

Part 1: Cultural Changes in Turkey

New Tendencies in Turkish Literature and Some Aspects of Orhan Pamuk's Works

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Since the 1980s, Turkish society has gone through fundamental changes. These changes are characterized on a political level by a stronger liberalization, and on a cultural level by the phenomenon of globalization. A growing number of minority groups and subcultures have gained public voice; their existence—and acceptance—in the public sphere prompts questions on the changes in the dominant value system of Turkish society (see Kandiyoti and Saktanber 2002). For the first time, the ruling state model of the Turkish nation has come seriously into discussion, and Turkish society has become more fragmented and socially modified.

The partial liberalization of Turkish society in the years following the coup d'état of September 1980 coincided with a growing development of cultural life, the press and literary production. With regard to literature, we can observe that the era of critical realism, which had been the dominant trend in the fifties and sixties, as well as the experimental modernism of the 1970s made room for a broader look on literature that is less connected with homogenous state ideas. Authors of the post-1980s see themselves first and foremost as experimental players on both a form and a subject level, with literature as their playground. As a consequence, new themes, styles and genres appeared, and already existing genres, as for example the historical novel or the crime and science fiction novel, have gained new forms and importance.

Concerning the historical novel, one of the first authors to thematize Ottoman history in a new and experimental way was Orhan Pamuk (b. 1952), whose works we will treat more extensively in the second part of this article. In his third novel *Beyaz Kale*, from 1985, he changed for the first time the temporal frame of his novels from the Republican present to the Ottoman past. Another author who since 1995 has become famous for the writing of historical novels, is the philosopher İhsan Oktay Anar: In his three novels, set in the Ottoman past, he mixes myth and reality to construct an immense “exotic stage design” for the human fantasy (Furrer 2000: 239). Other authors of historical novels include Reha Çamuroğlu, Gürsel Korat, Ahmet Altan, and Nedim Gürsel.

In the crime novel genre, from a vast spectrum of writers, only a few here will be named here: Ahmet Ümit, born in 1960, who has been writing crime fiction since the middle of the 1990s, gained fame with his first novel *Sis ve Gece* from 1996. The thematic spectrum of his novels ranges from the Turkish secret service system (*Sis ve Gece*), to Turkish communists in Moscow (*Kar Kokusu*, 1998), archaeological settings and multicultural Anatolian history (*Patasana*, 2000), Turkish

mafia circles (*Kukla*, 2002) and the cultural milieu of the Beyoğlu quarter of Istanbul (*Beyoğlu Rapsodisi*, 2003). Another writer who since 1994 has written at least 25 books belonging to the ‘thriller’ category, and who is obviously well received by Turkish readers,¹ is Osman Aysu. A third author, who has become famous recently (2003) with a travesty series hero who preferably solves cases in an Islamist or nationalist milieu, is Mehmet Murat Somer.

With regard to content, a shift from realism to fantasy and even the supernatural can be observed.² One of the earliest representatives of the genre of fantastic realism is Latife Tekin (b. 1957), whose 1983 novel *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* with its fantastic features transgressed the limits of traditional “village literature” (*köy edebiyatı*) and started a public discussion on the role of realism in Turkish literature and Turkish cultural heritage (see Sagaster 2002: 7-27). Another author famous already in the 1970s for her fantastic-satirical short stories, is the female writer Nazlı Eray. Apart from these, the authors Hasan Ali Toptaş, Aslı Erdoğan, Hakan Şenocak, and Faruk Duman can be named.

The spiritual search for a deeper meaning of life is another dimension which has to be added to the treatment of recent Turkish literature. This search, it seems, takes several different directions: On the one hand, we have the ‘indigenous’ direction with an interest in Islamic thought; this trend is represented by authors such as Ali Haydar Haksal, Mustafa Miyasoğlu or the female writer Cihan Aktaş. An ‘outsider’ among the seekers of Islamic religious meaning is Metin Kaçan, who, after his famous 1990 novel *Ağır Roman*, which describes life in an Istanbul gypsy quarter using a fantastic slang language, turned in his second, 1997 novel *Fındık Sekiz* to Islamic mysticism. This novel, based on a travel allegory, depicts the metamorphosis of a debauched bohemian character into a pious Muslim.

