

Chapter III

In Search of Lost Wife: Flânerie, Remembrance and the Re-conceptualisation of History in *The Black Book*.

“People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them.”

Stranger in the Village

James Baldwin.

“I shall roam about the city, searching for my beloved, searching for my very past behind every door I open, every opium den I visit, and every gathering of storytellers, every house I find where songs are sung.”

The Black Book

Orhan Pamuk.

“To live, by definition, is not something one learns. Not from oneself, it is not learned from life, taught by life. Only from the other and by death. In any case from the other at the edge of life.

Specters of Marx

Jacques Derrida

Mark Freeman’s considerations of selfhood and subjectivity locates it within the problematic premise of an in-betweenness, where the discursive and the pre-discursive, the empirical and

the residual, the hermeneutic and the experiential co-habit. Freeman observes that the self is “the most unusual and elusive being” and subsequently a “limit case” (*Rewriting* 5). The limit involved is an ever-pervading inability of the self to determine the essence of selfhood. Defining the self involves an interpretive enterprise where the “subject and object are one” (5) and where the materiality of the interpreted is never in split from the event and poetics of interpretation. The material of interpretation in the formulation of selfhood involves the historic. The historic can never retain its sovereignty from the enterprise of interpretation. It is nourished by interpretation and its significance is a febrile event that is considerably influenced by the hermeneutics-poetics of interpretation. Paradoxically, the perspective of interpretation is indebted to the material being of the lived. Freeman captures this nuance pervading the self as he reflects:

When we try to interpret something outside of ourselves, be it a text or a painting or a person, there is something *there* before us: words or splashes of paint or actions. But what really is *there* when the object of our interpretive endeavors is ourselves? Our pasts, you might answer, the history of our words and deeds. But are these pasts, these histories, suitably compared to that which exists outside ourselves? They are *our* pasts, *our* histories, and are in that sense inseparable from who is doing the interpreting, namely ourselves: subject and object are one. We are thus interpreting that which, in some sense, we ourselves have fashioned through our own reflective imagination. (*Rewriting* 5-6)

This elaborate quote provides the necessary premise to conceptualise the self as a nuanced and contested co-habitation of the recollected and the interpreted, the materialised and the implicated. As such, the self becomes an abstraction that is premised but not contained within the real. The real and the lived is not rendered redundant, yet they need the necessary complementation of the interpretive. The retrospective invocation of the lived is a ploy through

which the material order is recognised. This recognition however does not involve an unproblematically authentic rendering of the occurred that is contained within the material order of immanence. Freeman observes:

The self, after all, is not a thing; it is not a substance, a material entity that we can somehow grab hold of and place before our very own eyes...Is it therefore nothing, save what we ourselves conjure up in those moments of reverie when we wish to make sense of experience? (*Rewriting* 12)

Freeman's engagement with the ontic substantiates a subjectivity that is fundamentally contingent and which doesn't exist beyond the temporality that it has evoked. Being and the consciousness of being which is embodied in the remembered and interpreted conjecture of the self is essentially a temporal enterprise. This temporality however, doesn't suffice to contain subjectivity. For its sustenance and nourishment, it must retrospect and harp upon the lived. It is necessary to allocate the self within a lineage that constitutes his experiential. Thus, the spectre of past is invoked, which "charts that 'upward' trajectory whereby one has managed, despite the trials and travails that have come one's own way, to prevail, to come into being" (*Rewriting* 13). This is precisely the essence of the poetics of presence which the historical asserts even in its absence. The historical, which contextualises an occurrence within the considerations of the temporal, presupposes the absence of the occurring from the temporality of the contemporaneous. In other words, the claim to the historic is usually charted in a *happenedness* of the happening (*emphasis mine*). The rudimentary consideration of the historic is thus constituted in an empirico-experiential absence. However, the absence is not suggestive of a non-being and the being of the historic is paradoxically constituted in absence, it is a presence in absence. Ranjan Ghosh reflects:

The past becomes immovable; it affects and influences the way we think of our present; it loses its pastness and chimes with the breath of our everyday existence. This, thus, rescribes our everyday discourse with the affect and pull of ‘presence’. (*Lover’s Quarrel* 11)

The everyday intimacies of the historic, to go by Ghosh’s lines, are not suggestive of a situatedness that is in removal from the situation of the contemporary and the instantaneous. They are rather convolutions and eases, harmonies and tensions- which constitute the cogito and its consciousness, often lingering as a trace and presences which can be comprehended and experienced only/ even in absentia. While they are enticements which are premonitory, they are also exclusive and often non-regulated, bearing a secretive index that unfolds a heterogeneous and non-identical order of meaning. This heterogeneity of the implications that the everyday order of historicity contains is beyond the institutionalised order of history. It is discontinuous and non-charted, febrile and fertile, lingering as an entropic surplus. The entropic constitution of the proximal histories of everyday is inevitably re-posed within an immanence of finitude, unfolding and unravelling a meaning that is often in deference with the experiential reality of consciousness and its subsequent endeavours of representation. This consciousness of the everyday historicalities in turn problematises the finitudes of the self. The interpellation of the self by its awareness of that which persists as a spectre, in an ahistoric historicity, inevitably foregrounds the idea of the hauntic.

In his Exordium to *Specters of Marx*, Jacques Derrida observes that the hauntic is constituted by ghosts, “...certain others who are not present, nor presently living, either to us, in us, or us...”, those who are “...beyond all living present” (*Spectres* xviii). Being with(in) the hauntic is characteristic of an ethics that is profoundly associated with “learning to live...with ghosts”, which Derrida playfully entices as “To live *otherwise*” (xviii *emphasis mine*). For Derrida, living other-wise involves a “being-with specters”; a state of hyphenation/ febrility that involves

“a politics of memory, of inheritance and of generations” (xviii). To live within the consideration of memory and the mnemonic involves a being with-in the intimacy of the other.

