

SNOW as A TRAGEDY

*Tri Pramesti**

Abstrak. Genre sastra roman, tragedy, ironi/satire dan komedi menampilkan struktur yang oleh Frey disebut “total quest-myth.” Semua karya narasi secara struktur berkaitan karena merupakan versi tertentu dari bagian formula “quest”. Artikel ini akan mencoba menerapkan teori arketaipal Frey pada novel *Snow* karya Orhan Pamuk.

Kata kunci: literarygenre, narrative structure, tragedy

Introduction

Pamuk's novel, *Kar*, appeared in 2002 (English translation, *Snow*, 2004), which takes place in the border city of Kars explores the conflict between Islamism and Westernism in modern Turkey. Through its broad range of characters it explores a huge range of political, religious, and social issues. It is a character study, a portrait of obsession and jealousy. And, through its narrative structure and formal links between Ka's poetry and the events around him, it probes the relationship between art and life.

Snow follows Ka, an expatriate Turkish poet, as he wanders around the snowy Kars and gets caught up in the muddle of aimless Islamist, MPs, headscarf advocates, secularists, and a number of factions who die and kill in the name of highly contradictory ideals.

In "Snow", Pamuk describes tragic love stories, where a man falls in love with beautiful women at first sight. In this novel Pamuk's portrayals of women and the reasons men fall in love with them are powerful in their intensity, yet superficial in the way these love stories originate.

The Structure of Literary Genre

Mythoi (plural of *Mythos*) is a term used by Frye to refer to the four narrative patterns that structure myth. These mythoi reveal the structural principles underlying literary genres; specifically, comedy, romance, tragedy and irony/satire.

According to Frye, human beings project their narrative imaginations in two fundamental ways; in representation of an ideal world and in representations of the real world. The ideal world, which is better than the real world, is the world of innocence, plenitude and fulfillment. Frye calls it the mythos of summer, and he associates it with the genre of romance. This is the world of adventure, of successful quests in which brave, virtuous heroes and beautiful maidens overcome villainous threats to the achievements of their goals.

In contrast, the real world is the world of experience, uncertainty and failure. Frye calls it the mythos of winter, and he associates it with the double genre of irony/satire. Irony is the real world seen through a tragic lens, a world in which protagonists are

*Dra. Tri Pramesti, M. S., dosen Prodi BahasaanSastraInggris, FakultasSastra, Untag Surabaya dan mahasiswa program doctor UNESA Surabaya

defeated by puzzling complexity of life. They may dream of happiness; but they never attain it. They are human, like us and so they suffer.

Analogously, satire is the real world through a comic lens, a world of human folly, excess, and incongruity. In the world of satire, human frailty is mocked, sometimes with biting merciless humor. While romance occurs within an ideal world, and irony/satire occurs within the real world, the remaining two mythoi involve a movement from one of these worlds to the other. Tragedy involves a movement from the ideal world to the real world, from innocence to experience, from the mythos of summer to the mythos of winter, and therefore Frye calls tragedy the mythos of autumn. In tragedy, a hero with the potential to be superior, like a romantic hero, falls from his romantic height into the real world, the world of loss and defeat, from which he can never rise.

In contrast, comedy involves a movement from the real world to the ideal, from experience to innocence, from the mythos of winter to the mythos of summer, and therefore Frye calls comedy the mythos of spring. In comedy, a protagonist, caught in a web of threatening real world difficulties, manages, through various twists in the plot, to overcome the circumstances that have thwarted him and attain happiness. Unlike the villain who obstructs romantic hero, those who obstruct the protagonists of comedy are absurd and humorous. And in the end, the protagonist moves, usually with his or her beloved, from the cold, troublesome real world to a happier, kinder, gentler fictional space.

Frye notes that traditional quest has four structural components: conflict, catastrophe, disorder and confusion, and triumph. Conflict, as he observes, is the basis of romance, which consists of a series of fantastic adventures in which superhero encounter obstacles. Catastrophe is the basis of tragedy, which consist of the hero downfall. Disorder and confusion are the basis of irony and satire, which require that confusion and anarchy reign supreme and that effective action be impossible. And triumph is the basis of comedy, in which the protagonist and his or her beloved become the centerpiece of some sort of improved social disorder. Thus the genre of romance, tragedy, irony/satire and comedy spell out the structure of what Frye calls a "total quest –myth." All narrative is structurally related because it's all some version of some part of the quest formula.

