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## A STUDY AND ANALYSIS OF DISSECTING ORHAN PAMUK'S WORK CASTLE, MY NAME IS RED, AND ISTANBUL

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### ABSTARCT

This analysis will examine the structural and contextual organization of The White Castle, My Name Is Red, and Istanbul: Memories of a City by OrhanPamuk. The investigation's primary focus will be on the possibility of illustrating identity as the attempt to convey the characteristics that make the'self' what it is. Using Jacques Derrida's theoretical framework as a prism, I will analyze the various textual and aesthetic strategies employed by OrhanPamuk in his novels in order to express identity as différance.

**KEYWORDS:** Istanbul, story, Hoja, The White Castle, My Name Is Red.

### INTRODUCTION

This tale offers a fascinating look at life in 17th-century Istanbul. On his way from Venice to Naples, a young Italian scholar is kidnapped by the Ottoman Empire. Almost immediately after, he is sold into slavery to a wise man called Hoja (master), a man around his own age to whom he has a strong physical resemblance.

Hoja is in charge of reporting to the Pasha, who is keen in hearing about his travels and learning more about the world. A giant iron weapon is eventually created by Hoja and the narrator for the Sultan. The master has given the slave strict instructions to teach himself and his fellow slaves about Western astronomy and medicine. Hoja, though, wonders whether he and his slave could switch identities if they knew one other's darkest, most intimate secrets.

In The White Castle, the relationship between slave and master is explored at length. Hoja, the novel's master, constantly ridicules the narrator, either for his privileged background or his weakness and paranoia as a slave, in an effort to establish his authority. The narrator spends an equal amount of time trying to teach Hoja, and Hoja spends an equal amount of time becoming angry at the narrator for not teaching him. The already tense connection between slave and master worsens when they find they may switch roles.

The White Castle also devotes significant time to the power of knowledge. Both the Narrator and Hoja have widespread acclaim. Although at first glance both seem equally knowledgeable, the narrator's perspective is more modern and based on science than Hoja's, which is mediated by a

different language and further filtered by dogma. Both the heliocentric and geocentric cosmological theories are metaphors for people and their worldviews. The narrator, in contrast to Hoja, views his knowledge as a tool to aid others rather than an advantage to be used for his own ends.

*My Name Is Red*, written by Orhan Pamuk and first published in Turkey under the title *Benim Adım Kırmızı*, was translated into English by Erda Göknar in 1999. Pamuk went on to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2006. This novel, which is set in the Ottoman Empire in 1591 and follows a group of miniaturists, is widely credited with bringing international attention to Pamuk and earning him the Nobel Prize. Joyce, Kafka, Mann, Nabokov, Proust, and especially Eco may all be seen in the subtle ways that they influenced Pamuk's work. The book has been translated into over sixty languages since its first publication. The French version, *Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger*, and the Italian translation, *Premio Grinzane Cavour*, both won significant accolades in 2002. In 2003, the International Dublin Literary Award went to the English novel *My Name Is Red*.

In 2010, the Everyman's Library Contemporary Classics reprinted Erda Göknar's translation of the book as an homage to the work's position in the Pamuk canon. A drama based on the novel was broadcast on BBC Radio 4 in 2008.

The autobiographical work written by Orhan Pamuk, titled *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (*İstanbul: Hatıralar ve Hava*), is a very sad book. The book delves into Turkey's ongoing cultural conflict, the seismic upheaval that has rocked the country. As such, it's a touching ode to the nuclear family as a social institution. This book focuses on the Bosphorus and the connection between Istanbul and the strait. In 2005, it was translated into English by Maureen Freely.

Pamuk penned the book during a period of near-clinical depression. He explained it in an interview as follows: "My life was in shambles as a result of a number of factors; I won't bore you with the details, but suffice it to say that divorce, the death of my father, professional difficulties, difficulties with this and that, and so on and so forth all contributed to my personal crisis. If I let myself grow too fragile, I thought, an episode of depression was certain. On the other side, I would start my day with a shower and then write while appreciating the book's beauty. His brother and other family members were especially hurt by the way they were portrayed in the news. According to Pamuk, he and his mother had a falling out because of the book.

