

Idling With(in) History:

Flanerie and Alternative Historiography in Selected Novels of Orhan Pamuk

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled **Idling With(in) History: Flanerie and Alternative Historiography in Selected Novels of Orhan Pamuk** has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr. Ranjan Ghosh, Associate Professor of Department of English, University of North Bengal. No part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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CERTIFICATE

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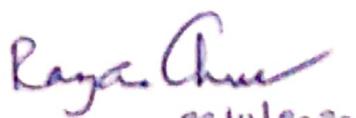
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ABSTRACT

Nadeem Aslam's celebrated novel *The Blind Man's Garden* begins with the assertion "History is the third parent." In its subsequent plot, Aslam evaluates the historic in close proximity with consciousness. History is interrogated as not just an epistemological category that exists in a temporal split from the present. Instead, the historic is explored as an inseparable constituent of the ontological. The historic occupies a position of ambiguity in the ontological context. It is both the foundation and the limit of consciousness. While it accords authenticity to subjectivity, it also posits the subject into a condition of immanence.

The present thesis does not engage in a critical evaluation of the literary oeuvre of Nadeem Aslam. However, it does consider the relationship of subjectivity with history and interrogates the problematic notion of historical consciousness. The thesis nuances the easy understanding of historical consciousness as subservient to the condition of history. Instead, in lights of modern epistemological ponderings on the philosophy of history, the thesis argues that historical consciousness is the un-peace and unease that the subject has in its engagement with history. The thesis argues that the modern subject is an alternative historiographer who intervenes the accepted fabric of history with an approach that is apprehensive of the notional and the nominal which accords reality its own historicity. The continuous philosophical tendencies of twentieth century philosophers to comprehend history as non-schematic, interpretive and above all marked by continuous caesuras and lacks, provide the theoretical premise for the research.

Modernity occupies a position of prominence in the thesis. The thesis argues that the flâneur, the archetypal modern subject, possesses the possibility of evolving into an alternative historiographer. For the substantiation and validation of the claim, the thesis engages in a conceptual reading of a select group of novels of Orhan Pamuk, the Turkish Nobel laureate of 2006. The Introductory chapter of the thesis attempts to establish a genealogical resemblance between flânerie and alternative historiography. By taking into consideration Baudelaire, Benjamin, de Certeau et al.'s theorization of the flâneur and modernist philosophical introspections into the idea and nature of history, the chapter tries to suggest a theoretical base to the possibility of reading the flâneur as an alternative historiographer. The latter half of the Introduction explains the project's interest in Pamuk and for this purpose engages in a conceptual reading of Pamuk's ficto-critical memoir *Istanbul*. Pamuk's visible (and feasible, as far as the scope of the research is concerned) interest in an ascription of the city illustrates his preoccupation with flânerie as practice turned performance. Simultaneously, his critical reconsideration of the history of Istanbul through an interspersed history and memory suggest the tendencies of alternative historiography. This duality is avidly discussed in the concerned section to provide a material base to the distinctive interest of the thesis in the selected literary oeuvre of the author. The first chapter of the thesis, **Poet as the Historian: Flânerie and the Becoming of History in Snow**, engages in a close reading of Orhan Pamuk's novel *Snow* and attempts to interpret Ka, the exiled poet protagonist in the novel as a flâneur turned alternative historiographer. The chapter explores how the trope of flânerie builds its act of engagement with the heterogeneous epistemic conjectures of history. The chapter takes into consideration the idea of history in the novel and reads it as an epistemic essence rather than a concurrence of events. The second chapter, **Turning Memory into History: The Material and the Spatial-Personal in *The Museum of Innocence***, argues that Kemal, the principle character in the novel who re-members his beloved Fusun by collecting

and preserving objects that bear her traces, is a curious combination of the flâneur and the alternative historiographer. The chapter substantiates how the material and cultures of materiality evolve as a paradigm where the personal and the social, memory and history co-habit. In doing so, the chapter problematises the easy consideration of the self-referential status of memory and depicts it as relational, dependent upon the corporeality of material culture. The chapter argues that the relational nature of memory is also fundamental in according the material its trans-material status of being. It attempts to engage in an understanding of how objects often evolve as images and as sites which are material in form but trans-material in essence. This trans-material understanding of the object is intimately associated with the poetics of flânerie and the chapter proposes to establish a correspondence between the two. The third chapter titled **In Search of Lost Wife: Flânerie, Remembrance and the Re-conceptualisation of History in *The Black Book*** engages in an understanding of the ambiguous disposition of memory as a curious poise of lived and interpreted, occurred and imagined, and considers its fundamental relationship with consciousness. The chapter, following the plight of Galip—the lawyer whose wife Ruya goes missing, takes into consideration the possibility of an alternative historiography which explores the remembered to trace in them an unrealised possibility that can situate the unhistorical and estranging present within a historical synchronicity. The chapter also substantiates Galip as the flâneur turned alternative historiographer who engages in material and metaphorical journeys through the streets of Istanbul, searching in them a trace and a sign which do not just convey significance within the consideration of the present but also tries to situate the present within an alternative historicity. The fourth chapter of the thesis is titled **The decadent flâneur and the Progress of History: Alienation, Flux and the Poetics of Reconciliation in *A Strangeness in My Mind***. The chapter assesses Mevlut, the boza seller protagonist of the novel, as a flâneur endowed with an alternative historical consciousness who negotiates with

the ordeal of change and the milieu of modernity that encompasses the social, political, economic and the spatial milieu of Istanbul. The chapter takes into consideration Mevlut's nuanced engagement with modernity and identifies his ambiguous state of being, within and without the valorised temporality of the present which modernity endorses, as a possible premise of alternative historiography. The final chapter analyses the findings derived from the research and restates the possibility of locating an overlap between the flâneur and the alternative historiographer.

The present thesis has attempted to evade the easy assumption of history as periodic or episodic. On the contrary, the thesis has tried to engage with the philosophy of history and the philosophical dimensions within which history can be conceived and narrated. The thesis has also tried to read the flâneur as an archetype and flânerie as a practice outside its standard considerations. Influenced by more recent studies, Flânerie in the thesis has refused to be contained within the considerations of a performative and has trespassed into the considerations of being. In this, the thesis has relied on the elaborate sections of the Introduction where a multifarious understanding of the archetype of the flâneur and the practice of flânerie has been attempted.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The thesis **Idling With(in) History: Flanerie and Alternative Historiography in Selected Novels of Orhan Pamuk** is my humble attempt to consider the possibilities of locating the flâneur as an alternative historiographer through a conceptual reading of a select group of novels by Orhan Pamuk. The thesis tries to locate a correspondence between flânerie and alternative historiography.

To acknowledge is to confess an interdependent self that is undeniably in dependence of the other. To acknowledge is to suspend the authority of the historicised singular before the polyvocality of the plural. It is the ethical act of writing and rendering in reflection a history of the other and its ineffaceable significance in ensuing the materialisation of the self.

My thesis would never have materialised without the aid of my esteemed supervisor Dr. Ranjan Ghosh. His erudite interventions, his scathing criticisms and his patient revisions have shaped my thesis beyond expression. I suppose I need to invent language to express my indebtedness to him. The existing flock of overused signifiers are likely to fall short in conveying my gratitude.

How do I convey my gratitude to Dr. Ashis Sengupta, Professor at the Dept. of English, University of North Bengal? He has never failed at being the caring Father who pats his child at the darkest of hours. I had turned up at his door with tales of despair on a gloomy August afternoon and he had welcomed me with an empathic ear. Ever since then, I have been turning up at his door time and again. Sometimes looking for academic clarification, at other

times for inspiration and even at times for an audience to my stupid tales of woe and heartbreak. He has never frowned at me, has never issued me a formal notice “Busy Now. Come Later”.

I have wasted precious academic hours of my dearest MMG, who is formally known as Dr.Madhuparna Mitra Guha. Before her, I have unveiled my most irreducible anguishes and anxieties. She has indulged them always, has been a patient listener to all that I had to say, without really looking for ‘sense’ in them. Without her constant support, my perpetual anxieties and apprehensions would have never allowed me to complete my thesis.

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My gratitude to Arnab, Shubham, Padma Lochan, Kritika and Abhirupa, who have walked long enough with me to have real-ised other worlds outside the one we live in. Their constant company and conversation have enabled me to survive the infernal weight of solitude on solitary evenings.

Sujit Das, Bhaskar Barman, Abhishek Paul and Abhik Nath have enabled me to survive this inferno in their own way. We had once shared our lunch in school, today we share our hopes of a tomorrow when we will spend a contented holiday on the shores of happiness, feasting together on the crumbs of memory.

To Suravi, who had once walked away without bidding goodbye, I owe my consciousness of the past.

Naughty and Amma! Your memories have taught me that *presence in absentia* can sometimes be more vital than presence itself.

I am formally grateful to all the faculties and non-teaching staffs of the Dept. of English, University of North Bengal, the staffs at the Central Library of University of North Bengal and The National Library, Kolkata. Their timely aid have taken me a step ahead towards the completion of my project.

Perpetually apprehensive as I am, I am rather unsure if it is usual to dedicate a thesis. In case it is and even if it is not, I intend to dedicate this present work to my Baba. He had once flâneried about the dusty districts of Bihar and Bengal as a salesman, with his briefcase filled with dreams—dreams of a tomorrow morning which will not be coloured in poverty. From him I have learnt the ethics of flânerie. He has taught me the secret craft of being able to look outside the tyranny of reality and dream of an-other possibility, however impossible it might seem.

Maa, how do I 'acknowledge' you?

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Introduction

Had Pyrrhus not fallen by a beldam's hand in Argos or Julius Caesar not been knifed to death? They are not to be thought away. Time has branded them and fettered they are lodged in the room of the infinite possibilities they have ousted. But can those have been possible seeing that they never were? Or was that only possible which came to pass? Weave, weaver of the wind.

Ulysses

James Joyce

In Lieu of an Opening

There is an interesting dialogue in the key-passages of James Joyce's acclaimed novel *Ulysses*. Stephen Dedalus, the artist-philosopher who is employed as a schoolmaster in Dublin is summoned by his in charge Mr. Deasy. Deasy is the personification of all that Dedalus is not. In sharp contrast to Dedalus's apprehension stands Deasy's conviction. Dedalus thinks of thought, Deasy is convinced that the validation of thought without expression is impossible. Dedalus is ever susceptible to drift into oblivion and re-invent history. For Deasy, nothing that is unhistoric can lay its claim to authenticity. History for Dedalus is a nightmare, for Deasy "All history moves towards one great goal, the manifestation of God" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 42). Deasy is unconditionally faithful to the piety of tradition and to him the habitation of history is a nominalised condition. For Dedalus, on the contrary, history is characteristic of a nuance, a perilous excess that is always on the verge of a recline, yet never quite so.

Dedalus's problematic nuance with history is an impersonation of the problematic relationship that the historic shares with modernity. Andrew Gibson, pondering upon this nuance, observes that "it is a lesson in resisting, accepting, and transcending history at one and the same time" (*Joyce's Revenge* 20). This simultaneous status of being and belonging in the inside-outside of

history is, in all possibilities, suggestive of the problematic relationship that modernity shares with history. It is thus that the thesis begins with a reference to Stephen Dedalus and his engagement with history for much of the thesis contemplates the nuances involved in conceptualising a relationship between the uneasy imperatives of history, modernity and subjectivity. The thesis introspects into the nuances that involve these three distinct, yet interrelated parameters by focusing on the archetype of the flâneur, who, in all possibilities, is the representative archetype of the modern subject (the thesis will justify such a claim). It is not without deliberation and discretion that flânerie has been chosen as the nuanced event which, the thesis presumes, is characteristic of the febrility that is involved in the co-habitation of modernity and history. As the thesis proceeds, it will be suggested that the engaging enterprise of flânerie has the potential to evolve as the possible practice of an alternative historiography, where ‘other histories’ and other possibilities in history are unearthed and validated. To substantiate such a claim, the thesis engages in a strategic theoretical reading of selected novels by the Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk. The texts have been chosen keeping in mind the contesting issues of flâneur, history and modernity and the subsequent chapters explore the many ways in which flânerie evolve as a possible praxis of alternative historiography. The historic in this research, in the lights of continental philosophers who have significantly contributed to the philosophy of history, ceases to be a confined as occurrences that have a materialised validity. Instead, the concept of history acquires an openness, suggesting both the materialised and the epistemic, the incidental and the conceptual, the concrete and the abstract. Modernity is *make it new*, it is apparently an unconditional rejection of the past for a valorisation of the present. Past, history, memory, tradition and such connotations are its ‘other’; they ought to be the foil in contrast to which modernity derives its essence. Paul de Man observes “the various antonyms that come to mind as possible opposite for ‘modernity’-a variety of which is

itself symptomatic of the complexity of the term—none is more fruitful than ‘history’” (*Blindness* 144). The very fundamental essence of the condition of modernity involves a consideration of past and history as a foil and a host of critical thinkers interested in the philosophical constitution of modernity (including the likes of Habermas, Adorno, Foucault, Benjamin, Paul de Man et al.) have all pondered upon the basic premise of modernity as characteristic of a departure. The modern claims its recognition in departure from history (tradition). To be contained within the premises of history is suggestive of a possible defiance that is posed at the clairvoyant call and claim of modernity to novelty. The modern and its preoccupation with the proclaimed gospel of ‘make it new’ is likely to render history as irrelevant. In its overemphasis on novelty, modernity renders history as an other—an outcast that epitomises all that the modern is not. To be modern is to identify tradition as a malicious and an outdated influence and hence history is definitely not a favourable climate where modernity can arrive. In his “Manifesto on Futurism”, Tommaso Marinetti poses a question that is not merely rhetorical but is impregnated with the vibrancy that makes modernity:

Why should we look back over our shoulders, when we intend to breach the mysterious doors of the Impossible? Time and Space died yesterday. (Marinetti 51)

A little while hence, Marinetti’s manifesto doesn’t just proclaim the death of time (history) but also inhibits a possible mourning of the past with an ‘ethical’ question: “Do you wish to waste your best strength in this eternal and useless admiration of the past, an activity that will only leave you fatally spent, diminished and crushed?” (52)

History and the tyranny of the past is a confinement and one is almost on the verge of inferring that modernity, at least in an *apparent (emphasis mine)* sense, involves a rejection of history.

Yet, such an inference never materialises, which is why the word ‘apparent’ has been mentioned and emphasised in italics in the preceding line. History and the historical is an inseparable component of consciousness. To be is to belong within a continual lineage of time and space and even the faintest and the most insignificant trace of being involves a *growth (emphasis mine)*. To grow is to invite a former, a slice of ‘happened’ within the retrospection of happening and thus the historic is not characteristic of an archaic essence. Instead, history is the contingent, the perpetual that slips with every passing moment contributing to the repertoire of history. The historic is the essential yet insignificant *everyday (emphasis mine)*. It is, as the thesis contends, a basic premise of subjectivity, agency and consciousness. The advancement of modernity, almost inescapably, invites the historic to a tryst. The proposed validation of modernity as the new is haunted by the spectral presence of the past. That way, much like Dedalus, the modern is never in liberation from past. The more prolific the claim to deny, the more intense is the awareness of the persistence of history. It is what one might call a recognition in denial. Hence, History is where history is denied.

This ambiguity, which is an inseparable aspect of any possible understanding of history in the modern age, is pertinently experienced in context of the urban climate of the metropolis. The arrival of modernity has significantly influenced the city and its manifest urban habitation, not just contributing to its already growing design but also constituting and formulating its essence. In all possibilities, it is the modern condition which sanctions the city its autonomy and it is under the influence of modernity that the city devises its points of departure from the other habitations of community life, the most obvious one being the countryside. This is not to suggest that the village and such other habitations have been insulated from the influence of modernity but only to emphasise that the centre of modernity has been, by some in-explainable correlation, the city. Marshall Berman observes that any attempt to “identify the distinctive

rhythms and timbres of modernity” is an encounter with a “dynamic new landscape in which modern experience takes place” (*All* 18). Berman describes this landscape as a “landscape of steam engines, automatic factories, railroads, vast new industrial zones; of *teeming cities* (*emphasis mine*) that have grown overnight, often with dreadful human consequences...”(19). Berman’s vivid description of the landscape of modernity further enlists the advancements in locomotives, technology and the hotcake of economics called the market, which are all valid but which one can refrain from re-harping for the time being. Instead, the contention is the italics in the quote, which suggestively identifies the landscape of modernity with the landscape of city. Modernity has been problematically identified and co-terminated by sociologists, cultural philosophers and even poets and artists to an extent, with the metropolis and the urban spatial paradigm.

However, one ought not to constrain modernity and the modern condition within the limits of what have been largely identified as European modernism. Michael Levenson, an eminent scholar and intellectual of Modernism, makes this significant observation:

Was there a first modernist? Even to pose the question is to hear the sound of folly. We look back to Edgar Allan Poe and further back to Lord Byron and then back again to Laurence Sterne. Francois Villon can be a precursor, as can Catullus or Petronius...To try to identify an elusive beginning or to propose clinching definitions is to play a game with changing rules.” (*Modernism* 8)

To propose the historical genealogy of Modernity as the mid-nineteenth early twentieth temporal epoch and to equate modernity with the historically identified phenomenon of Modernism is probably suggestive of an epistemic myopia. Modernity, in all possibilities, is not equable with Modernism. Undoubtedly, Modernism had its own call to modernity and modernity in its own way contributed to the determinant essence of Modernism, but that is not

all. There have been ‘other modernities’ which have either preceded or followed the European Age of Modernism. The thesis, in due course, will return to these other modernisms, for they will play a significant role in our understanding of the arrival of modernity in a non-European politico-cultural milieu like Turkey.

Modernity is suggestive of a condition, a characteristic urge to claim exclusivity, based on some principle of departure from tradition and its epistemes and practices. Berman sums up modernity as the “state of perpetual becoming” (*All* 16), much in resonance with Habermas’s oft quoted phrase of “an incomplete project”. (“Modernity” 01) To be modern is to experience a continuous shift and movement which is a growth that is non-schematic and non-systemic. Instead, it is conducive of a discontinuity; a sort of non-schematism which do not adhere to the rudimentary advocacies which holistically equate modernity with progress. To be modern is to experience and be aware of an ambiguity, an awareness that is intrinsic to the conceptual scepticism of Dedalus (Berman observes “self-doubt” as a constituent characteristic of the modern man, refer to *All* 23) that has been referred to at the very opening of the chapter, the oft quoted dialectic of *to be or not to be* where being and non-being are equally probable and relevant possibilities. Berman’s insightful introduction to *All That is Solid Melts into Air* wraps up modernity as this strange and liminal condition which is inhabited by ambiguity, paradox and contradiction. To be modern is to belong, habitate and interiorise the poise of paradox.

Framing the Flâneur

The flâneur is an archetype that dominates the cultural landscape of the late nineteenth-early twentieth century European modernity. Yet, culture does not exist in split from the greater worlds of political, economic and other discursive paradigms that formulate and constitute the social structure. Those old obsolete considerations of economy and politics as base and culture as superstructure are no longer credible; culture is as much as a component of base as are other

considerations. Hence, any consideration of the flâneur is likely to provoke reflections and interventions pertaining to social, political and economic considerations. Hence, while one considers and sustains the interrogations pertaining to the literary-cultural personage of the flâneur, one cannot disregard the implications that flânerie holds within a greater consideration of the epistemic foundations of politics, economics and such other social discourses.

To ensure that one does not lose his/her path in drifting across an archetype that has been interrogated and interpreted, churned and reproduced, re-read and misread, revised, reconceptualised and re-presented in representation, it is probably inevitable to begin from where it all began, i.e. Charles Baudelaire and his celebrated essay “The Painter of Modern Life”. Although engaging theoretical essays and enchanting literary works (Bruce Mazlish’s essay “The flâneur: from spectator to representation”, non-fictions like *Walking in Berlin* by Franz Hessel or even works of fiction like *Open City* by Teju Cole. These works have probably provided some epistemic base to the wistful urge of the thesis to deconstruct the flâneur) have taken the flâneur to streets that are outside Baudelaire’s Paris and habitations of modernity that are outside its typical alignment with nineteenth century, yet one must begin with Baudelaire, if only to acclaim him the credit of coining the archetype.

Charles Pierre Baudelaire identifies the flâneur as *the painter of modern life (emphasis mine)* and even when he does not affirm M.G. (the painter, who in all possibilities is Constantin Guys) as the flâneur, subsequent scholarships have inarguably deciphered a missing link between the flâneur and the much appraised exemplary ‘artist of the floating world’. (one can probably call him so, for the contingent nature of modernity has similar manifestations in dissimilar habitations and make nineteenth century Paris resemble post-war Japan) Keith Tester observes:

The flâneur of nineteenth century Paris receives his most famous eulogy in the prose and poetry of Charles Baudelaire. Certainly, flânerie is one of the main narrative devices of the Paris

Spleen collection of 1869 and thus Baudelaire provides an insight into exactly what it is that the flâneur does. Baudelaire achieves it by calling forth a poetic-and a poet's-vision of the public places and spaces of Paris. For Baudelaire, there is no doubt that the poet is the man...who can reap aesthetic meaning and an individual kind of existential security from the spectacle of the teeming crowds-the visible public-of the metropolitan environment of the city." (*Flâneur* 1-2)

Flâneur is not a coinage, it is a practice that is only validated by Baudelaire in eulogy and the poetics and praxis of representation. The 'missing link' is hence premised upon the identical patterns of thought and being that are characteristic to the flâneur and the exemplary artist of modernity and although Michel Foucault has located an opposition between the flâneur and Baudelaire's painter of modern Life before arriving at the conclusion that "Constantin Guys is not a flâneur" ("Enlightenment" 41), nevertheless, for many scholars, they are both invoked with an equability and are often identical. It is on such grounds that the present thesis can afford to walk further into 'habitus'es and habitations which are otherwise unidentifiable with nineteenth century Paris. While one cannot deny the contribution of Baudelaire in according the flâneur and the practice of flânerie the status of an archetype, yet the very proliferation of the archetype hints at the possibility of deconstruction. Tester observes:

Flânerie, the activity of strolling and looking which is carried out by the flâneur, is a recurring motif in the literature, sociology and art of urban, and most especially of the metropolitan existence. Originally, the figure of the flâneur was tied to a specific time and place: Paris, the capital of the nineteenth century...But the flâneur has been allowed, or made, to take a number of walks away from the streets and arcades of nineteenth century Paris...The flâneur has walked into the pages of the commonplace." (*Flâneur* 1)

It is hence, not astounding, that Baudelaire identifies his painter of modern Life as a “man of the world”, uncontained by any determinable consideration of habit, habitus and habitation. Baudelaire’s M.G. is “a man of the world” (Baudelaire 13), “very cosmopolitan” (12) whom Baudelaire does not prefer calling the artist. The following quote will probably render an insightful illustration of Baudelaire’s much appraised ‘other’ artist (or the non-artist artist) of his time:

He takes an interest in everything the world over, he wants to know, understand, assess everything that happens on the surface of our spheroid. The artist moves little, or even not at all, in intellectual and political circles...With two or three exceptions, which it is unnecessary to name, the majority of artists are, let us face it, very skilled brutes, mere manual labourers, village pub-talkers...Their talk, inevitably enclosed within very narrow limits, quickly becomes a bore to the man of the world, to the spiritual citizen of the universe. Thus, to begin to understand M.G., the first thing to note is this: that curiosity may be considered the starting point of his genius.” (13)

Baudelaire’s artist is not adherent to the pragmatics of the bourgeois order where unidirectional and methodical persistence of *techne* can confer excellence to the individual (*emphasis mine*). Instead, the artist is a polyphonic intellectual—a man who is curious of the heterogeneous in a non-utilitarian manner. Very soon, Baudelaire compares his artist to the short story protagonist of Allen Poe’s *Man in the Crowd* and observes that “the crowd is his domain”. (Baudelaire 15) In this curious state of being at home in the world, in his profound ability to be “away from home and yet to feel at home anywhere” (15) Baudelaire’s artist posits himself (arguably masculine, see Lauren Elkin’s *Flaneuse or The Invisible Flaneuse?: Gender, Public Space, and Visual Culture in Nineteenth Century Paris* for feminist responses on the flâneur and the myth

of masculinity) in an ambiguity, the ambiguity which is synonymous with the atmosphere and is the probable aorta of modernity.

Modernity preoccupies Baudelaire's aesthetic meditations and although it is evidently impossible to explore the nuances that pervade his understanding of modernity within the limited scope of an Introduction, yet, an attempt can be undertaken to understand his conception of modernity in the specific context of the referred essay. Baudelaire defines modernity in *The Painter of Modern Life* as follows:

Modernity is the transient, the fleeting and the contingent; it is one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immovable. There was a form of modernity for every painter of the past; the majority of the fine portraits that remain to us from former times are clothed in the dress of their day... You have no right to despise this transitory fleeting element, the metamorphoses of which are so frequent, nor to dispense with it." (18)

Yet again, modernity is validated not as a condition that can be identified and situated within a particular temporal or historic order. Instead, it is the *un-situatedness* (*emphasis mine*) of modernity which is its essence, for it concerns all that is transitory and fleeting. To situate modernity, the artist must capture its contingency and it is only by an indulgence of the transient and the contingent that modernity can lay its claim to history. In other words, to historicise modernity it is pre-notional to historicise the contingent. Baudelaire observes that modernity is suggestive of the eternal in the transitory and the artist must co-habit this ambiguity; he must be saliently responsible to both the temporary and the underlying permanence, both the fleeting and the constant within.

This dialectic disposition of the flâneur is further harped upon by Walter Benjamin who sporadically revisits Baudelaire and his take on the flâneur and modernity in his literary and

epistemic oeuvre. Benjamin's preoccupation with modernity is considerably influenced by his radical interest and subsequent revision of Baudelaire, which by now, is an already established fact in academic circles. Michael Jennings, in his insightful introduction to the collection of Benjamin's essays on Baudelaire published under the title *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire* observes that Benjamin was susceptible to an "intense identification with Baudelaire" (Jennings 16). Hence, one can evade a detailed analysis of the creative intricacies involved in Benjamin's restitution to Baudelaire the title of the *lyric poet in the era of high capitalism (emphasis mine)*. Instead, what is far more intriguing is Benjamin's innovation in conceptualisation of the flâneur and attributing it to Baudelaire, almost with an interpretive imposition.

Jennings' Introduction to Benjamin's essays on Baudelaire affirms that Benjamin's engagement with Baudelaire "was less the invention of a new Baudelaire than the assertion of the centrality of a number of aspects that had been neglected or misunderstood." (Jennings 23-24) Jennings claims that Benjamin's sporadic and rhizomatic engagement with Baudelaire and his subsequent reading of Baudelaire is deeply resonant of the epistemic overtures that pervade Baudelaire's literary-aesthetic oeuvre and its engagement with modernity. It is hence, no surprise, that in one of his seminal ruminations on Baudelaire, Benjamin highlights the poet's preoccupation with the metropolis. Citing Baudelaire's dedication addressed to Arsene Houssaye as the preamble of *Paris Spleen*, where Baudelaire identifies the aesthetics of poetics prose as the apt medium for capturing the "experience of giant cities", Benjamin observes that the crowd is "imprinted in his (Baudelaire's) creativity" ("On Some" 180) Referring implicitly to the aesthetics of shock, Benjamin foresees the crowd as a sensory truth, a source of affectation as well as apprehension.

Benjamin identifies the crowd as a possible motif that served as the premise on the basis of which Poe's *Man of the Crowd* was "equated" ("On Some" 188) with the flâneur. Although Benjamin identifies an essential difference between their nature of response to the pervading presence of the crowd, nevertheless, the crowd occupies a predominance within the sensibility of the flâneur. Benjamin's conceptualisation of the crowd occupies a prominence within the sensibility of easeful unease that he identifies as characteristic to the flâneur. For him, the crowd and its presence is fundamental to the perpetual "out of place" sensibility that is residual and pre-ontological to the ontic essence of the flâneur (188).

This out of place-ness that Benjamin identifies as fundamental to the flâneur is a significant premise upon which the conceptual framework of the present research has been designed. To be in place is to inhabit history. It is also a poignant suggestion of being in-habit, i.e., in a familiarity that is very much intimate and habitual, with no possible ecstasy of the estranging. Above all, it is to belong within a nominalised world where forms and their apparent significance is the only validated truth, as such there can be no *other* signification involved (*emphasis mine*). The flâneur refutes and resists such a homogenous and singular stranded purview and instead inhabits an experiential reality that is profoundly pluri-significant, pregnant and manifold with other determinants of meaning. This is where the flâneur holds the possibility of inhabiting an altered possibility of reality or to be more precise, unfolds reality within the gaze of an altered possibility. This altered is as much non/ trans-empirical as it is an aporia to history.

Benjamin's radical and creative thought undoes the archetype of the nineteenth century loiterer, i.e. the flâneur, and takes him beyond the confined aesthetic connotations and its relationship with an aesthetic modernity that has been characteristic to the reflective renderings of Baudelaire. Benjamin's play with Baudelaire is non-hermeneutic and rhizome like, inviting his

readers to analyse the polyphonic epistemic considerations and implications that are contained within the poet's aesthetic preoccupation. Thus, Baudelaire's temporal consciousness and his discontinuous engagement with time equally intrigue Benjamin. As Baudelaire poses the flâneur-artist in the habitations of modernity as an individual enchanted by beauty, Benjamin identifies this sense of beauty to be intimately collected with recollection. Referring to Proust's conjecture that "Time is peculiarly dissociated in Baudelaire" ("On Some" 197), Benjamin observes that Baudelaire's engagement with time involves recollection and is marked not by "any immediate experience" but rather by "a concept that is concomitant...with the notion of modern beauty." (197)

If one returns to Baudelaire and his conjectures around the painter of modern life and modernity, one deciphers with ease that his artist turned flâneur is preoccupied with beauty. It is the liability of the artist to extract "the mysterious beauty that may be hidden...however small or light it may be" (*Painter* 18) within the premises of modernity. Although modernity is the transient and the fleeting, the essence of modernity is an underlying beauty which is irreducible. Benjamin, in reflecting upon the temporal consciousness of Baudelaire, takes his readers towards the notion of time and beauty. For Benjamin, to extract beauty (the task of the flâneur), it is essential to recollect, that is, locate the slice of life in a disjoint that can "stand out from time." ("On Some" 197) Recollection, which Benjamin observes has a share of correspondence with beauty, promises the pertinence of experience and its curious infusion with ritual elements. Hence, the appreciation of beauty and the quest of modernity becomes an intimate and personalised experience, profoundly subjective and never free from the intimations of the lived. The rituals which are "appropriated" (197) by the flâneur-artist in his everyday encounter personalises the historic, which Benjamin describes as "prehistory" (198). Benjamin argues that such correspondences are fundamental to Baudelaire's engagement with modernity where the past

is evoked in infusion with the present within a practice of reminiscence (199). The present thesis, in due course, and in subsequent chapters, identify such correspondences- those attempted personalisation and epistemic appropriation of the habitual and its subsequent validation as an infused and intermediated reality, as an attempted claim to an alternative order of history. While Benjamin identifies the infusion as a possible genesis of the historyless, the thesis prefers to locate in it an alternative claim to history. For Benjamin at this juncture, history is suggestive of a chronologically designed and ascribed temporality (I particularly mention 'juncture' for elsewhere, especially in *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, Benjamin is ready to revise history, without discarding it as historyless) which ceases to be so with the gradual formulation of a philosophy of history. History for him becomes a Messianic entropy that can essentially disrupt any possible design of a chronological schema. In his later philosophical retrospections, the historyless acquires the status of primal history. Jennings observes that primal history, in the Benjaminian notion, is that which transgresses the ideological formulation of history and as such characterises history as the discontinuous. Benjamin's preoccupation with the discontinuous strains of history that survives in the fissures of the homogeneous ideological model of history and historiography is recurrent in his voluminous and incomplete *Arcades Project*. In the *Arcades Project*, Benjamin contemplates the historic within an imagist poetics where the traces of the discontinuous and the non-systematic past erupt as transgressions within the schematised and organised historicity of reality. This notion of history has a significant contribution in constituting the epistemic consideration of alternative history that the present thesis ponders upon.

