

The Dialogical Process in *My Name is Red*

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Abstract: In the novel “My Name is Red”, where a thriller and a love story are mixed an artistic discussion, which is appended to the plot takes place: the comparison of the 16th century’s miniature and the Western painting. The author, through using techniques that make the novel dialogical, ensures that the narrative and thus the discussion is opened to multiple readings.

Based on the difference between Western and Eastern mentalities, the Western and Eastern paintings are considered at length in the novel, and primarily through narratives offering different opinions of several narrators; the author assures the existence of a dialogical structure. Thus the discussion becomes open to multiple readings on an isochronal plane. On the other side, although the fact that the characters that use a language and discourse, which emphasize a contemporaneous perspective, are at the same time narrators creates an anachronism in the novel, this also leads the discussion to get a vertical dimension on diachronic plane.

Keywords: miniature-painting, dialogical process, East -West.

“Characteristic for [the novel] is an eternal re-thinking and re-evaluating” - *M. Bakhtin*

My Name is Red, set in Istanbul in 1591, is composed of two overlapping stories: that of the investigation into the successive murders of two court miniaturists, and the love affair between Black, one of the leading characters of the novel, and Shekure, who is in search of a father for his orphaned children. The discussions between various miniaturists about deviations in the miniature tradition due to the influence of Western painting are also part of these two stories as the main reason behind the two murders. This dialogical discussion, backed by historical events, information about the history of the art of miniature as well as by various anecdotes and art critiques, forms the focal point of the novel. While questions about the identity of the murderer and the possible outcome of the relation between Black and Shekure incite the reader to progress rapidly, the discourse on the roots of the mentality that separates East from West (namely the Islamic mentality) conducted on the basis of Eastern versus Western painting slows down the reader's pace. Nevertheless, the discussions which get richer and broader thanks to the writer's excellent fiction make sure that the reader is at no point bored. There is no doubt that the multiplicity and the speedy succession of narrators play an important role. This polyphonic nature of the novel, which allows it to expand on diverse dimensions, is one of its unique features. The most authentic feature of the novel however is, as this paper shall demonstrate, '*the argumentation methodology*' used to approach the problematics involved.

The East-West problematic has been one of the leading themes of the literary form of novel, which was introduced into the Westernizing Ottoman literature during the second half of the 19th century. Therefore,

the still current issue of Westernization became one the principal themes of the Turkish novel and it even constituted the sole theme of all the works of a number of novelists. Since its introduction, authors have adopted a more or less common position when dealing with this theme. For instance, the first generation of authors of the Tanzimat reform era with its strict traditionalists influences felt the responsibility of illuminating the public and believed that their selective approach, which could be summarized as ‘taking what is good and beneficial from the West and omitting what is bad and harmful’, would provide a solution.¹ In time, authors and intellectuals, who realized that they were faced with a plethora of interconnected problems, decided that a more objective approach was needed. Dramatic events caused by the culture dilemma inevitably interested all authors who wanted to establish a link with the people’s reality and led them to examine this problematic from one aspect or the other. Some authors who believed that the solution lied in an East-West synthesis tried, in line with their world views, to establish a

¹ Namık Kemal, Şemsettin Sami, Ahmet Midhat Efendi, Samipaşazade Sezaî and Nabizade Nazım, who are the first generation of novelists in the Westernizing Ottoman literature of the Tanzimat reform era, did not depict the East-West problem as a great confusion or a dilemma. For example, both Namık Kemal, who envisaged fundamental changes in the political sphere to increase the people’s cultural level, and Ahmet Midhat Efendi, who immensely valued technical developments, were very much loyal to the Ottoman-Islamic culture. As a result, their work did not display any authentic dissolution or dilemma. *Araba Sevdası* (The Carriage Affair) by Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem is the first sign of the great confusion of being split between two civilizations. For further information see: Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, İstanbul 1956; Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış* I.C., İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 1983; Orhan Okay, *Batı Medeniyeti Karşısında Ahmet Midhat Efendi*, Atatürk Üniversitesi Yayınları, Ankara 1975; İsmail Parlatır, *Recaîzade Mahmut Ekrem, Hayatı, Eserleri ve Sanatı*, 2.b., Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları Ankara 1995.

theoretical synthesis based on the personal quests of characters torn between the two worlds. Halide Edip Adivar, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar and Peyami Safa all sought such a synthesis through their work, albeit through different angles. They advocated a common system of values, which would do away with the East-West dilemma in all layers of the society to varying levels. Until Kemal Tahir, authors who dealt more or less with this problematic all tried to combine Eastern and Western values to different degrees. Kemal Tahir, however, refused a synthesis and suggested to the reader a new solution which was based on the reader's own culture, strengths and dynamics and which aimed to embrace the Turkish people with their entire history. However, authors involved in the East-West discussion always adopted a 'from the West' approach to their own realities. It should also be noted that even Kemal Tahir, who advocated a restructuring of the society based on a return to its own culture and values, regarded the West as the reference point in his feisty reaction to Westernization. Besides, all the abovementioned authors strived to analyse the problematic within their own texts, trying to give their own answers to the questions.

This paper will deal with *My Name is Red*, which handles the same sort of problematic yet differs from previous novels in terms of its presentation. Keeping in mind the fact that style goes hand in hand with content, when we look at classical styles we see that the idea behind the rather restrictive narration dominated by the author is the author's responsibility towards the society. This understanding of responsibility present behind all types of rhetoric, from traditionalist to innovative, from conservative to revolutionary, is based on the assumption that the process of individualisation is not yet completed in societies like ours

and that the reader is in need of a torchbearer to lead the way. Therefore, it usually took the form of a commanding voice, a set of directions by the author. Today, however, thanks to tools of mass communication, individuals are no longer isolated no matter where they are on earth and they wish to make their own decisions, for the good or for the bad. What is even more significant is that today's 'responsible authors' long for a responsible readership, which can make free choices. They aspire to a free, critical and participative readership. What distinguishes Orhan Pamuk from previous authors who dealt with the East-West problematic is that he grants his readers this type of freedom. Thus, it couldn't be expected from such an author to build his rhetoric on classical novel style and techniques. As a result, Orhan Pamuk enriched his novel with multiple layers of rhetoric, which would lead to multiple readings. Moreover, he made sure that at the end of the novel the reader wouldn't have all the answers to various questions that might arise during reading. This open-endedness is the main feature, which distinguishes Orhan Pamuk's work from previous novels on the East-West problematic. This paper aims to identify how and through which methods the author accomplishes this open-endedness in *My Name is Red*.

The East-West dilemma, which first appears on the artistic level in Orhan Pamuk's novel, expands to include the discussion about different mentalities of the East and the West and turns into a wider artistic problematic. The novel then progresses to touch upon the universal man and his basic artistic issues based on the concepts of Westerner and Easterner with all their unique colours and forms. None of the characters in the novel come across as shadows of the author's reasoning, defending and organizing his ideas. The author merely

activates the dynamics, which create the discussion, and paves the way for different points of view to be delivered by different narrators. In this manner, the author displays his mastery of the subject and more importantly, his intuitive way of discussing is widened and deepened within a multiplicity of narrations. It never takes the form of a 'commanding' idea. Orhan Pamuk succeeded in developing a technique to establish such an atmosphere in his novel. Within this framework, this paper tries to identify how the discussion which revolves around the art of miniature (added to the novel's fiction as a third dimension) and which tries to explore the roots of the debate on Eastern vs. Western painting is articulated to the novel and what is the uniqueness about the style of discussion employed by the author.