In this anthology, the author brings together his own memories of Istanbul with those of other writers and artists. One chapter is dedicated to the Western artist Antoine Melling, who, in the 19th century, engraved scenes from Constantinople. Some of Pamuk's favorite Istanbuli authors—including Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, Reşat Ekrem Koçu, Abdülhak Hâşimî, Ahmet Rasim, and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar—serve as inspirations and protagonists in the work. He particularly enjoys the works of Western-focused authors such as Théophile Gautier, Gustave Flaubert, and Gérard de Nerval.

Pamuk used professional photographs taken by Ara Güler and others to illustrate the book for the nostalgic feeling they elicited in him. Other pictures of Pamuk exist, either of him alone or with his loved ones.

## LITERATURE AND REVIEW

**Maha Sulaiman (2022)** This article examines the ways in which the Renaissance affected Michelangelo's ideas on sculpting and painting in Italy, as well as the miniaturist artists of Istanbul. The confluence of Eastern and Western painting traditions is a cause of conflict in Orhan Pamuk's *My Name is Red*. The novel's protagonists are a group of miniaturists living in sixteenth-century Istanbul who had brought the Persian style of painting into the city. Due to the city's very religious population, Muslim miniaturists in Istanbul struggled with feelings of inadequacy and shame. Artists were accused of trying to create a parallel reality in which they could play God. Miniaturists in the book are instructed to model their work after the detailed paintings and distinctive techniques of Venetian masters. This leaves them worrying about whether or not their work is blasphemous. The film draws parallels between Irving Stone's autobiography *The Agony and the Ecstasy* and the novel *My Name Is Red*. The time period of this novel is similar to that of *My Name is Red*. Michelangelo, the Florentine Renaissance sculptor, painter, and architect, is the main subject. This study goes into the backstory of Michelangelo's creative approach. There's also talk of how Michelangelo's religious background informed his own view of humanity and served as the major inspiration for many of the topics he explored. Both books examine how humanism influenced the arts and religion throughout the Renaissance.

**Sumon Chandra Shell et al (2022)** In his masterpiece, "My Name Is Red," Nobel laureate and Turkish author Orhan Pamuk reveals the secrets of the Ottoman Empire's huge art collection. This tale of enchantment and disillusionment takes place in late sixteenth-century Istanbul, a city where Eastern and Western cultures collided. Its focus is on love, art, and death. Unexpectedly for a story set in the Middle Ages, the narrative voice in this piece evokes a postmodern setting. The novel's use of several points of view enhances the reader's feeling of ambiguity by having numerous characters express their own first-person viewpoints only partly, which benefits the murder investigation, the cultural clash, and the growing relationship between Shekure and Black. Orhan Pamuk's multiperspectivity in his masterpiece *My Name Is Red* successfully integrates the postmodern aspects of decentralization, fragmentation, and posthumanism.

**Hülya Yilmaz (2012)** The novelist's imagination as an opportunity to modify one's own identity by changing the "other" into the self is at the heart of this chapter, a theme that Orhan Pamuk discussed in his acceptance speech after receiving the 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature. It is the author's belief that "[g]reat literature speaks not to our abilities of judgment but to our capacity to put ourselves in the position of another"<sup>2</sup>. It is the novelist's imagination that gives the limited world of daily existence its particularity, charm, and soul, he declares, adding, "the world to which I aspire to belong is, of course, the world of the imagination."<sup>3</sup> *Ka*, which means "snow" in Pamuk's home language and also refers to the Turkish city of Kars where he unfolds *Ka's* life in monumental transitions, is a canvas on which Pamuk builds a spiritual existence of particularity and enchantment for his protagonist. *Ka's* birth identification becomes unique as well, as Pamuk makes him drop both his names, which is illegal according to Turkish law.

**Ahmed Hassan Ali Murshed (2021)** It needs both innate talent and the discipline to polish one's trade in order to write works of literature. Honed craft is the skill of giving voice to one's ideas, emotions, and observations via language; natural aptitude shows itself in the author's originality, the beauty of their formulations, and the order of their works. Creative writing aims to expose the author's individuality and identity via the expression of a wide spectrum of human feelings and

experiences. The creative writer is patient and persistent because he or she understands that the first, second, or even third attempt may be unsuccessful, but it won't stop them from trying again and again until they do. The single most important quality of a creative writer is the capacity to employ their expansive imagination to produce a good text that attracts readers. Orhan Pamuk is a creative and knowledgeable writer. People instinctively consider him an authority on whatever topic he happens to be writing about whenever he does so. His considerable knowledge in the topic helps him to convey ideas as they are understood by specialists. In his complex works, he often has several characters provide their versions of the same story. He uses narrative and stream-of-consciousness techniques to illustrate the thoughts of his characters. This author gives the reader a lot of leeway to go into the brains of the characters and piece together his own story from the many viewpoints offered. Pamuk considers writing to be an inward spiritual journey, thus he does his best to portray his characters as they seem to him in reality. In this talk, we'll look at various works by Orhan Pamuk to analyze his genius and expertise as a writer.

