

Book Review

Snow

Author: Orhan Pamuk

Reviewer: Uday Adhikari

Orhan Pamuk is a wellknown novelist from Turkey. He was awarded Nobel Prize in 2006. His novels *Snow* and *My Name is Red*, and his memoir *Istanbul* made his name quite familiar in the contemporary world literature. First I knew Pamuk through his much acclaimed novel *Snow*. I heard him delivering Nobel speech 'My Father Suitcase' on television and I read his Paris Review Interview that helped me understand a disciplined, determined and unfrighten Pamuk who has attracted new readership across the globe.

Snow is a Turkish story, told from Ka's, main character of the novel, point of view. The narrator of the novel, novelist Orhan, loosely based on writer himself. The layer of stories is constructed around Ka, narrator's friend, a Turkish poet who was murdered in Germany.

The novel begins with the arrival of 'Ka' in the city 'Kars'. His twelve years self-exile in Germany doesn't make any particular difference to assimilate himself in the local life. His exile sharpens his feeling of comparison between before and after the time he left and arrived. He is very self-conscious and constantly feels a kind of surveillance. His arrival coincides the fall of heavy snow, though it seems to bear some symbolical meanings; but in reality, it throws some hurdles in everyone's life including Ka. Heavy snow fall makes his physical journey a daunting task. The city 'Kars' is completely cut off other places. The news of large numbers of suicide cases of teenage girls interests him to investigate to reach the cause. He meets his girlfriend 'Ipek' and drenches himself in emotional feeling that hasn't been extinguished in spite of twelve years exile and her short lived marriage with Muthar doesn't make any difference to their liking. While Following Ipek he comes to know some very burning questions, political or religious, of the country that are strongly felt in this small city. The city Kars represents whole Turkey in many senses. The things start unfolding. Ka knows how a tension is arising between wearing of head scarves or not wearing of headscarves girls. Ipek's sister Kadife is a leader of the small group of girls at college who strongly oppose the move of government's not wearing scarf in classroom. The common girls are trapped between the government and traditional families and 'Ka' assumes that might be a cause for escalating suicide cases.

Ka meets many people from different backgrounds. He visits Ipek's ex-husband Muthar who confesses his rekindled intense faith in Islam. He finds the country alarmingly leaning

towards Islamization, when he meets Blue, a radical Islamist, whose name is in the suspected list of murder of director; his fear of fundamentalism finds more fertile ground.

Ka, a strong atheist, finds himself in an awkward situation when he feels an urge himself to write a very mysterious poem 'Snow', later it has been proved to be prophetic. It is a starting point of suspecting his lifelong faith. More poems follow and he finds himself shrinking closer to 'Ipek'. He meets a religious kind fellow Necip and finds his younger self in him and becomes friend.

Performance of a play plays very crucial role in the novel. A secular leaning theatre company stages a play that criticizes the wearing of headscarves and all of the sudden the acting metamorphoses into blood bathing truth. Actors open fire and kill many including Necip. A question arises in Ka's, too. Ka's conversation with Blue, an Islamist leader, reveals the unreparable division in the society, the Islamist and non-Islamist. And the lack of trust between two groups is telling the story of bleak future of not only that of Ka's but Turkey herself.

The further story is forwarded by the narrator Orhan, he identifies himself as a writer and Ka's friend. He informs after that event Ka returned to Germany alone and spent his life until he was murdered.

Though the novel is based on particular city, at large it covers the whole country. Turkey is in the border line of Asia and Europe. It tells the story of first decade of the New Millennium, like other Islamic countries, Turkey is turning into more conservative and traditional outfit shaking off the liberal ideas and making a country suitable for fundamentalists.

The novelist describes love between Ka and Ipek, hate between wearing headscarves and not wearing headscarves groups and conservative and progressive very intimately, sometime we feel we are watching live telecast. Pamuk is very close to perfection for depicting the picture of lively society, though it is one of the greatest socio political novels of contemporary world; but I strongly believe the readers of romantic saga will not find any disappointment either. Reading in translation is sometime tiresome job; but the rendering by Maureen in English is superb. This flawless translation reminds me of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's translator Gregory Rabassa.

