

Tribhuvan University

April 2018

Subversion of Orientalist Ethos in *My Name Is Red*

– Nisan Khadka

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, T.U.

For Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Arts in English

By

Nisan Khadka

Subversion of Orientalist Ethos in *My Name Is Red*

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

April 2018

Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Subversion of Orientalist Ethos in *My Name Is Red*”
submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Nisan
Khadka, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Supervisor

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my respected supervisor Lecturer, Pradip Raj Giri for his incomparable assistance in order for the construction of the entire thesis writing. His priceless time, patience, friendly guidance and inspiring academic support proved to be a milestone behind the successful completion of the thesis. My word of thankfulness for his generosity in equipping me up with the academic materials to build up the perfect architect of the thesis is unmatched. His guardianship throughout the thesis writing will always be a special treasure of my memory.

Likewise, my thankfulness is equally extended to Prof. Dr. Amma Raj Joshi, the Head of Central Department of English for his approval of the thesis. I am also grateful to Prof. Rewati Neupane and Raju Baral for their parental role in encouraging me with the required suggestion that corrected the direction of the thesis writing.

Lastly, I am always indebted to my family members for their unconditional love, care and attention for any success I have had till now. I am thankful to my colleagues for their direct and indirect cooperation in making the thesis a reality.

April 2018

Nisan Khadka

Abstract

This thesis contends that Pamuk's dramatizes the complicated coexistence of diverse components of postcolonial identity. This type of complication ultimately challenges the fixity of identity claims and points towards a shift in attitude which remains skeptical of the West as a normative site. In this sense, Pamuk's postcolonial line of representation of the East-West encounter in comes out as a response to orientalist constructions. Postcolonial theory, in this sense, promotes a revisionary viewpoint. It aspires to amend the discriminative judgments of the West in its portrayal of the East. And it aims to take a liberatory position from the formulaic ways of seeing otherness by creating an alternative space for the native from which he or she can be heard. The thesis makes the point that Pamuk's demonstrates the shortcomings of Euro-centric representation of the "other" as he portrays the East with all its heterogeneity which resists the orientalist attempts of stabilizing Eastern identity. Pamuk suggests that the present cannot be understood without a strong understanding of the past, and that the past cannot be separated from geography.

Contents

Abstract

- | | | |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| I. | Introduction to the concept of Orientalism and Pamuk's <i>My Name Is Red</i> | 1 |
| II. | Contestation of Orientalist Construction in <i>My Name Is Red</i> | 18 |
| III. | Conclusion: Emphasis on Mutual Coexistence | 35 |

Works Cited

I. Introduction to the Concept of Orientalism and Pamuk's *My Name Is Red*

The research is a critical study of Orhan Pamuk's *My Name Is Red* which questions the orientalist ethos of the author. The research claims that, the west has always negative image towards the non west. To support the claim the researcher draws theoretical insights from orientalism, specially developed by Edward Said.

Covering a period of about a week, it is at once a murder mystery, a love story, and an examination of the cultural tensions between East and West. These tensions center around different theories of art. The Ottoman Sultan has commissioned an illustrated book to celebrate the power of his empire, and he has ordered that the paintings employ the techniques of the Italian Renaissance, in which the use of perspective and shadow create realistic portraits that are quite different from the stylized representations of Islamic tradition. The use of the new style creates fear amongst the artists commissioned to produce the book, and two murders are the result. Black, an artist who has just returned to Istanbul and is courting the beautiful Shekure, is told by the Sultan that he must solve the case within three days or he and the other master artists will be tortured. With its theme of East-West conflict, and its examination of what happens when Western ideas creep into a restrictive Islamic society, *My Name Is Red*, although set four hundred years ago, has much relevance for the cultural conflicts of today.

Set in a winter in Istanbul in 1591, *My Name Is Red* is told in brief chapters by multiple narrators; the narrator is identified in the heading of each chapter. The very first part is told by a murdered man whose as-yet-undiscovered-corpse lies at the bottom of a well. His name was Elegant and he was an artist working on illustrations for a secret book commissioned by the Sultan.

And then it is narrated by Black, who has just returned to Istanbul after a

twelve-year absence. For all that time he has been in love with his cousin, Shekure. He is returning to Istanbul at the invitation of his uncle, Enishte, to whom he was formerly apprenticed. Enishte is also an artist, and it is he who is in charge of preparing the secret book for the Sultan. Enishte has asked Black for assistance, since Black has experience commissioning artists. Black walks the streets of Istanbul and enters a coffeehouse, in which a storyteller has hung a picture of a dog. He is giving voice to the dog and pointing at the drawing. The next chapter is narrated by the dog. He questions why some people dislike dogs.

After this it is narrated by the man who murdered Elegant, although he does not identify himself. He is also in the coffeehouse, and he reveals that, he, like Elegant, is a miniaturist. He discusses what it feels like to be a murderer and reveals that Elegant had believed the illustrations they were doing were heretical. The murderer feared that they would all be denounced to the fundamentalists.

Next part is narrated by Enishte, Black's uncle, who recalls the circumstances of Black's departure, twelve years ago. This happened because Black fell in love with Enishte's daughter, Shekure, but was not considered a suitable match, so he was asked to leave the house. Several years later, Shekure married a cavalryman and had two children. But her husband, after going off to war, has now been missing for four years. Enishte tells Black that the portrait of the Sultan that is to be included in the secret book will be painted in the Venetian style, as a genuine portrait of the man. This will be a departure from the impersonal style of the Islamic miniaturists.

Therefore it is told by Orhan, Shekure's six-year-old son. Orhan overhears his grandfather telling Black that he thinks Elegant was murdered because of the controversial nature of his work, even though Elegant worked in the old style. Orhan and his brother Shevket misbehaves and their mother makes them wait in the kitchen

until Black leaves.

Black takes up the story in and he relates his feelings on visiting Enishte's house. He desperately wants to see Shekure again. Enishte tells him he must visit all the miniaturists working on the book, as well as Master Osman, the Head Illuminator. As he rides away, a clothes peddler named Esther hands him a letter from Shekure, and he also catches a glimpse of Shekure's face in the window.

Esther delivers letters as she hawks her wares around the city, relates how she came to deliver the letter to Black. She knows that Shekure has told Black not to return. Esther guesses, however, that Shekure does not mean what she says. Shekure confirms Esther's intuition that she does not want to discourage Black, and also tells the story of how she fell in love with her husband. After he went missing, she had to move back in with her father. She knows that Hasan, her brother-in-law, wants to marry her, but she does not want to marry him.

Hence here comes a tree, which says it does not want to be depicted in the Western, Venetian style, like a real tree. Instead, it wants to reveal what the meaning of a tree is. Now the Black comes and he reads Shekure's letter and dreams of being married. In the morning he visits the royal artisans' workshop, and senses that Master Osman is suspicious of him. Osman reveals that the miniaturists Olive, Stork, and Butterfly work on the special book— not at the workshop but at home. Black is given a tour of the workshop, and on his way back he gives Esther a letter for Shekure.

