

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 transfixed 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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