Phenomenology posits the self in a perilous proximity of the other and increasingly nuances the undisputed recognition of the cogito as transcendental. Edmund Husserl disregards the claim to “transcendental realism” of the ego as an “absurd position” (*Cartesian* 24) and instead distinguishes the constitution of consciousness (i.e. subjective consciousness) into cogito and cogitationes. Cogitationes for Husserl is the “flowing conscious life in which the identical Ego (mine, the mediator’s) lives” (31) and the consideration of the cogito is not restricted to the idea of an enclosed sovereign and self-sufficient consciousness. For Husserl, cogito is a “conscious process” (33) which is always related, within a reflective economy, with an outside-exterior, that which supersedes the self and its agency. Husserl observes:

In changeable harmonious multiplicities of experience I experience others as actually existing and, on the one hand, as world objects...as “psychophysical” Objects, they are “*in*” the world...On the other hand, I experience them at the same time as subjects for this world, as experiencing it (this same world that I experience) and, in so doing, experiencing me too, even as I experience the world and others in it. (91)

The Husserlian notion of the self (that is fundamentally construed in reflection) is an inter-subjective agency where “within myself...I experience the world (including others)—and according to its experiential sense, not as (so to speak) my private synthetic formation but as other than mine alone...And yet each has his experiences, his appearances and appearance-unities, his world phenomenon.” (*Cartesian* 91)

The paradox locates the self within a spectral presence of the Other and it is within the trope of inter-subjectivity that the self becomes a spectral truth. Although Derrida doesn’t “hasten to

determine” the spectre as “self, subject, person, consciousness, spirit, and so forth”, nevertheless the spectre to him is a “tangible intangibility of a proper body without flesh” (*Spectres* 6). The absence of flesh is suggestive of a non-vitality and yet the body allocates the spectre its persistence within an immanence. Collin Davis, in his discussion of Derrida’s Hauntology, observes:

Hauntology supplants its near-homonym ontology, replacing the priority of being and presence with the figure of the ghost as that which is neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive. Attending to the ghost is an ethical injunction insofar as it occupies the place of the Levinasian Other: a wholly irrecuperable intrusion in our world, which is not comprehensible within our available intellectual frameworks, but whose otherness we are responsible for preserving. (“Hauntology” 373)

The intrusion and subsequent trace of the *other* (*emphasis mine*) within the self, locates it (the self) as an inter-subjective event. The indebtedness of the self to the other is not just nominalised within the parameters of temporalised identity. Instead, the hauntings of the other are perpetual traces, which are discontinuous and eruptive in form of a return. The return is suggestive of a reconciliation with the pre-ontic which is ambiguously, never in dissociation from the ontological disposition of the self. Derrida observes:

...we feel ourselves being looked at by it, outside of any synchrony, even before and beyond any look on our part, according to an absolute anteriority (which may be on the order of generation, of more than one generation) and asymmetry, according to an absolutely unmasterable disproportion. (*Spectres* 6-7)

The lived and the ontological constitution of the self is everlastingly haunted by the anterior, which is a relational truth, holding the traces of the other. The reflective disposition of

consciousness that foregrounds the possible claims of subjectivity and agency inevitably invites a relational and precedent ideal which is perpetually indebted to the inter-subjective and antecedent other. The claim to the lived is thus posited in a perpetual deferral, where the reflective is in removal from the revoked. It is both within and without the reflective economy of the self, premised within the nuanced paradigm of the interior-exterior.

The flâneur is able to linger in the exterior and the interior in simultaneity and in this co-habitation, the flâneur takes a turn towards a paradigmatic hybridity of being. Walter Benjamin identifies the Arcade as the perfect habitus of the flâneur and comments that it is in the vibrant openness of the Arcade that the flâneur finds his “home” (“Paris” 68). Benjamin describes the Arcade as “...a city, even a world, in miniature” (68) and observes that the flâneur internalises this open and the unfamiliar and habits the outside-other at ease:

The street becomes a dwelling for the flâneur; he is as much at home among the facades of houses as a citizen is in his four walls. To him the shiny, enamelled signs of businesses are at least as good a wall ornament as an oil painting is to a bourgeois in his salon. The walls are the desk against which he presses his notebooks; news-stands are his libraries and the terrace of cafes are the balconies from which he looks down on his household after his work is done. (“Paris” 68-69)

The sense of home for the flâneur is poised within a predominant prominence of outside. To belong is to co-habit with the other and Keith Tester observes that an integral aspect of flânerie involves “being-with-others” (*Flâneur* 8) This other is not specific to a person or place and is instead suggestive of anything that exceeds the accomplishments of agency. This excess-other however is not an absolute exterior that is alien to consciousness; rather it entices the consciousness with a promise of the familiar. Paradoxically though, the familiar is also not an absolutely contained and appropriated habitual. It is constituted not by a predictable and

comprehended perception of the outside but contains an ever escaping unknown-excess that is revealed within a perceptive and reflective economy of experience and interpretation.

It is this paradoxical desire to contain the aura of the unknown and be evaded by it, which problematically locates the flâneur in a status of ambiguity. Charles Baudelaire expresses this dichotomy in his famous analogy between the flâneur and the child where the child, much like the flâneur, “sees everything as a novelty; the child is always drunk” (*Painter* 14). This notion of novelty is characteristic to the flâneur, for him reality unfurls an aura that is unprecedented. Yet this unprecedented is not alien; it is symptomatic of the usual lure that the ecstasy of the exterior posits before the flâneur. What is interesting is that the flâneur is a habitual component of the urban order; he is not essentially a migrant for whom the cityscape is an absolute other. His ritual enactments of belonging are essentially urban-centric where the “crowd is his domain” (15). Yet, the metropolis and the familiar concoction of the urban experience “is an event that makes the arrival of the other possible” (Damai, “Messianic” 70). The possible arrival of the other haunts the self with the premonition of an (un)belonging, where the familiar can evolve as the alien, the place can turn towards “placeness” (Derrida, *Hospitality*, 74). It is in this state of (un)belonging that the flâneur belongs, he is at home when he is un-homed, both in terms of the spatial and the epistemic.

