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Gendered Turkishness in Everyday Istanbul Through Elif Shafak’s and Orhan Pamuk’s Literature from an Aesthetic, Feminist, and Sociocultural Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This Comparative Literature dissertation delves into the portrayal of Turkish identity, particularly through the lens of gender, as depicted in the Elif Shafak’s and Orhan Pamuk’s contemporary novels. Through a multilayered analytical approach encompassing aesthetic, feminist, and socio-cultural frameworks, I investigate how Shafak and Pamuk illuminate notions of identity within Turkey by focusing on the intricate panorama of everyday life in Istanbul, and the distinctive experiences of men and women within the city. The chosen novels for this study include *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, *A Strangeness in My Mind*, *The Black Book*, and *The Museum of Innocence* from Orhan Pamuk, and *The Bastard of Istanbul*, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World*, *The Flea Palace*, and *Three Daughters of Eve* from Elif Shafak. Through a meticulous examination of these texts, in this dissertation I endeavor to uncover the unique literary approaches adopted by Shafak and Pamuk in reshaping the discourse surrounding Turkish identity. Central to this exploration is the recontextualization of mundane yet significant moments from everyday life in Istanbul, highlighting the gendered dimensions of perception, gaze, and bodily experiences.

My research underlines how these novels become an archive of complex vignettes that reflect the multifaceted nature of Turkish identity, where gender is represented to play a pivotal role in how identity is perceived. By delving into Istanbul’s historiographical narrative and using three distinct analytical angles – Istanbul as a metaphorical city, surrealist experimentation, and the conception of the Museum of Turkishness – I aim to explore the intricate interplay between gender and identity construction. Through a feminist lens, I examine how women navigate and experience the urban landscape differently from men, particularly through spectatorship and walking. This analysis indicates the pervasive influence of gender politics on identity formation within the urban environment. Furthermore, by analyzing the male gaze and its impact of female experiences, I argue for a nuanced understanding of Istanbul as a locus of negotiation between diverse gendered perspectives. Shafak’s and Pamuk’s narratives serve as a space for exploring hidden realities and sociocultural dynamics of Turkish society, including cultural memory, violence against women, explicit gender boundaries, transnational relations, religious fundamentalism, and the importance of recurrent figures such as street vendors and sex workers.
These themes, woven intricately into the pages of the Turkish novel, evokes interesting reflections on the human condition and societal norms.

Central to this dissertation are several central inquires: How do Shafak and Pamuk define Gendered Turkishness in their novels? In what ways do these texts portray identity as inherently gendered? And how do seemingly mundane experiences in everyday life contribute to the construction of gendered-defined boundaries and perception of self? By shedding light on the significance of seemingly inconsequential details, my dissertation focalizes the profound impact of everyday experiences on the construction of gendered identities and the sense of belonging within the urban landscape of Istanbul.

Word Count: 473
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in the Department of Comparative Literature was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own, except where explicitly stated otherwise within the text, and that this thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

Fidan Lurin Cheikosman
LAY SUMMARY

This dissertation assesses how Turkishness is represented in the novels of the contemporary Turkish writers, Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk. Through a study of the aesthetic, feminist, and socio-cultural components that constitute the Turkish novel, this study explores how Turkishness is a concept of identity that is facilitated by gender and is negotiated within Istanbul. This PhD identifies descriptions of everyday life as a recurring theme used by the novelists to illuminate the significance of insignificance in the process of identity formation. The selection of novels analyzed in this dissertation include: Istanbul: Memories and the City (Pamuk), The Bastard of Istanbul (Shafak), A Strangeness in My Mind (Pamuk), 10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World (Shafak), The Black Book (Pamuk), The Museum of Innocence (Pamuk), The Flea Palace (Shafak), and Three Daughters of Eve (Shafak).

Through this dissertation, I am interested in evaluating how women, as opposed to men, experience Istanbul through processes connected to perception such as gazing and walking in urban space. The three analytical chapters of the thesis navigate the male gaze and how women experience the city differently from men, therefore positioning myself from the lens of feminist theory. I argue that Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk render Istanbul as a space of negotiating between the male/female experience in the city and enhance the importance of gender and sexuality that changes how men and women perceive the world around them. In doing so, the writers engage with the novel as a creative space within which to represent the plurality of Turkishness. The research performed in this PhD project is informed by a multilayered methodology that approaches studies of the Turkish novel in consideration of Turkey’s historiographical narratives and Istanbul’s ambiguous geographical position as a bridge between the Eastern and Western worlds. As I progress through the thesis, I present Shafak’s and Pamuk’s novels as spaces pursuant of suggesting a gendered approach from which to understand some of the most profound aspects of Turkishness. The details of the everyday are distinguished in the selected novels as compelling avenues from which to approach the articulation of identity. This PhD project endeavors to address the following research questions:

- How is Turkishness facilitated in the novels of Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk?
• How do the selected novels portray identity as a gendered phenomenon?

• How does the truth of being a female in Istanbul affect how the city is lived, as opposed to how men live it? What circumstances prohibit a woman’s intimacy with the space in which she inhabits?

• How do seemingly mundane experiences in everyday life contribute to the construction of gendered-defined boundaries and perception of self?

The first chapter of the dissertation, “Turkishness: A Socio-Cultural Discourse,” contextualizes the environment within which the Turkish novel is produced by outlining some of the historical, cultural, and political changes that have influenced how Turkishness is perceived within the nation. This chapter is organized according to three themes: formations of the nation-state, changes of the role of the woman after the founding of the Republic, and the secularism and Islam dichotomy. I am prevalently interested in this chapter in how Turkey’s recent history has contributed to the coalescence between male and female subjectivities. Through a comparative analysis between Ottoman culture, and the Turkish Republic that followed, I assess the revolutionary reforms that sought to reshape Turkishness throughout the twentieth century. As the dissertation progresses, following this contextual chapter, within the vignettes of the selected novels about Turkish everyday life, I will return to the ideas posed throughout this preliminary chapter to articulate what the Turkish novel as a space from which to negotiate with how Turkishness is comprehended.

The subsequent chapter, “Istanbul as a City of Metaphors: Geography and the Perception of Belonging” questions the importance of geography in distinguishing the forms of Turkishness. By identifying Istanbul according to Ben Highmore’s phrase, “metaphor city,” which I will further elaborate upon, I illustrate how the narrative structure of Shafak’s and Pamuk’s texts manifests Istanbul as a space from which to distinguish the female experience from the male experience which often takes the form of the male gaze and the rendering of the female as subject of the male’s perception, and the task of walking in the city.¹ The following texts, Istanbul: Memories and the City (Pamuk, 2003), The Bastard of Istanbul (Shafak, 2006), and A

Strangeness in My Mind (Pamuk, 2014) are explored to identify how characters’ interactions within the cityscape lead them to realize that their Turkishness is indeed a projection of Istanbul itself. I question how the city of Istanbul has been described in the selected novels, and its significance to the representation of identity as prevalently dictated by gender.

Chapter three, “Tequila Leila’s, Galip’s and Celâl’s ‘Profane Illuminations’” further focuses everyday studies to the theory of surrealism to assess how aesthetic, sensory experiences - scent, sight, touch, feelings, and emotions - provoke socio-cultural memories and lead characters to come to the profane illumination, which is a term that I use according to Walter Benjamin, that what they once assumed was insignificant, is indeed significant. I categorize Shafak’s 10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World (2019) and Pamuk’s The Black Book (1990) as stylistically surreal texts, and the writers’ use of narrative techniques such as description underlines how the male and female perception within the city leads to characters’ self-realization. Shafak and Pamuk write about the habitual and the ordinary to emphasize its importance to the construction of identity. Throughout the chapter, I ask: What about these smells and tastes, or feelings and sensations is important to the narrative? How do these forgettable details have profound impacts on characters? How is the woman character subjected within a male-centered urban space? I focus on the minute details of characters, objects, and sensations to argue that Shafak and Pamuk create a feeling of the real through their emphasis on the everyday. Furthermore, I examine the influence of the gaze, similarly to in other chapters of the dissertation, to understand how projections of image through visual perception creates interpretations of identity.

In the last analytical chapter, “The Museum of Turkishness: A Double Staging of Identity Representation” I draw on Shafak’s and Pamuk’s novels as literary museums that seek to reproduce elements observed in Turkish everyday life. For this reason, I introduce the phrase, ‘Museum of Turkishness’ . However, I further enhance this already established thesis introduced

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by Yin Xing by pointing out the significance of the male gaze and even the fetishistic components attached to this theme, which evolves in all three of the studied novels in this chapter, to varying extremities. The following novels will be assessed: The Museum of Innocence (Pamuk), The Flea Palace (Shafak), and Three Daughters of Eve (Shafak). I outline the archival and curatorial dimensions of the novelists’ texts to understand how Shafak and Pamuk indeed remove their observations of everyday life from their contexts, and recontextualize them within the novel. As a result, the novel archives everyday Turkish life. Readers, like museum viewers, gain access into galleries of Turkishness that narrate the many aesthetic, socio-cultural dimensions of the nation. Through the collector figure and their collections, Shafak and Pamuk engage in a process of literary collecting that speaks to their novels as spaces that recover identity through the amassing of the everyday, in turn creating a Museum of Turkishness.

Throughout this dissertation, the question of Turkishness represents a deep interest in how to assess identity as a series of socio-cultural constructs, as well as introduces new ways of approaching the identity discourse. For Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk, the process of narrating Gendered Turkishness manifests itself as an articulate process of finding meaning in accordance to understanding how one’s biological sex does not constitute one’s identity but rather exists in coalescence to a nation’s established gender roles and how men and women are expected to act within private and public spaces. I argue that male and female identities are defined by visual perceptions. Biological sex and socio-cultural expectations of gender suggest that urban experience is defined by how males and females perceive each other. The rhythms of everyday life within Istanbul - towering minarets that fill the skyline in Eminönü, the abandoned backstreets that take walkers from Aksaray to Zeytinburnu, the bustling crowds that never empty in Taksim - evoke the soul of the city, creating a compelling space within which to think about identity as a projection of geography.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Turkishness and the question of my identity as both a woman and a citizen of a nation that my parents had adopted as their own has encouraged me to further explore the question of gender and identity through academia and novels. I would first and foremost like to thank my beloved father, Ghassan, whose stories about homeland have deeply resonated with me since childhood and have encouraged my rooted in-between sense of identity. I would like to express gratitude to my mother, Sylvia, and my sister, Evîn, for their endless kindness and encouragement, which helped me to build the strength to proceed in my research project. I would like to acknowledge the compassion I have received from my partner, Javi especially during the last year of my PhD journey, whose endless love and quick humor kept a smile on my face even during the most stressful periods. Warm appreciation is extended to my family and friends in Turkey and the United States for being my ongoing support system.

I am indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Fabien Arribert-Narce for supporting me, even prior to beginning PhD studies at the University of Edinburgh, when I was still writing my research proposal. Throughout my PhD, Dr. Arribert-Narce offered endless support in the form of reading material, proofreading my many drafts, early-morning, and late-evening emails to address concerns about my research topic, supervision meetings, and contributions that have guided me through the process of writing my dissertation. I would also like to express gratitude to my secondary supervisor, Dr. Ines Aščerić-Todd for her advice and feedback, whose unparalleled knowledge was always a source of inspiration. I am additionally grateful to the academic environment in the Department of Literatures, Languages, and Cultures at the University of Edinburgh for allowing me the opportunity to write this dissertation. I will always cherish having been able to live in Edinburgh, along with my very special workspace next to the window in the PhD study room, where much of my dissertation took shape. I am additionally thankful for the library at the University of Edinburgh for providing me with the reading material I sought, when oversees travel was not convenient.

The opportunity, in Spring of 2022 to be a visiting researcher at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul allowed me to further immerse myself into the study of Turkishness, as well as see the city of
Istanbul through the eyes of an academic. The endless support and library resources that I had access to gave me incredible insights and helped to bring my PhD to life.

Throughout my PhD, I have had numerous opportunities to speak at conferences, including in Edinburgh, Lisbon, Sakarya, Sarajevo, and Reykjavik, all which have given me a space within which to share my research with other scholars. Visiting these cities and engaging with other scholars in my academic field created a sense of belonging and community for me. These proved to be invaluable experiences that only further added to my gratitude to the University of Edinburgh for accepting me into their PhD program in Comparative Literature.

Lastly, I would like to thank the city of Istanbul. For years, this enchanting city has been a second home to me and will always hold a special place in my heart. Istanbul has remained one of the largest sources of inspiration in my decision to write this dissertation.
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INTRODUCTION TO THESIS

I Introduction

This dissertation investigates the concept of Turkishness as a gendered phenomenon, examining its portrayal in the contemporary novels of Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk. Through an exploration of aesthetic, feminist, and socio-cultural dimensions, this study delves into the complex formation of identity within the urban landscape. While these theoretical approaches may initially appear divergent, they collectively offer insights into the multifaceted nature of Turkish identity. By analyzing the sensory implications of everyday life in Istanbul, my objective is to elucidate Shafak’s and Pamuk’s depictions of gendered experiences to highlight the significance of gender in understanding Turkish identity. This understanding recognizes identity as a concept that is shaped by socio-cultural norms and intertwined with spatial and experimental contexts. Gender, as both a biological and cultural idea, emerges as a fundamental element influencing individuals’ sense of belonging. Moreover, it acknowledges the dynamic nature of gender roles, which are continually negotiated and redefined within socio-political contexts. Against the backdrop of Istanbul’s rich history and captivating landscapes, this research underlines the intricacies of the nation’s identity formation. Thinking about Istanbul’s golden, grand, and glorious history, divine skylines, towering minarets, enticing smells of spices, and alluring Bosphorus landscapes, concentrating on the nation’s complicated relationship with its identity is compelling to think about and engage with in this PhD project because it causes me to explore to intimacy that occurs in character’s attachment or detachment with the city and the many elements that contribute to such a connection. By examining characters’ relationships with the city, this project delves into the intimate connections that shape inhabitants’ sense of belonging, offering a nuanced exploration of Turkish identity and its complexities.

In the realm of Turkish literature, Istanbul emerges as a city of mesmerizing contradictions, simultaneously breathtaking and captivity, decrepit but also alluring. These paradoxes fuel discussions on the mundane experiences within Istanbul, which my dissertation navigates by

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4 The theme of gender is one that has been explored before in the context of Turkish literature. I would also recommend visiting Halide Edib Adıvar’s (1884-1964) novels as well, which comment on the treatment of women in Turkey’s socio-cultural climate.
exploring the divergent ways in which women and men traverse the city’s dynamism. My choice to delve into the essence of Turkish identity through the works of Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk stems from my intrigue with their adeptness of blending fiction and reality to unveil the often overlooked intricacies of urban life, such as the act of strolling through decaying streets or the lingering gazes of men upon women. As articulated by Maria Beville in her exploration of contemporary urban landscapes:

The city, in varying literary approaches, is regarded as both a physical and a metaphysical space, an artistic and a socio-political site, and as society and subjectivity have become increasingly urbanized in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, literary portrayals and interpretations of the idea of the city have proliferated along these lines.5

I agree with Beville’s position in relation to how the city is perceived through diverse literary lenses as both a tangible as well as a metaphysical presence that is intertwined with socio-political undertones. As society becomes increasingly urbanized in the modern landscape, literary depictions of urban spaces depict the city not merely as a backdrop but as an active participant that shapes the lives of its inhabitants, which is an idea brought forth by Stefan L. Brandt’s analysis of postmodern urban narratives, “fictional metropolis […] is negotiated as a quasi-organic agglomeration of signs and references, engaging the reader by means of what can be termed an ‘aesthetics of the body’.”6 My position also aligns with Brandt’s perspective, especially the idea of viewing the city depicted in novels as a maze-like construct that compels readers to renegotiate their perceptions of urban visuality.7 Within the narrative fabric of postmodern and urbanized cities, characters embark on aesthetic quests, which compels them to continually navigate the cultural tapestry that is woven by the metropolis. Throughout my dissertation, I refine this notion by centering on the gendered dynamics of urban belonging by exploring how Istanbul’s literary landscape converges with gender boundaries and the interplay between individual and collective experiences of the city. Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk offer their readers both their domestic and international audiences a literary vantage point from which to engage with Istanbul, delving into the gendered nuances of Turkish identity that is manifested

7 Brandt understands the fictionalized postmodern city as a “labyrinth,” that is organized in a maze-like manner. Brandt, “The City as Liminal Space: Urban Visuality and Aesthetic Experience in Postmodern U.S. Literature and Cinema,” 553.
in everyday experiences, such as pedestrian wanderings and contemplative gazes. My analytical framework entails an examination of Turkey’s recent historical backdrop, along with close textual analyses of selected works by Shafak and Pamuk. My research is further enriched by theoretical insights drawn from feminist criticism, everyday studies, socio-cultural historiography, and the aesthetics of surrealism. Through this interdisciplinary lens, I aim to unravel the gendered dimension of Turkish identity as articulated within the literary canvas of Istanbul’s urban landscape.

My position in relation to the topics researched throughout my dissertation are largely dependent upon my experiences as an everyday woman who has grown up reading Elif Shafak’s and Orhan Pamuk’s novels and considering how they have underlined how I experience urban spaces, Istanbul in particular. As I read the novelists’ illustrations of the beautiful city, I often dreamed of its splendors, and how living in the city and experiencing its crowds, contradictions and landscapes molded the characters described, creating either a sense of belonging or exile. The problematics of identity in Turkish literature is not a unique theme. However, in Shafak’s and Pamuk’s oeuvres, it is a narrative technique that permits both authors to explore the polemics of Turkishness through varying dichotomies that create boundaries between genders, coalesce spatiality with temporality, and call into question the relevance of urban space in the pursuit of identity understandings. The fictionality of the novel addresses’ aspects of the everyday world in a manner that has the capability to manipulate the reader’s perception that they are looking into reality. As an aesthetic space of culture, the novel illustrates various subjectivities and creates a space for the reader to negotiate with their socio-cultural environment. The research that I participate in throughout this dissertation may be interpreted as an addressing of the need to further explore overlapping frameworks within Turkish literature. Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk, whose novels represent the center of my doctoral thesis, are only two of many Turkish writers I have chosen who have rendered the question of identity a narrative technique within their novels. Speaking to this dissertation’s title, I am interested in exploring Turkishness as an identity that is largely dependent upon and influenced by everyday interactions within urban space, and which are defined by power structures which also leads me to concentrate on the importance of gender to how an individual views themselves within the city. The sources that I employ to explore this definition of identity find themselves within academic fields of feminist criticism (ie Simone de
Beauvoir), everyday studies (ie Ben Highmore, Henri Lefebvre, and Roland Barthes), and cultural aesthetics (ie Walter Benjamin). In the literature I study in this PhD, the woman as a concept of research adds a significant dimension as I question through what avenues is her presence in everyday life influential, and how the articulations of gender and sexuality glean to have profound impacts on how identity is articulated. For this reason, the flâneur figure is a prevalent character that I study to illustrate how the observer and person of the crowd varies deeply between genders. The flâneur, which is typically a male, becomes a different form when the flaneur is reevaluated as a woman. For Brandt, walking becomes a metaphor that “symbolizes transition and chance.” As a result, the “urban labyrinth offers the flâneur an enigmatic assemblage of indecipherable signs.”\(^8\) Therefore, walking becomes a significant literary theme in my dissertation because it is often through the flâneur that characters personalize the city and find themselves embodying its many signs and symbols. However, in my research, I am more interested in the differences of everyday experiences of the flâneur as they exist from men to women. In reference to the flâneur figure, I wish to focus on the male-female dichotomy and how in relation to the urban landscape to illustrate its significance to the identity discourse as represented in the Turkish novel. What I will try to navigate throughout this PhD project is how the woman figure in Shafak’s and Pamuk’s literature presume their condition within Istanbul, and how the woman finds herself in situations very different than the male figure, and how this likely affects her relationship with her identity.\(^9\) The principles of aesthetics touches upon not only the beauty of life and the passions we feel within the human environment but also creates connections with geographical, historical, political, and socio-cultural

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\(^8\) Brandt, “The City as Liminal Space,” 561.

\(^9\) To explore identity within the context of Elif Shafak’s and Orhan Pamuk’s literature, the reader will realize that I also understand identity according to a number of theorists within various academic disciplines. Note should be taken by the reader that this list is not comprehensive, but rather includes the most influential theorists and their writings of my dissertation, and does not include writings nor other theorists that I will also be visited whose writings have also impacted how I have constructed by thesis:

Ben Highmore, *Cityscapes: Cultural Readings in the Material and Symbolic.*


frameworks. This means that aesthetics, in my dissertation, is present for the purposes of drawing upon the importance of character’s emotional and sensory connections with their environment and through this method I observe how cognitive relations impact how the Istanbul is understood not only as a city, but also as an influential agent in identity formation.

In urban space, the everyday aesthetic experience underlines the city’s patterns of inhabitants’ sensibilities and impressions of changes undergone due to shifting gender expectations, geopolitics and histories. Aesthetics becomes a significant piece of the narrative structure because within an imaginary world of characters, conflicts and environments, texts replicate everyday realities and indeed draw attention to its ordinariness that is developed through personal interactions and principles of culture. The city projects itself in novels as a place of reality and fiction, myth and imagination, and of significance and insignificance. The epistemology connected to aesthetics appears in the use of literature to experiment with the illustration of Istanbul and its inhabitants to communicate the gendered angles of Turkishness observed in everyday life by Shafak and Pamuk, therefore leading me to utilize feminist criticism within the dissertation as well. The aesthetics and feminist aspects will be directly addressed in both chapter’s three when I study surrealism as a literary theme, as well as in the final analytical chapter when Turkishness is evaluated within the context of the novel-museum duality. The feminist perspective, which I am particularly interested in, will be revisited throughout my thesis in which I consider the experience the woman’s experience within the male-dominated cityscape. The socio-cultural element is of particular importance to the dissertation because I am not only compelled to discuss the architectural aesthetics of Istanbul and its environs, but also how geography has deeply impacted how Turkishness is manufactured within different social and cultural environments with Istanbul being illustrated as a strategic city where different aspects of life are blended, yet also contradict one another. This dimension will become most pronounced in chapter two of the dissertation as I study Turkishness as an identity of in-betweenness due to the perception of Istanbul as a gateway from Europe to Asia and from Asia to Europe.

My idea to write this dissertation in the first place is because of my readings on Turkish history, especially that which focuses on the fall of the Ottoman Empire and formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, and how the role of women in society has seen progress, but not enough to
render them equal enough to men because as this dissertation will argue, women have a very different relationship to public spaces than men. Nation-forming, and the idea that identity can be scraped away and made anew is a concept that has continued to puzzle me and made me wonder how principles of nation forming has persisted to evolve and influence everyday inhabitants. Dates, events, and political discourses surrounding the making of the Republic of Turkey are referred to in Chapter one, when I provide the context that is often referred to or alluded to in Shafak’s and Pamuk’s novels. However, history will continue to be referenced throughout much of the dissertation as I proceed to unravel the narrative elements of Shafak’s and Pamuk’s texts to understand the gendered angle of Turkishness. The breadth of Pamuk’s and Shafak’s oeuvres in redefining identity vary greatly. They illustrate vignettes of Turkish life: the experience of women living under patriarchal conditions, the sting of the male gaze as women walk down boulevards clad in heels and short skirts, family sagas which plot secularism against Islam, political turmoil speaking to numerous periods of violence in Turkey’s recent history, and tales of adolescence that feature periods of confusion as youths must choose between a safe and conservative future or one of chance and an opportunity to live in Europe. Conclusively, as I engage in close readings with Shafak’s and Pamuk’s literature, I am deeply invested in the descriptions and literary techniques by the authors to communicate to their readers the character of the woman and how her world differentiates and changes because of her sex. By closely researching the narrative structure of the novels I have selected for this PhD project, I determine the areas in each novel where gender is illuminated to become a remarkably significant aspect in the task of understanding the term Turkishness, and its role in Turkish everyday life.

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10 Throughout the dissertation I return to the notion of the gaze as a prevailing literary trope that both Shafak and Pamuk adopt to underline the distinctive female and male experiences within urban space. The gaze as a technique used by writers is not however unique, and it can be assumed that Shafak and Pamuk have likewise adopted nineteenth century literary practices in their own writing. To explore how the gaze presents itself in nineteenth century French novels for example, I recommend the following from Juliana Starr, which explores the genre of the “nude,” in the novels Manette Saloman (de Goncourt, 1867), L’Education Sentimental (Flaubert, 1869), and A Rebours (Huysman, 1884).
Juliana Starr, Men Looking at Women through Art: Male Gaze and Spectatorship in Three Nineteenth-Century French Novels, “Revue Frontenac 10-11 (1993): 8-34, ScholarWorks@UNO.
II Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk in Context

I justify my decision to research Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk according to both writers’ deep attachment to the polemics of Turkishness that finds itself between the lines of their fiction. However, I distinguish my approach to Turkishness based on my turn towards the importance of gender to how the city is experienced. Turkishness in my dissertation is then a concept that I study through the everyday experience, but also one which cannot ignore the different reception between men and women. To follow, I will briefly introduce the reader to Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk as contemporary Turkish writers whose narration of everyday life in Turkey represents an aesthetic pursuit into the everyday habits such as walking along crowded boulevards with determined patience, looking onwards at those sitting on the ferry from the European to the Asian side of Istanbul, and shopping amongst tourists in the bazaars. Such ordinary practices can contribute to or open a window to deeper conversations related to identity which is why I find it important to bring together everyday studies and feminist critique to distinguish what it means to be Turkish for a man and what it means for a woman. I will outline their upbringing and cultural background, provide a brief introduction to some of their most well received novels, mention Shafak’s and Pamuk’s own experiences with Turkishness within the context of Turkish politics, which has informed their relationship with Turkey, especially with the city of Istanbul, and lastly consider Roland Barthes’s and Michel Foucault’s discourses on authorship in relation to how I approach the presence of the author in Shafak’s and Pamuk’s texts.

Elif Shafak is a London-based novelist, human-rights activist, and scholar whose education and personal observations of Turkish life have shaped her approach to narrating Istanbul and its inhabitants. It could be that Shafak’s literary inspiration began as a child navigating between various cities, cultures, and languages. Shafak was born in 1971 in Strasbourg, but following the separation of her parents, Shafak and her mother came to Ankara to live with her grandmother in a somewhat conservative and patriarchal district of the country’s capital. Shafak was exposed to a culture she had not known before, as a child being born in secular Western Europe. As a result, she became deeply observant of the societal norms in this seemingly foreign culture that appeared conservative and judgmental of her unique upbringing as a young girl in a house only of women. While in Ankara, Shafak’s mother returned to university and following graduation,
became a diplomat stationed in Madrid, leading mother and daughter to again move from Turkey to Spain during the 1980s. Living in a number of different cities including Cologne and Amman, Shafak has become increasingly interested in the question of Turkish identity, and how minorities fit into the equation. Because of her immersion within numerous cultures and systems of thought, Shafak has referred to herself as a “commuter.”

In university, Shafak studied international relations, political science, as well as gender studies. She holds a PhD in political science, which has led her to obtain numerous faculty positions throughout Turkey, the United States, and the United Kingdom. In 2002, Shafak arrived in the United States, where she found an intellectual haven amongst Armenian-Turkish scholars, which influenced her perceptions of Turkish-Armenian relations, as well as her understanding of how minorities have been treated throughout Turkish history. While in the United States, Shafak has worked as a professor at the University of Arizona in Near Eastern Studies. Shafak’s multi-disciplinary background has nourished her literature, as she approaches numerous themes that speak to Turkey’s history, which will be analyzed in-depth throughout the dissertation.

Writing in both English and Turkish, Shafak has thus far produced nineteen books, twelve being novels, most of which have been translated into close to fifty languages. Her most recent novel is *The Island of Missing Trees* (2021), which has been shortlisted for several awards including the Women’s Prize for Fiction. Shafak’s first works include *Pinhan* (1997) and *Mahrem (The Gaze*, 1999). Against the background of the Ottoman Empire, *Pinhan* is a mystical and magical story that demonstrates Shafak’s unique skill of mesmerizing her readers to engage with the epistemological elements of identity. Shortlisted for the Independent Prize for Foreign Fiction, *The Gaze* is a novel about the polemics of looking and being looked at through the mingling of multiple narrative perspectives such as that of an overwhelmingly obese woman, and her lover who is a dwarf. Shafak’s first novel in English was published in 2004 as *The Saint of Incipient Insanities*. Some of Shafak’s most widely read novels include *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2006), *The Forty Rules of Love* (2010), *Honor* (2013), and *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World*.

