

## Elements of Postmodernism in the Novels of Orhan Pamuk

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### ABSTRACT

*In recent years, modern world literature, in particular, works of representatives of Turkish literature have been researched. Continuing this tradition, in this article we studied the specific features of postmodernism in the work of Orhan Pamuk, who was the first in the literature of the Turkic peoples to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. Most of the works of the writer Orhan Pamuk, who is mentioned at the front lines of Turkish postmodern literature, are novels. The postmodern elements that Orhan Pamuk uses most in his novels are the phenomena of intertextuality and metafiction. The original creative principle of Pamuk is the view that the text is nourished by the previous sources, and in the process of its processing, the ready motif can be transferred to a new artistic world. This approach entered Turkish literature together with Orhan Pamuk. Also, this article summarizes scientific conclusions about the postmodern novel through Orhan Pamuk's novels "Silent House", "The White Castle", "The Black Book", "My Name is Red" and other novels. It was studied with the help of comparative and analytical methods that the elements of the postmodern novel and the features of the genre are important in determining the creative principles of Orhan Pamuk. The considered theoretical principles of the postmodern novel were applied to Orhan Pamuk's work. Through this article, specific aspects of Orhan Pamuk's work, ideological and artistic views, the aesthetics of the artistic world created by him, and the role of Pamuk in the development of postmodern novels were studied. The Uzbek reader should familiarize himself with the work of Orhan Pamuk. Postmodern elements in his novels and*

*specific aspects of his work are also applied to Uzbek literature, which, like Pamuk, is a significant impetus for the improvement of new modern Uzbek prose, synthesizing Eastern and Western literary traditions. A comprehensive and systematic scientific-theoretical view was formed about the main principles of postmodernism direction, the leading features of Turkish postmodern literature, and the use of postmodernism elements in Orhan Pamuk's novels.*

**Keywords:** Orhan Pamuk, postmodern novel, motive, narrators, polyphony, deconstruction, game event, parody, pastiche, intertextuality, metafiction

#### INTRODUCTION

In the last half-century, postmodernism has been on the agenda of fiction as well as all fields of science. The term postmodern novel was first used in America by literary critic Ihab Hassan. About postmodernism, Muhammadjon Kholbekov's "Scenarios of 20th century modern literature" [1] and "20th-century world literature scenes" [2], Tilavoldi Jo'raev's "Stream of Consciousness. Modern" [3], Dilmurod Kuronov and other authors' "Dictionary of Literary Studies"[4] theoretical books, Kazakhboy Yoldoshev's article "Postmodernism: Essence, Roots and Symbols" [5]. We can see certain views about modernism and postmodernism in the books "From Men to Menacha"[6], "Creative Philosophy" [7], and "Kitob Bandasi"[8], where the writer Nazar Eshanqul's literary and philosophical reflections are recorded. Ulugbek Hamdamov's book "World Literature: modernism and Postmodernism" [9] describes the new literary trends - modernism, postmodernism, and their specific problems - which are sufficiently manifesting themselves in world and Uzbek literature. But the theoretical conclusions about postmodernism have not yet been sufficiently explored. In the early 1960s, the structure and principles of postmodern literature were developed, and by the early 1990s, large-scale discussions in Turkish literature began. Turkish postmodern thinkers and writers tried to demand freedom and democratization in art. After

1980, works filled with drama, irony and fantastic elements became the entertainment field of the literary environment of that time. After 1950, the number of rural novels and didactic novels, increased in number, giving way to more complex works. Turkish postmodern writers became active in creating a new imaginary world. They adopted motifs and narrative techniques from the world of texts belonging to previous periods, began to quote and refer, and parodies and pastiches proliferated.

Postmodern literature appeared in literature as non-traditional social life literature. Although theorists of postmodernism consider the new trend to be a movement against modernism, it takes its main characteristics from modern literature. The metafictional phenomenon of play, experimentation with form, and a variety of narrative methods are the main elements of the modern novel. This direction aimed at freedom in literary latitudes for the writer and popularity among readers. Postmodernism does not claim to create new poetic principles and new aesthetic trends. According to postmodernists, there is no new text in the world, all texts are taken from previous texts, repeat or recreate them.

