

Chapter 1

Conflicting Voices

This chapter will primarily focus on the conflicting voices uttered directly by all the first-person narrators in this novel. These conflicting voices actually derive from an unceasing argument, on that concerns the art of painting and illustration, religion, culture and tradition as well as many other aspects of the local life in Istanbul. Each of the narrators possesses his or her own beliefs and reveals them in his or her speech. This is a point which can be easily observed and determined by the readers, since each character-narrator speaks directly to them (to us). Moreover, the conflicting voices also serve as a cornerstone of the novel's structure, for it is through them or based on them that the author develops his East-West motif. Therefore, it would be appropriate to first discuss these conflicting voices and show how they pertain to many aspects of the Istanbulite life in this chapter, for these powerfully "independent" voices basically dominate the development of the plot.

According to Pamuk's depiction about his native city Istanbul, 16th century, precisely the year of 1591, marks an outset of a drastic change in culture and religion and especially in the art of painting and illustration. All the characters portrayed by the author, facing this kind of change, basically split into two camps, some happily accept and even support this change, while some appear to be nostalgically adhering to the old style and the inherent doctrines of the Islamic religion. Therefore, it can also be seen as a culturally and religiously domestic war between the avant-gardes, who enthusiastically welcome the westernization; and the conservatives who radically repudiate it on the other hand. However, this war between westernization and tradition never ends in a satisfactory way and eventually results in murders, claiming two lives, the killing of Elegant, the gilder who emerges in the first chapter of the

story, speaking as an apparition; and the killing of Enishte, a maternal uncle of Black, supposedly the detective of these murders, Enishte is known for his optimistic attitude toward the westernization of Turkish painting. And finally, these two murders arouse the Sultan's attention who later commands that the murderer must be arrested within three days, as Black says in the story, "Elegant Effendi's murder resembles the way Joseph's brothers tossed him into a well out of jealousy . . . And my Enishte's death resembles the unforeseen murder of Hüsrev at the hand of his son who has his heart set on Hüsrev's wife, Shirin" (MNR 263). However, although the way Elegant is killed somewhat resembles the way that Joseph is endangered by his brothers, but the motivation behind Elegant's murder is certainly not out of jealousy, but rather, out of his own fear. His conscience constantly gnaws at him and makes him confess his deep worry, a worry of betraying the teaching of Koran, to the murderer, which gives the murderer an excuse to kill him.

All in all, the more specific reason that causes these two murders is that, the Sultan at that time wants an illustrated manuscript to be accomplished by imitating the European, particularly the Franks and the Venetian, skills, hence he assigns Enishte to be the organizer of this book and also secretly sponsors the making of this book. And Enishte is also responsible for assembling four talented artists to help him completing this task. These four artists are named, Butterfly, Stork, Elegant and Olive. However, after the murders of Elegant and Enishte, the rest of the three artists then become suspects who are assumed to be involved in these murders, since the murderer leaves a trace of a sketch of a horse. In other words, it is this secret undertaking of a book imitating European skills that indirectly kills both Elegant and Enishte, for it is an extremely controversial book at that time in Istanbul. Yet, Enishte, unlike the uncertain and frail Elegant, dies for defending his own belief, that

is, his insistence on the westernization of painting. The reasons that explain why this secret book is controversial will be indicated later in this chapter.

To better understand the reason why all the voices emerge in this novel are conflicting and constantly challenging and contesting one another, one must first recognize the truth that a character's speech can well demonstrate this character's personality and personal belief, and this truth is even evident in this novel composed of first-person narrative, the voices are perceivable to the readers directly, instead of being reported by a third-person narrator. Every character's belief towards art, culture and religion can be easily observed and understood by the readers. Bakhtin once opines about this issue in his essay entitled, "The Problem of Speech Genres", arguing that, "All the diverse areas of human activity involve the use of language. Quite understandably, the nature and forms of this use are just as diverse as are the areas of human activity" (60). Therefore, through a character's narration, readers can somehow assume what kind of person this character is most likely to be, and what are the things that this character believes. Bakhtin further adds, "Any utterance—oral or written, primary or secondary, and in any sphere of communication—is individual and therefore can reflect the individuality of the speaker (or writer); that is, it possesses individual style" (63). It is thus quite evident that to approach a character's mind, one must first approach his speech, for a character's speech can well reflect this character, as a person. And since there are numerous and various speakers in this novel, the voices uttered by different speakers can be versatile and sometimes conflicting. This phenomenon again proves that the understanding of heteroglossia plays an important role for analyzing this novel.