The fact that the discussion between court miniaturists is set in late 16th century when the golden years of Ottoman miniature are drawing to a close, and the identities of the parties to the discussion form a perfect ground for capturing the traditional artistic senses. The author makes a perfect conscious choice in selecting this breaking point in the miniature tradition as the starting point of the ever-present debate about Eastern and Western mentalities that looks set to last forever. In addition, the most important trait in all this is the author's brand new perspective on the problematic: Western painting, just like Ottoman miniature centred on the axis of East-Islam tradition, is viewed through the eyes of miniaturists of the time. This approach is the complete opposite of the dominant approach since the beginning of the process of Westernization. The author tries to analyse the West through the eyes of an Easterner instead of looking at the East through the eyes of a Westerner (i.e.

adopting an orientalist approach). Therefore, he succeeds in establishing the novel's inner integrity through the presence of authentic characters with historical and social credibility due to their own time and space instead of the usual set of artificial characters who live like strangers to their own society and see themselves through a foreign perspective yet who are presented as locals. In this way, he manages to be local when discussing miniature and Western painting and universal when talking about the wider artistic level.

An original method: Dialogism in novel

My Name is Red is open to multiple readings thanks to its dialogical structure that enables the discussion within.² Previous novels that deal with the East-West dilemma with its intellectual, social and individual contradictions provide the reader with a dialectic structure that seeks a synthesis out of the East-West clash. Nevertheless, the presence of a commanding voice is almost always felt behind dialogues formed according to any ideology, official or not, worldview or any answer to be obtained. These novels, which are marked by the presence of a dominant author-narrator who is positioned as the torchbearer or the instructor, aim to convince and are, therefore, monologic in character. Although they do create a discussion platform, they do not give the reader any room to manoeuvre since they propose a synthesis, albeit a good intentioned one. In other words, at the end of the dialectic rhetoric the reader reaches at a

² This paper is based on Mikhail Bakhtin's work on novel. Bakhtin says that 'good literature is the type of literature that does justice to the dialogism and polyphony in life and language. Novel is a literary form conceived to do just that.' Bakhtin, *Karnaval'dan Romana*, (from Sibel Irzik's preface, p.20)

synthesis that is in favour of the initially given idea. Such a novel, which arrives at its own synthesis based on the preconceived conditions, is closed to the reader (i.e. a closed work). *My Name is Red*, however, enables the reader to pursue the discussion.³ It is especially noteworthy for this reason.

Two techniques are especially notable in the formation of the dialogical structure in *My Name is Red*. The first technique consists of the multiplicity of narrators with multiple features and functions. The second technique is the intentional anachronism present in the novel.

a. The multiplicity of narrators and their positions

The multiplicity of narrators and their positions are among the leading fictional elements that form the foundation of the dialogical structure in *My Name is Red*. Although some of the 20 different narrators of the novel, which is divided into 59 narration slots, seem to be more prominent than others (Black becomes the narrator 12 times, Shekure 7, The Murderer 5, Esther 5, Enishte 4, Butterfly, Stork and Olive 3 times), this is not because of their relative importance but because of their functions within the fictional structure. Black, who, as the most frequent narrator, animates figures (such as Dog, Tree, Horse, Devil) as if talking directly to the reader, is the male protagonist of the love affair. He also tries to elucidate the murders and finish the secret book. Therefore, he is

³ Mehmet Rifat says the following in his article '*Benim Adım Kırmızı*'yı Kim Anlatıyor, Kim Okuyor': '*My Name is Red* is, on the one hand, a **closed work** (a text with a completed narration) in terms of a number of reading levels and, on the other hand, remains an **open work** which demands new interpretations and new readings on certain levels'. (Engin Kılıç, *Orhan Pamuk'u Anlamak*, p. 384)

right in the middle of the discussions and the narration. However, the fact that Black appears more frequently than other characters as the narrator is not related to the order of pages in the art of embroidery or to the hierarchical order of importance in classical narration but to his function in the wider narration. This is also true for Shekure and other narrators. This fictional structure eliminates the classical hierarchy while still enabling the characters to gain depth. As a result, none of the characters, who take the scene with their own personalities and use the pronoun 'I', is superior to another. Faced with a multiplicity of equal first person narrators who talk directly to him/her, the reader is lead to be objective when analysing the rhetoric of each of the characters. The narrators, who openly express their complaints and criticisms about others and provide the reader with confessions about themselves, can refuse and refute others' claims. There are differences between the way each narrator sees himself/herself and the way other narrators see a particular narrator and assess his/her behaviour. As a result, different narrations by different characters, dialogical in their nature due to various contradictions and paradoxes, also form a dialogue when considered as a whole. Consequently, the behaviour and ideas of all narrators, who are characters of the novel at the same time, are also evaluated by other narrators according to their own points of view. However, the fact that all narrators use the same linguistic rhetoric, which implies that they share the same level of culture, hints at a 'super narration' by a common consciousness and therefore to a 'super narrator' who channels narrators.⁴ However, this 'super narrator' in *My Name is*

⁴ Mehmet Rifat says the following in his article '*Benim Adım Kırmızı'yı Kim Anlatıyor, Kim Okuyor*': 'While the narrators use the first person narration (the pronoun 'I'), the super narrator carries these separate narratives to the same level of consciousness,

Red isn't there to manipulate the reader's thoughts through the narrators, but to organize the narrative. It thus contributes to the dialogical structure of the novel, instead of disrupting it, because the fact that the narrators share the same linguistic rhetoric places them on equal footing. As a consequence, the reader focuses on what the narrators say, and not on how they say it. The novel features a discussion that stems from the confrontation between two artistic worldviews (East and West) both of which came into existence as a result of different historical conditions as well as cultural resources and beliefs. The author gives voice to the characters since they are subjected to a cultural dilemma as artists of a specific era.⁵ Through this method and by capturing the artistic sensitivities of miniaturists of the time, the author tries to shed light on an artistic tradition that has been left in the dark, locked away inside the Treasury and never discussed. The way the author goes about this is by

language and strategy. The single person narratives enable narrators to approach the same subject, object, discussion or problem from different angles (separate perspectives of 'I'), whereas, the super narrator intervenes regularly, or is continuously present in the background, and makes sure that these differing points of view are actually equal parts of a common guidance (manipulation or programming).' M. Rifat goes on to say that the reader can read the novel at various speeds along this 'basic line of narration', yet the universe of profound meanings is not easily exploitable. This, he adds, evokes contrasting emotions during the reading process and as a result, *My Name is Red* 'is a novel that ponders and discusses profoundly but it also ponders and discusses profoundly about the way it ponders and discusses'. (Engin Kılıç, *Orhan Pamuk'u Anlamak*, p. 386-387).