Orhan Pamuk, one of the leading representatives of Turkish postmodern literature, was born on June 7, 1952, in Istanbul. The writer spent his childhood and youth years in the Nishontashi district of Istanbul. This place with a cosmopolitan atmosphere, where different cultures, languages and people live together, had a significant influence on Pamuk's work. Pamuk, who started studying at the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture at Istanbul Technical University, left this place after three years of study. He continued his studies at Istanbul University, Faculty of Journalism. Pamuk does not work, he devotes almost all his time to the process of writing and searching for material for a new job. In 1985-1988, he completed a special course at the University of Iowa that allowed world writers to study life in the United States and reach their writing potential. This educational process changed his outlook and creative thinking. He won many literary awards during his creative career. His works were published in large circulations. While these works brought him fame, there were many times when he was severely criticized.

The postmodern elements that Orhan Pamuk uses the most are the phenomena of intertextuality and metafiction. The original creative principle of Pamuk is the view that the text is nourished by the previous sources, and in the process of its processing, the ready motif can be transferred to a new artistic world. This approach entered Turkish literature with Orhan Pamuk. A challenging aspect of postmodern novels for the reader is that it is important to know the hidden references in order to read the codes in the subtext. Pamuk's novels, "White Castle" [10] and "Black Book" [11] were written in this style. Due to the fact that different texts are used, references are given to them, and fragments are combined, it is appropriate to evaluate the novel "The Black Book" as a collage novel.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Pamuk's writing career began in 1974. The first novel published under the name "Darkness and Light" written in cooperation with Mehmet Ero'gli won first place in the "National Novels" competition. This novel was later expanded and reworked in 1982 and published under the title "Javdat Bey and Sons" [12]. The work is part of a series of novels depicting family life, which is one of the main topics of world literature and tells about the events that happened in the family of merchants. This novel is worthy of the Orhan Kemal Award in Turkey. While Pamuk's works continued to win one award after another, in 1984, his second novel, *Silent House*, won the Modern Novel Award. After this novel was published in French, Pamuk was awarded the "European Discovery" prize of France. The historical novel "White Castle" won the award for best foreign language fiction in the United States. Pamuk described the novel "Snow", published in 2002, as "my first and last political novel" [13]. This novel was translated into English in 2004 and brought the author international fame. In the same year, the novel "The Black Book" was recognized as "one of the 10 best books of the year".

Pamuk's status as an international writer increased even more. Each of his works was translated into foreign languages and reached the hands of readers around the world. "My Name is

Red" [14], published in 1998, has been translated into 24 languages and won the top prize at the International Dublin Literary Award in Ireland in 2003 [13]. The novel "My Name is Red", which can be included among the historical works in terms of subject matter, made the reader a witness of a common past with his own experiences, the consistency and inconsistency of reality, believability and confusion, the richness of surprising and exciting scenes increased the interest in the work. It is logical to say that "My Name is Red" is a comprehensive novel from the point of view of fiction. In this work, as in other works, Pamuk has developed various chains of events interdependently, from the point of view of reworking the old motif and the development of events, he has skillfully integrated the elements of detective fiction, East-West conflict in art, and melodrama into the text. The system of imagery in the novel "My name is red" has different characteristics than Pamuk's other novels. The composition of the images is described more widely, and the presence of non-human elements in them attracts attention. It has a colorful, rich and plural character with its symbols. Like other works of Pamuk, this work by developing various chains of events interdependently, from the point of view of processing the old motif and the development of events, skillfully absorbing into the text the elements of detective fiction, East-West conflict in art and melodrama typical of the postmodern novel.

When Orhan Pamuk was working on his first novel "Javdat Bey and his sons", Turkish literature was influenced by the literary movement called "rural realism". In these novels, where the rural environment is described and domestic problems are raised, the writers paid more attention to the content than to the form of the novel. The audience of these novels was large and their literary thinking was also adapted to domestic themes related to rural life. For them, a new artistic world, a style mixed with imagination, and the mentality of reading the subtext created complexity. At that time, due to the severe economic conditions in Turkey and the fact that the people's relations with the government were based on a strong bureaucracy, the material for novels on the rural theme was increasing.