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(2019). *Honor* visits the taboo subject of the honor killing by narrating one Kurdish-Turkish family’s emigration to London, and the inability for one son to assimilate within the city’s modern and liberal culture, while *The Forty Rules of Love* demonstrates Shafak’s fascination with the romantic components of Sufism.13 Elif Shafak’s nonfiction includes her memoir *Black Milk* (2007), written following her lengthy suffering with postpartum depression; and a number of articles published in various platforms including *The Guardian, The Times, The New Yorker, CNN,* and *Der Spiegel,* in which she has commented on world affairs throughout Turkey, much of Europe and the United States, and the Middle East. Throughout *Black Milk,* Shafak often expresses a sense of imposter syndrome regarding her gender, “To me, womanhood is something I need to observe and study, learn and imitate, and still can never fully comprehend.”14 Unlike many women who emulate a certain sense of femininity through decorum, dress, or elegance, for Shafak, to be a woman is hard work and something she must strive to become, referring to the need for resilience against established societal norms, especially in relation to gender. Speaking to this dissertation’s interest in Shafak’s and Pamuk’s representations of the woman figure, Shafak has described her experience of writing largely from a feminist perspective, “Male writers are thought of as ‘writers’ first and then ‘men’. As for female writers, they are first ‘female’ and then ‘writers’”.15 In her memoir, Shafak often pauses her reflection of herself as a female writer and turns to other female writers, especially from the west, who resemble her and provide her with inspiration such as Virginia Woolf, Emily Dickinson, Toni Morrison, Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald, Ayn Rand, Dorothy Parker, and Lou Andreas Salomé.16 Huma Saeed describes Shafak as “among those prominent feminist writers who have made valuable contributions to highlighting problems faced by modern working women.”17 It is not simply the biological definition of being male or female, but rather the socio-cultural constructs developed through

13 A selection of Shafak’s novels will be studied in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the dissertation as follows:
Chapter 2: “A City of Metaphors: Geography and the Perception of Belonging”: *The Bastard of Istanbul*
Chapter 3: “Tequila Leila’s, Galip’s, and Celâl’s Profane Illuminations”: *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World.*
16 Shafak, *Black Milk,* 40, 41, 131, 164, 204, 228.
living as a male or female that leads Shafak to understand being a writer as also being a man or woman. Being a woman born into a patriarchal society that is dominated by power structures influences Shafak’s writing. The characters and the conflicts that she describes in her fiction demonstrate her observations of gender and how being a woman or man is a paradoxical formation that creates identity perceptions and contradictory understandings. A few of the other recurrent themes and motifs identified in Shafak’s novels that will be studied as the dissertation continues includes the East-West duality, the conflicts present between Islam and secularism, the treatment of women, visual perception as a means of objectifying the opposite sex, and the existence of Turkey’s multicultural population.

Orhan Pamuk continues to be one of the most widely read authors not only in Turkey, but also in much of the Eastern and Western world. Pamuk was born in 1952 to an affluent family in one of Istanbul’s most Europeanized and wealthy neighborhoods, Nişantaşı. He grew up with the personal expectation that he would become a world-famous painter, a dream that he confesses to in his autobiographical novel, *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2003). However, not long after he matures into an adult, he discloses to his mother that he is destined to become a writer. Orhan Pamuk’s emergence as a novelist may be traced to the end of the twentieth century, in the 1980s. Perhaps contrary to suspicions, Pamuk cannot immediately assumed to be a political writer or commentator; he is a novelist, or archivist of Turkish everyday life. Throughout his decades-long writing career, Pamuk’s novels have been translated into over sixty languages. Similar to Shafak’s, Pamuk’s novels exhibit traces of his observations of the Turkish nation and subversive criticisms of the Turkish State, often leading to a large number of debates within the country of his birth. Even though unlike Shafak, Pamuk does not explicitly describe himself as a feminist writer, in his writings, as will be described later in the dissertation, Pamuk often subverts traditional patriarchal standards and his characters speak to the writers’ acknowledgement of the gender dichotomy that is inseparable from understanding Turkish

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In this chapter, “The Pleasures of Painting,” Pamuk confesses to the reader his understanding of painting as a way to become closer to the city of his birth. Because of the intimacy Pamuk felt with painting Istanbul landscapes, he believed that it would be his fate to become a famous painter.

19 Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, 368.
identity. Pamuk’s first novel was published in 1982 as Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları (Cevdet Bey and His Sons) but was never translated into English. Cevdet Bey and His Sons is written as a novella and traces three generations of an affluent family in Istanbul. The following year, Pamuk published his second novel, Sessiz Ev (Silent House), which was translated in 2012 into English. Silent House chronicles a period towards the end of the twentieth century of Turkey’s turbulently violent history through the focalization of three siblings during their annual summer visit to their grandmother’s home in a sleepy seaside village outside of Istanbul. Some of Pamuk’s other widely read works include My Name is Red (1998; tr. 2001), Snow (2002; tr. 2004), The Museum of Innocence (2008; tr. 2009), and A Strangeness in My Mind (2014; tr. 2015). My Name is Red is one of the most internationally recognized of Pamuk’s books due to the text’s masterful engagement with the East-West duality, while also creating a moving portrait of Ottoman culture through the presence of traditional, miniaturist art. Snow is often read as the writers most openly political novel because of Pamuk’s narration of Turkey’s rise in political Islam that is facilitated in the novel by the presence of the headscarf which appears to drive the trend towards fundamentalism as the protagonist returns to Turkey following a long exile in Germany to be thrown into Turkey’s socio-political tensions. Pamuk’s characters are drawn together in their pursuit of a Turkishness that is defined by their experiences and confrontations within urban space. Pamuk frames his novels according to themes relevant to Turkishness, often either alluding to or directly speaking to Turkey’s cultural memory and the many strategic transformations that Turkish identity has undergone following the Ottoman Empire and founding of the Republic.

Similar to Shafak, Pamuk has published numerous collections of essays and nonfiction such as Istanbul: Memories and the City (2003; tr. 2009), Other Colors: Essays and a Story (1999; tr.

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20 In my close readings of Pamuk’s novels, I will choose to analyze many female characters such as Vediha in A Strangeness in My Mind, Rüya in The Black Book, and Füsun in The Museum of Innocence to underline the boundaries that exist in Turkish society both in private and public life. This will include observing Pamuk’s use of literary tropes and imagery, especially within the context of female sexuality, the experience of walking and the perceptual gaze.

21 A selection of Pamuk’s novels will be studied in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the dissertation as follows:
Chapter 2: “A City of Metaphors: Geography and the Perception of Belonging”: Istanbul: Memories and the City and A Strangeness in My Mind
Chapter 3: “Tequila Leila’s, Galip’s, and Celâl’s Profane Illuminations”: The Black Book
2007) and *The Naïve and Sentimental Novelist: Understanding What Happens When We Write and Read Novels* (2011). In *Other Colors* Pamuk intimately enters a dialogue with himself as a writer and describes his methods of narrating Turkey’s socio-cultural climate. *Other Colors* is composed of a lengthy series of observations of Istanbul’s overlapping identity dynamics. Divided into a series of interviews, literary essays, social criticism, and political reflections, this collection subtly describes Pamuk’s ongoing feelings of contempt, sadness, confusion, and most of all, attachment to his homeland. In 2006, Pamuk was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. In his nonfiction, Pamuk confesses to his attachment and affinity with Istanbul, and the influence the city has had on his perception of himself and how he, as a Turk, may be perceived by the Western world. Pamuk laments the changes that Istanbul has experienced, and in doing so, sees himself as a projection of the city itself, an experience that many of his fictional characters also describe. As this dissertation assesses Shafak’s and Pamuk’s narration of Turkishness through their representation of everyday life in Istanbul, I will often return to moments in Turkish socio-cultural and geo-political history to facilitate between the writers’ illustration of Turkish identity as one that is persistently interrupted and reconstructed. Pamuk’s nonfiction texts will often reappear at various points throughout the dissertation, so mention of them remains limited here to a simple introduction.

I will briefly mention here that Shafak and Pamuk have each been victims of legal persecution because of their ideologies in relation to Turkishness. They have both been tried according to Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. Unlike other writers, artists, intellectuals, and journalists who have found themselves in prison due to their statements in public relating to the Turkish State and nation, both Shafak’s and Pamuk’s cases have been dismissed due to the international recognition of their cases, as well as lack of evidence. Because of the controversial reception of Shafak’s writing, both in terms of her fiction and journal articles, she has remained permanently in London, and has also traveled and made several other cities a place that she calls home. She

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23 Although the concept of Pamuk’s dependence on the city to determine his destiny will be visited in depth in Chapter 2 of the dissertation, for clarity, one example in which he describes his sentiments is in his memoir when he says, “Why were we born in this particular corner of the world, on this particular date? […] I sometimes think myself unlucky to have been born in an aging and impoverished city buried under the ashes of a ruined empire. But a voice inside me always insists this was really a piece of luck.” Pamuk, *Istanbul*, 6.
has described herself in one interview as in “self-imposed exile.”

Shafak’s apparent inability to return to Turkey is most likely because of her 2006 novel, *The Bastard of Istanbul*. Following the text’s publication, Shafak was quickly tried for insulting Turkishness in accordance with Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. The case against Shafak for *The Bastard of Istanbul* was based on the claim one of Shafak’s characters makes in her novel that in 1915, there was a massacre of Armenians in Turkey that has become known as a ‘genocide’. Over the next year and a half, Shafak went almost nowhere without a bodyguard. In September 2006, at the end of her trial, Shafak left Turkey, never to return.

Pamuk’s confrontation with Turkishness has occurred in a similar vein as Shafak’s. In an interview published in 2005 with the Swiss newspaper, *Tages Anzeiger* Pamuk accused the Turkish state of having massacred large amounts of Turkey’s minority populations, “30,000 Kurds were killed here. And a million Armenians. And almost nobody dares to talk about it. So, I do. And that’s why they hate me.”

In this very controversial interview that would cost Pamuk his safety in Istanbul, the writer brings together some of the rather unfortunate memories of Turkey’s history, including the debated mass killings of Armenians in 1915 and the large number of Kurdish people killed during the Kurdish PKK uprising that took place several years later in the last decade of the twentieth century. By the end of the interview, Pamuk justifies his choice to at once confront and subvert Turkey’s controversial politics and national history, “I am hated because I am a dissident author and public intellectual.” After the publication of the interview, Pamuk received a large amount of criticism and backlash from the Turkish State, media institutions, as well as his fellow citizens. As a result, Pamuk was forced to flee the country. However, many human rights organizations including Amnesty International and PEN put pressure and brought international attention to Pamuk’s case, and all charges against him were ultimately dismissed, and Pamuk quickly returned to Istanbul. Throughout the rest of the

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26 The debate concerning the events that took place in 1915 are out of the scope of this dissertation and reference of them will remain brief.
dissertation, I will not return to Shafak’s nor Pamuk’s legal troubles with Turkishness from the lens of Turkish politics but will instead assess the novelists’ renditions of Turkishness to understand how observations of the perceptual world have given them a means to satirize Turkey’s socio-cultural memory.

Before moving onto the next section, I would like to briefly visit the concept of the death of the author, and acknowledge how I distinguish Pamuk and Shafak, and their presence within the texts they write, which warrants theoretical analysis of Roland Barthes’s and Michel Foucault’s theories surrounding the presence of the author in writing. Barthes’s conception of “The Death of the Author,” understandings that to write means to eliminate the voice of who is writing because to produce a text amount to neutrality, rendering writing a space within which identity is defined by the writing itself, not the writer. Barthes presumes that the author is a hindrance to the reader’s ability to perceive the text, “To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing.” As a result, the objective of the author is not to be confused with the text produced, and their intentions in what they write should not be considered by the reader as a reflection of the author themselves. Instead, the reader is given the freedom to interpret the text personally, and not according to the socio-cultural background of the author. Although Barthes’s argument is fascinating, I believe that within the context of my dissertation, Foucault’s “What is an Author,” is the direction with which I choose to approach the novels of Shafak and Pamuk. In “What is an Author?” Foucault approaches this discourse in a more nuanced matter by defining writing as a transcendental process where while the author is eliminated from the main text, he highlights the need to question the significance of the author when the reader chooses a text to read, introducing the term “author-function” as a means to disclose the socio-cultural conditions that are perceived and experienced by the author. Foucault suggests, “The Author function is therefore characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within a society.” Furthermore, the author is in fact an important element of the text because it is them that puts the product in a socio-cultural

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30 Foucault, “What is an Author?,” 211.
context therefore making it impossible to completely separate the author from their writing. Within the context of Turkish literature, it is my grounded belief that the text is an embodiment of the author’s perceptions, and their socio-cultural contexts must be taken into account by the approach of the reader. Therefore, I do not transparently separate Shafak nor Pamuk from their literary productions. I rather acknowledge that their fictional characters and the worlds that they recreate are rather an illustrative reflection of their perceptions of the gendered identity discourse. In considering the textual juxtapositions that arise in the novels of study in this dissertation, I am interested in elucidating the established boundaries between author and text to distinguish how Shafak’s and Pamuk’s literary representations of Istanbul’s significance to the foundations of identity can be understood. Although this discourse about the death of the author will not be addressed again throughout my thesis, I remain transparent in my conviction that the author’s presence cannot be separated from the text especially in consideration that it is through the novel that I communicate with my readings the elements of Gendered Turkishness in everyday life that I disclose as being unable to disassociate with the author.

In their writing, Shafak and Pamuk navigate the complexities of Turkishness and the question of belonging to Istanbul through several metaphors and literary motifs that bring about questions of aesthetics related to power structures facilitated through gender boundaries, methods of representation, geo-politics in approach to the East-West question, and Turkey’s historical narrative especially in relation to modernization and Westernization. Because all the selected novels for this dissertation prevalently take place in Istanbul as opposed to other Turkish cities such as Antalya, Diyarbakir, or Gaziantep I will acknowledge the limited focus that this dissertation presents in concentrating solely on Istanbul. However, this also allows me the space to critically evaluate the distinct differences in how Istanbul is presented to the reader between the text and how everyday experiences, walking and gazing, with which I am primarily concerned, tend to change between men and women, thereby reminding readers of the significance that gender plays in urban experience. The dichotomy that exists between the fictional world and the real world creates a space within which to study the everyday world as it is perceived by writers. Shafak and Pamuk are each an agent that communicate with their readers the overshadowed realities present in Turkish everyday life from socio-cultural frames and diverse focalizations. As this dissertation delves into the dynamics of Turkishness, I will turn
towards Turkishness as a phenomenon that is facilitated by distinct gendered experiences. I will proceed to study how women navigate through systems including patriarchy, gender-based violence, the strength felt through the male gaze, the process of walking, and the desire exhibited by the male for control over the female. The two Turkish novelists that I have chosen to focus on in my dissertation, Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk, I suggest, through their novels dismantle gender boundaries and rather highlight the coalescence between the male female dichotomy within urban space, narrating the everyday experiences that make up one’s identity within the city as one that depended upon by gender. I will proceed to question how themes of gender have caused a dismantling of previous expectations of gender, and what it means to be a woman in a prevalently male-centered society.
III Literature Review: Approaching Gendered Turkishness Through Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk

In the global literary discourse, Turkish contemporary literature is frequently situated within a web of dichotomies, encompassing gender, geography, ideology, and temporality. Amidst this complex interplay, the notion of Turkishness emerges as a pivotal notion, serving to both reconcile and consolidate these diverging dichotomies. In the literature I write for this dissertation, I delve into the existing theoretical collection of academic works surrounding Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk, highlighting their works as nuanced responses to the multilayered socio-cultural and geopolitical landscape in Turkey. However, an apparent gap in scholarly inquiry remains in the scarcity of analyses that explore the realm of the quotidian – the mundane, yet profoundly formative encounters and experiences that constitute the everyday experiences of Turkish life. While my approach to investigating Turkishness is not without precedent, as numerous scholars have researched its representation in literature, my research endeavors to sculpt a distinctive niche by adopting a feminist lens. Central to this academic pursuit is an exploration of how Turkishness intersects with gender dynamics, particularly in defining the experiences of female characters vis-à-vis male characters within patriarchal frameworks. Moreover, my thesis seeks to illuminate the underexplored area wherein gender shapes narrative processes and plot directions. By synthesizing feminist theory within the insights outlined through everyday studies, I endeavor to unravel the intricate concept of Turkish identity, exposing its vulnerability to change by socio-cultural norms, urban landscapes, power dynamics, and gendered perspectives. In focusing on the quotidian aspects of Turkish social life, my research seeks to understand and change the pervasive tendency to prioritize the extraordinary rather the mundane, therefore underlining the importance of everyday experiences in shaping narratives of national belonging. Ultimately, this doctoral thesis pursues a gendered exploration of identity construction, elaborating on how Turkishness is mediated through the lived experiences of women within the urban landscape, and how male actions, mediated through the gaze and power dynamics, engender females’ altered perceptions of belonging.
In exploring the gendered dimensions of Turkishness, I conceive of Turkish identity as a
dynamic and alterable phenomenon that is intricately woven into the environment of everyday
experiences and is continually reshaped by gender dynamics and societal norms, rather than
being constrained by biological limitations. The following literature review comprehensively
traverses the prominent discourses within academic scholarship concerning the landscape in
Shafak’s and Pamuk’s contemporary fiction. Central themes such as Turkey’s modernization
efforts, the East-West dichotomy, notions of belonging, and pervasive melancholy emerge as
recurrent motifs in the works of Shafak and Pamuk, reflecting the writers’ engagement with the
cultural, geopolitical, and social landscapes of Turkey. While Shafak’s novels, in contrast to
Pamuk’s, often foreground the experiences of female protagonist within Istanbul’s urban
environment, her exploration extends beyond a simple portrayal to rather a scrutinizing of
various cultural phenomena within Turkish society. These include omnipresent patriarchal
structures, the pervasive male gaze, constructions of female identity, the institution of marriage,
and the complexities of motherhood. While this enumeration of binaries and motifs is rather
concise in this overview, it sufficiently establishes a framework for more thorough examination
throughout this dissertation.

An enchanting and mesmerizing place, Istanbul finds itself as the subject of captivation in almost
all of Shafak’s and Pamuk’s texts as both writers tend to render the city as a space of confronting
the Istanbullite’s sense of belonging and their place in society relative to the nation. In his study
of The Black Book (Pamuk, 1990) and The Forty Rules of Love (Shafak, 2009), Afraz Jabeen
identifies Pamuk and Shafak as writers who are deeply concerned with the role of their readers as
metaphysical agents who are compelled to uncover the fictional character’s pursuit of self-
actualization.31 Jabeen describes how both writers challenge established narrative techniques
through their choice to introduce into their texts “ambiguous narratives, unusual situations,
missing identities, eerie situations, open-ended investigations, and lack of proper beginning,
middle and end.”32 Studying literary devices and style is therefore useful to the understanding of

31 Afraz Jabeen, “An Analysis of Metaphysical Detective Fiction: A Case Study of Orhan Pamuk’s The Black Book
and Elif Shafak’s The Forty Rules of Love,” Research Journal of Language and Literature 6, no. 1 (December
32 Jabeen, “An Analysis of Metaphysical Detective Fiction: A Case Study of Orhan Pamuk’s The Black Book and
Elif Shafak’s The Forty Rules of Love,” 1.
how Shafak and Pamuk uptake the novel as a form of illustrating the emergence of identity as a metaphysical phenomenon. The process of actualizing the self, or the pursuit of identity in the Turkish novel oftentimes takes place in tandem with writers describing the city of Istanbul. Fiction that is written about cities demonstrates an aesthetic interest in space. It is presented to the reader as useful to the illustration of socio-cultural experience, and how geography can manipulate perception. In her comparative study, Elena Furlanetto describes Shafak and Pamuk as imagining Istanbul “as governed by dichotomous ideologies: imitation and truthfulness, Americanization and authenticity, integration and segregation.”

Furlanetto references The Bastard of Istanbul, The Black Book, and The New Life to approach both writers as largely concerned with spatial representation as a literary theme within which to illustrate state ideologies and cultural taboos. Furlanetto is concerned with the narration of Istanbul as a city that is laden by its past. Her analysis of the novel renders Istanbul not only the background against which characters exist, but rather as a protagonist that transforms and continues to develop and impact citizens’ relationship with the urban environment. In her doctoral thesis for the University of Amsterdam, Hacer Esra Almas describes Pamuk’s novels as a reflection of the writers perceptual gaze of Istanbul, “[…] his [Pamuk’s] gaze does not simply sweep the surfaces: the vertical view is equally important, evoking the city’s layers of meaning.” The cityscape for Pamuk evokes the literary landscape of Istanbul and emerges as an active agent for the novelists in their quest to comprehensively actualize Istanbul in their novels. Uzma Abid Ansari describes Pamuk’s novels as “a textual landscape of such cities with traces of the past, and his recurrent engagement with Istanbul, the city that preoccupies his imagination the most” and has in effect, “become a metaphor for the author’s idiosyncratic city imaginary.” The imagination of the city that both writers’ textualize is one that symbolizes how the city is not only affected by its imaginary but also how the city affects the perception that its inhabitants have. By emphasizing the importance of urban space, particularly homes, Istanbul as a literary theme in Shafak’s and

34 Furlanetto, Towards Turkish American Literature: Narratives of Multiculturalism in Post-Imperial Turkey, 49.
Pamuk’s literature is emphasized by scholars as inevitably critical in questioning the importance of space as influential of national identity.

Apart from space, Turkey’s cultural and political history finds itself either alluded to or directly referenced in some form in the Turkish novel, speaking to many academics’ preference to study the novel as an archive, or museum that stores Turkish memory. Political scholar, Kürşad Ertuğrul considers Orhan Pamuk in relative relation to Turkish modernist writers, Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962) and Oğuz Atay (1934-1977). Ertuğrul describes them as deeply engaged in communicating Turkey’s modernization project to readers, distinguishing Pamuk as a writer deeply fascinated with Turkish identity as a “replication of Western individuality.” Ertuğrul’s study of these writers speaks to the importance of Turkey’s modernization project in the making of a Turkish identity that could be disconnected from the Ottoman past, as well as an identity that could be reproduced within forms of fiction. Scholar, and translator of Pamuk’s My Name is Red (1998), Erdağ Göknar, has assessed Pamuk’s novels according to Turkey’s modernization thesis, yet he attributes Pamuk’s literary intentions as being more in line with the theme of secularism: “Pamuk uses the novel form, I am suggesting, to pose persistent political challenges to the state and the secularization thesis that informs Turkish modernity.” Göknar explains that Pamuk’s initial interest in Sufism took place while writing The Black Book, and identifies the philosophy as a structured theme in Pamuk’s other novels including The New Life, My Name is Red, and Snow. Pamuk’s use of Sufism and other Islamic tropes is not an effort to redeem Turkey’s Islamic memory, but rather to present an alternative version of Turkishness, one that does not solely rely on the modernization project that began with the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. Upon studying one of Pamuk’s most openly political novels, Snow (2002), Üner Daglier claims that Pamuk’s novels are not representative of a transparent political theory, but rather inform the debates that are on the rise in Turkey between the “proponents of Westernization and the multiple modernities theory in the Near Eastern context.”

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37 Xing, “The Novel as Museum: Curating Memory in Orhan Pamuk’s The Museum of Innocence.”
40 Göknar, Orhan Pamuk, Secularism and Blasphemy: The Politics of the Turkish Novel.
Pamuk in her understanding of the writers being concerned with the lasting impacts of the Turkish Republic’s shifting identitarian narratives on the perception of the Turk in relation to the nation. She describes Shafak as a writer whose literary endeavors aim to “‘write back’ to the hegemonic identitarian narratives of Kemalism […]” Mohammed Nihad describes Shafak as a novelist who writes about “marginalized, othered and subdued individuals in an attempt to reveal to the world that they do exist and that they have a voice they want to convey to the world.” Such an approach to the contemporary Turkish novel aims to highlight dynamics present in the process of nation-forming, and how politics and religion are crucial elements in studying the ways Shafak and Pamuk illustrate their observations of Turkishness to the global audience.

The East-West dichotomy is one theme that I have frequently come across in my theoretical readings related to Shafak and Pamuk. Istanbul’s unique geographical position as a crossroads between the Eastern and Western worlds has led many writers to render geography a literary theme in the pursuit to articulate the in-betweenness of identity. According to Gunvald Axner Ims’s thesis on the concept of Westernization twentieth century Turkish novels, “The Turkish critical tradition has been concerned with questions of identity, attempting to determine what it means to be Turkish as well as to define the relation between Western influence and Eastern tradition.” Furthermore, Ims addresses in his dissertation that the topic of Westernization is not exclusive to Turkish literature but also pervades the country’s culture and politics. The ways in which Westernization is addressed in the novels selected for this thesis demonstrate unique ways of implementing this concept as a socio-political discourse that recontextualizes how identity is understood in everyday life. The novels that I aim to study for this dissertation are prevalently grounded growth of Westernization and the debates it has caused surrounding what it means to live in a society determined to turn westward, away from its Eastern roots. For Arzu Akbatur,

42 The theme of early Turkish politics, especially in relation to Kemalism, will be elaborated upon in the following contextual chapter.
themes of identity, belonging, and representation lead Shafak to uptake Istanbul’s in-between, geographical position as an influential element of Istanbul’s collective, cultural identity as a city that divides East from West.\textsuperscript{47} Furthermore, in analyzing Shafak’s novel,\textit{ The Forty Rules of Love}, Furlanetto likens the novelist’s employment of Rumi to “a nineteenth-century tradition of viewing the Orient as therapeutic for the West.”\textsuperscript{48} Shafak then also partakes in rendering the East-West dichotomy as a prevalent subject in her literature to draw attention to how Istanbul’s geo-politics have influenced national identity. Istanbul’s place as a gateway from Europe to Asia, and from Asia to Europe leads Turkish novelists to explore urban space as a manifestation of collective identity. According to Emilia Parpală and Rimona Ațana, in their analysis of Pamuk’s \textit{My Name is Red} (1998), Pamuk is predominately concerned with translating “his native town as a place of antagonisms […]”, suggesting that Istanbul “could be conceived like a permeable text, like a labyrinth of visions and portraits.”\textsuperscript{49} The East-West metaphor allows for Shafak and Pamuk to negotiate with their literary intentions to describe the complexities attached to aesthetically representing the socially designed constructs of Turkishness.\textsuperscript{50}

The paradoxical identity dynamics that are identified in the Turkish novel are also approached psychologically, through the emotional attachment citizens feel, which typically takes the form of sadness, or melancholy. In line with Ian Almond’s thesis, Orhan Pamuk’s novels develop out of a “certain sadness.”\textsuperscript{51} The plots of such novels are typically described as being concerned with characters’ emotional interactions with their immediate environments. For Ian Almond, the sadness present in Pamuk’s novels occurs in reaction to Islam and the enforced suppression and


\textsuperscript{50} The East-West dichotomy as a literary theme is not a trope that is exclusive to Shafak’s nor Pamuk’s text, or to Turkish writers. It also appears across world literature. For example, Tawada Yōko is a contemporary Japanese novelist who also explores the theme of borders, transnational migration, and how in-betweenness disturbs one’s perception of identity. I recommend the following article to understand how the theme of in-betweenness also appears in Yōko’s novels:


exile characters have felt from religion. Such characters’ inability to assimilate in the modern nation-state, leads to an overwhelming sense of “melancholy and resignation.” According to Michael M. Moreno, the shared sense of loss and nostalgia for a collective past creates a particularly eerie atmosphere that Pamuk uses to negotiate with “Istanbul’s imperial and palimpsestic identity […]” Similarly, Clinical Professor in the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University, Sibel Erol, associates Pamuk’s literary endeavors to the “inescapable melancholy” derived from the loss of the Ottoman Empire, and the ruinous state in which Istanbul remains. This kind of sadness is described by Göknar as being “doubled” because it alludes to “the loss of empire […] as well as an Islamic and Sufi tradition of anguish and suffering in the absence of, or separation from, the divine.” In effect, melancholy represents a complicated ambiguity that finds itself a persistent theme within Turkish literature. In the rendering of memory a literary motif, there is the suggestion by Astrid Erll that the novel is a valuable source of communicating the “imaginative creation of past-life worlds, the transmission of images of history, the negotiation of competing memories, and the reflection about processes and problems of cultural memory.” By assessing Pamuk’s autobiographical text, Istanbul: Memories and the City, Kuğu Tekin describes Istanbul as acting upon the writer’s subconscious as a source of identity formation. However, because of the visual aspects of Pamuk’s texts, it can also be interpreted as a visual archive. Pamuk’s narration of Istanbul is further described through a constant presence of black-and-white imagery that speaks to visual traditions, such as through European painting. The use of visual references such as photographs and descriptive imagery has led Slavica Srbinska to refer to Pamuk’s text as a “visual archive

52 Almond, “Islam, Melancholy, and Sad, Concrete Minarets: The Futility of Narratives in Orhan Pamuk’s The Black Book,” 76.
55 Göknar, Orhan Pamuk, Secularism and Blasphemy, 230.
56 Although the theme of melancholy in this literature review has only been noted in reference to Pamuk, it also can be observed in many of Shafak’s novels, too. However, I only mention Pamuk here due to his direct confrontation with the term hüzün, the Turkish word for melancholy, in his autobiographical text, Istanbul: Memories and the City (A more in-depth analysis of Pamuk’s autobiographical text will take place in Chapter 2 of the dissertation.). As a result, reviewing scholars’ approach to Shafak’s text through the theme of psychology or melancholy is not directly relevant, nor useful.
– an archive that undoes the boundaries between private and public [...]”.

