thought, the product of unbiased way of thinking. The whole way of thinking and conception do not exist; they are changeable. Wars that prepare the decline of the Ottoman Empire, as well as inventions and discoveries of the West that fight with modern arms are symbolized. Ahmet Oktay interprets the issue in this way: “In a real sense of the word, the Ottoman Empire regarded the advantages of the West in the “arm” sphere. Westernization began in our country with the need for modern arms” (Kılıç, 2006).

Orhan Pamuk researches about fictional and meta-fictional, narrative and metanarrative features of postmodernist esthetics in *The White Castle*. Classic narrative style changes place with a postmodern narrative method.
It is worth mentioning that, historian Faruk Darvinoglu, the hero of *The Silent House*, opens the introduction part himself (Pamuk, 2010: 15). We witness referral in the mentioned novel – *The Silent House*. As a historian found the manuscript of the novel and then adapted it into the modern Turkish language, this fact makes the novel seem more persuasive to readers. Two slight details are hidden in this issue. Firstly, Pamuk is not under the obligation of reflecting the history itself, its language, and colors; in fact, Pamuk saves himself from not doing it because the manuscript has been adapted into the modern Turkish language. Writing extra and additional interpretations and descriptions at the end of the novel, he informs readers about events’ being fictional. Readers are between reality and literary opinion that is the product of imagination. In this process, a mutisouous narrative plays a great role: interpretations and descriptions of Faruk Darvinoglu, the speech of Venetian merchant, and events narrated by the author. It means that three different narrative styles that follow one another are metanarrative. Events take place in three different texts:

1. Introduction speech of Faruk Darvinoglu: This part is the knotting point of the text and a postmodern meanthat explains the essence of the text. It is a short and mixed summary attracting the attention with the lost manuscript notion.

2. The narration of Venetian captive expresses the basics of events in the novel. Events told from this captive’s point of view mix into the life of Hoja. The narratives of these two people, who are similar to each other, look like similar too. It is not clear who narrates the events and which narrative belongs to Hoja. Borders are eliminated. “Open text” (Eco, 2016: 308) tendency of Umberto Eco is visible here.

3. The part narrated by Orhan Pamuk himself. This chapter was added to the novel one year after the novel was written with this title: *About the White Castle*. In this part, Pamuk delves into each detail of the novel. Other writers before Orhan Pamuk used such kind of method as well. John Fowles, the worldwide famous representative of postmodernist prose, compared Victorian period England with modern England in his novel entitled *French Lieutenant’s Woman* (Fowles, 2015: 425). Comments and descriptions about the novel are added too. Pamuk also used this method. From this perspective, the impact of John Fowles on Pamuk is strong.
Funny and Multisonous Narrative in A Strangeness in My Mind

The latest innovative and multisided development speed in 21st century makes people not surprised with anything. It is not easy to amaze and entertain people of IPhone, IPad, and MacBook period and attract their attention to reading novels. It must be taken into consideration that the way and the method funniness is introduced in literary works are important. Literary studies must not ignore whether a writer uses this as a method or purpose. Of course, funniness cult mainly emerges in postmodernist literature as the need of the current period. However, funniness cult must be a tool that serves literary words, not to meaningless drollery. From this point of view, funny methods abound in A Strange in My Mind. A Strange in My Mind by Orhan Pamuk are in line with the “Cross the border, close the gap” tendency of Fiedler. The novel, from the description and narrative perspectives, coincides with mimesis and realist literature and it is a good sample for a serious literature. Multisonousness in narrative, funny paralleling of times and strangeness of events comply with popular literature.