AUTUMN: TRAGEDY

In tragedy the focus is on individuals: the tragedy is in the hero's isolation, not the villain's betrayal, in fact the villain is often part of the hero. The story begins with a hero who has comparatively free will and moves him or her into a world of causation. This world of causation is dependent on a belief in natural law or fate, although it does not necessarily attempt to answer questions about why these events happens so much as shows the effects of them. At some point in the tragedy the audience must be able to see two possible futures for the tragic hero: the one he could have had in which his path is more or less happy and peaceful and the inevitable one. The hero cannot see both.

Characters

Tragic heroes reside at the top of the wheel of fortune, somewhere between heaven and earth, between a paradisaal freedom and a world of bondage. They are inevitable conductors of power: instruments as well as victims of destruction.

Tragedy lies somewhere between these two ideas. It is helpful to consider this caveat: if the hero could not stand the story would be ironic, but if he hero could not fall it would be romantic. The tragic hero must seem to be able to stand, but does not.

Phases of Tragedy

1. Complete innocence: The hero who is dignified because of her innocence and courage is toppled; the hero is often a female in this phase
2. Youthful innocence of inexperience: The heroes and heroines are often young people first encountering the realities of adulthood; frequently a central character will survive so that the action closes with an adjustment to mature experience
3. Completion of an ideal: The success or completion of hero's achievement is essential despite his tragic end, and a sense of serenity or peace often exists after his death because of his final accomplishment; these tragedies are commonly a sequel to a previous tragic event
4. Individual's faults: The hero moves from innocence to experience with his fall occurring as a result of *hybris* and *hamartia*.

The Catastrophic Conclusion

In tragedy, unlike comedy, the denouement tends to be catastrophic; it is perceived as the concluding phase of a downward movement. In comedy, the change of fortune is upward; the happy ending prevails (more desirable than true, says Northrop Frye in the *Anatomy of Criticism*), as obstacles are dispelled and the hero and/or heroine are happily incorporated into society or form the nucleus of a new and better society. In tragedy, there is the unhappy ending--the hero's or heroine's fall from fortune and consequent isolation from society, often ending in death.

The Sense of Inevitability

To the audience of a tragedy, the catastrophe will seem, finally, to be inevitable. Although tragedy can not simply be identified with uncontrollable disasters, such as an incurable disease or an earthquake, still there is the feeling that the protagonist is inevitably caught by operating forces which are beyond his control (sometimes like destiny, visible only in their effects). Whether grounded in fate or *nemesis*, accident or chance, or in a causal sequence set going through some action or decision initiated by the tragic protagonist himself or herself, the operating forces assume the function of a distant and impersonal power.

Discussion

Plot

Kerim Alakusoglu, known as Ka, returns after many years to investigate a spate of suicides by young women forbidden to wear headscarves in school. Arriving during a blizzard, he feels as if it is "snowing at the end of the world," and when the city is closed to all traffic for three days, "The desolation and remoteness...hit him with such force that he felt God inside him."

Though Kars, which comes from the Turkish word for "snow," was once a crossroads for trading between Turkey, Soviet Georgia, Armenia, and Iran, all of which are within a few miles of the town, it is now "the poorest and most overlooked corner of Turkey." All the conflicting political and religious tensions of the country are seen here, its residents representing a melting pot of historical influences—socialism and communism, atheism, political secularism, ethnic nationalism (especially the Kurds), and the most rapidly growing movement, Islamist fundamentalism.

Ka, who grew up in Istanbul in a middle-class family, has lived in Frankfurt for the past twelve years and has returned to Turkey only briefly for his mother's funeral. A poet who has been unable to write anything for the past four years, he learns that Ipek, the woman he has always loved, is now single again and living in Kars. Traveling there ostensibly to interview the families of the "headscarf girls," he secretly hopes to reconnect with Ipek and make her his wife. As Ka becomes reacquainted with Ipek, he also meets people from the most influential groups in Ka. Ipek's father, Turgut Bey, is an old communist and atheist, now running the Snow Palace Hotel, and her sister, the lover of an Islamist militant named Blue, is one of the leaders of the headscarf girls. Ipek's ex-husband, formerly non-religious, is now running for mayor as an Islamist. Ka's bodyguards/government investigators follow him everywhere, and the army/police force is a constant presence, but this atmosphere, remarkably, inspires Ka's creativity, and for the first time in years, he is able to write poetry.

As Ka investigates the girls' suicides, he is most astonished by their "desperate speed." Girls and women go about their ordinary lives, and suddenly, without warning, kill themselves. While some officials blame western media for publicizing the suicides, therefore encouraging more girls to kill themselves, the Department of Religious Affairs has plastered the city with "Suicide is Blasphemy" posters, and local Islamists have railed against it. Still the suicides continue, a local official informing Ka that "If unhappiness were a genuine reason for suicide, half the women of Turkey would be killing themselves."