Yusuf Atilgan's first novel, "The Loiterer", which he started to create in the late 60s of the last century and adopted the main features of English literature, was not well received by readers. Later, in the early 70s, Oguz Atay's novel "The Disconnected" reflecting the postmodern style had to wait for its reader for a long time. Atay moved away from rural realism, used internal monologues and shifted the point of reality to another self. At that time, the word "realist" with its positive quality was used as a category of literary value, the works that deviated from the traditional-realist direction were evaluated as "romanticized texts" and were seen as insignificant works.

Orhan Pamuk entered the literature during the period of the dominance of realism and the failure of new movements in the Turkish literary environment. He became one of the leaders of Turkish postmodern literature. Later, in his memoirs, Pamuk recalls: "From 1974, I started writing "Jevdet Bey and Sons". The novel style and literary ideology that prevailed in Turkish literature at that time did not go beyond the village. I was writing "Javdat Bey and Sons", and an acquaintance who was not very close to literature said, "You are writing a novel, but do you know the life of the village?" he asked. For him, the novel was the story that happened in this village. The rural novel has played such an important role in the history of Turkish literature for the past forty years that no one would have thought otherwise. This phenomenon is rare in the history of world literature. From the 1930s to the 1970s, even though Turkey had become urbanized, there was a need to put an end to the still dominant literature and novel style that talked about the countryside in a special way. When I first started writing, I felt how hard it was" [15].

Pamuk was twenty years old when he decided to become a writer. At an important turning point in his life, he was faced with a choice between poetry and a novel. Soon, he decided to write a novel. He was fortunate that his family's financial situation was relatively good. This economic comfort afforded him an environment that few writers are blessed with. Over the years, he collected, read, researched and summarized the material he needed to create his novels. He spent six years writing his first novel "Javdat Bey and Sons". When this novel was published, it

was met with various criticisms. First, the theme of the work is the adventures of a bourgeois family, and the second main reason is that it contradicts the traditional concept of the novel that prevails in the literary environment. The 1980s were the period when changes began in Turkish novels. Authors such as Yusuf Atılgan, Bilge Karasu, and Oguz Atay began to implement the new Romani way of thinking. After the publication of the novel "Javdat Bey and Sons", it was considered to be autobiographical. Pamuk, as a modern writer aware of the trends of literary creation, opposes these criticisms surrounding the novel. "I don't know what the word autobiography means. If the author wants to say that what he wrote is to some extent "lived by himself", what is the measure of this? Some novelists try to achieve the effect they want to evoke in the reader, not by the form of the novel, but by hearing the evaluations that they "lived" what they wrote. But today's writer understands that he has to write his novel with the knowledge that cannot be reduced to any other aspect"[17], says Pamuk, reacting to opinions about the novel.

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From his first novel, it was seen that he searched deeply, read a lot and collected material within the framework of his writing. In one of his interviews, Orhan Pamuk touched on the ideas of imitation and influence about himself and said that his work was consciously influenced by Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, he learned from him how to use history and overcome the heavy burden of tradition. Another writer acknowledges that from Kamal Tahir, history itself can be a hero by itself, just like the hero of a novel, and that he learned new features of novel writing from Oguz Atay. Pamuk does not hide that in the novel he also pays attention to Western novelists who value history, human psychology and form. "Толстой, Стендал, Достоевский... When I was writing 'Javdat Bey and his sons', I was so attached to the novel of the 19th century that I did not even notice that I was influenced by it. "I escaped this influence early on thanks to modern American novels like Faulkner and Virginia Woolf. I learned that the novel is not a world of rules, but a world of non-

rules" [15]. In this short speech, Orhan Pamuk emphasizes two aspects that are the pillars of his creative principles. The first of them is the fact of using history, and the second is the concern of getting rid of the Western novel environment and giving a foreign form to his novels.