On the other hand, recent Turkish literature also demonstrates a growing interest in Far Eastern Buddhist and Hindu philosophies.³ Vivet Kanetti, who also publishes under the pseudonym E. Emine and who is seen as one of Turkey’s few ‘New Age’ authors, writes about topics such as emotional intelligence, reincarnation and the limits of rationality.

A third tendency that has found the interest of Turkish writers is the cultural aspects of religion: in her work, Elif Şafak, one of the most successful authors of

¹ Although we have no concrete numbers, the fact that Osman Aysu’s books are featured in many bookshops among the “Bestsellers of the Month” provides some evidence for this assumption.

² The female writer Nazlı Eray is commonly regarded as one of the earliest and ‘most fruitful’ writers of Turkish fantastic realism. For her biography and work see *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türk Edebiyatçıları Ansiklopedisi* 2002: 310-311. Some others are Latife Tekin, Aslı Erdoğan, Hakan Şenocak.

³ For the literature of an author with an interest in Far Eastern religions see the works of Vivet Kanetti (pseudonym E. Emine). A writer who has recently become interested in Islamic thought is Metin Kaçan.

the young generation, treats aspects of various religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism.

On a formal level, genres are often mixed, creating hybrid texts with numerous inter-textual allusions. One writer who mixes elements of pop-art, science fiction and the thriller in an ironical and experimental way is Cem Akaş (b. 1968).

Another factor playing a role in the way post-1980 authors see themselves is a new sensitivity toward the limitedness of the dominant local literary models. Here we see the aim to produce a Turkish literature able to meet international standards.⁴ Borders between the 'First', 'Second' and 'Third' World are, in this view, only secondary, while literatures from regions as diverse as Europe (England, France, Germany), Latin America, Japan and India feature equally as examples of 'world literature'.

In contrast to this cosmopolitanism stands the comparatively narrow geographical space in which the new Turkish literature is produced. In general, the centre of literary productivity is Istanbul: Many of the post-1980 authors live and work here, and most of the major periodicals of the literary and cultural scene (like e.g. *Varlık*, *Virgül*, *E Aylık Kültür ve Edebiyat Dergisi*, *kitap-lık*) as well as a huge amount of periodicals with a small or even marginal group of readers are located here.

The 'typical' author of the new generation of Turkish writers comes from an urban, middleclass background, has a university education and often has lived abroad. He or she often writes from an individualizing and psychologizing perspective. However, the new interest in the individual does not mean that themes dealing with social problems are completely missing: While in the era of village literature, authors preferred to write about the lives of 'ordinary people' from rural areas, the new generation of writers now shows a special interest in the difficulties confronting urban fringe groups such as *gecekondu* inhabitants, gypsies, homosexuals, prostitutes or religious and ethnic minorities living among the Turkish Muslim majority.

This last point leads us to the political dimensions of Turkish literary writing of the last decades. The ideal of a Turkish society with a high tolerance for different religious, social and ethnic groups, which is conveyed by many of the literary texts, stands in sharp contrast to earlier ideals of a mono-cultural state. The rise of the historical novel with themes from the Ottoman past, for instance, to one of the most important forms of the Turkish novel, can be understood as the result of a new willingness of both Turkish authors and readers to integrate the Ottoman multicultural past into the perception of their own history.

⁴ For a discussion on the contemporary situation of Turkish literature between Cem Akaş, Ömer Aygün, Cem İleri, Yekta Kopan, Levent Şentürk, Murat Yalçın, Özen Yulan and Ayfer Tunç, see Tunç 2001: 59-79.

Orhan Pamuk and new tendencies in Turkish literature

After this general overview of Turkish literature we will now focus on a well-known post-1980 Turkish author, Orhan Pamuk. He is both an Istanbul author who has become very popular during the last two decades in and outside Turkey as well as a writer whose works carry many features that seem ‘typical’ of the new literature. In the following we will first briefly describe what makes Orhan Pamuk a ‘typical’ author of post-1980 Turkish literature. Then we will show to what extent Orhan Pamuk’s novels can be seen as a contribution to world literature. In order to determine what makes his novels accessible to readers in and outside Turkey we will then have a short look at the narrated space in which his characters interact. This will lead us to the stage where all of his novels take place, i.e. Turkey in a wider sense and more specifically Istanbul. We will now consider some aspects concerning the author and general tendencies within his works

Orhan Pamuk was born in Istanbul in 1952, where he still lives today. He comes from an urban, upper-class milieu, was educated at the American Robert College in Istanbul and has a university education. Moreover, he spent three years in New York during the 1980s (see *Tanzimat’tan Bugüne Edebiyatçılar Ansiklopedisi* 2001: 680-683 and Wroe 2004).⁵ By 2004 his published works included seven novels, his childhood-autobiography, a screen-play, a short story and various essays.