The present chapter locates the poetics of (un)belonging in Galip, the protagonist of Orhan Pamuk’s novel, *The Black Book*. The chapter engages with the epistemic tension that pervades in this interplay of being (at) home and unhomed where to be at home is to complacently belong within a ritualised habitation of the familiar. Through a close reading of Galip’s quest of his disappeared wife Ruya, the chapter substantiates Galip as the flâneur turned historiographer who constantly retrospects into the excess that has escaped unperceived and which can evolve as a possible explanation of his wife’s absence. In doing so, Galip reassesses the lived-familiar

and his engagement with the ritualised-lived in the novel is contextualised within a perpetual estrangement. For him, the familiar is not an absolutely comprehended and essentialised reality. Instead, it contains a possible entropy that is non-ritualised and non-hermeneutic in essence. Unveiling this entropy demands an un-being of the self, an epistemic and performative gesture which Galip accomplishes in his impersonation of Celal Salik, the columnist and half-brother of his wife Ruya. Like the flâneur, becoming is being for Galip. The materialised present holds an incomplete significance for him. Instead, they are signs which allude Galip into a further play of signification. The stasis of a blissful reconciliation with Ruya is ceaselessly delayed as Galip lingers within the ecstasy of symbols and signs, clues and traces that constitute his quest of Ruya, both within remembrance and reality. The signs and traces are not merely *means to end (emphasis mine)* in his quest. Instead, the end is deferred and entangled within the aura of means, Galip becomes the flâneur who engages with the familiar order of the experienced and the lived, only to be re-situated within an alternative consciousness of reality. His reclamation of the lived is also not characterised by an unconditional trust. Instead, his remembrance is juxtaposed against doubts and apprehensions. The past thus revoked is polymorphic which engrosses the self with the allure of an un-reclaimable excess. Galip, the detective in search of his wife is lost; lost in the modus operandi of detection which has now taken a turn towards the experiential. The experiential is not in split from experience, yet with every passing moment the repertoire of the experienced and the lived is problematised by the interventions of speculation and fancy. Paradoxically however, the substantial and material premises of the lived are never unproblematically dismissed or rejected for the imagined. The material history of the lived is the base that hosts the contemplations of an alternative understanding of reality. It is on the lived that the prerogatives of possibilities are contained.

Published in 1990 and translated in 2006, Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* has attracted critical attention owing to the multifarious implications of interpretation that it contains and disseminates. Sevinc Turkkkan observes that the interpretive dimensions of the novel is heterogeneous and scholars have read it as "a theory of the postmodern novel, a bildungsroman, a picaresque novel, a detective novel, an encyclopedic novel, an experiment in innovation of the Turkish language and syntax, a cultural history of Istanbul, a quest in the tradition of mystical Islam, and an elaborate mediation on identity" ("Kara Kitap" 159). The plot is interspersed with meanings and metaphors, images and impressions, episodes and epiphanies which constantly nuance and disorient the hermeneutic heresies of the novel. Disrupting the synchronous unfolding of realism as a trope, the novel simultaneously infuses the traits of realism with the postmodern tendencies in novel writing. The positing binaries between the self and the other, the home and the city, the historic and the proximate dissolve in Galip's quest of his missing wife. The limits of realism are constantly nuanced by the enfolding of Ruya's absence within a greater consciousness of absence that is pre-discursive to Galip and his personal catastrophe. Instead, absence is emphasised in the novel as the precarious fate of Istanbul "where the great question of our time" (Pamuk, *Black* 182) inevitably pertains to a quest of the authentic that has been substituted, predominated and misconceptualized by the simulacral and the derivative. The consciousness of absence that haunts Galip is suggestive of a greater consideration of absence that engulfs the ethico-politico-cultural order of Istanbul. As such, the narrative design of the novel is a curious interspersal of chapters describing Ghalip's quest of Ruya with the columns that Celal publishes in the newspaper *Milyet*. Much of these columns attempt to address the greater questions, issues and considerations pertaining to the inauthentic and in-ecstatic community life of Turkey. Sibel Irzik observes:

the novel's many fanatics of authenticity characterize Istanbul as the site of a Westernization conspiracy that makes it impossible for its citizens to be themselves, to lead lives unscripted by "hidden hands." Involved in self-destructive, paradoxical quests for uniqueness, for identities that are not imitations, they seek the unity they desire in an escape from the city. ("Istanbul" 731)

The absent in the novel is the authentic-primordial and it is the relentless quest of the absent and the endeavours to reclaim it which make the present meaningful. In other words, the material reality of the present is empty and non-vital. Being in the present becomes a meaningful enterprise only when it is refurbished with the possibility of containing a trace that can reclaim the authentic. To engage with the present meaningfully becomes synonymous with a consciousness of those traces that suggest *other presences (emphasis mine)* within the present. These *other presences* are suggestive of an alternative ritual of existence that is not un-historic but is confounded within an alternative order of history and historical significance.

Hence, presence becomes a fundamental consideration in the novel. There are presences which are simulacral, presences which pertain to remembrances, presences that are essentially allied with representation and traces of presence that constantly nuance the essence of selfhood. In this heterogeneous assemblage of the perplexities of presence, the segmented binaries of the singular and the collective, the self and the other, the subject and his habitus constantly overlap and intersperse in an exclamation that complement the voices of the singular. The interrelated co-habitations foreground an idea/ essence of subjectivity which increasingly nuance the singular and it is the persistence and subsequent poesis of presence that formulates the notion of a derived order of subjectivity. Eelco Runia observes:

‘Presence’ in my view, is ‘being in touch’- either literally or figuratively- with people, things, events, and feelings that made you into the person you are...it is fully realizing things instead of just taking them for granted. (*Moved* 53)

Runia’s understanding of presence locates the self in an inter-subjective consideration where any claim to selfhood is deeply determined by a rumination of the other. More importantly, this trace of the other doesn’t necessarily allude to the contemporaneous. Instead, presence is suggestive of a historicity/ happenedness. Runia points out that presence is “a symptom..of the fact that our past...though irremediably gone—may feel more real than the world we inhabit” (*Moved* 54). To be conscious of presence is thus suggestive of a consciousness that is deeply considerate of history. The habitations of the other that presence validates involve a recognition of that which is not necessarily contained within the instantaneous. Recognition of the other and its presence is an essentially reflective act, where the temporal order is increasingly nuanced by the invocation of a past lived and realised. Such recognitions of the past involve “an explicit rejection of discursive theory” (Kleinberg, “Absentia” 11) and a realisation of the materiality of the presence. The claim to materiality demands an active engagement of the subject with the historic outside the hermeneutics of representation. History is no longer an occurred that exist in a temporal distinction from the present. Instead, the recognition with the trace accords the past a materialised persistence. The ontological stature of the self is subsequently premised in a temporal heterogeneity where the impressions of the happened are poised in simultaneity with the happening. The self emerges not as a being but in becoming, carrying within it the impressions that are pre-temporal and are hence suggestive of a fluid and dynamic nature of agency.