Bakhtin puts it even clearer:

The fundamental condition, that which makes a novel a novel, that which

is responsible for its stylistic uniqueness, is the speaking person and his discourse . . . The speaking person in the novel is always, to one degree or another, an ideologue, and his words are always ideologemes. A particular language in a novel is always a particular way of viewing the world, one that strives for a social significance. (332-33)

Conflicts of Painting and Illustration

Throughout this novel, readers are constantly reminded that the secret book commissioned directly by the Sultan and which Enishte covertly carries out is an immense threat toward the whole society and religion, due to its bold imitation of the Frankish and Venetian skills. And this highly controversial book induces the conflicting voices which effectively diversify all the voices of the characters. Again, this is an intense tug based upon the East-West motif, some critics even assert that this is the reason that divides a nation into two souls, “We have to understand that, just like a person, a country can have two souls. These souls are continuously in dialogue with each other, sparring with each other and changing each other” (Gardels 40). Indeed, a city like Istanbul, located in between two continents as well as two major forces of traditions and customs, must be dealing with this kind of inevitable dilemma, especially in a time where even the ruler of this world, the Sultan, also secretly supports the westernization.

During the process of the completion of this secret illustrated manuscript, Enishte respectively assigns the three of Butterfly, Olive and Stork to draw a tree, Satan, Death, dervishes and so on by imitating the Western skills. However, there is one last picture of this secret book that bears the mark of blasphemy, as it is written in the story, “There’s one final picture. In that picture Enishte desecrates everything we believe in. What he’s doing is no loner an insult to religion, it’s pure blasphemy”

(MNR 122) says the murderer. It is thus obvious that the murderer commits homicide in a fit of his own opposition to the westernization of the traditional painting. And Enishte's daughter, Shekure, whom Black falls in love with, also says, "This book is the source of the bad luck that plagues us . . . The followers of Nusret Hoja are spreading rumors that my father's book is a desecration and bears the marks of Frankish infidelity" (MNR 151). This Hoja just mentioned by Shekure is in fact the most representative figure of the conservatives who ardently celebrates the Islamic religion as well as the Koran, this Hoja is against painting, coffee and westernization, and he even raids the coffee house and kills many lives with his fanatic followers. There is one description that well demonstrates how radical and extreme this Hoja really is:

A cleric by the name of Nusret . . . This hoja, who was from the small town of Erzurum, attributed the catastrophes that had befallen Istanbul in the last ten years—including the Bahçekapi and Kazanjılar district fires, the plagues that claimed tens of thousands, the endless war with the Persian at a cost of countless lives, as well as the loss of small Ottoman fortress in the west to Christian in revolt—to our having strayed from the path of the Prophet, to disregard for the strictures of the Glorious Koran, to the tolerance toward Christians, to the open sale of wine and to the playing of musical instrument in dervish houses. (MNR 9)

In the description quoted above, not only can one plainly sense just how radical and rabid this Hoja really is, but can also be certain that this Hoja is actually a fundamentalist of the Koran and the Islamic religion. In other words, he is the center of traditional belief in this novel, and also is the source of fear to those who support the westernization. Even the dead gilder, Elegant is one of his loyal followers. It is

to say that, Elegant himself also holds an extremely conservative attitude toward the Islamic tradition, and what he does for Enishte, completing a book by imitating the European masters, is obviously against his belief. And this same dilemma and reprimand of conscience also gnaw at other characters who devote themselves to the making of Enishte's secret book.

After all, the exact problem of imitating the Western skills, in other words, making portraiture, is that the Western style of painting always puts the major subject to be portrayed in the center of a paper. And this is certainly against the principles of Islamism, for it is "like growing arrogant before God, like considering oneself of utmost importance, like situating oneself at the center of the world" (MNR 109) and for the "artists also dare to situate their subjects in the center of the page, as if man were meant to be worshiped . . . men are worshiping themselves, placing themselves at the center of the world" (MNR 290). In this regard, it is not difficult to assume that, according to the traditional teaching of Koran, the center of the world is supposed to be God himself. Furthermore, painting itself is also considered an intolerable sin of Islamism, as it is said in this story:

Let it not be forgotten that in the Glorious Koran, 'creator' is one of the attributes of Allah. It is Allah who is creative, who brings that which is not into existence, who gives life to the lifeless. No one ought to compete with Him. The greatest of sins is committed by painters who presume to do what He does, who claim as creative as He. (MNR 160)

And the case of Enishte's secret book is even worse, because the "use of the science of perspective and the method of Venetian masters was nothing but a temptation of Satan" (MNR 160).

