A Tryst with the Nation: A Study of the Writings of Orhan Pamuk

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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, "A Tryst with the Nation: A Study of the Writings of Orhan Pamuk", submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is a *bona fide* research work carried out by Aiswarya S.Babu, Research Scholar, P.G. Department of English and Research Centre, Sree Keralavarma College (Affiliated to the University of Calicut), under my guidance and supervision. Neither the thesis nor any part of it has been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma or title before.

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I, Aiswarya S.Babu, hereby declare that the thesis entitled, "A Tryst with the Nation: A Study of the Writings of Orhan Pamuk" submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is a *bona fide* research work carried out by me under the guidance of Dr.Mohandas C.B., Associate Professor, P.G. Department of English and Research Centre, Sree Keralavarma College (Affiliated to the University of Calicut), and it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship, title, or recognition.

Aiswarya S.Babu

Place: Thrissur

Date:

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Chapter One

Introduction

> "Nationalism" is the pathology of modern developmental history, as inescapable as "neurosis" in the individual, with much the same essential ambiguity attaching to it, a similar built-in capacity for descent into dementia, rooted in the dilemmas of helplessness thrust upon most of the world (the equivalent of infantilism for societies) and largely incurable. (Anderson, Nairn 5)

> …it [a nation] is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.
>
> It is *imagined* because members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. (Anderson 6)

Orhan Pamuk's fiction attends to a lacuna in his country's literary tradition of a writer of the world. The writer resurrects the histories of his nation, weaving historical tales indistinguishable from fiction while delivering it from the paralyzing end-of-the-empire melancholy, a feat that won him a Nobel and national as well as universal acclaim.

A writer who calls himself his nation's ambassador and traipses from one controversy to the next, Pamuk's choice not to engage with the present and dabble in tales of the past stirs up a volley of questions. Was the novelist only trying to address a lacuna that could better have been levelled by travel writers and historians? Does

this need to write of the past stem from the Orientalist hangover that craves adulation from the West –a West that has lost interest in 'the city of two continents.' While the city is trying to sever its eastern ties and strives to find its Western identity, what of its Islamic tradition that arguably ties it to the Arab and Persian roots and the Ottoman heritage? What happens to that identity that the country left behind after the defeat of the First World War through the modernisation drives of Gazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha (later Kemal Atatürk, the father of the Turkish nation)? What of the forgotten and erased pasts that make Turkish individuals strangers and aliens in their own country? What of the decimation of the Armenians and the Greeks, a feat Ziya Gökalp calls the win over the two races in *The Principles of Turkism* (1968), a truth that every Turk is aware of but refuses to acknowledge in its verity?

What is this imagined community made of –Orhan Pamuk's Turkey? Apparently the sum total of his literary masters' imaginations and a projection of his own imagination of his nation that converge the Western narratives with Ottoman stories, is it an alternative to the realist tales of Anatolia that the champions of Turkishness and the traditionalists unanimously recognised as 'authentic' Turkish literature? What are the problems of this narrative? Do these stories risk becoming yet another set of panegyrics to the nation while occluding its flaws? In his attempt play the ambassador of his country, does Pamuk risk playing the messiah to a nation relegated to the end of the Western world and its forgotten tales of glory? This study aims to consider these questions and endeavours to understand the problems that arise when Pamuk is considered as the chronicler of his country.

The investigations into Orhan Pamuk's texts mostly focus on his dichotomies of the West and the East, his treatment of the problems of identity of the individual including the notion of the other, the question of religion or the narratology of his

texts. Researchers often take for granted and rarely engage in the ramifications of Pamuk's self-appointed role as the representative of his country. When Pamuk termed *Snow*, his "first and last political novel", and stayed away from interventions in the contemporary Turkish politics since his controversial remarks about the Armenian massacres, his novels should have been studied closely for the political stand they identify with for no one is apolitical.

This thesis investigates Pamuk as a writer who engages in conversations with the histories of his country in search of its identity, his attempts to resurrect the forgotten and lost histories, his choice to place himself in these discourses, the statement that he makes through this stand, and the image of Turkey that rises out of these conversations as well as the problems in that representation.

Eric Hobsbawm's theories of nation and his theorising of nationalism as that which synthesise a national consciousness and manoeuvres the nation's people, identities, and power structures is the theoretical framework that I will use to get a better understanding of the conflicts in Pamuk's Turkey. Hobsbawm's findings about invented histories and the use of nationalism as a unifying force that connects 'its' people together and purges the nation of its 'vulnerable' elements are significant in the analysis of the purgative nationalist drives in Turkey that Pamuk broaches on in his novels and the denigration charges that he himself faced. It is also used to dissect the notion of the other and the outsider in Pamuk's Turkey. It is pivotal in understanding Pamuk's notion of *hüzün*, the paralyzing and all-pervasive melancholy that afflicts the soul of Pamuk's Turkey and dooms the prospects of his people and his protagonists.

Benedict Anderson's theory of how countries are imagined political communities is used to understand the different notions/identities of the Turkish nation put forward by different entities including the one by Orhan Pamuk as well. Even though there are more popular and massively researched notions on nationalism propounded by other theorists, I found Hobsbawm and Anderson most proper to help me in my investigation thanks to the overtly palimpsestic trait of Turkish national history and the ever-evolving nature of its national identity which concurs with the invented history and nationhood Hobsbawm uses and the construct of the nation as an imagined fraternity that Anderson puts forward. As countries all over the world are made to fit into distorted versions of themselves, imagined as perfect constructs by aspiring nation builders (even those who take on that title well past the founding of the nation), a phenomenon that seems to repeatedly happen in Pamuk's Turkey, Anderson's revelations will help make sense of these imagined communities that command deep emotional legitimacy today.

Edward Said's *Orinetalism* is used to check the verity of Orhan Pamuk's standing as a writer from Istanbul who is free of the trappings of Orientalism. Despite his crediting the Western travelogues for making him understand Istanbul better, Pamuk is believed to be free of the discriminating eye of the Westernised Easterner. I also refer to the theories of Frantz Fanon, Pierre Bourdieu, and Partha Chatterjee to make sense of the interaction between the people and the elite, the notion of the popular and the use of language and literature as tools of propaganda in Pamuk's Turkey. Ziya Gökalp's *The Principles of Turkism* is the guide used to form a notion of what "Turkism" meant to the nationalists and how they purported to fashion a Turkey out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. I opted for Gökalp's treatise from other texts that discuss "Turkishness" for his influence on Kemalists and their early plans for the

new nation and his elaborate plans that lay out every aspect of the new state. Orhan Pamuk's memoir, *Istanbul: Memories of a City* is the primary focus of this investigation while his other texts are consulted to validate or supplement the arguments derived based on this memoir. *The White* Castle, *The Black Book, My Name is Red*, *Snow*, and *The Museum of Innocence* are the major focus while other texts are consulted only rarely and when needed.

The study finds that Pamuk's texts were attempts to address the dearth of narratives on Turkey as there was a decline of Western interest in Turkey since the end of the Ottoman Empire. While addressing this aporia, Pamuk is also trying to resurrect the Ottoman glory for generations of Turkish people who lost their link to the nation's history since the Turkish language reforms. His selection of retold tales is identified as the political statements that they are, in a nation that selectively forgets its past and purges itself to further invented notions of nationalist ideals. Pamuk's perception a Westernised other in his own country is found to help his balanced narratives that seemingly desist from making political judgements and partisan stances about the ethnic clashes or the silenced histories. The thesis also finds that Pamuk's Turkey is yet another imagined community that preserves what he deems to be the best of Turkey so that it can be replicated if kept active in the cultural memory. The thesis concludes with the finding that Pamuk tries to don the garb of a messiah to deliver his country from forgetfulness –its own and the world's–to revive its Ottoman glory through resurrecting erased histories to cultural memory while effectively intervening on its behalf in his capacity as the literary representative of his nation.

The scope of the study is limited in the sense that the observations made are perceptions of an outsider who is purveying Pamuk's meteoric rise and claim to be the nation's chronicler from outside the nation's borders. The hypothesis is made solely

on the translations of the original Turkish texts and the secondary sources available in English. My knowledge of Turkish is almost non-existent beyond that of a preliminary knowledge that may include the meaning of a few common words, the ability to pronounce Turkish names, and at times make basic sense of their origins. Taking into consideration that what is lost in translation, I have resisted the urge to comment on or make references to Pamuk's use of language unless quoting a relevant observation made by a third party, that too only to place Pamuk in the Turkish literary canon and for nothing else.

The study opens questions as to Pamuk's choice of resurrecting subaltern and silenced histories that could be pondered by future researchers. If one possesses or could acquire a secondary knowledge of Turkish, Pamuk's literary protests to the language reforms are a worthwhile study. His translations and the disparity between and the conscious choice to make distinct British and American versions of English translations could reveal a lot about the political stand of the writer. The polyglots well-versed in Turkish can ponder over the problems of translating highly stylised and experimental narrative that he adopts in his novels. The more curious can look into the plagiarism claims of his detractors and try to understand why the complaints against the similarities did not stand long. The increased availability of Turkish translations of his predecessors, contemporaries and successors has opened up the scope of comparative studies as well.

Now, let us look into the different critical approaches and observations on Pamuk so that I can place my research problem in context.

Orhan Pamuk's entrance to the Western literary scene was with the English translation of *The White Castle*, his third novel. *The New York times Book Review*

announced Pamuk's arrival thus, "A new star has risen in the East–Orhan Pamuk". The novel was a deviation from his early modernist novels that conformed to the realist-socialist tradition of contemporary Turkish novels. It was set in the Ottoman past and had all the ingredients of a Pamukian text: the East-West conflict, the identity swaps, a haphazard narrative and elements that Charles McGrath called a "grab bag of postmodern literary devices" in his 2006 *New York Times* article. His later novels followed this tradition and established him as a bestselling author who found favour with the academia as well. It marked his success as a translated writer who was "touted as Turkey's new literary prodigy" (Gün 59).

McGrath attributes Pamuk's success to the heady mixture of the "exotic" tales of Istanbul with the "grab bag postmodern literary devices" (Ibid.) which distinguishes him from the village novels of prominent novelists like Yeşar Kemal. But Gün like many other American critics seemed impressed with it, "Pamuk, who has deliberately set out to become a world-class writer, has borrowed the attitudes and strategies of Third World authors writing for the First World. Not only does he know all the tricks; he never misses one. His works translate like a charm precisely for the same reason..." (7) Though Gün may appreciate Pamuk's attempt to appeal to a Western audience, the Turkish and Arabic world do not show similar intention of approval. Ahmed Saidullah in "Those Obscure Objects of Desire: The Political Economy of Civilization in Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*" says,

> Pamuk is now the voice of a country, who arguably belittled other more eligible writers and with his bag of tricks elbowed them to win the Nobel Prize for literature. Some Turkish critics have attributed his popularity in the west to combining experimental postmodern

> flourishes with bits of "Turkish exoticism" but there's no denying his talent, good fortune and timing.

Dane Green has got a more balanced view to present in this respect,

> Pamuk wants to use postmodern strategies precisely in order to *create* meaning, in effect to graft them on to his representations of Turkey's past and present as a way of strengthening these representations, or at least of bringing attention to them beyond the critical consideration conventional realism would be capable of attracting.

Maureen Freely, his translator and a Turkish literary critic, in "Talking Turkey", commended his skilful handling of the problematic notion of the West for any postcolonial writer, "Orhan Pamuk's genius is in describing the strange and tragic things that happen when real people aspire to that greatest of all modern fictions, the West….I would say it's also because he gives substance to the headaches of rapid modernisation". She told Nicholas Wroe in "Occidental Hero" that,

> The rapidity of social change in Turkey has been amazing…it has also been a source of considerable pain and confusion. Everything Orhan writes speaks to that and to the debates people are having inside themselves but they can't quite put into words. [His] modernist/ postmodernist games involve using elements from opposing traditions that, when seen together, defy reason and make a 'grand narrative' impossible, they are perhaps less difficult for a modern Turkish reader to understand in that this is their daily experience – living in a part-

> western culture that changes rapidly – and there is never time to sit back and ask how it all adds up.

Pamuk's meteoric rise in the Turkish and later in world literary scene was always been a topic of discussion. There were also the allegations that Pamuk belittles other/better writers from Turkey and hogs the limelight. Saidullah observed,

> However, Pamuk has also dismissed the secularizing, de-cosmopolitanizing and westernizing impulses in Turkish history, and sometimes the works of other Turkish writers who were influenced, as he was, by western arts and mores. The list includes newspaper columnist and novelist, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar whose epigraph opens *Museum* and whom he praised in *Istanbul*. This has left the impression that Pamuk has tried sedulously to silence other voices in Turkey's conversation with the west. Many Turkish writers, including Yeşar Kemal at the Friedenpreis in Frankfurt and Elif Şafak, though, have continued to speak up in Pamuk's support. (Ibid.)

Though a growing up tale of a young boy into a published writer in Turkey, *Istanbul* is about people who wrote about the city, and how a young boy grew up through them to be the city's chronicler.

His references to the "Four Lonely Melancholic Writers" in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* as failed artists who "died without achieving their dreams" has contributed to this criticism of his belittling earlier writers though Pamuk affirms his admiration for these writers in that very chapter (104). It is these early writers that Pamuk credits with making him a writer –them and Turkey. There is also no greater homage that a writer could pay to his literary masters and his muse of a city than the

panegyric that he immortalises them through his memoir. It enshrines them in the world cultural memory through anecdotes and photographs better than any academic writing on them to date. Eberstadt quotes Parla whose words affirm this argument, of Pamuk she said, “His source of inspiration has been more literature than life”. This would explain why the translator, Yurdanur Salman, as quoted by Eberstadt, called Pamuk’s fiction, “dry, cerebral, not a juicy, organic text”, a comment that readers of *My Name is Red* or *Snow* will strongly disagree with.

His use of Western literary techniques and the American support for his championing of human rights have been said to help him belittle the Turkish writers. Pamuk’s insistence that he looks up to the Western literary tradition aggravates the hostility towards him. When asked to comment on his drift from the socio-political novels of Turkey, Pamuk said, “My motivation is really to write a good Proustian, Nabokovian, Borgesian, whatever you like to call it, beautiful novel rather than think about the politics” (Lakshman 11). Adil in “Western Eyes: Contemporary Turkish Literature in a British Context” notes how the contested identities and village novels from Turkey are “flattened or lost in the British context” (5), Kemal’s *İnce Memed* (1955), translated to international acclaim as *Memed, My Hawk* (1961) loses much of its political resonance in an Occidental context since it can be read as “an evocation of the timeless rural backwardness of the Orient” (Ibid.) although it provides a Turkish cultural atmosphere. Even though Pamuk may be critical of other eminent writers from Turkey, he is not solely responsible for their cold reception outside Turkey nor is his presumed American appeasement.

Talking about his shift from the current realist strains in Turkish novel, Pamuk said,

> …the authors who felt a social responsibility, authors who felt that literature serves morality and politics…They were flat realists, not experimental. Like authors in so many poor countries, they wasted their talent on trying to serve their nation. I did not want to be like them.

Later he agreed with Nirmala Lakshman in the *Hindu* interview that it is the responsibility of the writer to constantly resist and critique the attempts to suppress freedom and impose censorship, "We should certainly say it is a writer's duty..." (11).

While announcing to readers that "Orhan Pamuk wins Nobel", *The Guardian's* Richard Lea reported, "The Turkish author, who has been exploring issues of identity at the collision of east and west since his earliest work, found himself in court earlier this year on charges of "insulting Turkishness." After last year's surprise award to playwright Harold Pinter, is the Academy focusing too much on the political? Or does Pamuk's work stand up on its own merits?" He left the question open to the readers. But this is a question that has been doing the rounds since Pamuk's nomination in 2005.

In his interview to the Swiss publication, *Das Magazine*, Pamuk spoke about his human rights concerns for his country. One million Armenians and 30,000 Kurds were killed in these lands and nobody but me dares to talk about it", a 2005 *New York Times* article on the news of Pamuk's trial in his country quoted Pamuk from the interview. Pamuk was referring to the massacre of more than 1.5 million Armenian deaths during WWI and the deaths of over 30,000 Kurds in ethnic clashes from 1984 to 1999. This is the comment that caused a lot of anger towards him in Turkey and raised charges of denigrating Turkishness. On March 29th, Turkish Governor of

Sutculer decided to collect and burn Pamuk's books in town. Charges for denigrating Turkishness, Art.301 was brought against him on 31st August, 2005 by lawyers of two professional associations. Turkey was then trying for a membership in the EU and literary figures like Salman Rushdie and Margaret Atwood strongly condemned this attempt. Under pressure from international media, the case was dropped on technical grounds. Still writers are languishing in Turkish jails under this decree which has now been watered down and needs the nod of the Government to use. "...and if you are famous, they will not allow it. I can get away with it, but you won't", said Pamuk in an interview with Nirmala Lakshman.

This case established Pamuk as a champion of human rights though another such case was settled only after he later went on record saying that he was only attempting to draw attention to the right to freedom of speech and expression in Turkey. Elif Şafak has openly spoken about the misuse of this law even before the last failed coup against Erdogan, but the government continues to use it with even more frequency since then. Things got so heated that Pamuk, in a rare public interview that broached on politics of the country, criticised the muzzling of opinion in the nation, rare since his public apology in yet another denigration charge had made him a bit more cautious about courting libel charges. On the criticism that he did not speak against any other encroachment of freedom of expression, Pamuk reasserted that he has always been a supporter of free speech. He also mentioned that he had condemned Khomeni's *fatwa* against Rushdie.

Amidst hatred towards Pamuk in Turkey, there was also criticism that Pamuk used the issue to buy visibility and literary fame. Critics point to the timing of those remarks and raise the following points: The 9/11 after-effects helped boost the sales of *Snow* and other works of the author of *Snow*. The Armenian-Kurd comment helped

with the timing of Nobel nomination and later the award. It also assured him continued visibility and the goodwill of the US, EU and other countries in the wake of the insecurities of post 9/11. Islamic fundamentalism and issues of civil codes like the headscarf found a newly interested readership. *Snow*, a novel that Pamuk termed his 'first and last political novel' promptly angered the fundamentalists and nationalists of Turkey while duly establishing Pamuk for the rest of the world the outspoken champion of human rights. Yet this negative critical reception to his political beliefs in Turkey did not reduce the sales of his books, instead they went on breaking publication records.

The Armenian genocide finds mention in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* in the chapter, "Conquest or Decline? The Turkification of Constantinople". The mainstream media in Turkey, in an attempt to soften the Western criticism for the rising intolerance towards free speech in the country, depicted Pamuk as "an illegitimate, marginal and demon character" and "framed Pamuk's case from the perspective of dominant ideology" (Iri 19).

Some mention that Pamuk's luck too played a role in the way he found mention in the press as well: Saidullah commented, ".... the American edition of *My Name is Red* went on sale the week of 9/11 and the novel TV campaign for *Snow* was capped by the heaviest snowfall in Istanbul in fifteen years. *Istanbul* contained details about his parents' failing marriage and his rivalry with his brother Şevket...these events fuelled sales, if not his popularity." It was as if the fates were colluding to put this legendary city and its chronicler in lime light.

Gabriel Noah Brahm Jr. while recording his experiences of Turkey and US states,

> In fact, some Turkish versions of the deportations and mass killings of 1915 are so disingenuous that a museum dedicated to the 'Armenian genocide' located in the north eastern city of Kars, focuses on the deaths of Turks at the hands of Armenians, rather than the reverse. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons why Orhan Pamuk's novel, *Snow* (2004) (in Turkish, *Kar*), is set there, in a remote region on Turkey's still-contested eastern border. (80)

Snow in fact makes a reference to this museum with the narrator telling us that the visitors are often surprised at its commemorating Turkish rather than Armenian deaths. If Pamuk was fulfilling his role as the representative of his country and a writer who is responsible to bring about social changes; his attempts may not have been in vain.

Snow ran into problems with the religious fundamentalists of Turkey. The *Spectator* review of the novel called it, "A gripping political thriller...Pamuk keeps so many balls in the air that you cannot separate the inquiry into the nature of religious belief from the examination of modern Turkey, the investigation of East-West relations, and the nature of art itself." *Snow* explicitly dealt with Islamic fundamentalism in Turkey, especially the issues of terrorism and religious codes.

The novel follows Ka, a poet back from exile and travelling to Kars in his search of his lost love, Ipek. Ka is there to investigate the suicide phenomenon of 'headscarf girls'. His meeting with Kadife, the leader of the headscarf girls who refused to obey the government decree banning headscarves and the relatives of the dead girls are accounts of female oppression under a patriarchal and religious realm. Brahm observed that "Even in Ankara, Ataturk's modern capital, girls and young

women are routinely policed by older brothers, cousins and total strangers of both sexes. Further to the east, 'honor (sic) killings' of young women who stray remain a horrific human rights scandal" (85).

As mentioned earlier, the horrors of religious persecution in Turkey gained attention in a post 9/11 US and in the Western world as well. The identity crises and insecurities (as seen in Mohsin Hamid's *Reluctant Fundamentalist*) worked in Pamuk's favour. He was also criticized for depicting the religious leader Blue in a bad light. The critics claimed that a devout believer like him would not stray from religious values and pursue a married woman, Ipek and her sister, Kadife. They were also angered by his treatment of the controversial topic of headscarves in the novel. But there is no denying the fact that he was giving voice to a group of women who are abused to score religious and political points. Girls like Teslime and Hamde say they cover their heads for religious reasons and wear it as an emblem of faith; Kadife too joins with them in this choice. Late when Kadife considers removing her headscarf, she is met with pleadings like that of Fazıl, "Please, I beg you, don't bare your head. We are all here right now....It would kill us, kill us all." (295) The woman's choice is made into a matter of patriarchal honour and the soft-spoken Fazıl statements conform to Blue's hardcore fundamentalist stand that, "But of course she shouldn't bare her head" (288-289).

Ian Ward in "Shabina Begum and the Headscarf Girls" deals with the British discourses on headscarves and refers to Pamuk's *Snow* as a novel that "encourages us to discern the genuinely 'humanistic spirit'" (129). He says, "Pamuk's 'headscarf girls' are clearly subjected to enormous pressures, from both those who demand they cover up, and those who demand that they do not" (126). Tussles with the religious authorities are not new to Pamuk. It could be evidenced be it in his support for

Rushdie against the fatwa or statements about the charges of religious extremism in his memoir. He is a member of Turkish elite which feared "the fury of those who believed in Her too much" (*Istanbul* 162). Critics like Brahm dismiss these accusations as stemming from "Occidentalism" that is rising in Turkey (88). In spite of the criticism he invited for the novel and the imminent American approval, Pamuk cannot be denied the credit for speaking out against human rights and sculpting a critically acclaimed bestseller based on the mishaps. His texts helped bring more attention to the human rights abuse in Turkey which is more significant in the contemporary Turkish scene where the muzzling of disagreement is on the rise.

I would now like to look at the allegations of Orientalist representations of Turkey in his novels and the critical reactions to it. Pamuk is often accused of appeasing the Western media at times at the cost of denigrating his own nation. It is not surprising for a writer who is said to derive his fame and acceptance solely on the Western reception of his novels. Alev Adil in "Western Eyes: Contemporary Turkish Literature in a British Context" talks about how "Istanbul: Memories and a City" became *Istanbul: Memories of a City*. The Faber edition of 2005 replaced Pamuk's school photograph with a minaret in a snowy Istanbul street. Adil observes how, "The cover of the English edition is thus a memory of the Turkish edition; transformed and translated by a romantic Orientalist gaze.... Sepia has altogether softer more cosy resonances than black and white. The image has lost both the book's specific engagement with black and white photography and with Pamuk's sense of writing at the intersection of personal and collective histories. The English version of the book is designed to look like exotic travel writing, packaged as an essential accessory for that weekend break in Istanbul." It displaced a cover that "echoes two central concerns of the memoir: firstly, how the memory of a place, or the place where memory resides,

what Pierre Nora calls '*lieux de memoire'* (Nora, 1996), is the point at which autobiography meets, and sometimes subverts, collective official history; and secondly, a refusal of Orientalist colour in Pamuk's re-imagining of the city." (2-3)

Pamuk has also written "that in wanting to "become myself…it would not be by deriding Naipaul's 'mimic man'…but by identifying with him....He admitted that, growing up in Nişantaş, he always felt like a "Westerner in the orient" and that it's only by living and writing in the US that he's now begun to "feel Turkish", points out Ahemd Saidulla. He credits this early anxiety to Pamuk's part-Circassian heritage and the Circassians' labile and unstable loyalties and identities in west Asia (Ibid.).

Turkey has never been under colonialism and with critics like Nora observing that Pamuk refuses to colour his Istanbul in Orientalist colour, I could discern Orientalist tendencies in his writing. The historic settings of his novels like *White Castle* and *My Name is Red* which discuss the rich Ottoman past and the East-West conflict integral to this transcontinental nation even though attempt to move beyond Orientalist tendencies are not completely devoid of those traits. His "odd historic quirks" exoticize his renderings of Turkish history even to Turkish readers according to Gün (7). This exoticization is one of the concerns that this thesis discusses.

Orhan Pamuk's texts have also run into problems pertaining to the politics of translation. Pamuk's translations were accused of being too American, especially the texts translated by Güneli Gün. She received the best and worst translation awards in 1997 for *New Life* in America and Britain respectively. Alev Adil observed how Gün's "fondness for Mid-Western slang and cliché, together with the grammatical errors that betrayed a writer who lacked the fluency of a native speaker, meant that her translation met with critical derision." Gün in turn justified her distinctive and

obtrusive transformation of Pamuk style approachable for American readers and accused the British of cultural imperialism.

Orhan Pamuk has always insisted the importance of his English translations' truthfulness to their Turkish originals as many of his translations into other languages are translations of their English translations. He sits with his English translators and works with them to ensure that they come out the way he wants them to. Yet when the reader finds "*simit*-sesame rolls" in *The Museum of Innocence* (194), the reader is conscious of reading a translated text. Ahmed Saidullah in "Those Obscure Objects of Desire: The Political Economy of Civilization in Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*" points out another instance of "*locur* or Turkish delight" and wonders whether Pamuk or his translator Maureen Freely is "by annotating the text, underlining Pamuk's role as *soi-disant* cultural broker to the west?" He also notes that, "Turkish readers and critics have been baffled by the syntax in Pamuk's previous works. They have gone so far as to accuse him of distorting his sentences in Turkish so that they would be easier to translate into English" (Ibid.). It is not just his Turkish readers who find *The Black Book* and *New Life* difficult reads, readers of his English translations too have made similar comments. Alev Adil refers to Lazard's criticism of Pamuk's language,

> Nicholas Lezard betrays his rather condescending assumptions about Turkish readers when reviewing *The New Life*. What kind of reading public hands such success to such a book? For I was finding it heavy going. Are the readers inordinately sophisticated, far better than decadent Westerners at picking up nuance and meaning? (6)

Saidullah also talks about how Pamuk wanted Gün to change the Americanisms in her translation to make it acceptable to British readers and her refusal which led Pamuk to find a new publisher and translator (Ibid.). Though Saidullah reduces it to Pamuk's knowledge of mass markets, it can be worked to Pamuk advantage that he didn't continue with the accused bias. The other allegations related with translation problems include deletions in his texts.