Galip, in the novel, is enthralled by presences and it is his consistent awareness of presence that increasingly posits his being within a greater dynamics of becoming. Simultaneously, his

engagement with presences, also emplace the other within a greater consideration of a derived subjectivity. The other is not an empirically validated personage that is *out there* (*emphasis mine*)—substantiated and contained within a manifested materiality of being and inhabiting a temporality. Instead, the other is also an assemblage, enmeshed and entangled within a derivative order of trace, produced within the tendencies of relativism. Reasoning the other thus demands a peep into the metonymic historicity of the other, premised upon the dichotomous disposition of invention and storage. Runia observes that this interplay of invention and storage amalgamates the surface that has been “taken for granted” with what “was left behind” (*Moved* 15). It is not just the face of the other which constitutes the essence of the other. The face is simultaneously a discursive truth, formulated and derived in origin. It is this re-conceptualisation of the other as not a subject of immanence but “a radical, primary opening to the Other conceived as ontologically anterior to the construction of identity” (Badiou, *Ethics* 19) which draws the historically confined self into a history of the other. The other pre-dates the self and to trace the other demands a consciousness of the derivative purview that has consistently asserted the becoming essence of the other.

Galip’s consciousness of the other as a formulated subject of inter-relational contingencies and derivatives is hinted at the very opening of the novel. He is not just conscious of the other; simultaneously he is also curious of the psychic interplays that haunt the other. The sleeping Ruya makes him curious of “the wondrous sights playing in her mind” (*Black* 3) and Galip is haunted by the possible presences which constitute Ruya’s memory. As the third person narrator informs us:

It was not the already identified apparitions he most dreaded but the insinuating male shadows he could never have anticipated.” (3)

The unanticipated foregrounds the self's apprehension of the other and thus problematically positions the other in an economy of estrangement before the self. The other is not a pre-comprehended subject before the self whose intricacies of the lived are already interiorised and familiarised facts for the self. The historicity of the other is not a habited reality of the self. Instead, it is perilously poised with an unacquainted and incomprehensible excess, which can only be speculated by the self. The surplus or the excess is the untameable essence of the other and it is only through a premonition of this excess that the other can sustain its sovereignty within the reflective economy of the self. The historicity of the other thus arrives as a history of difference and exclusion, enticing the self yet estranging him, positing its historicity within an irreducible singularity.

These enticements are intensely irresistible when the other inhabits the everyday rituals of intimacies of the self and belongs to the worldliness of the self. Pheng Cheah, arguing in the lights of Heideggerian phenomenology, observes:

Worldliness is the constitutive ontological structure of our existence. It refers to our original openness to other beings, our transportability toward other beings...The world is not something separate from us in the initial instance...The world's primary reality is that of nonobjectivity. (*World* 98)

The unapprehended excesses that trace and frame the historicity of the other are then, within an inter-subjective consideration of worldliness, potential nuances that influence and affect the historicity of the self. The presence of the other significantly contribute to the historicity of the self, "whatever it does or doesn't do, experiences or doesn't experience, says or leaves unsaid" (Granel cited in Luc Nancy, *Sense* 1) have a correlational affective eminence with the self and its being-in-the-world. This world is significantly premised upon the lived habitations and realities of the self.

The Other emerges as a conditioned subject within the economy of the self and Ruya's immanent identity as *Galip's wife* (*emphasis mine*), locates her in a limit before the reflective economy of Galip. Hence, her own irreducible intimacies of being, which Galip is unaware of, increasingly problematise Galip's agency and consciousness. Galip ponders upon the dreams that Ruya is dreaming in the very opening of the novel and is significantly reminded of Celal's observation in one of his columns in *Miliyet*, "Memory...is a garden" (*Black* 3). The sleeping Ruya tempts Galip with an irresistible urge to ponder upon her mnemonic disposition.

Without denying the patriarchal tendencies that such ponderings of Galip exhibit, one can indulge upon the other implications which underline the self's (Galip) interest in the mnemonic disposition of the other (Ruya). The mnemonic and memory is influential in according agency to the self and is intimately associated with "identity related pursuits" (Loytomaki, *Law* 4). This correspondence with identity that memory posits involves "thinking and practising the arrangement of (my) multiple being" (*Ethics* 52). Avishai Margalit in her introspections on the ethics of memory observes that remembrance is deeply intertwined with reliving. To re-live is to reconstitute one's being and the practice of remembering re-members (reconstitutes) the self within a non-singularity that is significantly discontinuous. The remembering self is poised as a discontinuity, containing within itself other impressions-impersonations of being.

Ruya's indulgences of memory locate her within a framework of discontinuity where she is not just contained within her materiality of being. Simultaneously, her immanent identity as Galip's wife is an inescapable material and inter-subjective truth. As such, the discontinuities that pervade her being and becoming are liable to synchronically influence the self (Galip). Ruya's interplay of mnemonics is thus not Ruya's alone; it also shares an affective relationality with the historicity of Galip.

With Ruya's disappearance, the affective relationality of the other overrules the self. The preoccupation of the self becomes a preoccupation of the intimate other and the reconsideration of the lived transform into inexhaustible attempts which strive to draw out the last impressions of the other. Remembrance transforms into a meditated discourse where ruminations are purposeful practices; engaged with the deliberation to unfurl the "temporal index" which Walter Benjamin observes as a "secret agreement" that the present has with the past ("Theses" 254). For Benjamin, the past "is citable" (254), bearing significance to the occurrences in the contemporaneous present.