We find many of the tendencies of post-1980 Turkish literature in the works of Orhan Pamuk. He makes excessive use of meta-fictional and inter-textual elements and frequently combines different styles and genres. His works include narrative elements from crime fiction, the new historical novel, the political novel⁶ and even fragments of science fiction and the supernatural story.

Elements from crime fiction are found in many of Pamuk’s novels, e.g. in *Kara Kitap* (The Black Book, 1990) and *Benim Adım Kırmızı* (My Name is Red, 1998). The new historical novel is represented by *Beyaz Kale* (The White Castle, 1985) and, again, *Benim Adım Kırmızı*, and the political novel by *Kar* (Snow, 2002). The latter also contains science fiction elements. Comparable to the *Novelle* within Goethe’s *Wahlverwandschaften*, the synopsis of the science fiction story *Necip’in Hicranlı Hikayesi*, set in the year 3579 on the planet Gazzali, serves as a story within the story (see Pamuk 2002: 107-9). It is written and read to the

⁵ His family background is described in his childhood memories, *İstanbul. Hatıralar ve Şehir* as well as in his novels such as *Kara Kitap* and *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları*, which contain autobiographical elements.

⁶ “Political novel” is a difficult, vague term. However, since *Kar* deals intensively with political matters and since the author uses the term for this novel himself, we have decided to use it in this context. One might add that though *Kar*’s narrated time comes close to today it can in some ways – according to the radical political changes occurring since its publication until today – almost be regarded as a historical novel as well.

protagonist Ka by Necip, a pupil at the religious high school in Kars. While the story narrates the friendship, affection and rivalry between the two boys, Necip and Fazıl, who are in love with the same girl, Hicran, the story not only reflects the relationship between the narrator, codenamed Necip, and his best friend, codenamed Fazıl, but also reads as an analogy to the poet Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1905-1983), who is regarded as an ideologue of political Islam in Turkey.⁷ A work titled *Büyük Doğu*⁸ happens to be highly admired by the 'real' and 'fictitious' friends Necip and Fazıl. In this sense the exaggerated confrontation of polarities such as Western destructive rationalism vs. Eastern mystical spiritualism, religion vs. atheism, etc. within the science fiction story mirrors aspects of the plot of the 'real' story. The same holds true for those parts of the science fiction narration which take place in the future of the 'real' story.⁹

As an example of the playful use of elements of the supernatural story several passages in *Yeni Hayat* (The New Life, 1994) can be mentioned, e.g. the angel's appearance in the final scene. For a mystical reading of the novel see Yıldız Ecevit's extensive interpretations (Ecevit 1996: 133-188).

Another point mentioned above was the general shift in the perception of contemporary Turkish literature from one that distinguishes between 'First', 'Second', and 'Third' World literature to one that recognizes an all-inclusive world literature.

The place of Pamuk's novels in world literature

Authors such as Aziz Nesin (1916-1995) and Yaşar Kemal (b. 1923) introduced modern Turkish literature in a broader sense to the world. Both have been widely translated and hold many national and international awards.

⁷ Necip Fazıl Kısakürek is an established Turkish poet. His political convictions, however, are highly controversial since he is regarded as an important ideologue of Islamic political and nationalistic movements. (See Tanzimat'tan Bugüne Edebiyatçılar Ansiklopedisi 2001: 503-506; Burhanettin 2004: 129-156).

⁸ *Büyük Doğu* appears in the story as Necip's and Fazıl's favourite work. In this context *Büyük Doğu* can be associated with Necip Fazıl Kısakürek's ideological work *Büyük Doğuya Doğru: Ideolocya Örgüsü* (1959), which had a great influence on political formations in the above-mentioned context. With Kısakürek the expression *Büyük Doğu* stands for both spirit and substance, time and space on the one hand and as a symbol for a specific spirit of the Eastern world on the other. The term is connected with Kısakürek's belief that the East in a spiritual sense has lost itself by trying to identify with the West. Certainly, this stock of ideas implied by mentioning *Büyük Doğu* in the story within the story in *Kar* can be read as a sub-text of the story. See Rasim Özdenören: Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, in *İslamcılık, Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, İstanbul: İletişim 2004: 136-149, quote 142. For an evaluation of the magazine published by Kısakürek under the same name, *Büyük Doğu*, see the article by Okay 1992: 513-514.