Pamuk has also been accused of deleting derogatory comments on the gay community from the translated versions of his novel, *My Name is Red*. This is pointed out as an instance of appeasing American/ English readers as they may find them discriminatory. It could have also created a dent in Pamuk's image as a champion of human rights which boosted his acceptance in the West. Homosexuality and Dervish interest in younger boys find mention in a few chapters of *My Name is Red*. In the novel, the mention of the homosexual community in his story telling sessions at the tea house earn the storyteller the wrath of the religious fundamentalist Husret Hoja and his people. There are also references of homosexuality in the narratives of the painters about their master and of the gold coin. What the discriminatory references would have done to Pamuk's image among his world readers can only be assumed.

Pamuk's deletion of supposedly derogatory remarks can be attributed to his sensibility about the Turkish naturalisation of it in the Dervish context and the American unfamiliarity with it. It may be an attempt to avoid exoticism and cultural shock and the resultant issues of human rights violations that may arise due to these cultural differences. It may be pure caution and not necessarily an attempt at preening.

One of the central themes of Orhan Pamuk's *Black Book* is the concept of plagiarism. Celal, the columnist is accused of plagiarism by his competitors. Yet when the three old masters meet the prodigy, they tell him, "Don't worry about

plagiarism either, ...Do you know Rumi's story, 'The Contest between the Two Painters"? He, too, borrowed the story from someone else..." (91). While Celal's observations on style provide further discourses on inspiration and imitation, the identity swaps between Galip and Celal and that their writing styles are indistinguishable from each other's do question the very concept of originality and authorship. Ironically the very same novel was accused of plagiarism.

Pamuk had also been accused of plagiarising *Ancient Evenings* of Norman Mailer in *My Name is Red* and borrowing heavily from Fuad Carım's *Istanbul in the Era of Kanuni* in *The White Castle*. The Western critics and media were accused of protecting Pamuk and turning a blind eye to the accusations as he is a human rights watchdog in Turkey for them. Pamuk's only response to them was that the accusations were not true. His detractors wrote to the Nobel academy but did not find any encouragement. The Western media too did not respect these accusations nor did it find mention anywhere else than in Wikipedia and some social forums. Plagiarism is a serious allegation and no appeasement should protect an offender if proven guilty of it. Reading Mailer's novel along with *My Name is Red* will be an exercise in understanding the distinction between inspiration, imitation and plagiarism and will provide the curious some answers as to the verity of these accusations.

Apart from these allegations, Pamuk has also been accused of riding the waves of fame and churning out works of lesser literary value. His *Other Colours: Essays and a Story* was termed a work of no literary value and to have tried to cash in on his Nobel fame. Claire Berlinski agrees with this view in "Pamuk: Prophet or Poseur?" in an article for the *Globe*. Yet she accepts,

> But this book is about Pamuk himself, particularly the challenges of being a great writer and a severe depressive. The collection has been received with rapture by many critics, who celebrate this offering as a unique window into Pamuk's interior life. Indeed, it is precisely that.

There is no denying that controversies have given more visibility to Pamuk. These controversies have contributed to Pamuk's eager and warm reception by the world audience. But his Turkish reception is ample proof that hostility towards the author and controversies alone cannot steer ahead the sales and readership of a book. Even though they may have enhanced his fame and fetched him a few awards, he has not sustained and steadily increased his readership and the academic acceptance on the strength of them alone. It is a point Saidullah agrees with Gün in his *3Quarks Daliy* article, when he acknowledges, "There is no denying his talent, good fortune and timing".

These observations point to the need of looking at Pamuk through a fresh perspective, especially one that will go beyond his postmodern tricks and the East-West and Oriental partisan problems. Pamuk is a writer who caught world imagination by incredible surprise. For a writer of his calibre and popularity, the interventions that he engages in and the ones he could represent are significant. This thesis studies Pamuk so as to understand the political statements that Pamuk's texts put forward especially with regard to how he projects his country and how it is perceived by his people and the rest of the world. His choice to tell stories from the Turkish past and the spatial and temporal significance of these selections are crucial in the case of a writer who made waves for his political remarks as much as he did for his bestsellers. The power that the role of the chronicler invests in him is indeed singularly pertinent. That his imagined country is unified by the spirit of *hüzün* and

often eclipses its real variant is a serious cause of concern that needs to be pondered further.

I have divided my thesis into seven chapters. The following are the concerns that the thesis discusses:

- Chapter Two titled, "Orhan Pamuk: The Birth of a Nation's Chronicler" traces the growth and development of the Turkish novel and places Pamuk in the literary cannon.
- Chapter Three, "Under the Western Eyes: Western (Mis) Conceptions on a Transcontinental Nation", investigates how Pamuk uses Western narratives on Turkey and how they influenced his point of view as a writer.
- Chapter Four, "Mending a Patchwork Quilt: Attending to the Fissures and Appendages in the Fabric of Turkish History", analyses Pamuk's selection of resurrected histories in his novels and identifies them for the political statements that they are.
- Chapter Five titled, "A House of Mirrors: The Self, the Other and the Outsider in Orhan Pamuk's Turkey", discusses the point of view that Pamuk adopts in his novels and what prompted that choice.
- Chapter Six, "Warping Orhan Pamuk's Imagined Community: A Chronicler, an Ambassador, and a Messiah" studies the various roles that Pamuk dons in Turkey and in his imagined community and what they mean to his nation and to the World.
- Chapter Seven is the concluding chapter that discusses the findings of the thesis, the questions that it posits, and the scope for further research that it opens up for future researchers.

The thesis will be an attempt to critique Pamuk's imagined community that he constructs to counter many such imagined communities that he perceives may distort his nation's identity as well as its future.

Chapter Two

Orhan Pamuk: The Birth of a Nation's Chronicler

> "When society fails, the nation appears as the ultimate guarantee."
> (Hobsbawm 173)

The freedom from the shadow of colonialism that would have never arrived, freedom from the loss of face after the defeat in WWI, the delinking of the nation from the Islamist-Ottoman relic of an empire that had fallen before the West, the need for a new beginning and a new identity for the new nation, the promise of a brighter future on par with the West which the people of Turkey hoped for in the heydays of the fallen empire, the feeling that they are not as good as the Ottoman folks of yore and the resultant need to warp a new identity free of the burden of the past and free of the expectations of Ottoman legacy that shadows their endeavours, and the promise and the hope –of a fresh beginning: the reimagining of Turkey ultimately after 1923 is all this and more. The freedom they sought was not from a coloniser or an enemy but from the shackles of a debilitating past and the identity as a fallen (from grace, from regal heights with the legacy of the conquest of Constantinople) people. They needed to be identified as the conquerors of Constantinople, the founders of Istanbul and not as the subjects of a fallen empire. The nation and the people needed to reinvent themselves.

Orhan Pamuk's novels talk about these people and the city and the country that they reimagined, all the while using whatever was written about/in the city and the country to create anew the picture of Turkey for the world, for his fellow nationals and for himself. This is why his self-appointed role as the nation's ambassador calls for perusal so that one can understand Pamuk's position as an insider who chooses to

be an outsider in his country, and imagining stories about it for readers on both sides of the borders. For this purpose, I will now trace the growth and development of the Turkish novel and place Orhan Pamuk, the brightest star of the Turkish novelistic horizon and its best representative to world literary stage, in the Turkish literary canon.

The novelistic tradition in Turkey began by the end of the nineteenth century with the first novel, *Taaşuk-u Tala't ve Fitnat* published in 1872. The journal tradition encouraged this new genre with *Servet-i Fünûn* of the New Literature movement and *Genç Kalemler* of the National Literature movement. The novel was the favoured genre of literature in modern Turkey as it was a relatively new and western form and suited the needs of the modernising attempt in the early part of the twentieth century. For a nation trying to delink itself from the fallen empire, Turkey's poetic and story-telling traditions were rooted in the Arabico-Persian tradition which the new nation builders found to be unsuitable for lessons in forgetting the Ottoman-Islamic roots. Partha Chatterjee in "Whose Imagined Community?" talks about how a "new language, modern and standardised" was synthesised to suit the modern Indian culture that the country's nationalists considered crucial in spreading the cultural identity uncorrupted by the colonial intruders (7). He also details how the novel "was the celebrated artifice of the national imagination" for this newly imagined India (8). Language reforms in Turkey and the choice of novel as the vehicle of nationalist propaganda were no different from what transpired in Bengal, India.

Hülya Adak in "Exiles at Home – Questions for Turkish and Global Literary Studies" discusses the favour that the literature celebrating nationalism enjoys in Turkey. She is also quick to point out the post-1980s phenomenon of resistance to modes of oppression in the nation-state. She finds the third element –of Georg

Gugenberg's developmental paradigm that Fanon mentions in *The Wretched of the Earth*, where the struggles against nationalism, celebrating nationalism, and the flag-independence and neo-colonialist criticism that form the three phases Third World literature– missing in the case of Turkey. For she states,

> …as a nation state without colonial rule…the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I and the occupation of Asia Minor and Istanbul (1918-23) caused the nationalist struggle against the allied powers to define itself as an independence struggle, and the literature celebrating nationalism and independence (phase 2) in Turkey has enjoyed to date, an extended golden age. (21)

The nationalizing endeavour thus didn't stop with the founding of a new nation in 1923 and continued down the years. Later, it took the form of that agglutinative force which according to its patrons holds the nation together from divisive forces –a trick that is used widely by many in newly formed nations since the latter half of the twentieth century. The chosen medium of literature of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's modern Turkey was the novel. The Turkish literary tradition that gave prominence to poetry over prose and carried forward the influential legacy of Persian folk tales and parables could not fit into the modernising goals of the new nationalistic writers and their patrons. The novel, with its European origins and its freshness as a comparatively new genre, got an expedited stamp of approval as the vehicle of nationalist ideology by the supporters of Westernisation. But the emphasis on cementing the fervour of nationalism and the consolidation of the nation-state did nothing to improve the growth of the novel in Turkey. The linguistic reforms and politicising of the literary space impeded the growth of the art as propagandist writing substituted aesthetic value as a desirable quality for contemporary novelists.

The enforced purification of the Ottoman Turkish to make it modern involved losing Persian and Arabic vocabulary. The switch from the Ottoman script to Latin script delinked the writers and readers from literature of the past as they were schooled in the new script. Though texts were transcribed into modern Turkish to make it accessible to the contemporary readers, a lot was lost in translation into a language that lost its rich vocabulary, its roots and its old script. When the use of the modernised language was equated with nationalism and the refusal to do so was equated with non-cooperation amounting to treachery to the Kemalist ideal of the new nation, writers like Tanpınar, Uşaklıgli, Aliye and Adıvar found it difficult to practice their art. As the transcription of old Turkish texts were not a government sponsored programme and building a nationalistic demographic through an invented language was, much effort was put into supplementing the language with new vocabulary. The vocabulary was also oversimplified to make it dissimilar to the complex linguistic structure of Ottoman Turkish, and very few litterateurs endeavoured to wade through the ensuing confusion in the pursuit of art. The project of turning Turkey from an empire to a nation-state gained momentum through Turcologists and texts celebrating nationalism until the 1980s.

Four novelists deserve special mention as to how they intervened to revive the Turkish novelistic canon (and for their influence on Orhan Pamuk) disagreeing with those who manoeuvred the purging of their medium of expression. Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, Yeşar Kemal, Orhan Kemal and Ogus Atay were writers, who strived to find a balance between the West and the East/ the Ottoman and the modern Turkish and failed, and in turn inspired Orhan Pamuk's own attempts to bring the best of both worlds together.

Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar did not receive the acclaim he deserved or his place in the Turkish novelistic tradition thanks to his refusal to adopt the purified Turkish. His nostalgia for the old Ottoman Turkish and the melancholy in his writing stemming from the loss of the past glory of Istanbul was perceived as anti-modern during his time. Now considered as one of the most influential Turkish novelist of the twentieth century and the proponent of modernism in his country's literature, Tanpınar was also a poet and a literary historian. The latter is the vocation he resorted to when met with resistance from the nationalists for his fictional outings, for continuing to use the rich vocabulary of the old Turkish language laced with its Arabic and Persian influences. His stories set in "the city of two continents" (The title of the opening chapter of his *A Mind at Peace*, a novel that Orhan Pamuk called the greatest ever written about Istanbul), are noted for their aesthetic complexity, exquisite language, and vivid pictures of the Ottoman Istanbul.

Tanpinar's works have been translated into 23 languages and there is no other writer who has contributed more to the genre in terms of the literary output. He is also the author of the first comprehensive history of Turkish literature, *History of Nineteenth Century Literature*. Apart from his magnum opus, *Hüzün* (*A Mind at Peace*, 1949), Tanpinar garnered critical acclaim for *Beş Şehir (Five Cities*, a collection of essays published in 1946), *Sahnenin Dışındakiler* (*Those Who Stand Outside the Stage*, a novel, 1950) and *Saatleri Ayarlama* (*The Time Regulation Institute*, a novel, 1954) that explored the country's transition to modern times. His complex tales with their layered semantics keep his stories fresh and intriguing even after half a century when they were unearthed by the enthusiasm of a reading demographic trying to understand a country torn between the forgotten past and a convoluted present. His literary voice that combines the European and Near-Eastern

sensibilities inspired future novelists to reclaim their severed literary and cultural legacy.

Orhan Pamuk regards him as his master and literary inspiration and pays homage to his writing in his memoir, *Istanbul.* Pamuk has also adopted his stylistic experiments with language. Tanpınar's posthumously published works had him gaining the deserved acclaim with the Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar Literature Museum Library devoted to the Turkish literary tradition and a dedicated literary festival reminding the reading public of the significance of his literary contributions that he accomplished all the while fighting an overzealous language purification drive by the new nationalists. The purification drive impeded the development of a novelistic canon according to Jale Parla and her enlightening piece on language purification, "The Wounded Tongue: Turkey's Language Reform and the Canonicity of the Novel". Despite his being a liberal humanist who tried to bring the East and West together in his novels, Tanpınar was dismissed as an Ottomanist by the Kemalists and was celebrated by the traditional Islamists. The post 1980s, Parla says, saw both camps claiming him as their own,

> His themes of alienation, problematic identity, tortured father-son relationships, and aestheticism resonated with the quest of intellectuals then for a redefinition of their identity, while his love for the past continued to recommend his work to traditionalists. (31)

Parla mentions two more novelists apart from Pamuk for their linguistic experiments and their struggles with the nationalistic drive for purification of Turkish language, Yaşar Kemal and OgusAtay.

Unlike Tanpınar, Kemal was a human rights activist and a reactionary much before he found international acclaim with the publication of *Memed, My Hawk* (*İnce Memed*) in 1955. He was of Kurdish origin and was quite vociferous about it and courted jail sentences for writing against the oppression of Kurds, racism, and the persecution of religious minorities. He had been to jail and back for disseminating communist ideas even before establishing himself as a writer; he found immediate acceptance among Kemalists who were trying to oppose the traditionalist notions of the Islamists. Yeşar Kemal was a prolific writer who used the Turkish newspeak with the local vocabulary and folk tales of the Anatolian villages to write about the people of Çukurova. His social novels with their elaborate Anatolian descriptions and local flavour found favour with the Kemalists and their nationalising efforts. They praised his efforts to infuse the purified language with Anatolian lexicon as they deemed it contributing to their cause. He continued to write profusely unhindered by the censuring that Tanpınar and Atay faced for their linguistic experiments. His novels celebrated the powerlessness of human beings before an indifferent fate and found resonance in Orhan Pamuk's fiction that celebrates the impending failure of his protagonists.

Kemal's major works of fiction include *Sarı Sıcak* (*Yellow Heat*, 1952, a collection of short stories) *Teneke* (1955, a novel) and *Ince Memed II* (*They Burn the Thistles*, 1969). Though his urban novels lack the linguistic freshness and literary charm of his Anatolian tales, Kemal is a mammoth figure in the Turkish literary tradition and may be the only novelist from Turkey, before Pamuk, to find international acclaim with *Memed, My Hawk* and subsequent novels and a Nobel nomination in 1973.

One of the epigraphs to Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* is the words of Stendhal from *The Charterhouse of Parma*, about politics in literature, "Politics in a literary work are a pistol-shot in the middle of a concert, a crude affair though one impossible to ignore." Yet in the nationalistic fervour of pre-1980s and in the light of the adoption of a constitution that was drafted by the military after the 1983 coup, writing itself is a political statement for Turkish novelists. When Orhan Pamuk and Elif Şafak courted political controversies and faced the threat of imprisonment for 'denigrating Turkishness' by giving voice to the Armenian oppression, early writers like Kemal Tahir, Nazim Hikmet and Orhan Kemal spent very many years behind bars for writing and talking about their ideologies.

Kemal Tahir wrote most of his acclaimed novels during his thirteen years of imprisonment. He was one of the most prolific writers of modern Turkey and his works include *Göl Insanlari* (*People of the Lake,* 1955), *Sağırdere* (*Deaf River*, 1955), *Esir Şehrin Insanlaı* (*People of the Captive City*, 1956), many collections of poems, film scripts and many volumes of fiction (wrote under pseudonyms for financial reasons). He pondered on the effects of Westernisation in Turkey and the suitability of Marxist ideology for an Eastern nation as well as its contemporary presence and was passionate about the intellectual discourse on the meeting of the East and the West in Turkey, a concern found in the discourses of Tanpınar and Pamuk as well.

A contemporary of these three, Orhan Kemal is known for his social novels that depicted the lives of the poor and dispossessed in Turkey. It is a world that Pamuk seldom ventured to in his novels, until *A Strangeness in My Mind* (2014), a tome that lacks the spirit of Orhan Kemal's fictional world that holds a mirror to the underbelly of Turkey. Like Yaşar Kemal, Orhan Kemal too found trouble with the

political leadership for his leftist ideology and was sent to jail for reading and propagating leftist literature. His meeting with Nazim Hikmet in jail, whose works he was accused of propagating, was a major influence on his literary career as he moved from writing poetry to writing prose under Hikmet's suggestion. His realist novels that showed the underbelly of Turkey drew inspiration from the author's own struggles and the life that he saw around him. His protagonists are optimistic souls and always manage to find the sliver of hope amidst oppression and poverty in industrialised Turkey. His works include *Baba Evi*, *Murtaza*, and *Eskici Dükkanı*. The Orhan Kemal Novel Prize and a dedicated museum in Istanbul pay tribute to the contributions of a novelist who wrote and stood for what he believed in. Pamuk won the Orhan Kemal Novel Prize for his first novel in the year 1983.

Ogus Atay is a novelist who attacked the language reform and the purgation attempts that hindered the development of Turkish literary tradition and severed links with the Ottoman past. His *Tutunamayanlar* (*The Disconnected*, 1970) is the epitome of the postmodern distrust of language as a deceptive and perpetually misleading carrier of meaning as well as a parody of the chaos and confusion that ensued with the Kemalists' purification drives. The Sun-Language and the Ur-Turkik theories were purging the language of all Persian and Arabic influences in an apparent attempt to bring Turkish back from its Ottoman influences to its pure origins. When combined with the move from Arabic script to Latin script, these experiments left the language a stranger to its former self and quite foreign to old users all the while effectively alienating the users of modern Turkish from its Ottoman counterpart. The disconnected narrative of *Tutunamayanlar* is about the futile fight against an unreliable and undecipherable language, rich in colloquialisms and irreverent toward language norms. Jale Parla writes,

> As implied by the novel's title, the narrative with its medley of styles, disconnects; it chops, cuts, separates; it does not cohere. It breaks the characters apart, impedes all forms of dialogue, carries no reliable information, results only in unfinished writing, fails in every attempt at expression or communication, and ends in a schizophrenic exchange between the protagonist, Turgut and his double. (33)

Parla believes his language in the novel to be "deliberately noisy" and "pointlessly aggressive" (Ibid.). The novel that mirrored the chaos of his country that resurrected from language reform, the aggression and the twaddle of gibberish that the standardised and purged language unleashed on the literary world, was meant to shock the guardians of standardised Turkish. Its sheer volume and challenging narrative did not hinder it from becoming a bestseller since its republication in 1984.

Atay continued his linguistic games, roughhousing of meaning and linear narratives in *Tehlikeli Oyunlar* (*Dangerous Games*, 1973), his next novel. Rejecting all norms of grammar, spelling, syntax, and decipherability, he mixes Ottoman Turkish with new coinages and adds a mistrust of history to the turmoil with a criticism of the invented histories that had made a palimpsest of the Turkish past. Parla also notes how the image of poorly fitting clothes inhibiting movement of the people is parallel to the awkwardness of a limiting language in his novels. This did not escape the language purists who dismissed his work as frivolous. But since the republication of *Tutunamayanlar* and the rave reviews it received from critics and readers alike has him being revered as the pioneer of modern novel in Turkey.

The distrust of history and the fascination with its variant versions combined with linguistic games are common traits of the novels of this rebellious postmodernist

and Orhan Pamuk as well. If Yaşar Kemal introduced Turkish novel to the world audience, paving way for Orhan Pamuk and his *White Castle* to the international literary scene; it is Tanpınar's East-West sensibility and Atay's destabilisation of meaning and of the past that contributed to a novel literary language and prepared his readers for his haphazard narratives of Ottoman intrigues and contemporary dissent.

Writers like Fatma Aliye chose not to write at all since the reforms while her exiled contemporaries including Halide Edib and Mehmet Şevket Esendal continued their opposition against Westernisation, modernisation and a purging of language, culture, literature, and history, risking further censure and persecution.

The military coup of 1983 saw the end of language experiments involving standardised Turkish and kick-started the nostalgia for the Ottoman past. The new generation of writers were a generation schooled in the standardised Turkish with exposure to Western postmodernist narratives. The cultural diversification and the opening of markets led to open discourses on gender and identity. The erstwhile marginalised including women, gays, religious minorities like the Dervishes, ethnic minorities like Greeks, Kurdish and Armenian people, and the victims of army and political persecutions, all found voice and a place in the political and cultural discourses. Though the constitution continued to be repressive and political persecutions increased with every passing day, Turkey started talking about its diverse demographic through its novels, art and pop culture. They reclaimed Ottoman Turkish as their chosen medium of expression and the nostalgia and melancholy for the glorious Ottoman days of yore found expression in the texts of accomplished writers of the era from Tekin, Toptas, and Pamuk to Kulin and Şafak.

The rejection of the history of women's rights movements and the narrative on gender rights as being distributed by a benevolent polity was opposed by the feminist movement in Turkey led by Latife Tekin and later by Elif Şafak. Latife Tekin belongs to the few writers who spoke against the horrors of the state and army on the marginalised and the minorities. A staunch supporter of Turkish feminist movement and one of the leading novelists of contemporary Turkish literature, Tekin's sharp narrative voice has always been vociferous against the state's attempts of occluding the resistance of the subaltern.

In her *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*, 1983) Tekin questioned the patriarchal, the affluent, and the nationalistic discourses in a narrative that drew inspiration from the rich folkloric and magic realistic traditions of Anatolia. Her texts presented a vibrant world with folk tales, fairy tales, the rural-urban migration, their oral histories, the squalor in the cities, the pain of separation from their Anatolian villages, the resilience of the poor and the unemployed to survive. Her language was the language of the Anatolian commoner to whom the fear of djinns and Şarıkız (the fair-headed witch) are as real as the anxiety about day to day survival. Her dispossessed speak an amalgamated language of neologisms, colloquialisms, Ottoman Turkish and urban slang and are always resilient in their rejection of the factitious and invented culture of the urban elite. The rapidly changing city and the urban elite were alien to the girl from Karacafenck who made sure her autobiographical narratives with the quality of a community novel had something to offer to the enlightened urban readers even when it spoke a language that was decipherable to and was put together by her migrant villagers. She empowered the silenced through this kaleidoscopic language as opposed to the distilled tongue of the affluent. Jale Parla observed,

> Tekin invented a highly personal, fabricated, and poetic style to express deprivation and demonstrate how subalterns could speak if they could. The have-nots could avenge themselves on the haves by indulging in a tongue richer than the sterilely correct, educated idiom of the republican elite. (35)

Her later novels, *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*(*Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*, 1984) and *Buzdan Kılıçlar* (*Swords of Ice*, 1989) talk about class differences, contemporary urban reality of the Turkish working class, and the affluent elite who were oblivious to the pestilence ridden existences of the country's poor and their magical villages that the latter left behind in search of a livelihood in the city, and of a linguistic purification that furthers this wedge between the two.

A contemporary of Orhan Pamuk and one of the strongest detractors alongside Pamuk of the sanctions put on the literary tradition by the polity, Tekin's novels document a facet of Turkey that Pamuk's Nişantaş tales never ventured into, even with *A Strangeness in My Mind* that travels through what had been unfamiliar alleys to Pamukian fiction. Though a fresh crop of writers like Asli Erdogan and Elif Şafak are making inroads to the novelistic scene in Turkey now, three names stand out since 1983 in the Turkish novelistic cannon: Orhan Pamuk, Latife Tekin, and Hasan Ali Toptas.

Hasan Ali Toptas' novels became available in English with the new publisher interest in Turkish novel since Pamuk's bestsellers. Best known for his postmodern novels that explore the absurd and the surreal reality of Turkish life through dreamlike, Kafkaesque narratives, Toptas's characters embark on strange journeys through meta-narratives that break the routines of their mundane existences devoid of

sense, and keep away from adherence to rules of reality. Ziya, the soldier protagonist of *Heba* (*Reckless*, 2013) or Nuri, the barber of whose disappearance and reappearance the narrator inform us of in *Gölgesizler* (*Shadowless*, 1995), are individuals who escape from their unbearable everyday lives to meta-realities. Toptas' *Shadowless* is about the military coups and regime changes that reduce disappearances and displacements to everyday business and about the silence that surround them. His novels are social commentaries on his conflict ridden country and raises questions about people who vanished and how such episodes affect those involved, both the victims and their perpetrators. One of the leading novelists of contemporary Turkish, Toptas has an interesting alternative to offer in terms of style, technique, and aspects of Turkish reality to international readers who are curious enough to venture past Pamuk and further into to literatures from Turkey.