Pamuk, who constructed the plot in order to recall the time from the beginning of the century to the 1980s, also constructed the form of the novel in a unique way. The main idea of the novel is aimed at solving the problem of "loneliness" and consists of the intersection of the fates of a whole generation at different levels of loneliness. Many of the love stories in the play are made up of generalizations that end in despair, depression, or anguish. In the novel, Pamuk brings up the theme of loneliness and gathers all destinies in one place through the symbol of the house. Characters who face loneliness due to reasons such as failures in life and unrequited love have their own characters, and the issue of their social position also has a special place in the work. One of the characteristics of the postmodern novel is the multiplicity of narrators and polyphony, so there are five narrators in the novel. It is more logical and correct to say that "Silent House" is a work dedicated to researching the psyche and general mood of Turkish youth in the 80s of the last century. The events in this novel are presented from the perspective of five people using multiple perspectives. This is called the perspective technique in fiction. This method gives movement, vitality and dynamism to the novel "Silent House". The work "Silent House" was also recognized as worthy of an award and allowed Orhan Pamuk to have a wide readership. With this work, we see that Pamuk began to use historical motifs in the novel and experimented with form. In 1985, the writer studied at a special writers' course in the USA. After that, he begins to sharpen his writing skills and create with effort. At that time, he planned to establish a school of writers in Turkey. He said that he had to suffer for six to seven years to become a writer in Turkey. "If you write something good, it is more valuable than any diploma"[13], Pamuk himself says about it.

The writer's third novel "The White Castle" is a complete symbol of rebellion for the traditional Turkish novel. This novel,



published in 1985, was called a "novel" by the author. That is, this term is used in relation to a long story and a short novel. Despite the small size of the work, the plot is built around long references in the text. Pamuk used this style, mainly used in American and English literature, as a format for his style with local colors. This novel also caused great interest abroad. After the novels "Javdat Bey and Sons" and "Silent House", the novel "The White Castle" can be said to be Pamuk's work that widely used the possibilities of the postmodern novel and raised his creative credo to a higher level. This novel, which is relatively smaller than his previous novels, is one of the main reasons why Orhan Pamuk's fame spread not only to Turkey but also to the whole world. Also, in this work, Pamuk used the method of creating a novel within a novel, metafiction, which is characteristic of a postmodern novel, and divided reality into external and internal through the element of history.

The work of Orhan Pamuk, recognized as a real event in Turkish postmodern literature, was his fourth novel, "The Black Book". Before the book was published, there were rumors about it. The novel was published in 1990, and at that time both critics and readers, who knew that Pamuk had worked on this work for exactly five years, were interested in it. According to Orhan Pamuk, "The Black Book" is "a kind of collage", etc. "a novel consisting of different stories, fragments of history, scenes of the present and the future are mixed together" [13]. In fact, the novel "The Black Book" consists of many unrelated stories. This novel, which is based on a free structure and breaks literary rules, and the idea is not bright at first glance, has been discussed for a long time by the literary community. While the hero of the novel, lawyer Ghalib, is looking for his missing wife Roya, in the process of finding her in Istanbul, the articles of his relative, journalist Jalal, will be of great help to him. It is a difficult process to understand the main idea of the work by reading Orhan Pamuk's unusual details and long sentences. In "The Black Book", Pamuk tried a form that was not found in Turkish novels or foreign literature before his time.

Although "The Black Book" was criticized, it opened a new era in the tradition of Turkish novels. This was the culmination

of the literary revolution started by those "unpersecuted". Literary scholar Dr. Tahsin Yujel reacted to the novel "The Black Book" and mentioned Pamuk as a bad writer. In his article, he criticized the language of the novel and the weaknesses of the fictional reality in the plot[19]. Orhan Kochak wrote an eighty-page critical article. Despite many criticisms, this novel played an important role in bringing the perspective of both literature and novel writing to the agenda and bringing the readers of Turkey to a new literary era. The imaginary space, imaginary characters and imaginary images in the novel "The Black Book" are presented not as a reflection of real life, but as a new reality that has passed through the author's perception. The black book in the title of the work is a reference to fantasy and is a summary of the writings in the process of the hero's self-discovery. In the novel, the method of intertextuality is very skillfully used, "The Black Book" consists of texts that quote from other works and refer to other literary sources. These texts have been rewritten by Pamuk and he is not responsible for the authenticity of the motifs. In the novel, using the contrast between literary imagination and reality, the motif of "searching" reached the level of the main idea. The imaginary space, imaginary characters and imaginary images in the novel are not a reflection of real life but are presented as a new reality that has passed through the author's perception. The content of the novel "The Black Book" was manifested as a reflection of the collective consciousness, embodying the conflicts between "old and new", "yesterday and today", and "existence and non-existence" in the characters of the novel. Collective consciousness is the reflection of social consciousness in a single person. In the novel, the character of the writer shines brightly when he combines the images of Ghalib, Jalal and Ruyter. The motifs of "forgetting" and "remembering" created parallelism in the work, and this parallelism served as a bridge connecting the space and time of the events sometimes with the past and sometimes with the present. In Pamuk's novels, the issue of "man's self-discovery", which is taken as the main object of study in "The Black Book", is analyzed together with the problem of Westernization, covering all the actions performed by people in the process of

