

## POSTCOLONIALISM IN ORHAN PHAMUK'S SNOW : A LITERARY ANALYSIS

Siyaswati

Prodi Bahasa Inggris Univ. PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya

### ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah mengungkapkan pendekatan poskolonialisme sebagai study literatur di dalam Novel 'Snow' karya Orhan Phamuk. Poskolonialisme diinspirasi oleh Orientalisme dan dibentuk karena ketidakadilan sosial yang terjadi di negara – negara koloni. *Snow* adalah sebuah novel yang terjadi di tengah kota *Kars* dan mengisahkan tentang konflik antara Islam, dunia Barat, kekayaan, larangan terhadap pemakaian Jilbab di Turki. Novel ini juga membahas tentang seni, budaya, keberadaan tradisi kehidupan sehari – hari dan pengalaman manusia tentang kepedihan dan keindahan.

***Kata kunci:*** *poskolonialisme, analisa literature, snow*

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to reveal the postcolonialism approach a literary study in Novel *Snow* by Orhan Phamuk. Post colonialism is inspired by Orientalism and produced due to social injustice in colonized countries. "Snow" is a novel which takes place in the border city of Kars and explores the conflict between Islamism, Westernism, poverty and headscarf ban in modern Turkey. It also explored vast trajectories of history, art, culture, the persistence of memory and tradition in their everyday lives and the poignancy and beauty of the human experience.

**Key words :** *postcolonialism, literary analysis, snow*

### INTRODUCTION

Orhan Pamuk, winner of the 2006 Nobel Prize for Literature, is a writer with a formidable international reputation. Deeply rooted in a liberal tradition that values tolerance, freedom, and a respect for the other, this Turkish writer passionately embraces his identity while echoing universal human values. A reluctant interpreter of East-West relations, he prefers to see himself as a bridge between the two worlds. A novelist whose aesthetic

sensibility is rooted in his beloved Istanbul but draws from the tradition of great Western novelists, he delights in history, memory, and the exploration of the human condition. In autumn 2009, Pamuk was Harvard's Charles Eliot Norton Lecturer, delivering a series of lectures entitled "The Naive and Sentimental Novelist". In January 2010, Pamuk admitted that he was in a relationship with the Man Booker Prize winning novelist, Kiran Desai.

Pamuk's next novel was *Kar* in 2002 (English translation, *Snow*, 2004), which takes place in the border city of Kars and explores the conflict between Islamism and Westernism in modern Turkey. Snow follows Ka, an expatriate Turkish poet, as he wanders around the snowy Kars and gets caught up in the middle of aimless Islamist, headscarf advocates, secularists, and a number of factions who die and kill in the name of highly contradictory ideals. *The New York Times* listed *Snow* as one of its Ten Best Books of 2004. He also published a memoir/travelogue *Istanbul—Hatıralar ve Şehir* in 2003 (English version, *Istanbul—Memories and the City*, 2005). Pamuk's *Other Colours* - a collection of non-fiction and a story — was published in the UK in September 2007. His next novel is titled *The Museum of Innocence*.

In both "Snow" and the "Museum of Innocence", Pamuk describes tragic love stories, where men fall in love with beautiful women at first sight. It has been noted that 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. Pamuk's heroes tend to be educated men who fall tragically in love with beauties, but who are doomed to a decrepit loneliness.

Pamuk's books are characterized by a confusion or loss of identity brought on in part by the conflict between Western and Eastern values. They are often disturbing or unsettling, but include complex, intriguing plots and characters of great depth. His works are also redolent with discussion of and fascination with the creative arts, such as literature and painting. Pamuk's work often touches on the deep-rooted tensions

between East and West and tradition and modernism/secularism.