The observation, worldview, and position of the writer are reflected in the description of Istanbul and the life of Mevlud. Starting from his first novel named Cevdet Beyand His Sons until A Strange in My Mind, Orhan Pamuk used a modern and exclusive narrative style being different from a classic narrative. The difference of such kind of narrative from a classic narrative is that, readers understand that events are far than being real. However, a narrator tells a story so interestingly that readers find a novel much more interesting. Initially, one can think that not real events were used in A Strange in My Mind but writer’s literary clownery enthralled readers with a reality magic. The novel’s starting sentence is as follows: “This is the story of boza (It is a malt drink made from maize (corn) and wheat with a low alcohol content and drunk in winter) and life and imaginations of Mevlud Karatash, the boza seller” (Pamuk, 2014: 15). The very sentence arouses the curiosity of readers. Then, the writer briefly describes physical appearance, character and the entire life of Mevlud. This short information is so interesting for readers that they do not hesitate to read the 451 pages novel. In the part entitled “The hard job to kidnap Rayiha with Mevlud” (Ibid, 2014: 15)–this part is considered the prologue of the novel- Pamuk narrates that he will start the novel from the middle of events; he explains how Mevlud saw Rayiha at the wedding ceremony of Gorgud (Rayiha is the sister-in-law of Gorgud) 4 years before he kidnapped her in 1982. Mevlud wrote letters to her 3 years nonstop. Mevlud was very happy when Rayiha returned his love (Ibid, 2014: 15). Mevlud kidnaps Rayiha with the
aid of Suleyman, his cousin. This event is the culmination of the storyline in the novel: “….lightening flashed, everywhere-the entire sky, mountains, rocks, and trees—was illuminated like a far memories…He would remember this moment—the feeling of strangeness—throughout his life” (Ibid, 2014: 15). From this part it becomes clear that the girl kidnapped by Mevlud is not Rayiha; in fact, it was Rayiha but not Rayiha to whom Mevlud wrote letters in the last three years. The prologue is finished with the following sentence: “….he showed the far islands to Rayiha. One day they would visit those islands. Unfortunately they could not do it during the short life of Rayiha” (Ibid, 2014: 15).

We can call the prologue of the novel the literary-esthetic reflection of a “naive and sentimental novelist” (Pamuk, 2011: 153) idea of Pamuk. Pamuk delivers a series of lectures entitled “The Naïve and Sentimentalist Novelist”(Ibid, 2011: 153) in Harward University and underlines the importance of a novelist’s being thoughtful, moral, and naive; according to Orhan Pamuk a novelist should approach the issues from inspiration perspective. The following events reveal the fact that Suleyman deceives Mevlud. Suleyman thinks that beautiful Samiha would not say “yes” to the proposal of Mevlud and introduces Samiha as Rayiha. It is worth mentioning that Suleyman is also in love with Rayiha. Mevlud writes letters to the middle and ugly daughter of the family and this process results with marriage. From the very first sentence until the last one, the writer amuses readers and narrates a very strange life story. However, this funniness, amusement do not serve an empty replica. This is a giant step towards finding proper readings and developing word art that undergoes declining. Literary reflection of life realities, boundless imagination power, and polyphonic expression style characterize the style of the novel. To start a novel from the middle of events is a postmodern trick. Pamuk notes that he will start from the middle of the events in order to express the life and imaginations of Mevlud. This method allows a parallel approach to events, their evaluation, and interpretation. Readers impatiently follows an early and the latest life of characters. As the writer mentions that Rayiha will lead a short life, readers are interested to learn about it. We begin to think about the fate and future of the hero.