But to linger a little more with the flâneur, if only to contemplate the heterogeneous potentialities which Benjamin attributes to the flâneur. In his yet another seminal essay, "The Paris of the Second Empire of Baudelaire", Benjamin returns to the flânerie and this time he is

more conscious of exploring the relationship that the flâneur shares with the spatial. For Benjamin, flânerie involves an intimacy with the spatial disposition of modernity and more topically, the metropolis. This intimacy is not contained and captured by the mere suggestion of inhabiting the arena and atmosphere of metropolitan modernity. It is also suggestive of an appropriation of the spatial by the self, i.e. the flâneur. For Benjamin, the flâneur in the city is analogical to Baudelaire's fish in water, yet not just so. He is not a passive and benign inhabitant of the city but also postulates the city within his pragmatics of habit. Inhabiting the metropolis involves an appropriation of the constituent fundamentals. Benjamin observes:

The street became a dwelling place for the flâneur; he is as much at home among house facades as a citizen is within his four walls. To him a shiny enamelled shop sign is at least as good a wall ornament as an oil painting is to the bourgeois in his living room. Buildings' walls are the desk against which he presses his notebooks; newsstands are his libraries; and cafe terraces are the balconies from which he looks down on his household after his work is done. ("Paris" 68-69)

As the essay follows, Benjamin locates the flâneur and his "dwelling" ("Paris" 68) in the outside in tension with the various measures of control that was devised by the various institutions of governance and administration in France. There is a latent suggestion to conceptualise in the poesis and praxis of flânerie a possible "resistance to control" (78), something that has had a simultaneous and synonymous onset with the birth of the bourgeois mode of governance in France. The flâneur, for Benjamin, embodies the last and the liminal possibilities of resisting the policies and politics of identification.

With the intervention of Benjamin, the flâneur stands on the verge of becoming the *other* of a nominalised bourgeois modernity (*emphasis mine*). The utilitarian model of a bourgeois mode of being is increasingly nuanced by the flâneur for he is concerned with the useless. He departs

sharply from the industrialist episteme of high capitalism by endorsing leisure over work and rest over labour. The perpetrating practice of cognition and consolidation of identities by State and its governing apparatuses and institutions are systematically overturned by his precarious statelessness and his wistful urge to exist incognito. The segmented world of the private and the public which is otherwise fundamental to the bourgeoisie social structure is jeopardised by his (the flâneur's) urge to dwell in the outside, thereby disrupting the binary construed model of being. More importantly, the flâneur attempts an interiorisation of the exterior and it is here that he is likely to become the *other* gaze through which modernity, metropolis and its constituent essences reconceptualise themselves. With such considerations in mind, the chapter will now turn towards the concept of history, for the thesis in question attempts to understand the possibility of the flâneur to emerge as the alternative historiographer.

History and Its Discontents

To be is to be within history and any possible praxis and poesis of being that concerns the human (in anthropocentric milieu, even the natural cannot escape the human) are enfolded within a temporality that is profoundly, almost inescapably, historic. Human condition is a Historic condition, to be human is to exist within the pre-determined legitimacies that constitute the climate of history. R.G. Collingwood, an influential historian-philosopher, rather didactically, observes that “history is ‘for’ human self-knowledge” and that the study of history and the practice of historiography implies “knowing” oneself (*Idea* 10). To engage with history is synonymous with an engagement with the human and any possible human existence is a profoundly historical-historicised existence.

Collingwood's notion of history and historiography is fundamental to what he calls “evidence” (*Idea* 10) and we can identify his philosophy of history to be promised upon a rationale that is reason. Collingwood's preoccupation with the idea of history as science presupposes that

history is scientific and founded on the principles of objectivity. The premise of historical knowledge and consciousness is determined by “the interpretation of evidence: where evidence is a collective name for things which singly are called documents, and a document is a thing existing here and now, of such a kind that the historian, by thinking about it, can get answer to the questions he asks about past events” (10). E.H. Carr in his seminal work *What is History* would essentially question the validity of the “objectivity” of history by pointing out how any kind of “interpretation of evidence” is liable to a bias and how history is profoundly subjective for it is never in split from the larking shadow of the interpreter-historian (*History* 29). Carr observes that the “...emphasis on the role of the historian in the making of history tends, if pressed to its logical conclusion, to rule out any objective history at all: history is what the historian makes” (29). As such, Carr would advise to “study the historian before you begin to study the facts” (26). However, keeping the historians’ debate aside for the time being, the chapter aims to take into consideration the *other* manifestations of historical consciousness that is synonymous with the epistemic disposition of modernity and which essentially refute the high-sounding claims that regard history as objective and comprehensible by a rational and scientific mode of enquiry.

T.S. Eliot, the representative poet of the Modern age and modernity, writes in “Gerontion”

History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
 And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,
 Guides us by vanities. Think now
 She gives when our attention is distracted
 And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions
 That the giving famishes the craving. Gives too late
 What's not believed in, or if still believed,

In memory only, reconsidered passion. (*Collected Poems* 30)

To invoke the poet in foil to the historian is not due of its own relevance; it intends to capture the heterogeneity that accompanies the epistemic considerations of history in the milieu of modernity. In the febrile epistemic-cultural condition of modernity, history develops a plural hermeneutic and occupies a fertility that is characteristic of poetry. While the conventional and orthodox model of historiography (partially embodied in thinkers like Collingwood) stands convinced that history is adherent to a factual objectivity, there are other understandings of history which increasingly highlight and foreground the ‘deception’ of history. James Longenbach observes “What is truly different about many twentieth-century (the canonised age of modernity) historians’ idea about history is their rejection of the presuppositions about the nature of historical knowledge that make the construction of any sort of teleological or even linear history possible” (*Modernist Poetics* 6). History acquires the status of an untameable excess, evading the possibilities of comprehension and lingering as an aporia to the being and becoming of the human.

Hence, there are contrary, mutually exclusive and yet overlapping conjectures of history that predominate the milieu of modernity. For philosophers like Friedrich Nietzsche, whom Paul de Man regards as an anti-historicist opting for “a radical rejection of history” (*Blindness* 147), history is a burden- an immanence that conditions and limits the human subject to a paradigm of finitude. As such, it is the predicament, yet ethical imperative, of the historicised subject, i.e. Man, to become the subject of History and subject history rather than exist in subjection to history. Nietzsche believed:

To think of history as objective...is the secret work of the dramatist, that is, to think of everything one after the other, to weave the isolated details into a totality, always on the

condition that a unity of the plan in the material has to be established, if it is not inherent in it”
(*Use* 23)

While one cannot ignore the dark sarcasm with which Nietzsche rejects the positivist school of historiography which attempts an interpretation of meaning and in absence of any, invents one; what is also significant is Nietzsche’s implicit suggestion that history after all is a synthetic and not organic truth. It is the agency of man which accomplishes the synthesis. The existential status of history is constructed in subjection by man, it is never otherwise. Hayden White, reflecting upon this interchange in subjection, notes:

Nietzsche’s purpose as a philosopher of history was to destroy the notion that the historical process has to be explained or emplotted in any particular way. The very notions of explanation and emplotment are dissolved; they give place to the notion of historical representation as pure story, fabulation, myth conceived as the verbal equivalent of music. Yet this conception of historical representation has its own conceptual underpinnings; it presupposes a lexicon, a grammar, a syntax, and a semantic system by which the historical field can be provided with a number of possible meanings. (*MetaHistory* 371)

For Nietzsche, as White argues, history is not homo significant but is rather suggestive of a plurality. This essence of the plural can be unveiled and experienced by dissolution of “the authority of all the inherited ways of conceiving history” and by returning “historical thinking to a poetic, and specifically Metaphorical, mode of comprehending the world.” (*MetaHistory* 372)

To live in the metaphorical is to exist in the proximity of a liminal, where the suggested is more fundamental than the apparent, the interpreted and experienced is more authentic than the manifested. It is the perilous inside-outside which Dedalus lives in, it is the ambiguous and the

dichotomous suggesting an ever-escaping excess that haunts the flâneur. The consciousness of history as metaphor bears a resemblance with the essence of flânerie (or the consciousness of the flâneur) and hence one cannot necessarily overlook a correspondence between flânerie and alternative historical consciousness. However, it is probably necessary to ponder upon the other notions of the historic that modernity contains for modernity is not all about Nietzsche. The epistemic purview of modernity is characterised by ambiguities and paradoxes and the discourse of history in the poetico-pragmatics of modernity is no exception. The historic emerges as a nuanced consideration in the epistemic milieu of modernity and such nuances pervade the introspections of even professional historians like Collingwood, who is one of the principal propounders of objective history.

Collingwood's notion of objective history does not necessarily exclude the possibility of a personalisation of history. As is suggested by his observation, to "discover the thought of a friend who writes us a letter, or a stranger who crosses the street" (*Idea* 219) is also very much situated within the considerations of history. History occupies an everyday topicality in the milieu of the modern and reflecting upon the relevance of history in the milieu of modernity. James Longenbach observes "...writing a poem is as historical an act as playing Chopin or falling in love" (*Modernist Poetics* 10). To be is to be within history, a history that is determined and constituted by the intimate order of everyday.

To be historical is also suggestive of a recognition of the Other and is hence intimately associated with an ethics of the Other. Collingwood observes "...historical method is the only one by which I can know the mind of another" (*Idea* 219). The conceptualisation of method inevitably suggests hermeneutics which, in the Gadamerian sense, is premised upon an intersubjectivity. David E. Lyne in his Introduction to Gadamer's *Philosophical Hermeneutics* observes that for Gadamer the hermeneutical "has to do with bridging the gap between the

familiar world in which we stand and the strange meaning that resists assimilation into the horizons of our world.” (Lynge xii) To be acquainted with the historical as a methodology that contributes to consciousness is to be impregnated with the possibility of being in an intimacy of the unfamiliar that is not otherwise an empirically and materially validated constituent of the habitations of the self.

Ethics of Alternative Historiography

The methodological that premises historical consciousness is performed into existence by the practice of historiography. To indulge in historiography is to engage with the past and an interpretation of the past, which is not an unproblematic enterprise. Reading the past and the practice of historiography bears a resemblance with, what Michel de Certeau calls, the act of “decoding” (*Writing* 3). More importantly, like any other form of methodological practice, it enhances a split between the surveyor and the surveyed, the student and the studied. Michel de Certeau observes:

MODERN Western history essentially begins with differentiation between the present and the past...This rupture also organizes the content of history within the relations between labor and nature; and finally, as its third form, it ubiquitously takes for granted a rift between discourse and the body (social body). It forces the silent body to speak. It assumes a gap to exist between the silent opacity of the “reality” that it seeks to express and the place where it produces its own speech, protected by the distance established between itself and the object (*Gegenstand*). The violence of the body reaches the written page only through absence, through the intermediary of documents that the historian has been able to see on the sands from which a

presence has since been washed away, and through a murmur that lets us hear-but from afar-the unknown immensity that seduces and menaces our knowledge.” (2-3)

de Certeau’s observation is a genuine epistemic portrait of the traditional notion of historiography where the body of the past is a “legible picture that can in turn be translated into that which can be written within a space of language” (*Writing* 3). Ezra Pound is critical of such a practice of ‘dissecting’ history which assumes that the past is an organised body of knowledge.

In his *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound observes:

We do NOT know the past in chronological consequence. It may be convenient to lay it out anaesthetized on the table with dates past here and there, but what we know by ripples and spirals eddying out from us and our time.” (Pound 60)

In contrast to this conventional model of traditional historiography, which takes for granted the notion of an undisputed and linear model of the past, stands the alternative model of historiography. The praxis of alternative historiography involves recognising the conventional model of historiography as essentially incomplete and liable to a (mis)appropriation and misrepresentation of the past by an objective schema of progress. In correspondence with an alternative historical consciousness, the principles of alternative historiography involve an indulgence of that which is “forgotten in order to obtain the representation of a present intelligibility” (*Writing* 19). de Certeau sums it up thus:

But whatever this new understanding of the past (historiography) holds to be irrelevant-shards created by the selection of materials, remainders left aside by an explication-comes back, despite everything, on the edges of discourse or in its rifts and crannies: “resistances,” “survivals,” or delays discreetly perturb the pretty order of a line of “progress” or a system of interpretation. These are lapses in the syntax constructed by the law of a place. Therein they

symbolize a return of the repressed, that is, a return of what, at a given moment, has become unthinkable in order for a new identity to become thinkable.” (19)

de Certeau’s suggestion of alternative historiography involves a lawlessness and precarity that is identical and characteristic of the flâneur—who is the bare subject occupying the liminal place of placeness. It is also suggestive of the correlation that historiography shares with place in authenticating the place its status. Historiography becomes an essential constituent practice and pragmatics which contribute in claiming/ making place out of space. While history is vital to the ontological essence of the place, it is also suggestive of a possible homogenisation. The historicised place simultaneously excludes, appropriates and annihilates other possibilities of becoming that pervaded the space before its historicization into place. These exigencies and anomalies, which are suggestive of an alternative possibility of becoming, are unveiled within the praxis of alternative historiography.

The binary contrast between space and place is pondered upon by de Certeau in his seminal work *The Practice of Everyday Life*. For de Certeau, place “implies an indication of stability”, while space “has none of the univocity or stability of a “proper” (*Practice* 117). de Certeau claims that “space is a practiced place”, where practice is suggestive of a vitality and is suggestive of “intersections of mobile elements” (117). Practice, as de Certeau seemingly suggests in his work, involves a performative intervention into the structured, patterned and the nominalised (de Certeau defines it as “ways of operating” (xi)) and is fundamental in opening up/ dissecting the finite and the fixed. For de Certeau, the space is the “ambiguity of an actualization, trans-formed into a term dependent upon many different conventions...modified by the transformations caused by successive contexts.” (117)

Flânerie, or the act of loitering, is a practice that increasingly posits the nominal within the ambiguous and in doing so, constantly melts the possible place of the city into the firmament

of the spatial. For de Certeau, the “ordinary practitioners of the city” are walkers and it is through the practice of walking that “the imaginary totalizations produced by the eye” can be escaped, thus revealing the possibilities of the birth of “another spatiality...A migrational, or metaphorical, city.” (*Practice* 93) de Certeau locates in the practice of loitering within the urban space a form “of resistance...without being out-side the field in which it is exercised”. (96) This is suggestive of a “process of appropriation of the topographical system on the part of the pedestrian” where “walking is suggestive of enunciation” (97).

This enunciation involves a possible reclamation of the spatial; it is a consideration of the urban habitation of the city in sovereignty from its situatedness as a place. The status of the city as a place is historic; it is by a subsequent de-historicization that the place becomes space. This de-historicization is not an absolute rejection of history. Rather it involves an awareness of the shortcoming of history. Pondering upon the historicity of the city de Certeau observes that the city exists in a ‘casual time’ and that “Casual time is what is narrated in the actual discourse of the city” which for him “is better articulated on the metaphorical practices and stratified places than on the empire of the evident in the functionalist technocracy” (*Practice* 203). de Certeau describes casual time as “a lapse in the system, and its diabolic adversary, it is what historiography is supposed to exorcize by substituting for these incongruities of the other the trans-parent organicity of a scientific intelligibility” (202). While the fiction of reason and its discursive methodology and poetics try to produce the city within a synchronous model of history, de Certeau points out that the seemingly consistent model of time constructed by historiography and accorded to the city is “broken and jerky” (202). It is marked by the “gap or failure of reason” (202) and exposes the shortcomings of theoretical time, i.e. the time constructed within the modalities of historiography. To trace the historical genuineness of the city it is necessary to acknowledge the casual time as historic. The city is, to go by de Certeau’s

proposition, located within an alternative model of history and it is in flânerie that this alternative model of history can be accessed.

Walter Benjamin explores the possibilities and potentials that the flâneur holds in evolving as the alternative historiographer. To him, flânerie is not a praxis that is essentially determined by the spatio-temporal immanence of the city. Instead, the flâneur inhabits not just the city as a topographical category but as an event. The flâneur's consciousness of the city is a possible field where the city can emerge in its openness, amidst overlapping temporal manifestations and bearing traces of all that which constitute its essential identity. This status of identity is accorded not just by the immanent but also the latent, not just the recognised but also the repressed-denied. For Benjamin, this other side of the realised is the primordial, that which has been previously discussed as "primal" (Jennings 12). What the flâneur embodies is the essential gaze through which the city can be accorded its primordial and non-immanent stature:

Couldn't an exciting film be made from the map of Paris? From the unfolding of its various aspects in temporal succession? From the compression of a centuries-long movement of streets, boulevards, arcades and squares into the space of half an hour? And does the flâneur do anything different? (Benjamin, *Arcades* 83)

The flâneur for Benjamin is that comprehensive gaze that posits the city in a tradition—a tradition which, however, is not suggestive of a mere consistency. Locating the city within this renewed hermeneutics of tradition involves a consideration of not just the recognised surface of history but also its underside. Benjamin's revision of the archetype of flâneur and the performative praxis of flânerie does not locate it within the unproblematic milieu of the modern metropolis. Instead, the very notion of modernity is problematised by the constant indulgences of all that is in departure from the institutionalised and canonised essence of modernity that is characteristic of a valorised obsession with the new. Modernity lingers as the discontinuous and the archetypal

subjectivity of the modern milieu (i.e. the flâneur) is endowed with a consciousness of the discontinuous.

Orhan Pamuk: A Flâneur within the Derivations of Modernity

Modernity in the non-West is derived, it arrives late and arrives with the notion of an already historicised vision of modernity, construed upon a design of progress. Unlike the West, where it is a febrile and fertile event co-habited by heterogeneities and even mutually contrary possibilities, the derived ordeal of modernity in the milieu of non-West are premised upon a vision of homogeneity. Touraj Atabaki observes that the arrival of modernity in a non-Western milieu like Turkey was an “exclusively from above” (*State* xiv) phenomenon where the plurivocalities were substituted by the organisation and implementation of a governed structural and political order. The dissemination of the principles of modernity involved the evolution of a centralised subject of authority called State and the consolidation of a National structure of economy. What is perhaps more important is the notion of rationalism and progress that was advocated by the Centralist State as the only possible mode of being. As such, any consideration of modernity in context of a non-Western cultural milieu is likely to invite a consideration of the tension between the native and the alien, the containments of tradition and the surplus of progress.

Orhan Pamuk, the celebrated novelist of Turkey, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2006, systematically revisits these tensions between tradition and modernity, the local and the global, the native and the alien. Horace Engdahl, the Permanent Secretary of the Swedish Academy, describes him thus:

Pamuk is a writer who opens the doors between hostile cultures and he makes it appear absurd that two cultures like the European and the Turkish, who have so much in common and who have been so intertwined over the centuries...are not able to understand each other (Engdahl).

Pamuk attempts to unearth the hybridity which is essentially historic to Turkey and which has for long been unexplored by the vehement historicization of Turkey within either of the binary patterned lineages of nativism and modernity. His engagement with this hybridity is explicit in his ficto-critical memoir *Istanbul* where the cultural paradoxes and the liminal counters of exchange where modernity and heritage co-habit are explored in the authorial reminiscences of his growth with-in the city. Elsewhere, Pamuk has called Istanbul “the capital of the world” (*Strangeness* 3) which is located in the curious poise between the East and the West. Although this thesis does not attempt a material reading of Pamuk’s novels and instead takes its own liberty in conceptualising an interpretive assessment of his oeuvre, nevertheless it is presumably methodical to begin with an assessment of Pamuk’s engagement with his city and its historic-material base. That way, the thesis will probably be able to contest the peril of strategic appropriation which is the perennial companion of a conceptual theoretical research.

Pamuk’s interest in his native city Istanbul is well known. The Press Release of the Swedish Academy which declared him as the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, 2006 described him as the writer “who in the quest for the melancholic soul of his native city has discovered new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures” (Swedish Academy). In his various interviews and non-fiction pieces, he has been unambiguous in his obsession with Istanbul. What is significant, however, is his urge to see his city not within the immediacy of its being but in its rupture and discontinuity, in its own history and within the intimacies of memory. Istanbul is the veritable space that is both a place and is simultaneously beyond its placeness. Here for instance, are a few lines from his much-appraised memoir *Istanbul*:

It is impossible for me to remember my childhood without this blanket of snow...I couldn't wait for it to snow-not because I would be going outside to play in it, but because it made the city look new, not only by covering up the mud, the filth, the ruins and the neglect, but by producing in every street and every view an element of surprise, a delicious air of impending disaster (*Istanbul* 37).

The non-validation of the empirical is the hay-stone that premises the possibility of reclaiming the spatial, which is haunted by the phantasm of disaster and disarray. The ecstasy of surprise is synonymous, almost identifiable with disaster. The premonition of the disaster anticipates an unbecoming of the place and its return to the elementary status of space. Hence, 'snow' (a significant motif in his novel with the same name and which has been analysed in the following chapter) delights him, for it significantly contributes to the transgression from the monotony of place and transforms the familiar and empirically nominalised habitation into an estranging unfamiliar.

The historic, however, is not a dismissible and ignorable consideration and it is functional as an essential constituent in Pamuk's consciousness of Istanbul. For Pamuk, the historic acquires a living presence, re-membering itself as a vitality which thrives in simultaneity with the present. The considerations of the past and the history of the city refuse to be contained as an anecdotal base to the contemporaneous milieu of modernity. Rather, it is transposed with the present, consistently merging with the 'now' time of modernity. To be conscious of this vital persistence of the historic is to see the city in "black and white" (*Istanbul* 34). Pamuk writes:

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. (38)

Pamuk's preoccupation with the historic occurs in the backdrop of a secular modernity and its ideological climate of progress that engulfs Turkey in general and Istanbul in particular. To be conscious of the historic as a vital presence and not as a relic problematizes the unambiguous claims and self-advocacies pertaining to the arrival of modernity. What is more, it is not just the limits of modernity that is contested by an unambiguous awareness of the historic. It is also simultaneously an opening up of the very consideration of history. History becomes an everyday affair, not removed from time but very much posited within the considerations of the contemporaneous. The living presence of history accords the everyday its own metaphor—an excess of significance that is the elementary enticement for the flâneur and the fundamental motif of flânerie:

There are places—in Tepebasi, Galata, Fatih and Zeyrek, a few of the villages along the Bosphorus, the back streets of Uskudar—where the black-and-white haze I've been trying to describe is still in evidence. On misty, smoky mornings, on rainy, windy nights, you can see it on the domes of mosques on which flocks of gulls make their homes; you can see it, too, in the clouds of exhaust, in the wreathes of soot rising from stovepipes, in the rusting rubbish bins, the parks and gardens left empty and unintended on winter days, and the crowds scurrying home through the mud and the snow on winter evenings; these are the sad joys of black-and-white Istanbul.” (*Istanbul* 35-36)

The excess is the historic, a historic excess that constantly intervenes Turkey's grand march to the history of modernity and poses the historicization of modernity within a framework of discontinuity. This discontinuity is increasingly framed within an alternative engagement with modernity. Pamuk locates a validated performative and “a moral point” (*Istanbul* 39) in the everyday practices of Istanbulers who “have shunned the vibrant reds, greens” and wears “the same pale, drab, shadowy clothes” (38). To him, this is a ritual enactment undertaken in

remembrance of things past, an everyday validation of the past which is present in absentia and it is the absence that holds an unforeseen validity over the present. Pamuk locates this lingering persistence of the historic, which is present in a consciousness of absence, as the possible root of *huzun*, a Turkish word with a theological root and later on adapted within the epistemic mysticism of the Sufi tradition. Pamuk observes that the essence of loss that is suggested in the Arabic meaning of the word, acquires the connotations of a cherishable and desirable ecstasy within the Sufi tradition. For the Sufis, the sense of loss is suggestive of the craving that the soul has for the divine and the more one is haunted by the intimations of *huzun*, the more he is endowed with a possibility of approaching the transcendental. The ecstasy is materialised in the lack and Pamuk realises that “it is the absence, not the presence, of *huzun*” which torments the believer (81). The tradition of *huzun*, as Pamuk argues, has been a time-honoured tradition in Turkey and is intimately functional as an identifiable premise that constitute the ambiguities of Turkish everyday and its consciousness of history. To wilfully embrace *huzun* and its constituent/ accompanying essence of loss is to linger within the paradox of a performative that is “as life affirming as it is negating” (82).

For Pamuk this tradition of loss is a historic sensibility, it is a historic way of responding to history. Hence, the city and its community existence is poised within the ethics of loss, something that persists even in a *modernity arrived and manifested* milieu (*emphasis mine*). This consciousness of the historic becomes an everyday companion of life in Istanbul, to be in the city is to be in loss, a loss that invites the residual remnants of history which linger even after the relics of heritage are substituted by the exhibits of modernity. The historic is traced in the constituent milieu of the urban-modern and Pamuk preponderantly observes:

To feel this *huzun* is to see the scenes, evoke the memories, in which the city itself becomes the very illustration, the very essence, of *huzun*. I am speaking of the evenings when the sun

sets early, of the fathers under the street lamps in the back streets returning home carrying plastic bags. Of the old Bosphorus ferries moored to deserted stations in the middle of winter...of the old booksellers who lurch from one financial crisis to the next and then wait shivering all day for a customer to appear...of the tea houses packed to the rafters with unemployed men; of the patient pimps striding up and down the city's greatest square on summer evenings in search of one last drunken tourist..." (*Istanbul* 84-85)

Pamuk's elaborate quote, which runs for almost three pages, accounts an exhaustive picture of the Istanbul everyday and ends with an affirmative containment "I speak of them all". (*Istanbul* 85) What is suggested is the inescapable persistence of the historic and its almost natural presence in every perceivable model of the ritual, mundane and insignificant order of urban existence of Istanbul. Being in Istanbul is synonymous with belonging in *huzun* and to be in *huzun* is to be in consciousness of loss, a loss that acknowledges the absence of the departed only to validate its presence in absentia. The becoming of history is induced by recognition; the being however persists even when it is not palpable and consciously experienced. To engage in flânerie is to be able to recognise history not in becoming but also in being.

The present thesis, with the relevance of such theoretical and conceptual framework, attempts to engage in substantiating the flâneur as the alternative historiographer in the selected novels of Orhan Pamuk. The thesis unveils other consciousness of history and its intimate association with the archetype of the flâneur. In doing so, the thesis also engages in a more nuanced understanding of the flâneur that is not strictly in adherence with the historical base of its origin and is yet very much in lineage with the ontic and epistemic ethos of flânerie. For validating the arguments and the interpretations, the thesis takes into consideration the philosophers that have been introduced in the scope of this Introduction and also other contemporary thinkers who belong to the same epistemic lineage but have their own departures while engaging with

the stratified and nuanced categories of history, modernity, flânerie, urban philosophy et. al. Hence, in the following chapters, the thesis has taken recourse to other eminences in Continental philosophy which include the likes of Jacques Derrida, Jean Luc Nancy, Immanuel Levinas, Edmund Husserl, among others. Since the research is conceptual, a considerable liberty has been taken to argue within a cross-cultural and non-chronological purview. The intention has been to substantiate the thematic nuances which the novels contain and the way they can be critically examined to uncover the fundamental logic that the thesis aims to substantiate: the possible semblance between the act of flânerie and alternative historiography and the possibility of considering the flâneur as an alternate historiographer.

The novels have not been selected in empirical whimsies but keeping in mind the contentions that the thesis engages with. The ensuing literature review has consisted in a careful reading of novels which deal with similar themes (*Invisible Cities*, *Year of the Death of Ricardo Reiss*, *The History of the Siege of Lisbon*, *Istanbul Istanbul*, *Open City*, *A Mind at Peace* to list a few) but the final design has been conceptualised with a characteristic emphasis on the fictional oeuvre of Orhan Pamuk. Such a preference does not claim that the texts that the thesis has excluded do not necessarily explore the nuances which constitute the research question. The novels listed above profoundly engage with the aspects of flânerie and in some cases with history as well. However, those novels have tried to foresee the flâneur as a precursor, and in some cases (for instance, in a novel like *The Siege of Lisbon* or *Invisible Cities*) as an inventor of history. The flâneur in such literary texts engages in the practice of fictionalising history. Even though such a practice can very well be a possible mode of alternative historicization (fiction, in the postmodern milieu has claimed its right to history and has started usurping from history its singularity) as well, it does not fall within the consideration of the historic that has been conceptualised in the thesis. The thesis, on the contrary, has tried to unearth an alternative

consciousness of history that is very much premised within the functionalities of history. History and its extensive repertoire of the past has been conceptualised as a preliminary premise and a foundational hermeneuticised field that can be subjected to interpretation, without being necessarily discarded. The historic and the hauntings of history do not constitute an impossible determinacy which can be evaded only in rejection and subsequent denial (interested reader can look into the novel *The History of the Siege of Lisbon*) or in a strategic transcendence (as in Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*). Neither is it a profoundly intimate indulgence of the lived that the self engages in, if only to negate the infernal material reality of the present. (*Istanbul Istanbul* by Bernard Sonmez) The historic in the thesis has been regarded as a curiously open premise that does not have a consistent predicament.

Chapter Abstracts:

The first chapter of the thesis engages in a close reading of Orhan Pamuk's novel *Snow* and attempts to interpret Ka, the exiled poet protagonist in the novel as a flâneur turned historiographer/ alternative historiographer. The chapter explores how the trope of flânerie is pertinent in the novel as an act of engaging with the heterogeneous epistemic conjectures of history. Hence, the chapter has been titled **Poet as the Historian: Flânerie and the Becoming of History in *Snow***. The chapter takes into consideration the idea of history in the novel and reads it as an epistemic essence rather than a concurrence of events.

The Turkish border town of Kars functions as an essential motif in the novel; it is a discontinuity within the Kemalist model of homo-hegemonic secularism and a valorised order of reason which dominate Turkey and Turkish history. For the modern Nation State of Turkey, Kars is historically underscored as a border town that is constantly falling out of secularised, modern history due to its growing obsessions with fanaticism. On the contrary, to the provincial subjects of Kars, performatives of non-modernity are the only possible recourse that can ensure Kars to

find its place in history through absolute singularity whereby it can disengage itself from the accumulative canon of world history. Hence, the provincial town of Kars stands as a point of departure and occupies a liminal status of hybridity where faith and reason, tradition and modernity, world history and lived history are posited/ juxtaposed in an economy of striation.

As Ka, the protagonist in the novel, arrives at Kars to report on the mystery of suicide girls, he is drawn into this unprecedented tension between two opposing binaries of historicism; the fabric of progress and modernity which is modelled on the Hegelian notion of world history and the performative cultures of non-modernity which are ruptures in Turkey's endeavour to culminate into a modern Nation State. Ka, the exiled subject, sees both this process of history making and unmaking in play and confronts the homo-hegemonic tendencies that both these performatives of hegemony and counter-hegemony involves. As the chapter shall substantiate, this double vision of Ka makes him a flâneur in essence and not just in performance and flânerie becomes an essential trope in the novel, not just in terms of aimless wandering (that Ka engages in for a considerable duration in the novel) but also in terms of an accumulative consciousness. This economy of accumulation, is not appropriative and the heterogeneity of impressions, narratives, catastrophes, historical monuments and emblems are all perceived like images which are operative in their transiency within the economy of consciousness of the solitary self. They do not become teleological advocations that will attempt to incorporate Kars in an either/or status of an inside/outside two contrary models of history and historical thought, i.e. the progressive and the exclusive. Instead, the images and events are inspirations to Ka's poetic enterprises, a work that is irretrievably lost in due course of the novel. Ka's historicization of Kars and the documentation of the suicide girls, in other words, thus becomes a historicization that is based on the metaphysics of absence rather than presence and is characterised by an openness rather than a teleological conclusion. His non-teleological consciousness lays the

possibility of an alternative historiography where the singular and the discontinuous that evade the tension between the material and the ideological can claim the possibility of recognition and hence, historicization.