The next three chapters are related by, respectively, Butterfly, Stork, and Olive. Each artist receives a visit from Black, who questions them about their philosophical approach to art and looks at some of their paintings. Each artist tells three stories that allude to the matter of artistic style (Butterfly), the nature of painting and time (Stork), and blindness and memory (Olive). Black observes everything in

their homes, searching for any clue to Elegant's disappearance. News arrives that Elegant's body has been found.

Next part is narrated by Esther and Shekure respectively, return to the love story of Black and Shekure. Esther visits Hasan and shows him the letter Black has written to Shekure, in which he says he wants to marry her. Hasan, who also wants Shekure, gives Esther a letter he has written to Shekure. He asks Esther what he can do to convince Shekure and her father that he would make a suitable husband. Shekure is confused by the Situation.

Enishte tells of his attendance at Elegant's funeral. Butterfly tells him that the miniaturists were jealous of one another over who would assume leadership of the workshop after Master Osman died. Butterfly admits that he had a bad relationship with Elegant, but believes Olive and Stork are exploiting this in order to blame him for the murder. Here the murderer arrives; who attended Elegant's funeral and wept more than anyone else at the graveside. And another part is told by a gold coin, which narrates its travels across Istanbul.

The story returns to Black's viewpoint. He listens to Enishte speak of the portraits he had seen in Venice, where portraiture is popular amongst the affluent. Enishte is both attracted to the portraits and appalled by them. Continuously Enishte explains to Black how he had persuaded the Sultan to fund the secret book, and that the last picture was nearly finished. He shows Black a picture of Death, painted by Butterfly, and all the other illustrations to the book. Black goes home thinking of Shekure, believing that she was watching him while he visited her father. He contemplates the task Enishte has given him, which is to write a story to accompany each illustration in the book, and he knows he must do this if he is to win Shekure.

And again it is narrated by the murderer, the culprit describes how tormented

he is following the murder. He reveals that he is also in love with Shekure. In the next chapter, Death reveals that the miniaturist who was persuaded by Enishte to illustrate Death regrets his decision because in painting the picture, he was unwittingly imitating the Frankish (Western) method.

Esther narrates how, in a letter, Shekure tells Black that he must complete the manuscript if he is to win her love. Black asks her to meet him at an abandoned house. Gradually, Shekure tells of reading Hasan's letter, in which he says that he is going to the judge in order to force her to live with him. Shekure ignores Hasan's letter but agrees to meet Black at the abandoned house. When they meet, they embrace and kiss. Black agrees to testify that he has seen the corpse of her husband, so that she can be declared a widow and be free to marry him.

Again the murderer comes, who visits Enishte and tells him about the rumors that the book they are preparing is blasphemous. He is worried about the final illustration and fears it is painted in the Frankish style. Enishte replies that two styles can be brought together to create something new. But the two men grow suspicious of each other, and then the murderer confesses that he killed Elegant.

In the next the narration is taken up by Enishte, who fears that the murderer will kill him, too. After a lengthy discussion about the nature of painting, the murderer hits him on the head with an ink pot, killing him.

Shekure narrates how, when she comes home, she discovers her father's body. She moves it into a back room and tells the children that their grandfather is sleeping. She informs Hayrire of the murder but tells her to behave as if nothing has happened.

After it is described by the color red, Shekure continues the story. She tells Black she wants to conceal Enishte's death because otherwise Hasan and his father will be appointed her guardians. She says that she will marry Black, but until the

murderer is caught and the Sultan's book is finished, she will not share his bed. It is then narrated by Black, who bribes the authorities to grant Shekure a divorce. At the wedding ceremony, the dead Enishte is dressed in nightclothes, as if he were sick, so he can act as Shekure's guardian.

After the wedding, Shekure and Black agree, (told by Shekure), to announce in the morning that Enishte has died in his sleep. Shekure awakes during the night, goes outside and finds Hasan and Black arguing. Hasan claims the marriage is invalid. He also claims that Shekure, in league with Black, killed her father. He says he will forgive her if she returns to live with him. Black responds by accusing Hasan of killing Enishte.

Here comes a horse, who argues in favor of the Frankish style of painting. In the morning, Shekure announces Enishte's death. Black gets an audience with the Head Treasurer and tells him that he suspects the secret book Enishte was working on was the cause of his murder because it fostered jealousy among the artists.

Therefore the dead Enishte tells of his public funeral, which was attended by many dignitaries. He says his soul is at peace. Now it is narrated by Master Osman, who is summoned to a meeting with the Head Treasurer and the Commander of the Imperial Guard. The Head Treasurer says the Sultan is furious that Enishte has been murdered. He wants the book finished and the murderer caught. Black, Olive, Stork, and Butterfly are all suspects. The Commander says he is authorized to torture Black and the others if necessary during interrogation.

The turn goes to Esther, who visits the widow of Elegant, who informs her of some sketches of horses that were found with the body of her husband. Since Elegant did not draw horses, they might be the work of the murderer. In chapter 40, Black tells readers that he is summoned to the palace, where he is tortured. He denies

knowing anything of Elegant's murder, and Master Osman informs him that the torture was only a test. But Osman also informs him that unless he finds the murderer within three days, as well as the missing final illustration, he will be the first to be tortured.

Master Osman tells of how he and Black examine illustrations from the secret book to determine which miniaturist illustrated which one. Osman dislikes the pictures and has no desire to finish the book. With Black, Osman discusses the talents and temperaments of Olive, Butterfly, and Stork. He reveals that he favors Butterfly to succeed him as leader of the workshop because he is the only one who could resist the lure of Venetian artistry.

Here Shekure's letter enclosing the sketches of the horses is delivered to the palace, where Master Osman and Black receive it. They try to match the sketches to an illustration of a horse in the secret book, concluding that they were drawn by the same hand. They notice that the horse's nostrils are drawn oddly. It is a clue as to which miniaturist might have drawn the picture. They examine hundreds of other horses painted by Butterfly, Stork, and Olive, but none of them bear this peculiarity. Master Osman suggests to the Sultan that they ask each miniaturist to draw a horse quickly and say it is for a contest.

And Olive, Butterfly, and Stork respectively narrate how they were asked to draw a horse to see who could draw the best horse in the shortest time. They describe their technique. In the next part the murderer reveals that he knew it was not a competition, and that the authorities wanted to catch him. However, he believes he has no peculiarity of style that will betray him.

Now it is Satan, who has just been identified by the murderer as the being who first separated East and West by asserting his own individuality and thus, in artistic

terms, adopting a particular style. But Satan refutes this argument, which is also put forward by the fundamentalists.

Again Shekure's opines that she has doubts about her decision to marry Black. Black tries to reassure her by saying how much he loves her. Black goes to the palace, where Master Osman tells him that they are unable to determine from the three horse illustrations who drew the horse in the sketches found on Elegant. Osman persuades the Sultan to allow him to examine centuries-old books in the Treasury to find out whether the unusual depiction of the horse's nose is a mistake or whether it reflects other techniques from the past. They examine thousands of pictures.

