

The Creative Launcher

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Ferit Orhan Pamuk: Novel, Theory and Practice

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Abstract

In literary world there are only few writers who are theorists and creative artists at the same time. But it is a general belief that every creative writer is a theorist whether or not he expresses it separately. Orhan Pamuk, the noble prize winner for literature, is one such writer who has separately delineated on the importance of theory in fiction. His all novels are actually expansion of this thoughts found in his seminal book about fiction titled *The Naive and Sentimental Novelist*. He believes that creation of imaginary world in fiction is ultimate task of a writer and for the necessary elements of that world he talks in detail in six lectures delivered by him and which ultimately got published in *The Naive And Sentimental Novelist*. The present work will look into detail about the theory and practice in Pamuk's art.

Keywords- *Art, Fiction, Practice, Realism, Nationalism, World Peace*

Every artist has some pre-conceived notions and assumptions about the nature and practice of his art in general. As such, an artist tries to weave his art around these notions. At times he also posits ideas about the process of creation of the work of art. His views about art, therefore, have invariably an unflinching correlation with his practice. Like various theoreticians and practitioners of novel, Orhan Pamuk has presented his views about novel in a series of six lectures delivered in Harvard University which have now been published in the book form under the title: *The Naive And Sentimental Novelist*. These lectures in a way constitute his theory about the art of novel writing. According to him the development of the novel is inextricably connected with the perception of a pre-structure shaped by the experiences of life. To him, the writing and reading of the novel is one of the humanity's great acts of optimism. He believes that creating an imaginary world is the novelists' real task because novels present sort of second lives. Orhan Pamuk's idea of novel is unlike that of his predecessors. For example, E. M. Forster writes in *The Aspects of Novel*: "Human beings have their great chance in the novel. They say to the novelist: "Recreate us if you like, but we

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must come in,” and the novelist’s problem, as we have seen all along, is to give them a good run and to achieve something else at the same time. Whither shall he turn? not indeed for help but for analogy...” In response to this Pamuk opines: “it is not the character that comes first, it’s the little details- the novelist wants to go in some direction and creates the character to take you to that direction.” Moreover, Orhan Pamuk, unlike E. M. Forster, finds novel no different from real life and feels common experiences like sleeping, eating and dressing all make novel surpass the imaginary boundaries of fiction and reality.

Pamuk believes that the novel reveals the colours and complexities of our lives and is full of people, faces and objects that we feel and we recognise. In novels just as in dreams we are sometimes so powerfully struck and moved by the extraordinary nature of the things which we encounter, the feeling of realisation is such that we forget the reality, we forget where we are and we envision ourselves in the midst of the imaginary events and people we are witnessing. This fictional world as per Pamuk is more real than the real world itself. We are honestly absorbed and immersed in it.

The study of Pamuk’s novels in the framework of his theory of the novel as put forth in *The Naive and the Sentimental Novelist* not only lime lights the basics of novel writing but how different ideas jostle down to make some coherent creative pieces. The writer embodies and executes his theoretical views on the art of novel writing. to study the theory and novelistic practice of the author in close proximity with each other to find out whether he really brings into operation his theory or not becomes inevitable. The study of art and practice of Pamuk’s novels helps to establish either the harmony or disruption between the theoretician and the practioner of creative art as the case may be after thorough critical qualitative analysis of his novels.

Once in an interview Orhan pamuk discussed about how previous writers dealt with their own art and practice. He said: “The authors who felt a social responsibility, authors who felt that literature serves morality and politics. They were flat realists, not experimental. Like authors in so many poor countries, they wasted their talent on trying to serve their nation. I did not want to be like them, because even in my youth I had enjoyed Faulkner, Virginia Woolf, Proust—I had never aspired to the social-realist model of Steinbeck and Gorky. The literature produced in the sixties and seventies was becoming outmoded, so I was welcomed as an author of the new generation.

After the mid-nineties, when my books began to sell in amounts that no one in Turkey had ever dreamed of, my honeymoon years with the Turkish press and intellectuals were over. From then on, critical reception was mostly a reaction to the publicity and sales, rather than the content of my books. Now, unfortunately, I am notorious for my political comments—most of which are picked up from international interviews and shamelessly manipulated by some

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Turkish nationalist journalists to make me look more radical and politically foolish than I really am. (Orhan Pamuk)

Orhan Pamuk believes that novel writing is also a way of politics which can aware people about the happenings around them. He practices the same theory everywhere in his novels. Almost all his novels are brimming with political flavor. "The art of the novel by nature is political," Pamuk said. "You speak about humanity; you are talking about others."

Much of the reception for "Snow" was colored by politics, Pamuk said. It was published a few months after 9/11, Pamuk said, and was viewed "through the filters of this trauma." People wanted urgent, ready-made answers about political Islam, he said, and were frustrated that the novel didn't provide them.

Pamuk did a lot of research for Kars, extensively interviewing the residents in his role as a journalist for a Turkish newspaper that sent him there. A local anchorman asked the townspeople to be forthcoming with Pamuk, and, as a result, "they were filling my buckets," Pamuk said. The only inconveniences were the friendly policemen who followed him around everywhere, ostensibly to provide him protection, but also to ensure that the folks didn't tell him anything too politically controversial.

Pamuk knows the trouble politics can cause. He got into hot water some years ago for bringing up the Armenian Genocide and the official mistreatment of Kurds, taboo topics in his native land. He was put on trial, but the Turkish government withdrew its case after an international outcry. Pamuk had to go into self-exile for some time, returning to Turkey only after the furor had died down. "I write because I am angry at all of you, angry at everyone," Pamuk eloquently remarked in his Nobel speech. "I write because I love sitting in a room all day writing. I write because I can only partake in real life by changing it. I write because I want others, all of us, the whole world, to know what sort of life we lived, and continue to live, in Istanbul, in Turkey."

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