The second chapter titled **Turning Memory into History: The Material and the Spatial-Personal in *The Museum of Innocence*** attempts to substantiate the intimate relation between material cultures and the material history of the self. Through an engagement with Orhan Pamuk's novel *The Museum of Innocence*, the chapter substantiates how the material and cultures of materiality evolve as a paradigm where the personal and the socio-historical spatial, memory and history co-habit. In doing so, the chapter problematises the easy consideration of the self-referential status of memory and depicts it as relational, dependent upon the corporeality of material culture. The chapter argues that the relational nature of memory is also fundamental in according the material its trans-material status of being and attempts to engage in an understanding of how objects often evolve as images; as sites which are material in form but trans-material in essence. This trans-material understanding of the object is intimately associated with the poetics of *flânerie* and the chapter argues that Kemal, the principle character in the novel who re-members his beloved Fusun by collecting and preserving objects that bear her traces, is a curious combination of the *flâneur* and the alternative historiographer.

The novel describes the endeavours of Kemal, an upper class Istanbulite, who to (re)member his love affair with his cousin Fusun, strolls around Istanbul and collects tokens and memorabilia which are impregnated with the impressions of his lost love. Kemal consequently constructs a museum that archives his loss; a discursive paradigm where the objects acquire a double life, the material and the affective. The archive of remembrance that Kemal conceives, by preserving and accumulating diverse objects, materials, possessions, becomes a personal labyrinth for him, where he can enact the performative of loss. Simultaneously however, these

memorabilia preserve their materiality and for the neutral observer; they are not affective relics and emblems but material renderings and validations of a past that embraces the collective and becomes history.

It is in this doubleness that the objects in the novel evolve as images, they are simultaneously relevant within the economy of the affective and the material, the temporal and the eternal. Like an image, the objects described in the novel surpass their form and provoke an essence that is personal and simultaneously historical and it is in his engagement with the trans-discursive material that Kemal provokes a possibility of evolving as a flâneur in the novel. For him, the objects are events which mean more than what they mean and as such this experience of the surplus that survives beyond the empirically perceivable validates his sojourns through the city as flânerie. Simultaneously however, the objects are spatially and temporally relevant to the subject; they are induced with remembrances of an occurrence that is spatio-temporally removed from the *now* (*emphasis mine*). The objects evoke a memory of a lost time and place and in this unveiled yesterday, the objects become potent signifiers of not just memory but also the greater milieu of history, that which contributes to the materiality of the object. In other words, the memory of objects often overlaps with their historicity. What the material signifies is the relational nature of memory and its dependence upon the material history of the object. Hence, the trans-material essence of the object that is revealed in its intimacy with memory is co-habitant with the historicity that the object derives from its historicity. The trans-material and the material thus complement each other in a paradox where the historic and the mnemonic intermingle and the act of archiving memory and making it persist in the essence of remembrance also becomes an act of archiving history, thereby contemplating the possibility of an alternative historiography.

In the third chapter of the thesis, memory and remembrance and its potentiality to evolve as a fertile interpretive domain that has the possibility of according the present an alternative foundation of the past is pondered upon. The chapter titled **In Search of Lost Wife: Flânerie, Remembrance and the Re-conceptualisation of History in *The Black Book*** engages in an understanding of the ambiguous disposition of memory as a curious poise of lived and interpreted, occurred and imagined, and ponders upon the possible implications that it carries in its persistent presence as a conceptual and constituent component of consciousness. The chapter, following the plight of Galip, the lawyer whose wife Ruya goes missing, takes into consideration the possibility of an alternative historiography which explores the unfelt significances of the lived, in order to accord a historicity to the present that has evolved as estranging and in unprecedent with the comprehended order of the lived. The chapter also substantiates Galip as the flâneur turned alternative historiographer who engages in material and metaphorical journeys through the streets of Istanbul, searching in them a trace and a sign which do not just convey significance within the consideration of the present but also posits the present within an alternative order of the past.

The novel registers the (mis)adventures of Galip, a lawyer who is immersed in a quest of his missing wife Ruya and in his endeavours to do so, Galip frequents the clubs and coffeehouses, the cinema halls and restaurants he had once visited with his wife. These revisits are simultaneous with his revision of memory. However, the ploy of memory is not an escape into the bliss of nostalgia; it is governed by the principle of quest. The quest however, in due course turns into a quest of essence rather than existence and it is in this engagement with the ideal rather than the real that Galip becomes a flâneur. Galip's flânerie is also suggested in his urge to go beyond the nominal, material and empirical to engage in a significance that is suggested,

yet not materialised. When it comes to the context of the past, this preoccupation with suggestive makes Galip the alternative historiographer.

Galip's explorations of the spatialities of remembered and the remembrances of the spatial accomplish the enactment of an intimate historiography. This intimate consciousness of history is also complemented with an informal mode of historiography that is suggested in the novel in form of the newspaper columns of Celal. In the novel, Celal is a journalist and a half-brother of Ruya and the daily columns that he writes for the newspaper *Milliyet* are also ficto-critical renderings on the history of Istanbul, where the happened is constantly tempered by possibilities and speculations, so as to defy the logocentrism of history and historical consciousness. History in the novel is constantly intervened by speculative conjectures and the chronological telocentric discursive formulation of history is intervened by a defiance of finality; by an experiential account of spaces where the present *now* is not dissociated from the past *then* and the crystallised vortex of past is not necessarily a consolidated occurred (*emphasis mine*). Rather, they are refractive tropes where the present survives as a possibility and not an unchallenged finality. The historical consciousness evolves as a kairotic discourse where the past and present constantly shape and influence the other and the chapter addresses this tendency of existential historiography that the novel embodies, chiefly by taking into consideration the character of Galip and his gradual development. The chapter argues that Galip develops as a flâneur turned historiographer whose tryst with history is existential in a sense that the past constantly intervenes into his perception of the present and as such his account of the contemporary is intrinsically characterised by a metaphysics of absence, where the perceived is always an absence of the remembered.

The fourth chapter of the thesis is titled **The decadent flâneur and the Progress of History: Alienation, Flux and the Poetics of Reconciliation in *A Strangeness in My Mind***. The chapter

assesses Mevlut, the boza seller protagonist of *A Strangeness in My Mind* as a flâneur endowed with an alternative historical consciousness who negotiates with the ordeal of change and the milieu of modernity that encompasses the social, political, economic and the spatial milieu of Istanbul. The chapter takes into consideration Mevlut's nuanced engagement with modernity and identifies his ambiguous state of being within and without the valorised temporality of the present which modernity endorses, as a possible premise of alternative historiography.

Mevlut's occupation as the boza (an authentic and traditional Turkish drink) seller, his appreciations of Armenian architectures and cemeteries, his desire to frequent the older quarters of Nisantasi during his night-time strolls conjecture him as a traditional subject who is interested in archaic occurrences rather than the kaleidoscope of everyday. Simultaneously, his urge to become modern by refuting the orthodoxies of family and his persistent urge to claim a sovereignty of being, his unmatched awareness of the perceptible variances of the present, make him the discursive subject of the temporal. This essential ambiguity that Mevlut embodies is suggestive of flânerie- a hyphenation in being and an intrinsic ability to behave and belong in discontinuity. Flânerie thus becomes a possible ploy through which Mevlut evolves a double consciousness; that is conscious of the *now* but is never oblivious of the 'then'. This double consciousness of the temporal conceptualises the past as not teleological history which ensures an arrival at modernity; rather as instantaneous and discontinuous. The past is not opaque or inert but vital and organic, possessing the ability to intervene the happening with the reminiscences of the happened. This is suggestive of an alternative historical consciousness and Mevlut's preoccupation with such a vital essence of history nourishes the possibility of an alternative historiography. Critical engagements with the novel have often attempted to understand the novel as a bildungsroman where the self is reconciled and accommodated with the flux of change that dominates the spatial-locational. The present chapter departs from such

pertinent readings to understand how this assimilation is accomplished in departure; wherein the self becomes a part of change with this salient realisation that the present is not necessarily an annihilation of past.

The final chapter analyses the findings derived from the research and retaliates the possibility of locating an overlap between the flâneur and the alternative historiographer. The thesis in no way suggests that the novels discussed are attempts to re-read the materiality of Turkish history within the fabric of fiction. Neither does it argue that the idea of history in the novels involve any specific episode from the history of Turkey. As such, the thesis has consciously excluded the novel *My Name is Red* from its purview and scope because the concerned novel has often been read as a period/ historical fiction. The thesis has evaded such easy connotations of history as periodic or episodic. On the contrary, the thesis has tried to engage with the philosophy of history and the generous fertile milieu in which history is often poised when considered philosophically. The thesis has also tried to take the flâneur as an archetype and flânerie as a practice outside its standard considerations. Influenced by more recent studies, Flânerie in the thesis has refused to be contained within the considerations of a performance and has trespassed into the considerations of being. In doing so, the thesis has probably been considerate of the elaborate sections of the present chapter which have considerably pondered upon the many interpretive implications involved in the archetype of the flâneur and the practice of flânerie.

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Chapter One

Poet as the Historian: Flânerie and the Becoming of History in *Snow*

The particular events of history can become meaningful only with respect to some larger end or goal, the achievement of which necessarily brings the historical process to a close. This final end of man is what makes all particular events potentially intelligible.

The End of History and The Last Man

Francis Fukuyama

‘What I would say is very simple,’ said the passionate youth. ‘All I’d want them to print in the Frankfurt paper is this: “We’re not stupid! We’re just poor! And we have a right to insist on this distinction.”’

Snow

Orhan Pamuk

Hegel’s acclaimed, often misunderstood statement, which conjectures history as a systematic progress towards a telos, has given birth to the idea of stagist history. Hegel conceptualises history as a systematic progress and engages in an understanding of history as a social organism; marching through the compartments of homogeneous empty time and evolving into “Universal History” (*Philosophy* 17). His understanding of universal history involves the notion of a “history which aspires to traverse long periods of time...” and thus “must indeed forego the attempt to give individual representations of the past as it actually existed. It must foreshorten

its pictures by abstractions; and this includes not merely the omission of events and deeds, but whatever is involved in the fact that Thought is, after all, the most trenchant epitomist” (19). This abstraction of the particular-real by a reductive yet comprehensive ideal is in turn founded on the fundamentals of reason. The universal “History of the world” (24), as Hegel sees it, is both a product and a process of reason and the rationale. It is in its affiliation with reason that the universalising paradigm of world history can produce/ formulate the essence of “World-spirit- that spirit whose nature is always one and the same” (24). Hegel claims that World-spirit is the desired outcome of World history; the destination turned telos towards which the grand march and emphatic progress of history must be directed at and which ought to be, under natural circumstances, “the ultimate result of history” (24). The world-spirit, within the Hegelian framework, becomes an undisputed singularity, a “spirit whose nature is always one and the same” (24).

The making of History thus involves an appropriation into a pre-existent discursive consideration which is founded on principles and tendencies which are homogenous and uniform in nature. History is not a consideration of the particular, the discontinuous or the diverse. Instead, within the climate and habitus of rational modernity, history is singular and the moment of history making is the moment where the alternative plural is appropriated within the greater design of an abstract singular. The quotient of reason renders history as a rational course of event which procures for the anthropocene the persona of a secular subjectivity. More importantly, Reason and its self-referential stature is accorded an absolute inclusivity, where even the Divine providences of the estranging and the differential can be unproblematically located. Reason becomes “Divine Wisdom”, “one and the same in the great as in the little” (*Philosophy* 29).

The paradigm of the universal, within Hegelian epistemic considerations, must contain the specific of “human activity as resulting from private interests” (*Philosophy* 38). In other words, the consideration of the private is conceptualised within an a-priori formulation of agency, where intimations of the subjective is precisely devised within the categorical imperatives of reason and rationale, “the formal side of energy, will, and activity” (38).

The essence of history, thus formulated and formalized within an epistemic purview of reason, foresees the birth of liberalism and the foundation of the secular State. This ideal of the secular-sovereign which arrives as the end of history and the means of liberal ethos, is significantly premised within the imperative rendition of “Rechtsstaat”. “Rechtsstaat”, as Rachel Turner observes, is the ideal state form for neo-liberalism, where a “Kantian conception of liberty, law and reason” characterise the spirit of the age (*Neo-Liberal* 28). Significantly, for a consciousness that is premised upon the ideology of liberalism, this is effectively the “end of history” where “the end point of human ideological evolution” is the materialisation of the liberal state (Fukuyama, *End* 66). Fukuyama refers to Marx and Hegel to substantiate his claim that history is inextricably associated with evolution which “would end when man achieved a form of society” (xii) that was conceptualised and envisioned by him as an abstraction. Hence, the essence of the modern liberal State is not unprecedented or deprived of a historical heritage. It is only that the heritage or the origin is existent in a realm of abstraction. The history of the Modern State is not comfortably co-terminus with/ merely limited to the material history of the Modern State. Instead, its historicity is flamed by its origin that belongs to a world of abstract conceptualisation, where the ideal precedes the real. The formulative aspirations to materialise the liberal state inevitably reduce and subject the existing materialised to the ideological.

The history of the modern Nation State is thus ideological where an “imaginary assemblage” (Althusser, *Reproduction* 175) attempts to appropriate the material-specific particular. What is

more, it tends to negate all other possible claims to history that reality is likely to posit. Louis Althusser argues that “ideology has no history” (175) in a sense that we locate the historical as something which has a concrete and positive materialisation in reality. Yet, the ideological is not irrelevant within the historic. For Althusser, the history of ideology “lies outside it” and “it is but a pale reflection, empty and inverted, of real history” (175). This emptying of the history of the real/ material is Althusser’s understanding of the history of ideology. For Althusser, ideology is endowed with a distinct feature to exist in an alternative historical order that “non-historicises” reality (175). This “non-historical” nature of ideology also provides ideology its “omni-historical” base (175). Ideology can consume the realities of history, it can infringe/ impose upon reality a historicity that does not pertain to the lived and the experienced. The abstraction of the general that ideology promotes essentially presupposes an un-recognition and subsequent de-historicization of the material, the irreducible heterogeneous that is characterised by and often synonymous with the essential subject of absolute singularity.

The flâneur, with his non-synchronous interventions into the ideological, embodies the possibility to evolve as the critical gaze that can restore and reclaim the intimations of the distinct that lingers as an irreducible excess beyond the entrapments of ideology. Cherishing a poetics of transition and preoccupied with the ephemeral and the transitory, the flâneur occupies a problematic position within the cultural tendencies of appropriation and fixation. Devoid of any constant and determinable ideological affiliations, the flâneur can subvert and even transcend the rigours of containment and essentialization. In the words of Keith Tester, “Flânerie can be understood as the observation of the fleeting and the transitory which is the other half of modernity to the permanent and central sense of self (*Flâneur* 7). The observation so involved doesn’t exist in an essential split from the ontological disposition of the flâneur. Instead, as Tester argues, the “ontological base of the Baudelairean poet (the flâneur) rests in

doing not being” (5). Doing is not necessarily a performative that can ascertain a conclusive fruition of the act. Instead, the deed is precisely the “search for self-hood through the diagnosis of dissatisfaction” (5). The dissatisfactory involves the chaotic which is an entanglement of possibilities, never complete and determined but always impregnated with the possibility of arrival.

Habermas, in his seminal take on Modernity, identifies the modern condition of being and modernity as an “exaltation of the present” (“Modernity” 3) where the past is an essential double to the present/ *now*. This essential valorisation of the temporal ‘now’ and its relational essence suspends history into a homogeneous whole where “Individual epochs lose their distinct forces” (5). Historical consciousness in the modern age is not merely a consciousness of the evolving and continuing trajectories of time. Instead, it is characterised by “a sense of time wherein decadence immediately recognizes itself in the barbaric, the wild and the primitive” (3). History derives an intonation and it is the ideological that formulates the modern subject’s historical consciousness. Modern historical consciousness essentialises the heterogeneous departures of the past into one systemic purview, that which has occurred and is thus beyond the ideological considerations of the instantaneous modern. Agency formulation of the modern self is premised upon the “principle of unlimited self-realization, the demand for authentic self-experience and the subjectivism of a hyperstimulated sensitivity” (4).

Modernity posits two antinomical notions of subjectivity; the subject imbued in a “heroic affinity of the present” (“Modernity” 5) is juxtaposed against the subject for whom the present is “a moment of revelation...a time in which splinters of a messianic presence are enmeshed” (6). The messianic, as Walter Benjamin observes, is never in dissociation from “historical materialism” (“Theses” 254). Instead, the present is bound in a “secret agreement” with the past and is a condition on which “the past has a claim” (254). This persistent presence of past within

the unfurling *now* problematises the understanding of present as ahistoric. The messianic nature of history and its fertile influence upon the modern, nuances the unconditional assumption of the temporal as the instantaneous and its easy reduction into the ideological. The messianic disposition of the past reclaims the relevance of a past that has exceeded the ideologically designed historicity of modernity.

The present chapter takes into consideration the ever-engulfing phenomenon of modernity and the problematic poise that historical consciousness has within the self-valorising referentials of modernity. The chapter establishes the flâneur as a significant figure of intervention, a subject considerate of not just the moment of historical becoming but also the process partaken to herald the becoming. This process, as the chapter through a close reading of *Snow* substantiates, involves an essentialisation of the heterogeneous and removed multiplicities of ideologues, faiths and convictions which are self-evidently removed/ distant from the envisioned finality of the desired and the valorised becoming of history that is inseparably rooted with the arrival of modernity. The chapter focuses on the role of the flâneur within this politicised process of history making and substantiates him as an alternative historiographer, whose agility with the ideological enables him to co-habit within the plural and the possible and not the iconised and the inevitable. This leads to the suspension of an “idea of universal history” (Kittsteiner, “Historicism” 180) and concentrates in an engagement with history which is a history of the everyday, “citable in all its moments” (“Theses” 254). The intimations of the historical are not confined to the imposed ideological. Instead, history and historicity sustains even within the irreducible lived and the recourse to an alternative history is suggestive of “the critical return of the ordinary” (*Practice* 13). The lived stands outside the transcendental paradigm of history but is relevant within an immanence. This order of immanence constitutes the alternative history

and the flâneur becomes the alternative historiographer, who is concerned with not just the resolution but also the process of history.

Orhan Pamuk's novel *Snow*, published in 2002 and translated into English in 2004, has been considered as a magnum opus in his literary oeuvre and has often been praised for its nuanced representation of modernity and its critical engagement with the homo-hegemonic purview of an ideologically designed ideal of rational secularism and progress. In the words of Hulya Yilmaz, *Snow* is essentially a novel about "polyvocal history" ("Imagined" 111) where the ethnic-cultural diversity of Turkey, with its irreducible materialities, evolves as constant impediments within the epistemic course of procurement of the secular modern state. The lived-material that is a redundant, and often a dangerous supplement, within the conceptualised ideal of history, intervenes the becoming of history that has been speculated and valorised within a hegemonic fetish of homogenisation.

Fundamental to the plot are a group of suicide girls, who enact out their resistance to the absorbing economy of power exercised by the seemingly secular, yet latently totalitarian State, which in turn is finding its way towards the *end of history* by endorsing the ceremonious and sanctified epoch of secular history and progressive consciousness (*emphasis mine*). European Secularism in Turkey officially began with the Kemalist regime when Turkey was declared as a Republic in 1923. The secular in Turkish history, as Davison points out, owes an affiliation with 'laicism' and the correspondent Turkish word for secular in the Turkish vernacular has been "laique", which "meant "of the people" or lay members of the church as distinguished from the "clergy"" ("Turkey" 337). As such, the very fundamental and primary essence and understanding of the secular in the Turkish imaginary has never been in complete dissociation from religion. Religion has persisted as an ideological tool, strategically advocated by the State apparatus to propagate a constitutive Islamism which necessitated the possibility of harmony

and fraternity among the citizens. Religion evolved as an integral component of the everyday intimate history of the Turkish subject. The intimate histories, which are inextricable constituents of consciousness, are constituents of finitude and deeply correspond with Jean Luc Nancy's understanding of finite history. They locate the self/ individual within a finitude of being. For Nancy, "history doesn't belong primarily to time, nor to succession, nor to causality, but to community, or to being-in common" (*Birth* 143). Community is the foreknowledge that is an aporia to the agency of the self, it lingers as an irreducible truth that opens the self to a state of "being-in-common that only happens, or that is happening, an event, more than a "being"" (143).

The Kemalist regime and its obsession with Eurocentric secular modernity essentially advocated and propagated a homo-normative model of historical becoming and being. Traces of non-modernity which were an essential component of the intimate realities of Turkish imaginary were essentially absorbed within an appropriative economy of progress. Not just the juridico-legal institutions but also the performative spaces of individual practice were systematically intervened and moulded in order to promote a significantly stable and uniform historicity of being. Umut Azak observes:

Kemalist state undertook even more direct interventions in the everyday life of the people in its attempt to secularize the public sphere and adopt Western civilisation. The dress code, which imposed the compulsory use of the Western brimmed hat in 1925 and outlawed the fez, the traditional headgear for men, reflected the Kemalist urge to break with the past and to change even the daily habits of people for the sake of Westernization." (*Islam* 11)

The performatives of being-belonging, which recount and render the materiality of everyday, often place the performing-being subject within a loci of "finite history" (Luc Nancy 143). "Finite history", as Nancy argues, "is the happening of the time of existence" where not the

imposition of an essence but an instantaneous “essence” is unveiled within an un-premeditated order of happening (*Birth* 157). Finite history evolves as an ontological historicity rather than a formulated historical consciousness and as such, doesn’t demand the “accomplishment or representation of the subject” (158). Rather, it is an order of happening that “only happens-as togetherness” (158). This essence of togetherness simulates the birth of the community. Community for Nancy is not a collective accomplishment containing identical individuals. Rather, the individual for Nancy is a relational truth, whose essence is discursively formulated and determined by the intimate order of community. The singular is never a “being” but a “happening” (156). The denial of the contingent influences of the community order-which discursively design the formulated essence of the subject, by an imposition of “finished history” (157), intervenes the validation of the subject as a vibrant possibility. Simultaneously, the conceptualisation of “finished history”, which relies on “history maintaining its end and presenting it” is liable to dismiss the finite-the everyday historicity of the self that is inextricably associated with the material-fundamental repertoire of community (157).

Religion (Islam) is an essential component of the Turkish everyday where “97 percent of the population identify themselves as Muslim” (Santesso, “Silence” 126) and the historicity of the Turkish subject is less likely to exist in separation from the epistemic purview of faith and the performative practices of religion. Soner Cagaptay observes that contrary to the promise of Secularism which the Kemalist regime envisioned as the end of history, the quest of Turkishness inevitably involves a consideration of religion and the discursive determination of Turkish identity posits uncomfortable questions about religion (Cagaptay, *Who is a Turk* 2).

This irreducible pertinence of religion is captured in *Snow* with the perilous presence of headscarf girls, ready to lay their lives for a validation of the habitual religious-traditional rather than deny the historicity of their being in favour of the State sponsored genesis of secular

history. The act of self-annihilation, as the trusted narrator-friend of Ka informs us, has been “without ritual or warning, in the midst of their everyday routines” (Pamuk, *Snow* 13). The unceremonious enactment of death becomes a relevant performative response against the strategies of an ideologically designed and pre-conceptualised schema of historical becoming. In all possibilities, they are likely to be interpreted as performatives of resistance. However, these performatives of self-annihilation occur without validation or justification and the essential silence of the suicide committing self about the act, locate the trope of resistance beyond the usual considerations of the ideological. The non-justification of the act formulates an essence of resistance that is inseparable from the ontic essence of the resisting body. Resistance becomes bare and unappropriable, claiming the recognition of an alternative ideal of history.

What is more, the contestations involving the body locate it within a discursive order of historicization. While the progressive disposition of secular history attempts to remove the body from the history of shame that religious fundamentalism accords to it (by prompting the ideology of progress which discards headscarf as an attire), the singular subject and her own consciousness of the body nurture it as an unconquerable intimate reality. The ontic ceases to exist without the corporeal. The ontic in turn is not liberated from the finitudes of the material history of being and becoming and is instead nurtured within the poetics of legacy and tradition. The historicity of being is synonymous with the ontological essence of being and Nancy affirms “history is the ontological constitution of the subject itself” (*Birth* 148).

The mutually contradictory paradigms of history making involving the body locates the body as a site of contestation where a contested politics of (de)-historicisation is in operation. Referring to the Hat Law of 1925 (previously mentioned in the chapter) which forbade the men from wearing fez and promoted the use of Western style hats as replacement, Alev Cinar

observes that the process of making of a secular state in Turkey was simultaneous with the rejection of the strains of Ottoman Islamic past (*Secularism* 68). The residues of the rejected past that are discarded by the new order of progressive history making survive as historicalities, within the traces of, what Ranajit Guha calls, “people without history” (*Limit* 8). For Guha, “historicality” is “the true historical existence of man” (3) and the grand narrative of secular turned world history often absorbs, appropriates and at times reject the more authentic intimations of the lived. “People without history” (8) are impersonations of historicalities that are left out of history.

This conjecture of “people without history” (*Limit* 8) doesn’t necessarily signify a homogenic clan of individuals located outside the limits of history. The epistemic violence involved in denying the *historicality* (*emphasis mine*) of subjects who are not concordant with the march of history is also alternately a process of history-making. This latent but significant process involves a “new mathesis of comparison” where “climates and habitats, customs and polities, belief systems and phonic systems of the most diverse kinds” are “all collected and displayed side by side on epistemic spreadsheets to be measured and calculated for their worth on a civilizational scale” that is profoundly Eurocentric (12). This new method of historicization de-recognises the intimate order of history, an irreducible historicality which is synonymous with the vitality of being.

The headscarf in the novel becomes a significant token of an irreducible materiality which promotes a possible claim to an alternative ethos of historicality by the Turkish subject. Kadife, one of the headscarf girls in the novel, who wears her headscarf with the clear intention of making a “political statement” (*Snow* 115) highlights in an engaging conversation with Ka, this essential lineage of intimate material history that the headscarf has. As she reflects upon her classmates, whom the provincial assassinator of the Director of the Institute of Education has

previously described as “poor, hard-working girls of ours” (41), the sacrosanct intimacy of a singular and authentic subjectivity is unveiled:

Their mothers and fathers brought them up to be as they are. So did the religious instruction they received during their state education. Then suddenly, having been told all their lives to keep their heads covered, these girls were now hearing, “Take off those scarves, because that’s what the state wants you to do.” (115)

In a later conversation with Hande, a friend of Kadife and one of the headscarf girls, the relevance of the headscarf is further evoked within an intimate order of the ontic. The affiliations with the ontic that the headscarf provokes is not merely restrained to a performative practice or an identifying emblem/ token associated with a greater community/ clan. It is simultaneously an accomplishment that premises the fundamental identification of the self within a valorised ideal of becoming, a denial of which renders the self in a perpetual estrangement:

Hande said angrily. ‘The true reason is that I can’t concentrate, I can’t imagine myself without a headscarf. Whenever I try to concentrate, I turn into either an evil stranger like the “agent of persuasion” or a woman who can’t stop thinking about sex...I would have removed the headscarf of my own free will, and not because the police have forced me. But for now I just can’t concentrate, I just can’t bring myself to imagine that moment.’” (*Snow* 125)

The headscarf doesn’t merely possess religio-traditional connotations, it is simultaneously an agent and an essential constituent of the modalities through which the process of self-fashioning is accomplished. A denial of the agent effaces the agency and the self is problematically poised in a non-identification where the becoming-being semblance is jeopardised.

The essentialist and appropriative tendencies of history making is an epistemic de-recognition of the individual. The singular is conceptualised within a systemic poesis of becoming, his/ her essence is a means to end. The singular is reduced to a component of the greater design of the collective. As long as the singular's material reality of being is not in resonance with the designed abstraction of the collective, it is likely to remain unrecognised. Diversions and interventions are negated through a systemics of exclusion and as such, the headscarf girls, who refuse to comply with the State advocacies of uncovered heads, are systematically excluded from the discursive modalities of institutionalisation. They are rendered redundant within the functional parameters of secular history making and their claim to history is denied by an overruling propagandist projection of a constricted historicity. The headscarf girls in the novel are excluded from school and the institutional paradigms that enhance the ideological identity of the subject/ self. The ideological, as has been argued before, is the determinant matrix of secular history, it is the founding fulcrum which designs and authenticates the course of history. Thus, the deviant individual, within the secular paradigm of history making, emerges as the unaccommodated other, the *wasted lives (emphasis mine)*, which Zygmunt Bauman identifies as the binary other in the emerging milieu of modernity. For Bauman, the waste of modernity comprises of those unaccommodated heterogeneities that exceed the institutional paradigms and hermeneutics of the epistemes of modernity. He observes:

The production of 'human waste', or more correctly wasted humans (the 'excessive' and the 'redundant', that is the population of those who either could not or were not wished to be recognized or allowed to stay), is an inevitable outcome of modernization, and an inseparable accompaniment of modernity. It is an inseparable side-effect of order building (each order casts some parts of extant population as 'out of place', 'unfit' or 'undesirable') and of economic progress (that cannot proceed without degrading and devaluing the previous effective modes of

‘making a living’ and therefore cannot but deprive their practitioners of their livelihood).
(*Wasted* 8)

The redundant thus becomes an inseparable companion of modernity and for Bauman the redundant constitutes the “supernumerary, unneeded, of no use” (*Wasted* 12) thus prompting an idea of waste that is not merely limited to a quantitative understanding but also involves the qualitative. As such, an idea or episteme, an ideologue or an ideology can be rendered as redundant and excluded from the historical moment of modernity which is also the impregnated moment of the genesis of the bio-political state. The redundant is excluded, yet in its exclusion, it is very much a component of the dialectical purview of bio-politics. Roberto Esposito observes, “Biopolitics has to do with that complex of mediations, oppositions and dialectical operations that in an extended phase made possible the modern political order” (*Bios* 15). The redundant is the waste, yet this status of being the waste does not accord it an absolute exclusion from the greater design of bio-politics. Instead, the waste is re-recognised and the recognition involves an appropriation. It is either essentialised within the great fabric of bios, i.e. the political order, or else it is located within a greater dialectic of opposition between the zoe and the bios, i.e. the natural and the political. The deviant singular is thus an inescapably politicised subject, where the collective, the community, the polis and even the filial lay their claim to the emerging possibilities of subjectivity. Departures from the systemic are not suspended into obliteration or non-recognition. Instead, the deviant sets up its own claim to history. The surplus epistemic that is not in adherence with the ideologues of secularism advocated by the biopolitical State emerge as an alternative canon/ institution that premises a fundamentalism on the material-real base of the ontic-lived. In its endeavour to do so, the fundamentalist trajectories overrule and appropriate the traces of the exclusive, irreducible and spontaneous that the singular lived is likely to posit. The historicity of the lived becomes a

possible ploy through which the deferred heterogeneities can lay their claim to an alternative paradigm of history that is beyond the progressive parameters of (secular) history.

The suicide girls in *Snow* are agents through which an alternative historicality arrives to jeopardise the ideal of secular history. This alternative paradigm of historicality laying its claim to history isn't irreducibly singular. Instead, it is constantly moulded and formulated within the epistemic and institutional hermeneutics of religious fundamentalism. Muhtar, the ex-husband of Ipek and the Mayor candidate from The Prosperity Party is quick to emphasise before Ka:

All across Turkey, our support of the covered girls is the key expression of our political vision. (*Snow* 52)

The presence of religious fundamentalists like Muhtar and extremists like Blue in the novel and their interpretive economy which analyse and present before Ka the happenings of suicide are manipulative in their own way. They are designed with the prerogative to formulate an alternative canon of National history that is non-modern, strategically exploring the dormant yet pertinent-persistent historicality that the act of self-annihilation contains. In other words, self-annihilation becomes an epiphanic gesture that enhances the possibility of incorporating the materiality of the lived singular within an alternative dynamics of history making.