Next part is related by two dervishes, characters in a painting over one hundred years old rendered in the Venetian style and in another Master Osman relates how he spends the entire night in the Treasury with Black studying thousands of illustrations. He feels deep affection for all the masters of old, and he relives with delight all the years he has labored as a painter. He knows that the artistic world he knew is coming to an end. After studying the legendary Book of Kings, he finds the needle that the great master Bihzad had used to blind himself. Knowing that he cannot prevent the spread of the new method of painting, Osman presses the needle into his eyes, which means he will soon go blind.

Once again here comes Black, who discovers in an album a picture of a horse with peculiar nostrils and takes it to Osman. Osman identifies the nose as resembling the noses of Mongol horses, who had their nostrils cut open. It is painted in the Chinese style. Osman then says he thinks Olive is the one who drew the horses in Enishte's book, because he is the one who best knows the old styles. But he does not believe Olive is the murderer, because both Olive and Elegant were devoted to the old methods. Osman believes the murderer was Stork. Black is confused, and even

suspects that Osman orchestrated the murders. As he leaves the Treasury he takes with him the needle that Bihzad and Osman used to blind themselves.

It is Esther, who receives a visit from Black. She informs him that Shekure's former husband is on his way back and that Shekure and her sons are now living at Hasan's home. Black and some armed men go to the house Hasan is not at home so Black sends Shekure a note. Esther notes how confused she is, ready to love either Black or Hasan if either of them prove to be a good father to her boys. She finds out that the former husband is not really returning; that was Hasan's lie. Black and his men attack the house although they do not enter it. Eventually Shekure agrees to return to live with Black.

The story then returns to Butterfly's point of view in the next part. Butterfly reports an attack by the followers of a fundamentalist preacher on a coffeehouse. On his way back, Butterfly is accosted by Black, who presses a dagger to his throat. Black forces Butterfly back to Butterfly's house, telling him he is going to search it. He wants to find the final, missing illustration. At the house, Butterfly turns the tables on Black, pinning him to the ground and threatening to kill him. Butterfly is worried that Stork and Olive are conspiring against him, and he convinces Black to accompany him to Olive's house. Olive is not at home.

According Stork in the following part, they arrive at Stork's house, ransack his possessions and quiz him about which miniaturist drew certain pictures for the storyteller in the coffeehouse. Eventually they all decide to join forces, since they are scared of Master Osman and the tortures they may all face, and they find Olive at a dervish lodge. And is narrated by Olive, who claims he was not the one who drew the horse with the peculiar nostrils, but Black and Stork search his rooms anyway. Then it is told by the murderer that the other miniaturists attack him, and Black thrusts a

needle into his eyes. He finally confesses to the murders and reveals the missing illustration. It is not a portrait of the Sultan but of the murderer himself, who feels guilty about painting a self-portrait in the Venetian style. The murderer, now revealed as Olive, attempts to flee. He attacks and injures Black and then runs out and heads for the harbor. He is intercepted by Hasan, who beheads him with his sword.

The story is completed in Shekure's voice. She nurses the wounded Black back to health. He remains melancholy but retains his interest in painting. Enishte's book remains unfinished; Stork became Head Illuminator following Master Osman's death. Butterfly devotes his life to drawing ornamental designs for carpets and tents.

A critical review of literature, given below establishes the originality of the thesis argument regarding the subversion of the orientalism in *My Name Is Red*.

My Name is Red has met unanimous praise from reviewers. A reviewer, for example, for Publishers Weekly admires the novel's "jeweled prose and alluring digressions, nesting stories within stories," and concludes that Pamuk will gain many new readers with this "accessible, charming and intellectually satisfying, narrative." A Kirkus Reviews critic describes the novel as "a whimsical but provocative exploration of the nature of ideas, an Islamic Society...A rich feast of ideas, images, and lore."

Jonathan Levi, writing in the Los Angeles Times Book Review, comments that "it is a Pamuk's rendering of the intense life artists negotiating the devilishly sharp edge of Islam 1,000 years after its birth that elevates *My Name is Red* to the rank of modern classic." Levi also notes, as other reviewers did, that the novel, although set four hundred years in the past, reflects societal tensions that can still be found in the world today. For this reason he refers to it as "a novel of our times."

In the New York Times, Richard Eder describes Pamuk's intense interest in East-West interactions and explains some of the metaphysical ideas that permeate the

novel. He also comments that the novel is not just about ideas: “Eastern of Western, good or bad, ideas precipitate once they sink to human level, unleashing passions and violence. ‘Red’ is chockfull of sublimity and sin.” Eder also has high praise for the characterization of Shekure, which he regards as the finest in the book. She is “elusive, changeable enigmatic and immensely beguiling.” Eder concludes with this comment about how readers are likely to experience the novel:

They will be lifted by the paradoxical lightness and gaiety of the writing, by the wonderfully winding talk perpetually about to turn a corner, and by the stubborn humanity in the characters” maneuvers to survive. It is humanity whose lies and silences emerge as endearing and oddly bracing individual truths. The above reviews show that the subversion of orientalism in *My Name is Red* has not been discussed. This research tries to fill in the critical gap.

Outlining post colonialism as a theoretical field first requires a close examination of colonialism. Colonialism dwells primarily on the cultural dimension of expansionism that compels assimilation. Colonialism operates through oppressive acts that result in a restructuring of institutionalized power in new territories. The novel *My Name Is Red* that this thesis analyzes is interested in depicting the lives of individuals in postcolonial societies which try to negotiate the change from a colonial past to a postcolonial present.

Colonialism is often portrayed as a malevolent exploitation of non- Europeans for economic gain. Discovering seemingly inexhaustible resources abroad, Western states took advantage of their superior technology and assumed economic control of foreign regions. During the Victorian age, Britain had established itself as a potent Empire ruling over four hundred million subjects over the globe. The British supported colonial expansion as a strategy to boost their economy, and, additionally,

equated colonialism with the enlightenment of the natives. The presence of the empire was welcome to stimulate economic and social growth of underdeveloped territories. The empire, according to this view, acted as a parent-state promoting the value and necessity of “transporting” European institutions overseas (Deena xiii). For example, in India Great Britain built railroads and introduced English education. Some Indians saw an opportunity under the colonial reign to advance their status by becoming civil servants. The launching of such programs allowed the British not to be seen as just exploiters, but as enlighteners. Using parent-child imagery to portray the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, white settlers legitimized their presence by claiming to civilize the natives. Today, many critics maintain that the education played a primary role in interpreting the Indians to the empire. The goal of education, according to Paroma Roy, author of *Identities Traffic: Identities in Question in Colonial and Postcolonial India*, was to make Indians “more English than the English themselves” in order to create “a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellects” (1). This is the dependence complex of the colonized on the colonizer. This complex is based on a consensual partnership as Philip Mason implies: “You have done something for me which you were under no obligation to do: therefore I am yours and you may command me but on the other hand I expect you to look after me, '--this is the attitude” (qtd. in Deena xiii). Colonialism transferred Western institutions and values to distant parts of the world to such an extent that modernization, in time, became synonymous with westernization. To portray colonialism, however, in a fashion that depicts the willingness of the colonized people for a symbiotic relationship with the mother country for their own advantage would be wrong. This is because accepting the dependence complex erases the significance of resistance movements among the

colonized. It also negates the will of the people to build independent nation-states. This will had resulted into decolonization in the post-War period.

