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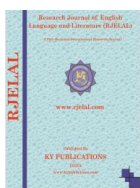
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## “MUSEUM OF INNOCENCE”: FROM PRINT TO CINEMA

OMKAR ROY

Research Scholar, Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga

[royomkar@gmail.com](mailto:royomkar@gmail.com)



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### Abstract

Orhan Pamuk has been a brilliant Turkish author of world fame. Orhan Pamuk won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2006. He is celebrated as one of the greatest story tellers of all time. He won almost all the literary prizes of the world. However, his literary contribution can be judged by the mere fact that he became his country's first writer to become a Nobel Laureate. He has been getting critical acclaim for his work ever since he started writing. Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* is a novel about first love painfully sustained over a lifetime. It is the story of a hapless suitor, besotted with love, locked in a lifelong obsession with a woman he can neither leave nor have.

Key words: postmodernism, meta narratives, intertextuality, meta fiction, orientalism.

Orhan Pamuk, born on June 7, 1954, has penned down ten novels till date. He is a Turkish writer and generally writes in Turkish language. Pamuk started writing early in life. His fictional works include *Cevdet Bey and his Sons (1982)*, *The Silent House (1983)*, *The White Castle (1990)*, *The Black Book (1994)*, *The New Life (1997)*, *My Name is Red (2001)*, *Snow (2004)*, *The Museum of Innocence (2009)*, *A Strangeness in my Mind (2015)*, and *The Red Haired Woman (2017)*. Apart from these fictional works, he has also written three pieces of non-fiction—*Istanbul: Memories and the City (2005)*, an autobiography; *Other Colours: Essays and a Story (2000)*, and *The Naïve and Sentimental Novelist (2010)*.

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Laureate. He has been getting critical acclaim for his work ever since he started writing.

Pamuk was born in a rich and western-oriented family. At the initial stage he studied painting, switched over to architecture but discontinued his studies midway, and finally settled for journalism and got the degree in 1977. He made writing his profession and devoted himself to a quest for Turkish identity and history in his novels. Before he got the Nobel Prize only five of his novels were available in translations in different languages. Since the award his works have been translated into more than fifty-five languages and they have earned universal applause. His works are praised for innovative and aesthetic qualities, as well as for their provocative and timely concern. He interrogates problems of modernity and cultural divide in the Turkish context. He interrogates Ottoman legacy formally and thematically in stylistically innovative ways.

Pamuk brought Istanbul back into the literary world map almost single-handedly. Istanbul has always been a place where stories and histories meet. From the Quran to Orhan Pamuk, it has three names—Byzantium, Constantinople, and Istanbul. It stands as the gateway between the East and the West. The ancient Byzantium was the capital city of the eastern Christendom, and at the later stage it became the capital of the Ottoman Empire. It has a history of 6000 years. Pamuk has an acute sense of place in his writings. His stories revolve round this longest-lived political entity of Europe. He gives a picturesque description of this city much in the manner of Salman Rushdie and O. Henry who unfold before us the cities of Bombay and New York respectively in their fictional works.

Love is the most important inborn feeling. Psychologists have defined love in different ways. For Freud, a boundary between 'ego' and 'love' is dissolute. He says, "against all evidences of his senses a man who is in love declares that 'I' and 'you' are one and he starts behaving as if it were a fact". Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* is a novel about first love painfully sustained over a lifetime. It is the story of a hapless suitor, besotted with love, locked in a lifelong obsession with a woman he can neither leave nor have. Thematically it is in the line of such memorable novels as *The Great Gatsby* (F. Scott Fitzgerald), *Love in the Time of Cholera* (Gabriel Garcia Marquez), *Remains of the Day* (Kazuo Ishiguro), and *The Bad Girl* (Mario Vargas Llosa). Pamuk's novel is a new addition to the triumphant chronicles of the lovelorn. Set in Istanbul of the 1970s, the novel is also a chronicle of its haute-bourgeois class which tried to define itself by Western values, a trend that continues even today as Turkey as a whole takes a more Islamic turn. Pamuk himself admitted that the book is an exploration of the 'pretensions' of upper-class Turks, who 'in spite of their pro-Western attitude are highly conservative.'

