

# Black as A Redeeming Hero in *My Name is Red*

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## Abstract

This article applies Joseph Campbell's mythological perspective to discuss Black's character as a redeemer in Orhan Pamuk's *My Name Is Red* (2002). This is done through discussing him as a lover whose dialogic interaction with the outside world helps him restore peace and order in an exemplary multicultural Ottoman society of the sixteenth century that is suffering gradual disappearance under the pressure of monologic strategies of communication. The strategies include Eastern and Western traditions of painting and a religious anti-painting one which refutes the other two as blasphemous. This investigation challenges the dominant reviews of *MNR* as a pessimistic political allegory that regrets the disappearance of traditional Turkish cultural identity, and argues that *MNR* develops an optimistic stand toward cultural formation through detailing Black's practice of self-understanding and adaptability. Highlighting the notion of life-and-death struggle, this article introduces Black as a reviver whose success is signified through his marital reunion.

**Keywords:** Joseph Campbell, Orhan Pamuk, savior, dialogism, monologism

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## Introduction

This article analyzes Black's characterization as a lover and the embodiment of the concept of life in Orhan Pamuk's *My Name Is Red*. The analysis is done through applying Joseph Campbell's notion of monomyth to investigate the breaking of constructive and destructive powers in the world of *MNR* where confrontation results in the reestablishment of peace and order in the novel. Black is discussed as the strongest representation of constructive forces through the notion of love; someone who restores peace, order, and life through the recognition of difference, in cooperation with other figures who symbolize diverse aspects of these constructive forces. In doing so, this analysis illuminates Pamuk's optimistic viewpoint in this Ottoman fictional historiography that, despite the dominant reviews of this novel as a pessimistic political allegory of present, modern Turkey, reflects an optimistic perspective of struggle for dynamic sociocultural interactions amid the rising restrictive views against them.

*MNR* is a postmodernist detective love story about the concepts of sociocultural formation and sense of identity in an Ottoman society. As a novel, it is set in the sixteenth century Ottoman era, reflecting a multiethnic, multireligious, multicultural society and narrating Eastern and Western interaction in shaping the cultural identity of Ottoman society. To explain briefly, the story narrates the returning of Black, a miniaturist and the protagonist of the novel in one sense, to Istanbul after twelve years of self-exile resulting from developing loving feelings toward his twelve-year-old cousin, Shekure. He is called back to Istanbul by his uncle to help him in a secret mission commissioned by Sultan Murad III for completing a book that is going to have a portrait of Sultan drawn in Western naturalist tradition along with some Eastern miniatures to be assigned with written texts. Black is expected to provide the texts. His arrival coincides with a chain of murders that starts among the miniaturists who work on this book and spreads in to the city. This puts Istanbul in a chaotic situation. With some other characters' aids, Black succeeds in resolving the mystery of murders. Notably, this achievement is prefigured through his marriage with his cousin in the middle of the novel.

To detail the analysis of Black's characterization, the polyphonic structure of the novel discussed by Ali and Hagood (2012) is considered as representing a heteroglossic, multicultural Ottoman society. In this respect, the notion of family life

through the reunion of Black and Shekure is focused on and discussed as the symbol of dynamic social life that intakes apparently contrastive strategies of visual, oral, and written forms of expression that are associated with binary oppositions of East and West, male and female, and life and death in the novel. In line with this, there is a discussion of the representation of Black, the storyteller, and Orhan, namesake of the writer, as the embodiment of the different aspects of a completing figure who, despite the challenges highlighted through the notion of violence, completes the incomplete book of the novel and, as such, harmonizes its disharmonized world. Accordingly, Pamuk's presence in *MNR* is introduced as a writer who completes an incomplete book of "Ottoman historiography" that "places traditional Turkish storytelling elements within a Western tradition of novelistic writing" (Ali & Hagood, 2012, p. 506). This traditional storytelling that, in East, has always been in an oral form, serves as an explanatory text for the miniatures of the novel and works to bring together the apparently Self and Other of the novel through the figure of a saving miniaturist who appears as a writer narrating his story.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is a type of mythological reading based on Joseph Campbell's perspective of hero as a lover whose struggle against death and disorder guarantees the retrieval of peace and subsequent life in *MNR*.

Campbell discusses lover as one of the different roles of a hero, such as warrior, emperor and tyrant, world redeemer, and saint, in an adventurous journey, who confronts and settles the havoc that is disrupting natural, civilized human life. According to Campbell, any myth and mythological representation is the symbolic embodiment of the struggle of life-giving forces against annihilating ones. In his book, Campbell elaborates on this struggle through discussing the concept of heroic journey. The journey embodies life and the process of hero's struggle to release his and others' internal, life-giving energies through exposing all internal and external conflicts that afflict natural life. Campbell believes that this process or pattern is a recurrent theme, visible in all past traditions all over the world, and it is incessantly produced and reproduced in modern times. According to Clarissa Pinkola Estes, "everything of interior and exterior life is approached as though it is an old story just now returned to new life (2004, p. IV).