Elif Şafak is the most successful and popular writer from Turkey to enter the world literary scene since Orhan Pamuk. She is a vociferous champion of freedom of speech and basic human rights in Turkey and unlike Pamuk, is an active on-the-street participant in the human rights movements of her country when freedom of speech and the rights of the minorities are increasingly violated, especially since the failed coup of 2017. She is the most translated Turkish writer since Pamuk and has won numerous awards and nominations internationally.

A passionate writer-activist, she announced her arrival to English literature with *The Bastard of Istanbul* (*Baba ve Piç*, 2007) that broached on the Armenian question and domestic abuse. Her novels use magic realism, postmodernism and historic narratives that vaguely remind one of Pamuk with their Ottoman and Sufi tales, the accounts of decimation of Armenians, the fascination with Rumi, and for tales unfurling in the city of Istanbul where the East and the West meet constantly.

She is also one of the strongest voices of feminism; her memoir *Black Milk* (*Siyah Süt*, 2006) talks about postpartum depression and narrates the motherhood experience with all its ugliness and glory, dismissing the romanticised pictures and factional narratives surrounding it. Her novels available in English are *The Gaze, The Forty Rules of Love, Honour,* and *The Architect's Apprentice*.

These novelists are variably responsible for the development of a Turkish novelistic canon and have enjoyed different degrees of literary and commercial success in Turkey. Yet, no other writer has conquered the Turkish imagination and international agreement like Orhan Pamuk to date. The metonym for his country's literature, Pamuk enjoys the popular fascination not unlike a pop star and his readers and critics equally find him impossible to ignore. Winning the highest international honour for a litterateur has made him almost immune to the political persecutions familiar to his country's novelists and has won over the most stubborn of Turkish readers. The trajectory of Pamuk's meteoric rise is more fantastic than his Ottoman tales.

Ferit Orhan Pamuk (1952-) was born in Istanbul, Turkey, as the second son of Gunduz and Shekure Pamuk in a wealthy Nişantaş family. He went to Robert College Secondary School (at the same time as Maureen Freely who translated many of his novels into English) and then to study architecture at Istanbul Technical University. It was partly to follow in the footsteps of his Caucasian grandfather, a contractor who made money from building railroads in modern Turkey and partly to keep alive his dream of becoming a painter. He left the University after three years to become a full time writer. He later graduated from the Institute of Journalism, University of Istanbul while working on the draft of his first novel from his mother's apartment.

Though he struggled for years to find a publisher for his first novel, *Karanlık ve Işık* (*Darkness and Light*, 1979) was the co-winner of Milliyet Press Novel Contest and went on to win Orhan Kemal Novel Prize of 1983, when published as *Cevdet Be ve Oğulları* (*Cevdet Bey and His Sons*, 1982). Set in Nişantaş, the novel that traces the lives of Cevdet Bey and his family resembles the life in Pamuk Apartments that one gets to know in his memoir, *Istanbul: Memories of a City*.

His second novel, *Sessiz Ev* (*Silent House*, 1984) too was a critically noted work that focused on family and the life in Istanbul. It is about Fatma Hanım and her three grandchildren who visit her in the old small town house in Cennethisar, Istanbul. Through five colluding narratives that uses internal monologues and stream of consciousness technique, the novel traces the aloof and disillusioned historian Faruk and his youngest brother Metin who dreams of a life in America, along with Nilgün, their revolutionary and spirited sister in their adventures at the seaside home of their bitter grandmother. Reliving their past and encountering their childhood ghosts, they are also transported into the tales that her housekeeper, the short and dwarfish Recep recounts. The novel ends in a tragic death that leaves the house in complete silence.

Beyaz Kale (*The White Castle*, 1985) announced Orhan Pamuk's arrival in the world literary scene. He moved away from the naturalistic style of his first two novels with *The White Castle* that had all the elements characteristic of a Pamukian text. The postmodern narrative with a metatextual quality begins with the discovery of an old Ottoman manuscript by Darvinoğlu who takes it upon himself to retell the story from the presumed journal of a Venetian and his Turkish doppelganger. When he finds no publisher for his book and when his friends discourage him saying such texts can be found aplenty in old Turkish *yali*s [Ottoman mansions], Darvinoğlu publishes it

himself and we are introduced to the story within the story of Hoja and his Venetian slave.

In a typical Ottoman tale where the East meets the West and confusions ensue, a Venetian scholar is taken captive in the Turkish siege of his ship by the Ottoman army and the Sultan offers him as a slave to Hoja, an astronomer and aspiring pyrotechnitian of the court. Amused by Hoja's curiosity to learn more about the Western scientific advancements and ways of life; the Venetian opens up to Hoja about Western science and about his life back in Italy. While working on different projects that involve pyrotechnics for the Sultan, and later for the young prince, the Venetian finds out the reason for Hoja's interest in him, that they are doppelgangers. In a narrative that questions the differentiating features of the East and the West and the identity crises of the self and the other in Ottoman Turkey, Pamuk leaves the reader with the possibility of an ultimate swap when Hoja and his double seemingly take each other's place in their respective ends of the world. Pamuk's first novel to be translated into English (His first two novels were translated into English only after his Nobel win), it won him international praise with the *New York Times Book Review* proclaiming; "A new star has risen in the east – Orhan Pamuk".

Pamuk became a popular name in Turkish reading circles with the publication of *Kara Kıtap* (*The Black Book*, 1990), an investigative thriller that had its share of controversies for its content and critical praise for the technical and narrative sophistry. Translated by Güneli Gün and published in English in 1994, it was retranslated by Maureen Freely apparently to cure it of the British idioms and to appeal to an American and world audience. In the novel, Galip, a lawyer finds his wife Rüya missing and suspects that she is with their cousin Celal, a journalist, a man whom Galip suspects his wife is having an affair with. Resembling the plot of one of

the detective novels that Rüya spends her daytime reading, Galip goes in search of his 'runaway' wife and for Celal who is absent from his flat. He searches the alleyways of Istanbul following what he gathers are clues to their whereabouts in Celal's newspaper columns. Slowly he moves to Celal's flat, wearing his clothes, answering his phone and writing his newspaper columns. He also gets interested in the story of Rumi and Shams of Tabriz and the mysterious drowning of the latter in Rumi's well while the poet was searching for his disciple all over Turkey. While disguising pleas to his wife to return to him in the columns he writes as Celal, he is bothered by phone calls from a fan whom Galip gathers to be the jealous husband of a woman that Celal was having an affair with. The novel ends with Rüya and Celal shot dead and their bodies found in a corner shop, Aladdin's (a real shop across the street from Pamuk Apartments). The assailant who shot them dead is never found and Pamuk enters the narrative to keep the readers wondering about the identity of the murderer.

Pamuk takes the problem of the self and the other to a whole new spectrum with parallel haphazard narratives and multiple identity swaps and the questionable reliability of the narrative of a jealous husband (Galip) and a jealous lover (Rumi whose poems are addressed to Shams of Tabriz, a young Sufi poet and later his daughter's husband who is found drowned in the former's well), and of historical narratives and the deferring quality of truth. Pamuk also wrote the screen play of the movie, *Gizli Yüz* (*Secret Face*, 1992), based on the novel and directed by Ömer Kavur.

Yeni Hayat (*The New Life*, 1994) was a publishing sensation in Turkey with billboards and discussions on its release and saw the same kind of reading frenzy as the fictional book in the novel. It is the fastest selling book in Turkish publishing history and even though it failed to garner much critical interest. In an absurd,

Kafkaesque narrative, the novel follows a young engineering student who is in search of a mysterious book that is rumoured to have changed the lives of all who read it. Osman becomes obsessed with the book and ignores his studies at the university and his mother, engrossed in the magical world inside its pages that tell him about the dangerous nature of love and self. In the manner of a quest narrative or a road novel, Osman tells us how his soul and entire identity transformed into a newer life from the energy that surged through the book's pages. He opens his narrative with this simple statement, "I read a book one day and my whole life was changed." (Pamuk, *The New Life* 3) In search of the life promised in this mystery volume, he finds people on the same quest, those who have read the book and are keeping its secrets and a few others who have sworn to destroy the book once they find it as they believe it to have corrupted its readers. The book shares the name of the novel and the novelist never reveals any part of the book to his readers. The novel ends with the bus carrying Osman in search of new life about to collide with incoming trucks and him stating that he is not ready for death or for crossing over to the new life and that he just wanted to go home.

Benim Adım Kırmızı (*My Name is Red*, 1998) is Pamuk's magnum opus and eternalised his repute as a master story teller and a great novelist of all time. Set in Sultan Murat III's Ottoman city of Istanbul in 1591, the novel is written in the manner of a modern day investigative thriller that blends history, art, romance, philosophy and psychoanalytical games. Spanning nine days of Turkish winter, the novel in eighteen monologues teases the reader in the quest for an elusive murderer.

Opening with a monologue of a dead painter who was working on the Sultan's secret book of paintings, the novel is an authentic text on the history of Turkish miniature painting and its degeneration with the coming of the realistic painting

techniques of portraiture into Ottoman Turkey. The perennial question of the novel is one that haunts every Turkish individual, that of 'a' choice between the loyalty to the East and the West, the Islamic and the European, the traditional and the modern. It causes a series of murders, distrust and a volley of questions on identity and Turkishness.

In Black's search for his Enishte's (the master painter Osman's) murderer, the readers learn about Black's hopeless love for the Enishte's daughter Shekure and the latter's attempt to survive with her two sons, in a world without her father and a husband who went missing in a war. Through monologues of people and things that they come into contact with, including the murderer who hides himself well behind his paintings, the reader is in for a breathtaking treasure hunt for clues to his identity in this postmodern murder mystery from Ottoman era.

Kar (*Snow*, 2002) is Pamuk's first political novel that talked about the Kurdish and Armenian killings in Turkey and the country's silence as well as its differing narratives of the subject. Set in the Anatolian border city of Kars –a microcosm of the nation– the novel questioned accepted histories, restrictions on freedom of speech, journalistic and literary censoring, the rise of religious fundamentalism, women's right movements, political persecutions, exiles, and disappearances, modernity, the gulf between the urban Nişantaş elite and the Anatolian common folk, the fear of Western gaze and approbation, and the very many elements that constitute the Turkish identity.

Set in the backdrop of a 1980 coup, *Snow* is the protagonist Ka's journey from exile and back to find his lost love, recover his creative imagination and may be search for his faith in God in the village of Kars. Amidst questions about the self and

the other, the evident and the hidden, Ka tries to find happiness in the prospect of a life in Germany with Ipek, a captivating woman who he suspects can never love him. His meeting with her sister Kadife, Kadife's lover and charismatic terrorist Blue, and her admirer Necip, and the town's response to an expatriate poet, all collude to his being used as a prop in a military coup and the ensuing events lead to his being shot to death in Germany.

The novel brought him acclaim as the outspoken litterateur of Turkey who dared to break the country's silence on the decimation of Armenians and the killings of Kurds. His open statement about these killings brought a criminal case against him though it was dropped in 2006. The attempt to reopen the case and try him for denigrating Turkishness and the honour of Turkish citizens created international furore with prominent writers and the EU advocating for quashing of the charges. The case was dropped by the justice department in the light of the Nobel Prize and the impending EU review of the Turkish justice system though Pamuk had to later pay a monetary compensation for hurting the honour of the five appellants of the case.

İstanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir (*Istanbul: Memories of a City*, 2005) is a treatise on the development of an Ottoman city through Westernisation into modern day Istanbul. Presented as a memoir of the author, the narrative traces the life of the child Orhan of Pamuk Apartments, Nişantaş to the day he decided to become a full-time writer. Pamuk has confessed in the *Wild River Review* interview to Joy E. Stocke that he wrote the book when he was on the verge of depression but managed to keep writing in spite of professional and personal issues troubling him. The text is a panegyric to the city of Istanbul and talks about the identities of the writer and his city. Supplemented by old photographs of the city by Ara Güler, Pamuk talks about Istanbul's streets, its historians, its melancholy, its old and dilapidated Ottoman

buildings, the darkness and the snow that transforms the city, the Bosphorus that gives it character, the Western gaze and accounts that affected the perception of the world and the city about itself, the writers who fell in love with the meeting of the East and the West in Istanbul not unlike himself, the newspaper columnists, Pamuk's love for painting, his growing up in an affluent family that was losing its wealth, the family squabbles at Pamuk Apartments, the newspaper shop called Aladdin's (that his readers are familiar with from the climax of *The Black Book*) and other things that conspired to make him a full-time writer at the age of 26, a writer who disagreed with the dictum that, "nothing good can come out of a place like this" (Pamuk, *Istanbul*, 323) and became the most successful writer Turkey ever produced.

Öteki Renkler (*Other Colours*, 1998) is a collection of essays on his life, writing and political views. It provides a rare insight into his world of fiction and his characters and into the little things that influenced the novelist and shaped his tales. Translated by Maureen Freely, the book of essays adopt a casual tone to talk about such myriad things like what makes his daughter sad, a black pen, Turkey's love with dogs and his first encounter with the West among other things. The book drew reader interest for the curious incidents that Pamuk recounts and as a window to his world, but drew criticism from readers especially outside Turkey as this was his first publication (though initially published in Turkish in 1998, it was translated into English only in 2007) after the Nobel and it failed to live up to their varied expectations from a new Nobel Laureate.

Mazumiyet Müzesi (*The Museum of Innocence*, 2008) is the first novel published after Orhan Pamuk received 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature. Written in the fashion of a guide book and accompanying literature to an actual Museum of Innocence that he set up and helped curate in Istanbul, the novel celebrated the failed

love of a Nişantaş businessman, Kemal for Füzun, a poor relative. Despite her marriage to another man, Kemal continues to support Füzun and her family that includes her parents (and now, her husband as well) and her dream of becoming an actress in the Turkish film industry that was only second to India then as the industry that produces most number of film per year. On her death, he turns the house that he had procured for her into a museum that immortalises her memory and everything from the period that she lived. From cigarette butts to china clay dolls, representative cultural products of the 1980s Turkish everyday life are reminisced in the book that ends with a printed ticket that 'admits one' to the museum. The museum was opened to public in 2012.

Both the novel and the actual museum pay tribute to the era, its culture, the Turkish film industry and the passion of collectors and curators who establish personal and public museums of every kind. Turkey's meeting with the Western way of life and the diversification of culture and lifestyle with opening of the markets in 1983, are immortalised as a tribute to an era when culture and citizen rights movements thrived. The novel analyses the dichotomy of the traditional and the modern, the gap between the urban elite and the poor city dwellers, the sacred and the mundane. The notion of innocence and virginity and the autonomy and independence of women in Turkey to pursue their life as their own is brought to question in the reduction of Füsun into the curator's lost love. The novel also celebrates the Turkish film protagonists, who are chasing their impending failure in love and life despite the hopeless knowledge of their approaching failure, traits that they share with Pamuk's melancholic heroes.

Kafamda Bir Tuhaflık (*A Strangeness in My Mind*, 2014, translated by Ekin Oklap) is the ninth novel by Orhan Pamuk. The story follows the life of Mevlut, a

boza seller who moved to the city of Istanbul from Anatolia as a young boy. In a novel that reveals the underbelly of the city, the story follows Istanbul's evolution into a corrupt and modern city and the darkness that affects its migrants who struggle to survive in the enveloping heartlessness.

In a novel of epic proportions, Mevlut falls in love with a young girl from an Anatolian village that he visits to attend a wedding. Tricked by his cousin Süleyman, Mevlut mistakes Rayiha for her sister Samiha and writes letters to her seeking her love. He elopes with her to the city and marries her even after recognising the mistaken identity during the flight. Their happy relationship is what sees Mevlut through his everyday struggle in the city to eke out a living selling whatever odd things that will keep his family fed. Through his memories and his spirit to stay hopeful and happy; Orhan Pamuk paints the picture of a city's rise from that of a nourishing provider to a life guzzling force like many other modern cities.

Kırmızı Saçlı Kadın (*The Red-Haired Woman*, 2016) is yet another investigative tale of a murder that happened thirty years ago and narrates the bond that develops between a well-digger and his young apprentice both of whom are trying to find water in a barren town on the outskirts of Istanbul. The middle-aged master who has no family and the young boy whose father disappeared after a politically induced arrest has to trust and depend on each other as they try to find water; using every age-old and mind-boggling technique available in the trade.

Drawing on the Western tale of Oedipus' patricide and the Eastern legend of Rustom's filicide, Pamuk weaves a tale of mystery and intrigue. The protagonist Cam Celik, the young well-digger is obsessed with these tales of Sophocles and Firdowsi, tales from the West and the East that will throw light into the psyche of two

civilizations and the murder of one man. He is forced to take up the well-digging job away from his middle class city existence, to pay for college and develops a filial bond with his master.

Conflict arrives in the form of a red-haired charmer of a woman from a travelling theatre group that the boy meets on his trip to the town to buy supplies. When the young apprentice and the red-haired actress find the attraction to be mutual; the pursuance of his feelings complicates his duties, resulting in a careless accident to the well-digger. The boy runs away to Istanbul fearing the consequences, and pursues an engineering career instead of his dream of being a writer and continues to ponder the mystery surrounding the incident. In a series of improbable coincidences and unbelievable revelations, the novel ends with the narrative voice switching from Cam to the red-haired woman as she unfurls the mystery of a murder.

The Naïve and the Sentimental Novelist is a series of lectures that Pamuk delivered in Harvard University as part of the Norton Lecture series. In the text, Orhan Pamuk takes the readers through his world of reading and writing and how they complement and affect each other. Basing his argument on Friedrich Schiller's notion of naïve writers who write spontaneously and the sentimental writers who ponder and reflect over their stream of writing before transferring them to the page, the book offers a unique insight into the creative and imaginative processes that involves passionately experiencing, reading, and writing a literary work.

Balkon (2018) is a collection of more than 500 photographs of Istanbul by Pamuk and comes with an introduction by the novelist.

Pamuk has announced that he is currently working on the draft of a new novel that will dwell on the dichotomy of the East and the West in contemporary Turkey.

The faded and foggy present, the inconsequential existence as opposed to a glorious past, the diminished awe in the Western eyes, poverty that gnaws at the country's prospects like pestilence and its resigned soul which wallows in the infectious melancholy–this is the quintessential image of his country evolving from Pamuk's texts. As Turkey's best liaison to the world readers, Orhan Pamuk is quite persuasive in making his readers concur with and be enchanted by this re-imagination of the country. I will now look into this imagined community, its inspiration, its constituents, the paths that lead to it, the factors that make the road convoluted, and the demographic that inhabits it, their projected imaginations about their nation, the problems that affect this literary construct and the interpolations of it on the perception of Turkey for its people and for the world all the while trying to make sense of Pamuk's role as the chronicler of his nation.

Chapter Three

Under the Western Eyes: Western (Mis) Conceptions on a Transcontinental Nation

> …until the beginning of the twentieth century, İstanbullus themselves wrote very little about their city. The living, breathing city – its streets, its atmosphere, its smells, the rich variety of its everyday life– is something that only literature can convey and for centuries the only literature our city inspired was penned by Westerners. (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 216)

Istanbul, Constantinople, Byzantium,… the moniker that one uses to call this Turkish city could reveal a lot about one's polemics, a can of worms or a box of confetti depending upon which side of the canal the reference is uttered in. As Pamuk rightly stated in his memoir, *Istanbul: Memories of a City*, Istanbul is a city that has fascinated the rest of the world since the opening of the Silk Route. From the travel narratives of Gustave Flaubert to the murder mysteries of Agatha Christie, Istanbul continued to catch the oriental flights of fancy of the rest of the world. These tales suffered an abrupt break with the founding of the modern Turkish nation that tried to disavow any links to its Ottoman past. Realist novels and novels celebrating nationalism replaced them with the support of the state and the new nationalist. The rise of the Ottoman tales in post-1980 Turkey that Güneli Gün identified as a notable paradigm shift in the nation's literature and the rise and international acclaim of Ferit Orhan Pamuk put Istanbul in the world imagination once again.

Reading Orhan Pamuk, I realised that the writer is attempting to weave not just city narratives; instead he has took upon himself the task of reinstating Turkey to world imagination in the fashion of the Western chroniclers. I investigate this with an

analysis of the reasons behind the erstwhile Western fascination with Istanbul as well as the dearth of Turkish city narratives on Istanbul, the decline in the number of the Western narratives since 1923, and their Orientalist tendencies, the ramifications of these on the Turkish people's perceptions and on the nation's cultural psyche, its repercussions as revealed in Pamuk's texts, and the apparent need for Orhan Pamuk to revive these narratives with his own tales of the city in an attempt to picture Istanbul for the Western eyes and for his own. The polemics of this representation is investigated to learn how it affected his own perception of his people/ city. The analysis will consider Pamuk's selection of the early Western narratives of Turkey in his memoir and the references to them in his novels to understand Pamuk's claims of how these narratives affected the Turkish psyche and how they influenced his representations of the city and its people.

Orhan Pamuk's memoir, *Istanbul: Memories of a City* is the source text of this study. Ziya Gökalp's *The Principles of Turkism* is used to understand the basic tenets of 'Turkishness' and how the pioneers who tried to shape the modern Turkish nation imagined it as/ into existence as Gökalp's text was influential in shaping the notion of 'Turkism' in Kemalist Turkey. Edward Said's observations on Orientalist narratives are used to further analyse these texts and Benedict Anderson's notion of imagined communities is invoked to find out how imagined communities of the Turkish nation had a hand in shaping the Turkish imagination of a new nation. The enquiry finds Pamuk attempting to repair a vacuum created by the decrescence of the Western narratives on Turkey, in renderings that aren't yet emancipated from the trappings of the Orientalist point of view.

The fall of the Ottoman Empire after the defeat in the World War I presented Turkey with a curious predicament. The Empire, that altered the course of history

with the 'conquest' of Constantinople (or the 'fall' of Constantinople depending on the version of history that one is schooled in, as Pamuk observes in *Istanbul*) and kept the Western nations in constant awe of a superior culture or the threat of a ruthless Eastern attack, was in decline. The defeat in WWI found the remnants of an empire, for the first time, under the occupation of Western powers.

Unlike the hundreds of non-European nations struggling against colonial oppression, the Turkish lands are hardly familiar with political conquests from the West –the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt and the Eastern lands did not affect Turkey beyond an invasion of the cultural space. Turkey was already familiar with such cultural infiltrations for a few centuries. Orhan Pamuk's magnum opus, *My Name is Red*, builds its plot and central tension over the influence of Western portraiture on Ottoman miniature painting.

With the fall of the empire, the way forward was shown by Gazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha who led the movement to free the erstwhile Ottoman Empire from the European powers. When Kemal Atatürk ("Father of Turkey") founded modern Turkey in 1923, he imagined it as a country ready to embrace Westernisation and eager to leave its Ottoman/ Eastern past behind.

The following fifty years, till the military coup of 1983, saw a country trying to find a fresh identity as a nation, with a newly minted language, a purged history and the hopes of a place in the list of Western countries. There was yet another change that was running parallel to the evolution towards a modernised nation; the West's declining interest in the fallen empire. When the mysterious land of oriental sultans was reborn as a modern nation, the Western curiosity for its myriad ways (different from "ours") had nothing more to feed on; it was suddenly just another

nation trying to be “like us”. There was also a dearth of writers writing about Turkey as the new national literature was focused on celebrating the folk tradition that was relegated to the villages during Ottoman rule. The architects of the modern Turkish nation had pledged to nurture the ‘authentic’ Turkish tales from Anatolia and displace the Ottoman literature that hogged the litterateurs, the intelligentsia, and the elite, both in Istanbul and in other major cities. The Turkish identity was once again reimagined and everything Ottoman was tied to backward/ traditional/ archaic so that they had no place in the modern nation. Aping the West also meant becoming like them, learning their ways so that ‘we’ can become like ‘them’, so that ‘we’ won’t be left out at the forgotten end of the continent and can fit in the Western part of the world one day.

Ziya Gökalp, in *Türkîülügünesàslarî* (*The Principles of Turkism,* 1968) published in 1920 as a guidebook to the nature of new Turkism, clarifies this mission of creating an authentic Turkish literature befitting a modern nation.

> Turkism believes that our literature, if it is to progress, must be educated in two museums of craftsmanship, namely, folk literature and Western literature. Turkist poets and men of letters must adopt as models, the masterpieces of the people and of the West, for Turkish literature can never become either national or perfected without serving these two periods of apprenticeship. Our literature must go to the people and, at the same time, towards the West. (97)

The Ottoman tales had no place in this nationalistic plan for literature. Turkish literature that followed kept to Gökalp’s guidelines and saw a surge in works of realist fiction and social novels that celebrated the spirit of Anatolia. The method and style adopted by the new nationalistic practitioners of literature was Western but the tales

were about rustic Anatolia. These tales about quaint villages held not much charm as the magical tales of Nizami and Ferdowsi and thus failed to sustain reader interest outside the borders of the nation except at times as representative texts of national literature.

The call to read and adopt the models of Western literature did not include the oriental narratives on Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman times were an era that the Turkish modernists wanted to dissociate themselves from as much as they could, and were dismissed from the nationalist plan for popularization of Western masterpieces. The Ottoman tales about the labyrinthian city were slowly relegated to the old volumes (that the new script and the express purge of anything Ottoman from the cultural sphere as ordered by the new nationalistic drive made alien to the following generations) stowed away in old warehouses and archives that nobody bothered to frequent anymore, other than a student or two of history who fancied old books and old tales and had a lot of time to reinvent themselves and the contemporary memory of the city. They were forgotten from public memory like the Ottoman narratives that Darvinoğlu finds in *The White Castle*. Discarded in the old and forsaken *yali*s, they were forgotten until given a fresh audience now and then by enthusiasts or alternate historians like Koçu who believed in the stories they had to tell.

When the military coup of 1983 opened up the Turkish markets to the world and brought an influx of diverse cultures into the country, Istanbul's public imagination found the Ottoman relics that they were living amidst, once more worth inquiring into. The etchings of Melling, Nerval, Gautier and the travel tales of Goethe and Flaubert reminded them of a colourful past with all its grandeur and glory. They lamented the vibrant city of yore and the dearth of narratives on that city which used to invite patronising eyes of the Western travellers. The struggles of a third world

country and its trials on the way to modernisation could not pique much Western interest. 'The patina of black and white' and the ruins of the past could not have enticed the Orientalist tales if not for the nostalgia of a Turkish writer –fed on the staple diet of the Ottoman splendour of Oriental narratives and the melancholy of a past alienated by a purged history who imagined them into existence.

Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul* does more than talk about the growth of the city's chronicler; it paints vibrant images of a land that churned out tales of mystique and intrigue for centuries. *Istanbul* is a memoir where Orhan Pamuk pays tribute to everything that conspired to make him a writer, and as he is the city's self-appointed chronicler, the pages are filled with images of the legend of Istanbul. As stated in the opening quotation to this chapter, most of these images are, or are inspired from, the Western narratives of the city.