Other life and death issues come to the fore when Ka witnesses the coffeeshop shooting of the Director of Education, the man who has, on orders from the government, banned the "headscarf girls" from the school campus. The assailant is a young member of the Freedom Fighters for Islamic Justice, and Ka soon meets and comes to know others associated with the movement and the leader responsible for it. The Director has been wearing a tape-recorder, and the reasoned dialogue with which he attempts to communicate with his assailant, and the assailant's sane, but completely irrational, responses are stunning to a western reader.

Soon afterward, a military coup begins at the National Theater, which is packed to hear Ka read a poem and to see a traveling theatrical troupe perform a modern version of the "headscarf girls" story within the framework of an ancient play. Soldiers burst into the theater, shoot randomly into the audience, which thinks the shots are part of the show, kill a number of people, then round up "dangerous" citizens. Over the next two days, many others are sought, arrested, tortured, and killed, including some of the people Ka has interviewed and visited. Ultimately, as the three-day blizzard ends and Ka readies to leave Kars, Ipek must choose whether to go with him to Frankfurt or to stay in Kars with her family, a decision that is by no means clear-cut.

Snow as a Tragedy

According to Frye's framework, *snow* embeds the structure of romance (Ka's narrative his happy childhood/ his innocence, the mythos of summer, the quest) within the structure of Irony (Orhan/ narrator's narrative, the mythos of winter, irony), the second structure offers a kind of running commentary on the first, which by novel's close forces Orhan to realize that the structure of romance (Ka's narrative) is no longer possible. That is in *snow* the structure of irony contains and eventually changes the structure of romance.

Ka is the hero of romantic quest. Although all the other characters have quests of their own, only Ka occurs within the mode of romance. The typical of romance is Ka's persistent for a golden past which for him is the happiest moment in his life. Upon his return from Germany, he devotes himself to find wife to live 'happily ever after'. In fact, all of Ka's activities in Kars to the moment at which he meets Ipek constitute the series of minor adventures the romantic hero must undertake before the major adventure-reclaiming Ipek for his own- occurs. Ka's major adventure, his quest to get Ipek, is also typical of the romantic quest to obtain a bride. Furthermore, his quest for Ipek leads Ka against Blue. Blue fills the role of antagonist, a man who doesn't have true love. He likes playing with women: having affair with Ipek and at the same time dating with her sister, Kadife and died with Hande in his side. As a romantic hero, Ka believes that he has to save Ipek by offering her his true love that will give her true happiness.

The struggle of romantic hero to win his princess is seen when he has to act as mediator. Although Ka avoids politic but he has to be involved in political intrigue shows his willingness to sacrifice himself for his quest proves him a hero. In fact, Ka's willingness to sacrifice himself for Ipek becomes the dominant motif as the narrative moves toward his death.

As Frye states that "Tragedy involves a movement from the ideal world to the real world, from innocence to experience, from the mythos of summer to the mythos of winter. Ka, the romantic hero, of Istanbul has dream a very special dream. Descendant from upper middle-class family, Ka almost knows nothing about poverty. Absent for 12 years from his country, Ka is lack of knowledge and experience the real world of his surrounding. His dream to return to his golden past, leads him to Kars, the poorest part of the country. Influenced by fairy tales that he read when he was a child, Turgenev's sad romantic hero," to meet the woman who has been haunting his dream for years" and a melodramatic pop song from the sixties "Peppino di Capri's Roberta, Ka builds himself that ideal woman for him is "a woman very much like her (Ipek)". For Ka, unites with a

very beautiful woman like Ipek will give him never ending happiness as he sees from his parents, without realizing that everything has changed in the real world.

Orhan/ narrator's narrative is structured by a genre that is the polar opposite of romance; the genre of irony. In contrast to the idealized world of romance, the mythos of winter "attempts to give form to the shifting ambiguities and complexities of unidealized existence" (223). This "unidealized existence" is not a world of heroes but of everyday, flawed human beings. It's a world in which human misery is the result not of fate or of some kind of cosmic intervention but of sociological and psychological causes. In other world, this is the real world, warts and all.

In the real world, in which Ipek and all the other non heroic characters live, it isn't easy to find true love. In the real world, a man/woman doesn't always remain faithful to his woman/her man, even when he/she is married. Sometimes he/she has frequent extramarital affairs as Blue and Ipek. In the real world of Kars, people enjoy standing around the scene of an accident to watch human misery. It is in Kars where people think that killing people is part of the scenario, where people like watching *Mariana*, a telenovela from Latin America, to forget their poverty, where a former communist Kurd turns into religion because it offers brotherhood, where a young boy tries to find the meaning of God existence, the meaning of heaven for "those millions who live in poverty and oppression" but then killed and where a communist-nationalist believes that this city is like a war zone "to kill or to be killed"

Ka's life becomes a tragedy because he still lives in his dream. He does not realize that reality is sordid and corrupted. He believes that he can win Ipek. He pursues his dream of romantic love without ever understanding that it has escaped him. He fails to understand that he cannot recapture the past, especially his fresh and new love for Ipek. No matter how hard he tries, he pays too much for his innocence.