The heroic journey, Campbell (2004) argues, is completed in three phases which he describes as “separation,” “initiation,” and “return”. In the first stage, there is a call which the hero refuses. But, later he responds to “ventures forth from the world of common day” to fulfill what he is called for and then, receiving some aids, successfully wins “a decisive victory and returns and resolves the conflicts” (p. 28). Of course, this winning is not always completed in full physical returning. In some cases, the hero faces physical injuries or even death whose final result is still the revival and reestablishment of social order.

To elaborate the hero’s characterization as a lover, Campbell (2004) starts by discussing beloved’s role. According to him, she “is the ‘other portion’ of the hero himself—for ‘each is both’ ... She is the image of his destiny which he is to release from the prison of enveloping circumstances” (p. 316). In other words, she is the illustration of life – considering the notion of female productivity – which the hero is going to embrace. While, as the beloved, she is the first call that summons the lover, or his own internal demanding voice for the beloved, simultaneously, she embodies the final end. In this way, the hero’s response to the call as the “prerequisite to the bridal bed” (p. 318) symbolizes the completion of his mission for the restoration of life.

In this process, the hero confronts antagonistic forces illustrated as jealous rival, demanding father, and outdated, sometimes religiously sensitive traditions. Campbell (2004) discusses these antagonistic forces through the archetype of the “tyrant-monster.” This figure appears as a “monster avid for the greedy rights of ‘my and mine.’” Any contact with him leads to blight, even the extinction of his civilization. As such, his “inflated ego is a curse to himself and his world.” Undisturbed as a “self-terrorized” and “fear-haunted” person, he is “alert at every hand to meet and battle back the anticipated aggressions” that threaten his “self-achieved independence.” Being so, he is “the world’s messenger of disaster, even though, in his mind, he may entertain himself with humane intentions.” Accordingly, wherever touched by his hand will let a cry: “a cry for the redeeming hero, the carrier of the shining blade, whose blow, whose touch, whose existence, will liberate the land.” (Campbell, 2004, p. 14)

This paper follows the reflection of the same heroic journey taken by Black in confronting various antagonistic forces like a demanding father and a rival and

finalizing his mission. Along with it, it looks at Shekure as a beloved or the physical embodiment of lover's internal motivation and determination in fulfilling his decisive role. Accordingly, Shekure is considered as the symbol of the very notion of the call of life for the hero that summons him for a heroic journey whose final end is liberation, peace, and order. As such, Black appears as a lover whose response to the call will guarantee life and survival in the world of *MNR*.

### **Literature Review**

The literary reviews written on Orhan Pamuk's style and his *MNR* mostly discuss his regret for the loss of historically international, multicultural perspective in Turkey along with his tendency for reflecting this regret in a written way. These reviews discuss West and East as collaborating concepts whose collaboration has worked and is working - while not recognized in Modern Turkey - to shape Turkish cultural identity. Gökner (2012) discusses Pamuk's literary works as the political reflection of "Istanbul cosmopolitanism" (p. 305). He believes, focusing on this concept, Pamuk has struggled against the secular nationalism which has persistently tried to authorize its definition of Turkey and Turkish cultural identity through silencing and denying whatever that is outside modern, national Turkishness. In this way, Pamuk deals with "number of elite national 'taboos' including multi-ethnicity, multi-lingualism, multi-culturalism, cosmopolitanism, homosexuality and religion" (Gökner, 2004, p. 55) as the constituting elements of cultural identity in Turkey. According to Gökner, this multicultural cosmopolitanism is reflected through writing a novel that, as a Western cultural manifestation, narrates a sixteenth century Ottoman history of completing a book of illustrations via employing both Western realist style of painting and Eastern miniature one that avoids the realist depiction because of some infidelity allegations.

Similarly, Çiçekoglu, in her articles, discusses Pamuk's inclusive perspective in relation to East and West collaboration in *MNR*. Comparing the Eastern and Western traditions of painting that are alternatively associated with word and image, Çiçekoglu (2003a) explains that Pamuk does not take side with any of these traditions and his novel is a balanced representation of their overlapping in shaping the cultural identity in the sixteenth century Ottoman Empire. According to her, Istanbul is a focal point in this reunion of East and West and, in itself, it

embodies a multicultural sense of identity. In her other article (2003b), she talks about the same traditions. She develops her argument by discussing the reflection of visual and narrative images in *MNR* and their connection with common cinematic concepts such as point of view, scene, space, and time. As she acknowledges, Pamuk's novel is a postmodernist one in which voices and points of view are not exclusively restricted to any of the two traditions, and their interaction saves the novel from being a representation and praise of an exclusively Orientalist Western or Eastern, Turkish Ottoman perspective of cultural identity. Setting the novel in the sixteenth century highlights the atmosphere opposite to that of contemporary Turkey.

