

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.

I thank the tough school master JS, Dr.Jaydip Sarkar, for being my moral conscience and ensuring that I never lost my path in the whirlwind of distractions. His constant but caring vigils have brought out the most of perseverance from a laid-back and carefree soul like me.

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?