Memory, then, becomes an implicative element in the author’s narration of Istanbul’s modernization process. In her dissertation, Mallory Katherine Koci describes Pamuk’s memories of Istanbul as occurring in the form of “cultural flashbacks,” meaning that the city’s ruins and end-of-empire melancholy are equally contributive to his relationship with Istanbul as an agent that is influential to the determination of his destiny. In reference to *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2006), Shafak is cited by Professor Dr. Hasan Baktr and lecturer Tuba Demir as using postmodern narrative techniques such as the use of various character voices, to evoke Turkey’s multicultural, Ottoman narrative, especially in relation to the question of minority culture within Turkish social life. Walter Andrews explains that Pamuk’s interest in memory as a motif in his study of Istanbul and identity reaches beyond the boundaries of “harmless nostalgia,” and is rather a matter of how stories of the past are preserved:

> Those stories are what enable us to know ourselves, our place in the world, to approach the mystery of why we are here. They justify what we do and point out paths we will follow as individuals, as nations, as societies. And I am also reminded, over and over again, that memory – all memory – is a matter of creation and imagination, not of truth.

In the Turkish novel, the implementation of memory as a literary theme is deeply rooted in the pursuit of identifying the authentic Turk and presenting them as indicative of framed portrayals of the nation. Cultural memory creates a sense of community, but also informs one’s awareness of themselves as subjects of the nation. Actions, choices, and thoughts are pursued by individuals not without reason, but based on pasts and memories. The image of Istanbul allows the Turkish novelist to navigate between the complexities and contradictions that have rendered identity an unreliable phenomenon and produce an illustrative narrative.

As I briefly mentioned in the introduction of this literature review, scholarship on Turkish contemporary literature has treated the novel as a space of negotiating Turkey’s most pivotal and

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60 Mallory Katherine Koci, “Istanbul: Redefining Topoi and Establishing the City as Character in Contemporary Turkish Novels” (Michigan: ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, 2009), 6.

61 Hasan Baktr and Tuba Demir, “Female Historiography: Re-writing Armenian-Turkish Conflict from a Historical and Meta-fictional Point of View in Elif Shafak’s *The Bastard of Istanbul*,” *Journal of Language and Literature Education* [Dil ve Edebiyat Eğitim Dergisi] 2, no.10 (April 2014):124, Proquest.

influential aspects of culture, geo-politics, and history. However, there appears to be an unawareness, or perhaps a hazy and shadowy understanding that oftentimes, the banal and the very basic components of the sensory world around us may be just as important in understanding the boundaries of individual and collective identity, and how gender is pivotal in understanding how men and women interact within urban space, further complicating the quest to define identity. As a result, my dissertation is interested in rendering this insignificance as significance, therefore introducing a new way of looking at the perceptual world and the identity that is projected upon it as a gendered phenomenon. I am interested in fictional characters confrontations with the world of Istanbul, citing how they negotiate the city as a space of comprehending their Turkishness. Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk are distinctive authors whose novels are a space for framing the Turkish everyday experience according to historical and geo-political conditions. Through the everyday experiences of their characters, Shafak and Pamuk archive Istanbul’s transformation, chronicling the varying events and pivotal moments that have led to a whirlwind identity narrative. By recognizing the symbolism and theoretical nature of Shafak’s and Pamuk’s characters, plots, narrations, and settings, I go on to identify the distinctions that are revealed between men and women and the qualities attached to gender that illustrates Turkishness as a phenomenon that is not only attached to urban space but rather how men and women distinctively experience that space.
IV Methodology: Towards an Approach to Gendered Turkishness

My investigation into Gendered Turkishness is complex, drawing upon a diverse array of literary sources spanning various academic disciplines. Throughout my dissertation, I meticulously concentrate of distinct disciplines including aesthetics, everyday studies, feminist critique, and socio-cultural analysis. To bring together these disparate threads of though, I implement close textual analysis and several annotations of selected works by Shafak and Pamuk, alongside a thorough examination of relevant secondary literature. Delving into the connections between gender and Turkish identity, I analyze how characters navigate the evolving social landscape of Istanbul, shedding light on rooted gender norms. In this methodology section, I am particularly interested in the insights of European intellectuals including Ben Highmore, Henri Lefebvre, and Simone de Beauvoir, whose theories inform my approach to identity as a scholarly pursuit. These scholars have intertwined notions of identity across disciplines, notably within everyday studies and feminist discourse, which are central to my dissertation. I intent to carefully explore the evolving significance of the everyday in scholarship, leading to my hypothesis that both Shafak and Pamuk emphasize the centrality of the everyday to identity formation, often foregrounding the lives of ordinary individuals to illuminate the nuances that shape inhabitants’ sense of belonging. By implementing narrative analysis and literary critique, I will delve into the structural and aesthetic dimensions of selected passages, discerning how quotidian experiences are unveiled through Shafak’s and Pamuk’s narratives to bring about broader questions of human experience. Moreover, I will examine the gendered dimensions of Turkish identity, examining how the depiction between masculine and feminine spheres shapes experience in both private and public realms. By unraveling the novel’s capacity to simultaneously subvert and confront the hidden realities of everyday life, I aim to establish a deeper understanding of the interplay between narrative form, identity politics, and lived experiences in the works of Shafak and Pamuk.

The trivial and boring aspects of the everyday is the position from which Ben Highmore’s Everyday Life and Cultural Theory approaches the topic of the quotidian.63 In the following passage, Highmore uses keywords that elicit a sense of repetition to refer to everydayness:

63 Ben Highmore, Everyday Life and Cultural Theory (London: Routledge, 2001)
[...] those most repeated actions, those most traveled journeys, those most inhabited spaces that make up, literally, the day to day. This is the landscape closest to us, the world most immediately met. But with this quantifiable meaning creeps another, never far behind: the everyday as value and quality – everydayness.64

Highmore uses adjectives such as “most,” “day to day,” and “repeated” to create an environment of repetition, and detail the habituality involved in actions, locations, and other experiences that leads to “everydayness,” as a term that is used to describe the usual and forgettable tendencies that make up one’s everyday world and how they navigate about spaces, both private and public. Literary techniques such as allusion, satire, metaphors, symbols, intertextual references, and synecdoche’s are used by the authors for the deceptive, enigmatic, and complicated illustration of everyday life in Istanbul. Apart from the reality and banality, the question of unpredictability is another characteristic of the everyday that will take form in Shafak and Pamuk through a variety of stylistic measures, especially as the writers describe characters’ feelings of alienation from themselves as well as from the city of Istanbul. Urban space is an inherently significant element of everyday studies because it is within the city that the everyday engulfs the individual and brings about the question of one peculiar characteristic of the everyday that is commonly overlooked: unpredictability. For the French sociologist Henri Lefebvre, the suddenness and unexpectedness of the everyday is an inescapable presence that is constitutive of fleeting and unstoppable moments. In the following passage, Lefebvre describes our lack of choice and the inescapability that renders the everyday rather stifling, yet also unstable:

How can everyday life be defined? It surrounds us, it besieges us, on all sides and from all directions. We are inside and outside it. No so-called ‘elevated’ activity can be reduced to it, nor can it be separated from it. Its activities are born, they grow and emerge; once they have left the nourishing earth of their native land, not one of them can be formed and fulfilled on its own account. In this earth they are born. If they emerge, it is because they have grown and prospered. It is at the heart of the everyday that projects become works of creativity. 65

However, the everyday experience is not simple, nor can it be broken down into a short series of social interactions, travels, and feelings because it is everywhere at all times, yet we remain unable to hold onto it for any period of time due to its fleeting nature. Lefebvre observes the contradictory elements rooted in defining the everyday, including, “illusion versus truth” and “power versus helplessness.”66 Within the geographical landscape, humdrum actions have the

64 Highmore, Everyday Life, 1.
66 Lefebvre, Critique of Everyday Life, 43.
ability to glean profound cultural reflections of a society, rendering the everyday an exciting approach to Shafak’s and Pamuk’s texts. The creativity of this practice is a combination of aspects of life – political, cultural, private – a necessity for unlocking the hidden aspects of the self, and its relationship with the immediate environment. What is interesting about the everyday is that it blurs the boundaries of contexts, classes, and worlds, making transparent the details which point to a greater importance of seemingly insignificant experiences to the formation of identity. Such details are not regularly categorized within levels of importance, nor significance. So, in the novel, when minute ideas and seemingly banal actions are described, a feeling of relatability, yet also surprise is felt by many readers. Michel de Certeau mentions the particulars of everyday life that manifests itself in fiction:

As indexes of particulars – the poetic or tragic murmings of the everyday – ways of operating enter massively into the novel or the short story, most notably into the nineteenth-century realist novel. They find there a new representational space, that of fiction, populated by everyday virtuosities that science doesn’t know what to do with and which becomes the signatures, easily recognized by readers, of everyone’s micro-stories.67

De Certeau defines fiction as a cultural medium that seeks to elucidate the intricacies of the everyday. The novel has the capability, unlike reality itself, to overshadow segments of life, and draw attention to fine details in a manner that makes one rethink their surroundings. As narratives develop into complex storylines with characters that undergo very real changes and experiences, they create a sense of awareness of the commonness of sensory experiences and everyday interactions between individuals through its literary increased emphasis on details and descriptions. The use of narrative voice demonstrates that the narrator is from another world, another time, another memory in a way that does not renders the absorption of the story by the reader as a productive venture that seeks to intensify awareness of surroundings.

Throughout my dissertation, I will often turn my attention to the role of the female in Istanbul and how her experience in the city is influenced and reduced by patriarchal authority. As I will assess throughout my dissertation, Turkishness becomes a gendered phenomenon in Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk through the comparative representations of male and female experiences within urban space. Feminist criticism is a centuries long tradition in literature that can be traced all the way back to the British writer and academic, Virginia Woolf. In her 1929 text for

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instance, *A Room of One’s Own*, Woolf speaks to the subject of gender roles and its inhibitive impact on women’s liberties, speaking to the author’s belief in women’s abilities to have identities independent of men. The protagonist, Judith, expresses her worry that due to her gender, her desire to be a writer will never be fulfilled because of her domestic duties such as baring children, tending to the home, and other miscellaneous chores. Within the novels studied in this dissertation, gender boundaries are constructed and narrated through the coalescence of male and female narrators that’s creates a paradigm within which to explore how gender influences and underlines everyday perceptions and experiences in Istanbul. In a world that still appears to be controlled and dominated by the male perspective, Pam Morris explains that “women are taught to think as men, to identify with a male point of view, and to accept as normal and legitimate a male system of values one of whose central principles is misogyny.” However, what my dissertation endeavors to accomplish is to reevaluate the city of Istanbul through the lens of both men and women, effectively distinguishing how the gaze of the male manipulates the female everyday experience. Furthermore, I look to undermine the established power relations that has rendered the male’s overt dominance within society, which have intercepted both private and public life including within the family environment, the woman’s ability to obtain medical procedures such as abortions, and the woman’s role within urban space. There exists a coalescence between the woman and her environment in so much as to speak of women in society from a critical perspective can be translated into an evaluation of the ways in which women as a collective group correspond to the sociocultural and geo-political elements that exist in the urban space which they inhabit. I refer to women as a “collective” here because wheat draws the female characters in the selected novels together in this dissertation is their shared experiences of being objectified or oppressed through male-dominated power structures.

Within the feminist criticism that I choose to apply throughout the dissertation I am most concerned with the coalescence between the gender discourse and the action of looking – the gaze - and the psychological sentiments that are thus developed. In Shafak’s and Pamuk’s texts, I am interested in assessing the gendered differences in characters’ experiences in Istanbul, and how these described perceptions are influential in the representation of identity. As Rosa Nogués

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68 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own* (Boston: Mariner Books Classics, 1989 [1929]).
explains in *Revisiting the Gaze,* “[…] the fact that representation is key in the constitution of the subject makes the analysis of cultural representations of women both urgent and necessary.”\(^7^0\) The interactions between males and females within the fictional world are often shaped by the system of power that is facilitated by Turkey’s cultural history. The focalizations of the selected novels are mixed between male and female characters as the authors illustrate varying experiences within Istanbul across different points in history and under distinct sociopolitical contexts. I will use feminist criticism to understand how the patriarchal system undermines female characters’ ability for choice, freedom, and agency within the cityscape. Definitions connecting to feminism touch upon issues of sexual autonomy, power relations, gendered identities, and social class and traditions. To secure the stabilization of society, the domestic space, the union of marriage, and the importance of creating families led to a distinction between men and women which ultimately formed the existence of identities based on biological sex. The subject of gender is of particular importance to the identity discourse because the dynamics of a culture’s structure is a historically distinct experience from female to male. According to Nira Yuval-Davis, “Gender relations are perceived to be at the heart of the discourse on nations and nationalism.”\(^7^1\) The boundaries between men and women within culture points to the importance of gender and the distinct roles of men and women that are brought upon societal expectations. Oystein Gullvåg Holter describes gender as a “social psychological link between the individual and the collective.”\(^7^2\) To navigate the power relations observed that has led to the exploitation of women within patriarchal systems I consider Simone de Beauvoir’s writings on feminist criticism. It is in fact because of certain circumstances such as abuses under patriarchy, including exploitation, objectification of women, and gender-based violence that feminism becomes a crucial field of study.

In the introduction of *The Second Sex,* de Beauvoir explains her decision in writing a book about the status of men and women, “If I want to define myself, I first have to say, ‘I am a woman’; all

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other assertions will arise from this basic truth.”  

Throughout _The Second Sex_, de Beauvoir builds upon the argument that the truths underlying humanity can be reduced to the subject of men and women, with men being the prevailing overarching power. She continues to make the compelling observation related to the oppression of women stating “[…] she was never a peer for man; her power asserted itself beyond human rule: she was thus outside of this rule. Society has always been male; political power has always been in men’s hands.” The establishment of gender roles is described by de Beauvoir as one that is not simply ascribed at birth, but rather is one which has become socio-culturally defined by external stimuli, which becomes evident in her use of language to show that the power of women and men is developed through environmental conditions. Throughout her feminist critique, de Beauvoir refuses to subject herself as a woman who is powerless to the powerful male, and rather positions the idea of gender as one that is socially developed. In her study of feminism, Bell Hooks defines feminism as “a movement to control sexism, sexist oppression and exploitation.” Gender occupations including professional as well as domestic create cultural and societal expectations based on biological sex. As a result, it becomes evident that gender is not only a concept of biology but is also largely created by the external environment which becomes enhanced in nations where patriarchy is the pillar of society. Diana Koester’s studies on the power struggle of women in relation to men draws a boundary between the roles of each gender under sociocultural conditions, “gender relations are power relations that to be a woman means to be powerless (quiet, obedient and accommodating) and to be a real man is being powerful (outspoken, in control, able to impose his will) and that gender roles preserve power inequalities.” Shafak acknowledges the feminist tone in her writing and attributes it to her Turkish roots:

Most of our model of thinking is based on dualities. Normal-abnormal, East-West, traditional-modern, feminine-masculine…As feminist writers, I think we should be aware of these dualities and see how they operate not only outside our communities but also inside us, inside our minds, our lives.

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73 de Beauvoir, _The Second Sex_, 5.
74 de Beauvoir, _Second Sex_, 80.
75 Bell Hooks, _Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics_, (New York: Routledge, 2015), vii.
Shafak’s portrayal of the world which she narrates defines the marginalized, the oppressed, and the misunderstood. Her evident focus on the importance of gender and how it is affected by dichotomies including those such as geography lends itself an essential element to her writing, and therefore becomes useful to this dissertation because, as will be further developed, all the novels written by Shafak that are studied, largely focus on how gender facilitates characters relationships and intimacy within Istanbul. The emphasis that is placed on conflicts of identity exists in the narrative structure to underline how the boundaries between male and female establish how Gendered Turkishness can exist and therefore become a subject of academic study. The image, or description of the female within the texts offer a telling account of how the female character is gazed upon by the male, which is often an allusion to sexuality and the traditional dominance that the male practices over an expectedly acquiescent female. Within the texts that I study throughout the dissertation, I identify in Shafak’s and Pamuk’s novels a heightened emphasis on the narrator’s attention to gender specificity which often concerns the everyday action of looking or gazing within urban space. The experience of fixation is a common theme that pervades the selected novels – a fixation with Istanbul that is produced in various forms between the male and female viewer.

The novels and theoretical works that I study throughout this dissertation indicates the conflicting and coalescing of urban space with identity, and furthermore demonstrates how femininity and masculinity becomes a dichotomy that stipulates the ways in which people live. Words and their manipulation into metaphors, allusions, and descriptions can regulate, cast doubt on, and reformulate ways of grasping material reality and the various power structures it is controlled by. Shafak and Pamuk are compelling Turkish figures to study in the unraveling of the boundaries of Turkish identity because they satirize national historiography and gendered power structures and in doing so, divulge to their audiences the fluctuating nature of Turkishness. Studying the overlooked details that attach an individual to their perceptual environment has led me to figure this dissertation as a fascinating project of not only traversing the history and culture of Istanbul, but also its everyday life from the fictional world of Shafak and Pamuk.78 I approach

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78 Throughout the dissertation I will likely return to the themes introduced in this section on methodology. However, I will not particularly reference the scholars that were introduced but will instead elaborate on their conceptions of the significance of the insignificance of the everyday. As a result, I will further study how the banal, the ordinary -
Gendered Turkishness through themes relevant within everyday studies to explore how Shafak and Pamuk write Istanbul as a protagonist that not only changes, but also changes the people and world around it, rendering identity an unstable human phenomenon. To follow, I will outline the form of the dissertation by communicating the key research questions that will be addressed in the contextual chapter to follow, and the proceeding three chapters which seek to theoretically analyze a selection of Shafak’s and Pamuk’s oeuvres as well as their nonfiction.
V  Form of the Dissertation

The dissertation unfolds through a structured framework that compromises of a contextual chapter and three analytical chapters, each which are dedicated to an in-depth exploration of select novels by Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk. These literary works become nuanced elements that reflect themes central to the discourse on Gendered Turkishness, portraying the intricate relationship that exists between societal norms and their subversion. The themes of identity, patriarchy, power dynamics, and spectatorship emerge as significant themes that become crucial for the unraveling of the complex framework of Turkish identity formation through the lens of gender relations. To trace my logic in choice of novel, I often pause during close readings to determine the stylistic components of the text to relevant theoretical readings, which will typically be outlined in the first section of each chapter. I shift between novel and theory to respect the structure of the dissertation as a study of the components that create a sense of “Gendered Turkishness”, a phrase I return to in my pursuit to understand how Shafak and Pamuk frame various vignettes of Turkish identity that are attached to the gender dichotomy. I present to my audience my observations of the selected novels, which I explore regarding cultural contexts and theoretical research that I perform within feminist studies and everyday studies, with brief mentions to theoretical criticism relating to historiography, urban space and surrealism. In all four chapters of the thesis, my objective is to demonstrate how the selected novels engage with concepts of identity, and how everyday life finds itself within the framework of defining Turkishness. My research intends to further discourses on the involvement of fiction within the overlapping and politicized discourses surrounding identity and its representation across culture. In my quest to critically investigate what it means for Turkishness to be a gendered phenomenon, I must first provide a cultural and geo-political context, and outline Turkey’s historical relationship with the dynamics of its identity.

The first chapter of the dissertation, “Turkishness: A Socio-Cultural Discourse” briefly contextualizes the environment within which Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk produce their novels. I define key terms and historical periods that have been absorbed within Shafak’s and Pamuk’s narrative styles. I introduce readers to Turkey’s recent history, especially the task of modernization and Turkification that predominately took place between the years 1923 and
1950. I describe the task of identity reconstruction that occurred during this period and narrow my focus on the revolutionary transformations that took place on the levels of culture, religion, and politics. This chapter will be written for the purposes of introducing readers to some of the important and influential elements of Turkish history, which are necessary to be aware of to proceed into close readings of Shafak’s and Pamuk’s texts. I clarify my usage of the term “Turkishness” as a loosely understood term that is negotiated with in Shafak’s and Pamuk’s oeuvres. As a result, I explain that Turkishness throughout the dissertation is not a term that will be distinctively bounded by political discourse even though it is necessary to acknowledge the presence of politics in identity, but rather one that is driven by cultural and social circumstances, especially as they appear within Istanbul’s cosmopolitan landscape. As a means to introduce the reader to Turkey’s history and numerous binaries and dichotomies that render Turkishness an ongoing discourse, this chapter is separated into two sections in which I assess Turkey’s history since the fall of the Ottoman Empire and identify the complications that exist between Islam and secularism. I will also turn to the interrelated changes that women’s experience within the nation has undergone which I describe as a subversion of the cultural norms that rendered women submissive subjects during the Ottoman Empire. This chapter will remain brief and, as I stated earlier, is present for the purposes of outlining to the reader some of the important elements in Turkey’s recent history, and which will be later revisited in the analytical chapters of the dissertation.

In the first analytical chapter, “Istanbul as a City of Metaphors: Geography and the Perception of Belonging” I form a methodology in line with Ben Highmore’s conception of the “metaphor city”, which expresses cities as creations that are determined by a succession of meanings.\(^{79}\) I not only study Istanbul as a city in which people live but understand it as a space within which identity is staked and reformulated. Istanbul is characterized as a metropolis that can be reduced to ongoing sensory experiences: touch, taste, feel, sight, sound. I engage with fictional characters’ experiences in Istanbul and how they process the city as a determinant of their fate, and therefore of their Turkishness. Istanbul’s aesthetics and geographical position, as a gateway between the Western and Eastern worlds results in a study of the many metaphors and literary categorizations that have been used to describe Istanbul. Before directly engaging with Shafak’s

\(^{79}\) Highmore, *Cityscapes: Cultural Readings in the Material and Symbolic*, 5.
or Pamuk’s texts, I study the importance of geography to the question of belonging. This takes the form of assessing the East-West binary that has led many Istanbullites to question to which part of the world they belong: Europe or Middle East? Istanbul: Memories and the City (Pamuk), The Bastard of Istanbul (Shafak), and A Strangeness in My Mind (Pamuk) are the literary works that, alongside theoretical analyses, will lead me to write the following thesis: identity is bounded largely by geography, meaning that elements of belonging or relating to inhabitants’ Turkishness occurs in tandem with the perception of belonging to Istanbul itself. Pamuk’s sensory experiences symbolize his attachment to the city as he relays to his readers how the city is a projection of himself. In The Bastard of Istanbul, Shafak continues to implement geography as a literary motif as she explores the many layers that inform Istanbul’s culture as one that is dependent upon its in-between existence as a bridge between East and West without overlooking that woman figure’s experience of the cityscape is bounded by the male spectator. A Strangeness in My Mind leads to a reinterpretation of the French term, flâneur. I remain concentrated on the expectations of gender, and how existing as a woman in urban space is a largely different experience from that of the male. The woman characters that exist in these novels is addressed through a visit to the theme of the male-centered gaze, and how ideas of looking vary between men and women. The storyline of each of the novels in this chapter are important because they present different metaphors used to categorize Turkishness, with Istanbul acting as the protagonist taking on diverse characteristics and evoking unique experiences in Istanbullites.

In the following chapter, “Tequila Leila’s, Galip’s, and Celâl’s ‘Profane Illuminations’” I ask the following question: In what ways is the quotidian and sensory experiences a reliant relationship? This area of my thesis seeks to present to readers the ways in which the ordinary everyday may be rendered revolutionary, briefly introducing into the dissertation the concept of surrealism. The first section considers the process of rendering the insignificant as significant by engaging with theoretical readings including those of André Breton, Sigmund Freud, and Walter Benjamin. The two analytical sections of this chapter traverse Shafak’s 10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This

80 In titling this chapter as such, I would like to acknowledge that “Profane Illumination” comes about in considering Walter Benjamin’s use of the term “Profane Illumination” to define how basic experiences glean to symbolize significance. This process of transformation from basic to significant, is therefore called “Profane Illumination.” This phrase will be further clarified in this chapter, so defining it remains brief here, yet necessary for purposes of clarification.
Strange World and Pamuk’s The Black Book. Istanbul, in both texts, is presented as an eerie and mystical place where identities become a space of confrontation, and lead protagonists into an epistemological kind of rabbit hole. In the second section where I closely read Shafak’s text, I am prevalently concerned with how symbolism and metaphors of urban space lead to divisions of the feminine experience in the city, which is particularly illustrated through the protagonist being thrown into the city as a sex worker. In following section when I closely read The Black Book, I traverse how the protagonist’s search for his wife is reflected to the reader through a male-centered gaze. As I study these two novels, I continue to pose questions in relation to details of characters, landscapes, and events. Narrative structure becomes important because it is through literary aesthetics that the novelists experiment with numerous themes relevant to Turkish life, including the treatment of women in Turkey, the effects of Westernization on Turkish citizens, and the misfortunes suffered by refugees in the country.

Chapter four, “The Museum of Turkishness: A Double Staging of Identity Representation” considers the novel as synonymous with the museum as both representing institutions where Turkishness is archived and curated to embody a narrative of the individual’s place within nation. I assess the archive as part of a process that is deeply rooted in the individual will to validate the importance of objects over others for the purposes of communicating to the reader, or viewer, a particular narrative that speaks to how a nation is illustrated. This leads me to think of Shafak’s and Pamuk’s texts as symbolic of a Museum of Turkishness. The first section primarily explores the novelist-curator binary. I introduce the idea of Shafak and Pamuk acting as collectors of everyday sensory experiences who thereafter take these everyday experiences from their context of origins, and produce a novel from them, very similar to the process of museum curation. I argue that the process of archiving the everyday is an aesthetic strategy for the novelists to express the numerous forms that Turkishness may take. In this chapter, I study three novels: The Museum of Innocence (Pamuk), The Flea Palace (Shafak), and Three Daughters of Eve (Shafak). Between these novels, I identify the collector figure and draw comparisons between them, seeking to position each collector as an alienated individual who desperately hoards for the sake of archiving the past and holding onto a kind of authority over choice of self. Kemal in The Museum of Innocence and Madam Auntie in The Flea Palace are figures who experience a tremendous amount of loss in their life, and it is only through an
unhealthy relationship with every day, consumerist objects that they can hold onto their sanity. Gender as a literary technique finds itself particularly in *The Museum of Innocence* as the protagonist comes to replace his desire to possess a younger woman of a different class through commodities. In studying the protagonist of *Three Daughters of Eve*, Peri, I am interested in the presence of a handbag, a polaroid, and a God-journal as objects which become artifacts that lead Peri to rethink her Turkishness. Gender is also a subject of research in this section, though in a lesser magnitude as I visit subjects of the gaze and its translation to the reader through theories of fashion and dress that I theoretically address with the help of Simone de Beauvoir’s writings. Through the procedure of observation, recontextualization, and narration, Shafak and Pamuk represent Turkishness in compelling and unique ways that affirm their interest in subverting the expectations that identity is a confined concept.

Each of the three analytical chapters of this dissertation includes theoretical studies that introduce the central themes significant to the chapters: Istanbul and belonging, the surrealist experiment and the profane illumination, and the museum-novel binary. Through Elif Shafak’s and Orhan Pamuk’s fiction, Turkishness and the everyday are intertwined systems of thought to navigate the frames of Gendered Turkishness, and what it means to refer to identity as an imaginary construct facilitated by aesthetics, feminist criticism, and socio-cultural understandings. Referencing to Turkishness in the dissertation is interdisciplinary as I relate present scholarship within numerous fields from the humanities and social sciences to create a contextual framework within which to navigate between the writing style, plots, characters, and conflicts of the selected novels.
VI Conclusion

As this dissertation unfolds, I trace the engagement of Shafak’s and Pamuk’s literature with Istanbul’s socio-cultural environment, illustrating how both writers communicate to their audience the burdens faced by females. As a space of recontextualizing Turkish identity, the novel becomes and insightful and instrumental means from which to evaluate expressions of Turkish identity. In my exploration of Gendered Turkishness, I draw upon theoretical frameworks and recent scholarly discourse that positions Turkish identity within the academic disciplines of aesthetics, geography, and history. All of the novels that I study demonstrate an awareness of identity as a literary theme that can be recontextualized and therefore become a means with which to explore identity as a dynamic subject. In later chapters, I will consider the slight anomalies and even disagreements that emerge because of contrasting approaches to cultural representation, as well as the geopolitical undercurrents that portray the intersections of Easter and Western influences on identity formation. The transformation of lived experiences into fictional narratives exemplifies Shafak’s and Pamuk’s authorial voice, which aids in the facilitation of a dialogue between adverse political, social, and cultural climates. In the next chapter, I will proceed to begin the unraveling process to understand how the novel has been used as a mechanism from which to evaluate the contemporary Turkish psyche, and its political and cultural visions as a boundary space that borders Europe’s progress and the Middle East’s enchantment.
CHAPTER 1: TURKISHNESS: A SOCIO-CULTURAL DISCOURSE

1.1 Introduction

Turkishness (Türklük) has incited numerous ontological questions related to the discursive nature of identity. In this preliminary chapter, I evaluate the formative characteristics of Turkey’s national identity through an assessment of its compelling, unparalleled cultural history and geographical politics. I question how Turkishness is represented in the Turkish novel as an identity that is constructed by gender expectations and socio-cultural understandings. I navigate through Turkishness as an embodiment of the self to traverse the cultural, historical, and political vendettas that underly my overarching goal in writing this dissertation, which is to unravel the layers of Turkishness as they exist in Shafak’s and Pamuk’s novelistic renditions of Turkish everyday life. It is useful to point out that the origins of the term ‘Turkishness’, which is the motif around which my dissertation is framed, are most vividly pronounced in Turkey’s political conversations as well as within rhetoric surrounding foreign policy. The official narrative that the (Turkish) State has used in the pursuit of making Turkey appear as a powerful and inalienable nation-state is Article 301 of the Turkish penal code, which came into effect in June 2005.