The fundamentalist and the non-modern in the novel apparently posit the promise of an all encompassive acceptance, willing to unearth the other side of history. Muhtar, the disillusioned leftist turned fundamentalist and a former compatriot of Ka observes that "Unlike Westernised Turks, they (the fundamentalists) don't indistinctively despise the common folk" (*Snow* 62). Although apparently self-advocating, the statement lays bare the problematic peril the "common" occupy within the politico-ideological milieu of Turkey. The singular and his/her materiality must belong to an order of historicality for its recognition. In other words, the re-

cognition of the self can only be enacted out only when it is emplaced and positioned within an order of ideological history of faith which is collective and communitarian in essence. The impressions of the collective not only formulate the singular; they also determine and validate the ontic, thus granting the singular its ontic re-cognition within the formulations of history. In other words, the historicity of the self that tries to sustain its autonomy in its denial/ departure from secular model of history, must adhere to the alternative dynamics of history making. Ka, the silent observer, (who in due course of the chapter will validate himself as the flâneur) is quick to decipher the institutional dependency that is a circumstantial limit to the singular as he reflects:

...in this part of the world faith in God was not something achieved by thinking sublime thoughts and stretching one's creative powers to their limits; nor was it something one could do alone. Above all, it meant joining a mosque, becoming part of a community. (*Snow* 63)

The historicity of the singular in this striated and binary structured milieu of history making is conditioned and formulated within an ever-emerging tension between what constitutes the dialectics of history. This dialectic is a perpetual enactment of struggle between modernity and practices turned performatives of non-modern, the derivatives of reason and the residual traces of faith, and most significantly, the valorised abstractions of world history and the irreducible spontaneities of the lived. Ka reconciles with the making of history as an unfinalizable process, where a relation without relation pervades the nuanced premises of the singular and its locationality in history. In other words, the singular subject is that material agent turned zone of performative and enactment, whose being unveils the relational dependency of modernity on its other and vice versa. As Ka, the poet turned reporter, reflects before Muhtar:

'The idea of a solitary, Westernised individual whose faith in God is private is very threatening to you. An atheist who belongs to a community is far easier for you to trust than a

solitary man who believes in God...I know I'm not going to be one, but say I did become the sort of believer who prays five times a day, why would that disturb you? Perhaps because you can embrace your religion and your community only if godless secularists like me are overseeing business and government affairs. A man can only pray to his heart's content in this country because he depends on the efficiency of the atheist who's an expert at managing the West and all other aspects of worldly business.' (*Snow* 63)

The subjective and its promise of a singular historicity are constantly premised within the essentialist tendencies of history making. The singularity of being occupies a febrile liminality that is impregnated by the contestations of the abstract ideological and its counter-discursive manifestations. The singular and its sovereignty of being, its claim to an interstitial and sovereign historicity is jeopardised by the pre-discursive modalities of being in history which are mutually opposing yet dependent. The third is relentlessly agonised by the over-engulfing tendencies of binarification and strategic essentialism.

Exile is an essential third space belonging, where the essentialised "frontiers between "us" and "outsiders"" (Said, *Reflections* 131) are jeopardised by a contrapuntal sensibility. Said describes the contrapuntal as a "plurality of vision" which "gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions" (138). For Said, the exiled self and his/ her contrapuntal essence of being is a curious juxtaposition of dissimilar and at times mutually opposing worldviews. The experience of exile posits the singular within a possible plurality, where contradictory material and ideological paradigms co-exist. The awareness of the plural locates the self in an openness, where the enfolding of the local and the global, the indigenous and the derived, the world and the home are posed in simultaneity.

The flâneur, with his agility of thought and an inexhaustible desire for the excess, is curiously poised within a non-hermeneutics of belonging. The non-hermeneutical rests in his openness,

where the limits of an empirical consciousness fail to contain the ontic preoccupation with an alternative, a surplus, an excess. The empirical is not rendered redundant, it is an accompaniment and often a trace through which the ontic can trespass into simultaneous alternatives that are contained within and constitutes the paradigm of possibilities. The flâneur, much like the exiled subject, possesses a contrapuntality, an ability to live within a ruptured and disharmonised purview that constitutes “a discontinuous state of being” (*Reflections* 132).

Kerim Alakusoglu turned Ka embodies this discontinuity that provides him a possibility to experience the multifarious and the discrepant. To him, the urban cityscape emerges as a heterotopia. Foucault observes that heterotopias are “a sort of counter-arrangement...in which all the real arrangements...are at one and the same time represented, challenged, and overturned” (“Heterotopias” 332). In their ability to contain nuances, ambiguities and contestations; heterotopias “makes the place that I occupy” (332). Ka’s experience of the urban milieu of Kars insistently makes him aware of other historical orders of being and belonging which are not in resonance with the history of progress:

There wasn’t a soul in the beautiful three-storey Armenian building that now housed the city council...Ka passed an empty, one-storey Armenian house, its windows boarded up...Across the street from the governor’s residence, the little park with the statue of Ataturk was empty. And Ka could not see any sign of life in the residence itself, which dated back to the Russian period and was still Kars’ grandest building. Seventy years earlier, after the First World War, when both the Ottoman and Imperial Russian armies had withdrawn and the Turks of Kars had established an independent state, this building had housed both the secretariat and the assembly. Just across the street was the old Armenian building that had been attacked by the English army because it was the same doomed republic’s presidential palace...A little further down the road,

in front of yet another old Armenian building, just as peaceful and beautiful as the rest, he saw a tank gliding past, slow and silent, as if in a dream. (*Snow* 167)

Besides unveiling the stratified disposition of the historicity of Kars, the passage is suggestive of Ka's inverted consciousness of temporality. The occurrences that happen in the present are not unproblematic realities. Instead, they are sceptically apprehended and perceived in doubt. The occurring reality appears distant and is deprived of conviction. On the contrary, the historical and the happened are beyond nuances. They are reclaimed in fervour; their authenticity remains undisputed. These other histories and their stratifications suggest the heterotopic disposition of Kars. More importantly, these contestations of other histories bring into context the forgotten in Kars. The "failing city and its forgotten people" (*Snow* 35) now have the potential to emerge within an alternative order of the temporal. The forgotten is not suggestive of absence; instead it is a residual sensation which nuances the assertions of reality.

Ka is conscious of these nuances and reality appears to him as diverse and heterogeneous. He is conscious of not just the significant or the sensational but also the fleeting and the discontinuous. His empathic involvement with the city involves an exploration of not just the dominant but also the peripheral. While the blood coup at National Theatre is likely to acquire significance in history owing to its effect, what interests Ka, is the constantly slipping liminal histories of everyday:

He threw on his coat and went outside, unnoticed by anyone. Instead of heading towards the city hall, he turned left on National Independence Avenue and walked down the hill...One stationary and cassette vendor was playing loud music. The pavements were crowded with people who'd come out just to mark the end of curfew; they walked down as far as the market and then up the hill again, pausing now and then to shiver in front of a shop window...The children in the streets made him forget the fear inside them. He watched them sledging on the

bridges, throwing snowballs, fighting and cursing in the vacant lots, the snow covered squares, the school playgrounds and the gardens surrounding the government offices. Only a few wore coats; most were in their school jackets, scarves and skullcaps. They were happy about the coup because it had given them a day off school. (*Snow* 217-218)

While history has supposedly heralded its arrival in Kars in form of the blood coup at the National Theatre, Ka is absorbed in an experience of other historicalities, the liminal experiences of lived that survive in the mundane. This process of experiencing constitutes the alternative paradigm of historicization where the happenings of the temporal are not strategically and systematically incorporated within a patterned and pre-ordained juridico-ethical and ideological paradigm. Instead, the turn towards history making begins with the veneration of the singular and the discontinuous, a re-cognition of not just the identical but also the distinct. The distinct is an irreducible singular that can claim its own historicality beyond the existing manifestations of history.

Ka's arrival in the forgotten city of Kars is a coming back in the novel. As an exiled poet in Germany, Ka's gaze is likely to posit Kars within a nostalgic sensibility and an economy of remembrance. Reconciliation with an already habited spatial often postulates the spatial in intimacy with the memory of the spatial. The return and reconciliation of the exile with the pre-inhabited habitus thus involves a perpetual essence of estrangement that often reconciles with the traces of change.

However, Ka's estrangement doesn't stem in from a de-familiarisation where the contemporaneous doesn't correlate with the remembered. Rather, the reconciliation with Kars as a space within the perceptive economy of Ka unveils "hopelessness and misery" that is intrinsic to a place that "the whole world had forgotten" (*Snow* 9, 10). His estrangement stems from the "scenes he saw as he hurried under the ice-covered branches of the plane trees and the

oleasters” which “spoke of a strange and powerful loneliness” (*Snow* 9, 10). It is the isolation of the spatial that renders him a stranger and it is in his ability to locate himself and subsequently empathise with the solitude of the city that Ka becomes the subject who doesn’t necessarily essentialise the other/ exterior. Instead, his consciousness of the city involves a non-appropriation where the consciousness of the self is increasingly nuanced by an unrehearsed and un-premeditated consciousness of the other. Ka is not the encased subject who absorbs the phenomenological exterior within a pre-determined and pre-designed economy of apprehension. Instead, the self emerges as an affectable reality, constantly effacing its residual traces of foreknowledge to experience the essence of the world/ other:

The scenes he saw as he hurried under the ice-covered branches of the plane trees and the oleasters- the old, decrepit Russian buildings with stovepipes sticking out of every window, the thousand-year-old Armenian church towering over the wood depots and the electric generators, the pack of dogs barking at every passer-by from a five-hundred-year-old stone bridge as snow fell into the half-frozen black waters of the river below, the thin ribbons of smoke rising out of the tiny shanty houses of Kalealti sitting lifeless under their blanket of snow- made him feel so sad that tears came to his eyes...These sights spoke of a strange and powerful loneliness. It was as if he were in a place that the whole world had forgotten; as if it were snowing at the end of the world. (*Snow* 10)

Memory and indulgences of remembrance are absent in Ka’s engagement with the city. This is significant when one takes into consideration the trope of exile and return that is fundamental to the novel. Instead of locating the city within the parameters of memory, Ka shows a persistent tendency to experience the city in the temporal order of the present. His perception of the city involves not merely a subjective consciousness of the city. Instead, it depicts an apprehension that has an increasing tendency to *become* the apprehended (emphasis mine). This dissolution

of the distance between the self and the other, the subject and the object becomes instrumental in Ka's awareness of the city beyond the limits of subjectivity. Ka is not interested in remembering the city and cherishing a sensibility of nostalgia. Instead, he is increasingly haunted by an ethical awareness of the other. This ethics of the other allows the self to experience the other without reducing it to any systemics of pre-determination. Ka doesn't remember the city, instead he is conscious of the city as a forgotten event; a reality which has been denied its historicity by the world.

Forgetting is an epistemic act of denial which denies the forgotten its historicity and suspends the disenfranchised historicity outside the limits and finitudes of history. Paradoxically though, the affective reconciliation with the act of forgetting is also an awareness of the trace that lingers in memory as a discontinuity. The epiphanic awareness of forgetting is also a simultaneous recognition of the traces of absence and non-being being of the forgotten. The forgotten is absent within the discourse of remembrance, yet it is in its locationality of absence that the forgotten registers its presence as a trace.

Ka as the historiographer is influential in unearthing this trace and positing the trace within the larger canopy of world history. The premonition of Kars and its possible locationality outside the aporias of world history simulates the rendering of Kars as a non-historic spatial that is denied the possibility of registering its claim to history. The atmospherics and habitus of Kars are not devoid of historicity that ensues from historicity, the *being in time* (*emphasis mine*). However, this historicity turned historicality is outside the apex of history, once prevailing but now effaced into oblivion. Historicising Kars involves a praxis that will reclaim the routine and the regular, the unceremonious and the uncelebrated as historicalities which can render an equal claim to history. The praxis of reclamation demands a recognition of the mundane.

It is the mundane that constantly alludes Ka and his act of flânerie becomes an acknowledgement turned appreciation of those non-ritualistic everyday that constitute the forgotten spatial-cultural. Ka's untiring walks through the city street, his appreciation of statues and mansions, cafes and hostels, his passive yet passionate interest in the "empty windows of the photography shops, in the frozen windows of the crowded tea-houses where the city's unemployed passed their time playing cards, and in the city's empty, snow-covered squares" substantiate him as an observer-turned historiographer of the everyday (*Snow* 10). Very soon, Ka has started to decipher a transcendental signified in these apparently empty and insignificant occurrences and coherences:

He passed a park in Yusuf Pasa that was full of dismantled swings and broken slides; next to it was an open lot where a group of teenage boys were playing football. The high lampposts of the coal depot gave them just enough light, and Ka stopped for a while to watch them. As he listened to them shouting and cursing, and watched them skidding in the snow, and gazed at the white sky and the pale yellow glow of the lamp-lights, the desolation and remoteness of the place hit him with such force that he felt God inside him. (*Snow* 19)

The revelation and the transcendental signified experienced in the everyday is a significant departure from the revelation of secular history and is not the "rich product of active Reason" (*Philosophy* 29). Instead, it is a revelation of faith where not just the empirical but also the experiential, not just the noumenal but also the phenomenal, devises and affectively accentuates the unfolding significance. This revelation is significant in not just posing the mundane within an alternative framework of history and historicity where the metaphysical and not the rational constitute the essence turned inference of the habitual-historical. Simultaneously, it also unearths the evolutionary possibilities of an alternative consciousness of historicity and a subsequent ideal of subjectivity, which is not constrained and contained by its own materiality

of being. This alternative consciousness is trans-material, problematically poised within a de-recognition of the material historic that has so long furnished the ontic essence of the self, only to reconcile with contrary possibilities and sensibilities of sense making.

Ka, the exiled subject, who has his material history imbibed in the Eurocentric order of Enlightenment and modernity, moves beyond his own materiality of being with the epiphanic recognition and realisation of God in the everyday eventualities and atmospherics of Kars. Neither the contrapuntal dispassionate discontinuities of exile nor the hereditary derivatives of a bourgeoisie rational culture explain Ka's indulgence of the excess called God. In the novel, the incessant assertions of the theological are not just propagandist claims of the non-modern to history. At a more subjective level, they are also suggestive of a de-historicization of the self; a de-historicization that is essential for historiographing the pluralities that are rendered and rejected as wasteful excess within the homo-normative patterns of historicization. The wistful ecstasy in the indulgence of the divine surpasses the ideological, material and other ontological considerations that formulate the identity of Ka. In his consistent assertions like: "Snow reminded me of God" (*Snow* 62), "But now I want to believe in that God...", "There's a God who pays careful attention to the world's hidden symmetry", Ka turns towards the "provincial" (99). This "provincial" (99) underlines the hidden and non-ritualised and constitutes the excluded wastes of the mechanisations of modern history. It is the unrecognised other, not just within the hermeneutics of modern history in process, but also within the lived materiality of Ka.

Ka's negotiation and the subsequent realisation of Kars as the waste of modernity is only consolidated and validated in the lines he copy from the plastered walls of the Lucky Brothers Tea-House. The line "If you're unlucky enough to live in Kars, you might as well flush yourself down the toilet" (*Snow* 104) is suggestive of not just the hopelessness and despair of the

residents and inhabitants of Kars. In a circumlocutory manner, the line locates Kars as an inescapable and unsurpassable limit to the human condition and the subsequent possibilities of self-assertion and agency formulation. The very presence of Kars within the material history of the self is an inescapable premonition and even an alteration in the materiality of the irreducibly intimate cannot negotiate the burden of being located in the spatial-temporal milieu of Kars. The only possible negotiation that the self can indulge upon is a profound and passive acceptance of his/ her non-presence within the limits of history. The only locale that awaits him/ her is the labyrinth of waste.

History embraces Kars in the novel in form of bloodsheds and military coups which is *staged* (*emphasis mine*) by the fulcrum that is both the logos and the telos of progressive and secular history, i.e. the State. This staging is the perilous moment where the ideological and the repressive, the actor and the military, proclaims the arrival of the Republic. As a prelude to the violence of repression in form of astounding bullets that will attempt to eradicate the last contaminant traces of non-modernity which has so long disturbed the grand march of Turkey towards a secular future and the progressive genesis of a secular history; Sunay Zaim, the actor staging the military coup in National Theatre, announces

Oh, honourable and beloved citizens of Turkey...You've embarked on the road to Enlightenment and no one can turn you back from this great and noble journey. Do not fear. The reactionaries who want to turn back time, those vile beasts with their cob-webbed minds, will never be allowed to crawl out of their hole. Those who seek to meddle with the republic, with freedom, with enlightenment will see their hands crushed. (*Snow* 158)

The all-encompassing march of secular history has subsumed and self-advocated a rational march to progress as the only destiny that awaits Turkey. Kars, being a politico-juridical component of Turkey cannot evade the conceptualised and pre-formulated model of secular

history that the Turkish State has transfixed for itself. The agony of the self in this pre-formulated principle of appropriation is characterised by an exclusion from the paradigm of History. This exclusion is not just a denial of the lived reality of the self as non-history. Instead, it also inauthenticates the fundamental premises of the material being of the self. The self is not just denied an acknowledgement within history, he/ she is also a misnomer in the conceptualised and yet to *arrive (emphasis mine)* predicament of history. The historical cognition of the self rests in his /her ability to attune and adhere to the hermeneuticised design of an unfamiliar model of History. The de-historicization of the lived is essential for history making, a history that is constituted and Stag(t)ist.

With the staging of the arrival of the modern State and its model of secular history, the transgressive lived can no longer sustain as the forgotten of history. He/she must now either be or not be within the encompassing milieu of secular history. The transgressive non-modern, in the evolving historicity towards historicization of Kars, is rendered relevant within a sacrificial economy. The violence that is enacted out within the theatre house is not merely a strategic annihilation of the counter-progressive fundamentalists who have intervened the systematic becoming of secular History. It is also a machination that simultaneously claims the interstitial historicalities which in the ensuing conflict of ideology-centric histories, have often been rendered as non-histories. As the reporting narrator in the novel informs us

The fourth flew into the outer reaches of the hall, beyond the range of the camera; through the back of a seat, it went into the shoulder of a dealer in spare parts for tractor and agricultural equipment named Muhittin Bey, who was sitting with his wife and his widowed sister-in-law...The fifth bullet hit a grandfather sitting just behind the Islamist students. He had come from Trabzon to see his grandson, who was doing his military service in Kars. (*Snow* 161)

In this binary purview that has been discussed before, the lived is contingently claimed by the mutually hostile patterns of history making. The non-historic, in this evolving conflict of a claim to historicization, is no longer able to evade the essentialist stratagems that both the modern and the non-modern propagate to enhance a homogeneous model of ideological and idealised History.

The interstitial and the excess, which have so long lingered as a surplus within these contradictory modalities of ideological history is now rendered into an inescapable predicament of History. Blue and the fundamentalists identify these interstitialities as material departures from the homo-hegemonic model of Western Enlightenment and secular history; which “take the opposite point of view” in response to the imposed notion of “...one West and only one Western point of view” (*Snow* 233). On the contrary, for Sunay Zaim, the non-ritualistic everydays of Kars are imbued in an unhistoricality which is insignificant and which is reflected in the existence of a mass comprising of the “poor jobless, luckless, hopeless, motionless creatures...who’ve forgotten how to keep themselves presentable.” (198) Nevertheless, for Sunay Zaim, who has self exponentially foreseen himself as the Hegelian actor chosen by the theatre of history, these disenfranchised agencies constitute a presumptive essentialist category designated by “poor brothers of mine” (198). What constitutes their disenfranchisement is their relative indifference of being, their effacing claim to emerge as historically identifiable subjects:

They all looked the same, these men: unshaven, their shirts dirty...Yet these men were all too numerous, ‘as we’ve seen in the wretched city of Kars’.” (*Snow* 198-199)

The indistinctive and hence the non-historic that secular history and its machinations intend to accommodate must then undergo a sacrificial recognition. It is only through the enactment of sacrifice that the indistinct materiality of the mundane can register its claim to historicity. The

sacrificial involves a transformation of the being with history into a becoming within the already conceived ethicality and ethos of History that is likely to dismiss the singular lived as non-history. The denial of the material reality of the singular, both in terms of the ideological and the corporeal, seems inevitable.

The denial of the material lived in the novel doesn't merely allude to a hierarchically imbalanced political purview where a rejection of the intimate historicity of the self foresees and suggests a unanimous and unproblematic de-ontologisation. Instead, the de-historicization thus involved also alludes to the possibility of the genesis of a consciousness that abounds in an ethics of the other. Such ethical disposition procures for the self an awareness of the infinite, where being is not the already existing that pre-dominates the conceptualisations of sense making. Instead, being is posited within a simultaneity that is cognised by the incessant influences and infringements of an *other* (*emphasis mine*). This re-cognition with/of the *other* is a simultaneous recognition of the finitude of the self that is contingent with its materiality of being. Levinas observes:

To address someone expresses the ethical disturbance produced in me, in the tranquillity of the necessary perseverance of my being, in my egotism as a necessary state...A going outside oneself that is addressed to the other, the stranger. (*Alterity* 97)

This "going outside" (*Alterity* 97) is signified in the novel in the ontic (re)formulations that Ka, the poet, undergo. His material lived that has been nourished in the epistemes of Western Enlightenment and secularisation is significantly revised in his increasing awareness of *other histories* (*emphasis mine*). Ka's urge to turn towards Provincialism, his experience of a transcendental signified called God and his increasing empathy towards the cultures of non-modernity locate him as a de-historicised subject. Ka intends to evade all possible forms and aporias/ limits of the historical by recognising the pluralities that increasingly jeopardise any

considerations of a singular historic. The de-historicization thus provoked isn't a de-historicization of the other, which denies the other a recognition of its historicity by a strategic epistemic and repressive essentialism. Instead, it is a de-historicization of the self, where the self can transcend the limits of foreknowledge to disengage from a possible apprehensive abstraction of the other. The reduction of the other is negated by an opening up of the self, where pluralities are recognised and can co-habit.

Ka's claim to *flânerie* rests in this de-recognition of the material lived in order to recognise other materialities and their subsequent indulgences of meaning and signification. Bart van Leeuwen observes that the *flâneur* is characterised by not just aimless walks but also his/her lack of a preoccupation with "one object or structure of meaning that he or she has been drawn to initially" ("Cosmopolitans" 303). In other words, the perpetual stability of ideology, hermeneutics and the structural chronotope of meaning making is constantly disregarded by the *flâneur*. To him, the claim to signification is essentially nourished by possibility and not the claims of finality. This recognition of the signified as a possibility and not a predicament presupposes an essence of estrangement. In other words, recognition of the plural estranges the self. This estrangement is not merely dystopic but also locates the self in a sacrosanct arena of possibilities where pre-discursivities and determinacies cease to exist. It is suggestive of an accommodative economy of consciousness which understands the temporal as not a schematic progress to a pre-designed deliverance but as a heterotopic instantaneous, containing the enfoldments of multitudinous possibilities that the temporal holds.

The non-historicity of the self is an essential prerogative to this experiential of estrangement which understands the temporal as a fertile arena of possibilities, liberated from the considerations of the hermeneutic-historic. Ka is conscious of this ecstasy of the non-historic and the lack of interest that the collective of Kars depicts in context of its apparent arrival to

History satisfies him. Curiously though, it is only the flâneur poet who can devise the authentic mode of historicising this general prevalence of dispassion. The sense of liberation that Kars cherishes in its dispassion towards History making connote for Ka an alternative historical consciousness, which far from being contained within a dialectic striation of secular and lived, modern and the provincial, transgresses into the irreducible that preserves its insignificance, within the dominant strategies of signification and essentialism. Ka's historicization of this insignificant in form of his poems that never address the immediate in a signifier-signified semblance but nevertheless carry the trace of the everyday historicalities make him the alternative historian. He is not preoccupied with the emergence of history that validates itself as an eventuality. Instead, his interested disinterestedness locates history as an event, curiously poised and juxtaposed in an arena of possibilities.

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Chapter Two

Turning Memory into History: The Material and the Spatial-Personal in *The Museum of Innocence*.

“In our standardised and uniform world, it is right here, deep below the surface, that we must go. Estrangement and surprise, the most thrilling exoticism, are all close by.”

Pays parisiens

Daniel Halevy

(quoted in Walter Benjamin’s *The Arcades Project*)

“We can bear the pain only by possessing something that belongs to that instant. These mementos preserve the colours, textures, images, and delights as they were most faithfully, in fact, than can those who accompanied us through those moments.”

The Museum of Innocence

Orhan Pamuk

The Museum systematically nuances the temporal with an evocation of multiple temporalities. It is a founded arena where potentialities and possibilities are contained in form of an “accumulating time” (Bennett, *Museum* 4). In the words of Michel Foucault, museums are heterotopic spatial paradigms, designed by the “concept of making all times into one place” (“Heterotopias” 334) and which contain heterogeneous temporalities, “where time does not cease to accumulate, perching, so to speak, on its own summit” (334). The instruments to the

possible multitudes of temporality are the relics, which contain the trace of the occurred. As such, relics are material formalisations of possibilities. The essence/ significance of the possible in a relic is not characterised and constituted by the non-observed and the non-materialised. Instead, the pre-consideration that is often associated with the aura of a relic in a museum is premised upon its claim to an authentic association with history. Tony Bennett observes “...both in the practices of museums, and as, visitors, in our relations to them the illusion that they deal in the ‘real stuff of history persists.” (*Museum* 126) What provides the relic an after-life in a Museum is its claim to an authentic and materialized engagement with the event and eventuality of History. The materiality of the relic is not just reduced to an empirically nominalized presence. Instead, “the meaning is decisively altered” (129) and the object acquire significance that is trans-material in essence. Tony Bennett observes in context of relics:

Although, materially, these remain as they were, they become on the plane of meaning, facsimiles of themselves. They announce a distance between what they are and what they were through their very function, once placed in a museum, of representing their own pastness and, thereby, a set of past social relations (129).

The simulacral-facsimiled essence of the material locates it within a greater discourse of a mimetic understanding of the object where the object is not what sustains as nominally and empirically validated. Instead, a deeper significance pervades the material being of the object, which is unveiled only within an evoked temporality, not as *what they are* but rather *what they were* (*emphasis mine*). The nuanced materiality posits the relic or memorabilia beyond the apparent order of being. In its status and stature as the relic, the object is not conceptualized within a singular temporal order. Instead, it belongs to a fertile order of significance that exceeds the reductive motif of the material. This transgression and consequent transcendence of the material constantly turn the object into an image.

Jean Luc Nancy's understanding of the image locates it within a sacrosanct seclusion of the "distinct" (*Ground 1*). For Nancy, the claim to distinction that the image transcribes is validated by the consideration of "a line or trait" (2). The trait, thus contained by the image, is what constitutes its self-referential claim to an alternative reality where it "must be different from the thing" (2). The materiality of the thing is essentially transgressed/ transcended by the revelation of the trait which locates the thing not just "as another obscure form" but rather "as the other of forms" (3). The trait, Nancy observes, posits the object beyond "the order of touch" and renders the object as "impalpable" (2). This impalpability, that exceeds the limits of empirical-material manifestations of the object, posits the object beyond the material considerations of forms, into a state of formlessness. In this formlessness, the object exceeds any pre-consideration that is likely to be evoked in context of its empirical and material manifestation. The object is posited in the open, a fertile field of formlessness which increasingly identify the *situatedness* (*emphasis mine*) of the object within a contemporaneous spatial-temporal epoch as insufficient and inept for its complete cognition. In other words, the contextualization of the object within a singular spatial-temporal order fails to signify the essence of the object. For a complete signification of the object, it is necessary to conceptualize the object beyond the immanent "world of availability" (*Ground 2*). Nancy argues that it is only in this removal from the manifested "world of availability" that the object becomes an image, that "which does not show itself but gathers itself into itself" (2-3).

As an image, the object acquires a self-referential stature and is suggestive of an embodied presence that is nevertheless uncontained and unmanifested in the premises of material presence. The image is thus evocative of a presence that is apparently absent and it is in this imag(i)native potency that the object is not limited an empirically conceived and an essentialized reality. Instead, it is also an embodied truth that renders a possible signification

that is trans-material. The signification is the contained irreducible essence of the object which Nancy identifies as the “primordial” (*Ground* 97). The primordial is explicated only in the possibility of the object to transpire into an image. In other words, the “image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation...the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent” (Benjamin, *Arcades* 462). As such, the pregnancy of the image contributes to the significance of the object. It is in this order of significance that the material and the sensual, the morphological and the morbid co-habit. The object attains its exclusion in its containment of a significance; which is not a mere consideration of the utilitarian and pragmatic providence of the object. Instead, the aura of significance is premised in terms of its historicity which under an anthropocentric consideration, takes a turn towards historicity.

The nuance of significance thus locates the object in an economy of ambiguity. The tedium of a historical significance is, under all considerations, an imposition on the self-referential status of the object. Simultaneously, it is also the modality through which the possibilities of an object-oriented ontology are provoked. This is the privileged moment of valorization where the essence of the object exceeds the considerations of the material and the immanent. Graham Harman observes “...ultimately there are just two ways of telling somebody what a thing is: you can tell them what it is made of, or tell them what it does” (*Object* 43). The significance of the thing, which Harman unproblematically calls object, is posited either within a consideration of its constitution/ composition (material) or its use (immanent). The significance of an object within the sanctified historical consciousness opens up a further third that allocates the object an essence that exceeds the constraints of the material and the utilitarian.

The quotient of historicity, thus provoked, locates the object in a contingency of the spatial and the temporal. Within this open arena of the experiential, the object procures a trans-material

interpretive status. As such, the object ceases to exist as a complete and self-referential truth. Instead it is re-configured within a poetics and an ambit of emergence, “bearing meaning, on their production, their circulation and their consumption” (Pomian, *Collectors* 05). They are suggestive of a secret index to past.

This secret index is the possible entropy that transforms the object into a commodity and positions it within the greater design of commodity culture. Karl Marx locates the object within two distinct connotations that contribute to its significance, the oft discussed considerations of use value and exchange value. While *use value (emphasis mine)* for Marx is suggestive of “the utility of the thing”, ‘exchange value’ “appears to be something accidental and purely relative” (*Capital* 42, 43). Marx observes that exchange value is the “only form in which the value of commodities can manifest itself” (45). Commodity is characterised by an excess/ surplus that exceeds its own use value and this excess constitutes and is in turn constituted by the exchange value. While the use value of the object conforms to and is resonant with the material and immediate disposition of the object, what turns the object into a commodity is the ensuing aura which is trans-material. Walter Benjamin observes that “the authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced...what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the subject.” (“Work” 221) For Benjamin, the authority of the object is synonymous with aura and the problematisation of the aura is effectuated by the nuances posed at the historicity of the object. In other words, aura and historicity of the object are co-relational and often interdependent.

Benjamin’s understanding of the object is constrained to the domain of aesthetic productions. Yet, his consistent explorations of the aporia that constitute the aesthetic, nuances any easy and undisputed pre-consideration about the object of art. In its own way, modernity has increasingly

explored the limits of art and has enhanced significant contributions to re-define the idea of the aesthetic. In the words of Arthur Danto, “works of art are embodied meanings” (*Art* 37) that depend upon the interpretive economy of the audience-perceiver and the material-ideological disposition of the self. Danto observes “The artwork is a material object, some of whose properties belong to meaning, and some of which do not. What the viewer must do is interpret the meaning-bearing properties in such a way as to grasp the intended meaning they embody” (38). Thus, Art becomes a contingent and interpretable category. The object of art is not necessarily an object of artefact. The exploration of its aesthetic potentiality does not begin with a pre-consideration of its status as an outcome or product devised by artistic meditation, conception and creation. Instead, what constitutes its artistic essence is its claim to an experiential ecstasy which the artist can revel and authenticate in sensibility. The affective precedes the creative and objects of art are not necessarily devised interventions. Instead, they are disclosed paradigms containing a claim to ecstasy. With the possible transition of the real thing into the event of the image, Reality and Art becomes indiscernible.

The flâneur conceptualises the object as image and comprehends reality as not a material finality but a field of multifarious possibility. The possible substratum of meaning that reality holds for him is as much vital as it is empirical. The real is a fabric that conceals other considerations and the flâneur delves deep into the semiotics of significance to unearth other interpretive truths which co-habit the undisputed pertinence of material reality. The gaze of the flâneur, as Walter Benjamin observes, unravels not just the recorded and recognised presence of the metropolis. Simultaneously, it is also an exploration of “a social, a modern substrate” (Benjamin, “Nineteenth-Century” 41). This substratum of modernity, as Benjamin observes, is inseparably associated with “primal history” (41). The exploration of the primal for Benjamin demands an intervention into “what has remained inconspicuously buried underneath” (*Arcades*

12). Modernity for Benjamin is an essentially dialectic truth where the primordial and the transient co-exist. It can be faithfully unveiled by, as Jennings observes in his Introduction to *The Writer of Modern Life*, a “speculative, analytic and intuitive intelligence” (Jennings 12), ready to negotiate the perpetual and inescapable ambiguity. The dichotomous thus involved is suggestive of an exploration of the excess that exceeds the considerations of an empirical-material sensibility.