### 1. Theories of Postcolonialism

Europe has grown so rapidly in their industry and technology. Fascinating sophisticated products are made in Europe, such as cars, machines, medical electronic tools, even fashions and science. This development had given certain honor for the Europeans to feel proud (or even over-proud) of themselves. In fact even the canon literary works are neither Indian nor Arabic, they are English. The development of science and inventory prompts the European nations to challenge their territory by touring around the world. Spain, Portugal, and British raced to spread their wings to Asian and African countries. On the contrary, the Orient used to live in their own culture with high respect for the past not the future. The Orient never force themselves to change their world. Whenever the Europeans arrived, they quickly colonized the Orient. Brainwash the oppressed Orient to feel their inferiority. Such inferior identity is over and over again being dictated to the Orient so that they might have no passion to move forward. Basically Edward Said criticizes the dichotomy between the West and the East. What so called the West are the European countries and their cousin the American? The West sees the Asian and also the African as the nations from the East or the Orient. The Western people have different perspective and philosophy from the Orient. They see things differently. As a result, the west paradigm in seeing the Orient is not the same as the Orient sees them.

The people in the East build their identity proudly over their ethnic origin with all their belief and culture. This

fair and is imbalance in accomplishing and value the theories and knowledge he critiques. Said fails to criticize Post structuralism since his own theory actually is built upon Post structuralism. He tends to underestimate Orientalism debts to Poststructuralist ancestor.

Post colonialism basically is a deconstruction to reveal the colonial conception on the oppressed and to articulate the \_others' mute opinion. Post colonialism arise because of the realization of West- East binary opposition. This opposition is sharply proposed to the world through Said's Orientalism. It can say that Orientalism is the grandfather of Postcolonialism. Marxism is produced because of social injustice in Europe. It inspires Orientalism which is produced because of social injustice in Asia. Post colonialism is inspired by Orientalism and produced due to social injustice in colonized countries. Abdul R. Jan Mohamed in his *The Economy of Manichean Allegory* describes colonialist as motivated by his own passion to conquer. He says: —Motivated by his desire to conquer and dominate, the imperialist configures the colonial realm as a confrontation based on differences in race, language, social customs, cultural values, and modes of production. As it is known that there are many forms of colonialism manifestation. It could be Dutch colony oppress the Indonesian to get the spices as in the previous centuries, or American colonizes the world countries' finance and trends nowadays, or even the military forces of a country oppress their own people to gain fake stability. All of them have the same spirit; harsh conquer to erase others. In colonialism, the different race should be minimized, the other language

must be forbidden, and strange culture is better to get rid of. Often in order to achieve this, any kind of harassment and violence would be allowed.

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin use the term postcolonial in a comprehensive sense, "to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the resent day," on account of the "continuity of preoccupations" between the colonial and postcolonial periods. Postcolonial criticism has embraced a number of aims: most fundamentally, to reexamine the history of colonialism from the perspective of the colonized; to determine the economic, political, and cultural impact of colonialism on both the colonized peoples and the colonizing powers; to analyze the process of decolonization; and above all, to participate in the goals of political liberation, which includes equal access to material resources, the contestation of forms of domination, and the articulation of political and cultural identities (Young, 11). Early voices of anti-imperialism stressed the need to develop or return to indigenous literary traditions so as to exorcize their cultural heritage of the specters of imperial domination. Other voices advocated an adaptation of Western ideals toward their own political and cultural ends. The fundamental framework of postcolonial thought has been furnished by the Marxist critique of colonialism and imperialism, which has been adapted to their localized contexts by thinkers from Frantz Fanon to Gayatri Spivak.

## 2. Characters in the novel

Little (1966:89) *said that character may be presented mainly through description and discussion, or, in a more*

constructs certain pride which is not understandable for the West. Orientalism signifies the whole comprehensive identity and culture of the people in the East. On the other hand, the West views the East as their primitive or savage past that still live with old fashioned way of living; therefore the East is uncivilized yet. The West considers them as the torch-bearer of civilization and that they are the chosen people who should lead the world into a better era. Unfortunately, this concept is refused by the Orient since it underestimates their value and identity.