Article 301 explains that it is a criminal offense to publicly denigrate Turkishness, the Republic, the parliament, the government, judicial institutions, and military or security organizations of the State. By 2008, the penal code received controversial backlash, mostly in relation to the ambiguity of the term ‘Turkishness.’ These criticisms came from many European nations that were still debating whether Turkey could be assimilated into the European Union. As a result, Article 301, headed by the Grand National Assembly, underwent a series of amendments. For instance, the term “Turkishness” was replaced with “Turkish nation” and the “Republic” was changed to “Republic of Turkey.” Laws on exactly how Turkishness should be categorized are yet to be clarified and would be beyond the scope of this dissertation, which is concerned with

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the cultural and aesthetic representations of Turkishness within the space of the novel. I will note at this point that throughout my dissertation I do not directly intend to undermine the State’s presentation of Turkishness as a politically motivated term. Instead, I use the term “Turkishness” to strictly refer to a unique Turkish identity that relates Turkey’s aesthetic and socio-cultural relations, therefore speaking to the idea of identity as vulnerable to dynamic interpretations, which is the point at which I turn towards a gendered understanding of Turkishness, rendering my research in field unique. I will not be debating the political origins of Turkishness, nor will I speak to the impacts Turkishness as a penal code has had on human rights and Turkey’s potential to join the European Union. I will mention Turkishness as a term to refer to an unstable atmosphere within which Turkish identity is manifested. For this reason, reference to Article 301 will not go beyond this quick mention for contextual reasons. Turkishness will be loosely used to describe the vignettes of everyday Turkish life, as they are described and curated in Turkish contemporary fiction.

“Formations of Identity in the Nation-State” introduces Turkey’s recent history following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the establishment of the Turkish Republic in the early twentieth century. There will be minor references to Ottoman culture and politics, yet only in relation to the new Republic’s nation-forming politics. I pose the following question: How has the Republic’s official ideology, Kemalism, become influential aspect to the understanding of the nation-state’s identity and how have women’s’ position in society shifted in the making of a modern nation-state. The following section is largely concerned with the capacity of religion to be an emblematic expression of Turkishness. “The Paradigm of Religion and Secularism in the Republic of Turkey” studies how the introduction of secularism into the new nation-state has thrown into question the relevance of religion to nationhood. This area of the chapter demonstrates the ideological tensions that have unraveled between Islam and secularism, which consequently, has led to an insecure relationship between the idea of secular modernity, and the preserving of Islamic traditions. This chapter prevalently deliberates Turkey as a geopolitical archive that registers refining mélanges of Turkishness. Though not all encompassing of the Ottoman and Turkish past, this contextual chapter’s analyses of cultural, historical, and political events provide important observations in the pursuit of outlining Turkishness, and to what effect it can be described as a dynamic paradox due to the ability for identity to be experienced as a
sensory phenomenon, and not solely dependent upon largely popular, recorded events. The tone of this chapter, unlike the rest of this dissertation is neutral and remains informative and important for the reader to understand prior to the analytical chapters in which I close read Shafak’s and Pamuk’s texts. I write with the intent of outlining the environment within which novels addressing Turkishness have been produced.

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84 Throughout this chapter, I am concerned with Turkey’s socio-cultural history, and am interested in relaying to the reader context, which will become useful in later chapters. Chapters 2, 3, and 4, unlike this contextual chapter, are interested in Shafak’s and Pamuk’s representations of Istanbul and Turkishness. As a result, I will note and be clear here that at no point in the dissertation do I assume an authorial position, nor do I seek to present my opinions related to Turkishness. Rather, I am interested in presenting the views of Turkish novelists’ and how they position themselves relative to Turkishness. As a result, categorizations or adjectives used to describe the Turkish state, Turkishness, or Islam are not opinions that are mine.
1.2 Formations of Identity in the Nation-State

Following World War I (1914-1918), the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the land's ultimate partitioning by colonial European powers, the resulting geographical region that would become Turkey was controlled by the Young Turks. This movement represented a critical period in the remaking of the fallen Ottoman Empire into a modern Turkish Republic due to the youth groups' revolutionary politics, especially in terms of Westernization. Modernization in the standard of Europe, for the Young Turks, was closely aligned with contemporary science, which suggested that by introducing European technologies to the nation, Turkey could be rendered as progressively competent as European nations. The Young Turk regime had lasting impacts on the remnants of the collapsing regime which took the form of a growing sense of patriotism. Referred to a constitutional movement, the Young Turks were dedicated to restoring the 1876 Ottoman Constitution because it symbolized a progressive and new government. The nationalist sentiments birthed by the Young Turk regime would remain present in the years following the formation of the Republic of Turkey. The Allied Occupation of the Ottoman Empire (1918-1922) and the National Liberation War (1919-1922), led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), thus put an official end to over six centuries of Ottoman rule. The Republic of Turkey was formally founded by Atatürk in 1923, a former officer born in Thessaloniki, Greece who governed Turkey between 1923 and 1938. Atatürk and his new government were interested in locating alternatives, such as substitutes for Islam, multiculturalism, and other unique characteristics of the past, therefore leading to a particular preference for European habits, that Turkey would ultimately seek to emulate in its culture.

The new Republic's political apparatus, Kemalism, or Atatürkism (Atatürkçülük) was named after Atatürk, and reflected the leader’s wish to orient Turkey towards the West, in the hopes that society could become increasingly modernized and turn away from its predominately Middle

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86 Hanioğlu, The Young Turks in Opposition, 18.
87 Hanioğlu, Young Turks, 28.
Eastern culture. The Kemalist narrative left a long-lasting legacy in the Turkish nation because it was not only about regime change, but rather called on citizens to change their perceptions of themselves and question whether or not they fit into the nation-state’s say in what it meant to be a Republican Turk, as opposed to an Ottoman subject. According to Furlanetto, “Kemalism associated the Ottoman empire with medieval backwardness, barbarism and religious obscurantism […].” This is not to say that the form of Turkishness proposed by Kemalism resulted in identity being reduced to an issue of being one or the other, but rather called into question how identity transformed in the transition from Empire to Republic as well as disassociating the young nation-state from its imperial history. Turkishness then became an issue of how it should be defined and from what sources it could be understood. Not long before Atatürk came to power, Ottoman identity had been often associated with pride; it was “a way of highlighting the very culture of the ruling elites,” but as Kemalism overturned the Ottoman memory, it became the Republican Turk who would be measured as the only identity surviving from the Ottoman era.

During its early years, Turkey saw a series of policies in the name of Turkification, which meant the creation of an identity that would form the core characteristics of the Republican Turk, and in effect ‘Turkify’ or make society more Turkish. It would also redirect Turkey’s position in the globalizing new world, leading to an increasing collective sense of pride within the Turkish nation and a spreading of nationalistic sentiments. For example, from grade school, children have been reminded of Atatürk’s declaration: “Turk, be proud, work and trust. […] Happy is the man who calls himself a Turk!” Nationalism, during these formative years is explained by geographer Amy Mills as being “founded on an imagined collective Turkish identity established when the Turkish state declared its sovereignty in the name of the nation.” Kemalism presented the nation with Six Arrows that led to a large array of institutional and civilizational

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developments: republicanism, secularism, nationalism, populism, statism, and revolutionism.\textsuperscript{94} Many of the reforms introduced by the State occurred on the levels of cultural engineering, including changes to appearance, language, religious representation, and social conduct. According to Serhun Al, the founders of the Republic were intent on “establishing a monolithic nationhood,” or an identity characterized by a deep sense of “assimilation and loyalty.”\textsuperscript{95} The changes made in the name of Kemalism were drastic, abrupt, and unpredictable, especially during the years of the early Republic, 1923-1950.

Kemalism implemented Turkifying policies that would enforce its Six Arrows of reform. The psychology surrounding Kemalism is grounded within areas of language, religion, physical appearance, and impressions of the European world as more in line with Turkey than the Islamic world. In November 1925, the Hat Law was passed, abolishing men’s right to wear a fez or turban, which were at the time popular head coverings that pointed to men’s Muslim faith. From then on, men were only permitted to wear European-style hats, such as fashionable fedoras.\textsuperscript{96} A strong wave of pride in being a Turkish citizen grew and spread between the State and nation, such as through the “Citizen Speak Turkish” programs.\textsuperscript{97} This campaign worked to encourage all Turkish citizens to speak only Turkish in public and renounce those who did not, creating an atmosphere of nationalistic pride in the Turkish language. In 1928, the desire to become more European was accelerated with an embracing of the European-style calendar, as well as criminal and civil laws along with processes of conduct.\textsuperscript{98} In November 1928, Atatürk endorsed the replacing of Ottoman Turkish, written with an Arabic hand, with Turkish, written with a Latin hand. Republican Turks were in effect compelled to relearn how to write, also meaning that children born during this period would have little to no connection with the past since they would not be able to read anything written during the Ottoman Empire. It is not so much a measure of Turks who would be literate and those who would not, but rather a question of how later

\textsuperscript{97} Senem Aslan, “‘Citizen, Speak Turkish!’: A Nation in the Making,” \textit{Nationalism and Ethnic Politics} 13, no. 2 (May 2007), https://doi-org.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/10.1080/13537110701293500.
\textsuperscript{98} Zürcher, \textit{Turkey: A Modern History}, 189.
generations would be able to access Ottoman texts and history if they are part of a generation who is educated according to the Latin script as opposed to the Ottoman. With one passing of law, Atatürk proved he had the capability to gloss over the 600-year life of the Ottoman Empire. The archives of the Ottoman past ran counter to the Kemalist program. In one interview, Shafak expressed a similar reaction to the socio-cultural effects of the language reform:

> Imagination shrunk, culture and information couldn’t flow from one generation to another. We have generations of people who don’t know the things their grandparents know, who cannot read the writing of their grandparents, who cannot read the names or who don’t know the meanings of the street names.⁹⁹

Shafak describes the flaw in the Kemalist language reform, that could equally apply to the other modernization projects that Kemalism endorsed. She invites readers to reassess an agenda that has been presented to the public as a progressive and modernizing mission. Despite Kemalism’s success in modernizing the deceased Ottoman State, it appears to have negatively impacted the nation’s relationship with its past and therefore created ruptures in Turkey’s identity. One’s inability to decipher street names and other titles can lead to feelings of alienation and estrangement from the immediate surroundings; something that often should not be experienced within homeland.

The subject of women during the period of transformation from centuries-long empire to newborn Republic was pervaded with a layering of discourses and significance that would go on to be felt in all areas of private and public life. As a result, gender has become a crucial element in research surrounding Turkish identity. Throughout the long years of the Ottoman Empire Madeline Zilfi describes the power structures existing between men and women as largely patriarchal: “women’s putative physical and moral weaknesses rendered them subject to men. As a general rule, women were economically dependent on men. They derived their social positions from their husbands and fathers.”¹⁰⁰ While women during the Ottoman era were most likely found working in harems or staying at home, as the Republican years evolved, women progressed into citizens of the nation.¹⁰¹ The woman’s position in society began to shift as


¹⁰⁰ Madeline Zilfi C., *Women and Slavery in the Late Ottoman Empire: The Design of Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 16.

Turkey modernized itself during the Kemalist years. In his study of women movements in Turkey, Ömer Çaha mentions the nationalist perspective of Halide Edib who describes four essential elements to being a modern Turkish woman, “She should be intelligent, nationalistic and patriotic; she should be conscious of her political rights and her liberty; she should be well educated, having the right to equal education with men; and she should be a Muslim and a modern woman.”

The woman, then, is an individual whose status has evolved and progressed, yet not to become above the male, as the male was above her during the Ottoman Empire. She is no longer expected to remain in harems nor solely in the home but is important to the making of a modern Turkish nation. Women therefore are understood to have acquired a sense of individuality that allowed them to become active agents to the new nation. According to Gül Aldıkaçtı Marshall, “the Kemalist revolution made the ‘woman question’ the center of its modern nation-making project and created a gender regime that introduced new gender policies, gender identities, and modes of conduct.” Some of the changes to women’s status during this period included allowing women the right to vote, gain a more equal position alongside men, the doing away with polygamy, the legalization of the burqa, permitting women the ability to file for divorce, access to the purchasing of property, and the chance to gain election into political positions. It can be then understood that the concept of feminism in the new Republic was born through the secularization and modernization program put in place throughout the Kemalist revolution, and that women become agents in the growth and prosperity during the nation-forming process. In conclusion to this brief analysis on the shifting role of the woman in the Kemalist years, I would like to underline my viewpoint that it is indeed the changing in how the Republic viewed woman that is symbolic of an Empire modernizing into a Republic to find a place in the Westernization project.

Since the death of the Republic’s founder, Turkey has seen a long sequence of leaders from opposing parties who have also attempted to restructure the presentation of Turkish identity, leading to the growth of conflicting political ideologies, and therefore a rather confusing and blurry conception of how inhabitants relate themselves to the nation. The portrayal of

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Turkishness as an identity that alternates between left and right, in accordance with the dominating ideology demonstrates the adaptability of identity dynamics and the inability for there to ever be a monochrome version of national identity. For example, while Atatürk was invested in a European vision of Turkey, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, the leader of the Demokrat Parti (DP) between 1950 and 1960 exhibited renewed sensitivities to the nation’s Islamic traditions. The current party that controls Turkey is the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, AKP). The semi-democratic party was founded in 2001 and led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. In control of Turkey since 2002, the AKP has submitted the nation to a series of Ottoman and Islamic discourses, evoking the country’s cultural memories. The conservative-majority party has defined itself within principles of democracy and secularism, but as it gained power it turned increasingly backwards towards Islamic ideals and pre-Republic memories. As early as the nineties, Erdoğan’s position towards the country’s socio-cultural morals has been conservative and Islamic. In 1994, Erdoğan became mayor of Istanbul, in 2003 he became Prime Minister of Turkey, and in 2014, he became Turkey’s twelfth president. As the current president of Turkey, Erdoğan has been characterized as the “new sultan.” He is described as a “symbol of strength, Islamic hegemony, and traditional Islamic values in a world under threat from Western powers and rootless, cosmopolitan ‘Westernized’ elites.” Erdoğan’s Turkey can be described as a turn from Westward, progressive politics, and a reconfirmation that Turkey may in fact belong to the Middle Eastern world because of its Islamic roots and shared Ottoman past. In Erdoğan’s regime, Istanbul is proudly described as “the East in the West, and the West in the East”, as well as a “gateway to the Orient.” While the Kemalist agenda sought a secular, Western identity, the AKP has steadily moved away from this to a reconstruction of Turkishness as overtly Muslim and conservative. Erdoğan’s faith in restoring Turkey to its

former glory is powerfully reasserted in a statement he made in 2006 for Yeni Şafak, currently a state-controlled media outlet:

> We have not rejected our past. We have always remained committed to the spiritual roots that created ourselves. We continue to establish inter-civilizational bridges while reinvigorating the centre of our civilization.\(^{110}\)

This claim to Erdoğan’s valorization of Turkey’s Islamic past places a light drape over Kemalism’s interruption of Turkey’s identity, presenting it as a distraction from the country’s past. Turkey’s Ottoman legacy, however, is shared by both Kemalists and Ottomanists. For those who exhibit longing for the Ottoman years, the past is symbolically discontinuous because it was at the point that Kemalism was born that national identity was reimagined into an image incongruent with the Ottoman memory. This kind of nostalgia that obsesses over defeat juxtaposes, recontextualizes, and seizes aspects of the Ottoman narrative in revolutionary ways, enhancing the idea of national identity as an ever-changing human invention. While the Atatürk period preferred looking forwards as a means of solidifying its identity, there also exists portions of society, such as through the AKP party, that seem to be gradually turning backwards, glorifying the Ottoman days, suggesting that the country should return to forgotten traditions.

Throughout this initial section of the chapter, it has been argued that the cultural revolution advocated by Kemalism has led to an ontological dilemma in the country in the development of a modern Turkish subject. The overarching consequences of reforming Turkishness in the model of Europe through Atatürk’s Kemalist reforms will find themselves as a recurrent theme within the Turkish contemporary novel using metaphors and other literary devices.

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1.3 The Paradigm of Religion and Secularism in the Republic of Turkey

Here, I will briefly characterize some of the elemental distinctions between Islam and secularism for the purposes of clarity, which will prove useful as I assess how both systems of belief have become influential in Turkish private and public spaces. Islam is a faith that brings together religion, politics, philosophy, and sociology, rendering it a complex and often difficult to understand framework for those unfamiliar with its intricacies. During the Ottoman Empire, the millet system was a uniquely valuable frame of laws that opened doors to inclusivity apart from Islam, and allowed communities to inherit varying levels of autonomy. This ethno-religious component of Ottoman society created an atmosphere of acceptance through the establishment of several official communities such as those for Greeks and other minorities, with the Islamic community being perceived as the prevailing authority. According to Bernard Lewis, citizens throughout the Ottoman era have been portrayed as having “submerged their identity in Islam – to a greater extent than perhaps any other Islamic people.” During the Ottoman Empire’s constitutional years (1909-1918) society experienced a somewhat modern sense of bureaucracy that allowed for an exemplary environment of acceptance under law. However, this period of peace was short-lived due to the Young Turks’ nationalistic agenda to create an authoritarian regime that would foreshadow the reformation of Turkish identity, focusing on the possibility of the Turk with one singular language, heritage – identity. Turkish scholar Soner Çağaptay acknowledges the influences religion has on nationhood today, describing it as one of the most prominent avenues to become a Turkish citizen, representing a direct contradiction of the earlier Muslim millet system favored in Ottoman Empire.

Secularism, or laiklik in Turkish, appears more closely akin to freedom and democracy, therefore easier to picture in the West due to a founding ideological grounding. Scholars working in fields of Islam tend to outline secularism as: “the acceptance of laws and other social and political

114 Hanioglu, Young Turks in Opposition.
institutions without reference to Islam, i.e. without their being derived from, or organically linked with, the principles of the Qur’an and the Sunna.”\textsuperscript{116} Secularism, which points to a separation of church and state in the likes of Christianity is not a typical characteristic of Islam, meaning that it remains quite unknown and in foreign territory, making it both a suspicious and an untrustworthy approach to governing society. Hüseyin Ekrem Ulus maintains in his dissertation that secularism is related to ideas of the “modern, modernization and the nation-state.”\textsuperscript{117} Secularism not only embodies the dividing of religion from state politics but is also characterized as “the removal of religion from public life and the establishment of complete state control over remaining institutions.”\textsuperscript{118} Secularism then could not be separated from the nationalist politics that they have manifested. In the following excerpt, Erik Zürcher describes the State under Atatürk as endeavoring to become a replacement of religion, therefore pointing to the pursuit of a Turkish identity completely severed from Islam as a centralizing faith:

> An extreme form of nationalism, with the attendant creation of historical myths, was used as the prime instrument in the building of a new national identity, and as such was intended to take the place of religion in many respects.\textsuperscript{119}

As alluded to in this passage, Kemalism epitomizes more than a political ideology. Kemalism is representative of an entire nation that would direct citizens’ relations with cultural institutions, including their use of religion in public and private life. Because of Kemalism's movement away from Ottoman tradition, secularism became a route from which to eradicate the memory of the Islamic past from every area of early-Republic life. For Atatürk’s nation-forming objectives, secularization was yet another avenue from which to dismiss religion from Turkish society and consolidate control over the country. For AI, religion and ethnicity are the two prominent components that facilitate the nation’s relationship with state enforced systems of identity, both in public and private everyday life:

> The debates over the appropriate identity of the state and whom it should represent, revolving around Ottoman, Muslim, and Turkish alternatives, likely influenced the mindset of the Republican elites as well, since the collapse of the empire came into being amid the wars and massacres over identity clashes [...].\textsuperscript{120}


\textsuperscript{118} Zürcher, \textit{Turkey: A Modern History}, 183.

\textsuperscript{119} Zürcher, \textit{Turkey}, 183.

\textsuperscript{120} AI, “An Anatomy of Nationhood and the Question of Assimilation,” 85.
It remains controversial whether secularism and the Kemalist agenda succeeded in remaking Turkishness in the image of its European neighbors, despite its almost desperate attempts to make Turkishness as a homogenous identity free from minority and Oriental symbols. Within the Muslim world, Turkey is the first country to declare secularism as a part of its official identity narrative. Throughout the initial decades of the Republic, religion was strictly brought under the control of the State because the Kemalist trajectory decided that Islamic values should have no role in policymaking. The Sharia, or Islamic law that thrived in the Ottoman past, turned into secular codes of conduct with the introduction of the Atatürk era. The Sharia not only represented the Ottoman Empire’s Islamic faith, but also manifested itself as an organized system of laws and methods of conduct. The Ottoman Constitution of 1876 had originally outlined that educational, legal, and political institutions would operate along the principles described in the Sharia. However, after the first World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Islamic politics experienced a change of ethics and integrity that amounted to a new space for conversations about the ability for democracy to be introduced and thrive in the new Turkey. In 1924, Turkish citizens realized that the introduction of secularization meant a complete break from their lifestyles. This occurred by Atatürk’s resolution to do away with Islam’s most powerful symbol of faith and order: the Caliphate.

The Caliphate had dictated life for 600 years during the Ottoman Empire, and remained accepting to multiple languages, dialects, faiths, and cultures with little to no animosity; a way of life that Robert D. Kaplan has referred to as “territorial indifference.” As early as 1924, the Caliphate, which was originally controlled by the Ottoman sultan, was abolished to make way for secularization. Considered to be a manipulative weapon of politics more than a traditional praise to the nation’s religion, the Friday sermon also underwent censorship; any and all references to the eradicated Caliphate were henceforth banned in the country. To defend his position against Islamic forms and references, Atatürk explained that without the Caliphate, Islam would no longer be a “tool of politics, in the way that has been traditional for centuries.”

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In 1925, education became State-run, and religious courts were prohibited. Kemalism’s reformist objectives led to Turkey becoming the first nation-state in the world to be secular, yet of Muslim faith. In 1926, the Republic was introduced to the Swiss civil code which would dictate the presence of religion in everyday life.\textsuperscript{125} Then, in 1931, the Republican People’s Party drafted the guiding rules of secularism that later became part of the Turkish Constitution.\textsuperscript{126}

Even in the twenty-first century, the competing missions that define Islam and secularism resurface and influence citizens’ relationship with their faith, and ultimately with their identity. Kemalism and today’s AKP party, as was assessed in the previous sections, appear as juxtapositions in Turkish society, which is further enhanced by their opposing positions to religion: “the AKP is a product of the Kemalist state and its top-down laiklik.”\textsuperscript{127} Perhaps the most clear piece of evidence that points to the distinctions between Kemalism and the AKP is the ban on the headscarf by the Constitutional Court of Turkey. Throughout the Kemalist years, the headscarf was not officially illegal, but was looked down upon because women were encouraged to wear European-styled clothes to supplement the modernization of the Republic. However, the headscarf for the woman in Turkey also could relate to the use of the dressed body to assert social status and therefore identity. In \textit{Revisiting the Gaze}, Sara Chong Kwan elaborates upon the significance of the dressed body to female identity: “Aspects of identity are expressed to others through clothing choices – constructed in accordance with or as a form of resisting, socially structured rules of dressing that link to cultural categories such as gender, age, and class.”\textsuperscript{128} The eventual outlawing of the headscarf has become not only a question of faith and a matter of politics but has also alluded to Turkey’s oscillating identity dynamics. The first officially recorded law that sought to restrict the headscarf was in 1978 when the government passed a

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\textsuperscript{127} Yavuz, Öztürk, “Turkish Secularism and Islam Under the Reign of Erdoğan,” 5.
dress code for governmental employees. Despite consistent efforts to lift the ban on the headscarf by later leaders such as Turgut Özal (1927-1993), the restrictions on women wearing headscarves following the 1980 military takeover remained in place. Even following the AKP’s introduction into the political landscape in 2002, the ban withstood resistance due to a still-strong Kemalist environment. Following a grand effort in 2008 to finally lift the ban on headscarves, Turkey’s Constitutional Court, after three years of deliberation, in 2013 finally annulled the headscarf law, allowing women wearing headscarves to enter universities and other government-run institutions. In the West, where democracy was born, one could reasonably argue that the ban on the headscarf proves a violation of human rights, and one’s choice to practice their religion as they see fit. The question of the headscarf and the ability for students to be allowed or prohibited to wear them in public institutions is a manifestation of the persistently shifting levels of religious freedom under Islamic or secularist states.

The uncertainty of the belonging of the headscarf in modern Turkish society; the inability to affirm Islam or secularism speaks to the country’s deep-rooted suspicions of inclusivity, both in terms of religion and ethnicity. Despite the Islamic memory becoming increasingly present in Turkey’s public life today undertones of the Islamic past never truly disappeared, nor were they forgotten because, as Lee Walker summarizes, “Secular Turkey is a myth because under the surface there is a different Turkey based on preserving the dominance of orthodox Sunni Islam.” According to Jenny White, Turkey’s Ottoman past and the Kemalist agenda that proceeded it has introduced a social reengineering process within which “[…] being Muslim was a cultural and ethical identity associated with being Turkish, but no longer with Kemalist nationalism.” The bounds of Turkish identity are largely mandated by the merging and divorcing of secular and Islamist ends of nationalism. The country’s political system today is

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130 Turgut Özal was the eighth president of Turkey, between 1983 and 1989.
132 A possible exception to this statement would be France. Unlike countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, in France, due to laws related to laïcité and secularism, the veil continues to be forbidden in public institutions.
brought about by this background of Islamic memories and secular impositions, meaning that religion in Turkey remains an unsettling and uncertain part of Turkish identity.
1.4 Conclusion

In this contextual chapter of my dissertation, I have suggested that because Atatürk’s modernization project was intent on eradicating pre-Republic traditions in favor for a national history that began with Atatürk himself, novels and other forms of narration become telling confessions to the unbreakable bonds between the Turkish Republic and its pre-Republic history. To the aim of highlighting Turkey’s ongoing dispute with staggering versions of national and personal identity, this chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of the revolving theories and literature on the formations of Turkishness. As I demonstrate through close readings and theoretical studies applicable to Shafak’s and Pamuk’s novels, the ability for fiction to connect with the everyday and the cityscape is a compelling method from which to define the boundaries of Gendered Turkishness. The chapter to follow will explore Istanbul as a metaphor city and visit themes including the flaneur figure and the subject of the gaze.
CHAPTER 2: A CITY OF METAPHORS: GEOGRAPHY AND THE PERCEPTION OF BELONGING

2.1 Introduction

Once upon a time, in a city referred to as “…the Gate of Happiness, the Eye of the World, the Refuge of the Universe, Polis, the City” there thrived some of the greatest empires and most affluent cultures in the world. This captivating, historical era saw six centuries of power, and a myriad of intriguing social growth that would come to shape the entire world. The city of Istanbul has a commendably alluring history that is made up of a long series of Ottoman emperors, Byzantine calligraphers, and a mystical cultural life that has brought together Eastern and Western geographies. Walking slowly through the districts and neighborhoods of the ancient, multicultural city, on the very crossroads of Europe and Asia, Istanbul discloses juxtaposing elements of Turkishness. The rhythmic sights, sounds, smells, and feelings of daily life speak to the spirit that the city brings to citizens, pointing to the mingling between the self and the perceptual world in the formation of identity, thereby bringing together geography with the individual in the question of belonging.

To relate the everyday in Istanbul with Gendered Turkishness, the concept of looking and being looked at – the gaze – becomes significant and is extensively demonstrated within the narrative structure. In the likes of Juliana Starr’s studies of men looking at women through art, I will relate spectatorship as a method of power relations. Starr explains that “visual pleasure derives from and reproduces a structure of male looking/female ‘to-be-looked-at-ness’ which replicates the structure of unequal power relations between men and women.” Throughout the narrative structure the theme of gender and its association with power structures, including patriarchy is concentrated within studies of Istanbul’s landscape and how the city places gender and identity in dialogue. Through their characters’ position within urban space, Shafak and Pamuk bring into dialogue Istanbul and Turkishness. Their texts offer an imaginative, intriguing new reality to how Istanbul is experienced, and shape the literary embodiment of Istanbul’s forms and textures.

In narrating to their readers everyday life in Istanbul, Pamuk and Shafak illustrate detailed vignettes of everyday Istanbullite’s aesthetic, cultural and social relations that lead to intimate portrayals of anxieties, conflicts, and questions of belonging within numerous spaces of the city.