Sooyong Kim (2009) follows the same line of discussion. While he talks about "encounter between East and West" and "different ways of seeing" in *MNR*, he emphasizes "it would be mistaken" to regard *MNR* as solely the reflection of this confrontation (p. 53). According to him, "*My Name is Red* is constructed according to the literary as well as visual frame of reference" (p. 54) where Pamuk as a novelist appears as a miniaturist who provides the plot of the narrative text for these miniatures. The plot unfolds through "European representationalism" and, yet, it is "filled with descriptions of miniatures, mainly Persian, and anecdotes about miniaturists" as an Eastern tradition (p. 53) with a sense of nostalgia for that mixed harmony.

Likewise, Farred (2007) talks about the multidimensionality and multivocality of Pamuk's literary creation. Göknaar discusses this multivocality through Pamuk's international perspective that ties Turkish identity with what is beyond recognized national Turkish culture and language "in an inclusive, outward-looking, 'neo-Ottoman' cultural development in direct contrast to the exclusive inward-looking aspect of Turkish republican nationalism" (2006, p. 36). Farred explains this reunion as an "internal globalization" (p. 81). Farred's internal globalization discusses Istanbul as a place where the interaction of Self and Other through the merging binaries of past/present, East/West, religious/secular, Muslim/non-Muslim ..., shapes a complicated text as the embodiment of multivocal, multidimensional Turkish cultural identity. He believes whatever Pamuk writes about, either through creating a religious historical Ottoman setting or a secular modern state, is to protest against the monovocal monodimensionality of the modern

Turkish national discourse that is systematically imposing its definition of secular Turkey at the expense of Othering the entire of constituting sociocultural groups.

Ali and Hagood (2012) discuss the very concept of multivocality in *MNR* under Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia which presumes "actual social life and historical becoming" a polyphonic interaction confronting monologic ideologies that struggle to create a homogenous society (p. 505). They discuss *MNR* as the reflection of heteroglossic spree where three communicative strategies of painting, storytelling and writing cooperate. Yet, they believe the novel represents the weakening of this heteroglossic entity in the particular era of the Ottoman society described in the novel as a political allegory of modern Turkey (p. 506). This perspective explains their argument about the fading away of oral storytelling and painting and emergence of the novel written by Orhan (p. 518), a character in the novel, as the only communicative strategy that monologically plays the dialogical role.

The works that were reviewed here totally discuss *MNR* as a requiem to the loss of peace and order in an Ottoman society whose dynamic social life was based on the cultural recognition of Other as part of Self. They also discuss *MNR* as a political allegory that illustrates the disappearance of the very harmonious interaction of Self and Other in modern Turkey. As Gökner emphasizes:

*Pamuk uses the novel form ... to pose political challenges to the legacies of Turkism (the ideology of Turkish nationalism) that advocated the dismissal of Istanbul cosmopolitanism and the denigration of the Ottoman Islamic past ..., championing the multifaceted cultural history of Istanbul over Anatolian nationalism. (2012, p. 305)*

Despite the pessimist perspective discernible in all these analyses, this article sees Pamuk's literary perspective in *MNR* an optimistic one that highlights hope for the actualization of constructive change for peace and order through the recognition of difference and tolerance. This investigation discusses Black's characterization as an effective factor in this procedure. Arjomandi and Faghfori (2015) have discussed the importance of characterization in *MNR* to some extent. Yet, it is done through a feministic lens where, highlighting Shekure's role as a strong woman, they emphasize the male-female division in the novel and interpret it

as another aspect of Self-Other division under the West-East confrontation (with a connotation of the motherly aspects of native Ottoman culture). The current investigation is concerned with the opposite of this understanding. It discusses Shekure as another part of Black; someone whose presence encourages Black to undertake the dangerous mission and resolve the tension erupted from the chain of murders in the novel. In this way, Shekure and Black emerge as a unified whole and the embodiment of the harmony and balance that are established by the recognition of affinity among the seemingly binary oppositions of the novel.

### **Heroic Journey: Love, Multivocality, and Sociocultural Life**

*MNR* is a detective love story about the adventurous journey of a hero whose mission is to complete an incomplete secret book and, then, resolve a chain of murders that rises from the very mission. As such, it is a story about life and death and the breaking into the novel of the forces associated with this division. The illustration of violence underlines this life-and-death struggle in the novel. This analysis focuses on Black as a hero who, motivated by love, fights for guaranteeing life. Accordingly, the analysis investigates his features to see if he is equipped with the necessary capability to fulfill his mission. As it is related in the novel, he succeeds in winning his beloved's hand, of course with the bravery she shows in her turn. This family formation can be regarded as the reflection of the winning of life-giving forces and the symbol of success in sociocultural reestablishment. This investigation considers the interaction of positive forces that under Black's leading role, revive a sustainable form of this life.