⁵ Other characters are involved, in one way or the other, in the discussion through their relations with the artists (for example Shekure is Enishte Effendi's daughter and Kara's lover). However, the author lets other characters talk about the thoughts and ideas of those characters that he wishes to bring to the forefront within the complex structure of the novel or those that are required to come to the fore as required by the fictional structure of the work. For instance, one of the factors that make Shekure a very lively character is the fact that she both narrates herself and is also narrated by Kara, Esther and Enishte.

drawing the readers' attention to what the characters say and for what underlying reasons they say what they say, and not to their style of saying. The multiplicity of first person narrators in the novel help express different points of view, while the common linguistic narrative on which the characters converge helps keep the focus on the discussion despite the complex narrative nourished by various narrators. The horizontal (synchronic) dialogical process enables the narrators to scrutinize both their traditional art of miniature and Western painting from different points of view. The vertical (diachronic) dialogical process, on the other hand, enables the discussion to remain open-ended even when the novel is finished.

b. Anachronism

What gives the discussion a vertical dimension is, apparently, a discrepancy. As it is pointed out in some of the analyses carried out about *My Name is Red*, this has to do with the anachronism present at certain levels throughout the work.⁶ For instance, a certain discrepancy stems from the fact that at the age of obscure and detailed Ottoman court literature heavy with symbolism, the narrators, most of whom have grown up in the court, adopt the same grotesque way of communication despite the fact that it is neither the language of the age nor of the people.⁷ This discrepancy is further emphasized when the characters,

⁶ Özgür Taburoğlu, "Baştan Çıkaran Nakış Cinleri: Lâle Devri'nin Göz Boyayan Renkleri ve Nakışları", p. 212-224.

⁷ Zeynep Tarım Ertuğ in her article '*Benim Adım Kırmızı*'nın Düşündürdükleri', says that the characters in the novel do not reflect the age in which they live and that it is an outsider's look that is depicted. She further underlines this idea by saying the following: 'You could take the characters and place them in a 20 century art studio and it wouldn't

who are extremely intimate in their relation with the reader, do not abstain from divulging their most intimate emotions or using a very coarse and inappropriate language. This type of rhetoric does not reflect the 16th century Ottoman literature, arts and the rhetoric used at that time and is, therefore, an anachronism. However, in this way, the author creates the necessary atmosphere to enable unconventional characters to speak freely. Besides, he rescues these characters from being confined to the ‘dead rhetoric’ of the past and turns them into living characters. In addition, this type of anachronism related to the rhetoric is also present in the unembellished depictions of nature and interior spaces. The perception of depth, which has historically developed in line with the conditions that gave birth to Western painting, and the depictions, which are far from being holistic and separate entities into its composing elements without using any symbols do not reflect the point of view of the people of that age. Such is the case with the following depiction:

“I do, however, know this: When you love a city and have explored it frequently on foot, your body, not to mention your soul, gets to know the streets so well after a number of years that in a fit of melancholy, perhaps stirred by a light snow falling ever so sorrowfully, you’ll discover your legs carrying you of their own accord toward one of your favourite promontories. [...] This was how I happened to leave the Farrier’s Market and ended up watching the snow as it fell into the Golden Horn from a spot beside the Süleymaniye Mosque: Snow had already begun to accumulate on the rooftops facing north and on

be awkward.’ Moreover, she indicates that there aren’t any signs showing that the court miniaturists’, who illustrate books, are interested in the leading art forms of the era, namely poetry and music, and considers this to be a deficiency. (Engin Kılıç, *Orhan Pamuk’u Anlamak*, p. 400)

sections of the dome exposed to the north-easterly breeze. An approaching ship, whose sails were being lowered, greeted me with a flutter of canvas. The color of its sails matched the leaden and foggy hue of the surface of the Golden Horn. The cypress and plane trees, the rooftops, the heartache of dusk, the sounds coming from the neighborhood below, the calls of hawkers and the cries of children playing in mosque courtyards mingled in my head and announced emphatically that, hereafter, I wouldn't be able to live anywhere but in their city.'' (p. 9)⁸

The fact that, the novel includes psychological aspects of characters as well as this type of depictions about the physical realities of spaces and people is contrary to the literary/artistic realities of the age: The notion of reality emerged in the West in parallel to the development of individualism and the science of psychology. It was only much later, during the following centuries, that this notion started appearing in novels.⁹ Until the 19th century, the Ottoman culture was dominated by an abstract worldview marked by a holistic and collective way of reasoning and perception with simple and clustered elements. In this worldview, people and their relations with their environment were generalized according to specific norms. Individuals only existed within the art forms of this era in a generalized or symbolized manner, as expressions of the collective way of feeling and reasoning of the society. This mainly resulted from the fact that these medieval people considered themselves

⁸ The quotations are from the First Vintage International Edition, September 2002

⁹ There is no doubt that had it been an external narrator who came up with the abovementioned depictions and psychological analyses, it wouldn't have created an anachronism in the narration. The chronological discrepancy between the narrator and the rhetoric stem from the fact that people who lived at that age are the narrators of the novel.

as parts of a closely-knit society in their daily lives and did not value their individual differences. As a consequence, individuals were void of a psychological aspect in novels, as they were void of a third dimension in miniature. Contrary to the realities of the age described in *My Name is Red*, the characters boast psychological features and emphasise their individualities. They assess the world through the mentality and the intellectual lens that have been acquired as a result of the historical development and accumulation of modern mankind. This paradox vis-à-vis the age they are told to live in gives today's reader the impression that both the characters and their rhetoric are very vivid. Consequently, the discussion has a reference point in every historical layer that witnesses the East-West problematic.

The author transforms characters, miniaturists in this case, from a certain era into individuals equipped with today's reality perception and ways of reasoning. This clearly is a contradiction with historical reality. However, the author unmistakeably displays the opposite of this intentional anachronism. Shekure, one of the characters, actually refers to Nazım Hikmet, a poet to live centuries later, when she says:

“A picture of bliss: What the poet Blond Nazım of Ran had pondered in one of his verses.” (p. 412)

In this way, the author wishes to underline how free he is in his fiction and to constantly remind that it is indeed fiction. The very first sentence of the novel, uttered by a corpse, clearly shows that the novel does not claim to be realistic: *“I am nothing but a corpse now, a body at the bottom of a well”*.

On the one hand, Orhan Pamuk places his characters in the age

they live in with the appropriate historical features (accurate portrayal of spaces, daily life and historical phenomenon of the era) so that none of them would stick out. On the other hand, he isolates them from the era in question (by providing them with modern perspectives). The anachronism created by these two opposite actions disturbs the temporal specificities of the characters and has a function: to give the author two opportunities. First is the opportunity to have the miniaturists speak the way they would as real miniaturists who are nourished by tradition and have internalized the traditional sensitivity and conception. Second is the opportunity to equip the miniaturists, artists of an unspoken tradition, with a rhetoric that would enable them to interpret their art with today's understanding. The first provides the discussion with a horizontal dimension while the second adds a vertical one. In short, the open-endedness in the discussion featured by *My Name is Red* takes place both synchronically due to the multiplicity of narrators with various perspectives within a certain period of time (9 winter days in 1591) and diachronically due to the modern rhetoric used to the fullest (contemporary language, tools of narration and modern perspective) by the narrators as if they were living in the present. By doing so, the author creates an unexpectedly coherent atmosphere, in which the traditional art of miniature can be evaluated on a hypothetical level, both during the era when the novel takes place and in 'present-day', and compared with Western painting.