The character descriptions, idea layers of the text, and the entire reflection of lives in A Strange in My Mind are determined with the scope of a dynamism in narrative and are of great importance. Orhan Pamuk is very sensitive and attentive about the life of Mevlud and he pictures Mevlud in parallel with Istanbul and time. Selling boza, sour milk, pilaf with peas, and ice cream in Istanbul streets, Mev-
Mevlud meets people with different opinions and finds himself in the middle of controversial and high-pressure events. Inner feelings of Mevlud, his being glass full type person, and his optimism are explained in line with his attitude to his family-Rayiha. The difficulties arisen because of the urbanization process and the impact of chaos and hopelessness on human morality and the way of thinking are described by Pamuk in details and sensitively. When all these turn into the subject of a narrative, no intervention and interpretation from a writer side are needed. A strained storyline and mobile narrative that arise from the dramatic effects of passionate and thoughts that are peculiar to people make us think about events. Economic problems faced by people coming to Istanbul from villages, the difficulties they face in acclimatizing fast changing and developing cities, and their loneliness are explained in the backdrop of the life of Mevlud. The reasons for eccentricities of Mevlud are tough daily life standards and complexity of events he experienced in the city. The essence of this complexity is global; the literary scope of the novel is not limited with the problems Mevlud remains face to face in Istanbul. The multi colorful essence and material-moral deformation of mega polices in the world turn out to be the subject of literary intellect. In this moment, let us remember the reason why Orhan Pamuk has been awarded with the Nobel Prize: “‘who in the quest for the melancholic soul of his native city has discovered new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures’”. The writer explained the melancholic atmosphere of Istanbul with oddities of Mevlud. To be precise, Mevlud is the person with a melancholic temperament. All events arise from the natural behaviors of heroes. From this perspective, we can say that Pamuk’s narrative is like an infinite cosmos. The most different, complex and strange galaxy of this cosmos is Istanbul.

The pen of Orhan Pamuk serves as wave impulses in the cosmos. The life in Istanbul is explained via narrative and description impulses. Events with their positive and negative sides are on the air – in the cosmos. The half-century life in Istanbul goes on the base of the axis of the Creator and events observed there do not vanish; they circulate in the cosmos. The life events converted into energy by the Lord emerge in *A Strangeness in My Mind* and live in memories of future generations.

One of the funny methods of narrative of the novel is multisonousness. Besides the author narrates the novel, other characters also narrate it and we witness self-expression of different characters. From words used by characters until details of their behavior and movements, we see differences. Every character expresses his or her attitudes to events

from his or her own perspectives. The author only narrates the events instead of Mevlud because the life of this character is meaningful as the main object of the description and narrative. Some points of Mevlud’s life coincide with some points of other characters. This, in its turn, reflects mental and moral sides of other characters.

Orhan Pamuk could literally comment on Mevlud’s ability to preserve his moral purity throughout his life. By using literary words, the writer managed to explain how religious, political, and ideological groups have damaged the moral ecology in the world and made people enemy to one another. The writer arouse the curiosity of “IPhone” period people for his novel and we all want to read the mentioned novel by keeping us remote from the chaotic situation that results from different entertainments.

**Alternative History Narrated by Orhan Pamuk in The White Castle**

As Orhan Pamuk views the history from identity replication point of view, Venetian merchant and Hoja from the Ottoman Empire characters are especially interesting. Hoja is a serious and frowning man. He represents the East. After he meets Venetian merchant, he changes. He is interested in Venetian. Hoja learns some secrets of astronomy from the merchant. Hoja speaks about his life, events in the palace, and international issues to the merchant. They share all secrets. Even the orders of the child king on public issues is one of the daily-discussed topics among them.

Analyzing the novel from “novel and personality” (Parla, 1992: 82) points of view, Jale Parla states, “Hoja and Venetian have achieved a long distance from history to today, from a life to an art and from a society to an individual” (Ibid, 1992: 82). It means that history and cultural changing process basing on the history are reflected in lives of people representing different poles, races, and cultures. This is a postmodern message sent to the honorary history of the Ottoman Empire and thinking system of the West. Representing the East and the West and Muslim and Christian worldviews, Hoja and the Venetian merchant are people of different qualities. In his heart of hearts, Hoja secretly wants to be a Venetian. In his turn, Venetian longs for Hoja’s secretive and magnificent life. All these show that people want to be others. A person thinks that it is possible to get rid of personal troubles and problems by being a different “me”. Using such kind of communication between Hoja and Venetian, Pamuk uses modernist novel technics. Existent questionnaires and experiments turn into literary-psychological experiments between two people; one from the East and one from the West. The stream of consciousness,
mainly used by modernists, is tested in *The White Castle*.