Here, the problematic is set, after seeing all the evidences quoted above from My

Name is Red, one can simply judge that the behavior of painting and even painting with Western methods are religiously unacceptable in the society of Islamism. Thus painting becomes a suitable subject matter for the author to depict a story filled with conflicts. By telling a story of painters and illustrators, combining with a background of a strict religion, the author, along with all his first-person narrators successfully render a story full of conflicting voices to the readers. Margaret Atwood comments, “He[Orhan Pamuk] deserves to be better known in North America, and no doubt he will be, as his fictions turn on the conflict between the forces of ‘Westernization’ and those of Islamists” (1). Furthermore, these conflicting voices in this novel, once again echo to heteroglossia, as Bakhtin argues:

All words have the ‘taste’ of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour . . . As a living socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. (293)

It is especially true that, in this novel, every character-narrator has his or her own background, has his or her vivid personality and individuality and also has individual consciousness respectively. It is this combination of all the character-narrators’ voices that ultimately renders a novel of heterogeneous voices filled with conflicts.

Conflicting voices stem from difference and dissimilarity. The major difference between the Frankish or Venetian portraiture and the traditional Turkish painting is that, the Western style tends to render an object perfectly according to how it appears to the naked eye; however, the old style of Turkish painting stresses on the spiritual connection between a painter and his work, it is to say, to paint as how one’s mind perceives, in other words, “they’re attempting to depict the world that God perceives,

not the world that they see” (MNR 218). It is apparent that, in this story, the Sultan, the highest ruler of this world favors the side of Frankish and Venetian skills of painting, and who therefore gives an opportunity for the rise of this new style in his country. The reason that he wants a secret book to be made according to the Frankish and Venetian styles is that he wants this book to be sent as a diplomatic token to a Venetian Doge, that shows how wealthy and powerful his country is, as Enishte says:

A book that depicted the thousandth year of Muslim calendar, which would strike terror into the heart of Venetian Doge by showing the military strength and pride of Islam . . . Furthermore, since the illustration were made in the Frankish style using Frankish methods, they would arouse the awe of Venetian Doge and his desire for friendship. (MNR 226-27)

Also, this book “is a symbol that would demonstrate to the Venetian Doge Our Sultan’s wealth and the regions under his control . . . so that the Venetian Doge might say to himself, ‘Just as the Ottoman miniaturists have come to see the world like us, so have the Ottoman themselves come to resemble us,’ in turn, accepting Our Sultan’s power and friendship” (MNR 266).

It is the Sultan’s personal preference of art that firstly initiates the argument between westernization and tradition. However, except Enishte who openly advocates the westernization of painting and, on the contrary, Master Osman, the head illustrator in the Sultan’s palace, who is known for his consistent loyalty for the tradition of Turkish painting, other characters, including the three potential murderers, Butterfly, Stork, and Olive, as well as Black, show a rather hesitant and indecisive attitude toward these two major ideologies of art, and they are therefore rather

confused and contradictory, swinging between both sides of beliefs. In other words, readers will have difficulty judging these characters' preference of art, and therefore also have limited clue to identify the real murderer, in other words. Throughout this novel, the three of the young masters, Butterfly, Stork and Olive, undergo an internal struggle and confusion, they are confused because the way they draw for Enishte's secret book demanded by the Sultan, imitating the Frankish and Venetian masters' skills, is against the way they are trained and educated back in their apprenticeship. It is also to say that, each of the three young masters has his own internally conflicting voices, for, on the one hand, they are consciously aware that their employment of the European techniques violates the principles of their religion, on the other hand, they all, to some extent, are latently attracted by the new techniques of painting. However, there is certainly a huge dissimilarity in both methodology and philosophy between the European new techniques and the traditional Turkish techniques, and this dissimilarity arouses conflicting voices inside all the painters' minds and inside the society of painters.

First of all, according to this novel, the traditional Turkish paintings are always completed with a religiously motivated intention. In other words, painting and illustration in the tradition and history of Turkey seem to serve as sacred tokens to honor God, or Allah, as the Islamists would call. Therefore, in the Turkish masters' viewpoint, the behavior of painting means to reproduce and represent God's vision and thus must exclude vulgar, secular and mundane subjects, as Master Osman says, "It is indeed important that a painting, through its beauty, summon us toward life's abundance, toward passion, toward respect for the colors of the realm which God created, and toward reflection and faith" (MNR 58). Apparently, the comparatively scientific methods invented and developed by the European painters violate this

tradition of Turkish painting, and thus become a reason that generates conflicting voices.