The beginning of the novel is cinematic and it catches hold of the reader's mind too soon, especially in the description of the protagonist Kemal Basmacı's encounters with Fusun in Merhamet Apartments. Kemal belongs to a nouveau riche family having export business; he is engaged to

a beautiful, fashionable young woman with enlightened views, Sibel, who, like Kemal, has been educated in a European country. Istanbul in 70's was trying to cope with the so called modernity of the West, but in spite of her modernity—which means that she isn't a virgin—Sibel is ready to make love to Kemal only 'when she was absolutely sure that there would in the end be a wedding.' But things change too quickly for Kemal. One day his eye is taken by a designer handbag which, he thinks, would make a perfect gift for his fiancée. But by then his eye has also been caught by the sales girl, a lustrous 18-year blonde who happens to be a distant cousin called Füsün, a relatively poor relation whom he hasn't seen for the last several years. At first, it's just a seduction. He thinks of her as even more modern than Sibel, and love doesn't come into it. But when he discovers her 'growing amazement' at the new world of sex he introduces her to, their afternoons together become an obsession. They meet regularly at Merhamet Apartments in one of the flats abandoned by his mother, which becomes a happy hunting ground for their sex game. She knows of his engagement and he knows he must give her up – and he will, any day now. It is less than a week now that Kemal is about to be engaged, and the Hamletian dilemma keeps on troubling him, yet he prefers staying along the tide to fighting against it. Even while exchanging rings with Sibel at the engagement party, his eyes keep searching for a glimpse of Fusun who does appear as a guest, and leaves with a promise to meet the next day. But it was not a promise to be kept. She disappears suddenly, and he learns that her family has moved. 'Self' of Kemal who falls in love is completely dissolute into the 'self' of Fusun. "Love distorts the security of an illusionary unified subjectivity".

Kemal keeps waiting for days and months for Fusun to return, hoping she would appear someday. The act of waiting becomes almost an obsession for him. It is at this point that we see him as a Bollywood hero, completely lost and desolated in love, taking to drinking, and adopting darkness as his only companion. Sibel waits for things to change, but Kemal cannot forget Fusun, for the harder he tries, the more it troubles him. He becomes almost a paranoid, leaving his home and living in a motel,

chasing people and looking into their faces in an attempt to catch the spirit of Fusun as if it were floating in the air. But he chases only ghosts or shadows, and it stings him hard to realize that he is losing all hopes of survival. It takes him almost a year to find her again, a year of driving through every neighbourhood of the enormous city, months of heavy drinking in which he loses all interest in Sibel, even after they move in together. Sibel, completely unaware of what was going on in Kemal's mind, tries her best to cheer him up. She hopes to save him from what seems an inexplicable sadness, but she gets enraged when she learns the truth. To her, Füsün is just 'a common shop girl', a slut, even though they have each only slept with one man. She breaks off their engagement; but that is only the start of Kemal's separation from the social world he had once thought to inherit.

Kemal loses all hopes to see Fusun ever, but it is only then that he receives a postcard from her which enlivens his dampened spirits. Eventually he discovers her whereabouts, and is invited to call at the apartment she shares with her parents in a lower-middle class neighbourhood just north of the Golden Horn. Over the next eight years, he would invite himself for dinner some 1593 times, sharing her mother's excellent food and endless glasses of *raki* with the family. Fusun is always pleased to see him, but she now treats him as a respected older relative. In the mean while she has also rescued her honour by marrying a fat, sweet-tempered boy from her old neighbourhood who later becomes a movie director. Night after night Kemal would join them at her family's dinner table, a threesome locked in a hopeless love story. All these long years he keeps courting her hoping everyday that she would eventually return to him, but he is barely allowed to do so much as to touch her arm.

Kemal becomes more and more obsessed with Fusun as other aspects of his life fall apart, and eventually he starts collecting things and even stealing them from her home for his life's work, the building of a museum in tribute to his onetime lover. He cherishes every physical relic of Fusun that he can save or steal. He has already been collecting mementos of his affair with Fusun: a hair clip, a cup she had touched, an earring. Now during their long

and explicitly unphysical reconnection, he stows away her cigarette butts, a barrette, a saltshaker from her dinner table, a quince grater from her kitchen, the little china dog that sits on top of her family's television. These objects eventually find their home in the Museum of Innocence, a shrine to everyday life that he will spend his last years in building.