Thus, Galip begins to ponder upon the last conversation that he has had with his wife before her disappearance to trace the possibility which might explain to him her absence as an anticipated and not an unprecedented and asynchronous occurrence. The meditations upon the lived become interpretive endeavours to experience the entropy of the past that do not merely sustain within a contextualised materiality of occurrence. Galip, remonstrating the telephonic conversation, begins to "wonder if he'd really heard that yawn, if he'd really heard anything they'd said" (*Black* 23). Ruya's words acquire "new meanings" and Galip infers that "the person I was speaking to was not Ruya at all but someone else" (23). This apprehension of the essence of the other is liable to an unproblematic denial to the other its alterity. It is suggestive of an absolute and unquestionable dependence of the self on the pre-formulated and a historicised conceptualisation of the other. The lived-historic and the infringement of the experiential seem to contain the self within an inescapable condition of immanence where the other is a habitual and thus a historically synchronous truth. The exigencies and the limits of the lived condition the self with a denial of the promiscuous other; the other which is not in lineage with the self's habituated perception of the other. The discontinuous other which is not in synchrony with the everyday order of historicity of the self can never exist; the self denies

(or is in the verge of denying) such *other* (*emphasis mine*) other its material-ontological possibility. Alain Badiou observes that “The dialectic of the Same and the Other, conceived ontologically under the dominance of self-identity...ensures the absence of the Other in effective thought, suppresses all genuine experience of the Other, and bars the way to an ethical opening to alterity” (*Ethics* 18-19). Galip’s elementary inference that uncritically dismisses the other as inauthentic arrives as an impediment to the genuine experience of the other. What is suggestive of this urge to dismiss is a failure to locate the other in lineage with the habitualised and ritualised other who is historically determined and familiar to the self.

While to exist with-in a consciousness that is historically determined and nominalised is characteristic of the cogito; the flâneur nourishes the potency to abandon “the positive experience of meaning and enchantment” (“Cosmopolitans” 303). The denial of the positivist tendencies and strains of sense making do not merely jeopardise the correlational hermeneutic order that stabilises the signifier-signified liaison. Furthermore, it nuances the discursive subject of positivism; the preoccupied self with an undisputed claim to the order of reason and sense. The undoing of positivism denies subjectivity its fore-being; it instead locates the order of the conscious within a fertile flux of contingency where pre-assertive claims to truth and selfhood cease to exist. Galip’s dubiousity about the authenticity of the other transforms into a self-scepticism that is apprehensive of the certitude of the self:

Later on, he would decide that Ruya had indeed said what he’d originally thought he heard, and that after the telephone call it had been he, and not Ruya, who had changed. (*Black* 24)

Being becomes a discontinuous enterprise for Galip and the order of existence for him is essentially an order of re-remembering. This re-remembering is a turn inwards; it tries to reformulate the essence of selfhood and is critical of the foreknowledge of subjectivity. As such, the ritual/ ordeal of sense making involve not just an exploration of the entangled order of the

lived that is exclusively singular. Simultaneously, it also involves a reconstitution of the self within a relational paradigm that is affective in presence of the other with an evolving essence. The inter-subjective other and its essence is no longer limited to the constructs and conjectures which essentialise a stable and non-contingent identity of the other. Instead, the other emerges as an unapprehended subject, sovereign and vibrant, within a modality of discontinuity.

The cognition of the discontinuous and its relational semantic with the self, demands an interiorisation by the self of the nuances that exceed his understanding of the other. This interiorisation draws the self within a febrile milieu of self-consumption, where what is comprehended constantly jeopardises and is on the verge of obliterating the residues of the material-lived. The lived of the self is constantly poised within an anxious economy of effacement, where the instantaneous ontological essence of the self shares the perennial possibility of a departure. Galip senses an alteration in his own ontological essence:

This new persona had gone on to reinterpret everything he'd heard wrong, everything he'd misremembered. By now his own voice seemed to belong to someone else, ... (*Black* 24)

This departure poses the self within an altered dynamics of lived and bears a paradoxical tension with the historicity of the self. The *remembered* (*emphasis mine*), which constitute the historicity of the self, is susceptible to doubt and non-recognition. However, the element of doubt that accompanies the lived does not essentially strip it off its relevance. Instead, the historical consciousness and remonstrations of the lived serve as the necessary premise of dissection; it is only through a careful interrogation of the lived that the self seeks to interpret the present. It is only that these attempted interrogations problematise an unconditional acceptance of the materialised past. The other suggestions that the past holds become increasingly essential to the self. Hence, the premise of the lived becomes an inescapable yet incomplete foundation; it is indispensable, yet inadequate. A re-cognition of the lived seems

essential, where the occurred can emerge as only a materialised possibility that exists in simultaneity with other non-materialised yet equally possible probabilities. These other non-observed and non-materialised possibilities now claim their pertinence within the historical consciousness of the self.

Hence Galip takes a turn backwards to trace those *other (emphasis mine)* possibilities that co-exist with the lived and which can explain the materialised reality of Ruya's absence. While his quest of Ruya involves a curious *flânerie* across the heterotopic cityscape; it is also curiously interposed with a quest within the historic. The historic is not set up as a distant arena of removal from the temporality of now. Instead, it is a habitation for Galip that involuntarily peeps up in simultaneity with the perception of the exterior. As Galip notices the Palace Theater in his quest of Ruya, he immediately remembers his past visits with Ruya to this place:

Twenty five years ago, Galip and Ruya used to come to this matinee with groups of classmates; they'd stood in this same crowd of pimply children in raincoats, rushed down those same saw-dust covered stairs, and as they'd waited among the posters for coming attractions, each illuminated by its own lights, Galip would quietly, patiently, wait to see who Ruya spoke to. (*Black* 110)

Yet, this remembered and ritualised historic is juxtaposed against a consciousness of the excess that has remained unobserved and unrecognised within the materialised past. As Galip walks into the same theatre and immerses himself in the atmosphere inside, his lack of interest in the movie and his growing epiphanies are suggestive of a recognition of other truths which surpass the limits of materialised memory:

He was not just guessing, he *knew*. Life was an endless string of miseries; if one came to an end there was another waiting around the corner, and if that misfortune became easier to bear,

the next would strike harder, leaving creases on our faces that made us all look alike. (*Black* 110-111)

This excess that is beyond the material manifestation of the lived and which is revealed as a discontinuous novelty within a preceding and familiar/habituated space locate Galip in a perpetual arena of chance. His previously derived conclusion of “whatever meaning a person found in the world, he found by chance” (*Black* 26) finds materialisation in *chance* (*emphasis mine*) realisations that Galip has in already inhabited spaces. The past and the lived are not just exhausted paradigms to him. They are always impregnated with the possibility of a further revelation.