According to this novel, the traditional Turkish painters are most likely to believe that, a genuine painter will spend his entire lifetime in order to be able to physically memorize every detail of a particular work and to be able to render a picture spontaneously afterwards, and finally, only in this way, can a painter attain to a level that God envisions. Moreover, the Turkish masters also tend to believe that, after lifetime toil of rendering pictures, a painter's eye will naturally get exhausted and eventually go blind. However, they deem this blindness after lifetime toil on painting as a God-given blessing, and are convinced that a true master's talent will be brought into full play after this eventual blindness. The murderer, in the middle of killing Elegant, shows him a sketch of black and white horses, and says that:

The old masters of Shiraz and Herat . . . claimed that a miniaturist would have to sketch horses unceasingly for fifty years to be able to truly depict the horse that Allah envisioned and desired. They claimed that the best picture of a horse should be drawn in the dark, since a true miniaturist would go blind working over that fifty-year period, but in the process his hand would memorize the horse. (MNR 20)

Again, one can plainly tell that, illustrators in Turkey often analogize their creations to their God, Allah, which firmly demonstrates that the activity of artistic creation is inseparable from their religion in Turkey, and which is definitely not the case in the West, though there are also religious paintings in the West. And this dissimilarity once again incurs conflicts. The Turkish artists also believe that only a blind master can achieve the highest level of skill, therefore, according to this novel, there are some mediocre old masters who cannot obtain this God-given darkness in a natural

way, so they simply blind themselves by plunging a needle into their pupils. In the story, even Master Osman does the same cruel thing to himself, as he says, pushing a needle into his eye, “I bravely calmly and firmly press the needle into the pupil of my right eye. My innards sank, not because I felt what I was doing but because I saw what I was doing” (MNR 324). Actually, there is yet another happening that better explains this belief of the Turkish masters. When Black is asked to visit each of the three young masters, Butterfly, Olive and Stork respectively, each of them tells him three parables regarding the art of painting and the history of painting in Turkey. In one of the stories that Olive brings up, namely “Three Stories on Blindness and Memory” (MNR 76), he refers to this matter quite straightforwardly, as he mentions in his third parable:

[f]or illustrating was the miniaturist’s search for Allah’s vision of the earthly realm, and this unique perspective could only be attained through recollection after blindness descended, only after a lifetime of hard work and only after the miniaturist’s eye tired and he has expended himself. Thus Allah’s vision of his world only becomes manifest through the memory of blind miniaturists. (MNR 80)

The reason that explicates why only the blind masters can achieve God’s vision is quite clearly indicated in Olive’s first parable also. Olive tells Black a story of a legendary master, named Sheikh Ali who initially works in Jihan Sha’s workshop. However, after Sheikh Ali perfectly renders an unmatched masterpiece for Jihan Sha. Jihan Sha, out of jealousy, worrying that Sheikh Ali might paint for his archenemy Tall Hasan with the same superb skill level, he simply blinds this legendary master. Nevertheless, the master, Sheikh Ali eventually escapes from Jihan Sha’s land and finds a shelter in Tall Hasan’s realm and he finally does paint for Tall Hasan.

Surprisingly, what he completes this time, after he is blinded, is even more outstanding than the one he paints for Jihan Sha, the blind master says, “Since my eyes will no longer be distracted by the filth of this world, I’ll be able to depict all the glories of Allah from memory, in their purest form” (MNR 77).

Quite coincidentally, this essential belief of blindness of Turkish masters can be paraphrased by the post-Platonic point of view. The post-Platonic scholars argue that, the only way to attain true beauty and to be divinely inspired is to posit oneself outside the world, focusing on the spiritual connection between a man and the “ultimate truth,” much like the Turkish painter’s belief, cutting off one’s senses from the world, Plotinus opines, “first stage, that of separation, a man is aware of self; but retreating inwards, he becomes possessor of all; he puts sense away behind him in dread of the separated life and becomes one in the Divine; if he plans to see in separation, he sets himself outside” (183). Both of the post-Platonic argument and the traditional Turkish belief emphasize the importance of separation and spontaneity. In short, only through a process of self estrangement from the physical world can one truly attain the “Divine,” or “Allah’s vision,” because “to see divine as something external is to be outside of it” (Plotinus 183). Therefore, only the blind masters can be truly outside of a world of senses, and be freed from the influence of secular matters.