> In the period just after the First World War, when Yahya Kemal and Tanpinar went in search of an image of melancholic 'Ottoman-Turkish' Istanbul – lacking Turkish precedents, they followed the footsteps of Western travellers, wandering around the ruins of the city's poor neighbourhoods. (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 103)

Antoine-Ignace Melling's sketches of Istanbul are devoted an entire chapter in the memoir, whereas the four Turkish writers whom Pamuk credits with shaping his writer's point of view together manage to accrue only a couple of chapters to themselves. Titled, "Melling's Bosphorus", the chapter opens with these lines, "Of all the Western artists who have painted Bosphorus, it's Melling I find the most nuanced and convincing" (55). Melling and his Istanbul paintings reaffirm Pamuk's faith and

pride in the city's glorious past and validate his melancholy for the lost splendour. Pamuk continues,

> I would spend hours studying every corner of those paintings, finding in them what I thought to be Ottoman Istanbul in all its glory…At times when I was most desperate to believe in a glorious past –and those of us overly impressed by Western art and literature do often succumb to this sort of Istanbul chauvinism – I found Melling's engravings consoling. But even as I allow myself to be transported, I am aware that part of what makes Melling's paintings so beautiful is the sad knowledge that what they depict no longer exists. Perhaps I look at these paintings precisely because they do make me sad. (55)

Pamuk reveals a lot more than his appreciation for Melling in these lines. The paintings remind the İstanbullu in him that his country was once powerful. That reminder is enough to keep the nationalistic chauvinism of the oriental in him alive. At the same time it manages to invoke that eternal sadness – the legendary *hüzün* that is Istanbul's special brand of melancholy – of living in a 'has been' city, pushed to the end of the European continent, living in a country that the world (the Western world) doesn't remember as much as it used to.

Let us consider the lacuna of local narratives and the consoling quality of the paintings that Pamuk talks about first before trying to understand the chauvinistic and melancholic elements that the paintings evoke. Pamuk seems to be validating the oriental idea that the paintings of Melling and the travel narratives of Flaubert are necessary even for the İstanbullu to make sense of and be sure of their own city's legendary fame.

The Western claims and the life they described continued to fascinate Yahya Kemal, Ahmed Tanpınar (both admired Nerval according to Pamuk's *Istanbul*) and later, Orhan Pamuk who found Gérard de Nerval's *Voyage en Orient* narratives to be a mix of reality and pure invention. These factional accounts made up for the apparently waning interest in the story Nerval was telling of the Oriental city so that his assurance to his readers that "the city was *'just like 1001 Nights'*" sounded true. While Pamuk is keeping the records right about the misconceptions of an Oriental scholar, he isn't impervious to the pain that the İstanbullu feels at the loss of the old Istanbul (nor is he insulated from making the same mistake as Nerval, imagining Istanbul as a city of the *1001 Nights*.), a pain that the Ottoman Turks would have shared with the modern Turkish people, if they were to witness what happened to their city:

> …I'd imagine what the İstanbullus of his day (of Melling's Ottoman era) would think if they could see what had become of their paradise, and I would feel the same pain as I did at the sight of the gardens, crumbling walls, arches and charred remains of burned-down mansions. To discover that the place in which we have grown up – the centre of our lives, the starting point for everything we have ever done – did not in fact exist a hundred years before our birth, is to feel like a ghost looking back on his life, to shudder in the face of time.
>
> I had a similar sensation at a certain point in the Istanbul section of Gérard de Nerval's *Voyage en Orient*. (Pamuk, *Istanbul 197)*

The walls between the city of the past and the city as painted by an oriental traveller merge in Pamuk's imagination and this tweaked perception of his city shadows his

Istanbul. Even though he is able to identify the temptations of fancy that Nerval fell for in his narratives, it is the presence of the affectation in his own self, that he caught this infectious trait from the Western traveller, which the author is impervious to. Instead, he talks about the pain that a reading of the tales inflicts upon him and his fellow İstanbullus. The pain never ceases and is rekindled every time he beholds a relic of the era or reads a passage about it.

In Gautier, Pamuk finds "a more skilful, organised and fluent" (*Istanbul* 202) account of the city, especially of the city's poor neighbourhoods that Nerval chose to ignore as his vibrant fairytales of the magical city of *1001 Nights* had no place for filth and poverty. Gautier's *Constantinople*, Pamuk finds, is "a fine piece of reportage" (Ibid.) on not just the city's riches, but the poorer streets and neighbourhoods of the city. Gautier is significant on another count –it is in Gautier's strolls through the Byzantine ruins that the traveller found a melancholy stemming from living amidst the ruins of a bygone era, Pamuk quotes Gautier: "'I do not believe there exists anywhere on earth more austere and melancholy than this road which runs for more than three miles between ruins on the one hand and a cemetery on the other.'" (209)

This melancholy that Gautier found in the road to Byzantine ruins, Pamuk finds it engulfing his nation; a melancholy that he calls *hüzün*, a lingering sensibility that the İstanbullu is committed to inflict on their own selves, a melancholy that he characterises as essentially Turkish and celebrates as a way of Turkish existence. Gautier's observations are followed by Pamuk's own realisation of his obsession with this Turkish melancholy and its European roots. He wonders,

> What happiness do I derive from such confirmations of Istanbul's *hüzün?* Why have I devoted so much energy to convey to the reader the melancholy I feel in the city where I've spent my entire life? ...What I have been trying to explain is that the roots of our *hüzün* are European: the concept was first explored, expressed, and poeticised in French (by Gautier, under the influence of his friend Nerval). So why is it that I care so much – about what Gautier and other Westerners have to say about Istanbul?" (210)

This concern of the Western gaze is not just a product of the attempt to Westernise or the East's curiosity of what the other (the West, in this dichotomy) thinks of it. It is rooted in the fear of the loss of every other element that made Turkey a country of interest to Western travellers; it is the Orient's fear of not being approved/ validated anymore by the West. There is also what Said describes as a tradition established by the Orientalist literature on its subjects:

> Most importantly, such texts can *create* not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In times such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it. (Said, 94)

The impression or the weight that these texts produced on Istanbul's psyche is evident in Pamuk's validation of Nerval's orientalised/ exoticized narratives despite his knowledge of this manipulation. The weight they have in the city's collective memory and Istanbul's need to be validated by them colludes to immortalise this presence. Pamuk observes, "My interest in how my city looks to Western eyes is – as for most

İstanbullus – very troubled; like all other Istanbul writers with one eye always on the West, I sometimes suffer in confusion." (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 211) He is not free of this confusion as evidenced by his city narratives. He goes on to state that,

> A city, it may be said, owes its very character to the ways in which it 'goes too far' [in the perception of the outsider], and while an outside observer can take things out of proportion by paying excessive attention to certain details, these are often the same details that come to define that city's nature.
>
> With the drive to Westernise and the concurrent rise of Turkish nationalism, the love-hate relationship with the Western gaze became all the more convoluted. (212)

The nationalistic need to ameliorate the three-pronged identity of the country is a contributory factor to this confusion. When Ziya Gökalp, the philosopher of the Atatürk revolution stated in *The Principals of Turkism* that, "…part of our nation lives in ancient times, part in medieval times and part in modern times….the first dogma of our social catechism must be: I am a member of the Turkish nation, Islamic community and Western civilization" (48), he was in fact acknowledging his country's destiny of being lost in multiple identities, though for him it was a statement about nationalist ideology and the need to be included into the fold of the Western nations.

The other two dimensions that Gökalp recognised as part of his country's identity, that of the Eastern nation and Islamic community combined with the Ottoman past and Byzantine civilization of Turkey that he and his fellow nationalists tried hard to renounce, continued to be a problem for their acceptance into the fold of

Western nations. The series of military coups and the decimation of ethnic population in the country made Turkey's candidature a distant possibility.

The *hüzün* thus is not just the melancholy of living amidst ruins; it is the melancholy that is born from the fading Western interest; rooted in the angst at time wiping out the last remnants of an era that awed the other, better placed perceiver, i.e., the West. The postcolonial wounds that most of the Eastern countries are trying to bounce back from protect them from this melancholy while its very absence makes Turkey susceptible and all the more vulnerable to the said melancholy. The indignation at the decreasing Western interest deteriorates into insurmountable melancholy of the lost glory for Turkey as its evasion of the colonial invasion leaves it with no insulation from it which the anti-colonial sentiments provided the postcolonial nations.

The Turkish people needed to be able to go back to those memories and relive them and make the West remember even if it is through a few printed pages. Pamuk makes this possible through his repertoire of Ottoman tales. He offered them an Orient that they could revisit, come back to; it was a world they were familiar with from the texts of Flaubert and the paintings of Melling. Pamuk offered a slice of the old world to the Turkish readers who were eager to relive the glory of the old and to remind the West once again of Istanbul's heydays in an attempt to be once more the receptacle of appreciation even if it be for the dead and gone days. The West could once more cherish the Old world in Pamuk's texts, and be assured that the balance of power has tilted in their favour, that the fall of Constantinople and the ensuing chaos that the Ottomans unleashed are no more. The fear of the Ottoman threat has been relegated to history and is replaced with the story of that decline. The rising awe of the West in the İstanbullu that they learn from the pages of the Pamukian text is

immensely comforting and once more affirms the superiority of the West over an erstwhile powerful Eastern sultanate. The texts offer yet another journey to the quaint and blessed land of yore reminiscent of the journeys that the Orientalist took to the Old World after the opening of the Suez Canal.

> The Orient therefore alternated in the mind's geography between being an Old World to which one returned, as to Eden or Paradise, there to set up a new version of the old, and being a wholly new place to which one came as Columbus came to America, in order to set up a New World. (Said 58)

Except the geographical distance that decreased after the opening of the Suez Canal, there was no change in the perceived notions of the inhabitants of the Old World. In the case of Turkey, the absence of the colonial wounds left the Oriental Turk without an option to act out the anger at his/her subaltern status and not enough love was lost to write back from the baggage of political oppression. The awe of Oriental gaze continued except when the shame of being looked down upon made the Turkish people/ İstanbullus aware of the 'past'ness of their city's glory. Until then they held on to narratives like these to console and reassure themselves– "To be caught up in the beauties of the city and the Bosphorus is to be reminded of the difference between one's own wretched life and the happy triumphs of the past." (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 51)

Regaling in the "happy triumphs of the past" is what characterises most of Pamuk's fiction. All his novels are set in the past of Turkey, a few even going back to the glorious days of Sultan Suleiman and Sultan Murad of the Ottoman era. Pamuk credits the Western narratives and the rescuers of these narratives like Koçu who imbued him with a sensibility and an appreciation for these narratives. Pamuk is able

to reinvent that very Orient in his texts so that it is reborn in his tales as a place to revisit for the Westerner and the Turkish reader, a place from a distant memory, not completely forgotten. A recovery of a once familiar memory is thus made possible by these retellings. As Said observed about Oriental narratives,

> One tends to stop judging things either as completely novel or as completely well known; a new median category emerges, a category that allows one to see new things, things seen for the first time, as versions of a previously known thing. (58)

The previously known Turkey is the one that is shimmering in the shadows of the abandoned Ottoman relics, the fleeting images and stories that rush though the minds of the natives and the travellers whenever they stumble upon an old Ottoman relic at the turn of the corner. Beyond snippets of oral tales that own the authenticity of a local gossip about a condemned building, Orhan Pamuk is able to invoke tales of intrigue and colour with mesmerising detail that the Oriental fascination for 'the new version' of Ottoman Turkey is reborn once again.

The unending concern with the Western gaze, approbation and validation therefore is a constant problem in Pamuk's texts, be it a memoir of an artist and a city, a political novel about military coups, or a fictional tale of a Venitian slave in Ottoman Turkey.

Nothing can exemplify this obsession better than the discussion on writing a letter to the German newspaper at the Hotel Asia conference in *Snow.* The drafting of a letter to explain what happens in Kars turns into a discussion of what the West thinks about Turkey and its peoples and how the latter will forever be looked down

upon. Blue, the militant leader in *Snow* sums up this sense of constantly being worried about the Western gaze and the perception of shame accompanying this thought,

> …wherever I happened to be walking, there was always a German who stood out from the crowd as an object of fascination for me. The important thing was not what I thought of him, but what I thought *he* might be thinking about *me*. I'd try to see through his eyes and imagine what he might be thinking about my appearance, my clothes, the way I moved, my history, where I had just been and where I was going, who I was. …I grew used to feeling degraded and I came to understand how my brothers felt. Most of the time it's not the Europeans who belittle us (sic). What happens when we look at them is that we belittle ourselves. (202)

Blue's candid statements resonate with the voice of the Kurdish youth who also explains this sense of belittling and shame in the meeting. The young boy talks about how, in order to avoid humiliation at the hands of the Westerner, one may try to prove to them that one thinks exactly like them, "There's no avoiding humiliation except by proving at the first opportunity that you think exactly as they do. But this is impossible, and it can break a man's pride to try." (284)

This innate sense of low esteem and the attempt to overcome it with the presupposition of an imminent failure is a relic of orientalism. Attempts have been made to overcome it, but it seems inescapable. Yet, following the nationalisation drive of Gökalp and others that tried to place Turkey in the fold of Western civilization and the failure of the nation to belong to either sides of the continent, added to the sense of loss and to the existing melancholy of living in the memory of

the past. There was a sense of being relegated to everything that they tried to leave behind, a sense of shame. But the attempts at Westernisation and the need for Western validation that had its roots in the Byzantine ruins, never truly disappeared in Pamuk's Turkey:

> The city into which I was born was poorer, shabbier, and more isolated than it had ever been in its two-thousand-year history. For me it has always been a city of ruins and of end-of-empire melancholy. I've spent my life either battling with this melancholy, or (like all İstanbullus) making it my own. (*Istanbul* 6)

The İstanbullu battles every day with this sense of shame that they inherited at the decline of Ottoman Empire, an overpowering and all-pervasive melancholy which envelops the spirits of Pamuk's characters and contribute to their impending sense of failure.

Pamuk identifies this melancholy in the archetype of the doomed hero in the country's imagination and warps his heroes in that same fashion. Thus, Black and Ka are bound to fail in their pursuits, "…like a hero [of the Turkish films] who is already afflicted with melancholy when the film begins and is so destined to lose 'in life and love'" (*Istanbul* 316). His heroes are people who wallow in self-doubt affected by a national affliction, and are in the pursuit of a deferring happiness that will elude them till their absolute failure. Galip in *Black Book*, Ka in *Snow*, and Black in *My Name is Red* invest in relationships with the evident knowledge that the favour will not be returned in truth.

Pamuk's heroes repeatedly find themselves falling for women who worship their fathers and have themselves fallen for (emotionally/ otherwise) unavailable men;

it is a fight where these men are neither of the competing parties and are bound to be upset whichever way the fight ends. For Shekure, the father she worships forbids her infatuation for Black, now, with a husband missing in battle, a brother-in-law who tries to force himself upon her, and a bevy of admiring young painters at her beck and call, Black is just another suitor –albeit one she can be sure of. Black frees her from endlessly waiting for a husband who won't return. Her father's murder and the murderer's death at Hasan's hands do not improve her affection for Black. Even though Black comes back to Istanbul in pursuit of Shekure's affections, it is the same affections that drove him away from the city of his birth, through twelve years of wandering the desert in search of a face that resembles his childhood love, a face that he is not sure he still remembered. The melancholy of it –the knowledge that the woman in whose name he lost his youth, ditched his city, and was impaired for life doesn't love him enough– haunts him in his sham of a marriage with Shekure. His quest for winning her heart ultimately leaves him with a wife who cannot convince herself to love him thanks to an injury he suffered in the very quest that she demanded off him.

Ka's journey in *Snow* to Kars is a search for a similar mirage, the memory of the girl whom he met in college, a girl whose affections he has no inkling of. In every moment that he spends in Kars, the poet is unsure of her affections and it drives him to betray Blue to the military, an act that frees Ipek from her pressing reason to leave the city with Ka. His sense of melancholic despair and his lingering doubt about her is what undoes his dream of a life with Ipek in Germany and leads later to his killing. Ipek had left her husband and was living with her sister in their father's house without any knowledge of Ka's affections. Once she learned about it, and with the knowledge of her unsuccessful bid for the love of her sister's lover, she finds Ka as a way out of

having to lose to Kadife. The death of the object of her sisters' affections seals Ka's fate, the result of a series of events he unleashed.

It is a fate he could not have escaped as an İstanbullu,

> *Hüzün* rises out of the pain they feel for all that has been lost, but it also compels them to invent new defeats and new ways to express their impoverishment…it also explains why it is their choice to embrace failure, indecision, defeat and poverty so philosophically and with such pride, suggesting that *hüzün* is not the outcome of life's worries and great losses, but their principal cause… (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 93).

His heroes venture out with a surety of failure and end up spelling their own fall, a flaw that proves fatal more than once to his protagonists. Even Pamuk who makes a brief appearance in *Snow* too confides to falling for Ipek and shares in Ka's sense of failure. Yet the failure of an empire and the agony of living in its aftermath have doused their souls so much in melancholy that these characters cannot help pursuing their impending doom.

Galip's impersonation of Celal in *Black Book* is also a futile attempt to be what he is not and what he could have been in Ruya's eyes had he been more like Celal, his foil and cousin. He is more at home in the garb of the other. Galip's search for Ruya is shadowed by his knowledge of her death the same way Rumi is sure of Shams of Tabriz's demise even before he starts in the search for his missing disciple. But both of them refuse to acknowledge it even to their own selves.

My Name is Red has another story of failure running parallel to the hero's doomed love story. It talks about the Sultan's secret book of paintings that he had

commissioned against the advice of his master miniaturist, Osman, and delegated to Enishte Effendi, his competitor. Osman's disapproval is for the portraiture mode of representation that violated the Turkish miniature norms and conflicted with the contemporary notion that realistic and point of view portraiture was blasphemy (according to Islamic edicts). The book is prepared in secret by a selected set of painters who are not privy to its contents as each part of the page is prepared in isolation and under the watchful eyes of Enishte Effendi so that the individual artists do not behold the paintings in whole so that they do not learn of their departure from miniaturist conventions.

The Sultan and Enishte Effendi hold back no expenses or efforts in this endeavour, meant as a present to the ruler of Venice who is expected to be impressed by the grandeur of the book as well as the evident expertise of the miniaturists in their adopted portraiture skills. But as Olive tells the reader (between his moonlighting for Enishte unknown to Master Osman), the pictures will end up as a mockery of both miniature painting and portraiture, for imitating the West in their ways will leave a painter who has been apprenticed in the ways of Eastern miniature style without being a master of neither styles, and with his endeavour rendered a failure in the eyes of both the Eastern and the Western masters of painting. Pamuk is trying to say a thing or two about the national project to imitate the West, through Olive here.

Yet the need for Western approbation drives Enishte Effendi forward and results in the deaths of two of his painters and dismemberment of his beloved nephew. The Sultan's book remains incomplete and is lost in the confusion over a killing in the streets and the ensuing investigation. The book, like the protagonist's quest, is lost. Yet the Ottoman setting gives the loss an added charm, it is not just the loss of a single miniature painting that is mourned, the novelist is able to invoke the memory of

the Turkish miniature style, a loss that Turkey still mourns over. The arrival of the English-made clock is a metaphor for the arrival of the Western interventions, interventions that altered and did away with the Ottoman miniature style among numerous other cultural markers.

This reimagining of Ottoman Turkey and the empire in all its grandeur is made possible by images of the Ottoman glory seen through the Oriental traveller's eyes and preserved in the narratives in currency in and outside Turkey, those narratives that escaped the purging drives of Ottoman life from Turkey by the nationalists. It is their very foreignness that kept them safe from the agencies of Turkish nationalism and hence was available for perusal especially after the diversification of 1983.

The *hüzün*, the unending melancholy evoked over living on the edges of Western civilization, and stemmed from the excruciating pain of being left out – excruciating for being relegated from its power position at the centre into the periphery, as a country stripped off its claim to be the cynosure of all eyes. The fall of the empire brought the power equations back to the European half of the world; the fall of Constantinople became a truism once more instead of the conquest of Istanbul in the palimpsest of a history. Turkey became a nation stashed away from the world memory reappearing when adventurous protagonists took a lonely path through the old empire –as a watered down and momentary reflection of its real parallel– in textual and visual narratives. Their references were the only available Oriental narratives of the twentieth century, until Orhan Pamuk gave it a factional resurrection.

> Still, the melancholy of this dying culture was all around us. Great as the desire to Westernise and modernise may have been, the more

> desperate wish, it seemed, was to be rid of all the bitter memories of the fallen empire.... But as nothing, Western or local, came to fill the void, the great drive to Westernise amounted mostly to the erasure of the past…. (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 27)

It is this erasure that Pamuk strives to undo, to recover a past that was vigilantly purged away from the palimpsest of Turkish history. He does it through narratives that pick up right from where the Oriental chroniclers left off.

Pamuk's narratives –that filled the aporia left by the dearth of Western narratives since the fall of the Empire– had another quality that appealed to the Western readership. The Oriental Ottomans were the fear-invoking Easterners whose wealth and regalia were overwhelming to the Western perceivers. The Ottoman threat that loomed in the East had ended and the element of fear it elicited in Europe was passé. Said clarifies, "The Orient at large, therefore, vacillates between the West's contempt for what is familiar and its shivers of delight in – or fear of – novelty." (59) Pamuk's narratives on the Islamic Sultanate were caught all in its grandeur for their consumption as a memory, as a window into the Oriental majesty, a window into what the other's world was like before they tried to be like "us".

Ferit Orhan Pamuk's fiction is the writer's attempt to emend this lacuna. Orhan Pamuk's Istanbul is a "living, breathing city" rising out of the memory of a vibrant Turkish past, once again conquering the world imagination from the pages of his Turkish chronicles. He made a conversation possible between the memories of a fallen empire and the aspirations of a modern nation – between the polarising charms of Western validation and of holding on to Eastern tradition – he offered clarity to his country's existential dilemma through narratives that celebrated a Turkishness that his

fellow citizens imagined and identified as their own. The melancholic images of Turkey that Orhan Pamuk painted enchanted the world readers and made the nation exuberant in its new-found aura once again as the source of myriad tales – beyond its Armenian problem and the many coups that caught journalistic attention and humanitarian concern – since the heydays of the Ottoman realm.

Göknar in "Orhan Pamuk and the "Ottoman" Theme" observes,

> The motif of the incomplete, failed, or "absent text" of the Pamuk novel, for example, is redeemed by the very text Pamuk has written. Read together, these narratives identify, critique, and subvert the processes of over determination articulated by discourses of orientalism and nationalism. The "Ottoman" theme is none other than this, a process of hermeneutic triangulation.

His texts work not just as an organic volume of selected historical incidents to fill these voids as Göknar points out; they also converge into a body of narratives that celebrate those elements that constitute modern day Turkey. The awe that the Western narratives evoked is now revived by the responses to Pamuk's Istanbul narratives, with all the grandeur and fantasy that Flaubert and Nerval's representations attracted. In Pamuk, his city achieves a glory and glamour that the Nişantaş resident is able to capture for a Western/ Turkish audience, abled by a Western education, and by a pedantic interest in the history and in the alternate historians of the city. The depiction of the shame and the squalor germinating from the remnants of the fallen empire doesn't hurt the Turkish sensibility for the writer shares it with them and transforms it into a glorious legacy albeit a painful one. Wallowing in that shame and misery of

being left out has a purgative quality that prepares the İstanbullu for the affairs of the next day.

For the Western reader, the Turkey of the Orientalist fame is resurrected in Pamuk's Istanbul images, with the otherness and the hegemonic superiority of theirs are safe as evidenced by the pictures of 'the city in black and white'. For the West, the Ottoman lands had meant everything that was Oriental. From travel narratives to crime thrillers, Turkey was an Islamic country that has a difference of political agreement with them yet it remained a gateway to the lands of Asia.

> To the West, Asia had once represented silent distance and alienation; Islam was militant hostility to European Christianity. To overcome such redoubtable constants the Orient needed first to be known, then invaded and possessed, then re-created by scholars, soldiers, and judges who disinterred forgotten languages, histories, races, and cultures in order to posit them – beyond the modern Oriental's ken – as the true classical Orient that could be used to judge and rule the modern Orient. (Said 96)

Pamuk made possible a journey through the classical Orient possible once more through his historical yarns. The Turkey that they left behind as a land of Sultans and Dervish singers and with its essential Orientalist qualities of otherness and mystery got once more alive in his tales. "The unchanging Orient, absolutely different (the reasons change from epoch to epoch) from the West" (96), that the Orientalism imagined according to Said, is verified by Pamuk's Istanbul narratives. What remained was the 'Eastern'ness of the narrator.

Orientalism presupposes an Orient that lacks the power to represent itself:

> The exteriority of the representation is always governed by some version of the truism that if the Orient could represent itself, it would; since it cannot, the representation does the job, for the West, and *faute de mieux*, for the poor Orient. (Said 96)

Orhan Pamuk manages this question of belonging to either side of the Canal with what Bourdieu would consider as a play similar to that between being 'popular' or 'of the people' in his "Uses of the People". In *Istanbul*, he talks about the struggles of writers like Kemal and Tanpınar who struggled with this problem,

> But for those Istanbul writers and poets who are excited by Western culture and wish to engage with the contemporary world, the matter is more complex still. Along the sense of community that *hüzün* brings, they also aspire to the rationalism of Montaigne and to the emotional solitude of Thoreau. (Pamuk 96)

It is a problem that he took head on and managed to be victorious. Pamuk hails from the Nişantaş area of Istanbul peopled by the modern and Westernised Turkish upper class, on the European side of the Bosphorus. The Anatolia of Orhan Kemal is quite another world for the Nişantaş elite as they are to the Anatolians of Latife Tekin's acclaimed novel, *Dear Shameless Death.* He had a Western education and writes in the postmodernist tradition of Western literature. His narratives are haphazard and circumlocuted, while his characters tackle the slippery slope of existential questions trying hard to survive in the quagmire of political unrest and persecution. He is also one of the most enlightened of Turkish novelists about the nation's histories, authorised and alternate.

When *My Name is Red* at once reads as a literary thriller and a chronicle of the rise and fall of miniature painting in Ottoman Turkey, Pamuk becomes more than just another novelist writing in Turkey, he speaks a language intelligible to the Western readers about those lost histories that the İstanbullus yearn to retell and relish in. His texts address the gaps in history that the modernisation drive created and the diversification of 1983 tried to resurrect from the palimpsest of national history, a gap that was inflicted by multiple coups and purges of the past tales. He needed to be identified, by the Turkish readers, as that writer who tells glorious stories that enables them to relive those days of glory and compensate for the failings of the contemporary reality where the past continue to dwarf the present stature of the nation. He is also the writer, for the Western reader, who recreates the Orient that once existed, assures them that it remains unchanged even though it exists only in the cultural memory of Orientalist and Oriental subjects.