The end of the World War II initiated unrest in many colonies located in Africa and Asia alike. The weakening empires in Europe can hardly control their overseas colonies. As a result, liberation movements spread throughout the continents to overthrow the imperial rule. Postcolonialism, then, first emerges as a time frame in which many colonies gain their independence. Gradually, however, postcolonialism becomes a frame of mind to evaluate colonial abuse of resources and populations in conquered territories.

Postcolonialism takes the colonizer as the centre and puts the colonized into the margin. The continuous movement between the centre and the margin resulted in a propagation of knowledge about otherness. Travel, the act of carrying information between the empire and its colonies, therefore came to “refer to the construction of categories in criticism that engender specific ideas and practices” (Caren Kaplan 2). Massive movements during and after colonialism also changed the structure of the home of the colonizer. The idea of a homogeneous Empire gradually dissolved. The dissolution forced the nation to redefine its national identity in the face of mass migrations from the margin. This diasporic situation is different from the colonial travellers who observed the colonial spectacle through gazes that were “panoptic and thus dominating” (Abdul Jan Mohamed 102). Travellers encouraged by imperial desire to scrutinize otherness often acted as “agents of a superior civilization” in their engagements with “geographical and ethnographical enquiry” (Rana Kabbani 3). Colonial geography acted as the contact zone that operated on a strict, Eurocentric hierarchy.

Unlike colonialism, postcolonialism owes much to the experience of the native

movement that was able to oust the colonial rule. It created a new type of diasporic identity of the erstwhile colonized living into the land of the colonizing power. The rhetoric of displacement automatically implies a point of origin, namely home. Leaving their natural homes in search of adopted ones, formerly- colonized, newly-liberated people migrate to the mother country. Diaspora creates problems in the definition of home; it also complicates the connotation of identity. Stuart Hall argues that displaced subjects feel the need to constantly “produc[e] and reproduc[e] themselves anew through transformation and difference” (402). Often, the postcolonial subject becomes an involuntary nomad in search of a positionality that he or she can call home. The quest for a positionality, however, should not be misinterpreted as a simple act of repudiating the past for a promising future. The reconstruction of identity demands an effort that is more complex than a straightforward choice between the values of East and West.

Pamuk doesn't believe in West's orientalist discourse. He believes that Turkey has always been at the confluence of the east and the west .As he has told interviewers in several interviews, there are many good things in the East, which the West must appreciate. A binary division between the East and the West based on the latter's superior view of itself at the cost of the inferior view of the former is unacceptable to Pamuk.

What this thesis aims to argue is not a privileging of any cultural identity over the other, but to recognize the complicated coexistence of diverse components of postcolonial identity. This attitude remains skeptical of the West as a normative site even as it inhabits the place. In this sense, postcolonialism becomes an answer to orientalist constructions. Postcolonial theory, in this sense, promotes a revisionary viewpoint. It aspires to amend the discriminative judgments of the West in its

portrayal of the East. It aims to take an emancipatory place from the conventional ways of seeing others by creating an alternative space. Though Pamuk does not write in English, he dismantles orientalist constructions to encourage a new dialogue between cultures. *My Name Is Red* looks back in time to discuss historical moments. Pamuk suggests that the present cannot be understood without a strong understanding of the past, and that the past cannot be separated from geography. Pamuk's historical vision illuminates the challenges an empire faces in its efforts to establish a strong sense of national identity.

Pamuk chooses the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire as his setting for his novel which attempts to take on orientalism by showing how historical representation of otherness fail to provide a dialogue between difference. *My Name Is Red* creates a lively picture of late seventeenth century Istanbul, a great imperial city that is going through troubled times. It has been shaken by fires and plague. Military defeats against the Persians have disrupted the economy and led to high inflation. The bad situation has allowed fiery conservative clerics to rise to prominence. They preach that the disasters that have afflicted Istanbul happened because people have strayed from the strict path laid out in the *Koran*. These preachers oppose tolerance to Christians, the sale of wine and the playing of music. They also denounce the drinking of coffee as a sin that dulls the mind and causes ulcers and hernias. They want the many coffee houses in the city to be closed. One of the coffee houses is frequented by the miniaturists, and they enjoy listening to the irreverent stories told there by a storyteller who mocks the conservative preachers and undermines or questions traditional attitudes towards social and religious matters. This particular coffeehouse is located in the back streets of the slave market. This acts as a reminder that slavery existed in the Ottoman Empire at this time. Enishte keeps a slave, Hayrire, in his

house. The atmosphere of Istanbul is conveyed by characters such as Black, Enishte and the murderer as they walk through the streets of the city. Returning after a long absence, Black finds the city bigger and wealthier, but not as happy as he remembers it. It seems to be a city of extremes. He is astonished by the extravagant new houses that have been built, with expensive Venetian stained glass. But the streets seem narrow to him, and there are beggars on them, too. But despite the ominous aspects of the city, Black is entranced by its sights and sounds. As the setting and atmosphere of *My Name Is Red* shows, East clearly meets West in the novel.

The novel ultimately illuminates the crisis of identity that the Ottomans suffer and bequeath to modern Turkey. Pamuk redefines Muslim identity in a secular way that aims to eradicate stereotypical representations of Muslims as militant fundamentalists. Despite the fact that he has become a canonical name in the West, he still occupies an in-between position that comes from his ethnic background. It is his in-betweenness which results in refashioning a secular religious identity by replacing monolithic representations of Islam.

The first chapter so far has tried to conceptualize the key argument of the thesis. The second chapter, which analyzes the novel *My Name Is Red*, shows that Pamuk uses orientalism as a tool to discuss the contentious views existing within the seventeenth century Turkish society only as a response to the trap of artificial binaries which oversimplify the relationship between East and West. The third chapter, which concludes the thesis, argues that Pamuk's response to the trap of artificial binaries is not cancelling Western knowledge but is his double consciousness. He recognizes Western values but remains critical of the West in berating the Eastern worldview. Blood which is red and defines one's identity is not much different from the red paint that artists use to create art.

II. Contestation of Orientalist Construction in *My Name Is Red*

Turkish writer Pamuk is interested in exploring the complex significations of a home he has never left. Having lived most of his life in the same apartment in which he was born (the Pamuk Apartments in Nisantasi, Istanbul), Pamuk demonstrates that being at home does not mean that one can avoid the kind of cultural negotiations the postcolonial subject submits to in his adopted home. Pamuk is interested in the identities constructed by those who stay home. *My Name Is Red* portrays Ottoman society in the seventeenth centuries. For Pamuk, using an Ottoman setting is by no means a way of “admitting implicitly that the most brilliant periods of the Orient belong to the past” (qtd. in Abdel-Malek 51). The author is not nostalgic in his depictions of the Ottoman past. Indeed, his selection of this time period gives him the opportunity to explore the early articulations of the divergence between the East and the West.