### **THE STORY OF THE 'I': THE WHITE CASTLE**

The White Castle is a historical book written by Turkish author Orhan Pamuk. The narrator, a young Italian academic, is taken as a slave by a Turkish scholar called Hoja, whom he shares a remarkable similarity to in the current day, and the narrative is presented in flashback from the present day to the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century. The Turkish edition came out in 1985, while the English version wasn't released until 1990. Freedom, knowledge, and the essence of one's own identity are all issues that the protagonist and adversary talk about throughout the piece.

The story we are about to tell starts in the midst of the 1980s. The following text is an account of how the historian Faruk Darvinolu came upon the account you are about to read. The manuscript's captivating narrative voice immediately draws him in when he comes upon it in the governor's archives in Istanbul, Turkey. He investigates the book's provenance, hoping to verify the existence of the author and the veracity of the events he read about. An Italian writer is the farthest he gets in his search for answers. He has decided to make the story available to the world after realizing that it must be told.

In the seventeenth century, the narrator, a young man from a wealthy family who is also brilliant and well-read, travels to Naples and subsequently Venice. Out of the haze, a Turkish armada emerges and races past the Italian vessel. As the Turks pick up the other passengers, the narrator makes up a medical profession to impress his captors and get a lenient punishment. But the Turks continue to hold him in slavery.

The narrator now reports to the pasha from the prison of the Turkish navy. The narrator offers to help the pasha when the latter mentions having trouble breathing. This helps the narrator out even if he is still a slave. One such opportunity is helping to set up the fireworks display for the wedding of the pasha's son. Throughout this ordeal, the narrator encountered a man called Hoja who could have been a double. Hoja becomes his master, and the two of them put on a fireworks show for the pasha.

When the pasha learns of the joyful wedding, he agrees to release the storyteller from prison, but only if he converts to Islam. In this case, the narrator has to reply "no." A false execution is staged

by the pasha in an effort to convert the narrator via terror, but the narrator is unimpressed. The pasha is inspired by the narrator's determination and decides to return him to Hoja.

Master Hoja has a poor reputation for kindness. He may be cold and calculating one minute, then ravenous for knowledge and ready to advance his career at any cost the next. While preparing for the fireworks display, the narrator educates Hoja about Western culture; following the performance, Hoja continues to learn from the narrator, this time about astronomy. Hoja eventually convinces the sultan to hire him as court astrologer thanks to the information he gained from the storyteller.

In between his furious outbursts, Hoja asks about the narrator's past, and the two of them discuss the chain of events that led them to where they are now. Everyone considers their own motivations and actions in light of this unexpected turn of events. In contrast to the storyteller, Hoja has a hard time with this. He's egotistical and rude because he can't think critically. Therefore, he loses his cool and lashes out at the narrator, arguing (weakly) that he is better than the narrator just because he is Hoja.

Then an awful pandemic breaks out. Hoja makes fun of the narrator for being afraid of it. The narrator sees his opportunity to go when it seems that Hoja has succumbed to the disease. Hoja, though, manages to stay alive and retake him later on. Hoja is unpleasant, yet he is curious in the narrator's past and wants to learn more about it.

The devastating pandemic has finally been contained. Hoja's ambitions won't be satisfied even if the monarch makes him court astrologer. Following his successful courtship, the sultan asks him and the narrator to develop a revolutionary new weapon to revolutionize the Turkish military.

Six years pass as they work on perfecting their weapon. Uncomfortable with how much Hoja knows about him and how interested he is in him, the narrator starts to feel uncomfortable as they continue to work together. Hoja is so good at imitating his master that the narrator begins to question if he has really become his slave.