The postmodernist esthetics that became worldwide famous in the 1980s played an important role in Pamuk’s keeping identity replication in the center of attention. Jacques Derrida, one of the postmodernist theorists called the literature of that time a “strange enterprise” (Ibid, 1992: 82). The form of literature changed in post-industry period. Postmodernists amused readers with their ironic approaches and they fulfilled an educating function of literature in this way. Literature developed parallel with the development of a society. The social function of literature changed. The role of languages, religions, cultures, and history played important roles in self-expressing of literature. Values became the subject of literary opinion again. Society of high technology forms postmodern society, and each notion and each understanding in this society becomes part of analysis, and discussion object of postmodern thinking as the main capital in consumer society is information. In novels of Orhan Pamuk, information is the main component of narratives.

The novel written about one period of the Ottoman history-this period is characterized with decline in political confrontations-attracts attention. Starting of liberal policy period in Turkey and the interest of the world community in *The White Castle* makes the novel more famous (Uçarol, 2015 :31). The political situation had its impact on literature. *The White Castle* is in relation with the period it was written in and with the Ottoman period. Although the events take part in 17th century in the novel, in fact, realities of 20th century are narrated. The period in which societies and cultures of the East and the West intersect turn into alternative history in a funny narrative of Orhan Pamuk. Researcher Stephan Guth, who expressed his opinions on Turkic society and literature in the 1980s, states, “Because of the increased interest in pre-Republican history and another, assumedly more world-open past, post-1980 Turkish literature experiences a boom of historical novels, favoring especially the Byzantine and ‘high’ Ottoman periods, but also the era that had been condemned by the nationalist discourse as an age of decadence—the late Ottoman Empire” (Guth, 2010: 261).

Vedi Ashkaroglu, the Turkish professor of literature, evaluates literature as “the mechanism with the function peculiar to itself” (Aşkaroğlu, 2015: 3). The reflection of a new life style -that refers to technological inventions which keep all people, countries, societies, and cultures within its impact circle- in

---

5 Uçarol R. Siyasi Tarih (1789- 2014). Der Yayınları. İstanbul. P. 31
literature is postmodernism. Postmodernism, being very popular in the American literature in that period, was formed because of an irony towards the history, the past, and today. American postmodernist writer P. Auster focused on identity replication and identity chameleon in his New York Trilogy (Auster, 2003: 384). Auster describes the changes human morality underwent from the high technological development and urbanism in the 1980s point of view. New York Trilogy, published one year before The White Castle was published, was written as a detective parody. Being different from Pamuk, Auster throws light on wishes of people to be others in relation with events of a modern life. Pamuk focuses on the same issue with his orientalist and anti-orientalist approaches to history. Intertextrelations are established in this case. Twinning subject that has been reflected in so many myths, stories, and novels, is transferred to the lives of Hoja and Venetian. Jale Parla relates the twinning and replication notion described in The White Castle to the enmity between the sons of first people of the Earth: Adam and Eve. Similarities and differences between Abel and Cain, Heracles and his brother Iphicles in ancient Greek myths, and Gilgamesh and Enkido in Gilgamesh epic are deconstructed in a different way in The White Castle (Parla, 1992: 82-91). The White Castle leaves an esthetic carnival impression basing on the unity of history, today, and texts. From this perspective, we can say that The White Castle introduces literary analysis of history from both the East and the West aspects.