In the first section of this chapter, “The Dialectics of Belonging: Istanbul as a Bridge Between East and West” I focus on the issues of space and belonging within a theoretical context that allows me to research a selection of overarching themes that are common in the articulating of Turkish identity in reality as well as identifying it in fiction. This will include elements such as the East-West dichotomy, and the metaphor of Istanbul as a bridge between Europe and Asia. The three novels that I study in this area of the dissertation include: Istanbul: Memories and the City (İstanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir, Pamuk, 2003), The Bastard of Istanbul (Shafak), and A Strangeness in My Mind (Pamuk, Kafamda Bir Tuhaflık, 2014). I am interested in how the city symbolizes identity and leads to the question, what are the effects of geography on belonging? In other words, how does urban space – Istanbul – influence the lives of its inhabitants? I wonder, in what ways is a person’s poetic sensibilities attached to a place? These questions reach similar conclusions via different channels of the Istanbullite within Istanbul: identity is indeed a matter of geography, and the destiny of Turkishness is the destiny of Istanbul. Identity is determined to be a projection of geography; Turkishness is largely attached to urban space. In “Istanbul’s Fate is the Istanbullite’s Fate: A Tale of Pamuk’s Istanbul” I ask: What are the dialectical processes involved in the city, and how are different forms of the gaze and perception of the city altered by means of everyday sensory experiences? I explore how the city’s sensibilities may occur in tandem with that of the individual. In “Istanbul as a City of Dynamism: The Female Experience in The Bastard of Istanbul” I deliberate the role of the woman in urban space and how it is compromised by the presence of the male figure. The last section, “The Postmodern Flâneur: The Episode of Walking in the City” researches the position of the flâneur in Pamuk’s A Strangeness in My Mind. I concentrate on the narrator’s writing of the city through the experiences of the subject as at once an archivist as well as a memoirist who dictates how the city is experienced. This elicits a productive analysis into the fundamental factors involved in the conceptualization of modernity and the ways in which it is described by an ordinary onlooker who seeks to understand the underlying motives of this cultural transformation.
2.2 The Dialectics of Belonging: Istanbul as a Bridge Between East and West

My theoretical inspiration in writing this chapter can be traced to the cultural sociologist, Ben Highmore’s definition of the “metaphor city,” which relays cities as dynamic and transformative spaces that are determined by meanings. Highmore elucidates on this phrase by pointing out that “the actuality of the city is its lived metaphoricity.” Urban space, as it appears through numerous techniques such as symbols and metonyms, “[...] is also a crucial aspect of the material experience of the urban – its actuality.” Urban spaces are no longer entities that are solely defined by their physical characteristics, but also through the metaphors they evoke, therefore leading to a new conception of the symbolism of city spaces. It is the metaphoricity of the city that takes on the function of template on which Turkishness is relocated and its politics are enriched. Kateri Carmola has used the metaphor of “veil” to refer to Istanbul due to the mystery and hidden aspects that conceal its ambiguous history. In studying our experiences within postmodern urban space as being evocative of the senses, Alina Tenescu observes, “Paths, alleys, towns and cities are referred to as places or spaces or bringing about peculiar landscapes; consequently, their meanings are hard to assimilate.” Urban spaces are not to be separated from the postmodern observer’s perceptual senses as they conceive of their environment in complex ways, which becomes a conceptual theme within the novel. As spaces of confusing dynamism, alternating histories, and cryptic dualisms, cities are often understood as “prime sites where identities are staked, belonging is negotiated, and rights are pursued.” Istanbul is characterized by Hülya Turgut as a “palimpsest” city where traces of various topological moments are reproduced to process changes to its identity. Andreas Huyssen reflects that discourses on cities “remain the battleground on which societies articulate their sense of past and

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137 Highmore, Cityscapes: Cultural Readings in the Material and Symbolic City, 5.
138 Highmore, Cityscapes, 5.
139 Highmore, Cityscapes, 6.
time present…Cities after all, are palimpsest of history, incarnations of time in space, sites of memory extending both in time and space.” Istanbul’s compelling synesthetic qualities are experienced in a number of ways: the mélange of languages heard in the Grand Bazaar, the weaves and turns leading from Eminönü to Galata, the loud waves of the water off the Bosphorus hitting the shores of Bebek, the quiet hum of the early morning prayer that radiates along the dirt roads from Üskudar to Ataşehir, and the constant thunder of tourists amongst the crowds in Taksim.

Istanbul’s many vignettes are each framed and illuminated by novelists in their pursuit to reveal the intricacies and often overlooked principles of Turkishness: As a prototypical figure, the Turk is described as categorically Muslim but Secular; with Eastern values by a Westward way of thinking; who is proud yet strives to be someone else, somewhere else. A myriad of opposing binaries devise the estrangement associated with Turkish national identity – East, West, modernity, tradition, Ottoman, secular, Islamic, melancholic, nostalgic, public, private. The quest for identity is nested with abstractions amid an obscure blending of languages, practices, and religions. Often illustrated as a subject of space, identity is a “geographical expression of the interactions between individual action and abstract historical processes.” Istanbul is a city that is resistant to comprehension, and is thought of as being “mired in layers of conspiracy and counter-conspiracy.” The sociopolitical climate in the city is layered in contradictions because it appears as a place that “resists understanding” and is thereby “resistant to characterization.” In “City Imaginaries” Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson illustrate the process of the imagined city, or the city as it has been illustrated within various mediums, including the novel. Observations of this structure of representation are beneficial to the observer because it allows new perspectives to be formed which then “self consciously disrupt the boundaries between real and imagined cities, and discursive and non-discursive terrains.” This reflects the need for retrospective

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147 Carmola, “Istanbul: City of Layers and Counter-currents,” 3.
analyses and interpretations within fictitious accounts of Istanbul, and a questioning of the techniques used to produce a paradoxical illustration of Turkishness.

The alternation between perspective, spatiality, and temporality – the collective and the personal, the past and the present, the East and the West for Alejandro Morales sees a persistent “juxtaposition, syncretism, and coalescence, which originate a prosperity of referential codes,” indicating the complicated nature involved in articulating a city’s identity in relation to its citizen’s identity, or Istanbul’s identity in relation with the Istanbullite’s identity.\(^\text{150}\) In his study of the cityscape John Freely addresses Istanbul’s unique geographical position, “Istanbul is the only city in the world that stands astride two continents. The main part of the city, which forms the south-easternmost extremity of Europe, is separated from its suburbs in Asia by the Bosphorus, which flows through a deep cleft that separates the two continents in the north-western corner of Turkey.”\(^\text{151}\) Per Zeynep Gûlsah Çapan and Ayşe Zarakol, “The use of the metaphor of the bridge is indicative of the binary constructions between the East and the West in that it creates a division and underlines the dynamics of not only connecting the East and West but also separating them.”\(^\text{152}\) The main part of the city, which forms the south-easternmost extremity of Europe, is separated from its suburbs in Asia by the Bosphorus, which flows through a deep cleft that divides the two continents in the north-western corner of Turkey.\(^\text{153}\) Istanbul can be considered a “boundary space” due to its embodiment as a nexus between Eastern and European relations.\(^\text{154}\) However, this is not the primary issue, but rather an obvious acknowledgement referring to the binaries that afford the city a unique subject of research, as Mansel points out, “At once Muslim and secular, Asian and European, traditional and modern, Istanbul is again, as in its Ottoman past, a crossroads of the world.”\(^\text{155}\) This bridging of opposing geographical landscapes becomes a vital component to Turkey’s “structural ontological


\(^{153}\) Freely, *Istanbul: The Imperial City*, 3.


\(^{155}\) Mansel, *Constantinople: City of the World’s Desire*, 432.
insecurity.”¹⁵⁶ This kind of discomfort represents the precursors to one’s estrangement, and even exile from homeland, both from the recent Ottoman memory as well as the overshadowing of the modern Republic’s restructuring thesis. The Turkish novel presents a reassessment of identity and exile through in-betweenness, and a psychological estrangement that results from feeling both East and West, but also feeling of neither the East nor the West. In the following section, I engage with Pamuk’s autobiographical text to assess how the novelist has negotiated between his identity as an Istanbullite, and how his relationship with the cityscape as a Westernized male has impacted his perception of the socio-cultural world around him, adding to his fascination with urban space as a subject that could be reproduced in his novels.

2.3 Istanbul’s Fate is the Istanbulite’s Fate: A Tale of Pamuk’s Istanbul

In *Istanbul: Memories and the City* Orhan Pamuk portrays to his readers the city that he has referred to as home for over fifty years, despite intermittent exiles and relocations to various European and American cities. Throughout his memoir, Pamuk visits themes that take the reader on a maze through Istanbul’s rich history, and evolving culture which often is projected to the reader through the writer’s childhood and adulthood as he navigates and gazes at the city he has grown to see as an extension of who he is. However, the way in which he describes Istanbul’s tired streets, demolished homes, shabby shops, and broken cobblestones is romantic, rendering Istanbul a subject of the reader’s desire. In using Istanbul as a literary motif similar to other literary urban landscapes such London, Paris, Dublin, and St. Petersburg, Pamuk situates the city not only as a physical setting for his novels but rather as a persistent presence that shapes destinies, echoing other narrative writers such as Charles Dickens, Gustave Flaubert, James Joyce, and Fyodor Dostoevsky. Pamuk makes mention of both Turkish modernist writers and nineteenth century European writers in their textualization of the cityscape including Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, Yahya Kemal, Gustave Flaubert, Gérard de Nerval, and Théophile Gautier. Throughout his memoir, Pamuk, as a male inhabitant and walker in the city, deeply expresses his experiences gazing at the city’s changes and its beauty, as a relic of the Ottoman Empire. The gaze, for Pamuk is not unique to his perceptions of Istanbul but is rather a theme that has influenced the writer following his readings of popular European and Russian novels. For example, in his collection of essays, *The Naïve and Sentimental Novelist* Pamuk analyzes a scene from Leo Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* when the protagonist gazes from a window on a return home on a night train. Pamuk speculates this passage due to Anna’s observations of the world outside the window rushing by. He implements Tolstoy’s novel to address how the literary genre distorts the spectator’s visual perception as they find themselves looking at the world through fiction.

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On Chapter 26: “The Melancholy of the Ruins: Tanpınar, and Yahya Kemal in the City’s Poor Neighborhoods,” for example, Pamuk introduces readers to some of his Turkish literary inspirations, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar and Yahya Kemal to understand how these poets illustrated the dilapidating Istanbul they saw within their own literature.

Davide Deriu describes the Istanbul illustrated in Pamuk’s memoir as a, “playground of adventures that allow the narrator to unveil multiple layers of memory by conflating experimental and historical times.” Pamuk explains to his readers his objective in writing this his narrative from the position of an Istanbullite: “I have described Istanbul when describing myself and described myself when describing Istanbul.” According to Almas, “[…] Istanbul represents a kind of immutable destiny. His [Pamuk’s] own fate and sense of self are intricately woven with the fate of the city.” Pamuk’s autobiography can then be interpreted as a coalescence between the writer and the city, Istanbul, which he writes about. Writing the city of his birth to his Western and Eastern audiences translates to a task of illustrating Istanbul’s contradictory history, and the nation’s sporadic relationship with its identity; an identity that cannot seem to detach itself from the city. Pamuk personifies Istanbul, explaining that the city’s soul “says more about our own lives and our own states of mind. The city has no center other than ourselves.” Early in the text, Pamuk discloses to his readers that the purpose of his autobiography is to recollect the Istanbul that he knew as a child, not to act as a historian. However, he also wants his readers to keep in mind that he may be an unreliable narrative voice, “So pay close attention, dear reader. Let me be straight with you, and in return let me ask for your compassion.” Pamuk confesses that his memoir must not be immediately trusted and continues to remind his readers that he is “prone to exaggerations.” Because the narrative structure of Pamuk’s memoir is presented through flashbacks, intimate monologues, archival depictions of Istanbul’s social climate, and photographs of Istanbul, it is hard to keep in mind that much of what is written is not factual but indeed a fabrication of reality to draw attention to the truth of what is, which is reflected to the reader when the writer discloses some of his tendencies in narrating the Istanbul of his youth. Pamuk separates his memoir into a series of varying temporalities which sketches his family, particular moments in Turkish history, and transformative episodes in his life, with the book’s temporality concluding during his twenties when he decides to become a writer instead of a painter. Pamuk describes Istanbul’s backstreets

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161 Almas, “Capitalizing Istanbul: Reading Orhan Pamuk’s Literary Landscape,” 65.
and forgotten spaces expressing “[…] to ‘discover’ the city’s soul in its ruins, to see these ruins as expressing the city’s essence, you must travel down a long labyrinthine path strewn with historical accidents.” The writer appreciates the soul that still radiates through the city, giving it life and reminding passerby’s, such as he, that Istanbul is a living place that reminds its inhabitants that they are attached to this place.

As Pamuk confesses to the feelings of melancholy that most Istanbullites’ experience within daily life, he develops upon the concept of ‘doubles’ or an ‘other Orhan’ to describe his inability to relay a certain identity or societal expectation. The stylistic presence of the other Orhan is figurative because not only does it speak to Pamuk’s literary objective of establishing a hybrid text, but also implies the character of the other Orhan as a boundary against Pamuk as narrator. The haunting presence of the ‘other,’ fictional, or imagined Orhan, and the real Orhan as storyteller mysteriously finds its way into many of Pamuk’s memories. He struggles to define who he is in relation to Istanbul, and if he can describe himself as independent from the city in which he was born and has grown attached to, “From a very young age I suspected there was more to my world than I could see: somewhere in the streets of Istanbul, in a house resembling ours, there lived another Orhan so much like me that he could pass for my twin, even my double.” This double Orhan deserves an emblematic status in the text in attaining multiple characteristics, desires, and habits that influence the ‘real’ Pamuk’s identity. As Pamuk presents decades of his life to his readers through the form of personal memories and historical narrations, the separation between the fictional and the real Orhan is persistently relayed to the reader as an impossible effort to separate the actual Orhan from his other self. As one of the most prevalent, recurring themes in the text, the ‘double Pamuk’ leads the narrator to visit different neighborhoods of Istanbul at different times in his life through the act of memory recall and interior monologues. The multitude of vignettes that bring together different Orhans and different versions of Istanbul allude to various versions of identity that make the narrator who he is, and a subject of Istanbul.

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165 Pamuk, Istanbul, 256.
166 Pamuk, Istanbul, 3.
Much of Pamuk’s memories are physically interrupted in the text by documentary-like black-and-white photos taken by the prominent Turkish-Armenian photographer Ara Güler. Istanbul’s serpentine streets, views of the Bosphorus, and portrait style snapshots of everyday Turkish citizens are typically these photos’ subject. As Ayşe Erek and Esra Almas note, “Pamuk’s use of the photographs of Ara Güler draws from the tradition of travel writing and autobiography, documenting both the lost city and, conversely, endowing the melancholy of the narrative with a reality effect that is difficult to trace in writing.”

Upon presenting these photos to his readers, Pamuk offers literary descriptions by highlighting the minute details of the black-and-white images, followed by an explanation of the overall symbolism that they possess. These photos supplement Pamuk’s effort in presenting to his readers the chaotic and surprising directions from which his memory occupies him. The memories presented by the photos are not narrated chronologically but are rather randomly presented along with out-of-order flashbacks to his childhood and memories that archive Istanbul’s socio-cultural memories. Pamuk often returns to the metaphor of black-and-white when thinking about Istanbul and its unstable relationship with its Ottoman history:

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

The ruins, history, and poverty, and overwhelming perception of sadness are only some of the elements that Pamuk mentions to construct the metaphoricity of Istanbul. The ruins and poverty demonstrate the effects of history over the present as inhabitants are forced to be persistently reminded of how the country’s past will always haunt the present. Through this excerpt, Pamuk communicates to his readers his way of gazing at the city of his birth as a child growing up to an affluent family at a time when Istanbul was in ruins, as opposed to being the capital of the greatest empire in the world. In her study Pamuk’s novels, Zeynep Uysal justifies the significance of constructed visuality: “Pamuk’s fictional poetic is shaped by the fragments of a dynamic, fluid, and lively landscape that is gaze upon, in which the gazes of the writer, the

reader, and the character are constantly and simultaneously on each other.”

Very similar to the photos sporadically scattered throughout the text, Pamuk builds a mood of the city that is dark, creating an atmosphere of tiredness and decay. Ansari furthermore describes Pamuk as implementing discoloration as a literary technique used to coalesce the city with the gaze, “That is why Pamuk automatically ties the act of walking the streets of Istanbul with color which signifies a certain type of gaze.”

This style of looking directly refers to the pattern of Western visitors who tend to “exoticize” their perceptions of Istanbul, therefore transforming the gaze into “Western eyes on his [Pamuk’s] city,” and their observations of Istanbul’s many ruins and dilapidated structures. With the supplement of photographs, Pamuk often refers to a spiral of recurrent images related to Istanbul, including streets, destroyed monuments such as churches, shops once owned by Greek minorities, and numerous panoramas which also find themselves within the body of Pamuk’s fiction. His writing is fascinating and even endearing in his strength to evoke feelings of the city that also relay to readers the collective feelings of everyday life. Unlike Shafak’s perception of the city, which is based on her nomadic background, Pamuk’s relationship with Istanbul is one of persistent sorrow and desire, but also one of dependence and a suffocating kind of passion.

Pamuk has lived most of his life in the Pamuk Apartments in the heights of Istanbul’s most Westernized and wealthy district, Nişantaşı, overwhelmed with European objects of imitation and Parisian style building blocks. For several decades, Pamuk has lived in this apartment building, each floor being occupied by one of his charismatic relatives. Throughout childhood, he remembers the many games and dinners he spent in each of these apartments: visiting his grandmother, playing with his older brother, admiring his father’s confidence, and observing his mother’s ongoing sadness. Pamuk’s personal relationship with Istanbul symbolizes a complex panoramic view of the self that is articulated through numerous dichotomies and geographical frameworks. These defining elements become the primary position from which to understand Istanbul as a significant character in deciphering Turkishness. The theme of spontaneity in

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170 Ansari, “Orhan Pamuk’s City and the Turkish Republic,” 166.
171 Ansari, “Orhan Pamuk’s City and the Turkish Republic,” 166.
172 For more on Shafak’s and Pamuk’s cultural backgrounds, refer to the introduction to the dissertation.
relation to the city is one which Pamuk believes draws him closer to Istanbul. As a place that continues to change, modernize, and transform, Pamuk often relies on the presence of ordinariness and the essential significance of memories in his efforts to remember and illustrate Istanbul for his readers:

[…] I am reminded that what gives a city its special character is not just its topography or its buildings but rather the sum total of every chance encounter, of every memory, letter, color and image jostling in its inhabitants’ crowded memories after they have been living on the same streets for fifty years, as I have.173

Feelings of estrangement, yet ordinariness that arise through Pamuk’s interactions with everyday spaces transforms his perceptual world into a long montage-like array of random images and senses. For instance, while Pamuk’s memoir is written for the purposes of narrating his experiences within Istanbul’s metropolis, there are numerous instances within which he refers to history, geography, and Western literary traditions, such as his referencing of numerous European writers for the sake of comparing his relationship with Istanbul. A product of Kemalist nationalism, Western education, and secular ideals, Pamuk’s familiarity with European culture in the form of literature and habits demonstrates the persistent impact that his childhood and upbringing has had on his consumption of literature, and later his production of literature. He compares himself with a string of writers, whose city had fueled their literary inspiration:

Conrad, Nabokov, Naipaul – these are writers known for having managed to migrate between languages, cultures, countries, continents, even civilizations. Their imaginations were fed by exile, a nourishment drawn not through roots but through rootlessness. My imagination, 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 this city because it has made me who I am.174

The novel has the ability to dream over-and-over again the world of the novelist’s perception and highlight aspects of the environs that may be overshadowed and otherwise dismissed. Writers’ engagement with the cityscape and their rootedness in describing their perceptual world is an ongoing, receptive motion of change that is manifested through the evolution of practices such as fashion trends, technological advances, body gestures, sites of entertainment, and objects of collection.175 As the writers note in Literature and the Peripheral City, “the city has always

173 Pamuk, Istanbul, 110.
174 Pamuk, Istanbul, 6.
175 Pamuk, Istanbul, 180.
occupied a special position amongst literary spaces.” Pamuk often compares the task of reading with that of gazing at a painting, a theme that is highlighted in his essay published in *The Naïve and Sentimental Novelist*, “Words, Pictures, Objects,” “To see everything we must continually transform the discrete moments of the novel into pictures in our mind. It is this process of transformation that makes the reading of a novel a more collaborative, more personal task than gazing at a painting.” The city of Istanbul is described by the writer as his muse for his novels, as well as his identity and place within space. Pamuk’s vision of the city is translated as a historical and emotionally driven presence, one that is influenced by the city’s economical and sociocultural decline.

Pamuk’s depictions of Istanbul have developed in accordance with his attitude of the politics involved in the making of a modern Turkish state while also growing up in a secularized and Western-leaning household. Connections with Ottoman history would be severed, and a new identity modeled after the West would be formed. Pamuk is mindful of the problems and perhaps even the toxicity of Western interference into Turkish everyday social life. His apprehension of the Kemalist project, and the increasing European influence over Istanbul’s private and public life is conveyed through the underlying plurality of his writing, further presented to readers as shifting thoughts and perceptions, and even varying attitudes narrated through a witnessing of Istanbul’s aesthetic, cultural, and economic changes. The reformatting of Turkish cultural heritage through the introduction of new codes of everyday life have led to a reformatting of memory. Westernization amounted to little more than “freedom from the laws of Islam.” Other than a separation from Islamic faith and old, Ottoman decorum, Westernization was only a way to rewrite the nations’ identity and reimage history. Pamuk’s Istanbul is an insular and rather rural place amidst numerous reforms to state and national institutions that originated from the Kemalist cultural revolution. Pamuk is particularly critical of Kemalism’s rearranging of Turkey’s layers of socio-cultural history, and identifies the disengagement Istanbul has experienced from the rest of the world:

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178 For more analysis on the making of the Turkish Republic following the collapsing of the Ottoman Empire, see Chapter 1.
When the Empire fell, the new Republic while certain of its purpose was unsure of its identity; the only way forward, its founders thought, was to foster a new concept of Turkishness, and this meant a certain cordon sanitaire from the rest of the world. It was an end of the grand polyglot, multicultural Istanbul of the imperial age; the city stagnated, emptied itself out, and became a monotonous, monolingual town in black and white.\textsuperscript{180}

The view of a new, better, and more progressive Istanbul of course has both lure and attraction over remaining an Eastern country stuck on ancestral values and mourning the losses of an Empire. Thereby, the entire narrative of Istanbul’s culture has irreversibly transformed. To contend with such diverse shifts, Pamuk has envisaged unique spatial compositions for Istanbul through an illustration of the city that transgresses the borders between fiction and reality, black and white. The experience of the Istanbullite as a European is posed as an illusion compelled by the Kemalist promise that through forgetting and severing oneself from the past, the nation can make a break from its Ottoman roots and Islamic values and become the European that they so desperately dream of. As Pamuk poetically puts it, for those like him living so close yet so far from Europe, being one with the modern, elegant European is a “future – but never a memory.”\textsuperscript{181} There is little to no space for inclusivity in the Kemalist landscape; there is never “this is how we do it in Turkey”; there is only “this is how they do it in Europe.”\textsuperscript{182} He communicates the nuanced nature of the city, and seeks to highlight the relevance that personal experience has when trying to understand the collective nation: “If the sight of the city from the deck of the ferry reminded us how much we were like others, the sight of the city from one of those millions of identical windows told us the exact opposite; it awakened in us the desire to be different, to be unique.”\textsuperscript{183} Pamuk walks in the likes of Walter Benjamin’s Parisian flâneur, who will be described in more depth throughout the dissertation, and witnesses economic progress and the destruction of neighborhoods which symbolize the city’s relentless efforts to modernize. Verena Laschinger likens Benjamin’s flâneur to Pamuk’s in claiming, “Benjamin argues that the flâneur acts according to economic interest; Pamuk’s flaneur acts as an observer in order to be creative and make a living from his writing.”\textsuperscript{184} Pamuk therefore renders it a part of his literary occupation to landscape the city in his writing and reinvent its history and culture. The reader is

\textsuperscript{180} Pamuk, Istanbul, 238.
\textsuperscript{181} Pamuk, Istanbul, 190.
\textsuperscript{182} Pamuk, Istanbul, 191.
\textsuperscript{183} Pamuk, Other Colors, 76.
meant to confront detached moments in the city, leading to a very real and very convincing depiction of events and discoveries, of objects and places, of thoughts and emotions that create a prevailing unity between self and nation. Pamuk searches within the city’s urban space in his effort to understand its contradictions. For the writer, the barrier between personal and collective memory is rather innate and inescapable – there has always existed an interdependence between Istanbul’s fate and that of Istanbulites, one that is embedded with national history and saturated with moments of defeat. He often returns to the concept of destiny, or fate in his study of Istanbul and his inability to detach himself from the metropolis:

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

This passage portrays Istanbul as indeed a metaphor – a place with a multitude of meanings and signs which speaks to the chain of associations within Istanbul’s historical, geo-political, and socio-cultural landscape. This includes an engaging with Kemalism, the Byzantine and Ottoman ruins that render the city ever “shabbier” and more fraught, and lastly, a number of sites and locations such as the Bosphorus, Ottoman mansions (yalıls), and old Greek shops and Jewish churches. Pamuk regularly points out the feelings of disenchantment and exile he feels from his city. He attests to the deterioration Istanbul has seen following the establishment of the Republic, “Sometimes one’s city can look like an alien place.” He expresses the withdrawal he feels, as the reason for his preference for solitude, “With its muddy parks and desolate open spaces, its electricity poles and the billboards plastered over its squares and its concrete monstrosities, this city, like my soul, is fast becoming an empty – a very empty – place.”

However, the descriptions of Istanbul’s alienating qualities presents an irony because while there are identified feelings of alienation, Istanbul is also presented to the reader as a subject for the reader’s desire. Pamuk often returns to these dark and haunting descriptions when characterizing the Istanbul he has known for over fifty years,

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185 Pamuk. *Istanbul*, 9
187 Pamuk, *Istanbul*, 317
When its melancholy begins to seep into me and from me into it, I begin to think there is nothing I can do: like the city, I belong to the living dead, I am a corpse that still breathes, a wretch condemned to walk the streets and pavements that can only remind me of my own filth and my own defeat.189

Pamuk’s experiences in Istanbul are facilitated by this prescribed collective feeling of sadness that is described by an eerie array of metaphors such as to belong “to the living dead.” To capture the darkness and gloom that encompasses the Istanbul of Pamuk’s literature, the writer often returns to veering descriptions of Istanbul’s streets, most of which lead to intimate flashbacks and allude to moments in Turkey’s recent past. Highmore personifies urban spaces as exhibiting a coalescence between past and present in a similar way that Pamuk illustrates Istanbul to his readers, “Cities as bodies, the disembodied perspective, and the metaphors of underground spaces exist like debris in the present.”190 As Pamuk’s text progresses, the grief and solitude that takes the form of melancholy becomes more than a feeling of resentment but turns into a socio-cultural paradigm when Pamuk renders the personal and inward as collective and pervading. Furthermore, Pamuk’s journey into his city’s memory is expressed through the term, hüzün, an expression that he continues to conceptualize throughout his exploration of Istanbul’s recent culture of failure, loss, indifference, and acquiescence:

We might call this confused, hazy state of melancholy, or perhaps we could call it by its Turkish name, hüzün, which denotes a melancholy that is communal rather than private. Offering no clarity, veiling reality instead, hüzün brings us comfort, softening the view like the condensation on a window with a teakettle has been spouting steam on a winter’s day.191

This category of ennui is used to demonstrate the individual’s experiences because of their relationship with Istanbul. Hüzün is more than an emotion; it directly forewarns the Istanbullite of their fate, as one which depends upon the fate of the city itself. Hüzün informs the interactions Pamuk has with Istanbul, and this grandiose feeling of intense melancholy wraps him into a collective group of other Turkish citizens who feel the same sense of alienation within this post-war, new Republic environment. Banu Helvacioğlu, in her study of the presence of melancholy in Pamuk’s memoir, describes hüzün as a symptom of Pamuk’s straddling between being and inhabitant of Istanbul as well as a westerner, “The tension between the personal melancholy and the collective nature of hüzün is heightened by the context of his [Pamuk’s] carefully tailored position of being a local, but also a European/Westerner, who appreciates the ‘sublime beauty’ of

189 Pamuk, Istanbul, 317.
190 Highmore, Cityscapes: Cultural Readings in the Material and Symbolic City, 4-5.
191 Pamuk, Istanbul, 89.
the city.”\(^\text{192}\) Pamuk’s aesthetic sensitivities of Istanbul are reflective of his pursuit to understand the city’s historical past which has prevalently been laced with Western and European influences such as the writings and paintings he often pauses in his narrative to explore. Melancholy, then becomes a method of socio-cultural understanding that allows Pamuk to come to terms with his own identity. This perception of Pamuk’s use of hüzün in his memoir is similarly described by Norbert Bugeja, “[...] perceived through the purview of hüzün, of historical loss, the city’s representational spaces come to be viewed as those spaces of continued living through the ordeals of the city’s history because hüzün itself constitutes a unique gesture of self-representation.”\(^\text{193}\) In his study of the presence of the fire theme in Pamuk’s memoir, Kader Konuk claims that hüzün is “the reaction to the black-and-white atmosphere of the city on a gray winter day, the expression of its inhabitants’ submission to fate, a feeling that the sight of Ottoman ruins elicits in the beholder.”\(^\text{194}\) The presence of hüzün-like sadness that finds its place in Pamuk’s writing exhibits many renditions that all find similar, estranging qualities that result in alienation from the self and similarly, from Istanbul. The spiritual disarray that comes along with the reality of not only losing the glories of one’s cities due to war, but also watching it transform into a post-imperial and capitalistic space is the reason behind the collective feelings of involuntary exile that many Istanbullites feel from Istanbul.