In Oriental world, a member of society is closely tied up to the socio-cultural and historical geographical background of his origin. A person becomes whosoever he or she is because the society and the nature construct the self identity. A Jewish boy is grown tightly in a constructed family and social education to maintain the Jewish heritage and his worldview. A Chinese girl will not dare to produce the taboo from outside of her culture and ancestry philosophy. An Indian child grows up believing the religion and paradigm the Indian society had taught. Therefore, whenever an Orientalist composes a work, actually the work is not a personal self achievement. It is a social production. The whole background contributes to the construction of the world. This exposure proposes a new breakthrough in Cultural Studies and Literary Criticism. Said enables literary teachers in Orient to teach literature that is not Oriental. At the same time Said helps the Westerners to understand Oriental literature. Even in Religious Studies, Said has become the silver lining. Take for example, in the Bible, there is a scene where Samson, an Israelite committed

suicide by destroying a huge temple in order to kill thousands of Philistines.

In Westerner's mind, this is a severe consequence, a terrible one; Samson had to receive because of his disobedient attitude to God and his adultery with Delilah. However, for the Jewish, this is a heroic action. According to the Orient, the death for your country, death on defeating your nation's enemy, death for your God, is something precious and honored. Another example might come from a Caribbean teacher who wants to teach about *Jane Eyre* in a literary class. This novel presents the Caribbean character as the antagonist. In order to maintain the balance in the students mind, study on *Jane Eyre* is accommodated by the presence of *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Said writes his Orientalism to challenge Marxist Theory, but Leela Gandhi, in one of her chapters, criticizes Said's Orientalism. At least there are two points in which Gandhi tries to reveal. The first is related to subjunctive attitude of Orientalism. Said criticizes Marxism for being limited in Western world only; however Gandhi says that Said himself is symptomatically articulating the events of 1968. On those years, the labors and students across Europe were protesting against the capitalist state and betraying Stalinist leaders. This utopian revolution influenced a lot in Said's reconsideration on West and Marx. Therefore, Orientalism itself, despite of its brilliant critic to Marxist, is social production text. Next, the second point is Said's debt to post structuralism. In Said's critique of Marxist theory, he arrives at objections to Marxist ancestor; Poststructuralist. Unfortunately, Gandhi considers Said failed to value his debts to his theoretical predecessors, the Post structuralism. Said, she says, is not really

*dramatic manner....* Character can be performed physically in this case Ka, the main character, he begins as a dutiful journalist, talking to a variety of town figures, trying to learn more about the suicide, but find himself drawn into the larger conflict throughout the country. It is no longer the Kurds that are perceived by the authorities as being the greatest threat, but the increasingly influential Islamist. Ka respected as a poet but tainted as one who has presumably been polluted by Western thought and ways is viewed with both suspicion and interest by both sides. The police are reluctant to rough him up as they do the local because of his Istanbul and German connections, while the Islamist see him as the enemy as non believer and also Westernized.

*Kadife* "Yes," said Kadife, "I have." (335)

Many events in Snow illustrated the tension between the Islamic fundamentalist and the more liberal people of Kars. The plot darkens throughout the novel and the reader encounters violent scenes as people from the village create internal tension that lead to kill and death. It represents the conflicts within Islam, which are filled with local contradictions that arise when traditional attitudes are faced with those modern of Islam. It is also present a few of Muslims who are faithful to God and are fearful of extreme secularists and fanatics. There is the slightest possibility that a balance can be maintained between both the religious and the secular. For example: we can analyze them from the pages of the novel:

A conversation between Ka and Necip, a young religious student who eventually dies when tensions between secularists and Islamist explodes during a

televised event at the National Theater. Before Necip dies, Ka has a conversation with him in which he testifies to a belief in God that sustains many of the locals, but also to the fear that arises from this tension and the idea that only westerners can question God. Necip tells Ka about a dream he has had, in which he fears his own disbelief in God and that if it is true he will die. He further illuminates his fear by confessing:

*"I looked it up the encyclopedia once, and it said that word atheist comes from the Greek athos, but athos doesn't refer to people who don't believe in God; it refers to the only ones, people whom the God have abandoned. This proves that people can't ever really be atheists, because even if we wanted it, God would never abandon us here. To become atheist, then you must first become a Westerner."* (153)

Necip's confession leads one to believe that the tension between East and West in Turkey is dependent upon Western influences that somehow direct human beings towards atheism. However, the main character in Snow oscillates between religion and secularity until Ka appears on the scene to explain that one can have a mystical union with God and still have an open world view.