On the one hand, we get information about the events that took place in 17th century. On the other hand, history is distorted. For example, the wars the Ottoman Empire had with the Austrian Empire during the reign of Mehmed IV (1664-1682) are correct from historic perspectives. However, now war is mentioned in the history of the Ottoman Empire to conquer the castle known as Doppio. One part in the novel attracts attention: “we saw the castle itself after the sunset and after we had learnt not only about incompetence of Sari Huseyn but the fact that the Austrians, Hungarians and Kazakhs helped Doppio alongside with the Polish. It was on the top a high hill; the rays of the sun on the towers decorated with banners were golden, however, they were white, snow white, and magnificent” (Pamuk, 2010: 160). Tens of such kind of examples exist in the novel. It means that Pamuk used history as an esthetic decoration. The aim was not to mention the historical events. The aim is to write a text to enable everyone to see daily events and himself or herself. At the same time, it is proper to fo-

cus on historic events that arouse curiosities of readers. Then one question can be asked: “Why is it necessary to describe so many historic realities?” Historic events and realities make novel attractive and weighty.

Orhan Pamuk addresses history in his novel he wrote after The White Castle including The Black Book, My Name is Red and A Strangeness in My Mind. In The Black Book, the events that take part in modern Istanbul suddenly undergo Kafka styled metamorphosis. Galib, the main hero of the novel, travels from the old Istanbul to the modern Istanbul after losing his wife Roya. This journey is realized in the backdrop of ancient texts (Pamuk, 2013a: 476). History is also witness to secrets of Istanbul and pure love. Journey to the Ottoman Empire continues in My Name is Red. Pamuk remembers calligraphy peculiar to the Ottoman period. Forgotten art types and calligraphers of Ottoman and Iran are reflected basing on a postmodern and multisonous narrative (Ibid, 2013d: 555). Cultural development and changes in Istanbul are described parallel with the life of Mevlud, the boza seller, in A Strangeness in My Mind. The interest of Orhan Pamuk for history starts with his novel called The White Castle and it continues in following processes. History is the mean for the literary expression of today in The White Castle. The article entitled “Is The White Castle an imagination?” by Shara Sayin reads as follows: “This novel does not send certain messages to readers by using historic sources. It is a reality that the author uses different periods, locations, and personalities” (Kılıç, 2006: 158). Pamuk uses different personalities to achieve monosonousness.

Pamuk assesses the environment of the East through the way of thinking of a Westerner. In some cases, the Venetian tells some controversial things about the history of the Ottoman Empire: “Sultan has issued an order to behead me if I am not converted to Islam. I am shocked” (Pamuk, 2010: 30). However, historic resources reveal the fact that people were not forced to be Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. “Pamuk introduces an alternative to history that has been shown as unchangeable. He opens a door for objective interpretations and descriptions peculiar to postmodernism. It is possible that some clerks had exceptional extortions. Pamuk also used the realities from the notes by Venetian Ramberty and Angiolello who lived in the Ottoman Empire and then returned to their motherland, and the writer makes these facts the subject of postmodern narrative” (İnalçık, 2011: 159). Distinguished historian İnalçık demonstrates objective and peaceful position while speaking about the opinions of Venetians about the Ottoman Empire. Using scientific and worthy explanations, he explains that it is possible that a Westerner can think wrongly about an Easterner and vice
versa. From this perspective, the mentioned source is a goodwill bridge between the East and West (Ibid, 2011: 159).

*The White Castle* was written in the course of cultural changes observed in Turkey in the 19980s, however, it is a literary text written about people and events of the Ottoman Empire and writer’s current period.

In *The White Castle*, Pamuk throws light on the interest of an Easterner in the West. He also wants to convert the rage of a Western to the East into a peace. From this perspective, the writer does not reflect the real history. Orhan Pamuk has invented a story that Easterners and Westerners find interesting. He calls readers from the East and West to have a “walk in forests of a narrative”(Eco, 2016: 160). All the events and details are colored with postmodern irony, parody, and pastiche.