Various references to many stories, masnavis on love (such as Khosrow and Shirin, Layla and Majnun) or references to Shahnameh by Ferdowsi, and to religious books by Al-Ghazali, Al-Jawziyya along with many verses from the Koran and hadiths contribute to the dialogical

process in the novel by reinforcing the diachronic dimension. Narration styles resembling ancient forms (starting paragraphs with letter sequences from the Arabic alphabet such as Alif, Lam, Mim and Alif, Ba, Djim), the utilisation of fable motives (such as triple repetitions) and the hybrid heterogeneous narration containing examples from letters also contribute to the dialogical structure. As a result of intertextual relations, extraordinary narrative examples (such as figures in paintings that speak) and the personification of figures such as horse, dog, the colour red and Satan, the traditional hierarchy of characters is destroyed and the novel is transformed into a multipartite, polyphonic and multilayered text. Consequently, the ‘discussion’ in the novel is freed from the monopoly of the author and the characters and is presented to the perception of varying degrees of the reader that is not stereotyped in any way.¹⁰

To sum up, *My Name is Red* handles the abovementioned discussion, originating from the art of miniature and extending to Eastern vs. Western mentalities, within a dialogical structure and opens up a new page along the line of novels that deal, in some way or the other, with the East-West dilemma as a novel that is open to different readers and opinions.

The analysis of the discussion that is fused into the narration

The discussion that the court miniaturists initiate following the

¹⁰ Based on his analysis of the text, Mehmet Rifat points out the types of readers to which *My Name is Red* is destined to in the section ‘Intra-textual reader types envisaged by the novel’ of his article ‘Who Narrates and Reads *My Name is Red*’. (Engin Kılıç, *Orhan Pamuk’u Anlamak*, p. 387) This paper suggests that besides providing the reader with a variety of possible readings, Orhan Pamuk does not presuppose a certain type of reader with certain ideas. The fictional structure of the novel, in this sense, is one of the factors that make the novel open to polyphonic, multiple readings.

events that take place during 9 days in the winter of 1591 revolves around such themes as the late 16th century miniature vs. late Renaissance Italian painting-portraits, appearances vs. meanings, miniaturists and style vs. Western painters and style, pure colours and lines that are the key features of miniature vs. Western painting with light, shadows and perspective. As mentioned above, the fact that miniaturists, as the representatives of age-old tradition, discuss their art and Western painting that they encounter at the time adds a temporal dimension to the discussion. On the other hand, the characters' theoretical and able discourse on and the current relevance of the issues at hand for the readers provide a vertical dimension to the discussion. Current questions such as the present vs. the past of 'I' and the other, the conditions that created Western art vs. the roots of Eastern-Islamic art, contemporary artist vs. traditional artist and style in general come to the fore in line with the dialogical structure of the novel and link the superficial side of the discussion to more profound elements.

My Name is Red kicks off with a murder: Elegant Effendi, one of the illuminators of the court miniature house is killed. It is thought that it is caused by the book that is secretly commissioned by the Sultan and is said to contain paintings inspired from Frankish styles. Conservative circles lead by the cleric Nusret Hoja of Erzurum provoke the public against the Sultan and court miniaturist by saying that Frankish painting is a sign of infidelity. The characters in the novel don't know the murderer of Elegant Effendi who is known to be close to these circles. Yet, the reader is aware from the very beginning that the murderer is one of the three most successful court miniaturists (which one of the three is

not known) thanks to the direct communication of the victim, the murderer and other first person narrators of the novel with the reader. Despite the fact that the reader's curiosity is stirred as to the identity of the murderer and the reasons of the act, upon the suggestion that miniaturists' styles may be a clue, the reader is also pushed to pay attention to the thoughts of miniaturists on different styles, the identity of the artist, the art of embroidery and Frankish art.

Enishte Effendi, who encounters Frankish painting during his service as the ambassador to Venice, gives the Sultan the idea of commissioning a book with Frankish-style illustrations. As someone involved in the art of embroidery, he pays special attention to Frankish painting and is especially impressed by the then flourishing portrait painting. He visits mansions and palaces of many wealthy people and members of the royalty as well as numerous churches and sees thousands of portraits adorning their walls: *"Each one was [is] different from the next. They were distinctive, unique human faces! [...] He was [is] intoxicated by their variety, their colors, the pleasantness – even severity – of the soft light that seemed to fall on them and the meaning emanating from their eyes"* (p.107). When Enishte Effendi returns from Venice, he manages to impress the Sultan with his impressions. He convinces the Sultan to commission a book to be illustrated by Western-style paintings and he is put in charge of this endeavour. The miniaturists work under the supervision of Enishte and cannot fathom what the final painting would look like once separate figures, drawn by separate miniaturist, are combined. The miniaturists are frightened by the rumours that circulate about the book and the killing of Elegant Effendi. Enishte Effendi, troubled by all this, summons his nephew Black from Tabriz to complete

the book. His words to Black about Western painting reflect a comparative perspective between Western and Eastern painting. This comparison does not only focus on embroidery and Frankish paintings but it also questions the worldviews and historical backgrounds that give birth to these two traditions:

“... I saw that these supposedly important infidels – most of whom appeared to be real and some of whom looked me straight in the eye – had attained their importance in this word solely on account of having their portraits made. Their likenesses had imbued them with such magic, had so distinguished them, that for a moment among the paintings I felt flawed and impotent. Had I been depicted in this fashion, it seemed, I’d better understand why I existed in this world.” (p. 108)

Brought up in a culture based on the idea that this world is ephemeral, Enishte Effendi’s amazement is only natural given that during the second half of the 16th century, when the commercial bourgeoisie prospered especially in Italy, European people started to seek the answers to their questions not in theology but in the real world that they tried to comprehend through their own minds, thinking of themselves as individuals. What is surprising here is to see a 16th century Ottoman individual who talks about his personal thoughts, impressions and experiences. Moreover, the critical perspective of the 16th century Ottoman miniaturist, master of an art form that is shaped by tradition, formed as a result of collective efforts and never institutionalized, is also astonishing.¹¹ This is mainly because of the fact that during the Ottoman

¹¹ In her article “Geleneğin Kırılışından Türk Modernleşmesine, *Benim Adım Kırmızı*’da Resmin Algılanışı” Zeynep Uysal Elkatip rightly talks about “*ideas that clash and a theory of painting that is conceived but does not exist*” or “*the fictional theory of*

period, science lost its primary importance of the heyday of Islam and instead of engaging in theoretical work, Ottomans contented themselves with the already available accumulation of information, commentaries on and translations of existing works. Therefore, the rhetoric used by Enishte Effendi, as someone brought up in these circumstances, does not fit the scientific perspective of the era. Although Enishte is the most striking example, other characters in the novel also make use of this type of rhetoric that isolates them from their time and connects them to ‘present-day’. This situation, which is contrary to the traditional understanding of reality, actually bolsters the sense of reality in this novel since the abovementioned comparison is not merely based on appearances but it also takes place on an intellectual basis. Moreover, were the characters to use the limited rhetoric of their age, they would remain as distant as archaeological findings to us.

