

Tamta Parulava

G. Tsereteli Institute of Oriental Studies

INTERTEXTUAL GAMES - "MY NAME IS RED" BY ORHAN PAMUK

Keywords: *Nizami, Pamuk, intertextuality, frame-like composition*

"My Name is Red" by Orhan Pamuk is set in 16th-century Istanbul, but it has numerous narrative realities that link it to Iranian culture and significant works of classical Persian literature.

"My Name is Red" includes numerous elements of the post-modernist novel and Persian classical literature; its characters enter Pamuk's novel in a post-modern "appearance." As Umberto Eco notes, "Books always speak of other books, and every story tells a story that has already been told" ("The Name of the Rose"). Pamuk's novel contains an extensive number of instances of intertextuality.

Although the protagonists of Nizami Ganjavi's love poem "Khosrow and Shirin" and Kara and Shekure of Pamuk's novel appear to be completely different from one another, the narrators, including the protagonists, continually draw attention to their similarities. While the characters in Nizami's poem are not central to the plot of Pamuk's novel, they do play a significant role in it. The narrative part of "My Name is Red" contains the stories of Khosrow and Shirin together with Kara and Shekure. The postmodernist "mosaic" that organizes the plot "layers" gives the characters of Nizami's work a clear say in what happens to the heroes of Pamuk's book, guiding their decisions and thoughts.

Although being allusive, the intertextuality in Pamuk's novel is quite transparent. Furthermore, the author frequently refers directly to the intertextual work and its author, citing certain scenes and passages in the process and occasionally calling attention to the "targeted" passage in his writing.

"Khosrow and Shirin" - the work, its characters, and individual details are mentioned in almost every chapter of the Turkish novel and often multiple times. We focused only on the intertext that conveys individual episodes of Nizami's poem. The episode of "Khosrow and Shirin" in which Khosrow is killed by his son - Shiroyeh - is mentioned four times. Moreover, there are six mentions of their meeting at Shirin's tower on a snowy winter day, when the woman forbids the man from entering; nine mentions of the story of falling in love through a picture; and six mentions of Khosrow spying on Shirin while she was bathing. When portraying these scenes, the author (or rather - this or that character-narrator) makes use of direct indications, descriptions, and recalls of the corresponding episode of Nizami's work. They also establish connections between the characters' words and behavior, and they bring the story to life by describing the narrative that is portrayed in this or that miniature. Often, the story "borrowed" from Nizami's writing is suddenly interrupted, and the intertext is presented in only one sentence; although it is implied that

the content of this most important episode is well known to the reader, the complete story should naturally unfold in their imagination.

The intertextuality of Orhan Pamuk's novel reminds us of a peculiar form of frame-like composition. But clearly, this is not a collection of fables, nor is it an outer-frame narrative made of connective tissue. This is where the tales of two solid, monolithic structures meet. The narrative connection between the story of the intertext and the story of the outer frame is central to Pamuk's work. The intertext enhances the storyline of the frame. Shekure, Kara, and other heroes imitate and recall the protagonists from Nizami's poem, mimicking their movements and speech patterns and fabricating similar situations.

In various contexts, the frame serves as a reminder of itself. For instance, in Pamuk's novel, the frame plot symbolizes the work of Bihzad or another miniaturist, and in Bihzad's painting, the narrative of Nizami's creations is portrayed. A masterful game of inserting narrative into the story is played in the chapter in Pamuk's book where the hero remembers an old miniature picture made in alignment with the story of Nizami. This miniature reflects another picture.

Additionally, "My Name is Red" provides classic examples of frame narration: Shekure tells her children a bedtime story: "Listen to me: 'There was a prince who, from afar, fell in love with a strikingly beautiful maiden. How did this happen? I'll tell you how. Before laying eyes on the pretty maiden, he'd seen her portrait, that's how.'" The story in the outer frame ends here too - it is assumed that the story—along with the literary cliché of falling in love with a picture—already exists in the memory of a reliable reader, and its plot line continues on its own.

If we consider that the comparison of the structure of Pamuk's novel with a frame composition is legitimate, then to some extent we must recognize the "equality" of the text and intertext, the two plot frames. Postmodernism distributed these stories in mutually intersecting parallel spaces and thus created a space for true dialogue in the novel.

One of the purposes of intertextuality is explanation and commentary, and in this regard, "My Name is Red" mostly employs passages from classical Persian literature. It's also an effective approach to depicting a character. Our two novels exemplify intertextualism's unifying power, bringing samples from other eras and civilizations closer together. Naturally, it also displays the author's creative approach- the same author who, on the postmodern stage, appeared to be hiding in the background. This separation of the author, getting lost in the polyphony of other people's words, is the sign that shows us his distinctiveness, individuality, and special tone. In Pamuk's novel the words of the characters-narrators completely replace the words of the author.

Pamuk's novel's intertextuality elevates the discourse to the plane of worldview. With some familiarity with Eastern culture, the reader should be able to discern more than just the relationship between the two passages. Another allusion in "My Name is Red" is to the collective memory of modern Turkish society. Bakhtinian polyphony is a discourse between two (Persian and Turkish) and more cultures.