Ruya’s non-materialised presence in the present takes Galip towards the past; not merely as a ploy to cherish the realised actualities of her presence. Instead, his turn towards the past is also an endeavour to trace the premonition of disappearance, a secretive index that has passed unobserved and unregistered by the self and which can be a possible explanation to the eventuality of occurrence. This premonition of the past as a fertile interpretive paradigm that contains the meaning of the present significantly posits the past within the dichotomous tension of inherited disinheritance. While the consciousness of the past and the happened is not to be denied into non-existence; it is also not an unquestionable, concretised certitude which proclaims a nominalised and a mono-significant vision of reality. Significantly, the past for Galip, is not the historian’s “foreign country” (*Lover’s Quarrel* 1) of abstraction that is vitalised in representation. Instead, it is a component of his material being and is constructed upon the impressions of the lived. Re-considering the past is thus not an attempt to unfurl an alternative interpretive paradigm of reality; it is also simultaneously an epistemic attempt to reassess the validity of reality.

It is thus that the flâneur and the historiographer overlap in Galip, who wanders aimlessly through the urban cityscape, re-considering realities that have so long drifted un-meditated into the foreknowledge of being. The poise of reality and the order of the mundane do not pass unobserved by Galip; instead Galip is now engulfed with an ever-growing desire to observe the material-temporal. The material-temporal ceases to exist as a nominalised empirical truth, haunting Galip to look beyond the imperatives of the apparent and the surface. The nineteenword goodbye letter that Ruya has left for Galip becomes insignificant, for what haunts Galip is not the essence of the letter that is materialised within the rational order of language. Instead, Galip's engagement with the letter sustains in a reflective-speculative order where not the materialised letter but the events and circumstantial rituals that constitute the process of materialisation of the letter acquire significance. The finished/ materialised letter is a material ingredient of Galip's lived and Galip is not content in limiting the potencies of his lived within the empirical-real. Instead, his preoccupation lingers with the un-lived yet probable, the happened that have a definitive essence within the paradigm of possibility:

Ruya had written her nineteen-word goodbye letter with the green ballpoint pen that Galip always tried to keep next to the television...Ruya must have used it at the last moment, on her way out the door; she must have thrown it into her bag, thinking, perhaps, she might need it later on...Galip spent a a great deal of time trying to locate the notebook from which she'd torn the paper. (*Black* 48)

The material presence of the letter is increasingly complemented by a greater spectrum of speculation about the process involved in the materialisation of the letter. Hence, the historic value of the letter is not unconditionally contained within the materiality of the letter. In his Introduction to Michel de Certeau's seminal work *The Writing of History*, Tom Conley observes that for the historiographer "speech acts...betray something *other* that their writing cannot

entirely efface” (“Introduction”, *Writing* x). The letter of Ruya, arguably a speech act (since it is intended to be an explanation, for more reference see Barron, *Acquisition* 2003), is performed within a greater historical climate, that which remains in/un-signified in the letter. Yet, this greater historical climate haunts, in form of an excess *other* (*emphasis mine*), the historicity of the letter. Jeremy Ahearne in his analysis of de Certeau’s model of historiography observes that the consideration of the Other in historical understanding is perilously poised within an ambiguity of disclosure and concealment, where the interpreter/ historiographer’s “apprehension of the other which he aspires to understand is both given to him and taken away by a larger Other which, precisely, can never be apprehended as such” (*Michel* 10). de Certeau observes that “The other is the phantasm of historiography, the object that it seeks, honors and buries” (*Writing* 2) and it is the question of the larger, unaccommodated other which constantly nuances the appropriative dynamics of closure that is the strategic telos which historiography aims at. The unaccommodable excess that warrants the other its evasion is constituted by the intricacies which discursively formulate and contribute to the materialisation of the other. It is these rituals that remain undisclosed within the materialised essence of the other and persists as the excess of which the self is speculative, yet inconclusive.

The speculative preoccupation indulging upon the possible enactments and occurrences that exceed the material presence of the letter are suggestive of the ficto-critical tendency that pervades Galip’s engagement with the lived. While the mnemonic ripples of the lived constantly intervene in form of “other little discoveries” (*Black* 49), they refuse to sustain as remembrances. Instead, these remembrances are re-membered, revealing themselves within a careful insight of reflection. What has been lived can no longer be validated within the habitual and complacent order of familiarity. Instead, they are likely to bear the suggestion of a premonition that can redeem the present from its unfamiliar-unhistoric status. Unearthing those

other possibilities contained within the lived can reassert the present within the lineage of history which for the time being has emerged as an estranged reality.