The family formation is done at the expense of dying to the past and being born to the future (Campbell, 2004, p. 14) which is a must for a hero. As Campbell explains, it is a return for a hero who is restricted by the mental afflictions resulting from previous difficulties that he eradicates (p.16) and, undergoing an "awakening of the self" (p. 47), comes back "with creative power" (p. 33). In social life, this creative power challenges the destructive ones that repress dynamic sociocultural interactions and aim for a monologic society that is run by sticking to ancestral rules and patterns. The analysis of Black's role as a hero follows the same pattern: the whole novel narrates a process of coming to oneself through eradicating the mental anxieties resulting from a previous frustrated love affair and responding to the



voices that summon him for sharing this understanding with his chaotic society.

*MNR* is narrated within a circular frame. The frame is developed through the separate non-linear narrations of different characters and things. There are two parallel narrations or levels of the story within this frame where the first one paves the ground for the emergence of the second one. The first level relates Black's separation from his family and country, his adventurous travel to Persia, and his returning as an experienced person after twelve years. The second narration uses the same tripartite structure to elaborate on Black's struggle to resolve the mystery of the assassination of his uncle and others and, as a reward, marry his beloved cousin Shekure.

Mystery and its resolution are fixed concepts in mythological narrations; they reflect the life-and-death conflict within stories. As Estes states, the mystery reflected through a "question at the beginning of a story—or at any point along one's own life line—grants the seeker a bar to measure against, to see then which directions to take most profitably in order to find one's own answers" (2004, p. xlviii). Black goes through the same process, facing the question of murder and discovering, in collaboration with others, who is the murderer. This unraveling is a dangerous mission that emboldens Black as a redeemer who, summing up the three types of communicative figures of novelist, storyteller and miniaturist in himself, revivifies peace and serenity in imperial household and his city. This is specifically achieved through conquering the fears that postponed his return for twelve years.

Fear and anxiety are inseparable aspect of the heroic journey. This fear rises from the anxiety of facing new, unknown situations or the repetition of bitter past experiences. In *MNR*, this fear is discernable in the struggle for the preservation of traditional values, particularly artistic tradition of miniature painting before the Western one, as well as the protagonist's personal fears of returning to the social norms and people who had rejected him twelve years ago. Of course, it is not peculiar to him and the beloved shows symptoms of similar anxiety.

In the first case, the story revolves around three opposing perspectives. The first one strictly recommends the traditional miniature painting. The second one is in favor of the Western realist tradition, and the third one is a fundamentalist perspective which considers painting sinful or a form of *shirk*.<sup>1</sup> The conflict arises

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<sup>1</sup> as kind of idolatry or putting painter at the place of God

from Ottoman Sultan's secret calling to have some painters draw his face in Western style. The believers in the other two perspectives come to know about this secret mission and, worried of God's wrath, earnestly try to stop it in any way they can. This indicates the refusal of the call by these painters, who refuse to be active agents of a cultural activity which can bring Eastern and Western perspectives to a kind of unity. Campbell discusses this refusal as "a refusal to give up what one takes to be one's own interests" (2004, p. 55). He further explains this through the concept of fearing to go beyond the safe zone of established principles in which one's systems "of ideals, virtues, goals, and advantages were to be fixed and made secure" (p. 55). The followers of the traditional style of painting and those who strongly oppose painting strive to keep their perspective alive as the only valid one.

In the second case, we have Black and Shekure who have their fears of an initial frustrated love, yet they dare to face the fears and in this way share their fate that is reestablishing life. Shekure's role as a female figure who can give birth to new life is very symbolic here. She challenges the patriarchal culture that strives to render her a possession of her father or keep her in her ex-father-in-law's house and unite her with her previous brother-in-law. Talking about her ex-brother-in-law, she explains: in "his last letter, Hasan pledged that I would no longer be a slave to housework, and that he'd made a lot of money" (Pamuk, 2002, p. 46). In the case of her father, she affirms: "My father doesn't want me to be declared a widow by verdict of the judge either. If I am granted a divorce, he thinks I'll find myself a new husband and abandon him" (p. 151). Both father and brother-in-law can be considered as the illustrations of antagonistic forces or the "tyrant monster" (Campbell, 2004, 14) that the lover shall conquer. To actualize this, contrasting the dominant culture, she summons Black and motivates him to finalize her undecided widowhood status and marry her. As such, she claims the control of her life and lets her personal feelings be expressed and realized. She gives birth to her love in this way and practices her equality to men.