Thanks to his novelist instincts, Orhan Pamuk enables the characters to elaborate an intellectual discussion made possible through dialectical methods without surpassing the scientific, religious or traditional restrictions of the time. While seeming paradoxical, this method is selected to establish the link between history and ‘present-day’. Bakhtin says the following:

“Depicting the past in a novel does not presuppose the modernization of the past (...). On the contrary, it is only in novels that the past can authentically be depicted as the past. Synchronic reality, along with new experiences, is preserved as a way of seeing and it has the depth, intensity, width and liveliness unique to this way of seeing.

painting in the novel”. Indeed, Enishte, Black and other miniaturists talk along the lines of an allegedly existing theory. (Engin Kılıç, *Orhan Pamuk’u Anlamak*, p. 372, 374)

However, it needs to stay away from the depicted reality of the pass as a force that modernizes and corrupts the uniqueness of the past.''¹²

The historical reality in *My Name is Red* is presented in a way to make use of the “synchronic reality’s way(s) of seeing”. A very important point, however, is the fact that while doing so, Orhan Pamuk doesn’t present “synchronic reality’s way of seeing” as the sole correct way of seeing. The author doesn’t make an effort to manipulate the miniaturist’s own way of seeing by reducing it to the modern way, refuting or justifying it. An appropriate analogy would be the following: just like providing the necessary means to a scientist who suspects that microbes do exist but who lives at an age when the advanced microscope is not yet invented, the miniaturists are provided with the tools to explain and discuss what they see, feel, can see or feel. What makes us accept this sort of reality in the novel is what we think about the nature of social development: it depends on the supposition that social development is cyclical and not linear because while “there is nothing new under the sun”, all that is human comes back and resurface under different appearances. The most appropriate example to illustrate the point is the transformation in Western painting in the early 20th century. Artists such as Van Gogh, Picasso, Matisse, Miro and P.Klee reflected elements from decorative arts.¹³

The discussions in the novel start with the idea that Frankish painting amounts to infidelity, they encompass such issues as style, signature, personality in arts and they finally extend to esoteric

¹² Bakhtin, *Karnaval’dan Romana*, p. 196

¹³ Article “Minyatürler Cennetinden Greko’ya” by Bedri Rahmi Eyüpoğlu. (Quoted by) Beşir Ayvazoğlu, *İslâm Estetiği ve İnsan*, Çağ yayınları, İstanbul 1989, p. 440-446

intellectual features of Islam. There is a clash of ideas between Enishte Effendi, representing the progressive line, and Master Osman, the chief miniaturist of the court who has the task of controlling the illustrations in the Book of Festivities (Surname) dedicated to the festivities held on the occasion of the circumcision of the Sultan's son. On the other hand, Stork, Butterfly and Olive, three miniaturists who illustrate the secret book and are frightened because of the rumours about the book, convey a feeling of apprehension due to being torn between the Frankish influence and the traditional approach. The dialogues of the figures in these illustrations, voiced by these five characters in addition to Black and the storyteller, are based on the analysis of the art of miniature against Frankish painting. The narrators often present their current thoughts. This is mainly because the influence of Frankish painting leads the miniaturists to question and compare their work. On the other hand, stories and parables told by the miniaturist and containing complementary and opposing views, contradictions and obscurities also enrich the dialogical structure.

Enishte Effendi, who is a proponent of Frankish painting, looks for the reasons behind Frankish paintings, which amaze and scare him at the same time:

“[...] Rich and influential men wanted their portraits painted as a symbol, a memento of their lives and a sign of their riches, power and influence – so they might always be there, standing before us, announcing their existence, nay, their individuality and distinction.” (p. 107)

This statement by Enishte overlaps to such a great extent with

John Berger's comments ¹⁴ on a discussion about "Mr and Mrs Andrews" by Thomas Gainsborough that it is as if Enishte is looking at his age from today's perspective.

It is clear that the shift in Europe from paintings with religious motifs adorning church walls to paintings that wish to display 'I' and the place it occupies on this planet is correlated with the transformation process of European societies. However, the fact that this phenomenon is depicted through the eyes of a 16th century Ottoman miniaturist is very interesting. In line with the thinking of André Malraux, who said that "One can only experience through comparison", Orhan Pamuk created the necessary ground for comparing the art of miniature with Western painting in a fictional setting.

"And it isn't enough that we be in awe of the authority and money of these men who commission the works, they also want us to know that simply existing in this world is a very special, very mysterious event. They are attempting to terrify us with their unique faces, eyes,

¹⁴ John Berger says the following about the painting by Gainsborough: "The special relation between oil painting and real property has been influential to a certain extent in the development of landscape painting. Why did Lord Hardwicke wish to have a painting of his special park? Why did Mr and Mrs Andrews want to have a piece of their lands as the background for their portraits? The Andrews aren't a couple that lives in nature as intended by Rousseau. They are landowners. Their facial expressions give away their landownership as an approach towards everything." (p. 106-108). In order to further explain this point, Berger quotes from Levi-Strauss in the same book: "During Renaissance, painting was maybe a tool for information, but it was also a means for property. When we look into Renaissance painting, we shouldn't forget that it was only made possible thanks to the immense riches that accumulated in Florence and other places and that wealthy Italian merchants regarded it as means of bringing all that was beautiful and desirable into their homes. The paintings in various palaces across Florence made up a small world: A world where landowners made their artists recreate all that was valuable for them in the most realistic and accessible manner possible." (p. 86). John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, p. 106-108.

bearing and with their clothing whose every fold is defined by shadow.”
(p. 108)

This is the exact moment when two mentalities are contrasted. It is as if Enishte's thoughts are being formed as he speaks to Black. This, in turn, conveys the tension between the two cultures very vividly. Enishte states that he cannot resist the force of attraction exerted by these paintings done with devilish impulses and sums his mental state as follows:

“However, it was as if I too wanted to feel extraordinary, different and unique,” he said. As if prodded by the Devil, he felt himself strongly drawn to what he feared. “How should I say it? It’s as if this were a sin of desire, like growing arrogant before God, like considering oneself of utmost importance, like situating oneself at the center of the world.” (p. 109)

For Europeans who get richer and believe in the might of the human mind, the world is no longer a place regulated by religion. It is this same moment of transformation that mesmerizes Don Quixote. The man is now the centre of the universe and this has repercussions on his way of living as well as on arts. As the West experienced this religious disintegration, the Ottoman Empire still preserved its integrity of faith and culture and would continue to do so for centuries. The questions to the answers were still in its own universe. By venturing out from this universe, Enishte exposes himself to very strong influences. His impressions about Western painting actually contain questions that scrutinize both civilizations. Nevertheless, it took the Ottoman Empire more than three centuries to deal with these questions consciously. In the

novel, on the other hand, the author doesn't have the preoccupation of rendering the fiction credible and creates characters that realize and question the moment in which they live whereas the necessary environment to give birth to such characters did not exist at the time.