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Dr. Indira Acharya Mishra is an Associate Professor and Coordinator of Semester Program at Department of English, Mahendra Multiple Campus, Dharan. She has conducted two mini-researches: *Evolution of Female Characters in the Nepali Novels* (2011) and *Representation of the Femininity in the Nepali TV Commercials* (2012). Nearly three dozens of her research articles have been published. She has presented papers in national and international seminars. She has also worked as an editor in different journal including *JODEM*. She has recently completed her PhD degree on "Dynamics of Women's Narratives in Nepali Novels" from Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

Jiwan Kumar Rai is a lecturer at Department of English, Mahendra Multiple Campus, Dharan under Tribhuvan University, Nepal. Rai is interested working in the area of literary theories and criticism, mainly in the Postmodern, Postcolonial and Cultural Studies. His writing

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Dr. Min Pun is Associate Professor at the Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara, Nepal. He also coordinates the QAA related activities in the institution as Coordinator. He received his PhD in English and Ethnic Studies from Tribhuvan University in 2010. His research areas of interest are linguistic diversity, ethnicity and identity, postcoloniality, English Writing in Nepal and quality assurance system, and published extensively in these areas. From 2003 to 2005, he had been Visiting Researcher at Faculty of Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies, University of Tokyo, Japan.

Mohan Kumar Pokhrel, Lecturer of English, has been teaching at Tribhuvan University for nineteen years. He works in the area of the Eastern Philosophy and displays its reliability, validity and practicality the in the life of the modern humans for the solution of their problems. He has contributed nearly two dozen articles in diverse journals. Currently, he is a PhD scholar who is doing research on the title “Interrelationship between Kṛṣṇa Līlā and Nature in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāna*”.

Dr. Mohan Kumar Tumbahang (Reader) is a teaching member of the Department of English, Mahendra Multiple Campus, Dharan, Sunsari, Province No 1, Nepal. He has earned PhD Degree in Linguistics entitled “A Linguistic Study of Limbu Mundhum” in 2070 B.S. (2013 A.D.) under Tribhuvan University. Dr. Tumbahang has conducted a mini-research on “Limbu Language and Literary Development” in 2073 B.S. (2016 A.D.) from the Department of English MMC, Dharan. More than two dozen scholarly articles have been published in different journals to his name. Likewise, as being a facilitator, he has conducted research seminars at different districts and institutional programs.

Dr. Ramesh Kumar Limbu, a PhD in Language and Literature from Tribhuvan University, is an academician, writer and researcher. He has presented more than two dozen of research papers at national and international seminars, and the same number of his articles on language, literature and culture has been published. To his credit, an anthology of a poem *Jivanka Chhalharu* (Waves of Life), a research book *Limbu Indigenous Knowledge and*

Culture and a folk story *Folktales from Nepal Himalaya* are published. He is also a Research Grantee from University Grant Commission (UGC) and National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN).

Dr. Ramji Timalisina is researcher of Nepali poetry and Diaspora. He is a lecturer of English at MMC Dharan under Tribhuvan University, Nepal. He has earned his PhD Degree on “Exploration into the Use of *Rasa* in Nepalese Diasporic Poetry”. He has conducted number of programs as a facilitator on research and writing. Timalisina has published five books and more than three dozen research articles in each of the English and Nepali languages respectively. He has conducted four mini-researches; and he currently works as an Editor-in-Chief, Executive Editor and Editor of different literary and academic journals. He has taken part in national and international conferences on Diaspora, language and literature.

Dr. Rupak Shrestha, a renowned figure in the Nepalese Diaspora in the United Kingdom, is originally from Pokhara, Nepal and presently resides in London. He is sound in various forms of poetry such as free verse, ghazal, song, muktak (quatrain), and haiku. The other areas that he loves to use his pen on are research, literary criticism and translating Nepalese creations into English and English creations into Nepali. So far, he has authored *Big Ben Ra Samay* (poetry collection) 2011, *Pokhtak* (muktak collection) 2014, *Butte Kimono* (haiku collection) 2017, and *Rupak* (songs’ album) 2018. He holds a Master’s Degree in English Literature from Tribhuvan University, Nepal and a degree of Doctor of Education on Curriculum Development from Brunel University, London. His research interest areas are curriculum development, diaspora literature and Shakespeare. Presently, he is a researcher at Shakespeare Institute, Birmingham University.