self-realization. Pamuk sees the art world as a platform for the imitation of others. In each of his works, Pamuk used a composition he had never tried before, a world of images, and new ways of telling the reality. The fact that time and space are three-dimensional in his works, he conveys the idea through allusions and metaphors, and he tries to convey the idea with ciphers hidden in the subtext are important aspects of his postmodern novels.

Pamuk began to write the novel "New Life" [20] after the influence of "The Black Book" began to fade. Before the novel was published in 1995, literary newspapers and magazines began to publish critical comments about Pamuk's yet-to-be-released novel, with the participation of many critics. Soon after the novel was published, 100,000 copies were sold. This is the highest number achieved for a Turkish novel in a short period of time. Despite the fact that so many were bought, criticism began again. Pamuk's novel "New Life" is completely created with references to literary works created in Eastern and Western cultures. Even the title of the novel is a reference to Dante's *New Life*. In this work, Pamuk chose a style that is close to the reader in every way, and the text hidden under the text encourages the reader to participate in the work. Usman, the hero of the novel, talks about reading books throughout the work. He wants to make the reader realize that the novel he is reading is "New Life" in his hands and that distracting with the superficial story will not give the reader anything. The novel "New Life" appeared to be a more perfected version of the product of imagination that began to take shape in "White Castle". "Patterns - stereotypes are positive when they first appear. When they are returned, the money comes out" [21]. These ideas are in line with Pamuk's creative principles.

There are still debates about Orhan Pamuk's novels. Researcher Yildiz Ejevit in his book "Reading" describes Orhan Pamuk as an avant-garde novelist, a leader of new traditions[22]. The writer's novels "The White Castle", "The Black Book", "New Life", "My Name is Red", "Snow" are mentioned as advanced examples of the postmodern novel. Through these books, Pamuk started a new period of transition between the types of literature. He continues to write his works in this spirit,

paving the way for great changes in the opposition of past and present, east and west, tradition and modernity. Literary critic Jale Parla Orhan, while researching Pamuk's novels, noted that Pamuk is a writer who is making a turning point in the Turkish novel. In his opinion, "Pamuk is one of the great writers like Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar and Oguz Atay, who worked a lot in the aesthetic field of East-West problems, and he showed himself in bringing these problems with their cultural and philosophical meanings into literature, especially in the novel "The Black Book". This work has become an exemplary text for researching this topic" [23]. One of the main features of Pamuk's novels is related to the skillful use of the superstructure technique, which is an important element of the postmodern novel. In this case, the essence of the work is hidden under the text. The art world in the text leads to the essence and increases the reader's interest in reality. Although Orhan Pamuk does not like games related to the language of the work, polyphony can be observed in his novels. In doing so, he enriches the narrative of the entire work by looking at it from a different perspective. In particular, a new style of expression appears in each chapter of the novel "My Name is red" and plays an important role in increasing the artistic value of the work.