⁹ Though in 'reality' it is Necip who is shot and Fazıl who will marry Hicran alias Kadife.

However, it is authors such as Orhan Pamuk who increasingly have taken their place within world literature in the new meaning of the term.¹⁰ Like no other post-1980 Turkish author, Orhan Pamuk, whose works have been translated into more than thirty different languages, became famous in the 1990s in and outside Turkey. His worldwide readership encompasses, speaking in his own literary terms, East and West¹¹. Thus, he is known not only in Europe and the United States, but also in the Islamic world (Iran, Arab countries) and the Far East (Korea, Japan).

The fact that a wider audience is aware of Turkish literature today is a sign of Turkey's growing connection to global influence and developments. Accordingly, the fact that Orhan Pamuk's second historical novel *Benim Adım Kırmızı* won the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award in 2003 is a strong indication that Turkish literature is finding its place on the international literary scene.

One aspect that marks Pamuk as an author who is accessible to a worldwide audience is his ability to combine the local with the universal. In what follows we will therefore discover the connection of a local space and a global perception or the local as part of the universal.¹²

First of all, readers in the East and in the West are able to identify with the space, – mainly Istanbul –, where Pamuk's stories take place. In other words, Pamuk's local references are transportable.

In Pamuk's Istanbul a reader can find traces of both East and West if he or she so chooses. And even if the reader mainly concentrates on the narrated stories as such, whether they take place in the Ottoman past (*Beyaz Kale*, *Benim Adım Kırmızı*) or in the political reality of the easternmost part of Turkey in the early 1990s (*Kar*), it is possible for readers in and outside Turkey to identify with Pamuk's heroes and their specific surroundings, since they are foremost universal spaces and characters. Furthermore, the author plays with different styles and inter-textual hints, incorporating into his work both references to Turkish – and in a wider sense Eastern – as well as European – and in a wider sense Western – cultural heritage alike.¹³ One can follow these hints – one reader might be more susceptible to them than another – but one can just as well read the stories as such.

¹⁰ For a detailed and useful understanding of the term see Bachman-Medick 1998: 463-69.

¹¹ The terms 'East' and 'West' are typical of Pamuk's literary vocabulary and, certainly, reach far beyond the literal sense of the words.

¹² For an examination of the connection between the global and the local see Robertson 1998: 192-220.

¹³ Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962) can be seen as a predecessor for this practice. However, Tanpınar's talents and the position he holds as one of the major Turkish authors of the 20th century were not fully recognized during his lifetime. In fact, Tanpınar's literary works can be considered a model for various tendencies in the new post-1980 literature. He has been named by authors such as Orhan Pamuk and Elif Şafak as a formative influence on their own works. While Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar has only recently been translated in part, his literary importance is by now commonly recognized. See Atiş 1983: 1-22 and Naci 2002: 15

In a recent article about Orhan Pamuk, Ian Jack, editor of the literary quarterly *Granta*, is quoted as follows: “There must be many good writers in many, many places whose work doesn’t easily translate because it is so specific to the place. Orhan is, for one reason or other, accessible to us” (Feeney 2004).

Yet, Orhan Pamuk’s novels *are* specific to the place, which is generally Turkey, and more specifically Istanbul. Paradoxically, this seems to be one of the reasons why they are so accessible to a diverse audience.¹⁴ To sum up, readers inside and outside Turkey, or, more generally, an Eastern as well as a Western readership, can identify with the specific space where his novels are set since Pamuk manages to make this place transportable, accessible, and, in a literary sense, *walkable*. Therefore, Istanbul which figuratively as well as literally unites both East and West seems to be the perfect stage. In this sense we can consider Istanbul a ‘universal’ space.

As a place, Istanbul in itself represents all kinds of supposed contradictions, uniting what is generally seen as unsuitable. By virtue of its geographical setting, the city has always been a kind of bridge between different cultures. Furthermore, with its rich historical fabric, it is a mega-city with metropolitan features, centre of new cultural scenes, publishing houses, etc. – in short, a symbol of modernity. A city of approximately 13 million inhabitants, it is home to many disenfranchised groups living independently – yet these groups still are somewhat dependent on one another. Certainly, Istanbul represents all parts and all peoples of Turkey – officially 65% of the city’s population are not natives of Istanbul (see Seeger & Palencsar 2003/4: 75) Thus, the city encompasses urban and rural aspects, and a wide range of political and religious counterpoints.