The notion of “*growing arrogant before God and considering oneself of utmost importance*” voiced by Enishte is a clear example of this awareness and it refers to being arrogance, which is frowned upon by all divine religions. These thoughts underline a new phenomenon that further distances the West from the East and from itself: Arrogance is peculiar to the Devil. “*It was Satan who first said ‘I!’*” (p. 287). However, the religious universe of Europeans was now transformed. In the chapter “*I, Satan*”¹⁵, Satan defines Frankish painting in an ironic manner as an indicator of shifting values in the religious universe of Europeans: Frankish painting is the proof of a shift from God-centred faith system to a man-centred one. Satan, who is dismissed because of his refusal to bow down before man, complains that the emergence of these paintings that illustrate man's importance is attributed to him and resorts to a paradoxical rhetoric: How would Satan consent to man's use of ‘I’ after having claimed his proud superiority before God? Indeed, both in Islam and Christianity, daring to say ‘I’ amounts to heeding the call of Satan.

¹⁵ It is also very interesting to note the names of chapters in the novel. The more individualized characters in the novel, Shekure (I, Shekure), Uncle / Enishte (I am your beloved Uncle), as well as various figures that are also narrators (I am a dog, I am a gold coin, I am a horse, I am a tree...), all use ‘I’ and refer to the disrupted heavenly hierarchy of the cosmos by ironically hinting at the possibility that one day objects will rule the man. Other expressions are used in the novel when introducing humbler characters that abstain from saying ‘I’ or do not have the dominant personality to do so: “I am called Black, I am called ‘Stork’, I am called ‘Olive’...” etc.

“But there’s something I’ll never forget – yes indeed, something I’ll always be proud of: I never bowed down before man. This, however, is precisely what the new European masters are doing, and they’re not satisfied with merely depicting and displaying every single detail down to the eye color, complexion, curvy lips, forehead wrinkles, rings and disgusting ear hair of gentlemen, priests, wealthy merchants and even women – including the lovely shadows that fall between their breasts. These artists also dare to situate their subjects in the center of the page, as if man were meant to be worshiped, and display these portraits like idols before which we should prostrate ourselves. Is man important enough to warrant being drawn in every detail, including his shadow? If the houses on a street were rendered according to man’s false perception that they gradually diminish in size as they recede into the distance, wouldn’t man then effectively be usurping Allah’s place at the center of the world? Well, Allah, almighty and omnipotent, would know better than I. But surely it’s absurd on the face of it to credit me with the idea of these portraits; I, who having refused to prostrate myself before man suffered untold pain and isolation; I, who fell from God’s grace to become the subject of curses.” (p. 290)

On this basis, the rhetoric in the novel is associated with the concept of egocentrism, which is strongly disapproved of by Islamic tradition. The fact that the artist incorporates his/her own feelings, passions and personal traits into his/her work and that he/she appears as an individual amounts to saying ‘I’:

“It was Satan who first said ‘I’! It was Satan who adopted a style. It was Satan who separated East from West.” (p. 287)

The fact that some chapters are narrated by Satan, who rebels against God by insisting on using 'I', adds an extraordinary element to the novel while at the same time creating an uncanny feeling of reality. Satan's presence as a narrator is, from another perspective, the representation of the 'Satanic' point of view.

It is stated in the novel that miniaturists often do not sing their works and that teamwork goes into the illustrations of the time with numerous miniaturists contributing to a single piece. It is also mentioned that the wish by a miniaturist to leave a trace on his work is the precursor of evil since it is considered to be the sign of 'egocentrism' that leads to arrogance. According to divine religions, it is not sufficient for human beings to abstain from being immodest before God. They should also refrain from claiming to be superior to other human beings. Therefore, Islamic mysticism dictates that "killing the self" is crucial. The Muslim artist needs to have higher ideals than seeking fame and proving himself:

"I was about to tell myself that regardless of whether the illustration was made today or a hundred years ago, whether it's a depiction of war or love, what the artist of absolute faith actually paints and conveys is a battle with his will and his love for painting; I was going to declare further that the miniaturist actually paints his own patience (...) In the pages of an album we saw high mountains interwoven with curling clouds in a landscape illustration that seemed to go on forever. I thought how painting meant seeing this world yet depicting it as if it were the Otherworld." (p. 301)

As if talking about a theory of Islamic aesthetics, miniaturists refer to the fundamentals of tradition; they question these fundamentals and

tell stories that are open to multiple readings. For instance, Butterfly, the miniaturist, sums up the lesson to be drawn from the “Parable of three styles and signature” that he tells to Black as follows:

“The first story established that ‘style’ is imperfection,” “The second story established that a perfect picture needs no signature, and the third marries the ideas of the first and the second, and thus demonstrates that ‘signature’ and ‘style’ are but means of being brazenly and stupidly self-congratulatory about flawed work.” (p. 66)

However, not everyone draws the same lessons from Butterfly’s tales. Black, for example, draws a different lesson from the third parable. In this way, the effort to reveal the thinking behind Islamic painting against a backdrop of discussions on styles that contain vagueness in meaning, signature, personality in arts, appearances vs. meanings and the age of miniatures becomes apparent:

What is crucial in the work of a miniaturist is the global meaning that the miniature carries and the prowess with which it is conveyed. The whole universe functions within a system established by the Creator. The mission of the miniaturist is to search for the unchanging beauty behind this world, behind what is essentially ephemeral. The miniaturist, who is on a quest for finding the excellence of Creation, believes that he can achieve this only through imitating previous masters and following the best lines and colours in tradition. At this point, one can use the analogy of a river: if tradition is a river, then each artist is a branch that feeds the river, mixing with each other and changing in time. Yet, the river itself is constantly enriched and it continues in its bed without losing from its principal characteristics. In the miniature tradition, the artist should deal

with his work, not with himself. To do that, he needs to erase his identity. If he tries to leave a trace in his work, this amounts to an imperfection, that is to say 'style'. Instead of toiling to reflect his own emotions and passions, the miniaturist has to try and depict the unchanging beauties created by God as seen by God. This, of course, means looking for the meaning behind appearances.¹⁶ Only this way can the painting resist time. If a painting is done with these thoughts in mind, it no longer matters what story it completes, what book it belongs to or when it is made. Only those paintings that strive to reach at the beauty of the unchanging, "the truth of objects" can resist time. By imitating the works of great masters, the miniaturist begins to distinguish "appearances" from "meanings". In time, elderly miniaturists, whose manual skills peak, go blind and they consider it to be Allah's blessing. It is only at this stage that manual mastery is combined with the inner eye and that the miniaturist can perceive the colours in "Allah's obscurity", grasp the meanings stripped from their appearances and maybe succeed at drawing the world as seen by God:

"(...) for illustrating was the miniaturist's search for Allah's vision of the earthly realm, and this unique perspective could only be attained through recollection after blindness descended, only after a lifetime of hard work and only after the miniaturist's eyes tired and he had expended himself. Thus, Allah's vision of His world only becomes manifest through the darkness of memory and blindness, the illustrator will have spent his lifetime training his hand so it might transfer this splendid revelation to the page." (p. 80)

¹⁶ "The realm that God sees" in the novel.