The premonition and apprehension of the unfamiliar turns the familiar world of Galip into a new world where, “Every object in the house, every shadow, took on a new personality; it was like waking up in a new home” (*Black* 51). This estrangement of novelty that Galip experiences within his familiar world is not stripped off from remembrances. Instead, the aura of the undiscovered is foiled against the mnemonic formulations which has the habituated-familiar as its matrix. It is an ecstasy that is contained within the stasis of the lived which is apparently an appropriated reality for the self. The “state of individuation” (Butler, *Undoing* 32) that is accorded to the self on account of his claim to a lived singularity and the reminiscences of it are subsequently problematised by the constant reflective and interpretive interventions of the self into the lived. Such interventions cease to be self-reflexive remonstrations and are inescapably enticed by the remonstrations of the other. These remonstrations posit the remembering self “outside” oneself and the self realises that the exterior of the social world “is already there, laying the groundwork for us” (32). The quest into memory is not necessarily an unproblematic and unidirectional quest of the other. It is also a simultaneous reconstitution of the self. As Galip proceeds in his interpretive ventures of remembrances to locate the historicity of the present, the traces of the other and the limits of the lived; he is now poised with an uncomfortable consideration pertaining to the authenticity of self. Galip diagnoses his usual and habituated experiences of being with Ruya, where “he’d look for reasons to phone Ruya; once or twice a day...” (*Black* 54) and as he carefully scrutinises his rituals of co-habitation with Ruya, the simulacral nature of existence is unveiled before him. The self, with its claim to a sacrosanct materiality of the lived, appears illusive within a world order that is pre-determined and formulated within a simulacral paradigm of existence:

From time to time-in a jealous moment, or a rare burst of happiness-he'd imitate those husbands in Western movies and ask her openly: What did you do all day, what did you do?...But he would never know the strange herbs and ghastly flowers that engulfed this world; like the garden of Ruya's memories, it was closed to him. This forbidden realm was the common subject and target of most radio programs and color supplements, every soap and detergent ad, every photo novel, every news flash from foreign magazine, though none came close to dispelling the mystery that surrounded it. (*Black* 54)

The *mystery* (*emphasis mine*) is constituted by the irreducible essence of the other; the being of the other that is validated and performed in its otherness. This irreducible essence is a secret historicity that lingers as a "lost referential" (Baudrillard, *Simulacra* 31) in the performative world of representation. Representation, almost failingly, promises an exposition of the authentic (absolute real) and which is also, synonymously, historic. Jean Baudrillard observes that the age of simulacra has reduced history to a *lost referential* (*emphasis mine*), where the essence of truth is only a promise, consumed within the fetish for the claim to signify rather than signification. Simultaneously, the hauntings of truth persist and are never rendered irrelevant; the lure of the possibility of revelation haunts the paradigm of representation with a spectral persistence. Baudrillard observes that the objects of representation "shine in a form of hyperresemblance...that makes it so that fundamentally they no longer resemble anything, except the empty figure of resemblance, the empty form of representation" (47). Yet, representation bears the perpetual drive of "historical fidelity, ...a perfect rendering" (50) of that which is construed and validated as authentic/ absolute real. The essence of the authentic persists, even in its non-realisation and as a *presence in absentia* (*emphasis mine*).

To live the authentic, Galip engages in an act of becoming-unbecoming where the ontological residues of being that is constituted by the lived is essentially complemented by a constant urge

to become the other. Significantly, this becoming of the other is in its own way an inter-subjective enterprise. Galip's quest of Ruya and his speculative indulgences that have previously tried to trace Ruya's absence as a potent possibility already contained within the lived, is now poised as discoverable truth. As Galip sits down to enlist all "the people and places" (*Black* 56) that he thinks, are associated, with Ruya's disappearance; he begins to bear an odd resemblance with the detective who has a pertinent presence in Ruya's intimate world of leisure and boredom. The simulacral order of reality poses before Galip an opportunity to unbecome his own material order of existence. He can now resemble Marc Bloch's historian proper, for whom "the will to know" overrides the "will to understand" (Bloch, *Historian's* 10). This knowledge of/ for the past is not in split from the knowledge of the present, instead the "knowledge of the present bears even more immediately upon the understanding of the past" (69). To know the present is not to be stranded within the entrapments of the ego. Instead, it incessantly demands an opening up of the self. This opening up is suggestive of a nourishment by the exterior that is an excess within the economy of understanding. It is not just opening up to the familiarised and ritualised poetics of habitation. Instead, it also involves an experience of the unprecedented and unfamiliarised for which the self must become in simultaneity with unbecoming.

Galip unbecomes the husband to become Ruya's half-brother Celal. This unbecoming however, is not essentially an unconditional stripping off of the material reality of the husband. Instead, this unbecoming is contained and nominalised within the residualities of being. What becomes is only an extension of what is. In other words, Galip's becoming of Celal is not an absolute rejection of his bare and fundamental identity of Galip. The persona of Celal that Galip endorses is not antithetical and counter-positional to his own residual essence of being. Instead, the positional and the counter-positional are trans(in)fused to design a synthetic subjectivity which

enables Galip to inhabit pluralities of being and thought, i.e. both within and without oneself. This liminality is suggested in Galip's desire to be and not be Celal, "...He wanted to be in Celal's place and also to escape him; he wanted to find him and he wanted to forget him" (*Black* 190). Thus begins the persuasion of the other, with-in an altered consciousness of otherness, where the other is not an essentialised object. Instead, becoming the other is a problematic objective that the self is obsessed with.

Galip's becoming of Celal involves not just an exploration of the lived residuals which bear the traces of co-habitation. It simultaneously demands an impersonation where the self doesn't exclusively enact the other within a pre-habited premise of being. Instead, performing the other is based upon an order of re-signification, "working the possibilities" (Tukhanen, "Performativity" 03) that are systematically excluded from the homo-perceptive tendencies of ontic formulation. History and the lived condition the self with a singularity and Galip's becoming-being that is turning towards Celal involves a revision of the interpretive significations of the lived.