Quite opposite to the traditional Turkish painting, the Venetian way of painting, which Enishte strongly supports, emphasizes the realistic depiction of life, and will therefore include the secular and mundane values, instead of the divinity of painting. In the European point of view, according to this novel, paintings are seen as demonstration to show one’s influence and social status, as it is described in the novel:

In all of Venice, rich and influential men wanted their portraits painted as a symbol, a memento of their lives and a sign of their riches, power and influence—so they might always be there, standing before us, announcing their existence, nay, their individuality and distinction. (MNR 107)

This statement quoted above is delivered by Enishte, and when he talks about the Venetian portraiture, “his face would abruptly light up like a child’s, invigorated” (MNR 107) as Black observes. Here, one can plainly see just how passionate and enthusiastic Enishte’s attitude is towards the European skills and thus better understand his position in this novel. In a time when the general atmosphere of the society of painters is still widely and basically dominated by the Islamic tradition, it takes tremendous courage and determination, like Enishte, to openly advocate the Western skills. In fact, Enishte foresees a potential innovation of Turkish painting by combining the East and West as a significant breakthrough of art as a whole, when he argues:

After beholding the portraits of the Venetian masters, we realize with horror . . . that, in painting, eyes can no longer simply be holes in a face, always the same, but must be just like our own eyes, which reflect light like a mirror and absorb it like a well. Lips can no longer be a crack in the middle of faces flat as paper, but must be nodes of expression—each a different shade of red—fully expressing our joys, sorrows and spirits with their slightest contraction or relaxation. Our noses can no longer be a kind of wall that divides our faces, but rather, living and curious instruments with a form unique to each of us. (MNR 137)

To some extent, what Enishte sees as new elements instilling to the tradition of

painting in Turkey is the vividness of portraiture from the Western skills. In other words, the ideal form of painting that Enishte pursues must be as life as a real human standing before one's eye, and therefore must employ the concept of cubism, which is certainly never known before by the traditional art of painting in Turkey. Enishte himself is utterly stunned when he first encounters the vividness of the Venetian techniques, he says, "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, this was the essence of 'portraiture'" (MNR 27). Quite interestingly, the so-called essence of portraiture is somewhat similar to Plato's idea of mimesis, for the ultimate purpose of portraiture is to completely represent a subject. Plato talks about representation in his Republic Book X:

It follows that representation and truth are a considerable distance apart, and a representer is capable of making every product there is only because his contact with things is slight and restricted to how they look. Considering what a painter does, for instance: we are saying he doesn't have a clue about shoemaking or joinery, but he'll still paint pictures of artisans working at these and all other areas of expertise, and if he is good at painting he might paint a joiner, have people look at it from far away, and deceive them . . . by making it look as though the joiner were real.

(70)

Again, the dissimilarity between the Western techniques and the traditional Turkish techniques is that, unlike the traditional Turkish painters who always rely on memory and proficiency of repeatedly drawing a same item, the Western painters are more likely to render a picture according to how a subject is perceived by the naked eyes.

And furthermore, since the Western portraiture always posits the main subject to be portrayed in the center of a paper, it obviously challenges the Islamic tradition and thus arouses conflicting voices in this novel, when the Turkish painters first encounter this new skill and new method. And naturally, Enishte, the sincere and long-time supporter of westernization becomes a target of reprimand, as Master Osman says quite sternly to Black:

Your Enishte is responsible for the way my master miniaturists—whom I love more than if they were my own children, whom I trained with dotting attention for twenty-five years—betrayed me and our entire artistic tradition; he’s to blame for their enthusiastic imitation of European masters with the justification that ‘it is the will of Our Sultan.’ (MNR 335)

The Argument about “Style”

There is actually yet another notable dissimilarity and argument based upon this East-West opposition, that is, the righteousness of the obtainment of individual style of a painter. In the tradition of Turkish painting, a painter’s identity is not important, painters in Turkey tend to ignore and conceal their personal styles, because, “Imperfection is the mother of style” (MNR 65), says Butterfly, when he broaches three parables to Black. For the traditional Turkish painters, their major goal is to reproduce and replicate a standardized ideal established by the old masters, therefore, a personal style of a work is considered inappropriate or even a blemish in the Turkish painting. Lynne Sharon Schwartz also recognizes this special tradition of Turkish painting, arguing that, “The salient feature of Ottoman illustration, as Pamuk describes it, was close copying of the old masters, ‘style’ as we know it was considered a flaw, a deviation” (24). Moreover, since the behavior of painting itself