As Pamuk delves deeper into hüzün, he separates himself from his perception and the scenes in the streets that he witnesses, instead choosing to categorize “[...] the fathers under the streetlamps, [...] the children who play ball, [...] the covered women who stand at remote bus stops clutching plastic shopping bags and speak to one [...]\(^\text{195}\) Pamuk recognizes his affluency as an adult male from a Westernized family who navigates the streets and expresses what he sees, not only acknowledging how women’s place in Istanbul is different than that of men, but also how children see and view the city as well. He instead sees himself as the Western travelers


\(^{195}\) Pamuk, *Istanbul*, 94.
such as Gustave Flaubert before him who categorizes, judges, and contemplates the city’s many layers and nuance, subjecting the city to his gazes.\textsuperscript{196} Pamuk’s control over the city takes place through his visual perceptions and can be defined according to the mental processes that take place as he walks along the city’s many neighborhoods. The reader comes to understand \( hüzün \) not only as a personal experience but also as one that is shared, and a defining characteristic used to comprehend Turkishness. \( hüzün \) is not only a noun Pamuk adopts to add a sense of distortion to this city that has known loss for much too long, but rather addresses it as an aesthetic component that becomes a metaphor of Turkishness; a Turkishness that has been defeated and has learned acceptance of defeat through acquiescence. In offering a coherent mapping of \( hüzün \), one cannot fail to note the aura of loss that is associated with the emotion that brings every citizen of Istanbul together. Loss of what? A vast, victorious, vanquishing empire that has now been reduced to an unremembered, lost, decrepit region, trapped between two continents, two senses of self, and countless reintroductions into what the ideal Turk must be like. The experience of loss and the resulting degenerative ruins embodies the decline in glory and power that Istanbul has been subjected to. The common image of ruins and degeneration within the city enables Pamuk to render the city his fate and a part of his lived experiences though the atmosphere of \( hüzün \) that they create. The spirit of the city following the fall of the Byzantine and later the Ottoman Empire was one of decrepitude, trauma, and confusion. Roots are imprinted in the despair and disrepair that resulted from being reduced from a prosperous people to ones of a third-world environment. The city becomes a character of suffocating sadness that has grown into such a quotidian and normal emotion that it is no longer a phenomenon. It is an ongoing battle that has taken place for so long now, that Istanbullites do not know what it means to be an Istanbullite without this toxic feeling of catastrophic loss:

After seeing all the wealth of the Middle East seep out of their city, after witnessing the slow decline that began with the Ottoman defeats at the hands of Russia and the West and ended with their city falling into poverty, melancholy, and ruin, Istanbullus became an inward-looking nationalist people; we are therefore suspicious of anything new and most especially of anything that smacks of foreignness (even if we also covet it). For the past 150 years, we have lived in timorous anticipation of catastrophes that will bring us fresh defeats and new ruins. It’s still important to do something to fight off the dread and the melancholy, and that is why the idle contemplation of the Bosphorus can seem like a duty.\textsuperscript{197}

\textsuperscript{196} Pamuk, \textit{Istanbul}, 289.

\textsuperscript{197} Pamuk, \textit{Istanbul}, 205-206.
This psychological approach to connecting the past city with the present city relates back to the overarching theoretical framework of this chapter: cities as metaphors. Through the presence of hüzün, Pamuk posits Istanbul as a landscape that can be experienced as a space of complex, psychological exploration. This kind of national sadness informs many of Pamuk’s memories and contributes to many of his visits to Turkey’s history. Hüzün does not only inform Pamuk’s estrangement from the city, but also speaks to a level of disheartening disappointment, and even resentment at the loss and sacrifice of an Ottoman history and memory, for the promise of a past-less, new civilization with shiny capitalistic prospects.

As Istanbul: Memories and the City finds its unlikely conclusion, Pamuk’s family conflicts are finally resolved, Pamuk grows increasingly distant from university life and eventually drops out and proceeds to make Istanbul his companion as much as his muse; his path; his fate. The exploration of Istanbul remains the overarching activity that ties together all Pamuk’s literature, with Istanbul acting as an enchanting metaphor embodying the human condition; the emotional, psychological, and sociological elements that become manifested in his writing. As the city of his birth continues to shape him and the perceptual world around him, Pamuk concludes that it is not through painting, but rather through producing novels and writing about Istanbul, that he can truly realize his identity.\textsuperscript{198} Michael Sheringham explains that the referential and the fictional are no longer “viewed as polar opposites but as interactive elements.”\textsuperscript{199} Through unexpected associations, the relationship between subject and object, and between the real and the imaginary reveal themselves in space. Pamuk’s autobiographical narrative has been a productive entry into studying the metaphoricity of Istanbul. Side-by-side with personal anecdotes, childhood memories, and historical events, Pamuk demonstrates to the reader the components, at a national and personal level, the many scattered characteristics that have led him to find his sense of belonging in attaching himself to Istanbul because of the city’s ability to evoke memories and as the city changes and evolves, Pamuk seems to find himself steadily more closely devoted. Pamuk offers a distinct perspective of Istanbul that will be oftentimes referred to in the following sections of this chapter as a means to highlight the structural and contextual implications Istanbul

\textsuperscript{198} Pamuk. Istanbul, 368.
has for the larger question initially posed in this thesis related to geography’s relationship with identity formation. To follow, I address Shafak’s relationship with Istanbul through a close reading of *The Bastard of Istanbul*, including an analysis of the concept of the woman as subject of the male gaze and the woman’s experience within the cityscape.
2.4 A City of Dynamism: The Female Experience in The Bastard of Istanbul

Writing of Istanbul’s overlapping histories through a feminist perspective, Shafak prevalently illustrates to her readers “[sexual] categorizations,” “outsiders,” “deviancy,” and “identity.” For Shafak, Istanbul is at once a fiction and a reality because it is not one place or one character but is rather a place imbued with numerous meanings and symbols: “Istanbul is the name of a city and the name of an illusion. In reality, there is no such thing as Istanbul. There are only Istanbuls – competing, clashing and somehow coexisting within the same congested space.”

In her fiction, Shafak adopts the many constructs of Turkishness, such as the ‘in-betweeness’ metaphor, the concept of the woman as subject, and details the everyday impacts that these contradictory elements have on everyday individuals to highlight their significance to the definitions of nationhood. The “imaginary world” present in the novel, for Shafak “could be more authentic than the so-called real world.”202 Istanbul becomes a city where the concepts of East and West are slippery and are ultimately imaginary ideas, rendering them interesting subjects within fiction.

In The Bastard of Istanbul, Shafak communicates to her readers the layered textures of Istanbul’s sociocultural history by bringing together an unlikely friendship between a Turkish and an Armenian family.203 A transnational novel that extends beyond Turkey’s borders, towards the United States, The Bastard of Istanbul reflects Shafak’s literary talent for overlapping geographical spaces for the representation of Turkishness. While Nabila Akbar’s, Saiqa Imtiaz Asif’s, and Afsheen Nusrat’s study of The Bastard of Istanbul is largely focused on identifying elements of postmodernism such as “depthlessness, silence, pastiche, play, chance, ambiguity, desire, [and] alienation […]” I am interested in how this novel, comprised mostly of women characters’, navigates through everyday life in Istanbul, and how sex and gender is manifested as

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an addressing of power and patriarchy in Istanbul’s society. The observation that *The Bastard of Istanbul* is a transnational text is explained by the author’s choice to narrate not only characters’ experiences in Istanbul, but also how Istanbul dictates their day-to-day life in other cities as well, including San Francisco and Arizona. Through multiple narrators and time frames, including flashbacks that detail numerous points in Turkish and Armenian historiography, the writer uses Istanbul as a point of mediation between the Armenian-Turkish tensions that have persisted for over a century. The superficiality and the confirmation of stereotypes is manifested through the characters’ internal battles with homeland and who they are apart from space. With the Kazancı family in Istanbul representing Turkey’s withstanding poor relationship with memory, and an Armenian family, the Tchakhmakhchians, that remember their collective history and who believe that all they have are memories, Shafak explores the rooted socio-cultural agitations through four generations of family histories. Through the two overarching protagonists, Asya and Amy, the lives of the Kazancıs’ and the Tchakhmakhchians’ are fused together and narrated in sporadic threads.

The flustered relationship that one of the early protagonists, Zeliha, feels towards Istanbul from the first pages of the text becomes a microcosm for the Istanbullites’ relationship with Istanbul. Zeliha navigates within the foggy shadows of a city that once was at the top of the world. She is a figure who does not blend in the crowd. She is different and refuses to adapt to the expectation of the Istanbullite and is patronized because of it. Her vulgar attitude towards the environment is posited through her disposition towards the daily culture of walking, similar to a flâneur, in the street which takes the forms of men explicitly looking at her with desire, and the attention from society she receives due to her indelicate decorum, styled in a short skirt and sky-high heels:

Yet, there she was on the first Friday of July, walking on a sidewalk that flowed next to hopelessly clogged traffic; rushing to an appointment she was now late for, swearing like a trooper, hissing one profanity after another at the broken pavement stones, at her high heels, at the man stalking her, at each and every driver who honked frantically when it was an urban fact that clamor had no effect on unclogging traffic, at the whole Ottoman dynasty for once upon a time conquering the city of Constantinople, and then sticking by its mistake, and yes, at the rain… this damn summer rain.

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In this opening scene, Istanbul is painted as a chaotic city that pulsates with a myriad of images, sounds, and histories. Istanbul symbolizes an imminent representation of different cultures and temporalities. Zeliha is stared at by other women, their intimate partners, and a taxi driver who is entranced by Zeliha’s daring choice of dress. Zeliha’s vulnerabilities as a woman in a patriarchal society are blatantly put on display, and she is gazed at in both disgust and lust for not conforming to roles as a conservative and devout young Muslim woman. Zeliha’s behavior and choice of dress transgresses the expectations of traditional femininity, causing attention from onlookers. Zeliha rushes along the streets occupied by men and see her demeanor and choice of attire as “the sign of her lustfulness.”\(^{206}\) Zeliha proceeds to walk down the street displaying her “ample breasts, satiny nylon stockings, and yes, those towering high heels.”\(^{207}\) Before long, Zeliha is harassed by a cab driver who, from his window, hollers inappropriate and sexualized offers, only to receive a combative confrontation from Zeliha. However, only after she vents her anger does Zeliha remember her mother’s, Petite-Ma’s long list of Golden Rules aimed specifically at Istanbulite Women, one that is aimed specifically for how a woman in Istanbul should conduct herself in the street:

The Golden Rule of Prudence for an Istanbulite Woman: When harassed on the street, never respond, since a woman who responds, let alone swears back at her harasser, shall only fire up the enthusiasm of the latter!\(^{208}\)

To wander in the street as a woman implies to evoke the gaze of others, especially the male and therefore causes a woman to be in constant danger. Appearing early in the novel as Zeliha is harassed on the street, through this Golden Rule the reader can assume the ordinariness of women’s strife in Istanbul’s streets; that being taunted for dress, conduct, and existing as a woman is an expected occurrence. The alternate world in the novel that focuses on the woman’s experience demonstrates the feminist writing style that Shafak has taken to question the concept of gender within urban space. It is not a question of how men navigate Istanbul, but rather how women do because of men. The fictional world of the story is in a feminist position that explores women’s sources of treatment within Istanbul. It is because of the male’s treatment of the woman as a subject that characters, such as Zeliha find themselves in a constant cycle of conflict. Female characters like Zeliha who are intolerant of the male gaze and who may choose to resist or react

\(^{206}\) Shafak, *Bastard*, 3.
\(^{207}\) Shafak, *Bastard*, 4.
\(^{208}\) Shafak, *Bastard*, 5.
to a man’s stereotypical power and influence appear as both dangerous and untraditional due to their resistance and unwillingness to submit to gender expectations. Following a great deal of window shopping and chatting, Zeliha finally makes it to her appointment to receive an abortion. Following checking in, Zeliha looks at the patients in the waiting room upon discovering their inquisitive gaze. Rather than make her feel uncomfortable, Zeliha enjoys being watched by this array of gazers which includes a “plump blonde,” a “head-scarved woman”, and the woman’s husband.\textsuperscript{209} Through Zeliha’s perspective, the gaps that divide Istanbul’s women are bridged as Zeliha observes the various classes, religions, and levels of comfort of those in the clinic around her. In her mind she negotiates the hidden stories behind each person in this blatantly female public space. Following a rather uncomfortable wait, Zeliha is finally let into the examining room. However, Zeliha unexpectedly decides not to go through with the abortion she had so adamantly come to the clinic to receive, instead believing it is Allah who wishes her to keep the bastard growing in her belly. This impulsive decision emerges as the conflicts underlying the novel’s preoccupation with Istanbul’s current gendered conflicts, for as the novel progresses, Zeliha’s birth to this bastard child becomes an opportunity for Shafak to explore society’s contradictory politics and the lives of women in urban space.

At the age of nineteen Zeliha, the most unyielding of the family, gives birth to Asya, and refuses to identify the father. The novel skips over by almost twenty years, past the birth of Zeliha’s child, and goes on to describe the Kazancı family. Zeliha is the youngest of the family, whose father died unexpectedly. Four sisters, along with their younger brother Mustafa, live together with their widowed mother and maternal grandmother in Istanbul. Mustafa runs away to America before the birth of Zeliha’s illegitimate child, so Asya never gets to know her uncle. Each of the sisters have a certain edge to their personalities and appear as victims of the Kemalist cultural revolution. All living under one roof in a Turkish konak are four separate generations of Turkish women: the grandmother, Petite-Ma; the traditional mother, Gülsüm; the first daughter, Banu; Feride, a geography teacher, Cevriye, a sporadic hypochondriac; Zeliha, the most rebellious; and lastly, Asya, the bastard. Asya, is raised by all the women in the household without referring to anyone as ‘mother’ and instead referring to them all, Zeliha included, as ‘auntie.’ It remains a strange mystery how all the Kazancı men somehow all die before reaching the age of 41, which

\textsuperscript{209} Shafak, \textit{Bastard}, 12.
is an understandably lingering fear that follows Mustafa throughout most of his life. This narrative choice to overwhelm the text with female characters and shorten the life spans of the male characters demonstrates Shafak’s interest in illustrating to readers the varying experiences of women characters within Istanbul and how their evolvement is closely connected to everyday experiences.

Being brought up in an informal and untraditional manner, Asya seeks refuge away from her family and all of Istanbul, in a café where she makes friends with defiant outcasts of Istanbul society. While her mother tries to enroll her in different activities, the latest being ballet lessons, Asya dreams of a different life, somewhere else, or at least in a place where she could be alone with her own thoughts and listen to her favorite European and American bands. Maybe she is like Pamuk himself, in her longing to become a flâneuse and remain a wanderer of the city:

If she [Asya] became a garbage collector, she would wander the city whistling Johnny Cash songs, while a balmy breeze caressed her hair and the sun warmed her bones. Should anyone dare to disturb such blissful harmony, she would scare the hell out of him with the threat of her mammoth Gypsy clan in which probably everyone was convicted of a felony of some sort. Despite the problem of poverty, Asya concluded, as long as it was not wintertime, it must be fun to be a garbage collector.210

In her ability to find belonging and companions that share the same sense of loss and boredom that she does, Asya epitomizes the repercussions of Kemalism on Turkish society. If Asya cannot attain her ‘dream’ to be a garbage collector, at least she still has Café Kundera to hide out in. To get further away from the female-dominated family she lives with, Asya seeks refuge smoking cigarettes in a café tucked in a quiet Istanbul neighborhood. The presence of Café Kundera, a place that Asya gathers with her strange friends, shows the clash of identities that pervades Turkish culture. Café Kundera is a boundary landscape tucked within Istanbul, and is occupied by multiple overlapping voices, exiled figures, and distant memories. Cafés are a space not only of social exchange and cultural mingling, but also of isolation and confinement of space. There is a certain seclusion felt in sheltering oneself off from the possibility of exchange with the outside world, and instead indulging in sitting amongst comrades to speak about the tragedies from which they wish to hide. Café Kundera is indeed just like this: it is a space where misfits can gather and lament the rapid changes of Istanbul, including why the café was named after a

210 Shafak, Bastard, 245.
European literary figure to begin with, Milan Kundera, a French author who is originally from Czech Republic is the symbol of the Western imagination. However, the presence of certain aspects of Turkish culture, such as Türk kahvesi (Turkish coffee), is a dwelling reminder that the escapist fantasies are just that: fantasies. The interior of the café is decorated with numerous landscapes and photographs of settings of elsewhere, anywhere away from Turkey, usually in Europe or in the United States. This suggests that happiness does not lie within the boundaries of homeland, but beyond borders. The idea that there may be a better future in their destiny is further enhanced by this escapist type of art of “Wide motorways in America, endless highways in Australia, busy autobahns in Germany, glitzy boulevards in Paris, crammed side streets in Rome, narrow paths in Machu Picchu, forgotten caravan routes in North Africa […]” that line the walls of the café. In the analysis that develops from the presence of this site in the city, other urban spaces also could have reasonably fit this description, such as barber shops, public baths, or street squares where interaction with others is rather spontaneous, yet inclusive because it opens an opportunity for discussions, that may have otherwise been unlikely.

Those who come to Café Kundera are detached from their perceptual environment and live in the land of dreams where places like the Eiffel Tower and the Silk Road are equally within reach, unlike the city of Istanbul, which remains unattainable and displaces those who appear ‘different’. The regulars are all strange and unwanted amongst Istanbul society. They are offbeats within the Kemalist landscape, as we know from the labels the narrator uses to refer to them: the Dipsomaniac Cartoonist, the Nonnationalist Scenarioist of Ultranationalist Movies, Closeted Gay Columnist, and Exceptionally Untalented Poet. The Café Kundera-goers are products of geography, and appear in conflict with it, which further adds to their sense of misery. They are described as “nihilists, pessimists, and anarchists.” The question of Istanbul’s place of belonging, due to its ambiguous global position, as a grounding between East and West, is also a subject of gloomy debate and frustration within the café. The Dipsomaniac Cartoonist quite cleverly satirizes the rather haunting effects of being of an ‘in-between identity,’ never

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211 Shafak, Bastard, 77-78.
212 Shafak, Bastard, 76-77.
213 Shafak, Bastard, 80.
214 Shafak, Bastard, 82.
truly belonging within space, unable to see any true benefits of belonging due to this geographical confusion:

Yeah, we should all line up along the Bosphorus bridge and puff as hard as we can to shove this city in the direction of the West, if it doesn’t work, we’ll try the other way, see if we can veer it to the East. […] It’s no good to be in between. International politics does not appreciate ambiguity.  

Between East and West; Europe and the Middle East; past and present, Asya and her friends find themselves trapped in this alternating reality between two geographies, two cultures, two histories. Café Kundera also represents dissidence, or the acknowledgement that Istanbul may indeed be a place of differences. It is a place of, as the Dipsomaniac Cartoonist summarizes, “boredom.” Shafak connects the Turkish citizen’s Turkishness as dependent upon in-betweenness, a kind of alien quality that is unescapable because no matter how determined one is to move East or West, one or the other pulls back with greater force. In the company of her friends, Asya passes her time aimlessly and does not appear eager to understand who she is, such as who her father was and why he is not around anymore, and why her mother does not say anything about him. Instead, she is indifferent to the in-betweenness of existence and does not appear to resist it, and instead submissively accepts it.

One of the novel’s only male characters, Mustafa Kazancı, is as a mysterious figure whose discomforted past leads him on a life-long journey from Istanbul to Arizona in the United States where he ultimately becomes the link that brings his family in Istanbul together with an Armenian family from San Francisco. Mustafa’s life is controlled by a determination to forget, and a desperation to blend with the West, as if his Turkish roots were never there. His self-imposed exile takes place when he leaves Istanbul behind to start a new life in Arizona, marking the quest of Turkish identity as one that transcends nations. In this foreign land, the ability for minorities to settle in diasporic communities renders the United States a location where Turks who do not “belong” to the vision of the Turkish state, may find solace. The United States, for Mustafa, is the jewel place that will allow him to evade his hideous childhood and adolescence in Turkey and become clean of the sins he committed. As we learn from the narrator, Mustafa is aware that to rid himself of these reminders of failure in his life, “he had to make it in America

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215 Shafak, Bastard, 144-145.
216 Shafak, Bastard, 81.
not because he wanted to attain a better future but because he had to dispose of his past.”217 The memories that Mustafa wishes to annihilate is the rape he committed of his younger sister Zeliha, which would mean that he is indeed both Asya’s father as much as he is her uncle. Mustafa expects that by living now in the United States, his memory will be instantly erased, much like the simple click and delete of files in computers, “How he wished he could remove his memory, restart the program, until all the files were deleted and gone.”218 As a child being the only male in a household of women, Mustafa is seen as the king of the household in his mother’s eyes. However, at school he is unable to connect with others, instead choosing to comfort himself with the belief that he is precious and as long as he remains precious in his household, he has no use nor need of the world outside his home. When his sister Zeliha confronts his spoiled and entitled behavior, unknowingly uncovering his secret of visiting backstreet brothels, he believes it is his duty to break her resistance by violating her through forced intercourse.219 While Zeliha has subverted standards of the categorically traditional Istanbullite woman, Mustafa appears intent on instilling patriarchal power over his younger sister, which he exhibits through rape. Mustafa’s self-imposed exile leads him further into a labyrinth of confusion in relation to his Turkishness. He is eager to rid himself of the past, but, even in Arizona where the Turkish population is almost unheard of, he senses he will never be able to forget his Turkish past:

Until he came to the United States, he had never had to cook. In his life. Every time he labored in the small kitchen in his two-bedroom student apartment, he felt like a dethroned king living in exile. Long gone were the days when he was served and fed by a devoted grandmother, mother, and four sisters.220

Mustafa misses his ability to assert his masculinity over a female-dominated family by being served, cleaned up after, and treated as a king. In this quote, he demonstrates his disavowal to having to perform “feminine” tasks, therefore placing gender at the forefront of his reasons for disliking certain everyday chores. Mustafa wants to become someone else and remains fixated on the notion that because he is now in the West, one day he will become one of the West. This appears especially evident in his determination to no longer receive questions about his accent, as is observed in the same grocery store scene, “One day, Mustafa thought, I will speak in such a way that no one will ask this rude question because they will not believe, even for a minute, that

217 Shafak, Bastard, 45.
218 Shafak, Bastard, 45.
219 Shafak, Bastard, 317.
220 Shafak, Bastard, 44.
they are talking to a foreigner.” This desperation for assimilation and to dissolve himself of his Turkishness guides Mustafa’s choices. His dependence upon the West for memory loss is nothing more than a delusion that ultimately comes to haunt Mustafa throughout his life in Arizona, and later, when he returns to Istanbul, where he commits suicide. As is the case with Asya and the daily inhabitants of Café Kundera, reminders of the past are everywhere and they do not cease to exist, just because geography changes, but rather remain signatures of identity. Mustafa’s inability to escape his past is eventually manifested in the novel when he returns to Istanbul after over thirty years of absence and is poisoned by Auntie Banu, who had ambiguously found out that Mustafa had raped Zeliha and ran away to the United States to elude his crimes. Realizing that the offering of one of his favorite childhood desserts, ashure that Auntie Banu had put next to his bedside was indeed poisoned, Mustafa knowingly eats it anyway, therefore committing suicide, and paying the ultimate price for his crime.

Meanwhile, all the way in the United States, lives Armanoush (Amy) Tchakhmakchian, who is the antithesis of Asya. She grew up in the United States between Arizona with her very American mother who remains bitter with her ex-husband and his obnoxious family, and San Francisco with her Armenian father whose family still holds a grudge that Amy’s father did not marry an Armenian woman to begin with. After her parents’ divorce when she is still an infant, Amy’s mother, Rose, meets Mustafa in a grocery store and, upon discovery that he is Turkish, pursues him and ultimately marries him, much to the distress of Amy’s Armenian relatives. Still holding resentment against her now ex-husband’s family for the breakup of her marriage, Rose is left with bitterness. Having left her infant child in the car, Rose rushes about the market on a rage looking for diapers. During this venture, she notices a man gazing and smiling at her. Indulging at having her motherhood observed, Rose throws in her cart numerous baby products that she most likely has no intention of really ever using, underlining the feminine aspects of grocery shopping. She proceeds by making up in her mind that from this day forth she will be the perfect American mother for Amy, and no longer allow her to eat the categoric Armenian dishes that to this day still make her stomach turn such as eggplant dips, salted grape leaves, patlijan,

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221 Shafak, Bastard, 46.
222 Shafak, Bastard, 337.
223 Shafak, Bastard, 38.
sarma, “No more weird ethnic food!” It is upon making this decision that Rose finds a young man in the canned food and dry beans aisle contemplating over cans of garbanzo beans who turns out to be Mustafa from Istanbul. The discourse surrounding Turkish and Armenian cuisine is significant to the narration because it demonstrates how the everyday, in this sense, food, is elemental to identity. Rose finds such ingredients distasteful and proceeds to mock these ingredients that are cultural components of the Armenian cuisine that she has become all too familiar with. However, these cultural conflicts that develop between Rose and the Armenian culture will have little impact on her consciousness as she develops a growing interest in Mustafa who is adamant about erasing the traumas of his past in Turkey and building a new identity for himself on the foundation of having relocated to Arizona, in a multicultural environment.

While for Asya and her friends, Café Kundera is a place to forget and dream of another place, for Amy, the concept of memory and remembering is something she depends on to connect with her Armenian heritage. As the name suggests, this cyber café, attended by Amy every night under the alias Madame My-Exiled-Soul, represents a site of remembering Istanbul’s Pre-Republic, multicultural past:

Café Constantinopolis was a chat room, or as regulars called it, a cybercafé, initially designed by a bunch of Greek Americans, Sephardim Americans, and Armenian Americans who, other than being New Yorkers, had one fundamental thing in common: They all were the grandchildren of families once based in Istanbul.

The introduction of this antithetical café into the storyline finds its substance positioned in evoking the question of belonging to Istanbul. However, due to cultural differences, these later generations of people once based in Istanbul find themselves exiled from the city, and therefore unable to access their past and their national, collective identity. Café Constantinopolis, similar to Café Kundera, is a product of Kemalism, but is static and rather represents an attachment to the past rather than an avowal and willingness for the future. Amy is obsessed to the point of desperation to understand who she is, and to choose a destiny that she can call hers, rather than one that is instructed to her. She is interested in history, the past, and determined to face the truth of her identity, even if that means traveling to the very site where her family, and ethnicity, is

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224 Shafak, Bastard, 39.
225 Shafak Bastard, 40.
226 Shafak, Bastard, 112.
said to have been massacred in the process of creating a homogenous Turkish nation-state. The introducing of Café Constantinopolis to her readers allows Shafak to draw a separation between varying claims to belonging due to the variety of members of the forum from varying ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Neither those who attend Café Kundera nor those who login every night to Café Constantinopolis have a clear sense of identity. For them, identity is an unattainable process that evokes memories of Istanbul. Amy finds herself contemplating traveling to Istanbul, which is the only place she believes she can get the answers she has been searching for, and finally come to terms with who she is as an Armenian-American. Amy wants to recover her grandmother’s old house in Istanbul. In doing so, she believes that she can reconnect with her only past. Deceiving both her mother and father, Amy makes arrangements to travel to Istanbul by contacting her stepfather’s family there who are surprised, yet excited to meet a new relative.

The attitude of Turks towards the Armenian question is in constant odds and remains dismissed. This behavior is not sacrificed in the novel. When Asya brings Amy to Café Kundera as part of the tour-giving mission forced upon her by her aunties, Amy is unable to remain silent about the Armenian issue and persists to unveil the atrocities that her relatives have detailed to her about the Turks. Amy’s decision to immediately, without pause, immerse Asya and her friends into the theory of the Armenian Genocide chaotically disrupts the lethargic mood that makes the days within Café Kundera pass quietly and in a forgettable manner. In response to Amy’s accusations, The Nonnationalist Scenarist of Ultranationalist Movies retaliates with his own argument:

We have never heard of anything like that…Look, I am very sorry for your family. I offer you my condolences. But you have to understand it was a time of war. People died on both sides. Do you have any idea how many Turks have died in the hands of Armenian rebels? Did you ever think about the other side of the story? I’ll bet you didn’t. How about the suffering of the Turkish families? It is all tragic but we need to understand that 1915 was not 2005. Times were different back then. It was not even a Turkish state back then; it was the Ottoman Empire, for God’s sake. The premodern era and its premodern tragedies.