The miniaturist who does not go blind until the end of his days, on the other hand, looks at the world with eyes that don't see and tries to capture the real image of this realm.

These ideas expressed by miniaturists in *My Name is Red* outline an approach to the esoteric aspect of Islam. Especially the way in which the issue of appearances vs. meanings is handled and the definition of illustration as “seeing in Allah’s obscurity” or “seeing this realm as Allah sees it” bring certain concepts to mind. In Sufism, the word Miniaturist is one of the names used to refer to Allah.¹⁷ The Koranic expressions *Levh-i Mahfuz* (*The Protected Tablet*), and *Kitab-ı Mübin* (*The Book of the Obvious*) are thought to refer to the issue of clear constants (*ayân-ı sâbiteler*), which means that Allah’s wisdom covers information about all beings and events. On the other hand, these thoughts might also make one think of Western ideology, which seeks the roots of art in a mysterious source of information in the vagueness between the rational and the irrational.

The discussion in the novel also tackles the Islamic ban on painting. What are the limits to illustration? Why is it a sin to do Frankish paintings? What does the artist abstain from when creating works that replicate reality, use perspective and depth, use the man’s point of view and finally adorn walls? What is the essence of this ban? The idea that emerges from the book is that hanging paintings on walls is a sin. The fear of crossing this limit between miniature and painting has always haunted miniaturists as well as Sultans and Khans who

¹⁷ Moreover, noun phrases such as Nakkaş-ı Ezel (*The Miniaturist of Eternity*), Nakkaş-ı Sun' (*The Miniaturist of the Universe*) are also used to the same effect. (İskender Pala, *Ansiklopedik Divan Şiiri Sözlüğü*, C.I., p.217)

commission the works and it has made them feel guilty. The dialogue between Enishte and his killer touches upon this subject. Enishte asks:

- “*Why did they all believe that painting would bar them from the gates of Heaven?*”

- “*You know quite well why! Because they remembered Our Prophet’s warning that on Judgement Day, Allah will punish painters most severely.*”

- “*Not painters*”, corrected Enishte Effendi. “*Those who make idols. And this is not from the Koran but from Bukhari.*” (p. 160)

For the Muslim miniaturist, there is something in Frankish painting that doesn’t befit his spiritual world. The presence of a forbidden zone, which isn’t extensively discussed and whose boundaries aren’t clearly defined is constantly felt. The question whether Islam bans painting has always been debated. This is a point made in the novel. In any case, the novel doesn’t intend to provide the reader with answers; it merely triggers questions.

All the above thoughts and dialogues lead to a “fictional theory of painting”¹⁸, a “theory of Eastern aesthetics”¹⁹ and this theory, no matter how it is named, enables the comparison between the art of miniature and Western painting. One point requires further explanation at this juncture: Based on historical information about the art of miniature, the general perception of Islamic art and his own intuition,

¹⁸ Zeynep Uysal Elkatip, “Geleneğin Kırılışından Türk Modernleşmesine, *Benim Adım Kırmızı*’da Resmin Algılanışı”, p. 368, 372.

¹⁹ Özgür Taburoğlu, “Baştan Çıkarın Nakış Cinleri: Lâle Devri’nin Göz Boyayan Renkleri ve Nakışları”, p. 215.

Orhan Pamuk presumes that the artists in the novel express themselves around a certain theory. This is the only means of creating a discussion and comparison ground. Talking about ‘illustration’ without mentioning the conditions, intellectual fundamentals, coincidences or obligations that created this art form would be comparable to strolling through a museum. As a result of this approach, all along the novel miniaturists, considered as artists who have grasped the dynamics that create their art, use their personal worldviews to deal with the man in his reality, the outside world as well as the distinguishing features of Western painting such as perspective, light-shadow and grading of colours:

Contrary to Frankish painting, which underlines the singularity and uniqueness of all objects on earth, the miniature tradition depicts the unchanging nature of concepts and their hierarchy within the divine order. It is a widely accepted rule to place figures and objects from the top to the bottom of the page according to their holiness and supremacy. This system of alignment is related to a hierarchy created both by religion and the administrative system.

When Black visits Master Osman, the chief miniaturist, he begins to work on the illustrations in the Book of Festivities to be prepared for the Sultan. The Book of Festivities is prepared to depict the circumcision ceremonies of the Sultan’s son and impress guests from various countries with the Sultan’s might. Scrutinizing the illustrations portraying 52 days of festivities, Black wonders:

“Once the text was written out by scribes, the illustrations completed and the book bound; the reader, turning pages, would each time see completely different activities in completely different colors in

the Hippodrome which remained under the same watchful gazes of the Sultan and His crowd of guests – who always stood identically, forever gazing at the same area below.” (p. 57)

The illustration of the Sultan, symbolizing the shadow of Allah, the real owner of all, on earth, represents the unvarying. His place on the page, his stance and glance never change while numerous ceremonies, festivities and processions come and go. He remains at his throne and watches the proceedings from above. The illustration doesn't need to resemble the Sultan or be distinguishable from his predecessors; his position on the page is enough to underline his status. All other figures appearing on these illustrations are also symbolic in a similar way. None of them is a single individual, a separate object. They are all pieces of a scene, components of a story. The fact that the hidden book is first illustrated, with the story to be written later according to the illustrations, is a notable change and a precursor of rupture in tradition, vagueness and maybe even arbitrariness. The conflict that would force Olive the miniaturist to commit murder is later revealed in his dialogues with Enishte, Black and other miniaturists. At this point, the artistic discussion morphs into severe tension due to the cultural dilemma: Olive the miniaturist is passionate about his art. Yet, despite his strong ties with the tradition, he is still heavily influenced by Frankish painting. He defines himself as “a free-thinking Kalenderî throwback, or worse yet, someone aspiring to be a Kalenderî”. He leads a life that doesn't respect the morals of Islamic tradition. However, influences from another realm disrupt his inner artistic balance. As rightly put by Uncle, he kills Elegant Effendi to use Frankish styles without fear. (p. 166) However, he is terrified to see that Frankish painting changes not only his art but also

his soul: *‘I considered style to be a variety of rootlessness and dishonor, but doubt was eating at me. I wanted nothing to do with style, but the Devil was tempting me and I was, furthermore, curious.’* (p. 396) On the one hand, he wants his works to resist time, to gain fame and to be valued for what he does; yet on the other hand he fears these thoughts. When he asks, *‘When will all those paintings we’ve worked on until we could no longer see straight truly be appreciated? When will they give me, give us, the respect we deserve?’* Enishte replies *‘Never’* and goes on to say that Frankish styles will spread like a disease, that their own style will die off, that rats will gnaw at illustrated books locked away in Treasury rooms and that all their deeds will be forgotten. The murderer goes mad upon hearing that his art doesn’t have a future and kills Enishte as well. Following the murder, he takes the last unfinished illustration of the secret book and tries to paint his own portrait, using his reflection in the mirror, in the spot reserved for the Sultan’s portrait but he fails to do so. Torn between the fear of being uprooted from tradition and the charms of new styles, he goes out of his mind:

‘I circled around and joined them, and I was ever so faintly trembling as I stared. (...) The pictures we made on various parts of the two pages over the past year – tree, horse, Satan, Death, dog and woman – were arranged, large and small, according to Enishte’s albeit inept new method of composition, in such a way that the dearly departed Elegant Effendi’s gilding and borders made us feel we were no longer looking at a page from a book but at the world seen through a window. In the center of this world, where Our Sultan should’ve been, was my own portrait, which I briefly observed with pride. I was somewhat unsatisfied with it because after labouring in vain for days, looking into

a mirror and erasing and reworking, I was unable to achieve a good resemblance; still, I felt unbridled elation because the picture not only situated me at the center of a vast world, but for some unaccountable and diabolic reason, it made me appear more profound, complicated and mysterious than I actually was. (...) I was both the center of everything, like a sultan or a king, and, at the same time, myself.” (p. 388) In a secluded world, a ‘window’ that opens to another world is an omen of frightening consequences: fear of the stranger, the different, the unknown and the forbidden. It is very hard to understand the trauma that Olive experiences from the point of view of someone in today’s world where thousands of different interactions, changes and fluctuations are constantly happening. Yet, he is fully aware of what is happening to him and he describes it as follows:

“I felt like the Devil not because I’ve murdered two men, but because my portrait has been made in this fashion. I suspect that I did away with them so I could make this picture. But now the isolation I feel terrifies me. Imitating the Frankish masters without having attained their expertise makes a miniaturist even more of a slave.” (p. 399)

The miniaturists in the novel have highly developed personalities as well as elaborate personal opinions, which is hardly befits the age they live in. When each of them is asked to draw a horse from memory in order to gain a clue that might elucidate the murder, they all use different stock phrases at the end of their narrations as to their drawings: “*When I draw a magnificent horse, I become a great master of old drawing that horse*” says Butterfly, “*When I draw a magnificent horse, I am who I am, nothing more*” says Stork and “*When I draw a magnificent horse, I become that magnificent horse*” says Olive. Butterfly wants to be

someone else (the other). This has to do with his personality. According to Master Osman, his greatest defect is the fact that he cares too much about others' appreciation. Stork, on the other hand, has self-confidence and he adores him'self'. Olive, for his part, has real artistic sensitivity and for him it is neither 'I', nor 'the other' which is important, but his work. Therefore, he gets very enthusiastic when Butterfly says "[An artist] should simply paint the way he sees fit rather than troubling over East or West". Yet, a departure from tradition has already taken place. He wants to go back to old days when he used to paint without asking any questions. He intends to leave Istanbul and go to eastern Hindustan in the search of his old purity. At this point, he makes an analysis of the art of miniature and the state of miniaturists:

"There is no longer any place here in Istanbul for us master miniaturists who wish to live by skill and honor alone. Yes, this is what I've realized. If we are reduced to imitating the Frankish masters, as the late Enishte and Our Sultan desired, we will be restrained, if not by the Erzurumis and those like Elegant Effendi, then by the justified cowardice within us, and we won't be able to continue. If we fall sway to the Devil and continue, betraying everything that has come before in a futile attempt to attain a style and European character, we will still fail – just as I failed in making this self-portrait despite all my proficiency and knowledge. This primitive picture I've made, without even achieving a fair resemblance of myself, revealed to me what we've known all along without admitting it: The proficiency of the Franks will take centuries to attain." (p. 399)

Fearing that he might be murdered when the opponents of Sultan provoke the people with the pretext that Frankish painting amounts to

heresy, Olive has murdered Elegant Effendi who seems to be in the opponents' camp. Nevertheless, the real reason that pushes him to commit a second murder is his inner conflict: his irrepressible appreciation for Frankish painting and the belief that this moves him away from Allah and towards the Devil. His experiences as a miniaturist shed light on the profound ramifications of this clash of cultures: Shifting from one culture to another is no easy task no matter how unconditional the desire to do so. The failed illustrations in the secret book, which is commissioned – as a way of saying ‘look, we can paint using your styles’ – to convince the Venetian Doge to sign an agreement will only make them laugh and say ‘the Ottomans are giving up their Ottoman identity’.

The killer miniaturist puts an end to the discussion with all these remarks meant for his friends. At this juncture, readers who are knowledgeable about Western painting think through the stages it has experienced and ponder over whether there is a third dimension to miniature painting (‘meaning’ is the third dimension for the miniaturist) and over style and personality in art as well as the meaning of perspective in a more general sense. On the other hand, the reader, who is reminded that imitation has its place not only in painting and that Western influence is still relevant, is invited to go on a process of “re-thinking and re-evaluating” all along the discussion in the novel and is faced with another question:

“In that case, sit yourselves down and do nothing but ape the Europeans century after century! Proudly sign your names to your imitation paintings. The old masters of Herat tried to depict the world the way God saw it, and to conceal their individuality they never signed

their names. You, however, are condemned to signing your names to conceal your lack of individuality.'' (p. 400)

It is in arts that the great perturbation created by the encounter between a world that has an inner integrity and order and a new world that is significantly different from the first is felt the strongest. People find it much easier to adapt themselves to cultural differences in day-to-day living. The real difficulty lies in changes that occur in superstructures such as belief systems and arts, which are often interconnected.

In *My Name is Red*, miniaturists interpret and compare the art of miniature with Western painting at a point where miniature has lost its inner integrity as a result of its encounter with Western painting. These interpretations and comparisons are presented to the reader in such a fashion to trigger a discussion with multiple questions. The first part of this paper has aimed to dwell on the techniques used by the author to establish and enrich the dialogical structure, which, according to Bakhtin, is the striking characteristic of the literary genre of novel. The second part has been dedicated to various points in the novel where the discussion is especially focused on. These points are particularly interesting since they are always open to further discussion. Therefore, the manner in which the discussion, open to multiple readings through the abovementioned techniques, is attached to the narration naturally requires multiple analyses. The discussion in *My Name is Red*, prompted on the East-West artistic plane and placed within the narration, is opened to multiple readings thanks to the techniques used by the author. The issues raised when miniaturists compare Western painting with their own art through a journey in time morph into questions related to the

historical and social conditions as well as the intellectual fundaments of the civilizations that gave rise to miniature and Western painting. The discussion in the novel is still relevant in our day due to the presence of discrepancies between the East and the West. For its part, *My Name is Red*, falling short of providing us with the “joy of life”, strives to give us the “joy of seeing” and invites us to “re-think and re-evaluate”.

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