is deemed as a sacred deed in Turkey, paying homage to God, therefore, the role that a painter plays is not important and a personal style is thus not allowed. Schwartz further adds, “To portray life as Allah sees it, ‘the vision of the world from a minaret,’ means resisting the temptation of individual style” (24). On the contrary however, the European masters often celebrate and take pride in their own characteristics and personal styles in their works, they even proudly sign their names in the corner of their works. In this regard, the people who basically advocate the European skills of painting will also hold a positive attitude toward the obtainment and display of personal style, as Black once says to Master Osman, “My Enishte, may he rest in peace, used to say that any fault arising not from lack of ability or talent, but from the depths of the miniaturist’s soul, ought not be deemed fault but style” (MNR 269). Once again, the conflicting voices emerge in this story when the argument about a painter’s style and individuality is taken into account, readers are again reminded just how opposite and contradictory these conflicting voices are according to those comments on “style” uttered by different people belonging to two different belief systems.

The two different beliefs of art never succeed in reaching a mutual compromise, the conflicting voices continue, and inevitably result in murders; first, the murder of the gilder Elegant, as a matter of fact, the conflicting voices might have already occupied a position inside Elegant’s mind, as he simultaneously and directly faces two different beliefs of art, and is constantly perplexed by these conflicting voices, as Master Osman says:

because he knew your silly Enishte’s book was an important project of the Sultan, his fears and doubts clashed: should he believe in his Sultan or in the preacher of Erzurum? Any other time this unfortunate child

whom I knew like the back of my hand, would've come to me about a dilemma that was eating away at him. (MNR 334)

And secondly, the murder of Enishte, the most representative advocate of the European skills, marks an irrevocable setback of the westernizing power in Istanbul. In other words, the uncompromising deadlock of the conflicting voices, the refusal of monoglossia, eventually pay the price. The situation of a relentless East-West quarrel is never able to reach a harmony, and the westernization in the workshop of Turkish painters is not actually successful at this particular time, along with Enishte's death, because, "Some painters try to illustrate like the Chinese, some like the Turkmen and some like they do in Shiraz, fighting for years on end, never attaining a happy union—like a discontented husband and wife" (MNR 332). No matter what kind of new elements that are going to be infused and employed by the Turkish painters, whether it be Chinese style, Turkish style or Venetian style, there will always be dissenters. To some extent, the death of Enishte can also be seen as the eventually drowned voice of the avant-garde camp, as Aylin Bayrakceken and Don Randall conclude:

The new novel's main subject, miniaturist painting, is submitted to debate by working artists concerned with the propriety, or impropriety, attached to various available modes of pictorial representation, both Eastern and Western. The narrative, which has in many aspects the form of detective fiction turns on the murder of one artist by another—or more specifically, on the violent erasure of the Western influences evident in the victim-artist's orientation and practice. (201)

And after Enishte's death, there is a voice that doubts and ridicules the imitation of Western skills, as the murderer says, "Imitating the Frankish masters without having

attained their expertise makes a miniaturist even more of a slave. Now I'm desperate to escape this trap" (MNR 399). Yet, the reason he questions the propriety of westernization in Turkish painting is actually quite understandable, as he further explains:

The proficiency of the Franks will take centuries to attain. Had Enishte Effendi's book been completed and sent to them, the Venetian masters would've smirked, and their ridicule would've 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. (MNR 399-400)

Despite the fact that, along with Enishte's death, westernization seemingly dies out at this moment; however, in reality, westernization is eventually proved to be inevitable and unchangeable in this story, since it is the Sultan's own decree to imitate the Franks and Venetians, as the murderer also admits that, "I found it quite appropriate that Our Sultan turn his favors from Master Osman to Enishte Effendi" (MNR 394), it is also to say that the Sultan has turned his favors from tradition to westernization. And it is also because of the Sultan's own taste that determines the fate of the following development of the Turkish painting. In fact, the murderer already foresees the truth that the tradition of Turkish painting has no room to survive anymore in the early part of the story, he says the following sentence when he visits Enishte, "I began to see that Master Osman's style of painting, and the legacy of the old masters of Heart, had no future whatsoever" (MNR 163). Like a swinging pendulum, the tendency of the conflicting voices obviously swings to the side of westernization in the end of the story. Even Master Osman, who never gives up his belief toward the traditional painting skills says quite sorrowfully, "We miniaturists are brethren . . . but now everything is coming to an end" (MNR 317) and Olive also