His next novels, "A Strangeness in My Mind", "The Red-Haired Woman", "Museum of Innocence" also won various literary awards. Orhan Pamuk's novel "Snow", published in 2002, is described as a "political novel exploring the ethnic and political issues of Turkey". The main themes of the writer's work are conflicts and contradictions between East and West, Islam and Christianity, and tradition and modernity. Finding a solution to these conflicts is the main idea in his work. Almost all of Pamuk's books are directly related to the city of Istanbul. Pamuk is not only famous for his works. He is also known for his civil stance against the Armenian Genocide and discrimination against the Kurds in Turkey. The writer's personal position on controversial issues made him a controversial figure among his compatriots. Someone admires his civil courage and tenacity, while others consider him a traitor. In 2005, the Turkish government sued him. The reason is that in February 2005, he

gave an interview to the Swiss publication "Das Magazin": "Thirty thousand Kurds and one million Armenians were killed in Turkey. "No one is talking about it, and they hate me for talking about it", he says [24]. According to Pamuk, after the publication of this interview, he became the target of a hate campaign, which forced him to leave Turkey, but despite the accusations, he returned to his country soon after. The accusations against Pamuk also caused reactions abroad. This process was looked at from the point of view of Turkey's accession to the European Union, and the issue of freedom of speech in Turkey was raised. In 2005, Amnesty International demanded that the Turkish government stop the persecution of Pamuk. Eight world-renowned writers - José Saramago, Gabriel García Márquez, Günter Grass, Umberto Eco, Carlos Fuentes, Juan Goytisolo, John Updike and Mario Vargas - released a statement in support of Losa Pamuk. Pamuk won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2006. This will further strengthen the opposition to him. 2021 Orhan Pamuk was brought to criminal responsibility again, this time he will be accused of insulting Atatürk and the Turkish flag in his new novel "Plague Nights". The main thrust of Pamuk's work is built around the conflicts between Eastern and Western cultures. Pamuk's only occupation since the age of twenty is writing novels. With his long-term creative activity, he made Turkish literature famous around the world. Orhan Pamuk's novels are texts whose aim is to create a unique Turkish postmodern novel tradition. In each of his works, Pamuk used a composition he had never tried before, a world of images, and new ways of telling the reality. The fact that time and space are three-dimensional in his works, he conveys the idea through allusions and metaphors, and he tries to convey the idea with ciphers hidden in the subtext are important aspects of his postmodern novels.

Although Pamuk's first novel, "Javdat Bey and Sons", was written in a traditional style, in his later novels, he made good use of postmodern novel elements and created his own novelistic traditions. In particular, his novels "The Immaculate House", "The White Castle", "The Black Book" are his first attempts in this direction, "Snow", "My Name is Red", "The Museum of

Innocence”, “A Strangeness in My Mind”, “The Woman with Red Hair” improved his style in his novels. One of the main reasons why Orhan Pamuk's novel "The White Castle", which is relatively smaller than his previous novels, spread its fame not only to Turkey but also to the whole world. Also, in this work, Pamuk used the method of creating a novel within a novel, metafiction, which is characteristic of a postmodern novel, and divided reality into external and internal through the element of history.

Orhan Pamuk's novels focus on four main issues. These are the East-West problem, man's self-discovery, social evolution, and the question of including a historical fragment in the novel. The images of Metin and Salahaddin Bey in the novel “Silent House”, Khoja in “The White Castle”, and Enishte Efendi in “My Name is Red” are the images that express the idea of Westernization, breaking the boundaries between Eastern and Western cultures, and removing the distances.

#### CONCLUSION

The main idea of Orhan Pamuk's work is to solve the problem of conflicts between Eastern and Western cultures. This major conflict, which holds the main idea of the writer's work, includes several other conflicts such as conservatism and liberalism, Islam, Christianity, values and popular culture. Pamuk made Turkish literature famous in the world with his long-term creative activity and won the Nobel Prize. Pamuk sees the art world as a platform for the imitation of others. An important observation from the writer's works is that in the artistic outlook of Pamuk's works, a writer starts by imitating others, when he finds his style, someone else starts imitating him, and almost every person is a collection of other people. Pamuk believes that originality is the ability to synthesize motifs collected from others in a new way.

Orhan Pamuk's novels can be said to be texts whose purpose is to create a unique Turkish postmodern novel tradition. The writer uses a unique structure in each of his works, he is not afraid to take motifs from previous literary sources. Processes old motifs, and skillfully use them to express his ideas and convey his thoughts to the reader.

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