

My name is red by orhan pamuk

Literature



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My Name is Red by Orhan Pamuk

This novel recently sparked a lot of controversy in Turkey, its homeland, and in other parts of the world where it was translated. The novel is a modern tale that looks into image-making debates in Istanbul in the 16th century. It not only focuses on the culture of miniature painting but also looks into Western painting. Most of all, the novel is a detective and love story that starts with a murder and ends with resolution to the mystery similar to other writings in this genre. What is special is role the conflict between the various traditions of painting and between word and image play in solving the love story and the mystery (Çiçekoglu 1). The tradition culture of miniature painting and the image of narrative texts that legitimized itself as artwork in the novel may be seen as a way of dealing with the culture of Islam.

In this context, images are viewed as footnotes not as dependent things within themselves. Images serve the purpose of words for an improved understanding of the meaning of the text and paint the reader's mind with imagination. Although images are representation of inner life, they do not give a depiction of the real life (Çiçekoglu 3). Therefore, contrary to the interpretation and meaning in Western sculptures, the meaning in Islamic illumination converges inwards rather than outwards.

The novel is based in the 16th century that is widely known as a period of 'word and image' conflict. This century saw the change from pictorial narration to art by describing. The 15th century through the Italian Renaissance for the Western art to what it has evolved into in the contemporary world. The novella is an account of the confrontation of two ways of thought and a description of how the search for representationalism triumphs tradition (Çiçekoglu 7). However, it is in no way a one dimension

tribute to the influence of Venice and its search for naturalism on Islamic art. On the contrary, the miniature tradition is brought about in a loving way in the novel as depicted by Bihzad, a Persian artist.

The novel is based along the fault line of the contradictions that were in existence during the period it was written (Çiçekoglu 9). The novel is also seen as an elegy for the lost tradition that had been overshadowed in the Renaissance stage by Western naturalism. From the examples given by the writer, it is clear that he supports the meaning of naturalism (Çiçekoglu 12). In spite of the variety of themes, techniques of narration and periods in the novel it can be observed that the main focus is the ' East and West'. This can be confirmed on the first page of the novel where the author quotes from the Quran " To God belongs the East and the West" (Çiçekoglu 15). The author has developed visual and spatial metaphors throughout the text repeatedly personified by Istanbul.

In summary, the story in the novel both by its time and theme points to an important issue at an important point in history where the subconscious of the present-day is entranced by an established East- West confrontation. The author provides a global framework for a more thoughtful understanding of the influence of images.

Work Cited

Çiçekoglu, Feride. " A Pedagogy of Two Ways of Seeing: A Confrontation of " Word and Image" in My Name is Red". The Journal of Aesthetic Education 37. 3 (2003): 1-20. Print.