says, “From now on, the European style would be preeminent in Our Sultan’s workshop; the styles and books which we devoted our entire lives would slowly be forgotten” (MNR 381). Quite ironically, Enishte’s death does not mark an ending of westernization, but on the contrary, the voices advocating westernization become more and more strong that even surpass the inherent voices of tradition. Maureen Freely puts it quite pertinently, “what matters in the end is not the identity of the murderer in their midst, but their devotion to an art they know is dying” (41) and Updike also asserts, “The trend, however, as of 1591, is clear: Frankish painting and egoistic delights of individualization will prove irresistible” (93). In the end of the story, the prevalence of westernization eventually occupies the whole society of painting in Turkey as a mainstream, Black says, “Don’t nourish the illusion over much that you’ll be able to escape Frankish methods . . . Did you know that Akbar Khan encourages all his artists to sign their work? The Jesuit priests of Portugal long ago introduced European painting and methods there. They are everywhere now” (MNR 401). Ironically, at the end of the story, even Shekure, Enishte’s daughter also wants her own portrait to be made, as she mentions, “My whole life, I’ve secretly very much wanted two paintings made, which I’ve never mentioned to anybody: 1. My own portrait . . .” (MNR 412). Shekure’s secret desire at the end of the novel, can be seen as a proof enough which confirms that the trend of westernization has already taken full control over the society and style of the Turkish painters, because, even an ordinary woman like Shekure, certainly not an aristocrat and not to mention a Sultan, will want her own portrait to be made, one may rightfully assume that every ordinary person in Istanbul at that time will also possibly desire his/her own portrait.

The conflicting voices here come to an end, as the overwhelming voices of

westernization drown out the voices of tradition. In the end of the story, one can rightfully get the message that the author recurrently try to convey that there eventually will be no distinctive borderline between East and West after seeing this series of conflicting voices. The denouement of these conflicting voices echo to two central beliefs that are stated powerfully and impressively in this story, one is “Nothing is pure” (MNR 160) the other is “To God belongs the East and the West” (MNR 400). And these beliefs may well reflect the author’s initial intention while he writes this novel, that is, it is the doomed future that the East and the West will become more and more alike, and this is beyond man’s reach. To some extent, this novel also reflects a nation’s struggle, apparently a cultural one, between tradition and innovation, and this struggle will not only take place in Turkey, but possibly every country in the world. Schwartz concludes, “My Name is Red takes no sides between Eastern and Western attitude; it recognizes the need for both and value their mingling. ‘Nothing is pure,’ Enishte says, ‘To God belongs the East and the West’” (24). Every careful reader will not overlook these two powerful statements which seemingly serve as the main messages conveyed directly by the author. Similarly, Bayrakceken and Randall also argue, “Countering Kipling’s ‘East is East, West is West,’ Pamuk states that ‘East should not be East and West should not be West’ . . . He also affirms that literature needs to combine Eastern and Western elements and thus create ‘a new third voice’” (203).

As the conflicting voices subside, all painters in this novel, facing the truth that westernization is proved to be irresistible, grow increasingly anxious and apprehensive about their imminent future. One can plainly sense that the conflicting voices are internalized and become individual character’s inner struggle. The fact that, the three painters, Olive, Stork and Butterfly swinging between tradition and

westernization can be perceived as a quest for selves, as one of them sorrowfully confesses:

If Master Osman truly goes blind, or passes away, and we paint the way we feel like painting, embracing our faults and individuality under the influence of the Franks so we might possess a style, we might resemble ourselves, but we won't be ourselves. No, even if we were to agree to paint like the old masters, reasoning that only in this way could we be ourselves, Our Sultan, who turned his back on Master Osman, will find others to replace us. (MNR 389)

By reading this confession of a painter, reader can easily observe that all the painters, knowing how compelling westernization is, are trapped in a predicament of losing selves. They no longer have a standardized doctrine of art to follow, and they desperately and blindly try to rid themselves out of this plight. Sadly, they are not able to go back to the past, where the tradition is being widely embraced, nor can they move forward to the future, where westernization prevails over the whole country. Updike indicates, "Pamuk's consciousness of Turkey's fate of imitation and inauthenticity expresses itself in his characters' frequent feelings of detachment from their real selves" (94-95).

In sum, through the lengthy process of the conflicting voices uttered by Pamuk's characters, the author might ultimately try to convey two messages. On the one hand, westernization of art, regardless painting or literature, may help to add multiplicity and versatility to its original body, which is a positive way of looking at the westernization; however, on the other hand, the people who devoted themselves in art, facing the change of westernization, may fall into a dilemma, cramped in a limbo that they are not able to move onto whichever directions, and eventually may be

self-questioning and doubting the authenticity of their art.