The weapon has been finished once again. The Turks use it to drive the Poles out of the white citadel at Edirne. But since the powerful new weapon is so ineffectual, the Poles had time to send in a massive reinforcement force.

In a single second, Hoja decides to leave before things become any worse. Hoja dons the narrator's clothes and assumes his character so that the narrator might do the same. The sultan frees this man, who is now known as Hoja, and brings him back to the palace, where he resumes his position as court astrologer. After the sultan's collapse, the slave is set free and goes on to become a writer. His old teacher vanished into the gloom of Edirne, and he has no clue what became of him in all these years.

## **THE PAINTING OF THE 'I': MY NAME IS RED**

The tree image, which is a carbon copy of one of the covers for Enishte Effendi's book, exemplifies the ongoing conflict in "My Name Is Red" between art as description of the world as God perceives it and art as depiction of the world as the naked eye sees it. The tree laments his

separation from the book since there is where his importance rests, and Islamic artists are expected to make works that are faithful to the text and the meaning of the cosmos God created. Enishte tells Black that "the visuals represent the story's flowering in color" (Pamuk, 26) when Black asks her to characterize Ottoman miniatures. The story is told entirely via visuals. Many people even think calligraphy is more significant than paintings and consider paintings to be heretical dalliances.

Miniaturists claim that the tree, rather than representing the truth of a single second, should symbolize God's limitless reality because of fear of punishment for depicting the actual world. Since the point of miniature painting is to depict the world as God views it, there is only one perspective from which a skilled artist may work: God's. In Islam, God is considered to be the highest being. Disclosure of the artist's identity is the greatest possible sin since it is the equivalent of doing what God does. In the book, master Osman used the "courtesan approach" to dismantle the miniaturists' work by examining the finer points of a picture. He thinks that the unique mark of an artist is a flaw that takes away from God's flawless plan. Enishte Effendi, on the other hand, argues that such meticulousness is not a defect but rather something to be lauded as a distinctive creative style that springs out from the artist's own past, from the recesses of the mind and buried recollections. He thinks trends can't be stopped and that different schools will unavoidably produce distinctive styles. He shows Black how the great Shirazi and Herati miniaturists presented the same subject matter in very different ways by using different backgrounds and horizon lines.

This, he reasons, is what drove the killer of the Elegant: the strain and uncertainty of adjusting to a new worldview. The tree thinks of himself as being as authentic and original as any other tree in the forest. European-style portraits do the same thing; the viewer can immediately tell who is being shown. The realism paintings are all framed differently. High levels of realism and uniqueness allow the viewer to more easily recognize certain people, trees, and dogs. Enishte believes that the most natural way to paint is in a realistic style, since this conveys what the eye perceives and may affect the viewer. To begin, the present, the past, and the future are all of equal worth. A tree as tall as the Sultan could fit on one page. The second thing that may have been covered is the value of authenticity. Each artist has their own special way of putting form and color together. In addition, a focus on human dignity would be emphasized. Being alive is a "really wonderful, very strange occurrence," as Enishte Effendi puts it (Pamuk, 108). Enishte Effendi is enamored by European style. For the hidden book he has commissioned the artists to create, he has Black write the accompanying prose. In this intriguing book, design is prioritized above anything else. The rarity of this tree is one of its distinguishing features.

The author attributes this phenomena to the pervasiveness of European dress in the court. The Sultan's envoy, Enishte Effendi, fell in love with Western attire while visiting Venice. He almost avoided death on his journey to persuade the Venetians to cede sovereignty of Cyprus. But the paintings on the walls by Venetian artists caught his eye. Enishte was intrigued by the photographs because they were authentic and detailed, even if she was unaware of the stories that accompanied them. He reasoned that the Venetian creation must have been constructed for artistic purposes. He intended to depict the Sultan in a way that reflected not just his material prosperity but also his emotional affluence, his joys, and his fears for the future of his realm. As a token of his wealth and power, the Sultan had a secret book made with a portrait of himself done in a European manner and presented to the Doge of Venice. The style of the artwork is reminiscent of

the Franks, a symbol of power in Islamic culture. It's a symbolic gesture meant to reassure the Doge that a peaceful relationship between Italy and the Ottoman Empire is possible and to demonstrate that the Ottomans share his worldview. This book was written to celebrate the first millennium of the Hegira, when the Ottomans showed they could compete with the Venetians by learning their skills.