*The White Castle* is rich in intertextual relations and pastiches. The writer uses historic facts with them and achieves postmodern referrals to the works by Cervantes, E.T.A. Hoffman, Dostoyevsky, Edgar Po, Robert Luis Stevenson and others. Pamuk explains the postmodern relations he makes with other works, “Naturally, I was informed about the books written on identity replication by E.T.A. Hoffman, who didn’t like himself and added the name of Mozart to his name as he wanted to be a musician... I was to be drowned after reading the works of others on similarities and replication in literature” (Pamuk, 2010: 188). Pamuk managed to attract the attention of readers, entertain them, and express himself with ambiguous words. We can see a funny and complex narrative mechanism. One sentence of the novel attracts attention: “Is it possible to imagine a story that is good for reading and listening with no other meanings and purposes? “Music, for example?” I said. Hoja was confused. The beginning of a story must be childish, we thought, the middle part must be frightening, and the final part must be bitter as a love story that ends with parting of heroes” (Ibid, 2010: 188). The dialogue between main heroes of Orhan Pamuk plays the locomotive role for a funny and postmodern narrative of Orhan Pamuk. Being different from stories written in mimesis esthetics, those with postmodern esthetics are polyphonic and funny and one of the main purposes is to make readers have reading and listening enjoyment (Ibid, 2010: 188). As Venetian slave, the hero of the novel, mentions, “the novel of the current period must be amusing and funny as music”. Pamuk continues the opinions as his heroes utter theoretically throughout the novel in the text. The text structure, social function, and funniness that are visible in the style, and narratives of the novel are reflected in the notion of the text. The funny hobbies of Mehmet IV, the young Sultan, are explained in a smooth
way. It means funny narrative results from events. The interest of this child for hunting and animals makes this novel more interesting for readers.

The professional meta-narrative in the novel is a postmodern narrative mode. It is not possible to understand whether Hoja or Venetian merchant narrates the story. Orhan Pamuk stresses that even though he is the author of the novel, he does not know it either. “I do not know whether Hoja or Italian slave wrote the manuscript” (Ibid, 2010: 188), he states. Postmodern tricks in literature are requirements of the current time.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the article is that, funniness, postmodern esthetics, and structure in The White Castle and A Strangeness in My Mind by Orhan Pamuk serve to establish strong relations between the text and readers. From this point of view, it would be advisable to conclude the research by showing similarities and differences of narratives of these two novels. There are three different narrators in The White Castle. We can call it a polyphonic narrative structure from this perspective. The first narrator is Faruk Darvinoglu, the one who finds the original manuscript of the novel. The events narrated by Faruk determine the construction system of the novel. It prepares readers to read the novel. It gives information about the period, which the novel is about, and its being a story about the East and the West. Faruk introduces the manuscript translating it to Turkish. The novel is about two similar people in the Ottoman Empire and this fact attracts attention. Especially, heroes’ being from the East and West enlarge thinking area of the novel. We listen to the magnificent story of the East and West, two ancient culture poles. The secret of a funny and postmodern narrative of Pamuk is solved in this case. In short, the introduction of an event that is interesting for both the East and West is a postmodern situation. Values turn out to be common. All values, ways of thinking are introduced equally. A multicultural word festival is organized. The second narrator is a Venetian merchant. The events narrated by the merchant are decorated with a postmodern word bouquet. Representing the Western world, the Venetian speaks about details of an Eastern environment. This factor shows that the East and West are parts of one another. Events are so mixed that readers are not sure about the narrator. Is it Hoja or Venetian merchant? The third narrator is Pamuk himself. He explains how and in which way he wrote the novel. This part shows postmodern interpretations and descriptions.