Focusing on the Ottoman Empire as a Muslim homeland helps analyze the deconstruction of orientalism in a different context. The Ottoman Empire’s geographical location at the crossroads of East and West generates an escalating crisis about cultural identity. In observing the Christian world on its Western border, the Ottomans develop an ambiguous interest in Europe as a site of attraction as well as repulsion. While they admire the cultural achievements of the West, they remain apprehensive about Western influence on Ottoman traditions. This uncertainty already figures the empire as a contested site. Considering this type of home-based contestation within imperial space allows one to observe how cultural interactions between civilizations complicate identity even for those who feel well-placed in their homeland. Looking at contestation in the national sphere complicates the arguments about identity. This is because contestation becomes a means not only to study the

experiences of the postcolonial subject but also the home of the subjects who are symbolically displaced by changes which occur around them.

Pamuk is interested in religious identity and the way it shapes human consciousness. He focuses on the formation of subjectivity within a Muslim homeland. He presents a strong case about the necessity of maintaining a secular view as a safeguard of individual liberty. The separation between the affairs of the state and religion is crucial for Pamuk, who believes religion is a private practice which should therefore have no weight in political discussions. Although advocating secularism, Pamuk does not aim to alienate his Muslim audience. Rather, he identifies secularism as a condition of modernity. Without secularism, there can only be further alienation. He believes that the positions created by the insider/outsider binary of religion often threaten the fundamental principles of a multicultural society.

In addition to religion, Pamuk is interested in the discourse of orientalism, arguing that orientalist discourse, as a system, can be disorienting for the Easterner who experiences a discrepancy between self-representation and the West's narrativization of his or her home. The scholarship on orientalism has so far offered valuable criticism on the construction of the East as a discourse, "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the orient and the occident" (Edward Said 2). Said, in discussing the East-West binary, identifies the artificiality of the dual categories. He shows how they convey a biased picture of difference. Said has argued that the East has been systematically depicted as an antithesis to Europe. The essentialist ways of knowing the East have resulted in extremely reductionist narratives and a collection of stereotypes about the "other." Reading the East as a text, orientalism fixes identity as an inherently stable category. Deprived of the ability to narrate its own history independently from European

authority, the East becomes a vacated space. Pamuk takes on the attempt to represent the East as a vacated space.

This chapter argues that in *My Name Is Red*, Pamuk utilizes orientalist discourse strategically to describe the opposition between Ottoman liberals and conservatives. His stereotype-laden narrative shows how the two groups misconstrue one another based on their preconceived notions of what it means to be a liberal or a conservative. Due to their obstinacy, the two groups fail to reach a consensus in their interpretations of religious and national identity. Pamuk, however, is not concerned with providing his audience with a more authentic image of the orient. He is aware of the fact that all knowledge--whether oriental or not--is contaminated, What he does achieve in his narratives, however, is to demonstrate how orientalism can be employed as a formulaic way of reducing the East and the West. Pamuk is well-positioned to make such a demonstration: as a Turk, both European and Asian, he belongs neither to East nor West. The question, then, is this: in what way does orientalism change when a writer who is neither Eastern nor Western rewrites it? Pamuk successfully deconstructs orientalism by destabilizing the East and West as designations of categorical identity. He argues that the slippery nature of identity resists stereotyping.

My Name Is Red demonstrates how orientalist stereotypes can be employed to describe the confrontation between groups in the same society with polarized political convictions. The novel takes place during the early seventeenth century--at a time when the Western Renaissance is beginning to influence Ottoman intellectual circles. The multiple narratives of the book present various perspectives on the ongoing debates about the impact of Islamic restrictions on a multicultural society. The first narrative belongs to a corpse, the late miniaturist Elegant Efeudi, who informs the

reader of his murder. Elegant claims that his assassination “conceals an appalling conspiracy against our religion, our traditions, and the way we see the world,” and he demands that the reader find his murderer (Pamuk 5). The next narrative voice belongs to the protagonist, Black, who has returned to Istanbul from exile in the Eastern borderlands of the Empire to reunite with his childhood love, Shekure, his maternal cousin and twelve-year junior. Upon his arrival, Black visits his uncle, Shekure’s father, Enishte, and finds him in charge of a secret book of illustrations commissioned directly by the Sultan to celebrate the thousandth anniversary of the Hegira. The Sultan demands that the miniaturist produce a unique work of art that resembles the innovative techniques of the Franks. Enishte’s enthusiasm for experimenting with different styles, however, is short-lived. It transpires that the commissioned book, which is an attempt to synthesize Eastern miniature with Western portraiture, is imperiling the lives of those who are involved with it. Soon Enishte meets his death at the hands of a murderer, a fellow-miniaturist, who fears that the amalgamation of techniques and cultures is an abuse of Islam. Finding himself in the midst of clashing voices, religious controversy, and political intrigue, Black takes it upon himself to find the murderer.

Behind the surface of a murder mystery, Pamuk analyzes the relation between different modes of artistic expression—namely the disparity between Eastern and Western art—that dictate a particular way of seeing the world. Pamuk observes how different artistic visions can become political matters in a society which views cultural exchange as a threat to identity. The opposition between Eastern miniature and Western portraiture serves as a framework to talk about the anxieties of the Ottoman masters who feel threatened by the impending Western Renaissance as well as by shifting modes of seeing and representing. On the one hand, the Ottomans, situated at

the crossroads of East and West, are reluctant to integrate Western influence into their artistic techniques fearing it would be blasphemous for trying to rival God's creative powers. On the other hand, they are well aware of the public fascination with the Western portraits that emphasize originality, individual style, and autonomous subject-matter. The conservatives fear that "Everybody will want to paint like the Europeans" (261). By having the Ottoman leaders counter Westernization with tradition, Pamuk has them unconsciously adopt an orientalist discourse. East and West in this novel lose their geographical significance, and they become political positions. In this way, Pamuk can draw parallels with Fred Halliday's contentions about the representation of Islam in the West in the twentieth century. According to Halliday, "the conflict is not, as Islamists and their fellow travellers in the west would have us believe, between 'Islam' treated as a unity and 'the west,' but between different interpretations of Islam and the politics it can allow" even within the same Islamic society (qtd. in John Hawley 8). What Pamuk does in this novel is to depict religion as a polycentric discourse—an agenda pursued by other writers interested in Muslim identity. Pamuk is determined to complicate Islamic identity by depicting the pressures in a Muslim society to dispute the belief that every Muslim believer roots for fundamentalism. Pamuk uses religious discourse not to analyze Islamic belief, but to explore how different interpretations of Islam create inner tensions in Islamic states. The two contentious groups in the novel, therefore, do not only reflect the opposing views on the role of Islam and the way it should be interpreted, but they project different political possibilities for the future of the Ottoman Empire as well as the future of modern Turkey by questioning the role of religion in the state and its influence on identity.