In effect, Istanbul plays a role in all of Orhan Pamuk’s novels. Sometimes directly – when it serves as the stage for the plot, as it does in *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* (Cevdet and his Sons, 1982), *Beyaz Kale*, *Kara Kitap* and *Benim Adım Kırmızı*, and sometimes indirectly, as in *Sessiz Ev* (House of Silence, 1983), which is set nearby in a summer resort on the Marmara Sea, in *Yeni Hayat*, which takes place mainly on the roads of Turkey, and *Kar*, which is set in Kars and Frankfurt. But in these books the protagonists also hail from Istanbul and the scenes are described mainly from an Istanbul point of view. Moreover, since Istanbul nowadays is the home of people from all over Turkey, it contains features of Anatolia or a city like Kars as well.

Whereas narrative and style differ from novel to novel, the backdrop of Orhan Pamuk’s seven novels more or less deals with the extensive treatment of one theme, i.e. of finding one’s own identity between different worlds, also symbolized by the terms East and West. Istanbul by definition serves as an ideal setting for this search. Since Istanbul at the same time represents aspects of the rest of the country, we will now briefly take stock of some recent changes in Turkey.

¹⁴ Compare to Çiçekoğlu’s point of view: “Pamuk’s talent as a novelist is revealed in his capacity of telling a local story with a universal tone.” (Çiçekoğlu 2003: 16).

As pointed out in the introduction, the ideal of a Turkish society with a high tolerance for different religious, social and ethnic groups stands in sharp contrast to the former ideal of Turkey as a mono-cultural state. This development can also be seen as a move away from the oppression of those who were regarded as potential enemies of the secular state – system, toward a growing freedom of speech and, generally, an increasing tolerance for a multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious society.

This tendency is reflected in Orhan Pamuk's historical novel *Benim Adım Kırmızı*, with its colourful, vivid integration of the multicultural Ottoman past.¹⁵ His earlier novel *Yeni Hayat*, and, in particular, his most recent novel, *Kar*, reflect the ongoing changes in Turkey's political and economic development, including the increasing gap between the impoverished Southeast and the prospering Northwest during the past decades.¹⁶

At least until the last of the three military coups in 1980, and partly until today, Turkey was characterized by a strong military power which suppressed different kinds of potential resistance in order to protect and retain the secular, mono-cultural state-system. Only recently, due to the partial political and social liberalization following the last coup d'état, have the above-mentioned tendencies been allowed to increase. The way Pamuk perceives the change in Turkish society today is aptly illustrated by a statement in which he compares Turkey's past with the current world situation: "*Unfortunately, my country's funny and tragic history is perhaps turning out to be, because of George Bush, the funny and tragic history of the world. That is, the arrogant, not-very-reasonable elite of my country destroyed its democracy when backwards, illiterate, conservative parts of the country resisted so-called modernization, globalization*" (Feeney 2004).

That ignorance and the suppression of opposition does and did not lead the country further is also described in a precise, courageous and humorous manner through the plot of *Kar*. However, the fact that this more relaxed way of focusing on political issues is possible, is also evidence of a new openness in Turkey today.

In order to show how Pamuk's novels embrace and survive the different kinds of changes the country and society have gone through, – and this is further testament to the quality of his books –, we come back to Istanbul and finish this

¹⁵ Here again Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar can be mentioned, this time as a forerunner who brought back the literary remembrance of the Ottoman past. See Atış 1983: 18-19, quoted as: "*There can be no doubt that it (Beş Şehir, B.S./ C.D.) together with Tanpınar's unceasing flow of articles and essays calling for an appreciation of Ottoman poetry, music, art and architecture, has been a force in bringing about what the Turkish poet and scholar Talat Sait Halman termed in 1972, an awakening of interest in Ottoman history after several decades of lamentable neglect of this vast untapped source of fiction.*" Compare also to Siedel 1992, 637, quoted as: "*Das (das Wiederaufleben osmanischer und islamischer Traditionen und die damit verbundene Kontroverse seit den 70er Jahren, B.S./ C.D) gilt ebenso Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962) und Orhan Pamuk (geb. 1952), die beide die osmanische Vergangenheit positiv neu bewerten (...)*"