Similarly, Black faces his previous fears which kept him away from Shekure. Now he is experienced due to twelve years of travel and dares to fight for his beloved through meeting the uncle and confronting the jealous rival Hasan, defeating and killing him - because he attacks to kidnap Shekure - with his supportive friends' aids. His consciousness has outgrown the view of shared life and

destiny with Shekure before his eyes and, responding to her call, he comes to himself and embraces life. This reflects an inclusive perspective which lets him acknowledge the validity of Shekure's invitation which is apparently against the dominant ethical codes of that society. The main point in this case is that it does not image another master-slave binary and, unlike what Arjomandi and Faghfori argue, it does not represent men as "weaker and more dependent" on women (2015, p. 113). Black's response to Shekure is not out of his need and misery. Through responding to Shekure, Black is not dominated and controlled by her. On the contrary, he is a free man acting based on his personal feelings, understanding: "I had no doubts about my love or that it was reciprocated—we were married in a state of great contentment" (Pamuk, 2002, p. 51). From this perspective, his union with Shekure is a constructive one which symbolically prefigures the happy ending of the novel which is the resolution of the mystery of the murders, catching and sentencing the murderer, and reestablishing life and order.

In fact, in this novel, Black's arrival brings to the fore the "manifestation of the powers that are breaking into play" (Campbell, 2004, p. 46). In *MNR*, the struggle among Western and Eastern traditions of painting and the religious anti-painting perspective represents confronting powers. In this categorization, Black is the illustration of a positive, balancing tendency that brings all these confronting traditions in to a harmonious interaction. In this way, he is assisted by some supportive figures whose appearance is common to most of mythological narrations. The example is the introduction of another female figure, Esther, in *MNR*. She stands for the "supernatural aid" as a female power that interferes on behalf of the hero and facilitates the fulfillment of his mission (Campbell, 2004, pp. 63-67). She is a Jewish peddler who surreptitiously carries letters between the lovers and when Shekure is abducted by her previous in-laws, interferes and argues about the legal consequences of abducting a woman whose widowhood certificate is issued and has no ties with this family (Pamuk, 2002). In this way, she convinces them to set her free and brings her back to Black. In other words, Esther is a figure on the side of the constructive force whose role in bringing life to the fore by accelerating the reunion of Black and Shekure cannot be denied.

The color symbolism in the novel comprehensively reflects the life-and-death struggle and the wining of pro-life forces. The title of the novel is *My Name Is*

*Red*. The color red in one sense reflects the bloodshed and violence related to the repression of nonconformist ideas and artistic traditions in the novel. It is strengthened by the description of dark gloomy winter in the beginning of the novel that somehow reflects Black's internal feelings when he arrives, also stressed by his very name. This is in agreement with the dominant pessimist analyses of *MNR*, as a political allegory, which believe the story leads nowhere and no clues offer "any explanation to the mysteries" (Çetintaş, 2006, p. 56). That is to say, the story mirrors Pamuk's negative view about the disappearance of a polyphonic Ottoman society, ending in the most restrictive form in secular Republic of Turkey (Gökнар, 2006; Gökнар, 2012). Yet, another reading of this color symbolism is meaningful. The color red can stand for excitement, energy, happiness, and merriment. Interestingly, in traditional Turkish culture, it is associated with wedding and the start of a new life where the bride is dressed in red. This is supported by the union of Black and Shekure and the resolution of the mystery of murders in the end of the novel.

On the other hand, as a female figure, Shekure symbolizes the Ottoman motherland. Being united with Black who carries an international experience of travelling in non-Turkish territories, she stands for the perfection of multicultural understanding in Ottoman society that confronts suffocating monologic ideologies. The metaphor of incomplete book can be of help in clarifying this concept. Black's first summon to Istanbul by the uncle was for the examination of the "illustrations made in half-Venetian, half-Persian mode and write[ing] a story suitable to accompany the opposite page" (Pamuk, 2002, p. 119). The reason for writing the accompanying text was that in Eastern miniature painting, the painting could have no independent existence and had to represent a text, except to Quran the illustration of whose narrations was blasphemous. In this form of painting, meaning was the final end and no true form was acceptable (Çiçekoglu, 2003a, p. 1; Çiçekoglu, 2003b, p. 127) because the creation of true form was exclusive to God. This points to "the core ideological tension" that confronts "'two books'—the secular secret and the public, and publicly permissible, koranically inflected, koranically sanctioned text" (Farred, 2007, p. 93). The two books here reflect the "art of the book" and the "Renaissance Painting" that are described by Çiçekoglu. According to her, solely "art of the book" as "the only form of illumination allowed in Islam" was recognized (2003b, p.127) and that was based on being attributed to a text. If Black succeeded