Conflicts of Different Lifestyles

Noteworthy, apart from the art of painting and illustration, the conflicting voices also occur on other aspects of Istanbulite life, which also well reflect the difference between East and West, such as the different attitude towards the habit of coffee-drinking and the different ways that dogs are treated in different cultures. Apparently, coffee is a European product imported to Istanbul, although all of the three painters drink coffee and frequently come to the coffee house in this novel, the fundamentalist of Islamic religion, Nusret Hoja, exhorts that, “Ah, my devoted believers! The drinking of coffee is an absolute sin! . . . coffee was nothing but the Devil’s ruse” (MNR 12). Likewise, in the tenth chapter of this novel, a tree’s monologue, it mentions, “Besides denouncing the wooing of pretty boys and the art of painting, this Cross-Eyed Nedret Hoja of Sivas maintained that coffee was the Devil’s work and that coffee drinkers would go to Hell” (MNR 50). Seeing these descriptions quoted above, one can grasp that the Islamic society, especially the group of people who are religiously devoted, is strongly against the drinking of coffee, as a part of the westernization, in other words, the Christian lifestyle. Furthermore, unlike “the so-called European, every dog has an owner” (MNR 14), the Islamist actually despises dogs, as one can observe from the questions asked by an Istanbulite dog:

So then, what’s the reason for this animosity toward dogs? Why do you persist in saying that dogs are impure, and cleaning and purifying your homes from top to bottom if a dog happens to enter? Why do you believe that those who touch us spoil their ablutions? If your caftan brushes against our damp fur, why do you insist on washing that caftan

seven times like a frenzied woman? Only tinsmith could be responsible for the slander that a pot licked by a dog must be thrown away or retinned. (MNR 13)

These two trivia of the life in Istanbul, coffee-drinking and the attitude toward dogs, once again bring forth the dissimilarity of two different cultures. And it is precisely this same dissimilarity that generates conflicting voices in the first place, because of two different worldviews.

Throughout this novel, there are actually several conflicting points occurred in sequence, and perceived as conflicting voices in this thesis, and these conflicting points of the novel mostly pertain to the art of painting. First of all, the inappropriate positioning of the main subject in the center of a paper is against the teaching of the Koran. Secondly, the different attitudes, East and West, European and Turkish, towards painting as a behavior, the European masters will paint simply for art's sake; while the Turkish masters tend to paint for representing the vision of their God. And thirdly, the different methods used by two different cultures' painters, the European painters employ a relatively scientific perspective method for portraiture; while the Turkish painters rely on their memory and proficiency derived from endless practice. Fourthly, the different attitudes toward the obtainment of style, or say, personal color, the European painters are encouraged to attain their own personal styles and to sign their names on their works; while the Turkish masters' identities are often ignored and their styles are deemed as flaw on a picture. And finally, the different attitudes toward coffee and dog. All these conflicting points, derived from the dissimilarity between the Islamic culture and the Christian culture, ignite violence in this novel, and turn on a series of events.

The conflicting voices in this novel function as an embodiment of a basic tension

of the whole story, and this tension is based upon Pamuk's East-West motif. And it is important to remind all the readers these conflicting voices, for the conflicting voices are tightly connected with the chain of events in this novel, from the beginning of the novel, the murder of Elegant, to the end of the novel, the murderer's being mistakenly killed, all the plots are started and developed by these conflicting voices, therefore, hearing the conflicting voices is the first approach to understand this novel. Moreover, as the tension being developed step by step, the conflicting voices can be almost found everywhere in this novel, because this novel is mainly about how people are struggling in a milieu where Eastern ideology and Western ideology clash at the same time and at the same place. All in all, pointing out and examining the conflicting voices uttered from the novel are crucial ways to reread this book, since throughout the novel, narrators speak directly to the readers, the conflicting voices can almost be heard clearly everywhere in this novel. The conflicting voices can be seen as a mere transitional stage in that long struggle between East and West. Although, it is true that, as Schwartz argues, the author of the story does not seem to overtly favor either westernization or the Turkish tradition, it is also true that, as the denouement of the novel implies, the author also implicitly recognizes that westernization is an irresistible trend. Reading My Name is Red as well as listening to the conflicting voices in it, one can clearly determine that this novel is actually a very powerful form of cultural expression, on that leads readers to reflect on their own cultures and on the future(s) they may be about to face.