Pierre Bourdieu in his "Uses of the People", clarifies this double break in a writer who feels authorised to be talking about or for his people,

> Writers who have come from the dominated regions of the social space…play on their supposed proximity to the people…to convert the stigma into an emblem, by proudly advertising his origins, and who uses 'his' 'people' and his 'feeling for the people' to win a position in the intellectual field…his exaltation of the people expresses less 'the people' than the experience of a double break, both with the 'people'…and with the intellectual world. (152)

This double break makes him 'the writer whom the West listens to when he talks about us' for the Turkish readers and 'the writer from Turkey who tells us about the

nation's need for our validation and fears of being left behind' for the readers outside Turkey. While it assuages the Western fears of an Oriental nation that may be a threat to them, it reassures the Turkish reader that they are insulated from the belittling eyes of the Western chronicler on account of his being one of them, and hence, will be speaking for them. It is this double dissociation that makes him at once the maker and breaker of Orientalist representations, he is a writer nurtured in the Western tradition and at the same time, well-versed in the alternative histories of his country.

This puts him at an advantage to the earlier writers who had the impossible task of struggling to be heard by the West while remaining faithful to the nationalistic drives of the new nation. It enables him to be that writer who addresses the dearth of stories of Ottoman glory and satiate the Turkish reader's need for seeing their city through the colourful lens of Western eyes, however addled those images might have been when rescued from the Orientalist narratives of Flaubert, Gautier, Nerval, and others.

The Western narratives of Turkey had served as windows to the past generations of Turkish readers and writers with the tales of an Istanbul at the zenith of its glory. The dissipation of the Ottoman sultanate and the founding of a new nation saw the production of nationalistic and social novels. The novels of Orhan Kemal and the historical writings of Koçu could not preserve the mystery of the Orient anymore. Though Orhan Kemal's novels like *Memed, My Hawk*, found international acclaim, they told the folk tales of Turkish Anatolia with a mix of social realism and the powerlessness of people against fate. They could not be more than representative novels from Turkey and their international appeal did not go beyond their token status. Though Kemal's failed heroes find resonance in Pamuk, the local flavour of his tales could not entice an international readership despite his success with the

advocates of Turkish nationalism. In Koçu, the thoroughly researched histories were not more than small anecdotes for a Turkish encyclopaedia, unlike the travel narratives of Gautier that wove a tale of the exotic and the exaggerated for the readers. In "Melling's Bosphorus" in *Istanbul*, Pamuk explains how Melling's point of view is different from other Western purveyors of the city's magnificence,

> Melling's is an insider's point of view. But because the İstanbullus of his time did not know how to paint themselves or their city –indeed had no interest in doing so– …Because he saw the city like an İstanbullu, but painted it like a clear-eyed Westerner, Melling's Istanbul is …a place of sublime beauty. (67)

It is this sublime beauty that Pamuk strives for in his Istanbul narratives. His narratives observe this same aesthetic principle. He is seeing the city like an İstanbullu, with all the ownership and pain of living in the memories of a fallen empire; he does that in the language of the Westerner, 'like a clear-eyed Westerner" (Ibid.). Orhan Pamuk's novels not just address and repair the void left in the historical narrative, they bring to life the richness and variety of the city; a feat not many Turkish writers have attempted, and none as victoriously as this self-appointed 'ambassador of Turkey' to the world.

The dearth and lack of access to the Western narratives post 1923, and the fascination with everything Ottoman that Göknar identified in the post 1983 Turkey, validated this vacuum. Pamuk addressed it with his novels that celebrate the heydays of the city and with a memoir that pays tribute to the Istanbul of the Western narratives. He brings to life that elusive past that is oddly consoling to the writer when

contemporary reality is difficult to confront and his fellow İstanbullus need "desperate(ly) to believe in a glorious past" (55).

They are unabashedly perceived through a Western point of view, a quality that found him success with readers outside Turkey as well. They don't mix high praise with the scathing and hurting traits of Flaubert's representations yet aren't free of the Orientalist trappings that both Melling and Pamuk get caught in. Pamuk believed that Melling painted Istanbul "because the İstanbullus of his time did not know how to paint themselves or their city –indeed had no interest in doing so", so did every Oriental traveller that wrote about the lands. Pamuk not just revives tales about the Ottoman city, he manages to revive the Oriental sensibility and once again the world is gleaned away from the contemporary Turkish reality and is willingly caught in this enchanting world of Oriental charm.

Chapter Four

Mending a Patchwork Quilt: Attending to the Fissures and Appendages in the Fabric of Turkish History

> Historians are professionally obliged not to get it [history] wrong, or at least to make an effort not to….unless the historian leaves his convictions behind when entering the library or the study. Some nationalist historians have been unable to do so. (Hobsbawm 12-13)

For the historians hailing from a country whose history has seen as many replacements as its ruling heads, getting 'the' history may be essentially problematic, especially when 'the' history may be the most ephemeral thing that they encounter in their nation. From Byzantium to Istanbul, and from Greek to contemporary modern, Turkey's experiments with its identity never seem to cease. This has left its history nothing short of a palimpsest where even the newest entries get lost amidst the old doodles. So, when a novelist endeavours to revive a few of these historical events to remind his folks (and the outsiders) of the glory that was Istanbul, it raises a pertinent question. The tales he uses to fill in a few gaps in the yarn, left there by changing regimes and authorized historians, and tiles he re-lays in the mosaic of Turkish history managed by the West and the East alike; they seem indistinguishable from the authorized histories of the nation, the ones blessed by the stamp of authority of the governing bodies.

How easy is it to fix a patchwork quilt? Does the confluence of multicolour fabric give it a sophisticated yet indistinguishable-but-very-much-there pattern that adding any stray piece and calling it mended may not seem too lazy? Or are the sewn-on pieces so random that anything will pass on for that square of torn cloth that needs

replacing which makes your search for the perfect piece a non-existing and by that reason unnecessary problem? Turkish history and Pamuk's retelling of it raised this doubt in me.

Once I surmount the problems of a non-Turkish reader and wade through the multiple possibilities of a historical tale, the almost unheard versions and curious snippets of addendums and additions to the palimpsest left by the constant erasures of different regimes and reigns; the Orientalist renderings of the apparent happenings in the mysterious land of Byzantium/ Constantinople and their Turkish rejoinders; and the closely knit pattern of history and the invented tales that Pamuk very dexterously employs in his novels, discerning the true tales of history from the not so authentic ones feels like unravelling the knotted strands of a ball of yarn. The amalgamation of opposing traditions and the resultant confusion bordering on chaos is characteristic of Pamuk's narratives. Nicholas Wroe in "Occidental Hero" quoted Pamuk's translator, Maureen Freely observing,

> (Orhan Pamuk's) modernist/ postmodernist games involve using elements from opposing traditions that, when seen together, defy reason and make a 'grand narrative' impossible, they are perhaps less difficult for a modern Turkish reader to understand in that this is their daily experience – living in a part-eastern, part-western culture that changes rapidly – and there is never time to sit back and ask how it all adds up.

This is not essentially the problem of the non-Turkish reader. In his apparently haphazard narratives, the novelist amalgamates history and invented stories with such masterly craft that if they were horse paintings that he scrutinized to out a killer, *My*

Name is Red's Black would have had a hard time distinguishing their true creators. Güneli Gün has expressed the same view in "The Turks are Coming: Deciphering Orhan Pamuk's *Black Book*",

> At first glance one might even think the author invented the Hurufi Book of Onomancy in the interests of postmodern high jinks. But no, Hurufism is for real and subject to serious scholarship, even today, involving divination by the letters "written in faces"' (60).

Gün credits this to Pamuk's being "an obsessive researcher into odd historical quirks, which come out of the past in recognizable embroidered satin tatters that he works into the crazy quilt called the postmodern novel" (Ibid.).

But I would like to disagree with the image of the crazy postmodern quilt that Gün suggests and would argue that it is a fine fabric that Pamuk manages to put together; endlessly captivating for the pieces patched together and highly functional for the purposes that Pamuk employs it for. This palimpsestic patchwork helps him question 'the' history sanctioned by those in power, dismiss the imaginations of the propagandists of erstwhile regimes, subvert the Western interpretations and representations of what transpired in his country, revive the purged and ironed out tales that are or were too shameful to the vigilante nationalist, give visibility to relegated and discarded chapters of history and peoples' lived experiences, unearth the curious tales of the city that was too funny or strange to make it into authentic and serious histories; all the while sending his reader in a postmodernist quest for 'a' version that fits their notion of verity in an era of post-truth politics. This chapter also analyses the games Pamuk plays with notions of truth and history in his texts and how he goes about these games for their achieved result.

"Getting its history wrong is part of being a nation", Hobsbawm quotes Renan in the "Introduction" to *Nations and Nationalism* (12). Orhan Pamuk is trying to get some of it right through his texts. Unlike the professional historians, unlike his historian brother Şevket Pamuk, Pamuk is not bound by the need to supplement his tales of history with proof and to single out his invented tales from them, instead his art lied in making them indistinguishable and using them to tell the uncomfortable and silenced voices from the margins and oblivion of purged histories and censored truths.

The Armenian problem is a pet topic of nationalism studies. Hobsbawm explains the sophistry of the problem in *Nations and Nationalism*,

> Transcaucasian nationalism (if such a term is not too strong for the grassroots anti-Armenian resentment of the Azeri Turks) had not been a serious political issue before 1917; the Armenians were, for obvious reasons, worried about Turkey rather than Moscow…the recovery of Transcaucasia eliminated local nationalisms, though – since it was achieved partly through negotiations with Kemalist Turkey – it left a few sensitive issues for future nationalist resentment, notably the problem of the Armenian enclave of Mountain Karabakh in Azerbaijan. (165)

Unlike the Greeks, the Armenian population in Turkey didn't have a place to go back to leaving behind their Anatolian livelihoods. The notion of their nation had moved away from territorial to that of the mind, another imagined national community without a country to be unified inside. Hobsbawm further explains the Armenian contemporary situation in a note:

> The Armenians illustrate the difficulties of tying nationality to territory. The present Republic of Armenia (with Yerevan as its capital) had not been of particular significance to that unhappy people before 1914. 'Armenia' was primarily in Turkey. The Russian Armenians were both a rural transcaucasian people, and a substantial urban population – probably the majority of the population in Tbilisi and Baku – as well as a large national and international diaspora. 'Armenia', one might say, was what was left when Armenians had been exterminated or expelled from everywhere else." (165)

It is these people that were driven out of and killed off in Turkey in the nationalistic purging of everything 'non-Turkish'. When modern Turkey invented a new language and identity, the problem of territorial domination and the identification of the other resulted in something that Pamuk equates to the ethnic cleansings of the Native Americans and that of the Holocaust.

Pamuk extensively refers to the Armenian deaths in *Snow*. Ka, his protagonist encounters the relics of Armenian and other minority existences in the Anatolian city of Kars,

> As he gazed at the grand old buildings on either side, admiring their handsome doors, their generously proportioned eaves, their beautiful friezes, and their dignified but time-worn facades, Ka had a strong sense of the people (Armenians who traded in Tiflis? Ottoman pashas who collected taxes from the dairies?) Gone now were all the Armenians, Russians, Ottomans and early republican Turks who had

> made this city a modest centre of civilization; and since no one had come to replace them, the streets were deserted. (*Snow* 135)

Pamuk peppers his tale of the Kurdish killings with an equally unmentionable topic of the killing of the Armenians and makes the truth of it a veritable reality of Turkish everyday life, a reality that stares the populace in the face through the remnants left by the killed and of those who ran away for their dear lives. He does it without much ado and makes it part of the tapestry of the stage that is set for the tale of the military persecution of the Kurdish people of Kars. Making these relics just another part of the streetscape, and casually mentioning the museum that surprises visitors with its commemoration of the Turkish dead in the Armenian attacks, Pamuk at once gives it undeniable and common place verity. They are as real as the snow that falls in Kars and the barking dogs that are characteristic of Turkish streets; these Armenian relics and references to the "tribal wars" are the elements of reality that anchors in the realism of his tale of Kars.

> Kars was an important station on the trade route to Georgia, Tabriz and the Caucuses; and being on the border between two defunct empires, the Ottoman and the Russian….There had been a large Armenian community; it was now gone, but its thousand year old churches still stood in their splendour. …There were Greeks with roots going to the Byzantine and Pontus periods. There were also Georgians and Kurds and Circassians from various tribes. …After endless wars, rebellions, massacres and atrocities, the city was occupied alternately by Armenian and Russian armies; and even, briefly, by the British. (*Snow* 19-20)

The references to abandoned Armenian churches and buildings or stray references to Armenian individuals of yore, their irremovable presence in the landscape and the cultural memory remind the reader of the terrible truth of the Armenian killings and how a nation purged itself of the ethnic minorities through violence and fear.

It is in the same chapter of *Snow* that Pamuk introduces the readers to the practice of writing history first and making it happen next. The notion of journalistic invention and imagination that is later perceived as historical truth is revealed to Ka when he picks up a copy of the next day's *Border City Gazette* which recounts (predicts rather) his recital of a poem called "Snow" at the theatre,

> 'I don't have a poem called "Snow", and I'm not going to the theatre this evening. Your newspaper will look like it's made a mistake.'
>
> 'Don't be so sure. There are those who despise us for writing the news before it happens; they fear us not because we are journalists but because we can predict the future. You should see how amazed they are when things turn out exactly as we've written them. And quite a few things do happen only because we've written them up first. This is what modern journalism is all about. I know you won't want to stand in the way of our being modern – you don't want to break our hearts and that is why I am sure you will write a poem called "Snow", and then come to the theatre to read it.' (29-30)

As it is difficult for the local paper to make available the next day's edition to the affluent subscribers in Istanbul on time (people from Kars who moved to the city but likes to keep in touch with things back home), the proprietor prints the paper much earlier than usual. He often scripts the outcomes of a few events like scheduled

performances so that his city readers can read about it the same day as their Kars counterparts. This is an accepted practice in Kars and the townspeople accommodate the falsity of the paper's version of events even if it varies with what they experienced firsthand. They are in on this duplicity as they are aware of the limitations of a small town newspaper owner. The trouble with the practice is that the invented events get preserved for posterity in the pages of the paper. Through Serdar Bey and his odd practice, Pamuk is able to remind his readers of the interventions that are part and parcel of texts that claim authenticity. Dispelling all notions of truth and invented truth, he enlightens the reader about orchestrated events of history, the fictional quality of the printed and represented truth, exemplifies how power manipulates individual actors into submission, the flaw of his protagonist who is open to suggestion and to being pushed over, and the two important plot elements that underlines that history is never what appears: that of Sunay's coup and his murder in the hands of Kadife that Serdar Bey could not predict and will not be printed and most important of all the fatal reading of the poem that Ka's toeing of the line makes him recite which sets the stone rolling for Ka's murder.

Later, Pamuk enters the narrative of the novel as the now dead Ka's friend, trying to recover the latter's lost poems and to tell his friend's story. His confession that Ka is the first person that he revealed his plans to write *The Museum of Innocence* is another such anchoring of the fictional tale to reality. Inserting himself into the narrative and meeting those fictional individuals (going so far as to fall for the charms of one of them *a la* Pirandello), Pamuk not only drives home the truth of Kurdish killings, he also manages to blur the distinction between creative imagination and historical tales.

By establishing himself as the protagonist's peer, and as someone who is hardly dissimilar in the world view and upbringing, Pamuk is able to appropriate Ka's experiences as his own, or rather the novelist is able to reaffirm the authenticity and verity of what happens in Kars, is able to tie it to the realm of real lived experience of a coup and its aftermath. The Kurdish massacres are detailed with all the horror and blood curling images that bring out the innate inhumanness of an ethnic persecution. The gag orders and silences surrounding the state sanctioned and/ or mass killings, and the persecution that a violation of it entails is spelled out vividly in the political discussions of Hotel Asia meeting in *Snow*,

> Then, in the course of his long speech, about the Crusades, the Holocaust, the American massacre of the Indians and the French massacre of the Algerian Muslims, a defeatist in the crowd slyly asked, 'And what happened to the millions of Armenians who once lived all across Anatolia, including Kars? Feeling pity for this man, the informer-secretary did not write down his name. (286)

By raising the Armenian question immediately after the reference to genocides from different parts of the world, and mentioning the pity that even the police informer feels towards the questioner, Pamuk declares it a genocide and broaches on the state imposed silence around it and the threat of persecution attached with it; all that without explicitly stating it so. Pamuk has scattered enough bread crumbs about the Armenian killings in *Snow* and *Istanbul* for the discerning reader to glean the reality of this version of history. *The Border City Gazette*'s observation that the news about the Armenian killings should have been buried a long time ago as well as the observations about Istanbul population in his memoir are pointers to the truth of the matter, they state the obvious without appearing to state them:

> At the beginning of the twentieth century, only half of the city's population was Muslim…a row of houses abandoned by Greeks, Armenians and Jews as a nationalist state bore down on the minorities…and that is why more Greeks have left Istanbul over the past fifty years than in the fifty years following 1453 [the conquest/ fall of Constantinople]. (*Istanbul* 157)

It shields him from the kind of outrage that followed his interview to a German newspaper about the Armenian massacre that lead to a case being filed against him for denigrating Turkishness, an out of the court settlement, and a public apology.

The inherent distrust of history is a device that Pamuk uses in his novels. This distrust is discernible in the Preface of *The White Castle* where the history enthusiast Faruk Darvinoğlu tries to pit 'historical' value of a recovered Ottoman text against the 'realism' he sensed in it:

> My distrust of history then was still strong, and I wanted to concentrate on the story for its own sake, rather than on the manuscript's scientific, cultural, anthropological, or 'historical' value. …When I consulted the basic sources of that period, I saw rightly away that some events described in the story bore little resemblance to fact: for example, I confirmed that at one point during the five years Koprulu served as Grand Vizier a great fire had ravaged Istanbul, but there was no evidence at all of an outbreak of disease worth recording, let alone a widespread plague like the one in the book. …The names of imperial astrologers did not match those in the public records, but since I thought discrepancy had a special place in the story I didn't dwell upon

> it. On the other hand, our 'knowledge' of history generally verified the events in the book. Sometimes I saw this 'realism' even in small details…. (1-2)

The disparity between the official records and what 'we' know to have happened and appealing to the latter suggests to the Turkish readers that the palimpsest that is Turkish official history (thanks to re-inscriptions) and what actually happened are two different things. The narrator could not have chosen a better trick to win the faith of the reader in his version of events.

This curious preference for the realism of minute details as opposed to the grand narrative of authentic history permeates all Pamukian texts, and is indeed what enables Pamuk to make invented tales/ invented histories indistinguishable from authorised histories endorsed by the nation. The casual and irreverent attitude to history is not just a postmodern narrative trick; it is deeply rooted in a country where authorised histories bear as much resemblance to reality as much as local legends. The trope of the unreliable narrator that is integral to the plot of *My Name is Red* is a tool to mock the unreliability of history. In *The White Castle*, Pamuk has the initial narrator, Darvinoğlu adopt an absurd method of retelling the Ottoman tale of "The Quilter's Stepson",

> My readers will see that I nourished no pretentions to style while revising the book into contemporary Turkish: after reading a couple of sentences from the manuscript I kept on one table, I'd go to another table in the other room where I kept my papers and try to narrate in today's idiom the sense of what remained in my mind. (3)

What is lost is not just lost in translation from Ottoman to contemporary Turkish. The irony and/or sarcasm of this statement deepens when one considers that Ottoman Turkish was almost a foreign language to the contemporary Turkish population who were schooled in the purged nationalistic language of modern Turkey that removed words with Arabic, Greek and Persian roots from its lexicon and replaced the Arabic script with a Latin one. The contemporary readers' access to Ottoman texts was severed away and their windows to the grand old days of yore were limited translations similar to Darvinoğlu's.

Darvinoğlu is not just a plot device for Pamuk; he is Pamuk's statement against the state's delinking of the people from their history as well as a dig at the claims of verity of the state-endorsed histories. The anger that the novelist genuinely feels against the state-orchestrated rewriting of the past is as political as the stand that he takes against ethnic persecutions in *Snow*. His novels don't just fill the voids left by the Orientalist travel narratives; they also function as the bridge between Ottoman history and Turkey's young population brought up in the conventions of a new language and a selectively retold and/or purged history. Jale Parla explains the national and historical significance of the language purge,

> …what was intended by the language reform went beyond mere linguistic purification. It sought to obliterate a recent past too complicated, complex, and heterogeneous to deal with and evoke a distant past whose glorious resurrection would be achieved by the reclamation of the lost tongue….So, on the one hand, there was this attempt at dehistoricizing or ahistorisizing history and, on the other hand, a specific, intentional historicizing, which entailed a spatiotemporal invasion in the notion of a nation – with its geopolitical

> mapping, collective memories of heroic deeds, membership in a superior "race", possession of an *Urprache* or a *Grundsprache*, and construction of a national linguistics. In short, it entailed the usual procedures of nation building…." (Parla 30)

Literary production was most hurt because of the language reforms, with novelists like Tanpınar, Kemal, Atay and later, Tekin and Pamuk facing brickbats for their affinity for the old language. Pamuk's subversions of histories and haphazard narratives were thus statements against a nation that stole its people of their past and of the language in which they could have expressed their misery of it. Every Pamukian text that casts doubts about received versions of history and subverts the national narrative about silenced histories is a protest, and a political stand against persecution in any name/ form.

The Black Book is a celebration of alternate and local histories. Celal, the novel's celebrated columnist doubles as Pamuk's mouthpiece to tell the lesser known tales of Turkey. The story about the *Hurufî Book of Onomancy*, which even the Turkish writer Güneli Gün admitted to mistaking for an invented detail, is an example. The novel advocates the significance of cultural memory and revives the often relegated, existing-but-silenced, and subaltern tales of the past as in the case of the above example or in that of Rumi's tale about Shams.

The iconic love poet, who eclipsed the popularity of Nizami, with his newfound popularity with the millennials is a favourite with authors in and outside Turkey. Rumi is a recurring figure in popular culture –Elif Şafak's bestseller, *Forty Rules of Love* also dealt with the love poet and his personal life.

Pamuk's Rumi in *The Black Book* is searching for his disciple, friend and son-in-law, Shamz of Tabriz. He searches all of Turkey for Shams and ends up finding his rotting body in his own well. Pamuk does not offer any straightforward answers about the death. Instead, makes his reader find the Easter eggs from the narrative, a game that he repeats in the case of the missing Celal. It is in fact the crumbs that he scatters in the narrative about Sham's life that makes the reader consider the possibilities regarding what actually happened to Celal. The history of the Dervish culture, the persecution that the community faced since the days of the Ottoman realm, and the homosexual orientation of many of the members of the sect, and Rumi's enthusiastic adulation for Shamz, are the subtexts that point to the possibility of Rumi falling for a much promising young talent and the mixed pulls of Shamz' increasing popularity and the latter's devotion to Rumi's daughter (an alliance that Rumi himself brokered to keep the young Derwish around) making him snub out the young poet's life in his own well.

An urban legend that was eclipsed in the popularity of Rumi and the mystery that explains the tragic end of a promising Sufi poet competes for legitimacy among similar tales that Pamuk unearthed by poring over the lesser known texts. These are tales that were stolen from the Turkish cultural memory through the language reforms that severed away the future generation's access to Turkish past. The role Pamuk chooses to play is that of an interpreter who lacks the credentials of the professionals of conventional history and is happy to be not limited by the burden of proof and the accusations of subverting accepted histories. He doesn't just attempt to subvert the histories of the nation; he is subverting the nation's very notions of history when Hurufism is found to be an actual religion, it extends a hue of legitimacy to many other tales including that of the underground tunnels of Istanbul.

Istanbul presents a singular case of retold history where the city is born out of a writer's memory. From the memory of a boy growing up stumbling on the relics of a city, a writer recalls how the city and he ended up becoming what they are now. From an account of letters exchanged between Hatice Sultan, Selim III's sister and Melling, during his brief stint as her architect, we learn about their using the Latin script to communicate centuries before the modern Turkish nation adopted it as the official script. Then Pamuk goes on to tell the readers about Melling's falling out of favour with Hatice Sultan and the troubled days that he endured in Turkey due to an anti-French sentiment during the Napoleonic wars. Then the narrative moves forward to apparently trivial historical facts like 'civilizing mission' of the signs in the parks and public places in Turkey, offering quirky snippets of unconventional history.

Pamuk wades through the city's memory with the innocence and observation skills of a child who perceives everything and reports with the unbiased outlook of the young. He broaches on topics of god, religion, and the ethnic killings with the voice of a young boy and then switches over to the conspicuous logic and maturity of a master storyteller to paint the city in nostalgic grandeur.

The switch is seemingly natural as the kaleidoscope of the city is arranged around his memories that progress from that of a young child to that of an aspiring writer and an accomplished novelist of the day. For example, the chapter titled, "Conquest or Decline? The Turkification of Constantinople" is a statement about the history of state-backed ethnic persecutions in the city seen through the eyes of a child who loved clinging onto his mother's fingers on her trips to the Greek patisseries and cloth shops and tried imitating their unfamiliar language (to him) through adorable childish babble. It then shifts to the voice of the politically conscious writer, who talks about the Turkish confusion regarding how to term the change of power in 1453

Istanbul. He mentions his wife being accused of 'nationalism' by her professor when she uses the word 'conquest' in an exam to refer to what is clearly the 'fall' of Constantinople to the Western perceiver. Pamuk observes, "Or perhaps she saw it neither as a 'fall' or a 'conquest' and felt more like an unlikely hostage caught between two worlds that offered no choice but to be Muslim or Christian." (156)

After discussing the politics of the term and the geopolitical ramifications of the reduced number of Greek and Armenian population in the Istanbul demographic, he gives the reader an account of the riots and lynching that followed WW II. This coupled with his childhood memory of watching the panic of his uncles when the angry mobs roamed up and down their streets during the riots, leaves no one in doubt about the horrors the minorities faced and the politics that perpetrated those riots.

A transcontinental nation with its Janus heads turned to the past and the future, Turkey doubles itself as a museum hiding relics and memories under the asphalt covered streets and in the faded colours of the Bosphorus *yali*s. Pamuk muses how an Istanbul resident giving a simple direction may sound like, "Go past Ibrahim Pasha's hamam. On your right, looking out over the ruin you've just passed (the hamam), you'll see a dilapidated house." (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 91) The coexistence of the present and the past in the nation can be equated to the museum houses that Pamuk says the people of Nişantaş lived in. For a cosmopolitan class that celebrated its modern and westernised legacy, Pamuk described the families filling their houses in the fashion of their imagined perception of the Western homes. With tomes of encyclopaedias and leather bound volumes lining the shelves, the ceramic figurines and doilies adorning the mantelpiece and table tops, the unused pianoforte taking up a sizable portion of the sitting room and the television sets to which the couches were turned toward, Pamuk found the Westernised neighbourhoods living in what he calls 'museum

houses', a term that could be better understood in the light of *The Museum of Innocence* that celebrates a failed love and the 1980s Turkish life.