The transition of the object into commodity, as discussed before in the introspective insights of Karl Marx, is profoundly founded on the principle of excess that surpasses the material orientation of the object. Does the flâneur, in his quest of the supra-sensory excess, nurture a commodity fetish and is ideologically faithful to the commodity culture of capitalism? Is he an already absorbed agency within the ever-pervading milieu of modernism where to be is to indulge a relentless becoming, consistently in harmony with the fluid temporality? Or is his engagement with the excess an alternative stratagem to re-historicise the fleeting and the fluid by exploring the potentialities which lie beneath the apparent real?

In his seminal and celebrated novel *The Museum of Innocence*, Orhan Pamuk problematises the nuanced correlation between the parameters that we have pondered at length: flânerie, commodity and historicity. In the words of David M. Buyze, “Kemal, the main character of Pamuk’s *The Museum of Innocence*...is a collector of memories in his amassing of a cache’ of material objects that are assigned significance because of how he values them as representative of his love for Fusun” (“Tensions” 34). The novel recognises the poises between loss and remembrance, the sacrosanct intimate and the striated politico-cultural, the object oriented ontic and the constant desire to sieve and preserve the irreducible authentic. The usual urge to preserve the authentic is suggestive of a historicity that is enclosed and in isolation from the greater considerations of the social-political. However, as the novel unveils, Kemal is not the

sovereign subject of an intimate history which is functional and contained within the parameters of memory. Instead, his turn towards memory is a simultaneous engagement with the exterior where the mnemonic ceaselessly functions in a performative of remembrance. It locates the singular consciousness of Kemal within the persistent dynamics of a historicity that is oppositional yet co-relational with an unfurling order of the chronological. The historical consciousness of Kemal is validated in response to the contingent which he increasingly seeks to negotiate. Kemal's tryst with the contingent indulges not just a constrained and self-referential stature of subjectivity; rather it evolves as a relational truth which problematises any possible claim to singularity that is often the characteristic of memory and the mnemonic.

Memory and its claim to history is often self-referential and autonomous where the organic experiential of the lived validates an intimate and vital historicity. The historic of memory is deeply entwined with the experiential reality of the self. The ideal of subjectivity that memory ensues is sovereign and exclusive and remembrance is primarily a personal practice. What is more, memory is not always a descendant to consciousness where consciousness reflects upon memory to accomplish the practice of remembrance. Instead, the anomaly of memory is an essential constituent of consciousness and is a foreknowledge to the cogito and its thought. Pierre Nora observes "Self-consciousness emerges under the sign of that which has already happened, as the fulfilment of something always already begun" ("Between" 7). The validation and authentication of memory doesn't necessarily require an acknowledgement through the performative of remembrance; it is already there as a pre-discursive and pre-performed sensibility. Nora observes:

Memory installs remembrance within the sacred; history, always prosaic, releases it again...Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects; history

binds itself strictly to temporal continuities to progressions and to relations between things. (“Between” 9)

Besides positing a binary purview which distinguishes and sets the remembered of memory and the represented of history as distinct and at times opposing, Nora’s engagement with memory locates it not within the un-historic but an alternative understanding of history and historicity. Nora observes that while History is “a representation of the past”, “Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present” (“Between” 8). This proximity of memory with the intimacies of the perception of reality promises the genesis of a historic order that is more intimate and thus real. In other words, memory validates itself as an equal and an equivalent truth with a “specific” (9) claim to history. Unlike history, “which belongs to everyone and no one”, memory promises the birth of an inheritable history (9). As such, the recourse to memory, “psychological, individual, and subjective” (13), has increasingly located the self as the historian. In doing so, the self has determined its own historicity and the ensuing historical sensibility. Re-membering of the self and the act of remembrance becomes co-terminus and what is ambiguous, is the suggestive dependency that the act of remembrance has on the self, which it is paradoxically trying to re-member. The formulation of the performative of remembrance is problematised within a poetics of deliberation, where the intervening agency of the self that mediates the act of remembrance, lingers as an inescapable residual truth. The precedence and the dominance of history and historicity over the self are increasingly challenged by a cogito which seeks to write its own history. Pierre Nora observes:

An order is given to remember, but the responsibility is mine and it is I who must remember...memory is no longer everywhere, it will not be anywhere unless one takes the responsibility to recapture it through individual means” (15-16).

The performance of memory and its simultaneous validation of being involve reclamation, only with the paradox that what is historical is what is reclaimed. The moment of reclamation is also the moment of creation and memory is what is reclaimed; a constricted category that is sacrosanct in its moderated essence. It is not the occurrence but the acknowledgement/consciousness of the occurrence that is necessary for the occurrence to claim itself as history. The historical consciousness premised within memory is often a self-referential reality where the temporality demands the moderation of consciousness to evolve as history.

The reflecting subject who remembers is thus curiously poised within the considerations of the semantic and the episodic, the reflective and the premonitory. Consciousness is not unproblematically temporal and contingent, cherishing an objective dissociation from the happened. The spectres of the occurred linger as traces through which the turning back and the evolution of memory is eventualised. Simultaneously, this turning back and indulgence of memory only re-members and performs a remembrance that is sacrosanct, often teleological. The phenomenology of memory is thus nuanced between the pre-discursive and the devised, relationally dependent on a consciousness, which in turn is dependent on it. The reclamation and the re-membering that the self engages in is a possible ploy to ensure the genesis of an intentional self, a constructed paradigm of subjectivity that is nevertheless, self-formulated.

The Museum of Innocence is iconic in its portrayal of an intentional self, who is defined relationally and wishes to become what he foresees as his predicament. This predicament is a prerogative that is devised, defined and formulated as a relational reality, where the other has influenced the self with a determinacy that the self cannot evade. Kemal, the narrator subject is a relational subject from the very beginning of the novel. The instant that he accords as the happiest moment of his life is interestingly a moment of coupling, where the complementary presence of the other has transfigured a valorised image of the intended self and an ideal of

happiness. The happiness so cherished is not in exclusion; it is intimately exposed to the peril of the other:

It was the happiest moment of my life, though I didn't know it...Yes, if I had recognised this instant of perfect happiness, I would have held it fast and never let it slip away...In that moment, on the afternoon of Monday, May 26, 1975, at about a quarter to three, just as we felt ourselves to be beyond sin and guilt so too did the world seem to have been released from gravity and time.” (Pamuk, *Innocence* 1)

Relational and inter-subjective nature of subjectivity consolidates a consciousness that is deeply responsive to the presence of the other. Reclaiming the ecstasy is also an attempt to reclaim the intimacy of the other. For Kemal, this intimacy is a trace that survives in the material world of objects. These objects are not material enterprises that are extraneous to the self/ subject. Instead, they are constituents of affectations and emotions, suggestive of “merely provocative representations” (*Innocence* 71) which half reveal and half conceal the essence of ecstasy. In their containments of the ecstatic, the object is not a mere instrument of material and commodity culture. Instead, they are allusions to images and Kemal observes:

I am certain that the fire at the heart of my tale is the desire to relive those moments of love, and my attachment to those pleasures. For years, whenever I recalled those moments, seeking to understand the bond I still felt with her, images would form before my eyes, crowding out reason...” (71)

These images are perceived reminiscences of those moments of ecstasy for Kemal, which designs the “happiest moment of my life” (*Innocence* 1). The *ordinary objects* (*emphasis mine*) that find a way into his museum of innocence are all categorised and organised within a comprehensive and an overarching paradigm. They are containments and constituents of

images. These images are suggestive of an authentic self; a self that is interposed within an aura of ecstasy.

Walter Benjamin's understanding of aura presupposes it to be deeply determined by the origin. As Georges Didi-Huberman observes, the origin for Benjamin does not designate "something 'remaining 'upstream' from things, as the source of the river is upstream from it" ("Supposition" 4). Rather, for Benjamin, "origin names 'that which emerges from the process of becoming and disappearance'" (4). As such, the aura evoking image is not essentially an encased reality characterised by a historicity that is outdated and obsolete. It is instead a "two-way flow of a historicity that asks, without respite, even to our own present, 'to be recognized as a restoration, a restitution, and as something that by that very fact is uncompleted, always open'" (4). The aura locates the image within a dialectic, co-terminally contained and open. Simultaneously, it is only through an understanding of the aura that the instant has corresponding temporalities. *What has been* glares a persistent presence into *what is* (*emphasis mine*).

As such, the aura of happiness that is contained within the image, once reclaimed, is evoked with a sense of timelessness; where the moment of revelation that locates and unveils the aura is distinct from the corresponding referential reality of the aura. The referred instant of happiness that the aura locates and is suggestive of; is deeply construed by a material/ actual engagement between the self and the other. The moment that is the kernel of aura is significantly a moment of coupling, where the self and the other are engaged in an exchange. However, the consciousness of the aura is deeply contained within the performative poetics of memory. The moment of revelation of the essence of aura is in posteriority with the event-occurrence that is the correspondent reality of aura. The involvement of memory in the revelation of aura is suggestive of a singularity which unveils the potency and potentiality of the lived instantaneous.

Yet, this singular practice of reclamation is profoundly influenced and haunted by the traces of the *presence in absentia* of the other (*emphasis mine*). Hence, memory and its intrinsic singularity is increasingly nuanced by a hauntology of the other.

This dialectic disposition of memory is consolidated by the persistence of traces. The elementalities of trace do not just contextualise the other/plural within the intimate order of subjective and singular consciousness. Simultaneously, it also opens up the temporal consciousness of the self. It is through a consciousness of the trace that the occurred constantly evokes itself as a presence. Sarah K. Robins observes that “traces are widely considered to be mental representations: mental states whose content reflects the facts, faces, and feelings previously encountered” (“Memory” 76).

Trace is also related to material culture and it is within the prerogatives of trace that, meaning and presence become co-relational and correspondent exchangeable categories. In other words, within the paradigm of trace, meaning and presence become symbiotic and to an extent synonymous. The post-representational school of historiography has increasingly accorded meaning to the metaphysics of presence. In doing so, it has refused to register absence within an empirico-corporeal consideration and has increasingly relied on absence as a form of presence. Undenying the affective nature of trace, philosophers like Eelco Runia have comprehended material culture as an ineluctable quantum that qualitatively contributes to the essence of trace. Eelco Runia observes:

My thesis is that what is pursued in Vietnam Veterans Memorial, in having a diamond made “from the carbon of your loved one as a memorial to their unique life,” in the reading of names on that anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Center, in the craze for reunions, and in a host of comparable phenomena, is not “meaning” but “presence”. (*Moved* 53)

The turn towards material history, as Ewa Domanska argues, is implicative of the genesis of an alternative model of historiography where the material-spatial and not the discursive or the representational lay their claim to a systematic tracing of past. For Domanska, this model of history is non-anthropocentric, distanced “from a humanist conception that places human beings at the center of the world” (*Material* 338). The poetics of material history and historiography relies on an understanding of “things as more than commodities or tools for use” (339). Instead, “they are much more interesting, variegated, uncertain, complicated, far-reaching, heterogeneous, risky, historical, local, material and networky than the pathetic version offered for too long by philosophers” (Latour, “Realpolitik” 19-21). The after-life of objects, often ensuing from and intimately associated with the aura, is the essence which premises a discursive formulation of alternative (material) history. The object is no longer an objective reality; instead it takes a turn towards being the secretive index to the past which increasingly de/re-ontologises itself as well as the self in relation with it. This affective ontologisation is foregrounded within a consideration of the excess, that which constantly exceeds any material considerations of the object.

The flâneur is principally and in principle synonymous with excess, considerate of not just the apparent order of the empirico-noumenal but also the phenomenal. In the words of Rob Shields:

Like the showgirl, the flâneur is a figure of excess: an incarnation of a new, urban form of masculine passion manifest as connoisseurship and couched in scopophilia...The metropolis is elating, intoxicating. The flâneur’s excessiveness, pathological ‘ivresse’ and resistance to the work-a-day pressure of the punch-clock. (“Fancy” 64)

As such, the ecstasy of the excess becomes equivalent with leisure, where the materiality of action is constantly nuanced by the indulgences of speculative whimsies which are non-productive and not dictated by the logic of utilitarian pragmatism. While the material evocations

of urban paradigm which persist in form of commodities are fanciful to the flâneur, his constant disengagement from labour and work locate him in withdrawal from the ethics of possession that is fundamental to the material purview of urban capitalism. The flâneur's possession lies in his dispossession; his fantasy with the material is also a simultaneous aporia that problematises the very dynamics of materiality. While material culture is associated with the certitude of the nominal-real and the concrete, the flâneur is often engaged with-in the speculative and metaphysical. The ambiguity that the flâneur poses in his understanding of the material order doesn't essentially assume a rejection of the physical-material for the metaphysical. Instead, the trans-material is folded within the entrapments of materiality. While the material is a nominalising trope which contains and conforms the greater entropic possibilities that the object is constituted by; it is also indispensable for the gradual transmutation of the object into the image.

Kemal, the protagonist in the novel, possesses this nuanced relationship with the order of the material. The materials that he possesses are symptoms that deeply reveal before him not the usual fetish that is characteristic to cultures of consumerism and capitalism. Instead, they are materialised performatives of possession which increasingly cherish an absence and a dispossession. The presence of the material is synonymous with an indulgence of the absence of his beloved Fusun. Fusun, at a crucial juncture in the novel, reflects upon the prominence of objects in the constrained and relational world order of the anthropocene. Pondering upon the relevance of objects in an anthropocentric purview, Fusun observes:

When we lose people we love, we should never disturb their souls, whether living or dead. Instead, we should find consolation in an object that reminds you of them, something...I don't know...even an earring. (*Innocence* 195)

Suspending its own material essence, the object is suggestive of an after-life. This after-life is not premised upon a metaphysics of presence. Instead, the materialities of presence give way to an absence and it is the essence of absence that determines and subsequently overrides the considerations of materiality. The possessed materiality is suggestive of an essential absence which exceeds the material order and it is in Kemal's relentless perusal and preservation of the relic that the absence in turn materialises itself. The material history of the object turned commodity and its phenomenology of presence only provokes a consciousness of absence. Kemal's possession of the object locates the material-corporeal within a surplus that is in turn, curiously suggestive of a lack/ absence.

In the secular milieu of Turkey, material becomes a potent component of culture. Objects and commodities are not reduced to a nominalised use value. Instead, in adherence with the milieu of modernity, they are potent signifiers of class and culture, identity and heritage. In the words of Yael Navaro-Nashin "...secularist and Islamist identities in contemporary Turkey are products of manufacture. They are not original and essential, even though they are experienced as such" ("Market" 222). The manufacturing of identity under the condition of modernity is associated with commodity culture. The material order and its manifestation is the relational and discursive episteme that pervades the possibilities of self-fashioning and agency formulation. Mike Featherstone observes that consumer culture and its fetish for commodities leads to a "seductive containment of the population from some alternative set of 'better' social relations" (*Consumer* 13).

Social relations in the novel are deeply reliant on commodity culture and the impersonations of intimacies are elocuted and formulated within the pervading structure and schema of consumerism. The performative of affection involves a repositioning of the self before the other

through the motif of material. The narrator protagonist ponders upon this material performative of authentication of affection as he reflects:

I had never been one of those suave, chivalrous playboys always looking for the least excuse to buy women presents or send them flowers, though perhaps I longed to be one. In those days, bored Westernized housewives of the affluent neighbourhoods like Sisli, Nisantasi, and Bebek did not open “art galleries” but boutiques, and stocked them with trinkets and whole ensembles smuggled in luggage from Paris and Milan, or copies of “the latest” dresses featured in imported magazines like *Elle* and *Vogue*, selling these goods at ridiculously inflated prices to other rich housewives who were as bored as they were.” (*Museum* 4)

Commodity becomes an affective instrumentality of self-validation and assertion; a significant ploy through which the self engages with the other. It is also a motif through which a redemption and reclamation of the self unfolds. The stasis of the self is affectively and effectively deployed by the ecstasy of the commodity. Commodity is suggestive of an exotic that is unfamiliar and as such is not in association with the regular and habituated historic order. To invoke the exotic within the ritualised orbit of the familiar is also an incorporation of the unfamiliar within the intimate and historically contingent purview of the self.

The flâneur is ready to invoke the unfamiliar and the estranging within the limits of the familiar, so much so, that the surplus of the exotic dismantles and disharmonises any promised poise of subjectivity. The object world of material turned commodity is not a means to perpetuate self-validation or entice the monotonous, known order of consciousness with an allure of a governed unfamiliar. Instead, the flâneur’s preoccupation with the order of objects is suggestive of a complex self-effacement, subjected to a perilous presence of the other. The being of the material-commodity and its ecstasy is a premise where effacement of consciousness is enacted upon. The material world of object is not an indulgence that is posited within an

unproblematised and stable subjectivity. Instead, for the flâneur, the material is a consumption which circulates an after-truth, experienced only with a simultaneous de-ontologisation and effacement of the self. The effacement of the self in the epoch of formulated and synthetic identities is also paradoxically a revelation of the primordial sense of being that is irreducible in essence. The nuance that the consumption and revelation of the material posits is an essential allure that reconciles the self with its own primordiality, un-meditated and un-formulated.

Kemal's self-effacement is contingent with his growing love for Fusun and in the absence of Fusun, the objects and the commodities, i.e. the exteriorities which exceed the paradigm of subjectivity in their object stature, constantly engage and encourage him in a systematic effacement of the self. In the final denouement of the novel, Kemal observes:

...all the objects in my museum-and with them, my entire story-can be seen at the same time from any perspective, visitors will lose all sense of time. This is the greatest consolation in life. In poetically well built museums, formed from the heart's compulsions, we are consoled not by finding in them old objects that we love, but by losing all sense of time." (*Museum* 712-13)

The pluri-significance of the lived is suggestive of a desire to efface the unproblematic consistency and stability of being. The lived is re-membered through the material and re-membering exceeds the imperatives of the occurred. It is instead exhibited before the extraneity of interpretation. The possession and acquisition of objects do not necessarily signify the validation of a desired ideal of selfhood. Instead, the re-presented and the re-membered self deeply embraces the urge to efface the mono-significant by inviting the interpretive. Objects do not sustain as possessions in this enterprise of re-presentation and re-membering. They are impregnated with traces of absence, signifying the life that is lived under the hauntings of the other.

The “timeworn” (*Museum* 712) self of Kemal, burdened with the hauntings of presence in absence, relies on the materiality of the material to trace the suggestive presence of the other. As such, the relic-esque material is prioritised on the ethos of its exchange value, a surplus that exceeds the considerations of use and utility. The exchange, however, is also not a fetish that sustains the appetite of possession. Instead, they are suggestive traces of an absence and the material object contains not the absolute embodiment of presence that can negate absence. Instead, absence lingers as a foreknowledge to consciousness. Within the forethought, the object thus sustains and retains its stature of exchange value where the material is complemented by an essence that is aporiac to its own material constitution.

The flâneur, engrossed in an aura of the object-image, is conscious of only the exchange value of the commodity. As such, his perception of the object is re-discursively constituted within a paradigmatic alternative of reality. In the words of Walter Benjamin, “Empathy with the commodity is fundamentally empathy with the exchange value itself. The flâneur is the virtuoso of this empathy” (*Arcades* 448). The empathic apprehension and appreciation of the object is suggestive of the after-life of the object. This after-life is also simultaneously founded on the historicity of the object. The historicity is constituted by the locational reality of the object within an anthropocentric order. Reclaiming the historicity is, thus suggestive of, a reclamation of the paradigmatic truth of the historicity of the self.

The genealogical nature of the self, that is a discursive construct, is always already conditioned within history. Foucault’s archetypal modern man is enfranchised within history, “revealed only when bound to a previously existing historicity” (Foucault, *Order* 359). This historicity not only pre-dates him but is also suggestive of “histories that are neither subordinate to him nor homogeneous with him” (402). The historical consciousness of modern man is historicised within and systematically subjected to a relative order. Yet, this profoundly relative and

extraneous historicity is also the “history that (now) concerns man’s very being...a historicity of man which is itself its own history” (403). The historic that is formulated within a relativism and dependence is the finitude of man and the claim to history is also a claim to an irrevocable finiteness of being. Yet it is also within the finite premises of history and the historic that ecstasy is located. The ecstatic cannot supersede the intimations of the already experiential and the empirical. Walter Benjamin observes:

Reflection shows us that our image of happiness is thoroughly colored by the time to which the course of our own existence has assigned us. The kind of happiness that could arouse envy in us exists only in the air we have breathed, among people we could have talked to, women who could have given themselves to us. In other words, our image of happiness is indissolubly bound up with the image of redemption. The same applies to our view of the past, which is the concern of history. The past carries with it a temporal index by which it is referred to redemption.” (“Theses” 254)

The claim to ecstasy is deeply entwined with the possibility of redemption; an act/ performative of reclaiming that which is past and constitute the historicity of the self. The historic is a limit upon consciousness. It constantly lingers as a pre-determinacy and a containment which consciousness can barely evade. Interestingly, the historic is also not exclusively singular. It is constantly exposed to the actual and imagined presence of other. The other is an enticement, existing in form of “people we could have talked to, women who could have given themselves to us” (254). Persuasion of the historic is thus not a persuasion of the singular but the relational lived.

Kemal’s historical is not singular, instead it is authentic only in its claim to dependency on the other. The relational nature of historicity locates it as a derivative. To historicise his historicity, Kemal must indulge with the derivative.

Indulgence of the derivative for Kemal begin with his relentless quests of objects, relics and traces that promise him an immaterialised yet conceptually experiential ecstasy. As he frequents the Mehmet Apartments, where he and his cousin turned beloved Fusun had engaged in a clandestine affair, he realises;

Sure enough, these things that Fusun had touched, these objects that had made her who she was- as I caressed them, and gazed at them, and stroked them against my shoulders, my bare chest, and my abdomen-released their analgesic and soothed my soul. (*Innocence* 255)

The objects are suggestive of an absence; the very peril of non-being of the other which has in turn jeopardised Kemal's own complacency of being. It is this phenomenal essence of absence which is deeply intertwined with Kemal's consciousness as he pines for his lost love Fusun through the city streets, frequenting the backyards and shanties of Istanbul. In this gradual expedition through the urban paradigm of Istanbul, Kemal encounters the spectre of Fusun. This spectral presence of Fusun acquires significance for they are tropes through which the self indulges in an awareness of that which constitute the material-empirical order of reality but is alien to the self's consciousness of the real. In other words, the chronotope of Istanbul in the novel is not merely pre-ontic to the self in terms of temporality. They are also perpetual inequilibriums, distant from the familiarity of the self. Although temporally contemporaneous with being of the self (*dasein*), the urban paradigm and its diversities are suggestive of other manifestations, which have a historicity that exceed the historical consciousness of Kemal. The absence of Fusun, who was once a component of the familiar order of Kemal, now compels him to un-self his historicised and formulated consciousness of being. The absence of Fusun is an essential lack that endows the ontic with a desire for the excess, an urge to consider that which is not the already incorporated within the historicity of being. Kemal observes:

...and so I began to frequent those crowded places where I might see her ghost, and eventually I would mark these places, too, on my mental map of Istanbul. Those places where her ghosts had appeared most often were the ones where I was most regularly to be found. Istanbul was now a galaxy of signs that reminded me of her. (*Innocence* 229)

While Kemal's turn towards flânerie has been suggested by his constant urge to peril the order of being by the urge of the other, the excess, the surplus; his performative of flânerie begins with an urge to hunt and in turn be haunted, by the spectral presence of Fusun. Fusun is the embodiment of the ecstasy which Kemal the flâneur seeks in his relentless quest of the cityscape. This journey is not limited to a topological confinement where the city is validated as a mere locational paradigm. Instead, Kemal's exploration of the urban heteropolis constitutes a consciousness of the other temporalities, those backstreets of modernity composed of "...poor neighborhoods, with their empty lots, their muddy cobblestone streets, their cars, rubbish bins, and sidewalks, and the children playing with a half-inflated football under the streetlamps" (*Innocence* 293).

This mundane everyday order of existence follows the expensive and extravagant end of summer holiday that Kemal spends with her fiancée Sibel at the *yali*. In his memoir *Istanbul*, Orhan Pamuk observes that the *yalis* were potent markers of an "obsolete identity and culture". (*Istanbul* 43) Adjacent to the Bosphorous, the *yalis* were characteristically posed in an intimacy with solitude where the re-membering of the self often occurred in isolation, removed from the mundane everyday occurrences of the city. While their association with the Ottoman Empire accorded it a valorised historical relevance, the *yalis* were removed from the communitarian historicity of the ordinary:

To stand before the magnificent iron gates of a grand *yali* bereft of its paint, to notice the sturdiness of another *yali*'s robust moss-covered walls, to admire the shutters and fine

woodwork of a third, even more sumptuous yali...it was to know a great, now vanished civilisation had stood here, and from what they told me, once upon a time, people very much like us had led a life extravagantly different from our own-leaving us who followed them feeling poorer, weaker and more provincial. (*Istanbul* 47)

Kemal's consciousness at the *yali* is suggestive of an insignificance of the self where swimming backwards in the Bosphorous, he sees "a great, mysterious whole, at whose sight one could not but rejoice to be alive, humbled at the thought of being part of something greater" (*Innocence* 270). Kemal's consciousness is complemented by the increasing awareness of a relational and not isolated stature of being. This awareness of dependency dismantles his contemplations of living a life that is premised within a pre-designed and thus historically determined and regimented schema. His bourgeoisie heritage had previously instigated him to live a double life, a being that was perfectly conceptualised within a historicised design of becoming. The being would not hinder the becoming; rather the former would be systematically incorporated within the latter. He had contemplated and desired to live a married life with Sibel, along with a simultaneous clandestine relationship with his beloved Fusun.

In the aftermath of Kemal's engagement party, the first signs of a discordance between being and becoming is exhibited in the novel. In Fusun's absence, the being of Kemal no longer complies with the historically determined and pre-conceptualised ideal of becoming. Kemal starts to obsess upon the materials that bear an aura of his now absent lover. This obsession increasingly disharmonises his everyday existence and as such, Kemal fails in his venture to become the pre-conceptualised subject, already formulated within a conceptual order of historical determinism. His own historicity of being becomes inseparably associated with the material absence of the other. It increasingly forces him to cherish the *presence in absentia* (*emphasis mine*) by indulging upon the objects that are associated with the aura of the other.

Nevertheless, within a greater context, this other and essence of the other is directly correspondent within a co-habited paradigm, where the other has been incorporated within the habitus of the self. The Mehmet apartments where Kemal had arranged for his clandestine affairs were significantly topical to his lived reality. The ecstasy of the other had so long been unveiled within the historicity of the self. In the *yali* however, swimming backwards, in close proximity of “the rusty cans, the bottle caps, the gaping mussels, and even the ghosts of ancient ships”, Kemal realises the insignificance of the self (*Innocence* 270). This sense of insignificance doesn't necessarily disengage the self from reclaiming the presence in absence which is fundamental to the manifestations of consciousness. Instead, it nourishes the possibility of experiencing the absent presence of the other in materialities which exceed the historical consciousness of the self.

In these epiphanic moments in the atemporal torrents of Bosphorus, Kemal realises that being is a pre-dependent truth, never removed from the greater design and schema of inter-relatedness with an exterior. Present and the presence of being are but a perennial component of the greater order of time and historical consciousness is an awareness of a constricted and complacent order of presence. There are other presences, a consciousness of which increasingly de-historicises the self, only to accomplish the historicity of being with an ecstasy.

Thus, Kemal seeks the presence of the other in materialities which exceed his empirico-historical consciousness of co-habitation. They do not pertain to his own material reality of being. Neither are they conscious and confirm relics containing the traces of the other. Rather, they are apprehensions which are possible embodiments which might emerge with a revelation of the absence and the historic. They are not historically coherent with the historicity of the self. Instead, they are other histories which might erupt with the presence of the other that is now an absence within the historical conception of the self:

As I walked these streets, it was as if I was seeking out my own center. As I meandered drunkenly up and down these narrow ways, the muddy hills and curving alleys that turned abruptly into steps, the world would suddenly seem uninhabited except by dog, and a chill would pass through me, and I would gaze admiringly at the yellow lamplight filtering through drawn curtains, the thin funnels of blue smoke rising from chimneys, the reflected glow of televisions in windows and shop fronts. (*Innocence* 293)

The *center* (*emphasis mine*) for Kemal is no longer the habited and the familiar world of elite Istanbul. It is now drenched in the material order of other histories where his intersubjective other Fusun lives. His childhood friend Zaim's stories about the extravagant bourgeoisie world cannot draw him away from the more enthralling habitations of the other which he has now started to experience. It is through *flânerie* that Kemal transgresses and subsequently transcends the usual premises of the habited and lived, only to live the habitations of the other. "Convinced that Fusun was somewhere nearby" Kemal spends "more time walking through these streets" and drinking tea in the "poor neighborhoods of the old city" (*Innocence* 290, 291). These performatives, saturated with the "need to live more like them" (*Innocence* 290), i.e. like Fusun's family, are attempts to get closer to Fusun and cherish the intimacy of the other. The other is no longer conceptualised and traced from the privileged and undisputed position of subjectivity. Instead, the self is ready to peril his own being in order to trace the other. Memory and the intimations of the mnemonic fall short in an authentic conceptualisation of the other. So long, they have conceptualised and nourished the traces of an objectified other. With Kemal's attempts to live a non-habituated life, the remembrance of Fusun is now complemented by the experience of the unfamiliar. This unfamiliar is not just the excess which exceeds the habitual order of the subject. It is an excess to the primary considerations of remembrance and memory. The ontological singularity of the self that is inextricably associated

with the experiential is compromised for a heterogeneity which is only suggestive, speculative and pertain to a non-empirical reality. Fusun's presence in the backstreets of Istanbul is only a speculation. Yet, the speculative acquires a priority that is identical with the remembrance of the lived. Remembrance of Fusun is a residue that is premised upon a happened: empirically validated, and thereby laying a claim to reality. On the contrary, the speculation of Fusun and the possibility of finding her in the underdeveloped corners of the city is a mere possibility, deprived of any empirical validity. Kemal's consciousness of the other thus involves a constant transposition of the empirical and the speculated.

The possibility of reclaiming the other is not merely historical, it is constantly nuanced by the speculative and the non-empirical. This non-empirical sustains in Kemal's museum where the nominal is stripped off from any connotations of meaning. Within the considerations of empirical thought, the object is often a signifier and Kemal's museum aporises the possibilities of signification in a profoundly obtuse suggestiveness. The loss of materiality of the object, as has been previously pondered upon, is potent trope through which the object gathers its own historicity. However, such easy considerations of historicization is deliberately problematised by Kemal as the objects in his museum are not confined to relics that bear the trace of Fusun. In other words, the relics are not necessarily objects which are impregnated with the habitations of Fusun. Instead, the paradigm of relics also includes objects which convey the loss, anxiety, estrangement, nothingness and despair that are premised within an in-signification. The significance of those objects are not contained within the usual connotations of bearing an empirical proximity with Fusun. They are not directly related to the material memory of Fusun. Rather, they are reminiscences of an aura of absence, poised within the performative enactments of the self, cherishing the traces of the other. In this curious assemblage of objects which are directly relevant as a mnemonic of the other and also the objects which present an aura of

memory, Kemal emerges as an alternative historiographer. The mnemonic, for him, is as primary as the speculative— the historicity of the other is as fundamental as the historical validity of the self that cherishes the historicity of the other. For Kemal, the historical assemblages are not merely validations upon which the self can premise a substantiative valorisation of memory and the reclaimed self. Rather, they are also nuances which efface a claim to selfhood by a consideration of the self that is lurking within a relational essence of being, ever indebted to the other.

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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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Chapter Four

The decadent flâneur and the Progress of History: Alienation, Flux and the Poetics of Reconciliation in *A Strangeness in My Mind*.

“The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.”

