

Orhan Pamuk's epic journey

By Hrant Dink,
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There is a certain country with a still uncertain destiny: will it be a wall or a bridge between east and west?

For a long time, this country had a famous slogan: "one Turk is equal to the world." For the first time in history, this slogan was given meaning.

It happened when a writer said: "Oh, ye people of the world! This country will never act as a wall between civilisations; but it won't make do with such a frivolous function as that of a bridge either! This society has its own peculiar colour and its own peculiar aroma, each with its character and depth. I present to you, with my novels, that colour and that aroma."

Among all the questionings of east and west, the Nobel [1] award for literature given to Orhan Pamuk is a significant cry.

Hrant Dink [2] has worked since 1996 as a columnist and editor-in-chief of the Armenian-language weekly newspaper *Agos* in Istanbul. The paper aims to provide a voice for the Armenian community in Turkey and to further dialogue between Turkey and Armenia

Also by Hrant Dink in openDemocracy:

"The water finds its crack: an Armenian in Turkey [3]"
(13 December 2005)

Also in openDemocracy on Orhan Pamuk's Nobel prize:

Anthony Barnett, "Orhan Pamuk's prize: for Turkey not against it [4]"
(13 October 2006)

Kanishk Tharoor, "My Name is Red', Orhan Pamuk [5]"
(16 October 2006)

If one winner of this award is Pamuk, the other is Turkey.

His voice comes from the depths of these lands, from their ancient culture and literary language. "I am neither a bridge nor a wall," says Orhan Pamuk, "I am myself."

The Nobel award given to Orhan Pamuk also immortalises the world from which his voice arose.

Orhan Pamuk [6] is the child of an international prostitute called "Istanbul" who bears the lines and the traces of the innumerable civilisations she has cradled.

She is a prostitute who shows herself to everyone though she never gives herself to anyone.

Even if you come from the remotest corner of the world, you will find a part of yourself in Istanbul [7], and immediately become jealous of her.

Orhan Pamuk has been writing the centuries-old legend of this city for many years. The legend spread from month to month.

Today, a new legend sprang from this land.

Orhan of Istanbul won the Nobel prize.

Through Orhan Pamuk's presence the world now knows better that there is a magical country called Turkey which contains an irresistible city.

Those who look at one facet of this country and this city notice the indefinable turmoil going on there. Those who look deeper see that their internal dynamism exists in intense resistance.

That resistance and that dynamism are so fertile that the resistance creates its literature while the literature creates its resistance.

Today ... Istanbul ...

Oh, ye people of these lands.

Today you have one Orhan Pamuk.

Tomorrow you will have more Orhan Pamuks.

Merry Nobel to you!

This article was translated from Turkish by Murat Belge

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http://www.opendemocracy.net/arts-turkey/pamuk_journey_3998.jsp

Links:

[1] http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2006/index.html

[2] <http://www.englishpen.org/writersinprison/honorarymembers/turkey/hrantdink/> target=_blank

[3] http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-europefuture/europe_turkey_armenia_3118.jsp

[4] http://www.opendemocracy.net/arts-Literature/pamuk_3994.jsp

[5] http://www.opendemocracy.net/arts/pamuk_3999.jsp

[6] <http://www.orhanpamuk.net/>

[7] http://www.faber.co.uk/book_detail.html?bid=34995&clid=



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