The opening of the markets in 1983 and the flooding of Western goods and cultural products accentuated the Westernisation dreams of the Turkish elite and middle classes. The NATO membership furthered Turkey's need to belong to the Western side of Bosphorus and to leave behind the Eastern roots once more since the founding of modern Turkey in 1923. Pamuk's preference for the era and the modernisation attempts that happened during the period are evident in the fictional and actual museums he built in commemoration. *The Museum of Innocence*, the book, not only tells the story of a liberal Turkey but also doubles as a guidebook to the museum of the same name.

This is another instance of history that transcends the confines of the printed word. Weaving the narrative of Kemal's doomed to fail love for his elusive object of affection, Füsun, the novel works as a curator's handbook to the urban Turkish life of the 1980s. From the 4213 cigarette stubs, the empty cologne bottles, to the match-boxes to the dog figurines, the museum in print and its spatial reality pay homage to an age when Turkey attempted to come out of the nationalistic fervour and ethnic commotions and the resultant gag orders on the press and the public. An age that saw the constant march of writers, journalists and activists to the state owned penitentiaries on charges of denigrating nationalism and Turkishness, the ideals that the early Kemalists and nationalists like Ziya Gökalp stirred up through their invention of the ideals of Turkism.

It will be curious to note that Gökalp mentions the setting up of a "cultural museum" apart from what he calls the "civic museum" in Topkapi Palace. Gökalp's museum "of our nation's contemporary life" would exhibit,

> The screens, carpets, shawls, silk textiles, antique jewellery and iron works, tiles, calligraphic inscriptions, illuminated books, beautifully copied Qurans, coins that document our national history, etc., etc., which are living testaments of the aesthetic genius of the Turkish people and which are being removed piece by piece from old Turkish homes fallen on hard times and sold in the bazaars…. (66)

Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence* is indeed a cultural museum as envisioned by Gökalp, but instead pays homage to the Westernised and secular ideal of Turkey, apparently a Turkey that the novelist would like to freeze in time or see actualised. It is homage to an age that broke free of the limitations of vigilante nationalism, an era when the markets opened up; a cultural change that embraced the West and the modernity that the West represented for the Turkish populace. I would say that it is Pamuk's answer to Gökalp's plea for a museum that celebrates Turkism/ Turkishness, a modern nation of free speech and progress as envisioned in the spirit of modern Turkish nation, "For museums, and the museumizing imagination, are both profoundly political. …The present proliferation of museums around Southeast Asia suggests a general process of political inheriting at work." (Anderson 178)

The 1980s Turkey is how Pamuk wanted the future generations to remember modern Turkey, especially when Turkey is metamorphosing into a nation that is alien to the Nişantaş writer, a cause that could explain the laborious task of setting up an

actual museum and acting as its primary curator that Nobel Laureate took upon himself.

In a Reuters interview on the publication of *The Red-Haired Woman*, an interview where he broached on the subject of free speech in Turkey, Pamuk was asked whether he thinks if Turkey is becoming too Westernised. Pamuk replied,

> The lack of free speech is so grave that we definitely need to be more friendly (sic) with the West and Europe. I am not worried about too much Westernisation, especially in these days when government is trying to push us away from Western values.

One could safely say Pamuk's ideal of Turkishness invariably differs from that of Gökalp and finds actualisation in the Turkey of the 1980s. As history adopts and morphs into many avatars to survive the constant erasure, Pamuk could not have found a better alternative to help him preserve the everyday cultural memory than the safety of a museum.

My Name is Red is a comprehensive study of the history of Turkish miniature painting; it is just cleverly hidden in the framework of a gripping murder investigation in eighteen narratives. Trying to detect the unreliable narrative of the murderer whose double narratives (as the 'Murderer' and as a miniaturist) question the reliability of all the tales, the reader learns about the painters who prayed for blindness and found pride in producing accurate and exact imitations of their masters' works. From its Mongolian beginnings to its end with the popularity of Western portraiture, Pamuk makes his readers pay undivided attention to lessons in the history of Turkish miniature paintings in their eagerness to find a chameleonic murderer.

The ramifications of geopolitical troubles is highlighted in a resolution that finds the murder to be a product of the East-West problem that Turkey grappled with since the Roman era, a perennial question that ended the legacy of the tradition of miniature painting. One learns that the East-West problem in Turkey is not just a geopolitical question but is evidently tied to questions of nationalism, religion and identity. It is an essentially problematic sentiment when the dogma of the nation's social catechism is defined thus, "I am a member of the Turkish nation, the Islamic community and Western civilization." (Gökalp 48) On how each of these facets is explained by the contemporary interpreters in power decides the fate of those who favour one of these tenets over the other.

Pamuk's love affair with history and his resolve for the revival of the lost and the relegated tales can be traced back to the palimpsestic quality of his nation's history. If the aporia of a cleansed and purged history and the delinking of his nation from its past were a clear impetus for the retelling of his Ottoman tales while the gap that was felt with the decreased interest in the erstwhile Oriental magic land did create a need in him to supplement the void though grand narratives of Istanbul. Another inspiration that Pamuk has hinted at in his early interviews is the growing up with a brother who became a respected Turkish historian. Like his fascination with the imaginary other this too had its roots in his highly competitive childhood in the company of his elder brother, Şevket Pamuk, now an accomplished Ottoman historian.

Pamuk's admiration for Reşat Ekrem Koçu, the Turkish cultural historian and encyclopaedist is a contributing factor; Koçu's eye for the curious is reflected in Pamuk's retellings. From the story of the Turkish acrobat who crossed the Golden Horn on tightened ropes and the tales of Istanbul's torturers and executioners that

thrilled the travellers from the West, Koçu had an eye for detail for the unfamiliar and the unheard. The passion with which Koçu unearthed his tales from old newspapers and the racy tales of Ahmet Rasim, is reflected in the retellings of Pamuk also.

In the Preface to *The White Castle*–Pamuk's first international success–an expelled student from the University who aspires now to put together an encyclopaedia is the one who chances upon the tale of the East West doppelganger. His expulsion and his aspiration are characteristics that he shares with Pamuk's melancholic and failed historian – dearer all the more to the novelist for his failure – Reşat Ekrem Koçu. Like Koçu, Darwinoglu finds joy in historical anecdotes that are lesser known, untold, or omitted from the authentic and state sanctioned versions of history.

The Ottoman text that Darvinoğlu unearths, the myriad tales of Turkish history of hidden tunnels under the city and the divination power of the Derwishes in Celal's columns, the alternate version of Shams of Tabriz and Rumi's love affair, the miniaturists and their growth and fall, the story of the first clock that reached Ottoman Istanbul, the Anatolian disappearances and the Kurdish massacres, the churches of Anatolia, the dog figurines and old film halls of the 1980s, the fine difference between the hoarders and collectors of Turkey, the alleys and shanties that hide the underbelly of Istanbul, the magical tales of Shohrab and Rustom and of Shirin, with the black and white photographs of the city and the writer, the all-permeating *hüzün* that stems from the agony of a fallen empire, the cobblestone streets disappearing under the layers of asphalt, the *yali*s of Bosphorus, the etchings and tales of Nerval; of Flaubert; of Goethe and Melling, the mysteries of the blue waters of Bosphorus, the gossip columns, the slogans and advices painted on the walls of the city, the riots that changed the demographic of the city, the fire-ravaged Ottoman buildings and the

deserted Derwish lodges, the anecdotes of the folks who fell in love with the city (local and foreign), the ever resilient dogs with their grey furs – unconventional, funny, and unbelievable – unfurl the mysteries and histories of a city and nation that fill up the silences and the missing days of the authentic historic tales.

As he mentioned to Fernanda Eberstadt in "Bestseller of Byzantium", he unearths his histories from the most unseemly places, "To search out this civilization in broken walls, in broken faces, became my highest challenge". If Koçu preserved the nation's past in *The Istanbul Encyclopaedia*, Pamuk recovers the erased histories and immortalises them through his hugely popular postmodern narratives. He doesn't just leave behind his convictions in the library as Hobsbawm needed the historians to do; he lets his readers to unravel the labyrinth of alternate histories that he leaves in his texts and their subtexts. Pamuk lets the reader ponder, consider and choose between 'historical value' and 'realism' of a narrative from the labyrinthine yarns of Faruk Darvinoğlu, Reşat Ekrem Koçu and of Orhan Pamuk –that is, if a palimpsest can have 'a' version.

Chapter Five

A House of Mirrors: The Self, the Other and the Outsider in Orhan Pamuk's Turkey

> All states are today officially 'nations', all political agitations are apt to be against foreigners, whom practically all states harry and seek to keep out. (Hobsbawm 163)

> As I waver back and forth, sometimes seeing the city from within and sometimes from without, I feel...not quite belonging to this place, and not quite a stranger. This is how the people of Istanbul have felt for the last hundred and fifty years. (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 261)

Identity crises and existential questions are regular plot devices in Orhan Pamuk. His heroes are outsiders trying to find a place and acceptance in an at once familiar and strange environment, with hopes of assimilating the strangeness, and in the quest of a deferred dream. The sense of belonging is rendered more problematic with the transcontinental nation trying to make sense of the opposing pulls of holding on to Eastern sensibilities while attempting to Westernise.

In the light of the nation's quests for a new identity, in this chapter I look at the writer's attempt and destiny to be an outsider in his city, something that he inherited and shares with his fellow citizens. I will also consider the construct of the doppelganger or the other, and the trope of the outsider looking into the familiarly unfamiliar in his texts and will argue that the trope of the outsider looking in and the trope of the other with an enviable life stemmed from the nation's geopolitical and historical peculiarities. I will start the analysis with the outsider in Pamuk's texts,

ponder on the reasons for and the advantages of using the trope of the familiar stranger and the construct of the other/one's doppelganger enjoying a better life. The study finds that these stem from the constantly reinvented identity of the nation and its transcontinental status. I will also look at the othering of chosen ethnicities, positing them as a threat to new/ modern nation-building in the light of Pamuk's fiction. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* and Pamuk's memoir, *Istanbul* are used to decipher *Snow* and other Pamukian texts to prove the hypothesis.

Pamuk's leading characters are often outsiders in a familiarly unfamiliar social scene, trying to make sense of it as an insider and outsider at the same time. The sense of their 'not belonging' is what makes them suitable to tell their stories of failed quests that Pamuk ties to the fate of his fellow nationals. That is at once their blessing and curse. Pamuk's protagonists are often blissfully unaware of what transpires around them and often fail to decipher the most evident things unfurling in front of their eyes.

> If he hadn't been so tired, if he'd paid more attention to the snowflakes swirling out of the sky like feathers, he might have realized that he was travelling straight into a blizzard; he might have seen from the start that he had set out on a journey that would change his life forever; he might have turned back. (Pamuk, *Snow* 3)

Ka, the poet protagonist's journey to the Anatolian city of Kars after years of exile in Germany starts thus. Ka is the familiar and affable outsider walking into a microcosm of the Turkish nation with all its convoluted politics. A native of Nişantaş, back from his political exile in Germany, Ka is on his way to Kars, in the hopes of winning the affections of Ipek, a girl he fancied in college. Having recently divorced Ka's friend,

Muhtaar, Ipek has moved back home to live with her sister Kadife, and their hotelier father. Ka is no more the invisible friend to Ipek anymore, but has improved his stature as a published writer outside Turkey that he hopes will improve his luck in love.

Ka is not sure whether Ipek was ever interested in him, or was even aware of his existence, or whether she is seeing somebody else; yet travels to Kars in the guise of reporting the suicide syndrome that seemed to be catching the region's young girls. The stranger with access to the Western press catches the attention of the local press, the military, the militant factions, and all and sundry in the town. For them, he is that outsider whom they can't trust completely, but whom they would rather open up to than the familiar faces that may judge them or even betray them to the authorities or other interested parties.

With the constant threat of persecution hanging over them, the outsider is trusted with possessing an objective non-partisan perspective. All the while Ka is reassuring himself that, as a representative of the outside, the locals cannot afford to hurt or is not interested in hurting him. Yet, the people presume he will identify with their cause as he will be seeing the merit of their arguments without the prejudices that their fellow Kars residents will be prone to.

Ka is not unaware of his precarious status as an outsider when he is at the mercy of one or the other factions. He is warned by the soft-spoken militant leader Blue, the leader of the coup Sunay, the government officials and many others about the risks of offending them and disturbing the path of their cause. He understands that when he entered the scene of action, he walked into an allegorical minefield and risks

affecting many well-laid plans that were neither ready for nor foresee the contingency of outsider interference.

Like Pamuk, Ka can communicate with a non-Turkish audience and his representations are merited in and outside Turkey for this dual nature of his identity. Ka knows that he cannot survive forever in Kars and will have to move to Germany or to Istanbul, that he is a misfit in Kars, and that he is only there to win the affections of Ipek. He is blithely unaware of Ipek's fascination for Blue (Kadife's lover), and that it is her inability to compete with her sister for the man's affections that prompts her to think of a future with Ka. His hope for future happiness with her is a fantasy similar to the one he had of her while away in Germany, the fancy for a deferred object of desire. He will never be one of them; one of the people of Kars, he is the only one unaware of Ipek's love for Blue, for the outsider is not privy to the shameful secrets of the realm. The partial knowledge ends up sending him back to Germany with a broken heart and eventually ends up killing him.

Like Ka, Black in *My Name is Red* fits this pattern of the outsider on a quest in an alien yet familiar world. Black's life in Ottoman Istanbul can be summed up as the adventures of an outsider who pits himself against a social group and unsuccessfully tries his luck for a membership in it.

Black left Istanbul as a young apprentice whose bad fortune sends him away from the miniature painting workshop of his uncle Enishte Effendi and from Shekure, the girl of his affections. Twelve years after, he returns to Istanbul to help his uncle and with the happy knowledge that his beloved has moved back to her father's place.

Black admits that he doesn't even remember her face anymore, and he is equally unaware of her admirers that include the miniaturists who work for her father

as well as her missing husband's brother. His Enishte is murdered and Black has to find the murderer if he is to have a future with Shekure. He is also promised torture by the Sultan's aid, who, after a round of torture to ensure Black is not the killer, appoints him to help Master Osman in the search for the murderer whom they know to be one of the miniaturists. Black go about the enquiry while waddling through the volumes of miniatures that the artists have done for the Sultan and at the same time interviewing the suspects, one of whom is out to kill him.

The workshop, though familiar from childhood is an alien world to him now as his twelve years as a trader took him away from the world of miniature painting. He also has to brave through the confounding tricks that Shukure and her two little boys play on him to further their whims. Black is caught in a quicksand as he no more understands the games that are afoot. He is the perfect outsider who can ferret out the hidden murderer from Enishte's apprentices, but that same unfamiliarity with the goings on in the workshop ends in his badly hurting himself.

Black is an outsider to the apprentices of his Enishte's workshop. For them, he is a trader that their Master irrationally trusts for he is blood. He is the apprentice the Master sends away and is back to compete for not just the Master's affections but for the favour of the most beautiful and ever charming Shekure, the Master's daughter. For Shekure's two sons, he is the stranger who threatens to take the place of their uncle Hassan, whose familiarity is comforting for them. For Shekure, he is the distantly familiar memory of a cousin whose strangeness entices her and is a trustworthy other among the familiar people of the workshop among whom hides a murderer. It is his strangeness and alienness that makes him the choice for the Sultan and for Shekure to find the murderer; it is this very strangeness that keeps him in oblivion of the presence of Hassan and how the latter will affect his fate. This

alienness contributes to the resent of Shevket and Orhan and in turn distances him from the hope of familial happiness. He will remain a stranger under his own roof, unable to wholly fathom the elements that decided his tragic destiny. Black can never go back to his trader days and is forced to live with the realization that the life he is living will never really be his.

This trope of an outsider looking in and the insider who doesn't belong is also the plotline of Pamuk's first translation into English, *The White Castle.* The narrator is a Venetian slave who is caught by the Ottoman soldiers and ends up being owned by his doppelganger, Hoja. Hoja is too eager to find out about the world outside the Ottoman realm and quizzes the Venetian about his land, his life and the people there. The Venetian finds himself an object of study for Hoja while he diligently absorbs what is going on around him in this Eastern kingdom from where he finds no way of escaping. He learns the ways and methods of the people of Istanbul, builds fireworks and weapons with Hoja for the Sultan, talks about astronomy, and makes himself indispensable to Hoja and the Sultan. He becomes so set in his life in the Ottoman city that he becomes identical to Hoja, in mind and manner, who until then was just his doppelganger.

The outsider/ insider game is complete when Hoja takes the Venetian's place back in his home and the Venetian finds himself doing nothing to disturb that delusion/ impersonation. He seems to have made a place for himself in the unfamiliar land and does nothing about the improbability of going back home to claim his life back there. Hoja seems to have been in the quest for the other who had a better life than him and finds it in the life of his Venetian doppelganger. His efforts from the moment he meets the Venetian soldier is to find more about him, extract as much information about the other's world and learning, be more like him, and ultimately to

replace him in his life in the West. For the Venetian, his purpose in the narrative is to serve as the other to the Easterner, be the Western doppelganger, to actualize in fictional terms the life of one's Western counterpart that Hoja could until then only imagine. He is there for Hoja to imagine the possibility of being their own selves and yet at the same time living one another's life at the opposite sides of the Bosphorus.

It is a Turkish cultural fantasy, a larping (live action role play-ing) of sorts where the İstanbullu is given a slice of what life could have been had Turkey been (or been identified as) a Western nation. Hoja's slave, who is never addressed by his own name, serves throughout the novel as the other, or the outsider trying to make sense of this new world. The fantasy of the other, significantly a Western doppelganger, with a life one covets is realized through him and culminates with Hoja claiming the other's identity as his own.

Coveting the life of the familiar other is not just a recurrent plot device in Pamuk. It is a trait that the novelist identifies in his own psyche in the memoir, *Istanbul.*

> …somewhere in the streets of Istanbul, in a house resembling ours, there lived another Orhan so much like me that he could pass for my twin, even my double. …Whenever I was unhappy, I imagined going to the other house, the other life, the place where the other Orhan lived, in spite of everything, I'd half convince myself that I was he and took pleasure in imagining how happy he was, such pleasure that, for a time, I felt no need to go to seek out the other house in that other imagined part of the city. (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 3-5)

The childhood game of young Orhan metamorphoses under the pull of multiple identities and the fascination for the other while growing up in a city that is itself lost between two continents and many histories.

If *The White Castle* is about the culmination of this fantasy, characters in Pamuk's other texts have varying degrees of success in their similar endeavours. Take the example of Necip and Fazıl. Necip introduces himself to Ka as an aspiring writer and requests for his dotage and guidance. Through his sci-fi novel, Ka learns that he is in love with the same girl as his friend and is not ready to own it up to Fazıl. The insider/ outsider or self/ other dualities help Necip and Fazıl live their love for Kadife all the while respecting the honour code of not coveting the friend's beloved.

The trope of the outsider looking inside in Pamuk is essentially linked to the nation's history. The conquest/ fall of Constantinople, the end of the Ottoman Empire, the attempts at modernization/ Westernization, and the multiple military coups and the resultant purges to history problematised the notions of Turkish identity and complicated the sense of belonging as well as adapting to the ephemeral imagination of what constituted the nation. When Pamuk states that the people of Istanbul felt a sense of not belonging for the past one hundred and fifty years, he is acknowledging this constant tweaking that the history and identity of the nation has been subjected to over the centuries. Like someone in a house of mirrors trying to identify their true self from the infinite images looking back at them, the İstanbullus find themselves not quite sure of the truth of their reflected selves.

The journey to understand this sense of othering and the need to place oneself in the shoes of the improved doppelganger of the other is an archetype that could be found in every culture. Yet, this need to believe in another self with a better life is a

cultural marker for Pamuk's İstanbullu whose predicament the writer traces back to events as old as a millennia and more.

The latter half of the nineteenth century marked the decline and fall of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul. Colonialism had spread to more than half of the world, and the Ottoman Empire could no more fight the organized economic conquest of the West over the rest of the World. The fall of the empire saw an array of imagined nations mushrooming up and vying for public attention and recognition. To defend these claims of new nationalisms, new histories were invented and fresh alliances and enmities fathomed.

> …the states they [the new nation builders] attempted to construct were, as we have also seen, generally the opposite of the ethnically and linguistically homogenous entities which came to be seen as the standard form of 'nation-state' in the west. (Hobsbawm 169)

The different nationalisms that caught Turkish imagination tried to limit the country into a homogenous fold and flag-bearers of this exclusivity –bordering xenophobia– identified 'the others' whose ethnic, linguistic, religious or any other difference with their imagined nation and made them the enemies to be ousted off it.

Hobsbawm quotes Miroslav Hroch, "Nationalism or ethnicity is a substitute for factors of integration in a disintegrating society. When society fails, the nation appears as the ultimate guarantee."(173). When the empire fell, a new nationalistic model was imagined in the hopes of it helping the old nation into an organic unity against factors that were disintegrating and threatening the continuance of the nation as a unified entity. This model also identified a few who did not fit into this apparently homogenous society that was being envisioned as the new Turkish nation.

New national identities needed this 'other', the stranger or an individual unlike 'us' who needs to be kept out for the longevity of 'our' national integrity. Hobsbawm finds that this is a universal situation, the search for identifying those who are guilty for the present condition of the nation,

> 'They' can be, must be, blamed for all the grievances, uncertainties and disorientations … the most rapid and profound upheavals of human life in recorded history….the strangers who by their alienness, are enemies: present aliens, past aliens, even purely notional aliens....If the foreigners with their knavish tricks did not exist, it would be necessary to invent them. (174)

The champions of the nationalization drive showed a lot of urgency and lost no time in inventing these 'others' in the face of the uncertainties about the success of modernization and the realization of a brand new Turkey. Identifying the "us" and "them" was a pertinent question in the nation in the wake of the many conquests and regime changes and the mosaic of a demographic that these invasions left in its wake. Defining 'us' and 'them' is an ever-evolving process for a nation caught between multiple identities and forever trying to leave behind the old ones in the wake of regenerations into new identities. These remarks from the Hotel Asia conference (a meeting that Pamuk uses to introduce the various ideologies, identity politics and propagandist deliberations in currency in the contemporary national politics) validates this,

> 'What I would say is very simple', said the passionate youth…. "We're not stupid! We're just poor! And we have a right to insist on this distinction."

> ‘Such humble words.’
>
> ‘Who do you mean my son, when you say “we”?’ asked another man. ‘Do you mean the Turks? The Kurds? The Circassians? The people of Kars? To whom exactly are you referring?’ (*Snow*, 282)

For the Turkish nationalist, the search for the stranger ended with the Greek and Armenian population that called Turkey their home, they were the ‘foreigners’ who caused the nation all its grievances. An enmity which began at the conquest/fall of Constantinople was revived to persecute and ethnically cleanse a people from the fallen nation.

The riots of the 1950s are claimed to have cost 30,000 Armenians their lives according to Orhan Pamuk’s much controversial interview with a German newspaper. The interview led to a *fatwa*, a civil case for denigrating nationalism and a public clarification that had all the traits of an apology or redaction. *Istanbul* talks about the resent and enmity that freshly erupted after WWII. In Chapter Nineteen titled, “Conquest or Decline? The Turkification of Constantinople”, he talks about the almost invisible Byzantines (the Greeks and Armenians) who were pushed to the margins of the society and were denigrated as second-class citizens,

> As for the Byzantines, they had vanished into thin air soon after the conquest, or so I’d been led to believe. No one had told me that it was their grandchildren’s grandchildren’s grandchildren who now ran the shoe shops, patisseries and haberdashery shops of Beyoğlu. …I was made to understand that the Greeks, like the city’s poor and the denizens of its shanty towns, were not quite ‘respectable’. I thought

> this must have something to do with the fact that Mehmet the Conqueror had taken the city from them. (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 155-56)

Pamuk goes on to explain how the "fall conquest of Constantinople" is often a problematic phrase for the Turkish people as their political and historical conditioning and not often the nationalistic fervour affects their perception towards this paradigm shift when the East met the West in a city of two continents. The defeat that the Greeks suffered at the hands of Mehmet the Conqueror and the taming of the defeated that follows all wars relegated the Greeks and Armenians to the social periphery and political invisibility. The change to this state of affairs happened at Turkey's (or their alliance's) defeat in the WWII.

The nationalization drive turned into vigilante nationalism and the invented need, as Hobsbawm termed it, to protect the new nation from the alien threat, and the resultant search for these 'strangers' ended in the riots and rampages that targeted the minorities. The riots that drove out the Greeks were built on the latent distrust in the İstanbullus from the days of the fall/ conquest of Constantinople.

> When I was a child, the view amongst the city's more vocal nationalists was that anyone who so much as used the word 'Constantinople' was an undesirable alien with irredentist dreams of the day when the Greeks who had been the city's first masters would return to chase away the Turks who had occupied it for five hundred years – or, at the very least, turn us into second-class citizens. It was the nationalists, then who insisted on the word 'conquest'. By contrast, many Ottomans were content to call their city Constantinople. (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 157)

This strain of disagreement that stemmed from geopolitical and ethnical differences were not enough to harm anyone until the vigilante nationalism of the 1950s used them as a political tool when the modernization drives died down without the intended result. When Greece tried to repossess the island of Cyprus in 1955 when the British left, this remnant vigilantism from the nation building days was used by the Turkish secret service and the resultant mob killings drove out Greeks from the city in huge numbers.

A distrust that was buried deep for the sake of its NATO membership and attempt to belong to the Western group of nations now became a handy tool for the extremist nationalism and its rule of fear. A tried and tested propaganda of nationalists elsewhere, the minority was unofficially identified as the enemy of the state and the rioters tried to match the mercilessness of the fifteenth century Ottoman soldiers in lynching and murdering their fellow citizens who amounted to more than half of the city's population until it resulted in the eruption of an ethnic violence not seen since the days of Mehmet the Conqueror.

Each succeeding coup and regime change created further more discontents within the reinvented nation making ethnic persecutions by the authorities a pet topic of litterateurs; Pamuk investigates it in *Snow*, Hasan Ali Toptaş in *Shadowless* and Elif Şafak in *The Bastard of Istanbul.* The Kurdish massacres that accompanied the military coups in the modern Turkish nation and the rehearsals in the green room of the political arena for such ethnic purges form the action of *Snow.* Pamuk's only openly political novel, *Snow* is a treasure trove of the games involving 'the other' and 'the self' in Turkey.