This kind of storytelling is instructive because it brings to mind the collaborative nature of a workshop as well as the many points of view that characterize most of the art produced in Europe. A clear picture of the world and the conflict between opposing worldviews has been painted for us. The reader may thus identify with the characters and better understand their goals and experiences.

Shekure was my favorite of all the characters. She may be strong-willed and bright, but she married Black because she wanted to use him to get what she wanted more than anything else. She wants her biography and likeness to be preserved for future generations through art. She also despises the fact that female characters in media never deviate from their conventional poses. The biggest difficulty, she writes at the book's end, is that "the painters replace the delight of sight for the joy of existence."

The artists spent long hours in the studio and poring through reference materials. They had a rough time as apprentices since their masters often thrashed and humiliated them. They were aiming for eternal significance by expressing the infinite truth from God's perspective, but they had no idea what that perspective was. Since miniaturists thought that the most authentic experience of God's splendor could be achieved via rote repetition, they saw blindness as God's reward for a lifetime of hard work and dedication. SeyyitMirek, Bihzad's professor, thinks that the human problems of blindness and memory loss are a window into God's plan for His world. Master Bihzad thought his depictions of the cosmos from God's viewpoint were complete, so he blinded himself on purpose so he wouldn't have to compromise his style to please his customers. Both Master Osman and the murderous artist Olive refused to try a new approach, insisting instead that the tried-and-true method was the only way to portray the infinite truth. Shekure argues that painters may capture a smile but not joy. The painters in the class may all find inspiration in the Ottoman style. Much of their self-respect comes from the values they uphold in this worldview. When compared to an idealized world, Shekure thinks that human emotions and experiences are closer to the truth. Miniaturists learn this lesson the hard way, but in the end they get a greater understanding of how art is really about synthesis and how the meaning of any one piece of art is flexible and open to individual interpretation.

## **ISTANBUL: MEMORIES OF A CITY**

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I've never left Istanbul – never left the houses, streets and neighbourhoods of my childhood. Although I've lived in other districts from time to time, fifty years on I find myself back in the Pamuk Apartments, where my first photographs were taken and where my mother first held me in her arms to show me the world...But we live in an age defined by mass migration and creative immigrants, and so I am sometimes hard-pressed to explain why I've stayed not only in the same place, but the same building...Conrad, Nabokov, Naipul – these are writers known for having managed to migrate between languages, cultures, countries, continents, even civilizations. Their imaginations were fed by the exile, a nourishment drawn not through roots but through rootlessness; mine, however, requires that I stay in the same city, on the same street, in the same house, gazing at the same view. Istanbul's fate is my fate: I am attached to this city because it has made me who I am.... I've accepted the city into which I was born in the same way I've accepted

my body...This is my fate, and there's no sense arguing with it. This book is about fate...

The narrator's connection to the city he depicts is intimate, on par with his connection to his own body. Orhan cannot just leave Istanbul, just as he cannot abandon his body. In the same way that Orhan is trying to make sense of the city's chaotic layout, he is also trying to identify who he is. Orhan's exploration of Istanbul and his memories of his youth are not a quest for a deeper, more meaningful understanding of either Istanbul or Orhan. He isn't looking for something that already exists in the city, but rather for ways to give it his own spin. *Istanbul: Memories of a City* deviates from the traditional city/hero narrative by exploring the many ways in which we each form our own unique identities. Why should we expect a city to mend our broken spirits when it cannot? Perhaps it's because it's hardwired into us to see the people in our community as anything other than kin. But then there's the issue of picking a favorite neighborhood and making up reasons to defend it.

## CONCLUSION

The White Castle's intradiegetic ambiguity may be traced back to the story's several diegetic layers. Many narrators across many diegetic levels reflect the story's fragmented idea of the self. The chapters of *My Name Is Red* are all told from a different character's point of view, creating a disjointed whole. The story's fragmented feel is heightened by the alternating perspectives of the book's several narrators. While the facial expressions of the characters in *The White Castle* and *My Name Is Red* are unrealistic, those in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* are spot on. Pamuk adopts an original approach by providing several in-depth studies on the same topic. The photographs show a redesigned version of Orhan's face; this creative process is crucial to his identity. New research directions might be generated by taking a comparative look at the various translations of Pamuk's writings.

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