The headscarves girls have strong identity. The authorities had outlawed the wearing of head scarves in educational institutions across the country, many women refused to comply. Because the girls thought if they don't wear headscarves (1) Their life will have no meaning and (2) they no longer wanted to live.

*"Certainly it was they who taught her to think of the head scarf as a symbol of "political Islam".* (18)

The statement that opposed the West, it can be seen from Blue statement. "Only Blue adamantly opposed the title.

*"We are not speaking to Europe," he said, "we" re speaking to all humanity. Our friends should not be surprised to learn we have been unable to publish our statement not just in Kars and Istanbul but also in Frankfurt. The people of Europe are not our friends, they are our enemies. And it's not because we're their enemies. It's because they instinctively despise us."* (293)

Other statement that opposed the West can be seen from Blue statement on his dialogue with Turgut Bey :

*Blue : "Europe's not my future," said Blue with a smile. "As long as I live I shall never imitate them or hate myself for being unlike them,".*

*Turgut bey: "it's not just Islamist who take pride in this country, the Republican feel the same wa," said Turgu bey. "if we say all humanity instead of Europe, what do we have?"(294)*

Resisting Westernization in "Snow" can be seen from the dialogue of Kurdish Youth and Blue as follow:

*Kurdish Youth: When a westerner meets someone from poor country, he feels deep contemp. He assumes that the poor man's head must be full of all the nonsense that plunge his country into poverty and despair."* (299)

*"That's way I want to tell the German paper that even if I got a chance to go to Germany one day, even if they gave me a visa I wouldn't go".*

*"the first western man I met in the street turned out to be a good person who didn't even despise me, I'd still mistrust him , just for being a Westerner. I'd still worry that the man was looking down on me. Because in Germany they can spot Turks just by the way they look. (300)*

*"It's as if they're saying, I'm sorry I'm not a westerner" (301)*

*Here is what I would like you to write: I am proud of the part of me that isn't European. I am proud of the things in me that the European find childish, cruel, and primitive. If the Europeans are beautiful, I want to be ugly, if they are intelligent, I prefer to be stupid, if they are modern, let me stay poor."*

Those dialogues are precisely the "other" of the West that lends individualism to the characters who are able to gain momentum in their self fashioning by being critical of the occident. While a strong desire to resist the West performed by Turget Bey who wants to be accepted by the West,

*" I wish to prove by the European that in Turkey, too, we have people who believe in common sense and democracy"(295)*

It seems to him that if he can get the West to accept the fact that the people of the East are in many ways like the people of the West than surely not only will the East be legitimate, but they will also not be the "other"

The last Postcolonialism analyses is the split identity by the character "Ka" which can be seen from the expression:

"I wanted to be a Westerner and a believer," said Ka. "A man could be at the coffeehouse every evening laughing and playing cards with his friend, he could have so much fun with his classmate that there is never a moment when they aren't exploding into laughter, he could spend every hour of the day chatting with his intimates, but if that man abandoned by God, he'd still be loneliest man on earth." (153)

### 3. Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, it can conclude that the novel *Snow* by Orhan Pamuk analyses from a postcolonialism ideology can give us understanding of dynamic characters in showing their identity and equality in which all people have the same right. Every human have to appreciate every Eastern, every woman, every child, every slave, everyone who used to be categorized as savage. The big question is, do the intellectuals, use the power to dominate like the West, or to articulate the silence of the marginal, the East?

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