If the distrust of the other stems from the need to invent the stranger in a new nation trying hard to find a united cause to bring together its people, the curiosity about and the need to lord over/ possess the other's identity is born from living on the edges of a continent, and the pulls of not/ belonging to the Western world. In a conversation with Fernanda Eberstadt of *The New York Times*, Pamuk opened up about this other in his texts, "There's this other person who is always in a more genuine, more heartfelt, more hardcore place than you', Pamuk explains, 'Even his failures are more authentic. You love him and you also want to kill him." He points to the geopolitical status of Turkey as one reason for this fascination with and the need to dominate the other; it is born out "of living on the margins of Europe…. My contribution to the doppelganger problem was to give it an East-West tilt.", he told Eberstadt.

The imagined other and the outsider looking in are used more than once in *Snow* as mentioned earlier. Necip and Fazıl revel in this game; in fact, their very identities are founded on this interchangeability of the self and the other/ projecting the other on the self. Fazıl tells the narrator, Ka that he and Necip are one and the same. For him, Necip is the better other in all senses. He is a budding writer of science fiction, more understanding of his friend, protective of him and is in love with the girl that Fazıl fancies but keeps to himself for fear of upsetting his perfect friend. He is not sure of himself and identifies with his more self-assured friend who embraces him with all his apparent flaws. He is everything that Fazıl wishes to be. He tells Ka,

> 'If I said things like this to my friends, they'd mock me without mercy.'

> ‘Even Fazıl?’
>
> ‘Fazıl is different. If someone does something bad to me, he goes after them and he always knows what I’m thinking.’ (140)

When he falls in love with the same girl as his more than perfect friend, this claim to oneness becomes his necessity to evade from the guilt he feels. For pursuing a relationship with the girl who his now dead friend fancied would have been too much for Fazıl to explain to his own self let alone the social censure that he fears he is vulnerable to now as his protective friend is no more there to shield him. “But there is no other way to explain how I fell in love with Kadife so quickly.” (92), he is able to transfer the guilt he feels to this apparent oneness. His suicidal thoughts and atheistic philosophy too are traced to Necip’s influence.

Yet his whole argument falls apart and the apparent insufficiency that he feels in himself as opposed to the flawless version that he finds in Necip is revealed when he later confesses his true feelings about Kadife to Ka,

> To tell the truth, it was not Teslime really; it was always Kadife I loved. But because my friend loved her, I hid my feelings. It was actually Necip who provoked it, by talking endlessly about Kadife. (293)

Even in the confession, he manages to blame it on Necip. Once dead, Necip loses the advantage of being the awe-inspiring other that Pamuk’s characters always manages to pit themselves against and belittle themselves through mental comparisons. Be it the Venetian or Galip, the other always seems to hold an imaginary advantage over them which, with the doomed to fail destinies that Pamuk

bestows his protagonists with, they manage to make real. His transformation into the improved and enviable other is complete when he successfully courts Kadife and takes upon himself to finish his friend's incomplete science fiction text.

Pamuk's texts could be read like the games that the doppelgangers and the others play with the selves, and from *The White Castle* to *The Red-haired Woman* this is a trope/ archetype that Pamuk exhausts to create tension. If similarity of the self and the other contributed the central tension and led the plot forward in *The White Castle*, the scope of coveting the enviable other's life is explored to all its possibilities in his later novels. This game derives supreme intricacy when the novelist is inspired by the geopolitical and historical fabric of the nation and its discontents.

Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar called Istanbul the city of two continents in *A Mind at Peace*, his magnum opus. In the novel where his treatment of melancholy inspired Pamuk's brand of *hüzün* (we will discuss this further in the next chapter), Tanpınar talks about a city and its people divided by the Bosphorus, or rather brought together as one by its two banks, where the Western and the Eastern parts of Turkey became one legendary city Byzantium/ Constantinople/ Istanbul and continues to inspire litterateurs.

For an İstanbullu living on one bank and wondering about the lives of the 'like me yet different' others across the Strait of Istanbul, of people who are part of an altogether different continent thanks to a sliver of blue water across Europe and Asia, the possibility of a better life in another reality is never alien. Coupled with the reinventions that the identity of the country underwent, being an outsider in one's own nation or coveting the other's life is not merely another afternoon spent in futile imagination. Pamuk excels in exploring the complexities of this essential otherness of

the İstanbullu, ably supported by the Western and Turkish literary and historical traditions that he amalgamates into an indistinguishable concoction of mystery and wonder.

This is how the sibling rivalry of Ipek and Kadife transforms into the thing that decides the protagonist's fate in *Snow*. Ipek comes to live under the roof of her father after her divorce from Muhtaar. Kadife, her younger sister and an advertisement model too lives in the hotel run by their father. Kadife ended her stint as a hair shampoo brand ambassador and turned into the voice of the headscarf girls whose protest against authoritarian interference transformed into a suicide epidemic that took Kars by storm and shocked the fundamentalists and modernists alike. Living under the shadow of a very pretty sister and competing for the affections of their widowed father gets complicated for Kadife when she manages to secure the affections of the radical leader Blue, whom her sister also fancies.

Kadife who envied her sister and her popularity grew up to be one of the most popular faces in the country. Her adoption of the headscarf girls' cause made her a favourite of the media. The sisters' competition with each other moves beyond simple sibling rivalry when they strive to pursue the things and people that the other covets and starts building their lives around the other's goals. Though Kadife knows that Ipek is their father's favourite, she was not reminded of it every day until Ipek moves in with them after her divorce. She manages to best her sister when she secures the love of Blue, a development that makes Ipek think of a life away from her father and Kars.

Ipek also senses Ka's admiration for Kadife which makes her insecure about the man who travelled into a blizzard and a military siege in the distant memory of her

affable glance. Later in the novel, it is revealed that Ipek's plans with Ka were based solely on her chances with Blue. When Blue is out of the picture and she is left with the choice of a life with her sister and father, and that of one with Ka, she inevitably chooses the former. It is his realisation that the sisters covet each other's life that leads Ka to betray Blue. Kadife without Blue is stripped of the magnetism that Ipek's forward action was based on and she manages to find peace with herself which later turns out fatal for Ka.

This impersonating or taking the place of the familiar other is also used as a plot device by the novelist to tell Ka's story and in a postmodernist narrative he inserts himself into the storyline to cement the verity and authenticity of his political tale.

Pamuk introduces Ka as a fellow writer (a poet, not a novelist like him, to keep the distinction between the two identities, it could be said) hailing from Nişantaş. Ka has a doting mother who worries about him living in a museum like apartment not unlike the Pamuks' that we see in *Istanbul.* Kars is the faraway land that he will be an alien in and could invite the same responses like the ones that Ka drew from the people of Kars. The censure that Ka's Nişantaş bred mother may have against Ipek is a reflection of how his own neighbours would have reacted toward someone from Anatolia. These misgivings about the Anatolians in the İstanbullus are reciprocated by the former as well. Ka in turn is accused of being ashamed of his Turkish identity by *The Border City Gazette* of Kars for choosing to be called by his pseudonym instead of his given name of Kerim Alakuşoğlu. This argument is rooted in his Nişantaş upbringing and outlook that the people of Kars find alien. As an outsider, Ka induces a sense of distrust and the promise of a balanced point of view in the disagreements of the people.

Constructing Ka in an image similar to his own, giving him the same roots, upbringing and exposure, Pamuk underlines his eligibility to tell Ka's story and unravel it from the dead poet's point of view. Ka's brushes with the authorities and religious fundamentalists resonate with Pamuk's own experience, though in the larger setting of the country. Pamuk takes the act of entering into the other's persona to a whole new level when he confesses to falling for Ipek and finding it hard to distance himself from her charm.

Though seemingly justifying his protagonist's fatal chase of the phantom of Ipek and making it seem less like a fool's pursuit of the myth of a woman (a fatal trait common to many Pamukian heroes like Black and Kemal), it enables the novelist to forge a link with his narrator to make his political high drama resemble one of the many true tales of ethnic persecution and military coups that unfurled in his homeland. It further contributes to impart a colour of truth to the discarded Armenian dwellings and the alternate histories and a museum that surprises the visitor with the Turkish version of the Armenian conflicts.

Sunay Zaim is an actor with political ambitions in Pamuk's *Snow.* Identifying himself with the character he played jeopardizes his career for Sunay Zaim and leads him to engineer a short lived military coup in Kars. His portrayal of leaders like Napoleon, Lenin and Robespierre made him popular during the heydays of leftist political theatre. When he became the crowd favourite to play Kemal Atatürk, the father of modern Turkey, Sunay took it too seriously. He could not dissociate himself from the character he was donning. The ensuing controversies about his suitability to play the larger than life role and the deliberations of his supporters and detractors made him an everyday face in the media. When the media got hold of the story, they celebrated and took it to all extents that people could not visualize him anymore as the

friendly face in a commercial and started to expect too much from his plays. The usual jovial jokes and satirical portrayals in his plays underwent much scrutiny and criticism that it spelled the end of a popular career for Sunay Zaim. In the coup that he orchestrates with the help of a military officer and the all encompassing snow that interferes with the protagonist's luck, Sunay realizes his dreams of being the founder of a new avatar of Kars, a microcosm of the reinvented Turkey. The distinction between his actor self and the founder and decider of a new nation's fate blurs and becomes almost indistinguishable for Sunay through the coup he orchestrates.

If in *The White Castle* the protagonist swapped places with a doppelganger, *The Black Book*'s protagonist covets the other's life and makes it his own without confessing it even to himself. Galip, the narrator tells the readers of his cousin Celal Salik, the accomplished columnist whom he and his wife Rüya looked up to as children. The sudden disappearance of his wife, Rüya who loved reading detective novels, has the narrator turning into an investigator. Parallel to the story of these three cousins, runs the story of the celebrated poet Rumi and Shams of Tabriz, his disciple and son-in-law whose disappearance have the poet rummaging every nook and corner of Istanbul for his most cherished companion.

Pamuk plays on this obsession to be someone else that is ingrained in the Turkish psyche. Rüya's ex-husband tells Galip of this two millennia old conspiracy that he shields himself from,

> To have deliberately chosen this life as he himself had done, to live in full consciousness, was to say no to a conspiracy that dated back two thousand years; it meant being true to the person you really were and refusing to become someone else. (129-30)

Galip on the other hand, is someone who yearns to be someone else, someone new.

Galip's search takes him to Celal's apartment where he learns that Celal's whereabouts too are unknown. Apparently fearing for the safety of both Rüya and Celal, and suspecting that the same person would have kidnapped them both, Galip decides to stay in Celal's apartment and write Celal's columns in the latter's guise. The impersonation is undiscovered by the newspaper and its readers and the novel ends with the bodies of Rüya and Galip being discovered across the street, at Aladdin's, the newspaper and tobacco store that Pamuk made famous with a reference in *Istanbul*.

Though the identity of the kidnapper is not revealed, Pamuk leaves enough breadcrumbs to his identity. Rüya's fascination for her famous cousin, Celal's doting on her, Galip's references to his common enough life, his avoidance of talking about himself and showering admiration instead on Celal, his effortless transformation into the celebrated columnist, the choice of telling Rumi and Shams' story, their apparent love affair, Rumi's frantic and devoted search for his missing friend, and the suggestion that Rumi's own jealousy would have sealed the fate of Shams of Tabriz; are clues to Celal and Rüya's disappearance.

Pamuk's narrator is aware of the oneness with the other that blurs identities: "…I knew at once he was not my double; we were one and the same, he and I. I knew, too, that the gaze I'd sensed only moments earlier was my own gaze." (Pamuk, *The Black Book*, 116). He is also conscious of looking into the presence of multiple identities within himself, identities that may have later helped him to distance himself from the act of murdering Rüya and Celal and labelling it as a mystery, "Yes, it's true, I was speaking to myself, but don't we all? We all have a second person buried inside

us, a dear friend to whom we whisper to our heart's content; and some of us even have a third" (117).

Pamuk's haphazard narrative blurs the lines between reality and fictional imagination, and generic statements develop in to plot lines in the following sentences. The narrative splendidly loses itself in the blurring and reinvention of the self and the other and then leaps in to the story,

> For after becoming a new person, and then another, and another and another, there was less and less hopes of returning to the happiness they had known as the people they'd been at the beginning. A moment had arrived when, hemmed in by the signs they'd never managed to decipher – the letter, manifestos, pictures, faces, and guns – this man and his wife had been forced to admit that they had lost their way. This house stood all alone then, on a hill in the middle of a wasteland. One evening, Rüya had packed a few belongings in her little bag and returned to her old family, to her old house, where she felt safe. (Pamuk, *The Black Book*, 129)

Though Pamuk refuses to identify the murderer, it all points to Galip and his jealously killing off his wife who was so enamoured by her more interesting cousin or may be left him and went back to her old life when she could not stand living with him anymore. Taking over the identity of the man who is like the proverbial other, Galip then tells the readers about a missing wife. Pamuk explained to Fernanda Eberstadt, about this proverbial other who is more genuine than one's self that, "You love him and you also want to kill him." Galip's refusal to acknowledge the kidnapping and killing as well as his dual act as Celal underlines his obsession with

dominating over a man whose life he coveted and yearned from childhood and who continued to diminish his life and accomplishments even after he won Rüya's hand in marriage. The other refuses to stop capturing the imaginations of Pamuk and that of his protagonists across texts and timelines.

Living amongst the ruins of a city and in the memory of an imagined country too can contribute to this sense of being an outsider in one's own city, and the yearning to live in a different timeline and space. The people who live in the museum houses like the one he grew up in is paying homage to the call of modernization of the founders of the new nation. When Ottoman relics that sprung up on them at the turn of an unsuspecting corner reminded the city dwellers of the heydays of glory, it also served as reminders of a fallen empire and that of a comparatively colourless present –like the grey *yali*s where the paint was peeling off. The Westernised sitting rooms and lounges reassured them of the possibility to move on from the memory of a failed past.

> Still, the memory of this dying culture was all around us. Great as the desire to Westernise and modernize may have been, the more desperate wish it seemed, was to be rid of all the bitter memories of the fallen empire: rather as a spurned lover throws away his beloved's clothes, possessions and photographs. But nothing, Western or local, came to fill the void, the great drive to Westernise amounted mostly to the erasure of the past… (Pamuk, *Istanbul*, 27)

Pamuk's Ottoman tales tried to fill this void as I discussed in the earlier chapter, yet the pull of placing themselves in the imagined reality of the Westernised or the Ottoman Turkey as opposed to the less enticing everyday existence continues to

fascinate Pamuk's fellow nationals, an urge that promises the continuance of identity crises in Turkish literature and life. From a little boy's fascination with his infinite mirror images in "Another Orhan" (*Istanbul*), to the indistinguishable and complete swap with the life of another, and the feeling of inadequacy/ deficiency in one's self to the envy, the desire to possess and to dominate the other's self –Pamuk identifies it as a national trait.

Erdağ Göknar in "Orhan Pamuk and the "Ottoman" Theme" has talked about the identity crisis in Pamuk's novels. He identifies "a representation of unstable identity within a specific Ottoman or Turkish historical context" (60) and "identity subversion" (Ibid.) in Pamuk's Ottoman themes, confusions that cause characters like Darvinoğlu to be caught between the Ottoman tradition and Turkish modernity. These identity crises, I find, going deeper beyond a mere Ottoman fascination for the Turkish people. It is rooted in the geopolitical reality of the country, fed by the unifying tactics of the nationalists, made deeper by the latent distrust of 'the other' in the Turkish psyche born out of the multiple conquests and invasions, and supplemented by the feeling of being left out in the margins of Europe by the Western nations. The sense of not belonging and coveting the familiar other's flawless existence germinate from these multiple strains, the pull of the Ottoman glory is only one of the contributing elements.

Chapter Six

Warping Orhan Pamuk's Imagined Community: A Chronicler, an Ambassador, and a Messiah

> That view from below, i.e. the nation as seen not by governments and spokesmen and activists of nationalist (or non-nationalist) movements, but by the ordinary persons who are the objects of their action and propaganda, is exceedingly difficult to discover. Fortunately social historians have learned how to investigate the history of ideas, opinions and feelings at the sub-literary level, so that we are today less likely to confuse, as historians once habitually did, editorials in select newspapers with public opinion. (Hobsbawm 11)

Does being Turkish and trying to re-earth and re-educate the Turkish people of their severed Ottoman past and the forgotten or tweaked coups, being proudly attached to the nation to go so far as to refer to oneself as the ambassador of one's nation to the world – even though one's modern education and Western views and the Nişantaş upbringing 'distinguish' one enough from the nationalist Turk – make one a nationalist or afflict one with the flaw affecting the nationalist historians? Or does being the nation's most celebrated chronicler-litterateur mean that one is able to cure/ iron out the said flaw?

Orhan Pamuk is the most successful novelist that Turkey has seen, to this day. Orhan Kemal's Anatolian tales and Tanpınar's melancholic Istanbul – though seminal in the Turkish literary canon – could not achieve the international acclaim and readership, nor the fervour that the publication of a single Pamukian text generates.

What distinguishes Pamuk's novels from the narratives of these master storytellers and devoted historians like Koçu are the bringing together of the points of view of the East and the West, something that Pamuk credits his predecessors with, yet a method that he perfected and excelled in.

The ability to look at Turkey using the methodology of the Western chronicler as well as the sensibility of the İstanbullu was not just derived from educating oneself in the legacy of Oriental chronicles on Turkey, it is synthesised out of being an İstanbullu, belonging to two continents, caught between different histories, and from being the self, the other and the outsider in one's own city. It is a legacy bequeathed by all İstanbullus, a legacy that Pamuk celebrates in his novels. The diverging quality of these vibrant pulls that confused his fellow nationals, Pamuk embraced and celebrated as the very essence of being an İstanbullu. He is the first 'celebrity' author in Turkey whose books are announced by billboards and who managed to open the horizons of world readership for the writers before and after him. His portrayal of Turkey is celebrated, criticized, dismissed, pondered over, but never ignored. So, what is Orhan Pamuk's Turkey?

In this chapter, I analyse the construct of Turkey in Orhan Pamuk's novels, and argue that it is yet another imagined community, a carefully invented notion of Turkey that he made his readers to fall for and, made them forget, for a while, its real counterpart. It is imagined with so much emotional legitimacy by the author and his readers –those who are caught by the imagination are enchanted by it and the detractors are so caught in its legitimacy and in its potential that they cannot allow anything distasteful in this construct– that Pamuk's Turkey often eclipses the real variant of it. While playing the literary representative of his nation to the world and projecting his imagined ideal or alternative to the contemporary reality of the nation,

Pamuk tends to don the garb of a deliverer of his nation's history and a messiah who resurrects Turkey to be the cynosure of all eyes since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, a messiah with his share of detractors who allege a misuse of his great power that came with equally great responsibilities.

The first thing that struck me odd about Pamuk's Turkey is his insistence of setting his stories in the Turkish past. Pamuk refuses to engage with the contemporary politics in his novels though he makes strong political statements in the stories told from the past. Not to forget the potential of the past to influence the present and the present to change/ reshape the past, Orhan Pamuk is one of those rare novelists from his nation who hasn't yet told a tale from the contemporary world. In "Orhan Pamuk and the 'Ottoman' Theme", Erdağ Göknar talks about the Turkish fascination for the Ottoman life, most of the modern Turkish authors have at least a text that refers to or dabbles in the Ottoman theme. But more than half of Pamuk's novels are set in the Ottoman era.

Pamuk doesn't limit himself to the Ottoman tales of the past, he finds the 1980's Turkey equally ravishing. Most of his novels focus on these two realms, either the heydays of the erstwhile empire or the era of heightened cultural production and exchange, of rapid Westernisation. *The White Castle* introduces his readers to the Ottoman world, *My Name is Red* revels in the grandeur of it all – the unending wealth of the Sultan's treasury, the magical craft of Turkish miniature painting, and the benevolent diplomacy of the Ottoman crown, *The Black Book* revives and indulges in the memory of it, whereas *The Museum of Innocence* enshrines the social and cultural life of the 1980s. The present –with its encroachment on free speech and the drifting away from the ideals of peace that the attempts of Westernisation of the nation endeavoured to bring about– dulls in comparison.

After the abrupt break from the Arabic past with the birth of a new nation in 1923 and the missed possibilities of transforming into a Westernised modern nation or a legendary empire (now no more), the chances of the Turkish nation warping a well-defined identity seemed problematic. Add to that the uprootedness felt by the young generations of people whose link to the history was taken away when the language changed its Arabic script in favour of a new Latin script. The language then was purified of words with Arabic-Persian and Greek roots to conform to the Sun Language theory which reinvented Turkish as 'the' ancient language from which all other languages originated from. In what Elif Şafak equated to ethnic cleansing (Parla 30), a purgation drive was carried out that discarded every 'un-Turkish' word in favour of newly minted ones that replaced them. It was an unsuccessful attempt by modern Turkey to leave behind everything that reminded it of the misery and memory of the fallen empire. Instead, it created generations of Turkish people to whom the histories of the past were inaccessible or were transformed beyond recognition by the champions of the new nation.

"…Standard national languages, spoken or written, cannot emerge as such before printing, mass literacy and hence, mass schooling" observes Hobsbawm (10). The standard language that the young of the nation were schooled in was 'the wounded tongue' (a term that Jale Parla uses to refer to distilled Turkish), a language whose power to communicate and exchange information was wounded beyond repair when the body of collective cultural and literary consciousness it was attached to was suddenly surgically removed from it. The novel as the chosen form of literature of the nationalists also suffered severely from the reforms before bouncing back through the powerful creative minds of Tanpinar, Atay, Kemal, Pamuk, Tekin, Şafak and the others.

If the damage that the language reforms did to novel was severe, the damage it did to the nation's history, more importantly to the people's sense of history was beyond repair. The purified Turkish had not just disowned the Arabic script for a Latin one; it had also disowned a major chunk of its vocabulary for their Greco-Roman and Arabico-Persian roots. The resultant language appeared like a foreign tongue to the eyes of the generations of the populace who were schooled in the new Turkish. Historical texts had already undergone multiple erasures in the name of nationalism and any aberration from these certified histories were stigmatised as attempts at denigrating the nation. The younger generations' access to the deleted and forgotten tales of Turkish history was twice distant thanks to political edits and nationalist censoring. It is these histories that with the help of earlier masters like Koçu and Tanpınar that Pamuk resurrected for the Turkish as well as the world readers.

If museums are about political inheritance, historical tales that capture the spirit of an age cannot escape being political preserves. Pamuk here dons the garb of the rescuer and preserver of cultural inheritance, assumes the messianic role to help a whole nation remember, so that the world can remember it along with Turkey. Pamuk's immortalizing of these eras is a conscious political statement against the nationalistic erasures of the history, literature, culture and language. Like a good doctor, and a true messiah, he saved Turkey's wounded tongue from being cut off from the nation's cultural memory and strengthened it through his international bestsellers that made sure that the Turkey he identified with is preserved for longevity. The images of Turkey invoked by his texts are of the distant and recent pasts that he wants his readers to remember, empathise with, and strive to build; his imagined community of "horizontal comradeship".

> Nor indeed is it possible to reduce even 'nationality' to a single dimension, whether political, cultural or otherwise (unless, of course, obliged to do so by *force majeure* of states). People can identify themselves as Jews even though they share neither religion, language, culture, tradition, historical background, blood-group patterns nor an attitude to the Jewish state. Nor does this imply a purely subjective definition of 'the nation'. (Hobsbawm 8)

In Orhan Pamuk's fictional Turkey, this identifier of nationality is the dark and all-occluding melancholy he calls, "*hüzün".* The most essential facet of Pamuk's Turkey is a melancholy that is "more communal than personal" (*Istanbul* 82). "In the quest for the melancholic soul of his native city [he] has discovered new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures", observed the Swedish Academy about Orhan Pamuk, awarding him the 2006 Nobel Prize for Literature. *Hüzün*, the Turkish word for melancholy, "convey[s] a feeling of deep spiritual loss" (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 81). Yet the *hüzün* that he celebrates as drenching all of Istanbul is a different manifestation of melancholy, something that has been central to Istanbul culture, poetry, music, and everyday life for the two centuries. It is a wound of honour on the spirit of the city, according to Pamuk.

> …to understand the central importance of *hüzün* as a cultural concept conveying worldly failure, lifelessness and spiritual suffering…if I am to convey the intensity of *hüzün* that Istanbul caused me to feel as a child, I must describe the history of the city following the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, and – even more important – the way this history is reflected in the city's 'beautiful' landscapes and its people….it is a way of looking at life that implicates all, not only a

> spiritual state, but a state of mind that is ultimately as life affirming as it is negating….*hüzün* stems from the same 'black passion' as melancholy,…and gives us the colouration normally associated with this feeling and the all-occluding pain it implies….not the melancholy of a solitary person, but the black mood shared by millions of people together….[Istanbul] carries it by choice….*Hüzün* does not just paralyze the inhabitants of Istanbul; it also gives them poetic licence to be paralysed….the *hüzün* of Istanbul is something the entire city feels together and affirms as one. (82-95)

Pamuk bathes his country in this at once affirming and negating melancholy that he claims the people of Turkey (the people of Istanbul especially), partake in as the members of that horizontal comradeship.

Hüzün is in fact the unifying factor of Pamuk's imagined community, it is as problematic as ethnic, linguistic, religious and similar notions that newly minted nations invoke to bring people together for the united cause of the new nationhood and nationalistic ideals. It issues from the misery of living in the memory of a fallen empire, and thrives on the sorrow of being left out at the end of Europe, the failure of the Westernisation drive, the incomplete fruition of the new nation dream, ultimately living in the residual times of a great empire and all the time reminded of it in every unsuspecting turn of the corner where a resilient old building with faded painting reminds one of how times have changed. "…the primary aim of a landscape painter is to awaken in the viewer the same feelings that the landscape evoked in the artist himself" (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 83-84). He drenches everything in his fictional world in this all-permeating melancholy because it is what the end-of-empire existence in Turkey evokes in him.

This debilitating melancholy is what contributes to the low self-worth and what creates the fear of Western reproach in his characters, “And the next thing the Westerner thinks is that the poor man’s head must be full of all the nonsense that plunged his country into poverty and despair.” (Pamuk, *Snow* 283). This fear of being judged and the accompanying shame emanating from being poor is not restricted to the financially struggling individuals; it is a shared shame from belonging to a country that was once great, “Today’s İstanbullu would be uneasy about everything the foreigner might see in those miserable streets” (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 91).

So, Pamuk’s İstanbullu can never feel the ‘inordinate pride’ that the novelist contrasts with the İstanbullu’s shame, in the memoir. *Hüzün* is everything that keeps the Turkish from seeing the brightness at the end of the tunnel, for Pamuk. It is the same negating *hüzün* that kept his four melancholic literary masters from achieving success outside Turkey; the very same comforting melancholy that he wore on the sleeve to Nobel glory.