Celal is attributed an absent presence in the novel where his being only subsists in impressions of memory that Galip has of him (Celal is also Galip's cousin) and in the material presence of the columns that Celal writes for the *Milliyet*. The newspaper, which in the words of Benedict Anderson, often provides "the technical means for 're-presenting' the kind of imagined community that is the nation" (*Imagined* 23) is introduced in the novel through Celal's columns. Galip's preoccupation with Celal's presence in absentia (which he carefully nourishes by an engagement with his columns in the *Milliyet*), hoping to locate a sign he has missed, trans-materialises the absence of Ruya into an absence within the deeper cultural imaginary. In other words, the aura of absence that haunts Galip is no longer contained within the sanctified precincts of the irreducible personal. It now alludes to a greater absorbing politico-cultural, that

is not an appropriable exterior in terms of an inter-subjective economy of comprehension. Ruya's absence is not just contained within the explainable and comprehended order of the lived; it has also pervaded the climatic complexities of the urban exterior. A correlation with the urban exterior invites Galip to relativise his own cherished temporalities of the lived within the greater homogeneities of the temporal. So long lingering within the intimate impressions of the subjective and the lived, Galip has purposefully refused to recognise the fractured and multifarious disposition of the essentialised homogeneity of the exterior. For him, the politico-cultural collective has persisted within a "homogeneous, empty time." (26) It is only through his careful and absorbed reading of Celal's columns that Galip realises other temporalities that exceed the relational reality of his lived; temporalities which are heterotopias that exceed the essentialised, reductive order of the "steady onward clocking of homogeneous, empty time." (33)

Hence, Galip takes to the street, where the city now emerges as a network of signs. The symbolic and the empirical are evoked within a curious poise of the experiential and it is this ecstasy of the experiential which nuances the aporia of the subjective. This indulgence of the exterior simultaneously posits the peril of non-exclusivity and non-sovereignty before the self, nuancing him with a climactic epiphany "that the life we live is someone else's dream" (*Black* 81). This essential sacrilege of the lived as inauthentic and simulated, nuanced by the contortions which locate the self within an ever-engulfing stratum of imitation, posit before the self the perennial concern which Celal addresses in one of his columns titled *I must be Myself* (*emphasis mine*). Being is thus paradoxically poised within the opposing and equally valid possibilities of trans-materialisation and imitation:

He'd walked through the streets like a tourist whose plane has been delayed, who finds himself with half a day to kill in a city he'd never thought to visit. The statue of Ataturk told

him that a soldier had played an important role in this country's history; the crowd idling in front of the bright muddy lights of the movie theater told him that on Sunday afternoons people in this country escaped boredom by watching dreams imported from abroad; the sandwich and pastry vendors waving their knives, as their eyes darted back and forth between the display windows and the pavement, told him that their sad dreams and sadder memories were fast fading from their minds; the line of dark bare trees running down the center of the avenue told him that they would grow darker still as evening fell, to signify the sorrow of an entire nation...It was, he knew, his mood that made the streets where he'd spent all his life look so different, but he knew at the same time that it was more than a mood, it was a state of mind that would be his forever. (*Black* 223-224)

The lived takes a turn towards trans-materialisation as Galip feels that "he were seeing the outside world for the first time in years." (*Black* 224) The pluri-significance in *were* (*emphasis mine*) is suggestive of a non-singular essence of selfhood. However, it is also through the trope of pluri-significance that the self is posited within a collective consciousness of absence, a tradition of the hauntic that pervades the greater consideration of the exterior of which the self is only a component. The city and the immanent of the spatial-temporal exterior emerge before Galip as perpetual finitudes, incomplete in essence and haunted by the pestering presence of a lack that is suggestive of "a shared defeat, a shared history, a shared shame" (*Black* 218). Galip's pre-ponderings to thrust his way through the city in search of signs is essentially haunted by the ominous cataclysm where "the city would soon swallow him up" (*Black* 221). This de-subjectification becomes synonymous with Galip's pursuance of the city; he begins his endeavour to preserve the last traces of consciousness from the ever-engulfing abyss of homogenisation.

It is thus that Galip takes a turn towards flânerie; he is now that ever-wandering urban stroller who is passively active in an interiorised exterior, where to be and to become are simultaneously habitable possibilities. While Galip becomes an impersonator, the residual notion of being survives in form of mnemonic retrospections. Much like the flâneur of Walter Benjamin for whom the “street becomes a dwelling” (“Paris” 68) and who is at home in the exterior habitus of urbanity; Galip revises his home (both in terms of the epistemic and the intimate structural) in the proximity of the city. This being at home and finding the secretive index to home becomes synonymous and susceptible to revelation within an immaculate performative of flânerie. The more Galip indulges in his flânerie, the more he stands convinced that the city will reveal the secret to the mystery. This secret however is no longer an explainable end of a narrative which is validated within the systemic progress of history. Instead, the mystery is that potent disclosure which will reveal only to conceal and the habitations of the lived will perpetually linger in their discontinuity. The city for Galip is no longer a habitation; it is a familiar estrangement, which bears the possibility of being habit-able, only to exceed the parameters of habit and habitus:

All that remained was to see how the mystery was reflected in the world. All that remained was to see how the mystery was present in every object, every person in the world...Because if signs were everywhere, if they resided in everything, then the mystery was also everywhere and residing in everything. (*Black* 300)

The presumptive reality of habitation as a possibility and not a validated, unproblematic and inapprehensible materiality unmakes Galip and re-members his being and becoming within a metaphysical paradigm of absence. The evocation of the mnemonic and the persistence of traces are not suggestive trades which will resolve the mystery of absence in the temporal. Instead, the remembrances of the lived premise an alternative reality for Galip where the aura of absence posits the possibility of a presence that is no longer contained within the material order of

immanence. Instead, the remembrances re-member the self within a speculative paradigm of trans-reality; where the promise of arrival is not effaced by the overarching order of the real. The aura of the other, within the realised imperatives of the lived and the un-realised and un-materialised abstractions of possibilities, locate the self within an alternative temporality where the tyranny of the real stands suspended. Galip's flânerie within the considerations of the historic persists, so much so, that it increasingly nuances the unconditional historical validity of the occurred and a-historicises the contemporaneous/ instantaneous from the tyranny of history. Thus, even after the discovery of Ruya's corpse has heralded and denounced the possibilities of a future impregnated by her material presence as non-historic, Galip's irreducible tryst with an alternative reality, premised within the lived and speculated order of the historic continues. In that alternative order of an alternative reality, Galip is growing old with Ruya, still tracing her patterns "on the blue-checked quilt", convinced that "nothing is as surprising as life." (*Black* 461)

Who can deny their claim to history?

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