Knowing full well how to hold the attention of the readers, Pamuk opens his novel with Kemal and Fusun in bed. This makes the story begin backward, consummation taking place before initiation, suggesting thereby that bedding Fusun is surprisingly easy; it is winning her heart that proves devilishly difficult. It was Kemal's failure to recognize the 'golden instant', 'the moment of perfect happiness' experienced with Fusun that makes him labour mightily for the rest of his life to recapture the bliss he wins so easily in the beginning of the story. In his irrational pursuit of happiness he moves from one obsession to the other, swiping and hoarding knickknacks that have even the slightest relation to Fusun. He sets out on a bizarre journey nourishing the fond foolish dream of a museum built to honour his love for Fusun, his lost paradise of their days together. He believes this journey will help him chase down the past; even overtake it, enabling him to transform his love for Fusun into a museum of relics, keeping the rapture of blissful togetherness alive.

Both the theme of the novel and the seemingly abnormal behavior of the protagonist can be best understood in relation to a Turkish word for melancholy, *huzun*, which is weightier than its English equivalent. "It carries a theological understanding of the 'place of loss and grief,' it sustains notes of elegy and nostalgia, and conveys a sense of 'worldly failure and listlessness.'" This sense of melancholy or sadness becomes the defining emotion as much of the protagonist as of the post-imperial capital the story is set in. "When Proust talks about love, he is seen as someone talking about universal love. Especially at the beginning, when I write about love, people would say that I was writing about Turkish love".

*The Museum of Innocence* is a unique novel in the sense that its theme, its words and the emotions they generate, have a physical, concrete identity. 'The Museum of Innocence' is both a novel and a real museum, and by a self admission of the novelist the twin ideas were conceived together. Kemal in fact wanted people not just to 'read' his story as chronicled by Orhan Pamuk, but also 'witness' it in the museum he intended to erect in memory of Fusun. The link between the two is provided by the reappearance of Orhan Pamuk as a character in the last chapter of the novel, 'Happiness', where he is introduced by Kemal as one 'who has narrated the story in my name, and with my approval.' It may be conjectured that Pamuk might have cherished for this enchanting story the memory of a beautiful model who posed for him in his young days in the makeshift studio in her mother's discarded apartment. According full honour to Kemal's words Pamuk collected for his museum more than a thousand artifacts that reflect the story. There are 83 display cases, one for each chapter of the book, and they are organized according to the storyline of the novel. In order to seek inspiration for his museum, Kemal claims to have visited as many as 1743 museums across the world, most prominently those of Dostoevsky, Nabokov, Proust, Spinoza, Tagore, Pirandello, Strindberg, Poe, Mario Praz and Flaubert. Kemal wanted his museum to be designed in such a way that once a visitor stood inside it, it should be possible to see the entire collection, all the display cases, and everything else. This experience of viewing all the objects of the museum at the same time from any perspective would enable the visitors to lose all sense of Time. "In poetically well built museums, formed from the heart's compulsions, we are consoled not by finding in them old objects that we love, but by losing all sense of time". And on top of everything else, a ticket has been provided in each copy of the book to let the readers of this book enjoy free first visit to the museum.

Museum is an institution that conserves a collection of artifacts of cultural, historical and scientific importance. Things presented in the museum evoke stories. An object creates story as there is a story lying in every object. Orhan Pamuk

erected a museum to celebrate his love and company of Fusun. Pamuk tries to give his love story a physical or concrete form by constructing a museum to commemorate his love. This celebration of things of his beloved is also the theme of the film *Innocence of Memories*. Orhan Pamuk and Grant Gee wrote the screen play of the film. It is directed by Grant Gee. The story is set in Istanbul during 1975 to 1984. The film makes a physical and psychological journey through Istanbul. It combines imagined narratives with real-world observation. The film also presents sensual experiences of places and objects just as people and their interactions. It also appears to be an anthropological study of the city of that time. The camera brings nocturnal scenes of streets in low light, people working at night and makes an organic study of the city. A man who collects rags and discarded things prefers to work at night and people pay less attention on him. We see the residential windows of the city. Pamuk is shown through fleeting glimpses of TV screens in living rooms.

Both the film and the text become successful in showing the fact that one man's trash is another man's treasure. The film does not focus on the love part but things that happen afterwards. It focuses on the museum and the protagonist's habit of collection.

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