The Book of Laughter and Forgetting

Milan Kundera

“It was sad to see the old face of the city as he had come to know it disappear before his eyes, erased by new roads, demolitions, buildings, billboards, shops, tunnels, and flyovers...he liked old things: the feeling of walking into one of those cemeteries he discovered while selling boza in distant neighbourhoods, the sight of a mosque wall covered in moss, and the unintelligible Ottoman writing on a broken fountain with its brass taps long dried up.”

A Strangeness in My Mind

Orhan Pamuk

The bourgeoisie is committed to history; his tryst with history involves an unconditional and undisputed subjection to the sacrosanct immediacy of history. The historical within the bourgeoisie imaginary is constituted by an order of immanence and Immanuel Wallerstein rightly observes that the bourgeois is the “shaper of the present and the destroyer of the past”

("Bourgeoi(sie)" 97). It is this unproblematic disposal of the historic that exceeds the bourgeoisie that marks him as the typical protagonist who is engaged in relentless endeavors of becoming the subject of his own history. As such, the order of immanence that constitutes the historical consciousness of the bourgeoisie is not contained within the predicated symptoms of the historical occurred. The historic for the bourgeoisie is largely constituted by an empirically familiar material order, one which systematically positions the bourgeoisie within a habituated milieu of history. The historic is not unfamiliar and anything unfamiliar and beyond the explainable limits of comprehensibility do not qualify as history within the bourgeois imaginary. The systemics of the historic is thus developed as a relational truth to the immanence of the bourgeoisie; what is historically undeniable is what qualifies as history within his cognitive emulations of self-representation.

Immanuel Wallerstein highlights this ambiguously inextricable association of the bourgeoisie with history as he identifies the bourgeoisie as the finitude of history, a curious case of "anomaly and ambiguity" ("Bourgeois(ie)" 91). Wallerstein observes that the birth of the bourgeoisie was enacted in an essential arena of (historical) statelessness, "devoid of a logical place...in the hierarchical structure and value system of feudalism" (92). The bourgeoisie lacked a historical tradition of its own, not merely in terms of the temporal but also within the considerations of episteme and culture. To belong to the middle class was to inhabit a historic-cultural vacuum—a sterile country that is devoid of the discursive parameters which constitute agency. In the words of Franco Moretti, the archetypal bourgeois is "a man alone on an island, dis-embedded from the rest of mankind" (*Bourgeois* 13). Amidst these historical sterilities, the *bourgeoisie Oedipus* must seek his *paterfamilias* who will provide his agency a historical validation and in the absence of any such pre-discursive *law of the father*; he can dare to dream of a sacrilege which will identify him as the inventor of his own history (*emphasis mine*).

Michel Foucault, in his analysis of Kant's essay "What is Enlightenment" observes that the constitutive characteristic of the Enlightenment involves a validation of the present on the fundamentals of "difference" and not "the basis of a totality or a future achievement" ("Enlightenment" 34). The bourgeoisie, a principle actor in the arena of Enlightenment, writes his own history. Martin Heidegger, contemplating the possible "significations" (*Being* 430) of History observes:

... 'history' is not so much the past in the sense of that which is past, but rather derivation... from such a past. Anything that 'has a history' stands in the context of a becoming. (430)

The *becoming* (*emphasis mine*) of the bourgeoisie posits a claim to history and yet it is posed in departure from the existing repertoire of history. The substratum from which history is derived is non-existent for the bourgeoisie and in all likeness; he can rest his claim to history in difference. It is this essential difference that allocates the bourgeoisie a distinguished historicity that is dismissive of other historicalities, which are equally pertinent and present within the temporal consideration of history.

Franco Moretti hints at this systemic evolution of a homo-significant history (also insignificant, i.e. everything is haunted by the perpetual possibility of signification) in the hands of the bourgeois as he imagines the birth of the 'serious century'¹ as an inevitable outcome of the bourgeoisie's claim to history. The bourgeoisie everyday, within a modus operandi of self-representation, acquires a historical worth. Moretti is quick to observe that 'the stranded man in an island', the archetypal bourgeois subject, begins to "see a pattern in his existence, and to

¹ For Moretti's discussion on 'Serious century' and the change in cultural historiography that increasingly informs the everyday reality its historical worth, something that was simultaneous with the birth of the bourgeoisie, please refer to the essay "Serious Century: From Vermeer to Austen" anthologized in *The Novel: History, Geography, and Culture* (ed. Franco Moretti)

find the right words to express it” (*Bourgeois* 13). This preoccupation with self-representation is viral and vital and, to return to Moretti, culminates into that curious climax of history where “...the bourgeois can no longer be simply ‘himself’; his power over the rest of society—his ‘hegemony’—is now on the agenda” (13). All that is validated within self-representation qualifies as history. The bourgeois arrives as the master of his history; history doesn’t precede him. It is instead reduced and nominalized within a valorized order of cognition, where to be is also to become, only and nothing but, history. Immanuel Wallerstein observes:

I know of no serious historical interpretation of this modern world of ours in which the concept of the bourgeoisie...is absent. And for good reason. It is hard to tell a story without its main protagonist.” (“Bourgeois(ie)” 98)

Modernity becomes synonymous with the birth of the bourgeoisie; the temporality and historicity of the two linger undistinguished. Wallerstein’s protagonist of modernity is Ian Watt’s precursor of modernity, “logically independent of the tradition of past thought.” (Watt, *Rise* 12) The container-contained, cause-effect, habitus-habited semblance is increasingly nuanced as the bourgeoisie evolves as the founding subject of modernity. Jerrold Seigel observes “...modernity has some of its essential roots in the efforts and activities of a category of people we call bourgeois” (*Modernity and Bourgeois* 13). The becoming of modernity (and thus its historicity) is indissociably associated with the becoming of the bourgeois and the birth of modernity and the birth of the bourgeoisie are simultaneous and historically synchronous.

Jurgen Habermas, returning to Arnold Gehlen’s understanding of modern culture, identifies modernity as a “crystalline state” (*Philosophical* 3). For Habermas (as well as for Gehlen) modernity is the essential apex of history where “the possibilities implanted in it have all been developed in their basic elements. Even the counter-possibilities and antitheses have been

uncovered and assimilated, so that henceforth changes in the premises have become increasingly unlikely” (3). The event of modernity acquires a stature of abstraction, promising a potential to contain all other historic, un-historic and trans-historic possibilities.

The *end of history* (*emphasis mine*) strain (which Gehlen identifies as *posthistoire* (cited in *Philosophical* 3)) that modernity upholds is significantly validated and substantiated in its presumptuous valorization of the present as the essential and unproblematic condition of historical significance. Habermas, underlining the undisputed priority of the present in the historical consciousness of modernity, observes:

Because the new, the modern world is distinguished from the old by the fact that it opens itself to the future, the epochal new beginning is rendered constant with each moment that gives birth to the new... Within the horizon of the modern age, the present enjoys a prominent position as contemporary history. (*Philosophical* 6)

The bourgeoisie and his promise to validate the present as the historic bears the promise of re-postulating history beyond the unproblematic notions of temporality. That is to say, history is no longer conceptualized in terms of chronology and is not undisputedly considered as that which has occurred. Instead, the occurring lays an equal claim to history which, as previously discussed, soon takes a turn towards becoming a universal truth, an emphatic narrative of progress. One can scarcely overlook the unholy tryst between the conceptions of progressive history, modernity and the bourgeois and refute the thesis that the bourgeois has been influential in historicizing modernity. What is more, this idea of history and modernity has been deeply uniform and homo-hegemonic in essence, postulating an exclusivist and constricted idea of history and modernity.

Since the historical base of modernity is the present and since modernity as a social-cultural phenomenon is intimately associated with the bourgeois spirit, it is probably worthwhile to evaluate the bourgeois and its relationship with the present. The bourgeoisie's conceptualization of the present is also a politicized enterprise. The present is an annotated presence within a constricted order of the experiential that is profoundly premised upon the material and the empirical. The bourgeoisie present, as Moretti observes, is a host of everydays; everydays that are constituted by "regularly repeated activities" ("Serious" 381) The bourgeoisie's conceptualization and recognition of presence sustains within an intimate order that is in compliance with his own material-empirical order of the lived. This obsession with the familiar is an attempted rationalization of "the novelistic universe" ("Serious") where the excess is systematically unrecognized and either discarded or appropriated.

This "teleological rhetoric", where "events acquire meaning when they led to one ending, and one only" (Moretti, *Way* 7) is a predominant component of the bourgeois sensibility and largely characterizes the bourgeoisie's engagement with history. Making sense of history for the bourgeoisie is thus correlational with explainability; the historic (even as a predated reality) must be explainable in relation with the present. The empirico-experiential reality of the present is never dubious or unreliable in disposition; it is the historic that is increasingly posited within a sensibility of apprehension. Foucault summarises and distinguishes this change in historical consciousness as the typical feature of the nineteenth century, i.e. the "golden age of the bourgeoisie" (Dejung Motadel, "Worlds of" 20). He observes:

History in this sense is not to be understood as the compilation of factual successions or sequences as they may have occurred; it is then fundamental mode of being of empiricities...History, from the nineteenth century, defines the birthplace of the empirical, that from which, prior to all established chronology, it derives its own being. It is no doubt because

of this that History becomes so soon divided, in accordance with an ambiguity that it is probably impossible to control, into an empirical science of events and that radical mode of being that prescribes their destiny to all empirical beings, to those particular beings that we are. (Foucault, *Order* 237)

Foucault's ambiguous postulation of history locates it as divided and it is this divide that in his opinion, is the typical characteristic of nineteenth century (bourgeois) history. In his opinion, the nineteenth century and the simultaneous turn of history towards empiricism suggest that history is no longer (unconditionally) "the space in which every being approached man's consciousness" (*Order* 238). Foucault identifies "a mutation of Order into History" (238) where 'metaphysics' is replaced by 'memory' and history ceases to be a "mere framework of acquired knowledge" (238). Instead, it tends to become "the mode of being of all that is given us in experience" (238) and this is essentially suggestive of a suspension of the metaphysical for the empirical.

The flâneur is profoundly contained within the empirico-experiential nature of being and becoming. He is the voyeur of modern life; his self-fashioning often involves a curious consciousness and indulgence of the exterior. This consciousness, in the words of Aime Boutin, involves a 'sensual turn' and the flâneur for Boutin, "epitomizes the ascendancy of vision" ("Rethinking" 124). Being for the flâneur involves a being with-in the intimacy of the urban atmosphere. This proximity and obsession with the empirico-material stature of the urbane outside probably compels Bruce Mazlish to assert that the flâneur is the "spectator of the modern world" ("spectator" 43).

And yet, this spectator and his ethics of spectatorship refuse to contain itself within the materialised nominal of reality. Instead, reality exterior for the flâneur is a habitation that is habitual, yet not quite. Characterised by, what Deborah L. Parsons calls "elusivity" the flâneur

“walks...into the labyrinth, myth, and fragments of the city” which constantly evade the empirico-material configuration of the city (*Streetwalking* 4). It is in this praxis of elusion that the flâneur looks beyond the empirical stature of reality. Bruce Mazlish, elucidating this problematic relationship that the flâneur shares with reality, observes:

Reality...is a shifting, historical phenomenon, laced through with an unchanging element...Reality is not something tangible, out there; it is a perception, by the painter of modern life. In the end, the flâneur’s vision of life, based on his peripatetic observations, creates reality. (“spectator” 53)

As such, the flâneur resembles the bourgeois in his obsession with the milieu of modernity and Baudelaire identifies him as the lotos eater; ever-thirsty and addicted to the dew-drops of ecstasy called modernity. In this, the flâneur is typical of the bourgeois. He intends “to extract from fashion the poetry that resides in its historical envelope, to distil the eternal from the transitory.” (*Painter* 17-18) For Baudelaire, modernity is constituted by “the transient, the fleeting, the contingent” (18) and in his incessant endeavours to sieve the *eternal* (*emphasis mine*) from the transitory, the flâneur, alike the bourgeois, engages in a valorisation of the present. Yet, flânerie also cherishes an ambiguity with bourgeois sensibility in its consistent attempts to transgress-transcend the constricted containments of empirical reality. For the bourgeois, the material-empirical manifestation of reality is an unproblematic truth. The flâneur constantly nuances the aporia of reality and its empirico-material manifestation. Reality for the flâneur is not an unproblematic validation. Instead, it becomes a phantasmagoria. Margaret Cohen, in her discussion on Walter Benjamin’s use of the concept of phantasmagoria, provides a historical account of the machinations and structure of the same as follows:

The centerpiece of the phantasmagoria was a mobile magic-lantern projector that the spectacle’s animator, the phantasmagoria, used to project ghosts ranging from the collective

heroes and villains of the Revolution to lost private loved ones reclaimed by bereaved persons in the room...it was so wildly successful that the term immediately passed into figurative use, where it described hallucinatory mental processes that were deluded yet that had an undeniable reality of their own. (“Benjamin’s Phantasmagoria” 207)

The flâneur’s engagement with reality (urban reality) as phantasmagoria removes it from the nominalised and enclosed status of the empirically validated and posits it within a fertile milieu of hypothesis and possibility. In doing so, the real and its claim to history is not conditioned and characterised by a unanimous singularity. Instead, the historicity of the real acquires a hetero-significance.

The present chapter will locate the flâneur in a curiously liminal state of the noumenal-material and the phenomenal-trans-material where the empirico-immanent and its claim to an unproblematic, apparent historicity is increasingly nuanced by an experiential recognition of *other histories (emphasis mine)* that linger un-manifested in the apparent. These *other histories* are not un-historic but rather convey the essence of an alternative historicity, which is unfolded before the flâneur in form of an unappropriated ecstasy. These nourishments of ecstasy do not surpass the everyday order of the familiar and do not necessarily refute the historical consciousness of the self (flâneur). Instead, they are revelations which conceptualise the self in the atmospherics of a re-historicised habitation, intimate and alienated from the greater design of the historic. For this purpose, the chapter will engage with *A Strangeness in My Mind*, a novel that deals with the “*Adventures and Dreams of Mevlut Karatas*” and simultaneously claims to portray “*Life in Istanbul...from Many Different Points of View*” (*emphasis mine*). Mevlut in the novel is a boza seller and it is through his perspective that the novel primarily depicts the everyday intimacies of a post-bourgeoisie urban culture and its consistent pattern of historicization of the cityscape. The historic in the novel is conceptualised not just as an

occurrence but also as an ever-consuming glide of the occurring into the schematic order of the past. The past is not a unanimous and unconditionally stable imperative in the novel. It is, instead, an experiential truth, constantly modulated, systematised and appropriated within the self-valorising enterprises of modernity. Paradoxically though, it is the interpretive and the efforts of systematisation which renders the historic in an openness of being an event. Deleuze observes that the event is “neutral to all of its temporal actualisations” (*Logic* 100) and the perpetual turn of history towards the becoming of an event problematises its claim to certainty. Paul Patton, introspecting upon the possibility of understanding history as a Deleuzian event, observes:

...pure events would be real and apparently transcendental objects only partially expressed in their spatio-temporal incarnations. At best, actual historical events would approximate the pure event, a part of which always remains not simply unactualised but ‘indifferent to actualization, since its reality does not depend upon it. The event is immaterial, incorporeal, unlivable: ‘pure reserve’.” (“Events” 38)

The ethics of modernity is characteristic of a historical re-organisation and re-stratification. Modernity accords history a homogeneity that bears the promise of a historicity which can historically contextualise the present within the design of progress. The possible excess, which surpasses the pre-determined status that the present holds in store for the past, is liable to a denial and un-recognition. Marshall Berman, in context of modernity and its relationship with history, observes that the modern man:

needs history because it is the storage closet where all the costumes are kept. He notices that none really fits him”—not primitive, not classical, not medieval, not Oriental—so he keeps trying on more and more. (*All* 22)

History lingers within the window-shopping premises of choice and the ideal modern subject is the master of his own history. He chooses rather than succumbs to the pre-ontological pertinences of the historic. He is the curiously nuanced agency of intervention and appropriation, conducting history within the contrary considerations of a fertile openness and a strategic essentialism. It is this dialectic enigma of the historic that modernity unveils which is problematised by the intervention of the flâneur. Like the modern subject, the flâneur is intimate in his intervention into the historic. The historic is essentially poised in a promise of openness before the reflective criticality of the flâneur. However, unlike the modern super-historic subject who tames and governs his own history; the flâneur doesn't claim an absolute valorisation of his own interpretations of history. In other words, the flâneur's historical consciousness is curiously poised in an atmosphere of alienation, where history is unfurled in its nuances. The historic is opened up and yet it is accorded an autonomy which is otherwise denied by modernity's rendezvous with history. While history is contained and essentialised by the imperatives of modernity, for the flâneur it acquires the status of an excess which entices and yet evades understanding. Baudelaire sums up the tryst of the flâneur with the historic in his aphorism that the flâneur sieves out the poetry that resides in the envelope of history- poetry that is essentially an irreducible excess (*Painter* 17). The historic for the flâneur is suggestive of an excess and is hence characteristic of poetry. The predominant essence of estrangement that is characteristic to the flâneur flames from a consciousness of this excess that the historic contains-an excess which is not contained within the conditional approximation of history by modernity.

Modernity and its conditional approximation of history has been epistemically conceptualised by Nietzsche and it is probably worthwhile to understand the ambiguity that Nietzsche presents in his engagement with the historic. History, for Nietzsche, is inextricably associated with the

ontic and historical consciousness is synonymous with the sense making prerogatives that are intimately associated with the validation of selfhood. Yet, the historic for Nietzsche is a consistent limit and for the *Übermensch* (super human subject), it is necessary to negotiate, and to an extent, transcend the historical consciousness that the self is vested with. The historic for the subject of modernity cannot predate consciousness; instead it is consciousness which must systematically re-formulate and reorient the constituted design of history. Nietzsche sees the need for a “borderline at which the past must be forgotten if it is not to become the gravedigger of the present” (*Use 3*) and expounds the “plastic force of a person” (3) as the moderating modus and ploy through which history becomes an appropriable category. Modernity becomes the plastic age of fluidity where history is mouldable and reduced within the imperative considerations of the age. For modernity to persist, history must be a moderated truth, appropriated and essentialised into “a motionless picture of immutable values and eternally similar meaning” (6).

The arrival of modernity in Turkey was marked by a consistent process of systematisation of the historic, where material departures from the desired eventuality of the liberal secular ordeal of modernity were systematically disenfranchised of their claim to history. Alev Cinar reflecting upon the homogenous nature of Turkish modernity observes “Modernity understood as an epoch imposes a sense of uniformity on everything that happens within a temporal frame; as a lifestyle creates a sense of monolithic culture and as an exclusively European experience asserts a sense of European homogeneity” (*Secularism 22*). This European model of a derivative order of modernity, in its imposed arrival within the Turkish *everyday* (*emphasis mine*), refuses to limit its significance within the consideration of the existing socio-economic and political structure. It also involves a moderation/ modulation of the cultural essence of the National imaginary. Cinar observes that this refurbishment of the National-cultural imaginary is a subtle

process of re (and simultaneously de)-historicisation. For Cinar, modernity is suggestive of a “reordering of space...and reordering of time” *determined* by “interventions (that) seek to transform and change an existing set of practices, patterns, and forms into something else” (*Secularism* 25).

Turkey’s tryst with modernity involves a simultaneous homogenisation and re-formulation of the lived historic. What qualifies as historic is an incessant epitomization of the contingent occurring within the hermeneutics of “advancement and progress” (*Secularism* 25). What escapes the pervasive design of progress is suspended as non-historic and all that *other lived*’s (*emphasis mine*), which depart from the recognised and qualified idea of history, melts into the abstract firmament of non-recognition as non-historic. The nuance of modernity, as Marshall Berman observes, involves “a unity of disunity” where the abstract ideal of the universal that promotes the idea of a world history is curiously juxtaposed against a “maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish” (*All* 15). It is the projected and conceptualised design of the historic that supersedes the more prominent historicalities of the lived and Berman, repeating Marx, observes/ sums it up as “all that is solid melts into air” (15).

This epical tension between the material and the abstract, the particular and the universal, the lived and the imagined, is fundamental to modernity as a phenomenon. Mevlut, our flâneur in question, stands in this milieu of epical tension and his engagement with the modern is characteristic of a critical co-habitation. It is not an unconditional recognition of modernity as an unproblematic phenomenon. Neither does it suggest a rejection of the empirico-material order of modernity with the gaze of “an outsider” (Pamuk, *Strangeness* 318). Rather, it involves a dialectic engagement with modernity that rejects the possibility of “absolute thinking” (Adorno, *Negative* 136). Dialectic, as Adorno conceptualises, involves a recognition of/in

difference. For Adorno, the dialectic conception invites a reconciliation (which he calls reconcilment) with the non-identical, a possibility of “the thought of the many as no longer inimical” (*Negative* 6).

While the materialised manifestation of bourgeois modernity is characteristic of a uniform and systemic history of unanimous progress, the essence of modernity is characteristic of a discontinuity. It is within a perpetual state of statelessness that modernity thrives as an essence. The very historicity of modernity is thus characteristic of a perpetual fluidity where, the contingent and the convoluted, the discontinuous and the disparate, lay their claim to history. Exceeding the ideologies of homo-hegemonisation, modernity is characteristic of an irreducible excess which evades any systematisation. The bare essence of modernity is constituted by *many modernities (emphasis mine)*, all relevant with their own claim to history.

Mevlut’s lack of a consolidated claim to agency and consciousness is significantly in resonance with the fluctuating entrapments of modernity. It is also simultaneously suggestive of flânerie which, as we have observed, is significantly characterised by the possibility of being in the liminal and the discontinuous and thus the contingent. Keith Tester observes that “the figure of the flâneur” is characterised by its essential obsession with the “flux of life” (*Flâneur* 8). The flux, thus conceptualised, is the spirit of modernity and it is in perfect resonance with the spirit of flânerie. Tester observes:

Flânerie can be understood as the observation of the fleeting and the transitory which is the other half of modernity to the permanent and central sense of the self. *Flânerie* is the *doing* through and thanks to which the *flâneur* hopes and believes he will be able to find the truth of his *being*. *Flânerie* also, then, is the way of avoiding arrival at the funeral pyre of *being*. (7)

The avoidance of the *funeral pyre of being (emphasis mine)* is significantly observable in the character of Mevlut, who constantly drifts across a facade of identities, engaging in a discontinuous state of being that is subjected to peripeteiac shifts. The very opening lines of the novel summarise this fluidity as the narrator states:

This is the story of the life and daydreams of Mevlut Karatas, a seller of boza and yoghurt...When he was twenty-five, he returned to the province of his birth, where he eloped with a village girl, a rather strange affair that determined the rest of his days: returning with her to Istanbul, he got married and had two daughters; he took a number of jobs without pause, selling his yoghurt, ice cream, and rice in the street and waiting tables. But every evening, without fail, he would wander the streets of Istanbul, selling boza and dreaming strange dreams.” (*Strangeness* 3)

In an interview organized by *Politics and Prose*, Orhan Pamuk reflected that he had originally conceptualized the novel as a short story based on the simple plot of a street vendor “losing his job because of modernization” (“Orhan Pamuk” 00:10:23-00:10:26) but later on decided to write an “epic about a man who had covered this whole distance” (00:12:17-00:12:21). The referred distance, in all probabilities, is a reference to the trajectory of modernity. The boza seller, as Pamuk remonstrates, was “mysterious...a poor man who had just come from rural poor Anatolia, selling things to secular upper middle class Istanbul” (00:12:45-00:12:58). Premised and inhabiting the overlap of the modern and non-modern and hence two historical timelines/ epochs, the boza seller becomes the perfect face of the other of modernity, or *other modernities*. His being is conceptually premised within a liminal order of discontinuity, he is *neither and both (emphasis mine)* here and there. Much like the flâneur, he belongs in the perpetual verge of unbelonging.

The authentic historicization of modernity and its fluctuating disposition of a heterotopic order demands an (un)belonging within the perilous liminality where the subject is both within and without the evoked climate of transition. To be (Being) in modernity is almost indissociably associated with an immediate consciousness of the *now* (*emphasis mine*); an engrossment within the material order of immanence. However, any uncritical assumption that is complacent with the material manifestation of modernity, fails to decipher its bare/ authentic essence. Modernity, as argued before, is characteristic of an essential discontinuity, nuancing its own premises of enclosure. *What is* (*emphasis mine*) is increasingly perforated/ breached by other orders that are consistent within an openness. The material validity of the *now* is only a possible and never a final claim of existence; it is always already open to refurbishments. Marshall Berman observes that “...no mode of modernism can ever be definitive” (*All* 6). Modernity refutes closure and the limits of the apparent-material are increasingly exposed by the flâneur for whom, the apparent is not an enclosed reality. It is increasingly poised within an openness, in an intimation of apprehension.

The historic of modernity, which is otherwise premised upon the contingent milieu of material manifestation, is increasingly nuanced by the flâneur. His consciousness of the historic is not an essential valorisation of the systematic and the concrete, which the bourgeoisie order of forms is obsessed with. Instead, it is speculative and engaged in a perpetual evocation of the abstract; an abstraction that is not suggestive of an indulgence of a wistful fantasy. Rather, the abstract is constituted by the intimate experiential interventions of the flâneur into the nominalised/ materialised validation of modernity.

Mevlut, our precarious boza seller, is consistently premised within the limits of experience where contemplation, conceptualisation and experience of reality (modernity) and the gross perpetuations of reality are suggestive of a discord. As such, his being is constantly marked by

an ethics of reconstitution and is essentially discontinuous in essence. This discontinuity is anticipated at the very opening of the novel as Mevlut's elopement with his lover Rahiya turns out to be a dystopia. Mevlut realises that the woman for whom he has grown an interest is in reality Samiha and that Rahiya, in reality, is the sister of Samiha. This essential reconciliation significantly posits Mevlut's fantasies of growing old with his lady love as unhistoric. The pangs of a tender love waiting to bloom, those exhaustive endeavours undertaken to ensure the birth of the "first letter" (*Strangeness* 173), the elaborate discussions involving the "most meaningful gift" (177) and the "poetic flights" (196) contained within those letters are now liable to be discarded by the materialised present as non-synchronous and hence inept in validating the present or the contemporaneous's claim to history. They contain the traces of a conceptualised present which has no resemblance with the materialised *now*. The present has estranged Mevlut; his lived now stands in the threshold of being dismissed as irrelevant and unhistoric. The present emerges as discontinuous, within a historical lineage that the self is eager to un-recognise and unburden.

One can thus hardly refute Gulnur Demirci's claim that Mevlut is "the decentered epic hero" (Demirci, "Decentered" 31) but can interrogate it further to illustrate Mevlut's nuance with the historic. For Mevlut, history appears as a ploy of disenfranchisement. Instead of procuring for the hero the promise of an unvanquishable agency, it burdens and alienates the protagonist. The great design, which accords every determinable development of the epic hero as historic (very much in synchrony with a tradition/ trajectory) and not unprecedented, is essentially reverted in case of Mevlut. Mevlut, like Galip in our previous chapter, is faced with an unprecedented present. The undeniably prominent and real material order of reality threatens the rejection of the past as non-historic. Will Mevlut reject the past as non-historic and consume himself within the apparently undisputed authenticity of the materialised order of the present? Or will he, like Galip (the previously discussed protagonist of *The Black Book*), attempt a validation of the lived

by positing the lived within an interpretive paradigm, if only to discover the alternative possibilities that have so long been unexposed by the tyranny of the apparent, and thereby restore the lived its historicity?

At this point, it is probably necessary to reflect upon the allegorical implications that Mevlut's state of estrangement by history carries within the broader context of history of modernity in a non-modern habitation. It will probably not be too far-fetched to read Mevlut's estrangement as the perpetual estrangement that modernity posits; whose unveiled materialisation is never in synchrony with its conceptualisation. Modernity arrives as a derivative discourse in the non-European cultural imaginary. The promise of modernity and its manifestation is often signified by a rupture, not just in terms of the temporal or the material-cultural but also in its materialisation. The expectation from modernity is profound and Habermas points out that the promise of modernity is essentially a promise of novelty, which "lives on the experience of rebelling against all that is normative" ("Modernity" 5). This departure anticipates the foreknowledge that modernity is synonymous with progress.

However, the materialisation of modernity, in the words of Habermas, involves a "cultural rationalization" where the "everyday praxis"/ "the life-world" remains stranded within a perpetual essence/ sense of deprivation ("Modernity" 9). Habermas observes that the arrival of modernity suggests that "the traditional substance has already been devalued" (9) and the claim to a valorised order that is avant-garde is constituted within a hierarchical structure of "the culture of expertise" (9). The mundane and the commonplace manifestations of reality linger in a perpetual limbo, deprived of any historically *recognised (emphasis mine)* lineage that can provide it any substantial traces of agency.

In the third world culture of non-modernity, the valorised ideal of modern arrives as a derivative discourse, bearing little or no resemblance with the generic intimacies of everyday. The mass

is engaged in a process of *becoming* (*emphasis mine*) modern and any possible endeavour to reconcile with modernity is suggestive of a disenfranchisement (and in a way de-historicization) of the self. The sense of disenfranchisement is not merely constituted by the haunting sense of the unfamiliar that the modern poses before the non-modern consciousness. It is also suggested by the dominance of a homogenic and predetermined methodology of reconciliation with modernity. Any possibilities of a third-space engagement with modernity (beyond the binary design of an unconditional acceptance or an absolute rejection and subsequent turn towards nativism) seem to be bleak and rather unlikely. Dipesh Chakrabarty observes that the derivative order of modernity is characteristic of an aporia and poses pertinent marks of interrogation concerning the ethics and poetics of belonging within the fundamentally non-nativist habitus of modernity:

How do we think about the global legacy of the European Enlightenment in lands far away from Europe in geography or history? How do we envision or document ways of being modern that will speak to that which is shared across the world as well as to that which belongs to human cultural diversity? (*Habitations* xxi)

The non-modern is likely to be stranded within a predicament that is essentially binary and holistic in design. It involves either an unconditional acceptance of the modern as the valid and reject the lived as un-historic or linger in an inescapable anxiety of being out of time. Modernity and its arrival involves an estrangement: it becomes an almost impossible co-habitant with the traces of the non-modern.

Tracing the lineage of modernity in Turkey increasingly substantiates a transition from an epistemic order of abstraction to the foundation of more comprehensive structures which increasingly manifest a more prominent culture of material forms. The grand ideologue of progress, which the founder of modernity in Turkey Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, identified as the

“universal norm of civilisation” (*Secularism* 5), increasingly valorised the ideal of a “mentality...oriented towards the West” (Ataturk cited in 5). The fundamental premise of Ataturk’s understanding of modernity was characteristic of a split between the material and the spiritual, the immediate world of form and the phenomenological order of the spirit. Undeniably influenced by the Hegelian notion of the *geist* (absolute spirit), Ataturk presumed consciousness as the preliminary agency that can induce the arrival of modernity. In other words, modernity became co-terminus with consciousness, with an abstract turning outwards into the greater purview/design of World-Spirit.

While the phenomenological movement towards modernity was characteristic of a re-configuration of cultural epistemes; the materialisation of modernity increasingly relied upon a significant manifestation of progress in the empirico-material world. The revision of politico-economic structures like State and market marked the genesis of high capitalism where progress was a material truth. This materialisation of modernity nuanced the traditional structure of the intimate and the familiar; the manifestations of reality had to be in absolute synchrony with the spirit of novelty. Modernity arrived with a sense of estrangement, increasingly positing the traits of tradition within an economy of un-recognition.

Hence, its arrival is synonymous with a de-historicisation of the self, which has so long been nourished within a familiar and intimate climate. The change that modernity invites and which is increasingly manifested in the material order of the world, problematise the intimate historical consciousness of the self. The estrangement of modernity is not constituted by the possibility of change, which otherwise, is its exclusive characteristic. The nuance instead lies in the unpredicted and the unanticipated character of change, i.e., the design that the new is likely to take. This ungoverned nature of modernity is the probable underlying reason of its perennial

essence of estrangement. Let us now return to Mevlut for whom modernity has arrived and now awaits in the van in which he has eloped with his love.