In a strict Islamic community, painting is deemed sacrilegious, for the Koran

explicitly prohibits pictorial representations to avoid idolatry. Within strict parameters, Muslim artists work with sophisticated forms of gilding, ornamentation and miniature—the only acceptable forms of representational art. The tradition of miniature compels the artist to represent visually the symbolic rather than individual nature of objects; therefore, they must avoid the frontal perspective of Western art and use a perspective which emulates the way Allah sees the world from above. As Master Osman, the chief miniaturist of the palace, explains: “Painting was not about melancholy and regret but about this desire I felt and it was the talent of the master artist that first transformed this desire into a love of God and then into a love of the world as God saw it” (Pamuk 319). Eastern vision aspires for a transformative experience: making the invisible visible by blending God’s perception with human awareness. With the goal of capturing the divine perspective, the miniaturist aims to replicate what is unattainable to the ordinary eye. “The miniaturist is engaged with an idealist vision that seeks to represent not mere objects, but more significantly, their meanings” (51). “By portraying the world not as it is, but as it should be, the miniaturist comes closer to God understanding, believing that comprehension of God’s vision of the world leads to comprehension of his justice” (325). The insistence on representing the world not in a realistic three-dimensional way but in a symbolic two-dimensional comes to represent the conservative position. “The conservatives depend on ‘systematic narrowing and obscuring’ as a way of imposing their own meaning, paralleling the iconological language of the scared books” (Donna Haraway 286). In this way, they aim to avoid any possibility of discussion or new artistic approaches, either of which might threaten the core of their beliefs.

Traditional miniaturists also issued specific guidelines to govern the relationship between the design and the artist. Composing their pictures from an

elevated viewpoint—as if looking down from a minaret—miniaturists work collectively on projects and are humbled by the thought of following a sustained tradition that emphasizes perfection without individual style and recognition. Masters are celebrated not for their artistic individuality but for their adherence to artistic tradition and methods. “Where there is true art and genuine virtuosity,” explains Master Osman, the head miniaturist, “the artist can paint an incomparable masterpiece without leaving even a trace of his identity” (Pamuk 19). The conservatives condemn style as a defect. For the devout miniaturist, “the personal stylistic touches [are] nothing but imperfections” (63). Aware of his position in a historic continuum, the artist refuses to seek fame as an innovator, believing that individual recognition “betrays the dream of the master. . . and their entire tradition of painting” (111). This type of representation attributes to art a specific mission: in this context, art does not aim to look forward to thaw possible scenarios for the future, but is a backward gaze that appreciates the beauty in repetition, perfection in tradition.

There is no room for realism in miniaturism and artists are discouraged from finding inspiration in the physical world. Perfect vision does not necessarily originate from the ability to see the world. It can also come from blindness, a state regarded as the optimum degree of awareness. Blindness is not a threat to vision; on the contrary, it is “a realm of bliss from which the Devil and guilt are barred” (81). With old age, many miniaturists lose their eyesight; ironically, this descent into darkness is prized by miniaturists as the ultimate artistic goal. Blindness, in that sense, is not “A scourge, but rather the crowning reward bestowed by Allah upon the illuminator who had devoted an entire life to His glories; and this unique perspective could only be attained though recollection after blindness had descended” (80). By the dint of blindness, the artist experiences a different mode of comprehension and gains a more

informed vision, one that enables him to see the world in its perfection. A gift of God, blindness instigates a vision beyond appearances: “No longer distracted by the filth of this world,” the artist turns to memory to produce masterpieces which reflect “the pure form of things” (77). The symbolism between blindness and sight is used as a leitmotif in many miniaturist representations which demands the spectator participate in a similar form of awareness. The spectator enjoys artistic depiction not because it mirrors reality, but it reveals a metaphorical truth about the value of things that he or she often fails to see. The symbolic value of the art, therefore, educates the observer about the divine beauty. Pamuk does not present blindness as a tragedy but almost as a goal: instead of preventing the production of art, it actually enhances it. The idea in Islamic art is that the artist works within an established tradition, following the work of previous masters. He works not so much from direct observation of objects but from imitation of earlier works and repetition of the same methods. After many years of working in this way, the artists find that they are painting from memory, so they do not actually have to see in order to paint. Blindness also frees them from being influenced by other artistic styles and from the sensory realm and all the distractions that come with it.

As an antithesis to Eastern art, Western art requires a different way of seeing. Western painting, according to the Ottoman masters, is not concerned with capturing divine vision; it portrays reality as it appears to the human eye. By adopting perspective not from the minaret but from the street, it imitates the world directly. Enishte Eferidi observes that the paintings of the Venetians “are more compelling because they more closely resemble life itself” (170). Their efforts to paint life-like objects using perspectival techniques indicate a shift from idealism to realism. Not only do the Venetians excel at these realistic techniques, they also own their creations

by signing their names on the canvas. Such possessiveness is indicative of the fact that the Western painter exists not as a part of collective consciousness, but as an individual in quest of unique style. Through stylistic idiosyncrasy, the painter focuses on individual features to make the object recognizable: “The Venetian masters had discovered painting techniques with which they could distinguish any one man from another--without relying on his outfit or medals, just by the distinctive shape of his face” (27). Western art immortalizes the object illustrated. With their photographic representations, the Venetians are able to freeze their depictions both spatially and temporally:

“If your face were depicted in this fashion only once, no one would ever be able to forget you, and if you were far away, someone who laid eyes on your portrait would feel your presence as if you were actually nearby. Those who had never seen you alive, even years after your death, could conic face-to-face with you as if you were standing before them.” (27)

For many miniaturists, the Western interpretation of objects as unique and individual, and their adoption of individual style, moves the emphasis of art onto the painter’s understanding of an object, rather than God’s understanding of an object. The Western artist is inspired not by the divine but the ordinary.

By displaying the essential differences between extremely different forms of seeing and representing, Pamuk may be re-constructing an orientalist binary, based not on an “ethnic typology,” but on the different philosophies of aesthetics (Abdel-Malek 50). He does, however, employ a more traditional orientalism as a way to highlight the fracture within the Ottoman community between conservatives and liberals. While the novel’s conservatives resist assimilating Western vision into

Ottoman tradition, the progressive Ottomans recognize the power of portraiture and aspire to modernize miniature techniques. And yet the liberals do not escape Pamuk's censure: the way the liberals see the conservatives ironically echoes the orientalist way the West views the East. Criticizing conservatives for their blind militancy and extreme religious orthodoxy, and liberals for their dismissive and stereotyped views, Paniuk voices his concern over destructive partisanship.