in completing the book, it meant he had solely acted as a miniaturist being loyal to the “art of book” and, bereft of creativity, had duplicated a text based on an already existing “Central Asian template” (Çiçekoglu, 2003a, p. 8). Traditionally, all miniature paintings were copies of fixed patterns based on fixed texts and originality was blasphemized. Against this tradition, Black is positioned in an unpredictable situation to discover the stolen sketch drawn to be completed by a text and, in this way, resolves the mystery of murders. As such, he appears as a novelist whose text, according to Kim, is the very *MNR* that as a Western production accompanies the illustrations (2009, pp. 57-61). The illustrations in the novel are, after all, represented as characters who are narrating their views of events. These narrations are then renarrated by a storyteller in his coffeehouse - signifying an Eastern oral tradition of storytelling - that renders him a shadow of the writer. In fact, there is a parallelism here. The pages of the novel represent the polyphonic space of a coffeehouse where Black as the writer and storyteller creates the story of his life through concretizing, that is to say giving physical form to the details of his life, described by the narrators, in a very imaginative way.

It is certain that the demonstration of this polyphonic interaction cannot be imagined without the representation of resistance before it, particularly considering the religious sensitivity of the Islamist conservatives against the presence of any ideology, tradition, or discourse that parallels that of God. In view of that, the representation of violence in the novel can be justified. On the one hand, it demonstrates the resistance of those associated with both Eastern traditional way of painting before the Western one and the conservative anti-painting Islamic ideology. On the other hand, it reflects hard challenges of the people who want to live their real life, not the duplication of what is dictated and fixed by established models, and to push back the monologic discourse that is silencing the voices that do not subscribe to the prescribed traditional and religious ideology. Ali and Hagood (2012) associate the very understanding by describing the violence as the representation “of the paradigm shift to a more dialogic perspective” signified by the assassination of Elegant effendi, the first murder, as a conservative with sympathetic feelings toward the ideological Islamist preacher (p. 507). It is done by a miniaturist who has Eastern sensitivities and is, likewise, killed at the end of the novel.

The first murder in the novel is the initiatory “blunder,” to use Campbell’s

term, that “account[s] to the opening of a destiny” which is “the appearance of the carrier of the power of destiny” (2004, pp. 46-47). The destiny here is the revival of life actualized through Black’s response, as the carrier of the power of love and life, to the calls of his uncle and cousin who summon him back to Istanbul and real life. To put it differently, Black in this novel is a hero who interferes and reconciles the life-and-death struggle represented through the confronting traditions as well. What is of importance here is that the cycle of life is not imaginable without death and, in real, their collaboration shapes the entity of life in this world. The same goes for traditions, either Eastern, Western, or religious; imagining a Turkish cultural identity without any of these constituting elements will not be complete; it will be an incomplete book.

Black’s interference embodies a “willed introversion” in *MNR*. To use Campbell’s explanation, willed introversion “is one of the classic implements of creative genius ... It drives the psychic energies into depth and activates the lost continent of unconscious infantile and archetypal images” (2004, p. 59). In counteraction with the powers broken into play, “if the personality is able to absorb and integrate the new forces, there will be experienced an almost super-human degree of self-consciousness and masterful control” (p. 59). This happens in Black’s case. Though Campbell emphasizes that this cannot take place as “an answer to any specific call” and is rather “a deliberate, terrific refusal to respond to anything but the deepest, highest, richest answer to the as yet unknown demand of some waiting void within” (p. 59), Shekure’s call works as a motivation for Black. In chapter 32 of the novel, discovering the assassination of her father, she proposes Black to marry her, protect her, and resolve the mystery of her father’s murder. This call strengthens the first call by her father and brings Black closer to the destiny that he is going to write himself: “I was speaking to Black in such a high-handed ... manner. ..only by assuming such a tone might I convince Black ... to believe in the possibility of events that even I have a hard time believing will come to pass” (Pamuk, 2002, p. 192) . Convinced of Shekure’s approval, Black is relieved of the frustrated infantile dreams of having Shekure, which are unconsciously controlling him, and tries to focus on the mission and have the situation under his control. Here, he is more conscious and determined to resolve the mystery. As Shekure asserts: “fixing my gaze into Black’s eyes, in which I was gladdened to see attentiveness more than

love” (p. 190).

In chapter 33, Black starts a trip to finalize Shekure’s divorce from her apparently dead husband and marry her. At this phase, he emerges as a meticulous seeker who is reviewing everything in his mind to facilitate and accelerate the procedure. He details every point or creates the process in his mind. This mental illustration reveals Black’s visual mind (Çiçekoglu, 2003b, pp. 128-129) and as the chapter unfolds, the line that separates this mental imagery from the outside reality disappears. In fact, Black’s inward contemplation reveals the mechanism of the outer world to him and he shapes his outside world based on this internal understanding; his mental contemplation and the outside reality are unified here. This is another aspect of the balanced interaction of Eastern inward-looking, meaning-based perspective with Western external-looking, form-based realist one. As it is clear, Black, here, emerges as an actor who is conscious of individual mental observations and practices them through active involvement with the external, physical reality.