When he declares, “It is *hüzün* that ordains no love will end peacefully” (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 95), his heroes’ past, present and future are bound to fail miserably in love, it is what confirms their citizenship in the Pamuk-universe where everyone contracts this melancholic infection, their impending failure is the only assured thing there. Pamuk’s Turkey is one that is peopled with characters disillusioned enough to walk towards misery and doom affected by the end of the empire melancholy, *hüzün*. *Hüzün* is the addiction that Turkey embraced to soothe the misery of the fallen empire, and like a most potent substance, it engulfs and lords over the very essence of the nation in all its orchestrations when melancholy becomes Orhan Pamuk’s Turkey.

Hüzun is not just the licence to be paralysed for the Turkish individuals in Pamuk-universe; it is their licence to fail. It is the void that can never be addressed, the lacuna that will drive his characters from failure to impending doom, with no respect for the natural human instinct for survival. They find their lives to be deficient and devote their life's quests to pursuing things that can best be said to be mirages or perfected images of reality. They, like their country drunk on the melancholy of being lesser than it aspired to be, are attuned to celebrating failures.

As Adli, one of the three literary masters who counsel Celal in *The Black Book* says, "All women are mirrors" (90), well, not all women, but the women characters in Orhan Pamuk's novels are. His protagonists see only the mirror images of these women as per the constructed notions of their own minds, while the reality and the prospect of a doomed future are apparent to all the other characters in play. Shekure of *My Name is Red*, Ipek of *Snow*, and Füsun of *The Museum of Innocence* are strong women who are capable of steering their fates whichever way they choose to, but the male protagonists in their sealed fates fail to sense it and imagine them as extensions of their projected hopes.

Pamuk derives these emotions of lost love/ impending failure/ melancholy to the extreme –that there is no sense of or a sliver of hope of winning– this is what makes his stories and the loses/ failures in them so appealing, he takes failure to the utmost imaginable extreme that there is no light or even a ray of hope at all, the accomplishment of the hero will always be faulty/ punctured.

Like the heroes of Turkish movies, who are doomed to fail according to Pamuk, his own protagonists are courting melancholic endings. Afflicted by the paralysing melancholy that nudges Turkish people to foresee failure in their quests,

much before they even occur, Black, Ka, and Kemal have to fail and immortalise those failures by aggrandising it through heroic quests. Ka's fated journey to Kars and to Ipek has no prospect of success for Ka has no clue as to Ipek's affections when he embarks on his quest for her love. He is not even sure whether she remembers him, yet is undertaking a journey from a city to a distant village in search of a love that is non-existent. Ipek's affection towards him is her way of making sense of a difficult relationship situation and Ka refuses to see it until it is too late. It is in his failure, his grand failure in the quest for love, that Ka is celebrated.

My Name is Red's Black had already forgotten the face of his first love, "…when I returned to my city at the age of thirty –six, I was painfully aware that my beloved's face had long since escaped me" (6). Like Ka, he is blithely unaware of his beloved's affections or the array of her admirers and refuses to see what is evident to every other person around him. There are far too many variables –from the news of Enishte's death leaking before time, the miniaturist-admirers, the failure to find the murderer, Hasan, the children's dislike and many more–that will continue to keep Black from a happy life with Shekure. That it was dismemberment at the hands of Hasan while the latter killed Eniste's murderer is just one of the many unlucky probabilities that would have failed him. The only sure thing in the narrative to any perceiver other than Black would have been the latter's failure to secure Shekure's affections all for himself.

Kemal's love for Füsun is also founded on a myth, or a memory. He spends his life with a pittance of what life could have been; taking care of the needs of her family while she is alive. Once she is no more, Kemal builds a museum for a woman whose affections he could never secure. If the museum celebrates Füsun, it at once

celebrates the grand failure of Kemal's love for her. He like *The Black Book*'s Galip refuses to acknowledge failure when it stares him in the face.

Galip in *The Black Book* in his denial to acknowledge –to others and to his own self– the truth about Rüya wipes out his identity to become an another that embodies his failures, is trying to become everything that he could not be. He is living out a lie, that (unlike the reader) he knows is going to end in a failed quest, and the quest he is on is not the one that he claims to undertake. His quest is to identify the lack in him that drives Rüya away, a quality that he imagines Celal possesses. His assumption of Celal's identity is the attempt to identify that which distinguishes his cousin from himself, an assumption based on his perception that puts his doppelganger's identity above his own; an affliction that the young Orhan in *Istanbul* and Hoja in *The White Castle* also suffers from. Like them, it is just his unhappiness with the present existence that causes this misconception.

His appropriation of Celal's identity has more in common with Hoja's appropriation of the Venetian's identity in *The White Castle*: both acts deem the protagonists' own identities as less than covetable. Hoja refuses to see a life worth celebrating in Istanbul and swaps it with the life of the Venetian, which he perceives to be better than being his own self. The Venetian is perfectly happy with what Hoja has in Istanbul and he even refuses to quash the myth of Hoja's assumed identity. What could be more depressing or melancholic than believing that being one's own self is a lesser existence?

This need to assume another's identity too can be attributed to *hüzün*. The shame that is perceived in the European gaze with its Orientalist trappings is the same sense of not measuring up to a pre-conceived notion of perfection or 'could-have-

been' that engenders a need for a perfected existence as the other. While coveting the better identity of the other, they also imagine a lesser and diabolic other on whom the failure to transition to perfection could be pinned on. Any success in moving towards this perceived perception creates a sense of break from the peers and contributes to the sense of being an outsider in one's own land, a feeling that Pamuk and his fictional peer Ka confesses to experiences among their fellow nationals. But it enables them to imagine a blending of these two worlds or rather a meeting of the best from these two realms.

To Pamuk's credit he identifies *hüzün* as that all-occluding spirit that emanates from everything that went wrong with his country and as the source of all ills that afflict modern Turkey. It is the reason that his country could not move on to a better tomorrow and a product of that failure as well, at once. It is that horizontal comradeship in his imagined community that links everyone in Turkey despite all perceivable differences. Once he lathers everyone in this black essence, once he lines up everyone under the banner of this shared affliction, he metamorphoses this sense of loss, the unquenchable lacuna, into a collective life-affirming spirit. By recovering the tales and the memory of the past that was lost, Pamuk tweaks the paralyzing melancholy into a nostalgic yearning for a realm that once was.

His invented country is Pamuk's attempt to bridge a generation to the Ottoman tales; an attempt left incomplete by Koçu and Tanpınar, the former is the source and inspiration of his historic tales and the latter is the author whose melancholic sensibility inspired Pamuk to immortalise doomed heroes and swathe his country in melancholic liquor. Pamuk followed Tanpınar in the war to recover and rejuvenate the cultural legacy of the language through his stylistic innovations in narrative and in reviving the use of Arabico-Persian lexicon of the old language. His novels that

combined the Turkish sensibility with the stylistic innovations of the West boosted beyond anyone's imagination the international interest and readership of Turkish novels.

Even though he problematised the East-West doppelganger in his novels, from *The White Castle* (his first novel to be translated into English) to *The Red-Haired Woman*, he doesn't see the East and the West as opposites that won't meet. In a 2017 Reuters interview, when quizzed about whether the Western influence is a threat or a positive influence on Turkey, he clarified to Michael Connor,

> I do not want to bring the East and West together. I essentially want to write poetic, literary observations about the lives of the people in and around Istanbul. And since Istanbul is made up of things from the West, and modernity, and also things that come from traditional cultures, and East, readers think my intention is to "bridge" them. Actually, there are things from East and West that are already harmoniously together in Istanbul. All I do is invent stories about them….My books are about how to be modern without losing your identity.

When Hoja takes the place of the Venetian in *The White Castle*, Pamuk is extending the idea that the East and the West aren't dichotomies as we are made to believe by the Orientalist narratives. The curiosity in the other's life that the Venetian deciphers in Hoja, the need to learn more and be more like his Western doppelganger doesn't pose the usual tensions that the dualities of the East and the West generates in the Turkish cultural arena. From the ensuing clashes of Islamic traditions and European modernity, between the Eastern sensibilities and Western point of view,

Pamuk is synthesising an amelioration of the worlds, cultures, and life as the way forward.

With the Westernisation as the future destination and the glorious Turkish essence of the old as the stabilising and guiding force (a rich historical legacy that is no more the collective shame that the country tried to leave behind but an affirming distinction), he shows the people of his nation and the witnesses outside its borders the promise of a path ahead. Serving as the guiding star in a path of hiccups and road bumps of fundamentalism, nationalism, and invented histories, he saves them from drifting away and losing their path in the mires of East-West, self-other, traditional-modern, Islamic-secular, and similar dichotomies. His interventions inside and for the nation does sit well with his self-appointed role as his nation's ambassador for no writer of Turkey has intervened this magnificently on behalf of his country and in representing its literature on the world stage to direct world interest back to his home country.

Pamuk's attempt is not to bridge the modern and Ottoman Turkey or a nation lost between two continents; it is to debunk invented histories, imagined communities, and to deliver his country and its people from the debilitating doubt of being compared to, looked down up upon, and purveyed by an early bloomer of a West when Turkey along with the rest of the East fell behind after the heydays of the Ottoman Empire. For him, Turkey is not the nation lost between two continents, but an amalgamated entity of both worlds that resonates the polycentric world of Ella Shohat. Bringing together the best of the Ottoman Empire and the ideals of the Kemalist nation, the Turkey of the old and the new are imagined into a possibility, a nation where the conquest and the fall, and the history before and after it cannot be forgotten by a nation born out of the ruins of the resultant empire. Living in the

memories of its glory and finding strength in the memory, Turkey finds a unique identity that could realise the potential for a future where it can come to terms with its place in the world so that the world can remember and admire it for what it has been and what it could be.

The East and the West are as interchangeable as the doppelgangers in *The White Castle*. Once they get to know and share their knowledge and understanding, they are only different in isolation from the other like Hoja and the Venetian were before they met. When Pamuk gets the two worlds to meet and learn each other's ways, he promises deliverance for his nation from the centuries old shame, low self-worth and stereotyping thus qualifying himself for the messianic role he plays for a nation that was relegated into forgetting its history. Turkey could not ask for a better chronicler, representative and saviour.

International interest in Turkish literature had lowered since the nationalists tried to appropriate and censor Turkey's cultural production. Partha Chatterjee identified the power and choice of theatre as the political bandwagon and instrument of nationalist notions in pre-independent India in *Nation and its Discontents.* The novel, for its nascent status in Turkey, (the genre came to Turkey in the last lap of nineteenth century, a handful of years before Turkey's national revival) and its European origins seemed like the apt medium to promote the ideals of the nation. The following decades saw a series of social novels that took the arena to Anatolian villages. Although Yaşer Kemal won international acclaim for *Memed, My Hawk*, his contemporaries failed to sustain that interest, for their nationalist novels had nothing of interest to the international reader beyond the curious slices of Turkish everyday lives. They could not also match the stylistic and narrative acrobatics and the thematic

complexity that the translations of the postmodern narratives from Europe offered for the Turkish reader.

The slump that the novel had gotten into after the march of the nationalist novels that stunted the growth of this new literary form in Turkey was repaired beyond recognition with the entry of Pamuk into the world literary arena with the publication of *The White Castle*. He evolved into the chronicler of Istanbul, the man who linked the 'shadow-less' (as in Toptas' novel) people to their tradition, culture, and collective unconscious.

> When the empire fell, the new republic, while certain of its purpose was unsure of its identity; the only way forward, its founders thought, was to foster a new concept of Turkishness, and this meant a certain cordon sanitaire from the rest of the world. It was an end of the grand polyglot, multicultural Istanbul of the imperial age; the city stagnated, emptied itself out, and became a monotonous, monolingual town in black and white. (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 215)

Pamuk liberated the country from the monotony of the monolingual town and told it of the vibrant world where the *yali*s with their faded paint existed in all its colourful glory. He equipped them with the tools to reimagine the abandoned ghost buildings through the kaleidoscope of Ottoman history and memory. He became the messiah who delivered them from the confines of a purged language and cultural memory and filled the gaps left by the dearth of Oriental tales since the fall of the Ottoman Empire. He turned the negating melancholy of *hüzün* that they shared with their fellow nationals into a life affirming elixir that his readers willingly plunged themselves into, so that they could remember the way things were in the days of yore and remind them

of the promise of the 1980s, of what could have been and could be in a country that was hastily forgetting its faith in modernity. Through his historical narratives, he led his country and its people towards what he believed to be their true and genuine identity, an identity rooted in the history of the great empire of the East and a country found in the promise of Western modernity.

Pamuk's novels are indulgences in the Ottoman past, powerful statements against the purge, but they retain a strong faith in the modernist ideals of the state. Modernisation with a firm conviction in the curative power of the umbilical link to one's roots is Pamuk's notion of Turkish modern existence. Pamuk's attempt as a novelist dabbling in history is to rekindle the modern Turkish reader's ties with the Ottoman past and to strengthen the Westernised views as the way forward for the Turkish republic.

> To see the city in black and white is to see it through the tarnish of history: the patina of what is old and faded and no longer matters to the rest of the world. Even the greatest Ottoman architecture has a humble simplicity that suggests an end-of-empire melancholy, a pained submission to the diminishing European gaze and to an ancient poverty that must be endured like an incurable disease; it is resignation that nourishes Istanbul's inward-looking soul. (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 38)

To move forward, one needs to make peace with the past, so that the very past could one day be a source of strength and inspiration. Pamuk's fictional world makes it possible for the Turkish individual to do exactly that. The Ottoman relic that they encountered in every turn of the road was a debilitating sight to the İstanbullus, eliciting that paralyzing passion, *hüzün*, "the end-of-empire melancholy" (Ibid.).

The *yali*s and old architecture that punctured the cityscape were, until Pamuk, painful reminders of the days that were gone, of a glory that ended and a depressing jolt into the reality that the Turkey that they lived in was poorer, politically insignificant and of not much interest to the outside world. Every building hidden behind the black and faded patina could remind the İstanbullu of what could have been if it all hadn't ended the way it did. The history that happened between the walls of those buildings were forgotten thanks to laborious purging efforts of the nationalisation drives that was overly happy to delink the nation from its Ottoman past and help it forget/ tweak the unpleasant narratives. Like the faded colours on the Ottoman buildings, those tales too were faded from the cultural memory, leaving behind the black patina and blacked out narratives, emanating only *hüzün*, that all-encompassing black passion.

Pamuk gave a new lease of life to those stories, reinventing latent memories, resurrecting histories that were elided by the overzealous nationalist, and made the İstanbullu relive the days of glory and grandeur whenever s/he chanced upon another one of those relics in the cityscape. Pamuk's endeavour made it possible for the Turkish individual and for the world audience to see the nation through the colourful kaleidoscope of Ottoman grandeur. The crumbling *yali*s were transformed from abandoned ruins to mysterious castles where a thousand Ottoman tales unfurled. The *hüzün* that was until then a debilitating pain emanating from an eternal sense of loss metamorphosed into that collective nostalgia mingled with pride of the lost glory, something that they could cherish in and the world can understand.

The validating European gaze that focused on the shameful (as perceived by the people who assembled for the Hotel Asia conference in *Snow*) poverty could now acknowledge the people of Turkey as the proud inheritors of the Ottoman heritage

that they very much are. From shameful reminders of the past in the collective memory, the relics were reimagined as remnants of a splendid heritage, thanks to a storyteller who chose to dabble in the nation's history.

From a nation reeling under poverty and political instability and a people who naturalised failure as impending and inevitable, Pamuk's Turkey became a nation that was glorious and a people who were the inheritors of a legacy. Pamuk shifted the gaze and the focus from the misery and melancholy to grandeur and hope – the grandeur that the past had and the hope for what could be possible for the inheritors of a rich legacy with their faith in the scope of modernity. He also made them realise through the amelioration of the East and the West that they aren't much dissimilar.

Pamuk held a full-length mirror to his nation, wiping it clean of the forgetfulness of nationalism and the shade of Orientalism, and made it recognise and perceive itself with all its glory and darkness, the strengths and the flaws, the Ottoman grandeur and the Armenian killings alike, so that it could reimagine itself better. He made his country and its people believe in their potential to move forward, empowered and educated by the past, in the fashion of a true messiah leading his believers onward in a journey of hope, to reimagine themselves and their nation. He also shows them how of it through the imagined community that he fashioned through his texts.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

> "…our four melancholic writers (sic) conjured old Istanbul out of its ruins… their starting point is that beauties of the past are lost forever." (Pamuk, *Istanbul* 102)

Orhan Pamuk's fiction is an attempt to paint Istanbul in all its grandeur, to conjure the beauties of the past from the ruins, the discarded texts and from that odd narrative/ artwork that till then managed to elude the historian. They show him to be that master conjurer who outshined all who preceded him in the act. Pamuk managed to almost single-handedly invoke the interest of international translators and publishers for his country's literature. The world fell in love with his Istanbul and poured into the titles of Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, Elif Şafak and Hasan Ali Toptas, enticed by the promise shown by Pamuk. It sees him as the mouthpiece of Turkey and his interventions on behalf of his country is received with rapt attention and media time.

When a writer becomes the face and (often the sole) representative of his country, his/ her political and literary statements acquire a seriousness that could multiply and go beyond the initial implications than the writer him/herself would have fathomed. Pamuk's words and silences, his select retelling of Turkish histories, the role he plays in and outside his novels, all could not but help becoming grave political statements. It is in this light that I decided to analyse Orhan Pamuk's fiction and the conversations that he holds with his nation.

After placing Orhan Pamuk in the Turkish literary cannon and reviewing the significant literature on him in the first two chapters, I investigated in the Third

Chapter, “Under the Western Eyes: Western (Mis) Conceptions on a Transcontinental Nation”, the influence of Oriental narratives of Turkey on the Istanbul’s psyche and on Pamuk’s fiction. With the establishment of the modern Turkish nation in 1923, Turkey left behind its Ottoman ways and started looking toward the West for inspiration. The language reform and the purged history denied access to the past to later generations of the Turkish populace. So the Turkish perception of Ottoman Turkey is based heavily on the travel narratives of Western travellers. For the contemporary Turkish individuals whose links to their past is severely damaged by the language reforms, and are living in the memory of a fallen empire, these narratives offered comfort and escape from the dullness of everyday life. Their Oriental flavour and the pictures of old Turkey that these narratives presented to the later readers engendered a sense of melancholy and a sense of shame for the diluted present in the İstanbullu.

Pamuk addressed this dearth of Turkish narratives and succeeded in even eclipsing the memory of the Oriental narratives to create an image of Turkey that takes away the harsh judgement of the Oriental eyes. He helped the İstanbullu to remember the lost city and the bygone era in all its grandeur even though he was heavily indebted to the Western chroniclers for those images of Turkey that he recreated in his texts. Pamuk is able to make Turkey the cynosure of all eyes in a messianic fashion through his novels, and especially through *Istanbul*. The problem with this representation, I found, is that Pamuk also falls for the Orientalist distortions that the Western travellers were prone to. In his attempt to present Turkey in a manner that is at once delectable to the Western and the Turkish readers alike, he presents a narrative that accentuates the past glory while presenting the contemporary reality as bleaker. He is not aware of the double break that ensues where his Westernised

Easterner in an attempt to represent his people to the West falls into the trappings of Orientalist influences. He imagines the Ottoman and contemporary Turkey as dichotomies where the new is a desolate shadow of the old one. For the Western reader it is now a nation that is diminished considerably that it can never be a threat to the West like the Ottoman Sultanate. For the Turkish reader, the dreariness of the present creates a need to wallow in despair in the memory of the colourful city that is hidden in the relics and old texts.

Chapter Four, "Mending a Patchwork Quilt: Attending to the Fissures and Appendages in the Fabric of Turkish History", is an analysis of the selection of historic tales that Orhan Pamuk chooses to resurrect from their erased and silenced corners and the politics of that choice. Pamuk is able to recover the lost and forgotten histories and the alternate versions of the official narratives of a few historical events thanks to a passionate devotion to the search of lost stories in the manner of the Turkish encyclopaedist, Resat Ekrem Koçu. He skilfully repairs the fabric of Turkish history with quirky and curious tales that were either lost or deleted from the palimpsest that Turkish history became after rewritings by the historians of different reigns and by the whimsical cleansings carried out by vigilante nationalists. The choicest of stories he revives or replaces reveal them to be literary resistances against an increasingly authoritarian power and its nationalistic crusades. They are serious political statements against the state-sponsored silences that send thousands behind bars and created legal trouble for the author. They reveal the dissident facet of Pamuk that his readers encountered in his political novel, *Snow.* It is a deft and responsible use of his power as the representative of Turkey for he cannot collude in the delinking and silencing of the Turkish past.

By blurring the lines between fact and fiction, he manages to tiptoe away from potential persecution for denigrating the nation. The invented and propagandist versions of history are carefully subverted with alternate, silenced and relegated truths that were deemed shameful or hurting to the new identity of Turkey by the nationalists. He anchors in the relegated truths by presenting them along with accepted facts under the pretext of the litterateur's freedom to mix fact with fiction. A thread of an inherent distrust of history and narrative runs through most of his works: in *Snow* it is achieved through a newspaper that forces events into existence, in *My Name is Red* and *The Black Book*, it is done through the trope of the unreliable narrator. He also blurs the distinction between the real and the fictional by inserting himself in the narrative in *Snow*. With the discussion on "the conquest" and "the fall" he questions the agency of history as well. He successfully pits realism of minute details of an event against the authenticity of grand narratives, making the readers aware of the existence of the subtexts in the palimpsest. The alternate tales also help him mend a few fissures in the megalith of Turkish history, which suffered quite a few cracks and chinks from the language reforms and state-sponsored purges, to make it decipherable once more.

Chapter Five, "A House of Mirrors: The Self, the Other and the Outsider in Orhan Pamuk's Turkey" talks about the position with respect to Turkey that Pamuk adopts in his novels and in his literary conversations. I find that his Nişantaş upbringing and the erudite passion for history has made him look differently at the notions of the other in Turkish psyche. His access to the rich and vibrant histories of his nation enlightens him to demythify the imagined unity of the new found nation and the horrors that ensued from stamping the weaker sections of the nation as the other. The dangers of Turkish nationalism and Pamuk's resistances against its

crushing nature is studied in detail to find that the notion of and the fascination with the other is a norm in this fallen empire.

Pamuk approaches the question of the other through the tropes of the doppelganger and through that of the stranger coming home to a once familiar place. Pamuk's characters often survive through coveting and appropriating someone else's identity; be it Hoja, Galip or Fazıl. Inventing an other and seeking to keep them out is a pet cause of nationalism and in Turkey with its many conquests and ethnic mosaic, there is a lot of buried distrust for the other. Pamuk is also able to broach on the issue of ethnic persecutions in Turkey with the help of the outsider looking in. Inventing an enviable other who could be blamed for everything, from the failure of the empire to the failure of modernisation and Westernisation, is resorted to quite often in this transcontinental nation and had resulted in violence towards the perceived other. Embattling day to day failures and coveting someone else with better luck, especially someone who is at once similar and different to oneself, seem part of the collective unconscious. This othering and the need to appropriate another's identity in Pamuk's Turkey stem from the geo-political, historical and ethnic peculiarities of his nation. The failure of the modernisation drives and the state's knowledge that the nation could not be forced into a single ethnic and linguistic identity transformed the ever present other in Turkey to be perceived as a threat. I found that Pamuk did effectively intervene against this propaganda and is trying to reclaim the other as a mirrored version of the self through his texts.

"Warping Orhan Pamuk's Imagined Community: A Chronicler, an Ambassador, and a Messiah" is the sixth chapter of the thesis; it critiques the image of Turkey that Pamuk puts forward in his novels. Turkey's identity as the nation that is held together by *hüzün* as well as his role as the chronicler and ambassador of that

nation and the powers of intervention it wields are analysed further. While resisting the different imagined communities put forward by the different interested parties, Pamuk, I find, ends up suggesting yet another imagined community in place of the current version. Pamuk insists on telling stories from the past and is fascinated with the Ottoman era to which the populace lost their link thanks to a language purge and the gag orders on mentioning parts of the nation's history. Pamuk makes the nation remember an era of grandeur though his tales while he recovers the political and cultural inheritance of the 1980s through his museum and the book on it.

The imagined community where the spirits of these two periods meet is held together by the comradeship over *hüzün*, a shared communal melancholy. Personal failings are evaluated along with the fall of the empire and the failure to Westernise, with the latter two creating a sense of impending failure in the İstanbullus as well as helping them make that fervent journey toward their own undoing. The victory always appears as faulty or punctured and each of these individuals manages to wallow in the resultant misery that Pamuk identifies as *hüzün*. It brings them together as a nation and is the affirming force in a Turkey that remembers and draws inspiration from the Ottoman glory and looks forward to the promise of Western modernity that they got a taste of in the 1980s. This imagined community is a safe space where the Westerner and the Easterner can achieve complete identity swaps and where the myth of the dissimilarity of the East and the West are debunked as a nation rises up to find its identity that is free from the shame and low self worth at being left out of a continent. Although the thesis finds flaws in these interventions that at times have Pamuk play the self-ordained role of a messiah, a role that tends to overshadow the other voices from his country, I find him to be doing it all in good faith and that he manages to ensure that it doesn't cause his nation much harm and does it quite a lot of good.

I am aware that the study has certain limitations. My unfamiliarity with Turkish and access that is limited only to the translated texts of Pamuk and his fellow writers will make what is lost in translation to remain lost. I will not be able to fully fathom the gravity of the language reforms and the wounds it inflicted on the language and the literary cannon. It will also limit my understanding of Pamuk's intervention against this debilitating action and the stylistic experiments he employed to counter them. I also have only limited access to the Turkish novelistic cannon, only to those novels available in English translation, which may affect my understanding of the cannon. I chose to study the relationship of the writer and the nation for this express purpose for the distance that the limited knowledge of Turkish will offer me a more balanced and non-partisan view of the engagement of the writer with the nation and its identity, unaffected by the nationalist propaganda that a Turkish reviewer may be vulnerable to.

The study opens the scope for a few future questions for potential researchers. A comparison of Pamuk's haphazard narratives that pose problems in their original and in the translations can be attempted by researchers who possess the knowledge of both languages and are interested in the nuances of language and translation. The idea of imitation, the inspiration that Pamuk sourced from the masters and the allegations of plagiarism against him will be quite an interesting study of how culture and cultural memory distinguishes between imitation and inspiration. Ferit Orhan Pamuk's novels will not cease to amaze and raise doubts in the reader-researcher, for he is that mysterious story teller who has mastered the craft of hiding Easter Eggs in his texts and who like a dexterous magician will never quite reveal his hand.

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