A mouthpiece for extreme conservatism, the unknown murderer is one of the multiple first-person voices in the novel. His perspective is not that of a victimizer, but of a victim of circumstances at a historic moment when Westernization has entered into the realm of Eastern tradition. He contests the influence of liberal infidels and defends the eminence of Eastern conventions. The murderer sees European stimulus as a menace to Islam: miniaturists who give into Westernization will inevitably commit heresy and forsake their own religion. Following the Christians, Muslim miniaturists will commit idolatry by representing the world and worshipping their own creations. More importantly, their quest for innovation and personal style will cause them to lose their modesty, and they will start regarding themselves as rivals of God for being able to create unique illustrations. The murderer, therefore, endorses extremism in opposition of European style, justifying the assassinations as a necessary defence against Ottomans aping Europeans. For holding this view, the murderer is regarded by Black, Enishte and others as a small-minded, inhumane villain. In this particular instance, then, it is not the orientalist Europeans who are judging the murderer; it is other Muslims living in the same community.

By repudiating cultural interaction and exchange, the murderer implicitly defends homogeneity, representing the views of the conservatives who “reject automatically all foreign elements which conflict with its own fundamental values”

(A. L. Tibawi 164). In doing so, however, he conveniently ignores the fact that even miniature is a borrowed artistic practice developed in Persia. Though under Ottoman occupation, Persia is still regarded as an independent culture, and the superiority of the Ottoman military does not change the fact that the Ottomans are basically borrowing from Persian art, integrating theft traditions into their own. Why, then, is it acceptable to borrow from the “Eastern other” while the exchanges with the West are seen as contamination of traditions? G.E. von Grunebaum states that “Islam has always combined a capacity for absorption of foreign elements with a certain reluctance to admit theft origin” (qtd. in Tibawi 165). Pamuk seems to suggest that extremists do not necessarily oppose change as long as change comes from a similar, Islamic culture. Therefore, the East of the Empire is viewed as a source to enrich Ottoman culture while the West is perceived as an enemy threatening Ottoman identity.

This anti-Western mentality is not necessarily caused by religious difference. Even though the West has always been recognized as the religious other, a more traditional “other” to the Ottomans was the states situated east of their borders. Seyyed Hossein Nasr draws attention to the fact that Islamic empires themselves often identified the East as the “other”: “For Islam, there were several other civilizations, such as those in India and China, with which it had contact and which it saw as the other” (309). Nasr’s observations clearly articulate the way otherness extended beyond the parameters of traditional orientalism. Nasr continues:

This factor itself contributed, through Islam’s image of itself as the central world civilization, to the neglect for several centuries by Muslims of the rise of European power during the Renaissance and major intellectual and religious transformations that were taking place

at the time in the West including the rise of modern science followed by the new technology. (309)

The emergence of the West as an intellectual and cultural rival was a recent phenomenon; it was this that spurred the conservative miniaturists' fears of Western art.

Pamuk recognizes the futility of attempts to claim cultural purity and is impatient with those who insist on cultural isolation as a means of preserving traditions. The murderer, blinded by the fear of Westernization, symbolizes those who try in vain to stabilize identity failing to recognize that cultural identity "is a meeting ground for different allegiances" embodying "conflicting loyalties" (Amin Maalouf 4). For the murderer, identity is fixed, and any attempt to achieve synthesis will inevitably result in humiliation:

Had Enishte Efendi's book been completed and sent to them, the Venetian masters would have smirked, and their ridicule would have reached the Venetian Doge--that is all. They'd have quipped that the Ottomans have given up being Ottoman and would no longer fear us. (Pamuk 399)

Immersed in metaphorical blindness, the murderer tries to protect Islamic artistry to prevent it from meeting "its end on account of the appeal of portraiture" (109). The murders he commits are a desperate testament to his hope to sustain a permanent cultural homogeneity.

Unlike the murderer, liberal artists, including Enishte, see the value of harmonizing different ways of seeing; this practice might synthesize different forms of artistic expressions. Enishte is aware of his role as a pioneer and willingly sacrifices his life to achieve his goal. He is aware of the fact that "illustrating in a new

way signifies a new way of seeing” that does not rest on artificial binaries but on the effort to experiment with different possibilities (28). His acceptance of the commission is not just an artistic endeavour; it is a political act as well that aims to advocate a more productive relationship between the East and the West. Enishte’s attempt to borrow from the West, in effect, reveals his desire to open ways for coexistence without the dictate of artificial hierarchies privileging either side: the Venetian Doge might say to himself, ‘Just as the Ottoman miniaturists have come to see the world like us, so have the Ottomans themselves come to resemble us,’ in turn, accepting Our Sultan’s power and friendship” (266). Enishte’s amalgamation of Eastern idealism with Western realism reveals his efforts to cross borders in order to generate a mutual dialogue between cultures. What Enishte wants is not to imitate the Venetians, but to use their techniques to bring richness to the Ottoman traditions:

I wanted the things.I depicted to represent Our Sultan’s entire world, just as in the paintings of the Venetian musters. Bat unlike the Venetians, my work would not merely depict material objects, but naturally the inner riches, the joys and fears of the realm over which Our Sultan rules. (25)

What Enishte hopes to create, therefore, is not Western, but Eurasian art that can combine the beauties of the inner and the outer worlds, paying attention both to physical detail and uniqueness as well as spiritual meaning of the object. In many ways, Enishte’s project can be seen as an adoption of a third space perspective:

he advocates borrowing but not combining. Enishte worries about the results of mindless combination of cultures: if one simply combines Venetian and Persian artistic techniques, he argues, “the result was a miserable painting that was neither Venetian nor Persian” (250). To combine visions without negotiation is to have no

vision at all.

Although Enishte's efforts air or card to find common grounds between the two forms of art, he is seen by the conservatives as someone who is in favour of westernization. However, what Enishte encourages is a form of secularism— an idea that seeks to keep the dogmatism of religious discourse separate from creative acts so that the artist can rely on his aesthetic vision without the fear of controversy.

Rejecting any form of religious radicalism, Enishte and Black advocate secularism in order to give precedence to the act of creation rather than the politics of creation: while the murderer insists that “Allah will punish painters most severely” (160), Enishte asserts that “I dared to move the art of illustrating away from Allah's perspective” (111). Enishte and other secularists anticipate future controversies.

Secularism, explains Anouar Majid, is a worldview that came to existence mainly during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Majid defines secularism as:

The product of enlightenment thought and a classical liberal philosophy whose goal was nothing less than the recalibration and redefinition of human morality to adjust it to a new social calculus that excluded traditional religious commitments (irrational as these might have been). (2)

Pamuk does not condemn religion; indeed, all the characters who remain open to change like Enishte, Elegant and Black consider themselves as devout Muslims. They explain their passion not in terms of their desire to become westernized, but as a way to serve to the enrichment of Eastern art. They all support the idea of adopting new forms to augment Eastern traditions. For believers like Enishte, the murderer is not a true Muslim, not just because he is willing to take fellow Muslim lives, but also because he cannot recognize that Christian art does not contradict the foundation of

Islamic art. Many liberals contend that ‘The new styles of the Frankish masters aren’t blasphemous, quite the, opposite, they are the most in keeping with [their] faith’ since the Franks do not pretend to access to the way Allah sees the world--since such divine vision is surely beyond human comprehension (Pamuk 219). The liberals do not stray away from their beliefs; on the contrary, they propose a new way of defining Western art which does not oppose the essence of Islam. This is why, when Elegant is murdered at the beginning of the novel, his corpse makes the following claim: "My death conceals an appalling conspiracy against our religion, our traditions" (5). For the liberals, traditions and religion still hold great value. The only way they differ from the conservatives is in their efforts to form a bridge between different artistic expressions—and ultimately, between cultures—by continuing to honour their faith.

