

Reflection on the book 'the white castle'



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The White Castle The first question is: How does Pamuk portray the relationship between religion and Ottoman society/Identity? The White Castle by Pamuk is a beautifully scripted story which tells about both the Turkish and European empire. It takes the reader deep into the realms of life and the different identities and religion of people. Pamuk in the story is comparing the identities with respect to their religion of both the Eastern and Western people. The story revolves around the Ottoman empire in the 17th century in times when people were devoted to the religion of Islam and had identities according to the religion which they followed. However in the story Pamuk shows that the Ottoman society was not satisfied with their life styles and thus looked forward to the ways of Western people. Like in the story Hoja, a Muslim, made the western slave tell him about their life styles and he preferred these western styles over theirs. Pamuk portrays religion with great care in the book and shows how the two different thoughts of West and East can merge together. The Ottoman society follows the old traditions according to their religion and thus do not take any sanitary precautions when a plague hits Istanbul, however the Italian slave advises the Sultan to use such measures for the end of plague and the Sultan does eventually follow the Western way of removing the plague which proves to be successful.

The second question is: Cruelty is an implicit theme in this story. Where does cruelty fit in defining the identity of the characters of the novel?

Pamuk in his story White Castle tells about the realities of life in the 17th century. It describes different events taking place in the Ottoman Empire. Cruelty is prevalent through out the plot of the story and can be clearly viewed in the characters. The Italian Scholar seems to be laid into a trap by

the Eastern world but is saved by his own intellect. Similarly Pamuk is portraying the Eastern world with great uncertainty and cruelty. The pirates who capture the Italian scholar are cruel in nature and are supposedly going to kill the scholar. However the scholar's intellect helps him to misguide the pirates into thinking that he is a doctor and this saves his life. But on the other hand the pirates do not free the scholar; they rather gift him as a slave to Hoja. The character of Hoja can also be viewed to be cruel as he absorbs all the information from the Italian scholar about his lifestyle and even then does not let him free. The cruel nature of Hoja can yet again be seen in his aim of designing a deadly weapon which would help his empire to conquer other states. And furthermore, when the weapon does not work as expected by him he steals the identity of the Italian scholar and runs away leaving him in the Ottoman Empire.

Bibliography

Pamuk, Orhan. *The White Castle: A Novel*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998.