¹⁶ For the state of the country then, cf. Baykan & Robertson 2001: 191-192.

section with an example of how the historical dimensions of the changing perception of Istanbul are treated in Pamuk's work. Therefore, we will briefly compare the perception of Istanbul in Orhan Pamuk's first novel *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* with the one in *Benim Adım Kırmızı*:

Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları is the story of three generations of one family. Set in the time between 1905 and 1970, the book is also about the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the founding of the Republic (1923) and the following decades.¹⁷ The first part is written from the point of view Cevdet, one of the first Muslim entrepreneurs, and reflects in an insightful, subtle manner the way the city was perceived by the newly established bourgeoisie at the beginning of the 20th century. The old parts of the city – *eski* Istanbul – defined as everything that comes into the view of someone crossing the Galata Bridge from the north, looking towards the south –, are described as having a humiliating effect on the protagonist. As a result, Cevdet turns his back on them and establishes himself and his family in the new, modern, wealthy part of the city north of the Golden Horn.

In the second part of the book, which takes place between 1936 and 1939, we find Cevdet Bey, now successful, married to a pasha's daughter, with two sons, a daughter and grandchildren, thinking that while he had always planned to establish a family 'alafrağa' he had ended up with a family 'alaturka'¹⁸. The identity of the following generations will lie somewhere in between, but this distinction shows how massive the changes that took place during this time were, and that it would take decades to find one's own identity by finding a balance between past and present, East and West, something Cevdet Bey's single life was too short for (compare to Elçi 2003: 203-205). The social changes and the changing perception of the past and of the spatial surroundings, which mirror the social changes, since the city, too, is changing rapidly, are shown via the following generations. Thus, the changes Cevdet's family goes through can be seen as general social changes of their time.

Benim Adım Kırmızı, by contrast, which takes place in 1591, is narrated from a present-day point of view of the city, into which the Ottoman legacy is easily integrated. In *Benim Adım Kırmızı*, the author portrays the complexity and beauty of a fallen empire from the multivisual perspective of 19 different points of view. *Eski* Istanbul, fled by Cevdet Bey 300 years later, and perceived by him as old, dead, and humiliating, functions in *Benim Adım Kırmızı* as the vibrant, powerful centre of this empire – with Topkapı Palace as its heart.

In conclusion, this paper could only touch on a few of the many aspects Istanbul represents in Orhan Pamuk's works. We have tried to show that by combining different perceptions of the city during the last century, Pamuk's novels

¹⁷ For the different time-levels in *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* see Nacı 2002: 104-107.

¹⁸ From the Italian 'alla franga' and 'alla turca', see Pamuk 1991: 107: "Alafrağa bir aile kurayım dedim, ama sonunda hepsi alaturka oldu!" diye düşündü. (...) 'Sonunda hepsi alafrağa olmak isteyen alaturka oldukları, bu da alaturkanın kendine özgü bir türüdür!'"

also link the heritage of the Turkish Republic to the Ottoman past, which the author describes as a culturally rich and colourful era. This extraordinary presence of Istanbul in his works, encompassing many different influences, stories and decades, also serves to introduce Istanbul as a setting and a motif to his worldwide readership. As a tendency it can be stated that Pamuk is recently forming a literary image of Istanbul which introduces the city as a literary place to world literature. Thus, it would be possible to compare Pamuk's Istanbul with the cities of other authors, such as James Joyce's Dublin, Amos Oz's Jerusalem or the New York of Paul Auster or Jonathan Lethem.

Pamuk's readers discover an Istanbul that perhaps – even if fictitious – shapes the way we understand the city and allows us to develop an idea of its complexion and what it stands for in Pamuk's fiction. At the same time an examination of Pamuk's Istanbul would make Istanbul as a literary city accessible to further-going comparisons. Thus it could also serve as an affiliation of Turkish literature to world literature.

This general tendency brings back to mind our initial evaluation that through experimental play, new themes and genres, and, not least, through a re-evaluation of the Ottoman past from a contemporary point of view, a new era of Turkish literature has emerged. In our view, this new form of Turkish literature in its vivacity, colour richness and individuality can hold its own on an international scale and has already found – as we hope to have shown with the works of Orhan Pamuk – its place in world literature.

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