As Mevlut closes the door of the van in which he has escaped with his lover and whom he has so long believed to be Rahiya, “for a moment, the sky, the mountains, the rocks, the trees—everything around him—lit up like a distant memory” (*Strangeness* 7). Mevlut realises that the woman for whom he had developed an immediate attraction at the wedding of Korkut and Vediha is not the woman who was now sitting next to him in the van. As events unveil, Mevlut reconciles with the fact that all this while he had been labouring his love for Rahiya, while the woman who had kindled the flames of love in his heart was her sister, Samiha.

The speculated and the materialised are disparate and the contemporaneous emerges as unprecedented. Yet, the validity of this unprecedented is unquestionable, i.e., since it is a materialised occurrence, it has an undisputed claim to reality. Hence, it is not the present whose claim to history can be disavowed. Instead, it is the speculation of the present that is likely to be denied a historical validity. Hence, those lived realities, which Mevlut has so long indulged in speculating the possible shape/essence of the present, now appear susceptible to a denial by history. The only historical truth that is likely to persist from henceforth is Rahiya, and not Samiha, is his wife:

This was not the girl he had seen at the wedding of his uncle’s elder son Korkut in Istanbul. This was her older sister. They had shown him the pretty sister at the wedding, and then given him the ugly sister instead. Mevlut realized he’d been tricked. He was ashamed and couldn’t even look at the girl whose name may well not have been Rayiha. (*Strangeness* 9)

Interestingly, Mevlut’s conceptualisation of this present (which has now estranged him) has been marked by a sharp departure from the regulative restrictions of tradition. The fantasies of

love and desire for Mevlut that have significantly contributed to this climactic venture of elopement has largely been subversive to the *law of the Father* (*emphasis mine*), both at a literal level and in context of a symbolic order. While the chance encounter with Samiha is materialised after Mevlut has disobeyed his Father and has attended the wedding ceremony of his cousin Korkut; Mevlut's fantasies of love and desire has so long been enthralled in passionate contemplations of the forbidden and the repressed:

...he was twenty-one years old and he had never slept with a woman. A pretty girl with a headscarf and good morals, the kind he would like for a wife, would never sleep with him before they got married...His priority wasn't marriage anyway, but finding a kind woman he could hold and kiss, a woman he could have sex with. In his mind, he saw all these things as being separate from marriage, but apart from marriage, he found himself unable to obtain sexual contact. (*Strangeness* 152)

It is thus that Mevlut arrives at the threshold of securing an agency that is essentially transgressive and not congenial with history. The *law of the Father* and its regulative constrictions have been increasingly abandoned by Mevlut for his desire to depart. He is not the Mevlut who finishes his high school first and then does his military service; a perfect enactment of a historicised future that the *law of the Father* has conceptualised and kept in store for him. Yet, the materialisation of departure posits him before an epiphanic juncture of estrangement. Mevlut fails to materialise his own history of transgression; the present that arrives before him is irregular, consuming his so long lived and cherished ecstasies as invalidated and denying them the sanctity of becoming a synchronous premonition of the present. As Mevlut boards the train to Istanbul from Akeshir railway station, he realises that "he had no clear understanding of how he had been tricked, no memory of how he'd arrived at this moment" (*Strangeness* 10). The strangeness in his mind (estrangement) is suggestive of his

consistent failure to locate the discontinuity that the unfolding present has posed before him and which has been in absolute departure from the lived and the habited. His encounter with the historic tree located “next to the station building”, under whose shade “THE FOUNDER OF OUR REPUBLIC MUSTAFA KEMAL ATATURK DRANK COFFEE”, only intensifies his alienation further (10). The prophet of modernity in secular Turkey (Ataturk) and his consistent claims to vitalise a history that is in absolute synchrony with the ideal of development and progress is juxtaposed against the growing disillusionment of the modern self who has attempted a historical validation of his own agency in departure from tradition, and now stands estranged by a deceptive modernity. Modernity, in sharp departure from its conceptualised notion, arrives as unfamiliar. The valorised vision of modernity framed in contemplations fail; the materialisation of the moment of modernity is characterised by a perilous rupture. Negotiating the rupture demands a reorientation and re-conceptualisation of the self.

Mevlut’s reorientation of selfhood begins with his endeavours to accept the estrangements that the unprecedented has posed before him. Unlike Galip in *The Black Book*, he is not obsessed with the urge to re-interpret the lived and trace the unearthed anomalies constituting the lived which is likely to resolve and reconcile the present in an alternative order of history. The estrangement of the present does not inspire Mevlut to live outside time and within the familiar and empathic intimacies of the past. Instead, he habits the contemporaneous, even when it appears to be estranging. This urge to habit the occurring temporal with its anomalies formulates an objectivity and a third space ethics of belonging within modernity. Mevlut does not reject the modern and yet his engagement with modernity is not without nuance. Mevlut’s consciousness thus formulated is not apprehensive of alienation as an experience. Instead, it is able to cherish an irreducible sense of being even in an impending sense and verge of un-being. The growing self of Mevlut, which has promised to grow with-in modernity doesn’t abandon

the promise of vitality, even when disinherited by the unprecedented order of the modern. The possible disinheritance does not overpower him and as Mevlut returns to Istanbul with his *unmatched* (*emphasis mine*) wife, there are little ecstasies which Mevlut invents, adoring the world which has incidentally been born in deception and predestined with a lack:

Mevlut saw light pouring into the room from Rahiya's milk-white skin. He briefly considered that he might be responsible for those pink and light purple marks on her body. Once they were back under the covers, they embraced in the comfort of knowing that everything was fine. Tender words tumbled unrehearsed from Mevlut's mouth.

"My darling," he told her. "My sweetheart, you're so lovely..." (*Strangeness* 219)

This agility of the self to belong to a dis coherent world order, to *embrace in the comfort of knowing that all is fine* (*emphasis mine*) is suggestive of a vitality which is typical to the protagonist a bildungsroman, a prototyped genre that charts the historicization of the self, within an assimilative economy of absorption into the greater temporal constitution of the exterior climate of modernity. The "'great narrative' of the Bildungsroman", in the words of Franco Moretti, "comes into being because Europe has to attach a meaning...to modernity" (*Way* 5). The characteristic bildungsroman involves an unconditional valorisation of modernity, where youth and age are absorbed into an ever existing "boundless dynamism" (6). The static society and its enclosed politico-epistemic order which cherishes wisdom and age as the ideal of heroism is substituted by the transitive youth, mobile and fluid, contingent with the evolving epoch of time. The history of modernity is likely to find its embodiment in the youth; it is the contingent order of the lived of youth that becomes an embodiment of the contingent historicity of modernity.

Yet, Moretti observes that the experiential reality of youth in a bildungsroman is not an unproblematic history of an unconditional accentuation and convergence into the greater temporal structure that constitutes the historicity called world. Instead, the essence of a bildungsroman is also constituted in divergence, in its ability to contain within its greater schema, the possibility of not just assimilation but also rupture. The self is not necessarily accorded and governed “to a stable and ‘final’ identity” (Way 8). Instead, the totality of the exterior is also an indeterminate category, where the self is perilously poised in the threshold of alienation. The ideologue of progress that constitutes the historical essence of modernity is inevitably haunted by the peril of being subjected to a history of estrangement.

This estrangement, significantly for Mevlut, isn’t a denouement within the narrative design of the novel. Instead, Pamuk begins his novel with an essential dystopia where the bildungsroman protagonist has been informed about the discordant ways of the world—in the very denial of his claim to a contemporaneous that is in consistency with his lived. The disillusionment that is otherwise characteristic of the bildungsroman and its subsequent genesis of a selfhood on the “predisposition to compromise” (Way 10) is an essential component of the strategic denouement of the narrative. Moretti observes that the bildungsroman “attempts to build the ego” and “make it the indisputable structure of its own centre” (11). Hence, the denouement of compromise in the bildungsroman doesn’t aim to disenfranchise the self. It is rather suggestive of a harmony with the normative, a *becoming* (*emphasis mine*) which is an inevitability for agency formulation.

Mevlut’s condition problematises the easy consideration of the novel as a bildungsroman, for his compromise does not suggest a self-validation/ affirmation. Instead, the act of compromise has sufficiently derided him of his agency and hence historicity to an extent. As he marries Rahiya, Mevlut cannot refrain from being overtly conscious of the deceit that modernity has

embraced him with. His reconciliation with Rahiya is a simultaneous and synonymous reconciliation with this materiality of deceit. Unfollowing the modalities of a bildungsroman, Mevlut's angst is not characterised by the salient motif to claim his historicity within the greater order of the historical that formulates and constitutes the social. Instead, it involves a persistent urge to formulate his agency in denial, a possibility to lay a claim to history that is in departure from the historical disposition of modernity. Mevlut doesn't necessarily reject modernity but rather exhibits an apprehension about the contemporaneous and its unproblematic claim to history. It is this apprehensive consciousness, that frames history as not unanimous but heterotopic, which contextualises the flâneur in Mevlut. The realisation of *many histories* opens up the poise of presence into an ecstatic order of interpretive experience, removed from the striations of essentialism and pre-determination.

In his tireless wanderings across the city with boza, Mevlut is constantly haunted by his awareness of reality as non-essentialised and bearing a secret that is undisclosed in its immanent-material manifestation. For Mevlut, the urban cityscape of Istanbul and its apparent milieu is "hollow and meaningless" (*Strangeness* 134). The ecstasy, paradoxically, is contained within the un-real(ised) aspect of the urbane. The un-real is not in split from the material considerations of modernity but only exists as a non-apparent presence, unveiled only within the economy of experiential:

He'd walk for kilometres every night with all kinds of beautiful images and strange thoughts crossing his mind. During these walks, he discovered that the shadows of the trees in some neighbourhoods moved even when there was no breeze at all, stray dogs got braver and cockier where street lamps were broken or switched off, and the flyers for circumcision ceremonies and cram schools pasted on utility poles and in doorways were all written in rhyming couplets.

Hearing the things the city told him at night and reading the language of the streets filled Mevlut with pride. (241)

This intervention of the experiential is suggestive of caesura/ interruption which Walter Benjamin identifies as the determinant feature of modernity. The caesura in Benjamin, as Andrew Benjamin observes, is suggestive of the “staging of an opening that can only ever be maintained as this opening” (“Benjamin’s Modernity” 99). The opening up of the climate of progressive modernity by Mevlut does not merely suggest a suspension of the material manifestation of modernity. Instead, it is also an attempted problematisation of the essence of modernity. Mevlut’s realisation of other immediacies that are discontinuous yet hidden within the material manifestation of modernity is a significant attempt that reclaims the true essence of modernity.

The flâneur, in his own way, is conscious of the discontinuities of the contingent and is often involved in perception and exposition of other immediacies that are contained yet unrevealed in the immediate. The habited contingencies of the real are not a limit to experience; they are aporias which promise the possibility of nurturing an excess. In this anticipation of an excess, the flâneur is able to preserve his consciousness from a possible tyranny of reality and instead speculate an alternative dynamics of reality. This alternative is not in absolute split from reality, yet it is not reliant within an appropriate and unconditionally faithful rendering of reality. Baudelaire, harping on this nuance that reality occupies for the flâneur, observes that the flâneur is “a solitary mortal endowed with an active imagination.” (Baudelaire, *The Painter* 17) This *active imagination (emphasis mine)*, as Baudelaire observes, is influential in uncovering and extracting the secret of (apparent) reality and it is this secret which Baudelaire understands as modernity.

Resembling the flâneur, Mevlut's engagement with the city is polyphonic and non-uniform in nature. His experience of the urban is problematically poised in the interstices of incoherent categories like memory and the contingent, tradition and progress, faith and reason, history and the forthcoming. As he ferries his boza in winter nights around Istanbul, Mevlut reconciles with the heterogeneous disposition of the urban experience. This heterogeneous is marked by discontinuities where the perceptions of presence are constantly intervened by Mevlut's awareness of the excess that has been subsumed by the material manifestations of modernity:

A place like Beyoglu, for example! The most populous neighborhood and the one closest to his house. Fifteen years ago, toward the end of the 1970s, when the area's ramshackle cabaret bars and night-clubs and half-hidden brothels were still in business, Mevlut was able to make sales in the backstreets until as late as midnight...But in the last decade or so, the demon of change had cast its spell over the neighborhood as it had over the whole city, and the fabric of the past had been torn asunder, causing those denizens to leave and the clubs playing Ottoman and European-style Turkish and continental music to shut down, giving way to noisy new establishments serving Adana and shish kebabs cooked over an open grill and washed down with *raki*. (*Strangeness* 20)

The residual remains of the past constitute the excess that infringe upon the present; the materially substantiated order of the present cannot consume the impressions of the past which are discontinuities, revealed within an experience of the contemporary. Mevlut re-members the de-materialised past and nuances the validations of presence by his consistent awareness of the contemporary as transient. Baudelaire's flâneur reclaims the eternal from the material by going beyond the perceptive finitudes of the empirical-exterior. The eternal thus conceptualised, is not a transcendental signified that is singular and unproblematically stable. Instead, it is suggestive of an ecstasy that is intensely personal and is contextualised and formulated within

an interpretive consciousness of the observant. For Mevlut, this ecstasy is conditioned by a persistent awareness of an irreducible historical consciousness.

Mevlut's relationship with history is assumable and subjected to easy essentialism, owing to his active professional identity of being the boza seller. Boza, an authentic Turkish drink in the novel, is increasingly portrayed as an endangered cultural motif, thereby signifying the plight of tradition in a National culture obsessed with modernity. As Mevlut steps into the upper middle class Istanbulite households with his boza for sale, he cannot help "feeling poor and out of place" (*Strangeness* 23). For the modernity obsessed upper class society, he is easily nominalised as "a living relic of the past that has now fallen out of fashion" (23). However, Mevlut's engagement with the past does not involve a nominalisation where the historic is commodified and subsequently reduced to a fetishized relic that is susceptible to comfortable consumption. Instead, his engagement with the historic involves a constant perception of the persistence of the past as a referential matrix through which the self engages with the occurring:

When he shouted "Boo-zaa" into half-lit streets, he wasn't just calling out to a pair of closed curtains that concealed families going about their lives, or to some bare, unplastered wall, or to the demonic gods whose invisible presence he could sense on darkened street corners; he was also reaching into the world inside his mind...He sensed, now, that the streets on which he sold boza in the night and the universe in his mind were one and the same. (*Strangeness* 363)

The world within, resembling Badiou's idea of the "world...of contingency" (*Adventure* 62), is the familiar that locates the experiential within a conceivable and irreducible continuity of comprehension. Mevlut's consistent awareness of the world within and its evocation in every nominal interaction with the exterior presupposes a valorisation of the intimate over the exterior. This is not to suggest an attempted reclamation of memory and Mevlut's passive and reflective agency do not fetishize the past as an absolute truth, thereby prompting notions of

resistance in a country haunted/ appropriated by the ideologues of modernity. Instead, Mevlut is in complacency with time, hospitable and open to the fluctuating order of the flowing temporal. His being in the world is undivided and synonymously invokes a characteristic poise between “the source of sense...” and “...a simple logical figure for appearance” (63) i.e. the haunting order of sense making and the exterior formal world of empirical order. The constant nourishments of past that entice his senses are curiously juxtaposed with his systematic endorsement of modernity- his evolving techne and trade to sustain within the discontinuities of the post-capital consumerist economic whimsies, his absolute rejection of the dogmatic tendencies that celebrate a valorised vision of a fundamentalist Nation State. History and the anomalies of the past for him are not revivable sensibilities or eventualities that can be retraced by an alternative cultural or epistemic order. Instead, the past to/for him is contained within the present, in form and potency of an irreducible lived; un-reclaimable: for it is devoid of the necessary distance that can facilitate any possibilities of reclamation. The past and the historic for him is a residual sensibility that personalises the temporal in a lingering intimacy.

It is this simultaneous belonging within the distinct temporal paradigms of the past and the present with equally faithful responses which locate Mevlut as an alternative historiographer. His engagement with history is an irreducible reality, so much so, that the historical refuses to limit its essence as that which has occurred and is in removal from the temporal *now* (*emphasis mine*) of the present. Instead, it becomes a consistent presence that is indissociable from his being there in the world, where “walking around the city at night made him feel as if he were wandering around inside his own head” (*Strangeness* 579). This prominence of the historical, however, doesn’t hinder his being in the temporal considerations of modernity and its characteristic flux. While the consistent fluidity and formlessness of modernity perplexes the historical consciousness of the collective that is apprehensive of the unhistorical nature of the

unprecedented now; Mevlut's engagement with the habitations of modernity is founded on an ethics of intimacy. The haunting exterior is not estranging, instead it is the arena where the irreducible historical reconciliation is likely to happen. The discontinuous constituents of the exterior, the "advertisements, posters, newspapers displayed in grocery stores, and messages painted in the walls" (581) are not agencies of immanence which contain and confine the self within a transient order of meaning. Instead, in perfect synchrony with the poetics of *flânerie*, they are traces, "symbols and signs" which make him reconcile with "another realm" where the irreducible essence of the historic persists (581). This altered world is a world in which Mevlut finds that his love of life has been Rahiya, the woman with whom his marriage has been nothing but an unprecedented accident. The discontinuous emerges as an irreducible historical essence and it is in this epiphanic realisation of the discontinuous as the most primordial and intimate of all histories that Mevlut, the boza seller, becomes an alternate historiographer.

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In Search of a Conclusion:

To be within history is an inescapability, for the historic is the premise in which any possible claim to agency is validated. It is also the contingent discursive field that is complemented with each passing anthropocentric moment, for every slice of temporality that hosts the anthropocene, has a liable claim to history. History is the house of vitality which, keeping in pace with the growth of the human-anthropocene, is always in growth. This vitality is essentially discontinuous and to be in history is to inherit the pauses and fissures of a discontinuity. Such an understanding of history is in sharp departure from the conventional and canonical rules of historiography, where the history of human is emphatically the history of progress. True history progresses, but not with the stagist gait of the traveler with a destination. It is instead the flâneur, strolling aimlessly, its foot retractable from the insignificant everyday. To historicise these footfalls and to chart a meaning out of it is to construct a Library of Babel, where the comprehended and the familiar is perennially haunted by the possibilities of an unrealized excess and this excess is where the real of history evades the historian and his/ her attempts of historicization.

What is the real that history supposedly contains? This thesis has not been able to arrive at a determinable inference, and in all possibilities, it has deliberately problematised the possibilities of determinability. On the contrary, the thesis has tried to hint at the poly-significant status that history acquires and the pluralities which can emerge as the real of history. The thesis has tried to disengage from any homogeneous and systematic ideal of history and has significantly attempted to nuance the real of history. In doing so, the thesis has argued that history is not characteristic of a real but a reality, which has discordant and distinct implications and does not necessarily abide by a homogeneous law of significance.

The thesis has tried to validate the many statures of History and has tried to unearth the many implications that the historic might contain. Hence, the basic premise of the thesis, i.e. History has been intentionally opened up, if only to explore the nuances that constitute its possible discursive paradigm. For each chapter, the essence of history has been different and this relative instability pertaining to the ontological stature of history has been both deliberate as well as dependent. Deliberate because, from the beginning the thesis has attempted to engage in comprehending the many significances which the signifier called History is likely to contain. Dependent, for the concerned chapters are attempted analyses of novels and since nothing exists outside the text, the plot and its profound limits have been the starting premise upon which the subsequent interpretive engagements have been made. The understanding of history has been different in each of these chapters for each of the novels represent history from a distinct perspective. For instance, in the immediate chapter following the Introduction, history becomes a site of contestation where History and history co-exist, i.e. the State advocated machinations of teleological History and the claim to history of the deviant subject inhabiting a subversive order of the lived. In the next chapter, history is more intimate and stripped off its ideological determinacy, it acquires the status of a lost time. This essence of loss that the historic contains is suggestive of an absence that the historically conscious subject aims to ritualise as a *presence in absentia* by preserving the traces of history that are contained in the relicsque status of objects. The following chapter presents us history as a messianic containment of the present which the historicized subject constantly engages with, within an interpretive economy, if only to explore the unmanifested potentials of the past. This interpretive engagement with the past, accord it an alternative historicity which can subsequently anticipate the present as contingent and synchronous and not as ahistoric and estranging. The final chapter returns to the understanding of ideological History but does not necessarily emphasize the tension between the ideological and the lived. Instead, it hints at the possibility of inhabiting the intersection of

the ideological and the lived and being indebted to both for constituting the historical consciousness of the self. This liminal stature of historical consciousness increasingly involves a transgression of the systematic validation of history and instead posits history as a discontinuous reality, which is devoid of any nominal significance of the real.

It is this essential understanding of history as the discontinuous and the ensuing departure from the usual obsession with the systematic and hermeneutic model of history which historiography endorses that validate the possibilities of alternative historiography in the novels. As the chapters have tried to argue, the four principle characters in the novels engage in the praxis of alternative historiography in their departure from the notional understanding of history as an inalterable and inert recorded debris of past. The significances that the historic acquires in the novels are different; they resemble each other in their refusal to adhere by the rudimentary understanding of history as a neutered and non-vital past. History is conceived within a polymorphic economy, suggesting the promise of an alternative engagement with history.

As the thesis has tried to substantiate, this alternative engagement with history has a curious resemblance with the poetics and performative of *flânerie*. The principle protagonists in the four chapters have a claim to *flânerie* in their wistful indulgences of straying, both within the cityscape and the conceptual pragmatics of logic, purpose and intent. The poet turned reporter strays off from the accurate reportage of incidents and entraps himself within poetry, the bourgeois Istanbulite rejects the good life of material culture and revises his understanding of materiality as a relic and not riches, the lawyer searching his lost wife ends up searching the city of memory and the memories of city, the boza seller trades his fortune in order to preserve the traces of ecstasies that are revealed in reminiscing the lived- which is otherwise marginalized in the material milieu of modernity. For all these correspondents, the present and the material manifestation of the present (apparent events, occurrences and incidents) hold little

significance. Their only signification rests in containing a meaning; an ecstasy that has always been a preoccupation of/for the flâneur. More so, all these flâneurs are able to co-habit the ambiguous, the paradoxical and the contradictory. They are both in and out of the locational, the empirical-material, the hermeneutic and most importantly the ontic. This habit of co-habitation, as has been argued throughout the thesis, is essentially the characteristic feature of the flâneur.

To co-habit is also to belong within the paradoxes and nuances that constitute history. History in the eyes of critical philosophy, as the thesis has substantiated, ceases to be a discourse that can be objectively rendered through the limited approach of an objective hermeneutics. Instead, it is conceptualized as a profoundly fertile and poignant site of contestations and exigencies, of limits and limitlessness, of fact and interpretation, of scientism and imagination, which contribute to the plasticity of history. Ranjan Ghosh observes that history, in the lights of critical philosophy, acquired the ambiguous disposition of “certainty and unpredictability, revisionism and relativity” and transformed into a site of “discord” (*Lover’s Quarrel* 2). This “discord” was fundamental to “history’s professed aim to tell truths about the past” (2). The truth of history (the real) appears deferred and probably absent, what is present instead is the possible claim to truth (reality) which in turn is not a singular but is affected by plurality. The possible claim is construed, developed, intervened, interpreted and realized; it barely sustains as pre-discursive and uncontaminated. To be within history is then to be aware of the nuances that history contains and realize that there are other realizations which remain unrealized but cannot be denied as unhistoric. Such realizations do not just pertain to the meaning of history, they are equally apprehensive of the claim to history that the present posits. What becomes history? Only that which has occurred or even the non-occurring? Can tracing the non-occurrence within the occurred enable us to revise history’s claim and the claim to history?

Presumably, there is no real resolution to this dialogue of doubt. However, this doubt is suggestive of a profound skepticism, an overlap where the flâneur meets the alternative historiographer. Both of them are intensely aware of the limits of empirical and the apparent. For both these personas the excess is the essence and both of them are concerned not with the trajectories of consistency but the discontinuous. To both, the experiential is fundamental but inadequate and both revel in introspection and interpretation of the experienced and the sensed. The sensory and the apparent are premises which host and do not contain or limit the experiential significance that can be derived. The meaning is subjective and yet both of them are ready to nuance their subjective with an increasing consideration of the other. The experiential and the interpretive do not lay a claim to singularity, it is increasingly juxtaposed by a recognition of other validations of experience and experience of the other. The other is the excess; the self is the curious overlap of flâneur-alternative historiographer, perpetually haunted by the urge of self-effacement to furnish other realizations of realities, but never the real.

The circle winds up, in the beginning is the end. There is Dedalus walking along the Irish sea shores, insulating himself from “the ineluctable modality of the visible” (Joyce 33): in other words, the empirical, and speculating— trying to see the unseen, trying to hear the unheard, trying to speculate that form which the arriving is yet to take. What he reconciles with instead is a heap of broken images, the rudimentary remembrances of childhood, those little insignificances which have so long lingered unrealized. He feels “at one with one who once...” (Joyce 36)

Apostrophes replace being and Dedalus fails to arrive at his material destination, the house of Aunt Sara. He has however arrived at that crucial overlap where sense is procured in a suspension of sensory, where realization and reality are liberated from the tyranny of the

material and nominal real and where past and the present are co-habited simultaneities, none identified and determined in distinction from the other.

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In the Aura of Objects: flanerier, remembrance and de-subjectification in *The Museum of Innocence*

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Abstract:

The present paper registers the aura of objects in Orhan Pamuk's celebrated novel *The Museum of Innocence*. In doing so, the paper substantiates Kemal, the lovelorn protagonist in the novel, as a flaneur who travels into unfamiliar habitations (both spatial and psychic) in search of an ecstasy that can be arguably called love. The paper argues that Kemal's turn towards flanerier involves a de-subjectification wherein his material order of the lived is increasingly nuanced by his consideration and experience of other material realities that exceed his familiar bourgeois world. Kemal in the novel is an upper class Istanbulli who falls in love with his half-cousin Fusun, a working class lady who is not as financially privileged as him. As the clandestine affair fails and Fusun deserts Kemal, the latter undergoes a rigorous process of de-subjectification. His complacent self-consciousness that has so long basked in the comforts of privilege and satiation is now opened up to nourish an awareness of the other world orders that exceed his own world of affluence. This transition towards an open is symbolised effectively in Kemal's altered consciousness of material objects. For him, the objects are no longer signifiers of cultural capital that are in correspondence with a commodity fetishism. Instead, they are embodiments of traces which are deeply affective and are intimate worlds of their own. The chapter explores this transformed consciousness of Kemal and substantiates him as a flaneur. By doing so, the chapter locates the flaneur as the open subject that is drawn towards the material but is also endowed with an ability to engage with the material beyond the regimented practices of material culture and the limits of lived reality.

Keywords: material culture, flaneur, commodity fetish, surplus, desubjectification.

In one of his rather personal essays, which is not devoid of the characteristic philosophical introspections, titled "Unpacking My Library" Walter Benjamin observes that the art of collection acquits the collected (i.e. the objects which constitute the collected) an afterlife. This afterlife is profoundly non-utilitarian and impregnates the object with a significance that is trans-material in essence. What is further interesting in Benjamin's contention is that the trans-material is not limited to the realm of the object alone. Instead, it places the collector in a dubious subject position. Benjamin opines

"...there is in the life of a collector a dialectical tension between the poles of disorder and order. Naturally his existence is tied to...a relationship to objects which does not emphasize their functional, utilitarian value—that is their usefulness but studies and loves them as the scene, the stage, of their fate...One has only to watch a collector handle the objects in his glass case. As he holds them in his hands, he seems to be seeing through them into their distant past as though inspired." (Benjamin, 1969, p. 61)

The revealed past is not a mere consciousness for the collector, it is also occasionally (often problematically) interspersed with the lived reality of the collector. The object is not a mere materiality that is collected, on the contrary, it often becomes a world that is founded on the entropy of memory and which is capable of hosting the lived or the performance of the lived. Benjamin reflects that the collector collects to "renew the old world" (ibid.) and this renewed world is founded on a hermeneutics of familiarity.

The Benjaminian notion of the object as the world is a preoccupation in his epistemic and literary oeuvre and later criticism of Benjamin has systematically unfolded this notion of the object as an impregnated microcosm which bears the trace of an event in its, rather anachronistic, essence. Alison Ross, in her reading of Benjamin's seminal work *The Arcades Project* observes

"...The Arcades presupposes the idea...that there is a meaning potential lodged in things that is able to redeem the past." (Ross, 2015, p. 8) The meaning is the significance that the object holds. In containing a connotation, the object refutes material containment. It is rather a fertile and trans-material entity that acquires the stature of an image. For Benjamin, the image is "that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation." (Benjamin, 1999, p. 462) It is in this duality of essence that the object turns into an image. It is no longer the material that holds significance in terms of its use value. On the contrary, it is haunted by a surplus significance that exceeds the nominal. In this co-habitation of the material and the surplus the object often transforms into an image.



The flaneur, a predominant archetype in the urban cultural modernity, presupposes the design of an excess which is liminal and latent to the material order of an objective reality. In other words, the flaneur is endowed with an aesthetic and epistemic insight that increasingly recognises the immanent as unevadable yet incomplete. For the flaneur, the material-nominal order of apparent reality is not the essence of reality. The essence is instead located beneath-beyond the empirico-material world of forms. Bruce Mazlish, pondering upon the flaneur's take on reality observes "Reality is not something tangible, out there; it is a perception, by the painter of modern life (the flaneur). In the end, the flaneur's vision of life, based on his peripatetic observations, creates reality." (Mazlish, 1994, p. 53) Charles Baudelaire, the progenitor of the flaneur, describes him as the "solitary mortal endowed with an active imagination" (Baudelaire, 2010, p.17) who is always looking deep into the material order of objective reality to trace the "eternal from the transitory". (ibid. 18) Hence, the rampant fluidity of the object dominated exterior does not necessarily perturb the flaneur. He is, on the contrary, in possession of a critical and aesthetic prudence that enable him to look beyond the contingent and trace the essence that rests beyond the limits of the nominal and the empirical. Bruce Mazlish observes that the flaneur is essentially engaged in a "quest" (Mazlish, 1994, p.69) where "...commodities...must be examined for their hidden 'truth' and essence." (ibid.)

In Orhan Pamuk's celebrated novel *The Museum of Innocence* the 'hidden truth' and 'essence' of objects acquire a seminal importance. The novel charts the fate of Kemal, an upper class bourgeoisie subject based on Istanbul, as he desperately falls in love with his cousin Fusun and is subjected to a state of alienation and despair. The novel delves into profound questions of futility, loss and an existential agony which constantly posits the self in a sterile state of barrenness and nihilism. Simultaneously, with constant allusions to a class conscious and hierarchically designed Turkish social life that is deeply influenced by material culture, the novel explores the rather problematic relationship between the human and the material world. It unfurls an interdependency where the intimate essence of human affection finds form in a material ambit of expression and the material deeply influences sacrosanct and irreducible affections and constituents of agency like memory, love, desire. The human is not the precedent who overrules and dominates the material as the master of a medium. Rather, unambiguously, he/ she is also vulnerably subjected to the rigours of the

material that considerably influences the more intimate and singular performances of being.

As such, material culture and the world of objects occupy a prominence in the novel. In a personal essay titled "Museums and Novels" Orhan Pamuk remonstrates how the world of objects had been fundamental to his narrative design. Pamuk observes that he "was looking for objects that could have been used by the fictitious family whom I imagined to be living in the old house from 1975 to 1984, and who were the focus of my novel." (Pamuk, 2010(a), p.121) As such, he was "imagining situations, moments and scenes suited to these objects, many of which...I had bought on impulse." (ibid) Pamuk reconciles his readers with this object-oriented-world that dominates the narrative limits of the novel as he observes

"...I wrote my novel *The Museum of Innocence*—by finding, studying and describing objects that inspired me. Or sometimes by doing precisely the opposite: trolling the shops for objects that the novel required, or having them made to order by artists and craftsmen." (Ibid. 122)

The relevance of the objects in the novel is not just an accompanying trait of the plot. It is rather, more inseparably, associated to the formative process of the narrative.