The opposition between liberals and conservatives is the result of a discrepancy between how liberals view themselves and how they are viewed by conservatives. In effect, both groups are disoriented, both resemble the modern disoriented Muslim, who has “the impression of living in a foreign, hostile, indecipherable universe” (Hawley 4). Pamuk feels that a society which is governed by the strict dictates of religion in its affairs with the rest of the world will always disorient its citizens, Pamuk’s secular view aims to create an understanding that emphasizes the separation of religion from politics as well as the separation of politics from art—not because he believes art should be immune to political conviction, but because art is too precious to be politicized by various interest groups. As long as Muslims have a disoriented view of their relationship with the rest of the world and continue to struggle against the forces of globalization, they will remain in stasis and their life will only carry meaning by the degree of radicalism they display against an unnecessary enemy they construct in their minds; thus, the murderer can justify his

actions by their hostility a we West: “For me, having a style would be worse than being a murderer” (Pamuk 375). Pamuk makes a clear distinction between assimilation and secularism. For him, accepting Western values and institutions without questioning their validity is an act of assimilation that does not benefit the cultural traditions of the Turks. However, to portray the West as a source of corruption and threat is equally misleading and unproductive. Rather, he supports the idea of cultural exchange and the possibility of coexistence without the injunction of religious difference.

The novel presents change as an inevitable condition of modernity. The miniature artists start getting news from the bordering provinces which testify that “in Mashhad and Aleppo, many miniaturists had abandoned working on books and begun making odd single-leaf pictures--curiosities that would please European travelers--even obscene drawings” (23). This change signals that despite the efforts of conservatives, art recognizes no cultural borders; it cannot be isolated. Art is an eclectic form of expression that cannot have a specific orientation. The conclusion of the novel, therefore, affirms that homogenization is inconceivable in art, which continuously rejects tradition in favour of innovation. Art is “Eastern and Western both” in a world that is rapidly globalizing (354).

My Name Is Red allows Pamuk to employ orientalist discourse and to critique it. First, he employs a traditional East-West binary to talk about the differences between Eastern and Western art. However, Pamuk’s narrative does not present a hierarchy between the two artistic modes. He only acknowledges them as being different from one another. The duality he creates is not an attempt to confirm orientalist stereotyping, but to recognize vital differences in artistic illustrations. Secondly, he uses orientalism to emphasize the struggle between the possible ways of

constructing an Ottoman identity. By opposing liberals with radicals, he creates a context to discuss questions about the relationship between disoriented Muslims who fear change and their counterparts who embrace polyvocality. Though the author initially utilizes an East-West binary as a strategy, his purpose is not to present this binary as an inherent opposition between cultures, but to argue that it is imperative to bring an end to the contention created by each group's misguided visions of each other in order to learn how to coexist without giving way to violence.

III. Conclusion: Emphasis on Mutual Coexistence

Pamuk's *My Name Is Red* is an engagement with the experience of modern-day Turkey. Pamuk takes a strong stance against clear-cut divisions, identifying them as ironic inversions of orientalist thinking. His novel dedicated to the exploration of Turkey's two-faced character and its struggle to bridge the gap between the East and the West. The history of the Ottoman Empire, situated on three continents, along with the history of Turkish independence from the allied forces after World War I plays a crucial role in understanding some of the challenges modern Turkey has inherited in its quest to construct a national identity bridging East and West. The Ottoman society acts as metaphor to discuss Turkish nationalism and the role of Islamic identity in the face of modernism and secularism.

In *My Name Is Red*, the discrepancy between Eastern and Western artistic representation illuminates the crisis of identity that the Ottomans suffered and bequeathed to modern Turkey. Pamuk ends his novel by saluting the fact that the young "artists painted neither like Easterners nor Westerners." (411). *My Name Is Red* clearly criticizes the fundamentalist position that cultural exchange means loss of identity. Pamuk acknowledges that cultures cannot and should not cling to purity. It is Pamuk's contention that the diffusion of different values and perceptions should be viewed as a triumph rather than a loss. Cultural identity can no longer be defined as "static and closed" (Anthony Appiah 223). Rather, it is a diverse system of practices that include "points of similarity" as well as "points of difference which constitute what people really are or rather, as a consequence of historical processes and events, what people have become" (Emilia Ippolito 18). In the age of globalization, "it is impossible to speak about 'one experience and one identity' without acknowledging the ruptures and discontinuities" (18-9). Therefore, having dual, triple, or quadruple affiliations is no longer a theory but is the very essence of the world we live in.

Works Cited

- Abdel-Malek, Anouar. "Orientalism in Crisis." *Orientalism: A Reader*. Ed. A.L. Macfie. New York: New York UP, 2000. 47-57.
- Appiah, K. Anthony. "Cosmopolitan Readings." *Cosmopolitan Geographies: New Locations in Literature and Culture*. Ed. Vinay Dharwadker. New York: Routledge, 2001. 197-227.
- Deena, Seodial F.H. *Canonization, Colonization, Decolonization: A Comparative Study of Political and Critical Works by Minority Writers*. New York: Peter Lang, 2001.
- Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Patrick Williams and Chrisman. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf 1994. 392-401.
- Harraway, Donna. "The Persistence of Vision." *Writings on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*. Ed. Kaie Conboy, Nadia Medina and Sarah Stanbury. New York: Columbia UP, 1997. 283-296.
- Hawley, John C. *The Postcolonial Crescent: Islam's Impact on Contemporary Literature*. New York: Peter Lang, 1998.
- Ippolito, Emilia. *Caribbean Women Writers: Identity and Gender*. New York: Camden House, 2000.
- Jan Mohamed, Abdul R. "The Specular Border Intellectual." *Edward Said: A Critical Reader*. Ed. Michael Sprinker. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992. 96- 120.
- Kabbani, Rana. *Europe's Myths of the Orient*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986.
- Kaplan, Caren. *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*. Durham: Duke UP, 1996.
- Eder, Richard, "heresies of the Paintbrush," in *the New York Times*, September 2,

2001.

Levi, John , “Ode on a Grecian Urn.” in *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, October

7,p.9.

Review of My Name is Red, in *Kirkus Reviews*, Vol.69,No. 15, August 1,

2001,p.1058.

Review of My Name is Red .in *publishers weekly* ,Vol.248, No. 32, August 6, 2001 p.

58.