It may be argued that Black’s physical injury (Pamuk, 2002, p. 402) reflects the incompleteness of his mission as this is strengthened by his fruitless life with Shekure - having no child - and the ascension of Sultan Ahmed I who shatters the watch gifted by Queen Elizabeth I (p. 411) as the symbol of Eastern-Western interaction in Ottoman society. Yet, the success of the hero’s mission does not necessarily mean his full physical returning or presence. Campbell emphasizes: “the physical body of the hero may be actually slain, dismembered and scattered over the land or sea” (2004, p. 85). Further, as the reflection of antagonistic forces that resist and confront Eastern- Western interaction, all these cases embody the very notion of violence before change.

As it was explained, one essential aspect of this violence is death that is also signified through the notion of silencing other voices. As a hero, Black confronts this type of death. His cycle of journey provides him with the necessary ability to face silencing and liberate his family, occupation, and city from its consequences. Concepts of adaptability and recognition of difference are important here. In fact, the murders in the novel root in the stubbornness of the three perspectives whose fans and practitioners are not open to the other stands. For example, Olive, the murderer, has not learnt to adapt himself to the Western

tradition of painting and the religious vision that prohibits any form of representation. In this way, wandering between these traditions and developing a sense of doubt, he is unable to harmonize his interactions with the external world: “he kills one for being overly bound to Eastern tradition and one for being too slavish to Western innovation. Much like Pamuk himself, he tries to juxtapose, synthesize, or transcend both” (Gökner, 2004, p. 54). Unable to do so due to the lack of original personal perspective or self-understanding, reflected through his failure in depicting himself in a natural way (Pamuk, 2002, p. 398), he loses that sense of balance that is essential for a harmonious life. As such, there will be no option than disappearance for him who cannot establish that sense of connection and belonging with a community which, despite monotonous appearance, is a multicultural, multivocal one. In this way, he becomes the opposite of the responsive forces in the novel represented by Black. Black as the embodiment of love and life positively responds to the voices that summon him, while, confused, Olive is not responsive before the various voices that call him. This reflects a failure in completing the adventurous cycle of his life. Therefore, and based on the natural system of life, he is defeated by the one who succeeds in completing his cycle:

*The capturing and the blinding of the murderer is a collective act. ... while the one who carries the needle in to do the deed is none other than Kara [black], ...who is expected to solve the mystery and to undertake the mission of completing the book. (Çiçekoglu, 2003a, pp. 9-10)*

Here, there are references to Sultan’s secret book and the concept of blindness. These two are related to the major conflict of the story between life and death. Death can be associated with blind dedication to fixed disciplines, symbolized through the concept of blindness in the novel. The ones considered as the masters of a particular tradition of painting experience blindness and death in the novel. This is true about Master Osman, the head of the miniaturists working on the book of *Festivities*, who blinds himself as well as Uncle who favors Western naturalist painting and is killed by Olive. The notion of blindness, on the other hand, signifies perfection through internalized mental image and shows that in the case of these blind masters (as the great Bihzad is also mentioned as a blind master in the novel), the perfection in their particular tradition is attained at the expense of disregarding



external world and denying other disciplines or traditions of painting. Yet, the result makes no difference; it is a blind dedication to fixed patterns and there is no place for such figures in a dynamic society with various sociocultural communities. Therefore, these masters disappear step by step and give way to representatives who recognize the diversity.

Disregarding the artistic value of each tradition, the blindness and death in the novel stop the completion of the books under the supervision of these masters, at least for a while. In this respect, one thing is clarified. As it is understood from the novel, the clue that aids Black to discover the identity of the murderer is the recognition of the murderer's personal style through finding the lost miniature drawn by him and comparing it to the illustrations in Sultan's treasury (Pamuk, 2002, pp. 357-366). That is to say, despite copying the fixed patterns of miniature painting, the miniaturists cannot evade applying their personal style, even in an unconscious way. This is the very sense of liveliness that guarantees the survival of these masterpieces through the test of time, notably via *MNR* here, while Sultan's portrait drawn based on blind dedication to Western style vanishes in the world of the novel.