Ka's conflict is the conflict between his dream/his innocence and the reality. He does not realize that in reality people grow old and change. When Ka was a child he saw snow is pure and innocent, but it changes and no longer "promised innocence", in fact it begins "tiring, irritating, terrorizing". His inability to understand the changes in human life and nature ends his life tragically.

Ka possesses certain greatness as a tragic hero. His greatness lies in his incredible ability to actually live in his dream. His greatness leads Fasil [the young generation] to fulfill his dream. Though Ka's life ended tragically, he saves Fasil's happiness. If Ka does not set Blue free, it is impossible for him [Fasil] to marry Kadife. It can be said that Ka's death is the reason to make young person [Fasil] to fulfill his romantic dream, marry Kadife, the woman that he love. His greatness also leads him to his tragic end. His greatness becomes his irony, because no one wants to remember him Kars. He is distrusted and rejected "no one here likes Ka these days". Even Ipek refuses to talk about him. She also regrets having affair with him. Ka's tragedy is a tragedy of innocence. His innocence makes him unaware that the real world is not the world that he likes to see. Another quality for Ka as a tragic hero is he is a kind man. Ka does not judge and is not involved in a certain group. He wants to make friend with all groups because he is "a real gentleman". He stands among the Islamist, Kurds, Leftist and fundamentalist. He does not represent anyone. His being neutral leads him to his downfall because as a westernized

Turk, he should stand against Islamist, against Muhtar to whom he gives respect and against Sheikh SaadatinEfendi whom he kisses his hand.

The text is structured by a struggle for dominance reaches between two very different literary genre: romance – the mythos of summer, the genre which Ka's narrative belongs – and irony, the mythos of winter, the genre to which the narrator's belongs.

The structure of irony does not succeed, however, in eradicating the structure of romance. Instead, the structure of irony is shadowed by the structure of romance. Perhaps because Orhan/narrator knows that romance is no longer possible. The nostalgia of lost innocence, a lost paradise, for the mythos of summer, the genre of romance will be substituted by the genre of tragedy can be seen from Orhan's closing description.

...They all disappear into the thick-falling snow... I sat down and as I looked out the window through the snow at orange lights of the outermost houses of the outlying neighborhoods, the shabby rooms full of people watching television, and the last snow-covered rooftops, the thin and elegantly quivering ribbons of smoke rising from the broken chimneys at last seemed a smudge through my tears (463).

The Sense of Inevitability in *Snow*

In *Snow*, the sense of inevitability can be seen from Ka's decision to be a mediator. The decision that he make is based on his romantic view of his future. He will take Ipek to Frankfurt and they will live happily like in fairy tales. Knowing Ipek only for three days, he believes that she will agree to come with him. He does not realize that Blue is Ipek's real lover. Ipek is a mature woman, she knows what she wants. Furthermore, by turning to Ka, Ipek hopes that she can forget Blue because Blue is also loved by her sister, Kadife.

Ka comes to Kars as a reporter not as a politician. He should not be involved in conflict between secularist and Islam Fundamentalist. He should not come to Kadife and ask her to uncover her head. Furthermore, he should not come to Blue and ask for his freedom from the police. His purpose is to report not to be reported. Because of his act, he is accused by Blue's followers that he gives information to Z Demirkol and the Police. His love for Ipek makes him unreasonable. As an educated person, he must use his reason before he agrees with SunayZaim idea to ask Kadife to uncover her head in order to set Blue free.

Conclusion

In *Snow* the genre of romance is overcome by the genre of irony in the novel, although, throughout the text, the former ' shadows' the latter in the form of Ka's description of past, a romantic, paradisaal childhood.

Snow as a tragedy presents not only Ka's weakness and uncertain security and liability to suffering, but also his nobility and greatness. As a tragic protagonist, Ka has an active role which exposes not only his errors of judgment, his flaw [his innocence/ his lack of knowledge of his surrounding], his own conscious or unwitting contribution to the tragic situation, but which also suggests his enormous potentialities to endure or survive or transcend suffering, to learn what "naked wretches" feel, and to attain a complex view of moral responsibility. At the end one can say it is ironic to see a man who tries to open his

heart for religion is killed by people devoting their lives for faith, people who are taught the importance of brotherhood and tolerance.

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