The characteristic of denial that Shafak mentions in much of her nonfiction writing, is further put on display in the discussion of the Armenian-Turkish conflict in the novel. This argument put on by a Nationalist character who attempts to be neutral to this very subjective affair, immediately

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227 Shafak, Bastard, 117.
228 Shafak, Bastard, 209.
angers Asya who comes to Amy’s defense, referring to the element of amnesia that has become inherent to many Turks born following the fall of the Ottoman Empire:

Yea, what do you know?…What do we know about 1915? How many books have you read on this topic? How many controversial standpoints did you compare and contrast? What research, what literature?…I bet you have read nothing! But you are so convinced. Aren’t we just swallowing what’s given to us? Capsules of information, capsules of misinformation. Everyday we swallow a handful.229

Asya notes the submissive forms of manipulative forgetting that she believes have become an acute attribute of Turkish society. According to Asya, it is this collective sense of voluntary amnesia that prevents Turks from understanding the truths of their national past. Initiated by Amy’s internalized trauma and resulting defensive behavior towards the Turks, Café Kundera immediately transforms into a space of direct confrontation between the surprised Turk and the angered Armenian. After Amy’s blatantly catastrophic effort to educate Asya’s friends at Café Kundera, she feels defeated and perhaps even more confused about her heritage now than she did before visiting Istanbul. However, it is actually one Turkish-Armenian character, Zeliha’s boyfriend, Aram, whose brief presence in the novel has the most profound impact on Amy. When she sets the United States as a symbol of multiculturalism that Turkey should aspire to be like, Amy suggests to Aram that he should emigrate to the United States and leave Turkey for good. Aram is of Armenian heritage, and he still considers Istanbul his home, his love, his identity: “This city is my city. […] My family’s history in this city goes back at least five hundred years. Armenian Istanbullites belong to Istanbul, just like the Turkish, Kurdish, Greek, and Jewish Istanbullites do. We have first managed and then badly failed to live together. We cannot fail again.”230 Unlike Amy’s relatives, especially Auntie Varsenig, Aram does not have the same resentment against the Turkish people. Despite his small role, Aram presents an alternative version of Istanbul, one that is multicultural, inclusive, and in the present, rather than fixated on an unchanging past. He offers alternatives to moving past the Turkish-Armenian socio-cultural tensions that have disrupted so much of daily life. Aram, similar to Mustafa, Asya, and Amy, represents a dynamic figure of the multicultural memory of Istanbul’s past. Various textures of focalization, temporality, and spatiality are manifested through the presentation of Istanbul as a changing character, reconstructing Turkish recent history as an ongoing phenomenon whose repercussions are felt between Turkish citizens as well as minorities. Amy

does not appear to gain a sense of identity by visiting Istanbul since her grandmother’s house has been destroyed and replaced, but rather receives a sense of understanding and peace in the understanding that it is cities that determine one’s identity, and in coming to the homeland of her ancestors Amy becomes closer to her Armenian identity.

Through her characters’ predicaments within Istanbul, Shafak communicates to her audience a plethora of identities and contradictions that color Turkishness.\textsuperscript{231} The narration of two families, one Turkish and one Armenian, and their ties to Istanbul facilitates the novelist’s interest in framing numerous conceptions of Turkishness within Istanbul through the everyday experiences of ordinary characters and the impacts they experience within the perceptual world by Turkish national identity. The dominance of female characters in the storyline creates an illustration of Turkishness that is largely driven by the woman’s perception in a male-centered society. In the following section, I will analyze Pamuk’s \textit{A Strangeness in My Mind}, with noted emphasis on the flâneur figure.

\textsuperscript{231} For the reader’s reference, the Kemalist cultural agenda was outlined in chapter one of the dissertation.
2.5 The Male Flâneur: The Episode of Walking in the City

Pamuk’s *A Strangeness in my Mind* begins in media res, when the protagonist, Mevlüt Karataş comes to a startling and rather discomforting realization that he ran away with the wrong girl.\(^{232}\)

At the pivotal age of twenty-five, Mevlüt notices a young girl’s vibrant eyes looking right back into his during his cousin’s wedding. Without immediately knowing the identity of this young woman with beautiful eyes, Mevlüt proceeds to write love letters to her with the help of his best friend and cousin, and dreams of a life with her. Despite not passing a word or touch with this thirteen-year-old, Mevlüt feels that it is his destiny to make her his.\(^{233}\)

Falling in love with Samiha during a moment of eye-contact at a wedding Mevlüt, wishes to elope. His cousin, Süleyman, who facilitates the elopement, in a fit of tart humor, sets Mevlüt up with the Samiha’s older and less attractive sister, Rayiha instead. It is not until boarding a train in the middle of the night that Mevlüt realizes this, but instead of turning back to return his accidental fiancé, he brings her to Istanbul and marries her anyway, “He [Mevlüt] had no clear understanding of how he had been tricked, no memory of how he’d arrived at this moment, and so the strangeness in his mind became a part of the trap he had fallen into.”\(^{234}\)

It is these kinds of estranging memories and experiences that create a panorama of one *boza* seller’s inability to attain his dreams due to surprising circumstances that lead him to become increasingly alienated from not only himself but a changing and modernizing new city.\(^{235}\)

Between 1969 and 2012, for more than forty years, Mevlüt Karataş chronicles the changes that his life has undergone, and the increasingly strong feelings of displacement he experiences from a politically, economically, and socially changing Istanbul. Mevlüt arrives in Istanbul from the Anatolian village of Gümüşdere in the conservative region of Konya with his father, leaving his mother and sisters behind, not by choice but by necessity. Mevlüt becomes a *boza* seller and a street vendor, having gained experience through working alongside his father throughout his childhood. Mevlüt’s relatives: his uncle Hasan and cousins Korkut and Süleyman are already


\(^{233}\) Pamuk, *A Strangeness in My Mind*, 4.

\(^{234}\) Pamuk, *Strangeness*, 10.

\(^{235}\) *Boza* was a rather popular drink during the Ottoman Empire. However, during the new Republic, *boza* became a ‘distant’ drink, and more of an uncommon delicacy that was shared amongst the nostalgic. The presence of *boza* evokes memories of Turkey’s recent past, when the sweet drink was sold throughout many winters.
settled in Istanbul, and quickly assimilate to life in the metropolis in a manner that Mevlüt and his father, Mustafa are never able to attain. The muddy, revolutionary hills of Duttepe and Kultepe where the Karataş family lives is swarming with Anatolian migrants who dream of the life that Istanbul has promised to offer them. The narration of Mevlüt’s schooldays is rather half-heartedly described. It is not where Mevlüt wants to be; he attends school for the sake of fulfilling the hopes his father once had of attaining an education. Mevlüt dreams of the streets and the world that lies beyond the four corners of the one room dirt-grounded space where Mevlüt and his father sleep for several years, “[…] walking around the city at night made him feel as if he were wandering around his own head.”

This observation, though made much later in Mevlüt’s life, is immediately observed in Mevlüt’s attachment to Istanbul’s streets as an adolescent. To satisfy his desire to be in the streets, every day after school, Mevlüt joins his father, and sells yogurt. Mevlüt carries loads of yogurt on his shoulders, supported by a long wooden stick. Walking along paved roads crowded by trucks, horse carts, and busses:

When they reached the paved road, he would concentrate on reading billboards, the headlines on newspapers displayed in grocery stores, and signs affixed to utility poles advertising circumcision services and cram schools. As they advanced farther into the city, they would see old wooden mansions that hadn’t yet burned down, military barracks dating back to the Ottoman era, dented shared taxis decorated with checkered livery, minivans blowing their musical horns and raising a cloud of dust in their wake […]

This passage innocently relates Mevlüt’s first impressions of Istanbul from the vantage point of a child who wishes to become one with Istanbul, and project the energy and enchantment that the city has already shared with him. Through this excerpt, the reader relates Mevlüt’s experiences learning how to be a street vendor in a new city with Istanbul’s changing environment, making mental notes of paved roads, billboards, and the old mansions that withstood the Ottoman years into the new Republic. Mevlüt and his father walk several kilometers between their neighborhood and the center of the city. During these long and exhausting walks, Mevlüt traces his experiences of the city, from the weight of the yogurt on his shoulders, to the sound of the passing vehicles. As the novel progresses, Mevlüt’s relations with Istanbul steadily transform from one of innocence, to one of strangeness, as Istanbul undergoes a series of changes. By the same token, John Dos Passos’s novel, Manhattan Transfer, originally published in 1925, bears a similar resemblance to overwhelming sensory environment that Mevlüt indicates in the previous

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236 Pamuk, Strangeness, 579.
237 Pamuk, Strangeness, 77-78.
passage. The city of Manhattan that Dos Passos portrays in *Manhattan Transfer* is teeming with descriptions of the city’s developing factors including the growth of consumerism, the juxtaposition of urban space and those who occupy it, the rise and fall of the economy, and the struggles characters withstand to uphold the American dream. Dos Passos uptakes symbolism through the city’s visual signs to communicate the kaleidoscopic movement of the crowded environment as characters navigate around the landmarks of the modernizing Manhattan metropolis in the early decades of the twentieth century. Through ambiguous textualization of mass consumerism and modernization comes to the forefront of the novel that is manifested through the city’s use of advertising and massive signs. Characters in the textualized cityscape of Manhattan are rendered subjects of the agents involved in the development of modernization and growing capitalism. A similar process of observation of the prospering environment that Mevlüt describes in *A Strangeness in My Mind* parallels that of the character, Bud in *Manhattan Transfer* as he strolls along Broadway and witnesses the city’s use of textualized signs, “[…] Bud walked down Broadway, past empty lots where tin cans glittered among grass and sumach bushes and ragweed, between ranks of billboards and Bull Duham signs, past shanties and abandoned squatters’ shacks, past gulches heaped with wheelscarred rubbishpiles where dumpcarts were dumping ashes and clinkers […]” Throughout the novel, similar to in *A Strangeness in My Mind*, through the textualization of the city, characters discover that they are trapped and their sense of perception is impaired by vignettes of the cityscape’s attractions which manipulate their relationship with their identity. To follow, I will turn to another subject of the urban environment, the flâneur, whose obsession with walking in the city becomes an active agent in characters psychological conceptions of themselves.

The utilization of the French term “flâneur” becomes insightful when applied to the exploration of pedestrian experiences and their significance in exploring the influence of Istanbul’s milieu to shaping Turkishness. Originating in early nineteenth-century France, the concept of the flâneur can be redrawn to transcend its original context, thereby becoming a valuable element for the recontextualizing of a Turkish flâneur within the framework of literary analysis. As a result, the flâneur can also be thought to symbolize a psyche that has experienced a fractured relationship

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with identity that stems from the severing between geography and history. In fact, it was Charles Baudelaire whose compelling and romantic studies of Paris and modernity led to greater focus on the role of the flâneur. Baudelaire defines modernity according to dualities: “the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable.”  

In his essay, “The Return of the Flâneur,” Walter Benjamin describes the flâneur figure as symbolizing a number of “deeper motives” that are associated with the narrator’s or the novelist’s close relationship or experiences within urban space. Between the flâneur of Paris and that of Mevlüt’s Istanbul, there exists a juxtaposition that changes the flâneur’s role in the city. Typically, the flâneur is an individual who wishes to explore, be educated by, and is enchanted by his surroundings. He concerns himself with the psychological, aesthetic, and cultural processes that appear similarly affected by the modernizing urban space. The flâneur is described across feminist literature and discourse as a “man who takes visual possession of the city” and has become “the embodiment of the ‘male gaze’.” The flâneur character in the novel is disillusioned and destitute with tones of defeat leading Mevlüt through destroyed streets and making vain attempts to assimilate with the crowd. This kind of flâneur is peripheral because they are part of the everyday goings ons of the city’s life. They walk amongst ravaged homes and trashed boulevards, holding onto a history of what once was, carrying a quick aversion for what now is. Despite the inevitable contradiction it may pose, the most interesting characteristic of the flâneur is heightened sensitivity. According to Gilloch,

> The flâneur not only rubs shoulders with the crowd, he also ‘brushes history against the grain.’ The city is thereby transformed, not into a text to be read, but into a plethora of overlapping texts, a palimpsest to be deciphered.

The flâneur is rootless, neither here nor there, absent nor present. The perceived responsibility of walking, be it in Paris or Istanbul, displays an effort to conceive of a palpable image of the city. Engaging in such a process points to the flâneur’s intimate value given to the memories of social and cultural experiences. It is through the act of walking, separating mind from body that the flâneur seems most comfortable, looking at the state of the world and seeking to discover a place

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of belonging and identity within it. To walk within the city means to be in search of something else; to be in constant motion without a designated place. For Lefebvre, urban space is dependent upon walking, and to walk means to process the imageability of the city, as Mevlüt does. During this process, people “experience the intertwining threads of their activities until they become unrecognizable, entangled situations.” The city is felt by the walker’s promenades about the city’s neighborhoods, who observes and studies its appearances, architectural changes, and social ramifications. Walking is a means of narrating experience, during which space is negotiated and harmonized. De Certeau has described walking as a practice that “affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects, etc., the trajectories it ‘speaks.’” In this sense, De Certeau seeks to understand walking as sharing similarities with language and the act of speech. Walking through the city is related to being without a place, or in constant search of a place of belonging, and could therefore be useful in studying the flâneur in the Turkish context:

The moving about that the city multiplies and concentrates makes the city itself an immense social experience of lacking a place – an experience that is, to be sure, broken up into countless tiny deportations (displacements and walks), compensated for by the relationships and intersections of these exoduses that intertwine and create an urban fabric, and placed under the sign of what ought to be, ultimately, the place but is only a name, the City.

The temporal and spatial characteristics linked to walking are articulated in the presence of the flâneur, a point that Deborah Parsons elaborates on in her research on the spatial practices that take place in the metropolis, “Walking in the city is at once an encounter with modernity and with the past, with the now and the unknown but also with haunting ghosts.” The flâneur in France, is the relaxed, rootless, bourgeois who walks for the sake of knowing his city and experiences the privileged opportunity to restlessly explore the newly paved streets and boulevards for artistic inspiration. However, in A Strangeness in My Mind, the identified flâneur, Mevlüt, is narrated as a placeless citizen who walks and becomes one with his city for the sake of survival, as the reader notes through his occupation as a street vendor. According to Laschinger, “The flâneur’s seeming idleness must be understood as labor; his studious gaze has

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the analytical detachment crucial for a society with a worth ethic that values effectiveness and efficiency."248 As a flâneur, Mevlüt not only finds himself lost within the city of Istanbul but is also lost within himself because of Istanbul. The flâneur of Paris, or the flâneur of Istanbul, are together allegorical, urban characters whose presence within the city reveals the transformation of the city’s landscape while also unraveling its psychological consequences on the city’s inhabitants. The city is nothing like the sparkly, emblematic, and enchanting fantasy that often comes to mind in speech relating to Paris and the Parisian flâneur. In Istanbul, for the Istanbullite, the inverse seems to be the case. The flâneur figures are individual, unique, and capable of making personal choice. Most importantly, they are not anonymous. Their originality is mapped through their very personal interactions and identification with their surrounds.

Mevlüt’s access to the city’s neighborhoods and its changes takes place through his professional occupation because as a street vendor he exists as part of the urban environment and this personal contact with the metropolis informs his sense of belonging. Mevlüt’s behavior as a male walking within Istanbul displays itself very differently than that of other female protagonists such as Zeliha, Asya, or, as the later sections will display, Tequila Leila, Füsun, or Peri. It can be said that Mevlüt’s tendencies, his behavior, and his attachment to the cityscape are revealed by not only his occupation as street vendor, but also because he is a male. However, Mevlüt’s occupation and his gender appear to contradict themselves because unlike typical male protagonists, he does not display characteristics of power nor heroism, or of success nor of sedition. He is rather submissive and accepts his lot in life, just as long as he has Istanbul to guide him. Mevlüt appears to be imprisoned and restrained within his inessential means of being an unhealthy vendor lost within the modernizing Istanbul streets. His daily life is a series of repetition with little progression towards wealth; what changes is his relationship with the city as it continues to be destroyed and rebuilt. He loves that in Istanbul all sorts of “wonderful things seemed to be going on at the same time,” and he could get on a bus with a ticket to nowhere and “walk freely into those same streets he couldn’t enter when he had yogurt to carry, savoring the joy of getting lost in the commotion and the noise of the city […]”249 Mevlüt’s life as a young man growing up in Istanbul is not limited to that of a typical schoolboy skipping out on classes to

248 Laschinger, “Flâneuring into the Creative Economy: Orhan Pamuk’s Istanbul: Memories of a City,” 103.
249 Pamuk, Strangeness, 169-170.
roam the streets, but is also speckled with numerous failed attempts to make money through small business entrepreneurship with his best friend, Ferhat, who engages Mevlüt in leftist political adventures that include pasting revolutionary signs on buildings in the middle of the night, pursuing women on the streets, and unexpected romances that blossom from endless feelings of strangeness.  

Throughout much of his adolescent years Mevlüt becomes increasingly infatuated with his sexuality and what it means to be a male. As he matures, the distance from his father grows stronger. He begins masturbating multiple times a day, goes alone to the cinema to watch erotic films, and with a rapid acceleration becomes obsessed with an unknown woman that he sees on the street and begins to secretly pursue her. Mevlüt closely watches this woman whose name he imagines to be Neriman multiple times a week. Having learned from his friends of the women they have secretly lusted and pursued throughout Istanbul, Mevlüt initially does not believe he would ever do such a thing. However, he quickly finds himself dreaming of Neriman and discovers where she lives, what she does for a living, and even the brand of cigarettes she smokes. He imagines a life with this woman that he pursues throughout Istanbul and feels himself to be her protector. Soon after the beginning of his imaginary escapades with this Neriman, Mevlüt embarks on journey of looking for her amongst Istanbul’s crowds of other women, soon realizing that it only deepens his love for Istanbul:

> He liked that these new women took him away to other neighborhoods, and he enjoyed finding out about their lives and daydreaming about them, but he could never seem to get attached to any of them.

This passage reveals that the protagonist’s infatuation with actively following women without their knowledge is a projection of the association he has made between the female subject and himself as a subject of Istanbul. The women that Mevlüt follows into different neighborhoods have no consciousness of being watched, nor of being subjected to Mevlüt’s daydreams. Mevlüt does not have a sexual or lustful desire for these women but rather believes that through silently pursuing them, he may come closer to understanding Istanbul, and therefore understanding his place within it. Despite Mevlüt’s obsession with pursuing women differing little from that of his classmates, he believes his intentions to be pure and respectable. He finds himself strolling

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250 Pamuk, *Strangeness*, 579.
through neighborhoods such as Şişli, Taksim, and Beyoğlu. In these affluent districts of the large city, Mevlüt enjoys indulging in the gaze, “He liked the mannequin displays of women in long skirts next to cheerful children in two-piece suits, and he always looked closely at the trunkless mannequin legs in hosier’s shops.”\textsuperscript{254} Mevlüt’s compulsions do not however go unnoticed. His father and even his cousin, Süleyman observe Mevlüt’s questionable behaviors and wonder how he will ever succeed in Istanbul when he is already so far disconnected from the realities surrounding him. Mevlüt often expresses in the text his dreams of marrying a conservative young woman whose faith in Islam was strong as his own. Yet, he is still energized by his sexual fantasies, and therefore appears as a contradictory character. As the city changes and once-popular places fall to ruins, Mevlüt becomes increasingly estranged from the city and alienated from himself. To preserve his memories of the changing city, Mevlüt walks and chooses a profession that requires him to be acquainted with, and constantly be immersed within Istanbul’s many neighborhoods and broadening social classes. The narrator’s writing of the protagonist presents Mevlüt as someone who is constantly alone, walking within the spirals of cobblestoned streets within the city. He stalks women who fascinate him, mourns the tearing down of old apartment buildings, and fantasizes about a life that Kemalism had promised: one of modernity, opportunity, and security. When he marries Rahiya his urge to have sex is ultimately fulfilled. However, what is interesting is the voice given to the female to express what the sexual encounters with Mevlüt felt like, which appears in contrast to how Mevlüt describes them. Pamuk, in the likes of Shafak, uptakes the gaze and the notion of looking and being looked at as a theme. However, as a male writer, in contrast to Shafak who is a female writer, Pamuk asserts himself in the position of his protagonist to imagine the female experience being watched in the city. To proceed, I will turn attention to one of the female characters in the novel to analyze the focalization of the woman and how hers differs from our protagonist.

In the text, Rayiha’s older sister, Vediha appears as a minor character, but it is her restriction by male authority to access Istanbul and the lack of agency she experiences to make her own choices have long-lasting impressions. She makes her way into the novel through her marriage to Korkut, Süleyman’s older and temperament brother. Korkut does not want to be married to a village girl, yet when his mother shows him a photograph of her, he becomes infatuated by her

\textsuperscript{254} Pamuk, \textit{Strangeness}, 170.
innocent beauty. He travels to Vediha’s village and watches her from afar to observe her demeanor to judge whether she would be a respectable and suitable wife for her.255 Upon haggling for his beloved with her father, Korkut wins his approval and brings Vediha to Istanbul with him to be wed. Vediha wants to see Istanbul and look at its new buildings and watch the waves of the Bosphorus. However, as a woman, she is expected to remain at home with the children and maintain the peace of the household. When Vediha does step out of the private, domestic space into public, urban space, her experiences are oftentimes facilitated by male figures, so she never has the same interactions with Istanbul as the men around her, which is something she openly detests. The feelings of inadequacy and lack of control that Vediha feels regarding her ability to make choices for herself and to independently uncover her purpose in life is compromised by the male figures in her life whose patriarchal power dictates her identity.

Vediha’s character evolves in the novel as she becomes a voice of reason and a facilitator to resolve family disputes. However, she is unable to prevent her youngest sister, Samiha, from running away with an unknown man to free herself from being sold to Süleyman. As Vediha chases down the street in her house slippers the cab that her sister has run off into, Samiha feels victorious, thinking to herself, “You saw for yourselves: no one can buy me…I’ve been so furious at them all.”256 It is later uncovered that Samiha has run off and married Mevlüt’s close friend from childhood, Ferhat. He earns little, is gone most days and stays out late into the night. However, Samiha is convinced that by marrying Ferhat she has risen against standards of gender and took back freedom that she was never willing to sell. To alleviate the pain and anger that Süleyman must feel at losing Samiha to Ferhat, Vediha sets about finding an eligible wife for him. However, the reader discovers that the true motivation behind this task is simply because she wants to get out of the house; she wants to see Istanbul.257 She is frustrated and the burden of becoming the family’s mediator of conflicts weighs heavily upon her. She expresses her discontent with how her marriage, motherhood, and life has spiraled to her trusted reader:

Is it reasonable that I should be the one who’s been taking my father-in-law’s lunch over to his shop every single day for the past twenty years? That I should hurry to make sure his food doesn’t get cold only for him to say ‘Not this again’ or ‘What on earth is this,’ regardless of whether I’ve made his favorite meat-and-bean stew or tried something different with okra in it? […] Is it right for all

255 Pamuk, Strangeness, 179.
256 Pamuk, Strangeness, 315.
257 Pamuk, Strangeness, 378.
of them to come to me with their problems, but then always turn around and say, ‘You don’t understand’.\textsuperscript{258}

This passage demonstrates to the reader a different dimension of power relations between the male and female that takes place within the domestic space with the woman being confined to the home and must be traditionally submissive to the male-dominated family structure. The hierarchal relationship between Vediha and her husband and his family immediately position her beneath them, underlining practices of patriarchy and the lack of value women are expected to live in comparison to their male counterparts. In describing the unfair conditions of being married to Korkut and living with his family, Vediha demonstrates an understanding of her role as reticent female, despite the unhappiness that she reveals to her trusted readers. Vediha’s character is given the agency to tell her own story to her readers from first person. She is unable to communicate her domestic sufferings with those around her including her family, so the narrator offers her the opportunity to express her unhappiness with being a woman in such a male-dominated society with those willing to read it, creating a sense of intimacy as well as confidence. Vediha’s self-awareness of her strife and inability to navigate Istanbul the way she would like is an illustration of her subordinate life as a female in the city, in contrast to how other male characters in the novel, such as her husband and the protagonist, Mevlüt are able to mobilize within the city and live amongst its splendors. Although Pamuk is not a female writer, he witnesses the experiences of his female characters such as Neriman, Rayiha, Vediha and Samiha – their unhappiness’s, their trivial everyday life tasks, and their oppression by the men in their life. Pamuk positions himself in the place of the female in a similar way that he notes that Gustave Flaubert does for his protagonist in \textit{Madame Bovary}, which he explores at length in \textit{The Naïve and Sentimental Novelist}.\textsuperscript{259} Similar to Flaubert, Pamuk cares about the thousands of details of everyday citizens, and particularly how he can illustrate the woman’s experiences living in a world that is male-centered. Pamuk reimagines that the experiences of his female characters could very likely resemble that of millions of women in other parts of the world.

Throughout the latter course of the narration, Mevlüt becomes increasingly isolated within the cityscape as it turns into a foreign space. Mevlüt’s occupation and the tremendous amount of

\textsuperscript{258} Pamuk, \textit{Strangeness}, 587-588.

\textsuperscript{259} Pamuk, \textit{Naïve and Sentimental Novelist}, 46.
walking characteristic of being a street vendor symbolizes the protagonist’s separation between himself and the rest of Istanbul society. Mevlüt’s experience as a walker and viewer of the city is one which is defined along the limitations of the lower class in Istanbul. Selling boza is what connects Mevlüt to his past, causing him to hold onto this occupation throughout his life. During his decades-long career as a street vendor, Mevlüt sells yogurt, pilav and chickpeas, and ice cream, but it is boza that Mevlüt feels best connects him with a sense of authenticity. Despite the modernization of Istanbul that causes a decrease in the amount of people knowing of and purchasing this historic drink, Mevlüt continues to sell it, and becomes known as the boza seller:

The neighborhoods beyond and old city walls had been described as being ‘outside the city’ when Mevlüt first came to Istanbul, and now that thirty-three years had passed, they all looked alike: they were thick with tall, ugly apartment buildings six to eight stories high, with oversize windows, as well as crooked side streets, construction sites, billboards bigger than any you saw in the city center, coffeehouses full of men watching television, and metal dumpsters build like train carriages that kept hungry strays from the trash, until every corner of the city looked identical, with overhead pedestrian crossings bound by metal railings, barren squares and cemeteries, and main thoroughfares – uniformly the same all along the way – where no one ever bought any boza.260

The gradual disappearance of Mevlüt’s enterprise assumes the form of a socio-cultural portrayal of Istanbullites’ turning away from a strange and unfamiliar Ottoman past, towards a more attainable and promising new Western reality. Through his business, Mevlüt becomes a symbol of Istanbul’s collective hüzüün, reminding residents of the city’s Turkishness as an identity marked by its Ottoman Eastern roots. As the text progresses, boza becomes more than a presence in the novel but rather comes to symbolize Mevlüt’s desperation to clasp onto the Istanbul that he remembers as an adolescent.261 The emerging of new technologies, high-rise apartment buildings, more advanced systems of transportation, and other modernizing processes are archived from the experience of Mevlüt as he walks and witnesses Istanbul’s changes, unwilling to assimilate as he persists in his passion for selling boza. As Mevlüt engages in what many characters perceive as ‘skill-less’ work, he walks for years, through numerous leftist political conflicts that continue to affect his ability to sell boza peacefully and safely. The old city that

260 Pamuk, Strangeness, 653

In his text, Keyder notes the overlapping perceptions of social exclusion that found its way within Istanbul’s socio-cultural climate during the period of rapid modernization in the 1980s when the city experienced and influx of migration to Istanbul’s outer neighbourhoods.
Mevlüt used to know falls away into the past, to make way for a new, restored city. In effect, it is this conflict between the world he knew and the new world taking its place that he does not know that represents the strangeness in Mevlüt’s mind. Mevlüt is afflicted with loss. It is indeed a modern kind of loss that comes as a result of losing one’s sense of home and being unable to experience the modern city in a modern way that can annihilate the past and live only for what is to come, not what has. As Caglar Keyder notes in his article, “Globalization and Social Exclusion in Istanbul”:

Most of the physical transformation associated with globalization in Istanbul has taken place since the mid-1980s: gated communities, five-star hotels, the city packaged as a consumption artifact for tourists, new office towers, expulsion of small businesses from the central districts, beginnings of gentrification of the old neighborhoods, and world images on billboards and shop windows.262

This is the kind of rapid change that Mevlüt struggles to come to terms with as a boza seller. The blatant transformations in the name of progress that Istanbul undergoes during this period in history creates a new cityscape that is laden with tourism, consumerism, and advertising, also leading to a change with the way inhabitants engage with one another as they begin to look at each other as symbols of prosperity or poverty. The overwhelming series of descriptions of Istanbul’s rebuilding creates a sense of rootlessness and reminds the reader of the strangeness that persists in Mevlüt’s mind throughout the course of his life. To add on to this claim, the city’s changes plant a painful longing in Mevlüt. Not a longing for the past, but rather a strong wish to just understand why the city he has come to believe himself capable of succeeding in, change at the speed of which it has. Mevlüt’s intoxicating estrangement from the modern city is transparent through his oblivion of what are the norms now accepted in the city, all the while refusing to change and adapt. Mevlüt’s meanderings about the city allows a narration of Istanbul’s socio-economic and political transformations that in effect offer a perspective of history:

When he walked down a quiet street where no curtain twitched and no window opened, he would sometimes feel – though he knew, rationally, that it wasn’t true – as if he’d been there before, in a time as old as fables, and as he revealed in the sensation of meeting the present moment as if it were a memory, he would shout ‘Boo-za’ and feel that he was really calling out to his own past.263

This above excerpt indicates Mevlüt’s reaction to the city’s modernization project as one that has led to a series of alienating perceptions. Following his wife’s death and his daughters’ marriage, Mevlüt is left alone in his home and finds himself being further immersed into this eerie

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263 Pamuk, Strangeness, 642.
strangeness that has only continued to consume him. The strangeness that Mevlüt feels throughout his life coincides with a spatio-temporal transformation of the city. Mevlüt’s growing inability to create a cognitive map of relations that could connect him with his urban surroundings is an obstacle that hinders the seller’s identity in relation to the modernizing environment. Mevlüt’s nighttime walks resemble a pursuit, a quest, a dream, or a kind of adventure that carries him through personal and national memories, but also through the tangibility of time, and the experiences which have led to his experience with the city, as one who cannot seem to locate his place of belonging within it. The effects of this urban change are profound for Mevlüt. This era of demolition is transformative for Mevlüt as an individual, and Istanbul as a collective. It also signals to the traumatic periods of Turkish history; of a time when violence for the purposes of political change and destruction of buildings for new European standards became a norm. Throughout Istanbul’s demolition and rebuilding years, Mevlüt’s feelings of strangeness had grown increasingly strong as his sense of time and space are continuously reshaped. During this historical period, the narrator describes not only the processes of demolition that became common in Istanbul, but also the ‘demolition’ of much of Istanbul’s cultural influences, which existed under the guise of a ‘clean up’:

The program of demolitions was announced as an effort to clean up and modernize the city, an approach that appealed to everyone. Criminals, Kurds, Gypsies, and thieves currently squatting in the neighbourhood’s vacant buildings would get kicked out; drug dens, smugglers’ warehouses, brothels, bachelor dormitories, and ruined buildings that served as hubs of illegal activities would be demolished, and in their place would be a new six-lane highway taking you from Tarlabası to Taksim in five minutes.²⁶⁴

In this passage, the narrator brings to the forefront the specific tasks that were undertaken to render Istanbul a modern city that could be comparable with those in Europe, such as London or Paris. It was not simply about mapping the history of a city through coups and wars, but rather drawing attention to how everyday citizens’ lives were changed to accommodate for this forced project such as through the emptying out of homes, the demolishing of buildings, or the building of paved roads. The economic and socio-cultural metamorphosis Mevlüt witnesses is amongst a debatable political climate that will lead to Mevlüt’s voyeuristic behaviors and by the resolution of the novel, to his undoing. The plot and conflict of the novel does not necessarily accelerate, nor does it clearly come to a close. Instead, the narrator pauses conflict for the sake of describing the plot and conflict of Istanbul’s rapid changes. Modern Istanbul, with its newly built apartment

²⁶⁴ Pamuk, Strangeness, 317.
blocks, secretive back streets, and unrecognizable luxuries, became an archetypal illustration of a new kind of life, or an aesthetic experience that renders the city a public show, a spectacle, or even a model of what the new Turkish citizen should be in pursuit of. With the changes that Istanbul undergoes, Mevlüt’s perception of the golden city grows less and less magical and his sense of belonging is weakened, and he becomes increasingly disillusioned. New people from other cities show up with money and new settlements and cultures are everywhere. Mevlüt questions the influence Istanbul has had on his sensitivities and often reflects on his lack of integration and ability to assimilate despite having lived in this growing city for several decades by now. Pamuk’s narrator transcends the real city for the metaphoric to frame vignettes of certain parts of Turkey’s cultural memory from the point of view of everyday Turks, who perceive and react to the city. However, by no means is Mevlüt nostalgic. In fact, he detests the term. When he describes the seemingly endless building work taking place in the streets, Mevlüt continues to reflect on the rapid changes and their impacts: “There were plans to limit Istiklal to foot traffic (leading to endless roadwork that had littered the whole street with potholes), except for a single tramline described in the newspaper as ‘nostalgic’ (a word Mevlüt didn’t like).”