To summarize, Campbell in his book points to Professor Arnold J. Toynbee's arguments about recurrent deaths and how they can be confronted: "Only birth can conquer death—the birth, not of the old thing again, but of something new" (Campbell, 2004, p.15). There are many deaths which result from silencing Other in the novel and what is the birth that stops them? Shekure invites Black to express his love and when he responds, she accepts it. Came to himself through his journeys, Black has learnt to meet the prerequisites of successful social interactions to tackle difficulties and finalize his life-long dream. This represents the birth of a love that they conceived and carried for a long time. This is not the rebirth of an old thing because this love had not already gone through birth. In finalizing his dream, Black comes out of the previous life replete with disappointment, confronts the terrible perspective of the new world, suffers and tolerates the blocking hardships, keeps moving despite the physical injury, and completes the book of his life that is symbolized through stopping the raging death in *MNR*. As Campbell has beautifully scribed: "there is nothing we can do, except be crucified—and resurrected; dismembered totally, and then reborn" (Campbell, 2004, p.15).

## Conclusion

This article was an investigation of Black's role in reestablishing peace and order in the Ottoman society reflected in *MNR*. It was done through applying Joseph Campbell's theoretical discussion of heroic journey with a peculiar focus on the role of the lover, among other heroic roles. To discuss the success of this heroic journey, the chaotic sociocultural condition in the beginning of the novel shall be compared with the sociocultural one in the end of it. The novel starts with the words of a corpse and lets the reader understand the main conflict of the novel that is the confrontation of life and death symbolized through the reflection of the clash of Eastern and Western artistic traditions of painting and the religious anti-painting one. As it emerges from the investigation, the overall plot of the novel represents a progressive movement toward the betterment of the situation by spotting and conquering previous fears, recognizing difference, and taking practical actions for tackling the conflict in collaboration with others. As a lover being motivated by her beloved's calling, Black emerges as the embodiment of the carrier of hope and life and pushes away the all antagonistic forces that side with death.

As a unified whole, Black and Shekure represent different aspects of herohood, in both masculine and feminine forms, while facing traditionally restricting personal and local-historical challenges to develop a natural, authentic form of human life. As lovers, both of them dare to face fears resulting from the bitter memories of past failure in union and finalize their love. This is along with the demise of the sociocultural prejudices which are working to stop them by imposing the social pressure of what is the norm. As a strong woman, Shekure has achieved the maturity to decide for her life and free herself from the restricting chains that keep her under the control of her father and ex-husband's family. At the same time, as Black's beloved, she embodies the internal motivation that encourages him to terminate his self-exile and respond to the first call, which is that of his uncle, to come back to Istanbul and accept part of the responsibility commissioned to the uncle and his group of miniaturists by the Sultan.

There are two cycles of heroic journeys that are represented by the callings of the uncle and Shekure. The cycles merge with each other, letting the novel unfold. They reflect Black's success in completing the mission that is stopped by a chain of murders initiated by a figure who feels threatened by Sultan's secret

mission. Skillfully, the story of the completion of the heroic journeys is narrated through the metaphor of an incomplete book. Its completion brings Black, as a miniaturist, to the fore as a novelist, who, unwillingly stick to any particular artistic tradition stipulated in the novel, practices dialogical perspective. He actualizes it via conquering the chain of murders that result from monological slant and, doing so, revives his society. This is emphatically signified through his reunion with his beloved. This all illustrates the idea that “[t]he effect of the successful adventure of the hero is the unlocking and release again of the flow of life in to the body of the world” (Campbell, 2004, p. 37).

As it was discussed in the previous section, Black is the self-representation of Pamuk who develops his apparently Western novel, which Kim (2009) discusses as the very text written for the illustrations (pp. 57-64),<sup>1</sup> as an Eastern oral storytelling - represented through the coffeehouse storyteller narrating the stories of the nine miniatures in the novel - revealing the merging of these two traditions. This reveals the interaction of the three different artistic and religious traditions through Black’s figure and reveals the incessant deconstructive resistance of the context represented in the novel to be exclusively associated with any of these traditions. This explains Pamuk’s interference as the novelist in the end of the novel as a Western literary genre with solid ties with outside reality: “For the sake of a delightful and convincing story, there isn’t a lie Orhan wouldn’t deign to tell” (2002, p. 413). As such, the novel, deconstructing its realist roots, appears as a miniature which carries the very miniaturistic feature of being not the real representation of what has happened, but aiming at communicating meaning. Therefore, the writer, here, is a miniaturist who focuses on the meaning or content, not the exact physical form or reality. This incessant shifting among these traditions renders *MNR* an artistic creation that, evading classification under any of these, perpetuates dynamism. This dynamism is the very bone of Turkish identity that Black represents.

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<sup>1</sup> Kim argues the plot and the characters of the novel as parallel representations, or duplications, of famous Eastern love stories like the ones by Nizami, notably his famous Hüsrev and Shirin. As such, the novel emerges like a miniature painting that is created by copying fixed, pre-established patterns originating from central Asia. For further information refer to Çiçekoglu, Feride (2003). “A Pedagogy of Two Ways of Seeing: Word and Image.”

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