As such, the world of objects acquires a principle focus from the very beginning in the novel. Kemal is engaged to Sibel and in one of their lovewalks together, they come across a 'beautiful bag' which Kemal purchases for his beloved in the following day. As he confesses, "...I had never been one of those suave, chivalrous playboys always looking for the least excuse to buy women presents or send them flowers, though perhaps I longed to be one" (Pamuk, 2010(b), 4), the readers are acquainted to the world of commodity culture where objects function as significant imperatives that mould, frame and formulate the performance of being. In this commodified order of existence, objects cease to possess a mere use value. Instead, they contain the entropy of a surplus that pertains to the greater design of class and social hierarchy. Hence, an association with the object and its aura conditions and legitimises the social identity of the self. Kemal, the first person narrator, hints at this intricate relationship between object and social life as he observes

"In those days, bored Westernized housewives of the affluent neighborhoods like Sisli, Nisantasi and Bebek did not open "art galleries" but boutiques, and stocked them with trinkets and whole ensembles smuggled in luggage from Paris and



Milan, or copies of “the latest” dresses featured in imported magazines like *Elle* and *Vogue*, selling those goods at ridiculously inflated prices to other rich housewives who were as bored as they are.” (Ibid)

The interspersed of commodity and subjectivity, which is otherwise an inherent characteristic of modernity, is prominent in the novel. Hence, most of the characters exist in a world that is overtly determined and regulated by a principle of possession. Self-validation is correspondent with possession, to be happy is to exist in complacency where all that is desired is successfully possessed. Kemal desires Fusun whom he meets in the process of purchasing the Jenny Colon bag (which turns out to be an imitation) and very soon he is haunted by an irresistible urge to possess her

“To touch her body and her lovely long arms, to feel her breasts pressed against my chest, to hold her like that, if only for a moment, made my head spin: Perhaps it was because I was trying to repress the desire, more intense each time I touched her, that I conjured up this illusion that we had known each other for years, that we were already very close.” (Ibid. 21)

Kemal is aware of the discord that such primordial desire for possession involves. What constitutes the nuance of desire is not its instinctive stature. Rather, the peril rests in the reduction of Fusun to a commodity and object, ready to surrender to the whimsies of the gaze of the patriarch-predator turned consumer. What follows is a profusely imbalanced exchange between the subject and the object of desire where the agency of the latter is eroded by the former.

“With a look to suggest that men, alas, were all alike, she cast her eyes around the room one last time...She had sized up the situation, but I—perhaps out of shame—could think of no way to keep the game going.” (Ibid. 30)

The ‘game’ is nonetheless played and the victorious Kemal is able to defeat Fusun’s self-restraint and eventually consummates his professed love. What seems amoral is Kemal’s desire to keep the clandestine affair a secret and to seek a fine balance between his marriage to Sibel and his desire for Fusun.

Yet, such a delicate balance fails and in this failure rests the possibility of the birth of the flâneur. As he risks his stable and grounded position of being for the precarity of desire turned love, the materiality of the mundane acquires a significance. The mundane and the insignificant refuses to stay so for Kemal. Instead, hairpins, earrings and such

other trivialities acquire the status of relics. Within an economy of memory, the objects which bear a trace of his lost love Fusun become precious possessions (relics) for Kemal. What marks Kemal in departure from the consumer class obsessed in a principle of possession is this rather reversed consciousness of the precious. As Kemal engages in relic hunting in the novel, a growing change in his consciousness is rendered visible. He subjects himself to a precarious state of being where the material order of existence that pertains to the immanence of reality is redundant. What is more cherishable is a deep association with and possession of objects which are associated with the more intimate considerations of memory.

“Sure enough, these things that Fusun had touched, these objects that had made her who she was— as I caressed them, and gazed at them, and stroked them against my shoulders, my bare chest, and my abdomen—released their analgesic and soothed my soul.” (Ibid. 255)

Kemal, the protagonist in the novel, possesses this nuanced relationship with the order of the material. The materials that he possesses are symptoms that deeply reveal before him not the usual fetish that is characteristic to cultures of consumerism and capitalism. Instead, they are materialised performatives of possession which increasingly cherish an absence and a dispossession. The presence of the material is synonymous with an indulgence of the absence of his beloved Fusun. Fusun, at a crucial juncture in the novel, reflects upon the prominence of objects in the constrained and relational world order of the anthropocene. Pondering upon the relevance of objects in an anthropocentric purview, Fusun observes

“When we lose people we love, we should never disturb their souls, whether living or dead. Instead, we should find consolation in an object that reminds you of them, something...I don’t know...even an earring.” (Ibid. 195)

Suspending its own material essence, the object is suggestive of an after-life. This after-life is not premised upon a metaphysics of presence. Instead, the materialities of presence give way to an absence and it is the essence of absence that determines and subsequently overrides the considerations of materiality. The possessed materiality is suggestive of an essential absence which exceeds the material order and it is in Kemal’s relentless perusal and preservation of the relic that the absence in turn materialises itself. The material history of the object turned commodity and its phenomenology of presence only provokes a consciousness of absence. Kemal’s possession of



the object locates the material-corporeal within a surplus that is in turn, curiously suggestive of a lack/ absence.

The objects are suggestive of an absence; the very peril of non-being of the other which has in turn jeopardised Kemal's own complacency of being. It is this phenomenal essence of absence which is deeply intertwined with Kemal's consciousness as he pines for his lost love Fusun through the city streets, frequenting the backyards and shanties of Istanbul. In this gradual expedition through the urban paradigm of Istanbul, Kemal encounters the spectre of Fusun. This spectral presence of Fusun acquires significance for they are tropes through which the self indulges in an awareness of that which constitute the material-empirical order of reality but is alien to the self's consciousness of the real. In other words, the chronotope of Istanbul in the novel is not merely pre-ontic to the self in terms of temporality. They are also perpetual inequilibriums, distant from the familiarity of the self. Although temporally contemporaneous with being of the self, the urban paradigm and its diversities are suggestive of other manifestations, which are otherwise outside the myopic and regimented order of the familiar and the lived. The absence of Fusun, who was once a component of the familiar order of Kemal, now compels him to un-self his historicised and formulated consciousness of being. The absence of Fusun is an essential lack that endows the ontic with a desire for the excess, an urge to consider that which is not the already incorporated within the familiar. Kemal observes

"...and so I began to frequent those crowded places where I might see her ghost, and eventually I would mark these places, too, on my mental map of Istanbul. Those places where her ghosts had appeared most often were the ones where I was most regularly to be found. Istanbul was now a galaxy of signs that reminded me of her." (Ibid. 229)

This urge for the unfamiliar and the subsequent indulgence of other 'real's which exceed the familiar is characteristic of the flaneur. While Kemal's flaneur consciousness has been suggested in his ability to look into the nominal and the objective outside the perceived understanding of the material, ever apprehensive of an excess and a surplus, his performative of flanerie begins with an urge to hunt and in turn be haunted, by the spectral presence of Fusun. Fusun is the embodiment of the ecstasy which Kemal the flaneur seeks in his relentless quest of the cityscape. This journey is not limited to a topological confinement where the city

is validated as a mere locational paradigm. Instead, Kemal's exploration of the urban heteropolis constitutes a consciousness of the other temporalities, those backstreets of modernity composed of "...poor neighborhoods, with their empty lots, their muddy cobblestone streets, their cars, rubbish bins, and sidewalks, and the children playing with a half-inflated football under the streetlamps." (ibid. 293)

Thus, Kemal seeks the presence of the other in materialities which exceed his empirico-historical consciousness of co-habitation. They do not pertain to his own material reality of being. Neither are they conscious and confirm relics containing the traces of the other. Rather, they are apprehensions which are possible embodiments which might emerge with a revelation of the absent.

"As I walked these streets, it was as if I was seeking out my own center. As I meandered drunkenly up and down these narrow ways, the muddy hills and curving alleys that turned abruptly into steps, the world would suddenly seem uninhabited except by dog, and a chill would pass through me, and I would gaze admiringly at the yellow lamplight filtering through drawn curtains, the thin funnels of blue smoke rising from chimneys, the reflected glow of televisions in windows and shop fronts." (Ibid.)

The 'center' for Kemal is no longer the habited and the familiar world of elite Istanbul. It is now drenched in the material order of other histories where his intersubjective other Fusun lives. His childhood friend Zaim's stories about the extravagant bourgeoisie world cannot draw him away from the more enthralling habitations of the other which he has now started to experience. It is through flanerie that Kemal transgresses and subsequently transcends the usual premises of the habited and lived, only to live the habitations of the other. "Convinced that Fusun was somewhere nearby" (ibid. 290) Kemal spends "more time walking through these streets" (ibid. 291) and drinking tea in the "poor neighborhoods of the old city". (ibid. 290) These performatives, saturated with the "need to live more like them" (ibid.), i.e. like Fusun's family, are attempts to get closer to Fusun and cherish the intimacy of the other. The other is no longer conceptualised and traced from the privileged and undisputed position of subjectivity. Instead, the self is ready to peril his own being in order to trace the other. It is in this ever-persistent urge to de-subjectify the self in priority of an aura of the other which marks Kemal as the flaneur. For Kemal, the material of memory and the lived contributes to a trans-material



understanding of matter as Kemal unlearns objects as easy possessions and considers them as relics. Yet, his praxis of flanerie also entails in his more pervasive attempt to live a non-habituated life, the remembrance of Fusun is now complemented by the experience of the unfamiliar. This unfamiliar is not just the excess which exceeds the habitual order of the subject. It is an excess to the primary considerations of remembrance and memory. The ontological singularity of the self that is

inextricably associated with the experiential is compromised for a heterogeneity which is only suggestive, speculative and pertains to a non-empirical reality. Thus, Kemal engages in an act of flanerie which involves not a consolidation of consciousness by the authentication of memory and remembrance. Instead, his transition into the flaneur is accompanied by a rigorous de-subjectification.

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Between Old and New: Flanerie at the Limits of Modernity in Orhan Pamuk's *A Strangeness in My Mind*

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Abstract

The present chapter locates the flaneur in the tension of tradition and modernity in the seminal novel *A Strangeness in My Mind* by the Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk. The flaneur is a predominant archetype in the literary and cultural imaginary of Modernism. As such, rather unsurprisingly, the flaneur plays a significant role in the subsequent explorations of the salient traits, juxtapositions and the nuances that constitute the event of modernity. The evaluation of modernity often involves an inevitable exploration of the performance and essence (often inseparable) of flanerie. The present paper proposes to explore this interspersed relationship between flanerie and modernity through a strategic reading of the novel. The chapter will substantiate Mevlut, the boza seller protagonist in the novel, as a flaneur who is the embodiment of Turkish modernity. The chapter will argue that the perpetual status of Mevlut as a hyphenated self who is characterised by the interplay of apprehension-appreciation and is unconditionally hospitable to the contingency of the temporal-spatial substantiate him as the flaneur in the novel. In doing so, the chapter will also identify the essence of Turkish modernity and will locate it in departure from the unanimous notional conjecture of modernity as progress.

Keywords: Modernity, Flaneur, Material-lived, Dasein, Liminal.

The form of a city

Changes faster, alas! Than the human heart.

Charles Baudelaire, "The Swan".

Modernity apparently trails with a presumed aura of newness; to be modern is to suggest, almost pre-conditionally, that there is a difference or departure from that which is the archaic, the stable, the established—that which one can half-convincingly categorise as tradition. Hence, tradition and modernity are often interrelated yet opposed considerations/ conditions where the suggestive material trace of the one assumes the absence of the other. To be modern is to exist in a state of autonomy where the eclipse of history does not haunt the solstice of the present. Modernity is a valorization of the 'now' of present against the archaic time of history. Jurgen Habermas, one of the celebrated thinkers of the Modern age who explores the nuances of the condition of modernity, observes

"Individual epochs lose their distinct forces. Historical memory is replaced by the heroic affinity of the present with the extremes of history—a sense of time wherein decadence immediately recognizes itself in the barbaric, the wild and the primitive. We observe the anarchistic intention of blowing up the continuum of history...Modernity revolts against the normalizing functions of tradition; modernity lives on the experience of rebelling against all that is normative." (Habermas 5)

Habermas's contention of modernity does not just substantiate the modern as an epoch that is the arch-other of tradition. What is further suggested is an inaccurate representation of the past/ tradition that modernity accomplishes through a strategic essentialism. In Habermas's opinion, this is done with the vested intention of augmenting the

modern as an unprecedented state of exception. The modern self-referentially claims for itself the state of an indisputable apex of progress.

This self-referential claim to progress is substantiated and often validated by the techno-industrial material climate of modernity. With the rise of scientific rationalism and the outbreak of industrial capitalism, modernity acquired a perceivable disposition. The landscape of modernity was easily recognizable and Marshall Berman describes it thus “This is a landscape of steam engines, automatic factories, railroads, vast new industrial zones; of teeming cities that have grown overnight, often with dreadful human consequences; of daily newspapers, telegraphs, telephones and other mass media, communicating on an ever wider scale; of increasingly strong national states and multinational aggregations of capital; of mass social movements fighting these modernizations from above with their own modes of modernization from below; of an ever-expanding world market embracing all, capable of the most spectacular growth, capable of appalling waste and devastation, capable of everything except solidity and stability.” (Berman 19)

While the early attributes in this rather elongated description of modernity constitute its material form, the latter is suggestive of the essence. We will engage with the latter in due course as we topicalise our study in context of a non-European politico-social culture like Turkey. Let us, for the time being, concern ourselves with the material world of modernity. For this, we prefer to emphasise the phrase ‘teeming cities’ that essentially identify modernity as a typically urban phenomenon. Or, to be more precise and accurate, the aspect of the urban is inextricably associated with the origins of modernity.

Although cities are not essential misnomers in history, what distinguishes them in the era of the modern is their urban disposition. The condition of urbanity is often considered as a typical phenomenon of nineteenth century when the agrarian modes of production underwent a substantial transition into industrial, leading to a demographic shift towards the

metropolitan from the countryside. Kingsley Davis opines that the emergence of a “revolutionary new form of production—the factory run by machinery and fossil fuel” (Davis 433) led to a “transformation” that can be regarded as “the true urban revolution, for it meant not only the rise of a few scattered towns and cities but the appearance of a genuine urbanization, in the sense that a substantial portion of the population now lived in towns and cities.” (ibid.) Davis identifies urbanisation as “a product of basic economic and technological developments” (ibid. 429) and the nineteenth century as the epoch of “urban revolution” (ibid. 433). The condition of urbanity thus becomes synonymous with the politico- social and cultural climate of the nineteenth century and the same is often presumed to be the age of metropolitan urbanity, i.e., the age of cities.

In his Introduction to the *The Flaneur*, a seminal anthology which interrogates this predominant literary-cultural archetype in varied contexts, Keith Tester observes “Flanerie, the activity of strolling and looking which is carried out by the flaneur, is a recurring motif in the literature, sociology and the art of urban, and most especially of the metropolitan, existence.” (Tester 1) Hence, the urban condition is a predisposition to the flaneur and in his seminal essay “The Painter of Modern Life” Charles Pierre Baudelaire describes him as a “man of the crowd.”(Baudelaire 13) The crowd for Baudelaire is not just a demographic entity. Instead the dissoluting multitude and the “ebb and the flow” (ibid. 15) is only the materialised enactment of the innate discontinuity and the fluidity that one identifies as modernity. To be modern is to be at home in this high flux of the urban which Baudelaire describes as the “enormous reservoir of electricity”. (ibid.) Being at home in this changing discontinuous of modernity involves a possible reclamation of an element of essence from the fluctuating. For Baudelaire “the transient, the fleeting and the contingent” (ibid. 18) constitute the immanence of the modern. Nevertheless, the experience of the modern is not essentially limited to the fragmented discontinuous and is not devoid of any intimations of the

transcendence. There is an-other half truth that constitutes the hemisphere of modernity. Baudelaire's painter of modern life, whom later scholars have identified as the flaneur (not without nuances though, for instance Michel Foucault refutes the strategic coherence/correspondence between flaneur and the painter of modern life. Foucault thinks the two to be distinct and differs from the canonical readings of Baudelaire by thinkers like Walter Benjamin), is in quest of this other half- that excess which lingers beneath the immanent material order of modernity. Impregnated with an urge for the excess, the flaneur attempts "to distil the eternal from the transitory." (ibid. 17-18)

Baudelaire's further ponderings on the flaneur (a substantial evaluation of it is beyond the scope of the present paper) locate him as a hyphen subject who is the embodiment of transition. In his home in the crowd, in his perennial pursuit of the significance that is contained in the insignificances of the everyday (one can refer to Michel de Certeau's *Practice in Everyday Life*) and above all, in his preoccupation with an excess that exceeds the nominal enterprises of the material-familial, the flaneur earns for himself the status of liminality. In the words of Walter Benjamin, the sense of being "out of place" (Benjamin 188) is fundamental to flanerie. What is paradoxical is the suggestion that the flaneur is at home in this essential state of out of place. His "composure" (ibid) rests in the state of being unhomed where he is exposed to the precarious state of placelessness. Referring to Allen Poe's short story which is also referred by Baudelaire, Benjamin sets up an essential distinction between the man of the crowd and the flaneur in his revisionist ponderings on the flaneur and flanerie.

"Baudelaire was moved to equate the man of the crowd, whom Poe's narrator follows throughout the length and breadth of nocturnal London with the flaneur. It is hard to accept this view. The man of the crowd is no flaneur. In him composure has given way to manic

behavior. He exemplifies, rather what had to become of the flaneur after the latter was deprived of the milieu to which he belonged.” (Ibid)

In contrast with the maniac who lacks composure, Benjamin sets up the flaneur who “demanded elbow room and was unwilling to forgo the life of a gentleman of leisure.” (ibid) Benjamin observes that the “man of leisure can indulge in the perambulations of the flaneur only if as such he is already out of place.” (ibid) The flaneur, for Benjamin, acquires his ‘composure’ in his place of ‘placelessness’.

Modernity and its impersonation (the flaneur) are hence both characteristic of a precarity that is marked by nuance, paradox and ambiguity. What is characteristically modern is not appropriable through easy decipherments. Instead, they are marked by a characteristic spin on the head, a self-contrast that is never in adherence with the quintessential narrative of progress. The grand narrative of progress and the material manifestation of the technocratic that is often mistaken as not a predicament but as modernity, i.e. the essence of modernity, is suggestive of a critical myopia. An understanding of modernity demands an epistemic or critical endeavour to look beyond the matter/ form of modernity into the essence. Only then the liminal finesse of modernity is unveiled which reveals the modern condition as the state of perpetual statelessness.

The march of material modernity into the politico-social-cultural climate of the third world, which has recently been re-categorised as the Global South, is marked by a characteristic glitch. The advent of modernity in non-Europe is intimately tied to the more pertinent and historic socio-political considerations like imperialism, colonialism, secular Nationalism, political sovereignty, among others. Hence, the precarious hyphenation which marks the essence of modernity is only intensified when one takes into consideration the history of modernity in the non-European Orient. Partho Chatterjee, in his discussion on the nature of modernity in the context of a non-European culture, observes “that there cannot be

just one modernity irrespective of geography, time, environment or social conditions...true modernity consists in determining the particular forms of modernity that are suitable in particular circumstances; that is, applying the methods of reason to identify or invent specific technologies of modernity that are appropriate for our purposes...by teaching us to employ the methods of reason.” (Chatterjee 8-9) Such a topical modernity is characteristic of a hybridity where the strains of a global modern epoch is infused with more indigenous elements of culture.

This infusion is often marked by a tension and the co-existence of the global and the local is not often a happy co-habitation. This is specifically foreseen in the conflict between scientific rationalism and faith, progress and tradition and secularism and religion, industrial technocratization and the agrarian modes of production. Turkey, geo-politically located in the hyphen between West and the East, is not unfamiliar to this perpetual tension that characterises the milieu of modernity in the non-West. Alev Cinar ponders upon this climate of conflict as she observes

“...modernity is made possible by the defamation of the present. Suddenly diverse practices, customs, values, styles, and forms that have been in practice at their own pace are framed, labeled, and defamed as backward, traditional, inefficient, irrational, primitive, or corrupt and decomposed, against which the ideals of modernity can be articulated and the modern-subject can be oriented.” (Cinar 23)

Cinar’s notion of the present is not suggestive of a mere temporality. Instead, the present is a signifier of the elemental everyday which is profoundly absorbed in tradition, that which constitutes the intimate historicity of the self. Hence, the experience of Turkish modernity involves a constant effacement of the past and all that constitutes the discursive contingencies of the face of tradition. To be a Turk, as Soner Cagaptay observes, “can be a puzzling phenomenon” (Cagaptay 1) where irreducible considerations of tradition (in form of

ethnic and religious practices) constantly intervene into the State advocacies of a secular model of identity. The ‘Turkish’ essence, in the milieu of modernity, is hence constantly interspersed by the perpetual tension between tradition and the unfamiliar, nativism and novelty, faith and reason.

Orhan Pamuk, the Nobel laureate of 2006 and the celebrated Turkish author, explores this problematic disposition of Turkish modernity in his seminal literary endeavors. His engagement with these subtlet nuances that constitute Turkish modernity and identity is explicit in his ficto-critical memoir *Istanbul* where the cultural paradoxes and the liminal counters of exchange where modernity and heritage co-habit are explored in the authorial reminiscences of his growth with-in the city. Simultaneously, the memoir is also suggestive of his life-long engagement with Istanbul, his city of birth and childhood which he carries in his closet of thought and consciousness. In his memoir, Pamuk writes

“Conrad, Nobokov, Naipaul—these are writers known for having managed to migrate between languages, cultures, countries, continents, even civilisations. Their imaginations were fed by exile, a nourishment drawn not through roots but through rootlessness; mine, however, requires that I stay in the same city, on the same street, in the same house, gazing at the same view. Istanbul’s fate is my fate: I am attached to the city because it has made me who I am.” (Pamuk 2006: 6)

As such, Pamuk finds home (for his childhood is inseparably attached with the everyday atmospherics of Istanbul) in the various heterogeneous elements and aspects that constitute the citysphere and include the “evenings when the sun sets early...the empty bathhouses of the old Bosphorus villas...the crowds of men fishing from the sides of the Galata bridge...the beggars who accost you in the least likely places and those who stand in the same spot uttering the same appeal every day...the crowds of men smoking cigarettes after the national football matches...” (ibid. 87-89) What is suggested in this vivid and

detailed description of the Turkish everyday is a flaneur like gaze which unfurls the urban sphere in its totality. Hence, the very praxis turned poesis of flanerie is not alien to Pamuk's pragmatics of literary representation. Instead, it is very much a constituent of his aesthetic indulgences and is often elementary to his fictional ponderings.

The present chapter locates the trope of flanerie in Pamuk's seminal novel *A Strangeness in My Mind*. Published in 2014, the novel deals with the "Adventures and Dreams of Mevlut Karatas" and simultaneously portrays 'Life in Istanbul...from Many Different Points of View.' Mevlut in the novel is a boza seller who wanders around the nocturnal climate of Istanbul ferrying boza. Hence, flanerie is inseparable from Mevlut's performance of being. Yet, as the paper argues, flanerie in the novel is not just restrained to performativity. It is not merely in the long nightwalks that Mevlut engages in through the cityscape which substantiates him as the flaneur. Instead, for Mevlut, it is also suggested in the more elementary considerations of the ontological, that which is suggestive of a Heideggerian Dasein. Heidegger's engagement with the question of Being (Dasein) locates it outside the limits of "comport" (Heidegger 33) and conduct. For Heidegger, being is associated/ affiliated to more pre-existential questions which are "pre-ontological" (ibid. 32). The dasein is not merely the performance; it is also the essence which precedes performance. For Heidegger, "Being lies in the fact that something is, and in its Being as it is; in Reality; in presence-at-hand; in subsistence; in validity, in Dasein; in the 'there is'." (ibid. 26)

Mevlut's lack of a consolidated claim to agency and consciousness and his discontinuous state of being exhibits a resemblance with the flaneur. The flaneur, as we have observed, is significantly characterised by the possibility of being in the liminal and the discontinuous and thus the contingent. Kieth Tester observes that "the figure of the flaneur" is characterised by its essential obsession with the "flux of life". (Tester 8) The flux, thus

conceptualised, is the spirit of modernity and it is in perfect resonance with the spirit of flanerie. Tester observes

“Flanerie can be understood as the observation of the fleeting and the transitory which is the other half of modernity to the permanent and central sense of the self. *Flanerie* is the *doing* through and thanks to which the *flaneur* hopes and believes he will be able to find the truth of his *being*. *Flanerie* also, then, is the way of avoiding arrival at the funeral pyre of *being*.” (Ibid. 7)

The avoidance of the ‘funeral pyre of being’ is significantly cultivated in the character of Mevlut, who constantly drifts across a facade of identities, engaging in a discontinuous state of being that is subjected to peripeteiac shifts. The very opening lines of the novel summarise this fluidity as the narrator states

“This is the story of the life and daydreams of Mevlut Karatas, a seller of boza and yoghurt...When he was twenty-five, he returned to the province of his birth, where he eloped with a village girl, a rather strange affair that determined the rest of his days: returning with her to Istanbul, he got married and had two daughters; he took a number of jobs without pause, selling his yoghurt, ice cream, and rice in the street and waiting tables. But every evening, without fail, he would wander the streets of Istanbul, selling boza and dreaming strange dreams.” (Pamuk 2015: 3)

In an interview organized by Politics and Prose, Orhan Pamuk reflected that he had originally conceptualized the novel as a short story based on the simple plot of a street vendor losing his job because of modernisation but later on decided to write an epic about a man who had covered this whole distance. The referred distance, in all probabilities, is a reference to the trajectory of modernity. The boza seller, as Pamuk remonstrates, was “mysterious...a poor man who had just come from rural Anatolia, selling things to secular upper middle class Istanbulus.” (Politics and Prose) Premised and habiting the overlap of the modern and non-

modern and hence two historical timelines the boza seller becomes the perfect face of the other of modernity, or 'other modernities'. His being is conceptually premised within a liminal order of discontinuity, he is 'neither and both' here and there. Much like the flaneur, he belongs in the perpetual verge of unbelonging.

Mevlut's perennial occupation as the boza seller marks him as an irreducibly liminal agency who inhabits the hyphen between tradition and modernity. For the increasingly urbanizing world of Istanbul, the boza seller is an embodiment of "centuries past, and the good old days that have come and gone." (Pamuk 2015: 18) Mevlut's performance of boza selling in the streets of Istanbul signifies him in the popular imaginary as "a living relic of the past that had now fallen out of fashion." (ibid. 23) This 'out of place'ness is a significant trait of flanerie.

Yet, to be out of place in an ever-growing milieu of modernity is suggestive of an anachronism which is not coherent with the archetype of the flaneur. Retrospections on the flaneur and flanerie begin with a pre-consideration that emphasise the flaneur as a typical subject of urban modernity. Modernity for the flaneur is not suggestive of a dystopia. On the contrary, the flaneur is typically enticed by the provocations of modernity. The suggestion that Mevlut as the boza seller is increasingly alienated by the advent of industrial modernism (hence the feeling of out of place) derides the present objective of substantiating him as the flaneur. What is rather suggested in Mevlut's out of placeness is his status of an impoverished subject who has lost his tread to fortune due to the impediment of modernity. In a dialogue with one of those families that would often make him feel "poor and out of place" (ibid.) and that asks if he is rich, Mevlut remarks:

"“I cannot say that I am... All the relatives that came with me from the village are rich now, but I guess it just wasn't meant to be for me.”" (Ibid. 24)

Hence, to locate Mevlut as the flaneur demands a deeper consideration of his engagement with modernity. To assume that his status of being out of place in the milieu of modernity substantiates him as the flaneur is suggestive of a critical myopia that refuses to take into consideration Mevlut's material reality of impoverishment.

Hence, to comprehend the traits of flanerie in Mevlut, it is indispensable to take into consideration his engagement with modernity. It is significant that the plot progression in the novel never happens in distinction from the progress of modernity. The novel charts the growth of Mevlut and, in doing so, takes into consideration the trajectory of modernity in Turkey. Mevlut grows in the climate of material modernity and like the representative modern subject, Mevlut depicts an unkempt desire for sovereignty. He is rather critical and subversive of the rigours and regulations of tradition and the institutional regimes of social governance. Here is an excerpt from the novel which that describes the fantasy turned desire quotient of an adolescent Mevlut.

“...he was twenty-one years old and he had never slept with a woman. A pretty girl with a headscarf and good morals, the kind he would like for a wife, would never sleep with him before they got married...His priority wasn't marriage anyway, but finding a kind woman he could hold and kiss, a woman he could have sex with. In his mind, he saw all these things as being separate from marriage, but apart from marriage, he found himself unable to obtain sexual contact.” (Ibid. 152)

Mevlut's 'priority' is not marriage, the institution that guides desire within a traditional patriarchal structure. Instead, he is driven towards the urge to indulge that which constitutes the primordial. Such an indulgence foregrounds an agency which is deeply sovereign and is simultaneously transgressive towards tradition. It is in this desire to transgress the regulative that Mevlut becomes an embodiment of the essence of modernity. He is striving for modernity in spirit.

While the spirit of transgression finds materialisation in Mevlut's decision to marry without the consent of the Father (the impersonation of tradition), the event of marriage arrives as an estrangement. The much desired elopement that is the climactic culmination of Mevlut's urge to transgress, subjects him to a momentary dystopia. As Mevlut shuts the door of the van where now sits his desired love Rayiha, he realises that the girl with whom he had fallen in love is not the one who has eloped with him. As is soon revealed, Mevlut has been subjected to a terrible deceit. While all this while he has desired Rayiha and promised her his love in carefully performed letters, while all this while Mevlut has dreamt of a life of ecstasy and contentment in the arms of his beloved, while all this while Mevlut has been haunted by those pair of eyes which he had seen in the marriage of his cousin Korkut (which he had attended against the will of the Father and thus 'tradition'), he is now estranged to realise that Rayiha is not the woman who had set flames to his heart. Instead, those pair of eyes belonged to Rayiha's sister Samiha and the Rayiha that Mevlut had conceptualised in his indulgences and performances of love is not the Rayiha who is now an inhabitant of the world. Between the conceived and the material has fallen an unerasable shadow.

To live in this shadow between the promised and the materialised is the precarious fate of the non-Western man inhabiting the milieu of modernity. For him, the arrival of modernity is a promise of novelty. In it lies the promise of change which can essentially open the doors of the stagnated politico-cultural to a radical appeal of progress. However, once arrived, the modern bears an unfamiliar disposition, often bearing a stark contrast with the intimate everyday and the familiar. The response to modernity thus appears binary patterned. One can either reject the unfamiliar and live in tradition or else recognise the unfamiliar as a unanimous truth and engage in mechanised revelry of the alien as the lived.

Mevlut in the novel chooses neither but curiously inhabits the ecstasy of the estranged. While at the realm of the personal he refabricates his desire and rekindles his love

with Rayiha, at the more manifested realm of the modern, he chooses to be the liminal subject who has internalised the discontinuum of modernity. The estrangement of modernity does not necessarily lead him to an absolute rejection of modernity and an unconditional obsession with the non-modern inertia of tradition. Simultaneously, Mevlut is not completely obsessed with the materiality of novelty that modernisation seems to advocate. In his walks through the cityscape, Mevlut realises that “old things” (ibid. 391) made him “feel good”. (ibid.) Mevlut thus occupies a curiously singular and sovereign position in his engagement with modernity. He is in pace with the flux of the modern. Yet, he is not completely absorbed by it. Hence, like the Baudelairean flaneur, Mevlut is able to look beyond the nominal and the materiality of the apparent for a deeper truth. The city for him emerges as a system of signs that hold a secretive index to an alternative truth, that which is revealed only in a state of hyphenation and estrangement. Mevlut has internalised modernity, but not as a grand ideologue of progress. Instead, it is an internalisation that is able to decipher the essence of flux and respond to the discontinuous and the evolving. This internalisation does not necessarily suggest that Mevlut is an empty subject without a residual sense of agency. Instead, he is profoundly appealed by memory that sustains as the underlayered essence that is eternal and sovereign from the flux of change. Simultaneously, however, he is not contained within the familiar solace of past, memory and tradition. Instead, he curiously infuses the new and the old, the discontinuous and the underlying continuous and it is thus that he claims for himself the status of the flaneur who is the subject in transition without determination.

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