The detailed variant of a multisonous and polyphonic narrative has been used in A Strangeness in My Mind. Two novels are
similar from multisonousness perspective. As in The White Castle, events are narrated in the first person in A Strangeness in My Mind. By using different characters in both novels, narrative festivals are organized. However, there are differences. The author - Orhan Pamuk - interprets and describes events by being the second and even the third degree narrator. In other words, the author narrative is not in the center of the text. The author narrative is leading in A Strangeness in My Mind. The narration of events base on it. However, all of the main characters of the novel are narrators of the novel. From this perspective, this novel by Orhan Pamuk is similar to The Green House (Llosa, 1968) and The Feast of the Goat (Llosa, 2002: 416) novels by Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa, the Nobel Prize recipient. In The Green House, events that take place in a brothel and monastery are grouped. Amoral values clash with religious views. The novel suggests a free human model conception. Four narrators narrate events in the four-part novel. The Green House is the sample of polyphonic postmodern sample. The Feast of the Goat is a novel with a more polyphonic narrative as is seen in A Strangeness in My Mind by Orhan Pamuk. Llosa portrays Rafael Trujillo, the dictator of the Dominican Republic who ruled the country for 31 years. Mario Vargas, Trujillo and tens of people narrate the novel. Orhan Pamuk, however, portrays political and cultural changes in Turkey between 1960s and 2012 years in the same manner. These similarities reflect themselves in the narrative style.

Pamuk uses this method as well. In addition to his own narration, he adds narrations of different characters.Narrations of characters make the novel more interesting and dynamic. This makes readers amused as in each narration there are replicas and counter arguments. In A Strangeness in My Mind, monosonous and polymest narrative forms funny postmodernist structure. This enables proper samples for the research. It is worth analyzing narrations of different characters to show it.

Suleyman’s narration: (the cousin of Mevlud, the hero of the novel): “Because of the bad habit of my uncle Mustafa, Mevlud lost one year doing nothing in the village and he enrolled Ataturk Lyceum one year later...” (Pamuk, 2014: 57). Suleyman’s family moves to Istanbul earlier than the family of Mevlud. That is why this narration is information about Mevlud and his father. It shows differences about characters as well.

Mustafa’s narration: “I know, you visit your uncle without my permission...” (Ibid, 2014: 59). Mustafa, the father of Mevlud, has conflicts with his brother Hasan. The reason is that Hasan took control over the piece of the land of Mustafa. Pamuk makes these characters speak themselves.
Ferhat’s narration: (He is the childhood friend of Mevlud. He is a communist. He marries Samiha who is known to Mevlud as Rayiha) “Mevlud started to sell boza as I did” (Ibid, 2014: 89).

Rayiha’s narration: “For the first time in her life, Samiha lit a cigarette by my side. She said that it had become a habit with her not because of Ferhat, but because of rich houses where she worked” (Ibid, 2014: 270). In the narration of Rayiha, the author compares two environments: the village and urban environments. Women in cities of Turkey smoke; it is shame for women in villages.

To sum up by taking all afore mentioned facts and information, we can say that the most important similarity between The White Castle and A Strangeness in My Mind is funny narration system. They are both polyphonic. The difference is that, there are modern and postmodern features of meta-narration in A Strangeness in My Mind. Finally, we can say that social functions are strong in both novels. It makes them more readable for readers.

REFERENCES


GUTH, S., (2010). Introduction: Some Thoughts about Makber (‘The Grave’) and Turkish Postmodernism, Middle Eastern Literatures, December, 13(3)


PAMUK, O., (2010). Beyaz Kale, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul. 199


PAMUK, O., (2012). Yeni Hayat, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul. 282

PAMUK, O., (2016a). Kırmızı Saçlı Kadın, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul. 204

PAMUK, O., (2014). Kafamda Bir Tuhaflık, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul. 480

PAMUK, O., (2013a). Kara Kitap, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul. 432

PAMUK, O., (2013b). Kar, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul. 415

PAMUK, O., (2013c). Masumiyet Müzesi, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul. 516

PAMUK, O., (2013d). Benim Adım Kırmızı, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul. 552

PHILLIPS, C., (2011). The Game of Remembering: A Study of Narrative Strategies and the Postmodern Theme in Muḥammad Barrāda’s Novel Mithl Ṣayf Lan Yatakarrar, Middle Eastern Literatures, April, 14(1)


TÜRKIYE DİYANET VAKFI ANSİKLOPEDİSİ., yıl: 2003, cilt: 28, . 389- 414


INTERNET SOURCES