The protagonist exhibits at once an attachment and a displacement from homeland that leads to disenchantment due to an ongoing in-between existence. Figures like Mevlüt tend to feel an eerie sort of separation however, from both homeland and a land they themselves are still wary and rather alienated from. In the words of Bruce Robbins, individuals close in on a “mode or degree of belonging” that places them geographically in East and West without a solid certainty of either. Narrated and real Istanbul seem to form a framework with networks of metaphoric and symbolic meanings. Highmore defines this collection of images making up the metaphorical city as “the tangle of physicality and symbolism, the sedimentation of various histories, the mingling of imaginings and experience.” The novel comes to embody a preserved archive that is reflective of a surrealist influence that blends reality within the fiction.

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265 Pamuk, Strangeness, 336.
267 Highmore, Cityscapes, 5.
After Rayiha’s death and his two daughters marriage, the streets of Istanbul feel to Mevlüt “like bottomless black wells.” The longer Mevlüt remains in Istanbul, the more of a stranger he becomes. He no longer recognizes the same streets that he has lived in for years. Yet, he continues to recall the happy years he spent married to Rayiha, despite initially having wanted to marry her beautiful sister. At the wedding of Mevlüt’s daughter, Fevziye, the novel seems to reintroduce the gaze and momentary eye contact that Mevlüt and Samiha exchanged many years ago. As a result, Mevlüt’s desire for Samiha is again brough to life and dependent on the initial gazing process that he experienced with her at his cousin’s wedding, demonstrating Mevlüt’s overestimation of physicality’s to determine his decisions in life. While Mevlüt desperately tries to hide his desire to stare at Samiha, the latter looks back at him, fully displaying her freedom to gaze right back and the stronger male:

Oh, Mevlüt, you coward. He keeps looking at me, but then pretending he didn’t. But I look right back at him, just the way I did at Korkut’s wedding twenty-three years ago, just as he wrote in his letters, as if I wanted to take him prisoner with my ensorcelled eyes. I looked at him so I could cut across his path like a bandit and steal his hear away, so that he would be struck by the force of my gaze.

In this passage, the reader notes the resistance of Samiha as she chooses not to evade Mevlüt’s gaze but rather looks right back at him. Pamuk describes Samiha as the female doing the gazing and Mevlüt as the object of her gaze. Samiha subverts the expectation of acting as the passive female in reaction to the active male’s gaze. She does not divulge in passively being looked at by the powerful male but instead asserts her power as a female and in effect demonstrates her ability to make choices for herself and not resign to being the subject of the male’s desire. It is during this exchange of gazes that Mevlüt begins to wonder if he can indeed marry again, despite the possibility of disrespecting his late wife’s memory.

In the concluding chapter of the novel, “The Form of a City” Mevlüt confesses, “I can only meditate when walking.” The protagonist, like his creator, finds himself only able to meditate with the dynamics of his identity within Istanbul though the act of walking through the numerous streets and alleyways that mark the city. Very similar to Pamuk’s memoir, A Strangeness in My

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268 Pamuk, Strangeness, 512.
269 Pamuk, Strangeness, 639.
270 Pamuk, Strangeness, 645.
271 Pamuk, Strangeness, 707.
Mind reflects upon the significance of memory to the narration of Turkishness, as an identity much rooted in its distant, national past. The repeated recall of Istanbul’s modernization project, which develops as an overarching theme in the novel, enables the narrator to come to terms with the fragility of his identity. The discovery of Turkishness in relation to the urban landscape is an overt endeavor to draw connections between the past through the form of storytelling. The aesthetic susceptibility of Pamuk’s oeuvre occurs in tandem with his interest in defining the changing circumstances surrounding Istanbul which has included the figure of the flâneur and different gendered experiences exhibited by male and female characters. In thinking about Istanbul as a developing figure in the novel that is narrated through the experiences and memories of a street vendor, Pamuk’s work becomes more than an aesthetic venture, into an illumination of the juxtapositions and paradoxes rooted within Turkey’s socio-cultural life.
2.6 Conclusion

Novels related to the urban landscape create a storytelling and reading experience that speaks to the measuring of identity within the perceptual world and blurs the boundaries between self and nation. Following Highmore’s definition of the “metaphor city” Shafak and Pamuk use their narrative structure to question what it means for Istanbul to be defined by metaphors and symbols. The thesis that was explored in this chapter has sought to perform an in-depth study of Shafak’s and Pamuk’s portrayal of Gendered Turkishness through close readings of the cityscape.

Although each section is unique in its approach to discourse on urban space, they all relate in their productive use of literary techniques and numerous motifs as an avenue from which to observe the emergence of the city as an influential agent in the fate of the individual. These components have included an in-depth discussion of Istanbul from the vantage point of Pamuk, Istanbul as a space of negotiating the male-female dichotomy through a close reading of Shafak’s The Bastard of Istanbul, and the subject of the flâneur in Pamuk’s A Strangeness in My Mind. By focusing on these perspectives, I have acknowledged in these texts an alternative idea of identity as a gendered concept that considers the gaze, female subjectification, and walking in the city. Identity coexists with geography. The sections that I have visited in efforts to progress throughout the thesis largely proposed in my dissertation: “What are the effects of geography on belonging?” have all led me to discuss varying components of Turkish identity and in what ways the city of Istanbul is a catalyst for its many contradictions. Within the novels I selected to study in this chapter, I was keen to present multiple approaches of exemplifying in what ways Gendered Turkishness is indeed a question of Istanbul, and is not a unique, nor an isolated concept. Therefore, in efforts to contribute to the larger motivations of this dissertation, I have examined the role of geography in the question of belonging, via Shafak’s and Pamuk’s oeuvres to indicate in what ways identity is largely facilitated by gendered societal expectations. In the following chapter, I will narrow my focus of Turkish everyday life in Shafak’s and Pamuk’s novels by exploring elements of surrealism, the figure of the prostitute as a commodity in Shafak’s Ten Minutes 38 seconds in this Strange World, and the gaze which will be most pertinent in the close reading of Pamuk’s The Black Book.
CHAPTER 3: TEQUILA LEILA’S, GALIP’S AND CELÂL’S’ PROFANE ILLUMINATIONS’

3.1 Introduction

The study of Gendered Turkishness is dependent, according to this dissertation, upon theoretical studies within aesthetic endeavors, feminist groundings, and socio-cultural conversations. In this area of the dissertation, I assess Turkishness through the lens of surrealism as a literary, stylistic technique used to explore the eerie qualities of everyday life. I question how sensory experiences evoke discussions surrounding Turkish private and public life by visiting the theme of surrealism as a method from which to explore the objectification of women characters. Throughout the two analytical sections, I analyze Shafak’s 10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World (2019) and Pamuk’s The Black Book (Kara Kitap, 1990) as experimentally surrealistic texts. Their approach to writing from this angle is compelling because while history lessons tell of heroes and martyrs, they rarely tell the tales of ordinary people’s ordinary lives under ordinary circumstances. By situating the experience of surrealism in the everyday as an instrument of cultural translation, I traverse the details of everyday life as a possible means of illumination and a remarkable practice of identity emplacement: How did such everyday people lead their lives? What about the rhythms of the everyday world in the city is compelling to the Turkishness narrative? No detail of a character, a landscape, nor an event is neglected. Narration of the ordinary makes the fiction feel ‘real;’ it highlights the everyday; the very small things that typically one would not pay mind to nor even notice. Represented reality is not a direct replica of the real world, but is rather a reshaped and refigured reproduction, a concept that Roland Barthes elucidates on in his essay, “The Discourse of History,” “historical discourse does not follow the real;” historical discourse is translated to “a taste for realistic effect.”272 Descriptions of objects, experiences, places, or feelings gain a valuable sense of recognition and come to have profound impacts on characters as they absorb the perceptual world around them.

In the first section of this chapter, “Theoretical Overview: The Surrealistic Rendering of the Insignificant Significant” I enhance earlier research of everyday studies by further concentrating on the surrealist experiment that will speak to the alienating, the eerie, and the estranging. Through a comprehensive framework that includes readings of the following late nineteenth century, early-twentieth century thinkers: André Breton, Walter Benjamin, and Sigmund Freud, I interpret the impact of the perceptual world as it is translated by Shafak’s and Pamuk’s characters as they continue to navigate through their Turkishness. My interest in following a surrealist methodology is due to a preoccupation to elucidate the realm of experiences and to especially coalesce reality as a function of art. This will take the form of blurring the boundaries between the novel and reality as I pursue the surrealist experiments as indeed a revealing of the perceptual world. The two analytical sections to follow will approach Shafak’s and Pamuk’s texts as allegorical illustrations of the ordinary world, which will be a useful phrase in the exploration of ordinary characters ordinary lives, pointing to the overarching pursuit to understand the dynamics inherent in Turkishness. The premise of the everyday is professed as a space to illuminate reality. This means that both writers’ literary language is concerned with Istanbul as a space focused on reality as well as a space from which fictional characters engage with the smallest details within their environment. However, the strangeness of the everyday is further enhanced because its portrayal through texts is rather dependent upon characters sensory experiences, such as their thoughts and feelings of Istanbul and how this city has shaped their identity. As this chapter goes on to argue, existing within the space of the fictional world, the textual oscillations in Pamuk’s and Shafak’s texts not only depict a historiography based on fiction, but also explores themes experienced by characters which connect the novels to the sociocultural element rooted in Turkish everyday life, which are largely facilitated by the gender dichotomy. Identity manifestation is the thematic response for the character constructions and the individual narratives. Surrealism will become a useful avenue of theoretical studies in the following sections of close readings which will focus on the subject of the prostitute as commodity, and the concept of the gaze, both which will connect with the provocation of sensory experiences.
3.2 Theoretical Overview: The Surrealistic Rendering of the Insignificant Significant

In this preliminary section, I traverse the principles of surrealism and how they apply to everyday studies and provide relevant literature that will be useful in my readings of the selected texts as surrealistic texts. As an experimental avenue of study, surrealism is not related here to the artistic movement of the early twentieth century in the likes of Frida Kahlo or Salvador Dali for instance, but is rather concerned with the familiar being ordinary, yet appearing as bizarre; it has to do with the contradictory statement that the everyday is indeed a site for the revolutionary. In his Second Manifesto of Surrealism, Breton expresses that the everyday is concerned with mental processes.\(^{273}\) To look at the everyday from the lens of surrealism means to associate it with what is dull, perpetual, lacking, artificial, predictable. Life is basic, in contrast to what is to be desired – what we see in our dreams, and what is tragic or marvelous. Surrealism is fascinating because it comprehends the thus far neglected, yet inconsistent opportunities that are disguised within the ordinary world. Grounded in the motions and praxes of the everyday, the streets, the teahouses, the tobacco shops, the trains, are all sites for potential action or surprise. There is a stimulative level of chance in every encounter in the everyday.

Walter Benjamin has expressed writings of this category as being “concerned literally with experiences, not with theories and still less with phantasms. These experiences are by no means limited to dreams, hours of hashish eating, or opium smoking.” This process is referred to by Benjamin as a “profane illumination,” which, following the individual’s alienation from the self, entails the sudden epiphany-like realization of the small details of the everyday as, in actuality, significant in their engagement with the world and all of its intricacies.\(^{274}\) It is through such circumstances that the surrealist experiment is at its climax, making the individual feel trapped in a space where they feel lost and estranged from what they thought they knew, rendering their sudden awareness of the everyday grow stronger. Keya Ganguly outlines Benjamin’s concentration on surrealism’s “montage-like strategies of estranging the familiarity of the


everyday world.”\(^{275}\) The devotion to the ordinary that we see in discussions of surrealism speaks to an intimacy but also to a melancholy with the state of the perceptual world. Lefebvre has similarly acknowledged this elusive chase that occurs in the hopes of catching a reality that constantly escapes, speaking to the inability of holding onto the tangible, everyday world:

> The person who speaks, the person who acts, does he ever really know what he is saying, what he is doing? The ‘other,’ the other thing, is hidden behind every moment of life, and of our life. Not to be obsessed with that is to be profoundly implicit and in agreement with it; to be obsessed with it is to pursue an elusive reality that escapes every direction. But we sense it, we touch it, beneath our own consciousness. But it is always beyond our reach. The inability to grasp the real, and this escape by the real, are the characteristics, indissolubly joined together, of the consciousness and the life of our times. A general unreality and an exasperated need for who know what permanent passion are each the cause of the other.\(^{276}\)

Experiences of everyday life are at once a regular ritual and a strange happening. Lefebvre recognizes that there is always some “other thing,” that remains shadowed “behind every moment of life.” The elusiveness of everyday reality creates moments of eerie strangeness that causes one to rethink themselves and their authority over the world as they experience it. Attention is attributed to individual’s reactions to social circumstances, and interest is deserved to how people deal with and manage the world around them, which in effect influences how identity can be absorbed in a culture. It is a matter of making sense of the chaos of the quotidian. This is not to say that events such as wars, epidemics, and migrations do not impact identity. Instead, it is how one approaches such occurrences and their memories of their lives within such circumstances that has an authentic impact on the conscious. The process of self-exploration is a force that depends on the familiar world, including very basic meanderings that could range from an attachment to commercial objects to a discovery of passing landscapes. Through Breton, the disruptive and antagonizing nature of one’s immediate surroundings are uncovered and revealed:

> Would we not be equally justified in decreeing, because drunks see double, that for the eyes of a sober man the repetition of an object is the consequence of a slightly different drunkenness? As this difference would result from the material fact of having drunk or not having drunk, I consider it useless to insist any further.\(^{277}\)

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\(^{277}\) André Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, trans. Mary Ann Caws and Geoffrey T. Harris (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 107.
The alienating qualities attributed to the everyday is grounded in what is familiar and the “repetition” expected from the quotidian is described by Breton as a different kind of “drunkenness” that can be satirized between the cases of being drunk and sober. The surroundings no longer appear as familiar as they once seemed, further enhancing a sense of estrangement from the known. Identity as a direct result of the ‘non-everyday’ is not immediately eliminated, but it no longer deserves the same category of importance because there is now a sense of value ascribed to the everyday. The surrealistic practice of viewing the everyday as mystic and as a mundane happening evokes a brief mention of Sigmund Freud’s studies into the “uncanny.” This concept that Freud defines as inseparable from the everyday experience allows the Austrian psychoanalyst to perform an aesthetic investigation, engaging directly with literature. The uncanny exists in the “realm of the frightening, of what evokes fear and dread.”278 Freud’s *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* is especially interesting because it introduces discussions related to the ‘peculiar’ components of everyday life that are usually not even part of such thought. Some examples of these constituents include the forgetting of names and the inability to pronounce certain words.279 Elements attached to one’s reality – political, cultural, private – are necessities for unlocking the hidden aspects of the individual. It is this back-and-forth between a connectedness that occurs at the level of everyday events, and one that is more estranging that are played out through aesthetics, emotions, and psyche. A certain level of depersonalization; being at odds with oneself or estranged from oneself is present when one senses the uncanny. It is not directly distinguishable, nor can it be categorized, but instead is an eerie and mysterious feeling in unfamiliarity with what once was familiar that I will later relate to the ‘uncanny’. Throughout the following two sections, I will often return to the strangeness of the everyday which has rendered if not only a surrealist experience, but also one that can be characterized as ‘uncanny.’ It is now, then, necessary to bring together the everyday and the novel form, to assess the merging of fiction with reality for the purposes of illuminating the banal details of daily life.

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In the chapter titled “The Reality Effect,” in his *The Rustle of Language* Barthes notes narrative descriptions as central characteristics of realistic fiction, “The singularity of description (or of the ‘useless detail’) in narrative fabric, its isolated situation, designates a question which has the greatest importance for the structural analysis of the narrative.” Barthes goes on to pose the following question, “Is everything in narrative significant, and if not, if insignificant stretches subsist in the narrative syntagm, what is ultimately, so to speak, the significance of the insignificance?”

There is an ongoing movement between reality, imagination, and the process of embodying reality within fiction that recurs through the process of narrating what is assumed to be insignificant. The presence and influence of the surrealist experiment in literature is expressed through a referencing to a dissatisfaction with the world that often either represents or underrepresents a memory, or references an alternate reality, such as through dreams and imagination. Characters are placed in mundane worlds equipped with mundane things to have mundane experiences in a chaotic environment. Narrators then tirelessly describe a world of everyday encounters that serves the purpose of facilitating cultural and social memories. Details are complex and convoluted and cause the reader to delve into the alienating aspects of their ordinary world in a way that they would not have considered doing otherwise, through which the reader hopes to uncover meaning in the world and find their place within it. Through the process of description, fiction is useful in the manifestation of sensory experiences and the role of urban space to the portrayal of identity. Surrealism and the real world do not detach from each other, but rather thrive off one another, divulging the clouded dimension of identity.

Freud describes the writer as a figure who cleverly “tricks us by promising us everyday reality and then going beyond it.”

Pamuk and Shafak are writers who describe everyday reality, but in doing so, reveal profound truths and realities of the perceptual world that would typically otherwise evade notice because of how unoriginal they initially appear. Benjamin similarly focuses on narrating the everyday to study the ontologies of identity. Benjamin’s relationship with the world of surrealism is no more telling than in his analysis of *Nadja* (Breton, 1928). The writer draws upon things and places and draws readers attention to their ordinariness to

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demonstrate their stunning character. His focus on Breton’s protagonist is for the interest of bringing together the female protagonist’s Nadja’s experiences of the world, and rendering them ‘revolutionary’:

He is closer to things that Nadja is close to than to her. What are these things? Nothing could reveal more about Surrealism than their canon. Where shall I begin? He can boast an extraordinary discovery. He was first to perceive the revolutionary energies that appear in the ‘outmoded,’ in the first iron constructions, the first factory buildings, the earlier photos, the objects that have begun to go extinct, grand pianos, the dresses of five years ago, fashionable restaurants when the vogue has begun to ebb from them. The relation of these things to revolution – no one can have a more exact concept of it than these authors.  

*Nadja* is not a novel about a woman with a fantastical plot; the subject of the text rather symbolizes an infatuation of the author with the phenomenon of experience and what these small happenings and minor stories may possibly suggest for the illustration of being. *Nadja* begins with a questioning of the psyche: “Who am I?” For Benjamin, Breton and his female character, Nadja take the overlooked experiences that take place in the Parisian landscape and render them *revolutionary* experiences. An interaction with the habitual causes one to note its influence over the formation of identity. Benjamin draws on the city of Paris to demonstrate the allegorical power of objects displaced within the city: “At the centre of this world of things stands the most dreamed-of of their objects, the city of Paris itself. But only revolt completely exposes its Surrealist face (deserted streets in which whistles and shots dictate the outcome).”

It is in the city, and in the city streets where the surrealist experience perpetually occurs, therefore creating a definition of identity that becomes increasingly dependent on immediate sensations in reaction to experiences had within urban space. In his novel, Breton traverses the question of sensory experiences and their reactions to the unexpected, making *Nadja* a novel representative of the surrealist experiment. The question of identity, for Breton, is not one which lies in the body, or through psychological misgivings, but is rather a phenomenon that can only be explored within one’s encounters in urban space. Similar to Breton’s Nadja, Shafak’s and Pamuk’s protagonists embody attributes remarkably elemental to Benjamin’s profane illumination that causes characters turn towards the everyday as a refuge and a place of discovery.

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In the following two sections, I engage with *10 Minutes, 38 Seconds in this Strange World* and *The Black Book* through the lens of everyday studies and the surrealist experiment, with minor visits to the woman’s role in Istanbul that has been comprehensively overviewed in this section. In both novels respectively, I determine the symbolic value of Shafak’s and Pamuk’s narration of sensory experiences, and how context bares importance in the analyzing of everyday influences over definitive impressions of identity. What remains so compelling in both novels is that the writers demonstrate their stylistic talents by eradicating any distinctions that could separate the everyday from what is not the everyday. The ordinariness of characters’ is subjective and dependent upon an almost infinite accumulations of random itineraries, and the emotional relationships that accompany many regular interactions with places, people, and things.
3.3 *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World*: Tequila Leila’s Sensory Recollections

*10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World* depicts an explicit effort to portray the novelists’ insights into numerous facets of everyday life in the Turkish landscape. Set against the backdrop of Istanbul, the novel intricately navigates the various dimensions and social constructs such as religion, political tribulations, gender roles, and socio-cultural norms prevalent within the latter decades of the twentieth century. Within this section, the protagonist’s and the surrounding characters’ recollections, which are triggered in the text by sensory stimuli, along with the evolution of relationships between the characters with Istanbul, emerge as complex focal points. What becomes particularly interesting in this study of the novel, is the study of the text’s gender dynamics and how the interplay between male and female characters significantly leads to a compromised sense of security among female characters. This renders the women in the text exiles within the urban landscape, largely because of the entrenched patriarchal hegemony. This chapter closely researches Shafak’s writing of her protagonist, Leila’s daily routines and cognitive processes, aiming to unravel the veiled intricacies of daily life in Turkey as a means to comprehend gendered identities, as I proceed to scrutinize how female characters navigate the underlying perils of Istanbul amidst pervasive prejudice and patriarchal structures.

As misfits in, or outcasts from Istanbul, each of the characters’ lives in the novel are chronicled in the most minute details which typically takes the form of memories recalled through the introduction of familiar smells and tastes. The habits and unlikely friendships that are narrated between Leila and her friends are placed throughout the storyline, complicating the text’s spatiality and temporality. Characters are all presented to the reader as figures whose lives are swayed backwards and forwards by the unlikely, yet constant changes of the city’s urban, cultural, and political environment. The abusive tensions that frame the novel appears through the characters individual traumas, highlighting the violence and gender-based subjectification that has brutalized the backstreets of Istanbul. The narrative time of the text begins with the protagonist’s death towards the end of the twentieth century. Leila’s body is found dumped in a trash can in the middle of a deserted alley late at night and remains stuck inside through the early morning hours. She was the victim of an atrocious murder committed by a pair of men.
Leila, known as “Tequila Leila” to her friends, owing to her love of the potent alcoholic beverage, would do anything to be at home. Instead, she is straddling between life and death “somewhere on the outskirts of Istanbul, across from a dark, damp football field, inside a metal rubbish bin with rusty handles and flaking paint.” This uncanny imagery recurrently haunts the novel as Shafak chronicles the Istanbul that remains concealed and sheltered from tourists. Tequila Leila’s voice in the text appears from a place between life and death which becomes a narrative feature upheld throughout the novel to create an eerie space from which the protagonist undergoes a lengthy process: 10 minutes and 38 seconds of remembering traumas and joys throughout her life that have made up her position in the city. The presenting of a voice to Tequila Leila by the narrator is reminiscent of prosopopoeia, which endows perception and senses to the dead. The twentieth century Belgian literary critic, Paul de Man resurrected the prosopopoeia theme to address the character of the voice from beyond the grave in his essay, “Autobiography as De-Facement,” when he renders autobiography a trope of prosopopoeia stating, “[...] it is the figure of prosopopoeia, the fiction of an apostrophe to an absent, deceased or voiceless entity, which posits the possibility of the latter’s reply and confers upon it the power of speech.” In doing so, the voice from beyond the grave, has their life restored and is effectively endowed with the power of perception and control over the narrative, only to be stripped of such a transcendence later on in the storyline. Kasey Evans defines prosopopoeia in coalescence with apostrophe claiming, “For giving a voice and a life, the speaker, reciprocally, is struck dumb and dead. These tropes thus confront the promise and the threat of resurrection: the granting of a voice, the making of a face, and the loss of both.” Shafak indeed grants the dead a voice, a face, and in the end of the text, does away with both. In placing a garbage dumpster as not only the opening setting of the storyline, but as a space where the protagonist’s body is dumped, as well as the location from which Tequila Leila recollects the long years and traumatic moments leading up to her death, narrative voice is critical in its betraying of metaphors. Although the reader already knows, from the opening scene, the fate that awaits Tequila Leila, the novel is not without captivation. Tequila Leila remembers the idiosyncratic smell of ashtrays,

285 Shafak, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World, 1-2.
coffee, drenched towels, and used urinals, leading to a gruesome tone of miserable misfortune that continues to be felt throughout the text as the reader receives and puts together the puzzle pieces to answer how Tequila Leila ended up as a murdered prostitute in a garbage dump somewhere lost in Istanbul.\textsuperscript{288} Shafak goes on to create a grim and suspenseful storyline that reflects upon Turkey’s culture, speaking directly to women, and the everyday struggle in the country to be different, or may be described as far as ‘undisciplined.’ Some of the desolating sensory elicitors that appear throughout the novel includes not only garbage bins, but also the brothels, the sewers that infest the city, and the graveyard where Tequila Leila is later buried in the city’s hopes that she will quickly be forgotten.\textsuperscript{289} Through harrowing descriptions of Tequila Leila’s everyday life, an alternative Istanbul is created. Through these dark, unforgivable, vindictive settings, Shafak is critical of the circumstances which led Tequila Leila to lie for hours, dead in a garbage bin in an Istanbul alleyway, waiting for three young beggars high on glue to find her body.

During the next ten minutes and thirty-eight seconds that Tequila Leila spends between life and death, she recounts a series of memories of her childhood in the conservative Eastern city of Van, her escape to Istanbul where she believes she can finally be who she wants to be, her trapping into the world of prostitution upon arrival to Istanbul, the happiest years of her life being saved from prostitution and getting married, her return to the brothel’s following the death of her husband, and her daily adventures with her five friends, “People thought you changed into a corpse the instant you exhaled your last breath. But things were not clear-cut like that. Just as there were countless shades between jet black and brilliant white, so there were multiple stages of this thing called ‘eternal rest.’ If a border existed between the Realm of Life and the Realm of Afterlife, Leila decided, it must be as permeable as sandstone.”\textsuperscript{290} The novel alternates back and forth between spatial and temporal settings, tracing how Tequila Leila had managed to form such unusual, yet long-lasting friendships throughout her life of misfortunes. Each of Tequila Leila’s

\textsuperscript{288} Shafak, \textit{10 Minutes 38 Seconds}, 3.

\textsuperscript{289} The graveyard as a literary trope and the subject of the protagonist speaking from beyond the grave has been used across fiction in a variety of forms. Some examples include: \textit{Gates Ajar} (Elizabeth Stuart Phelp, 1868), \textit{As I Lay Dying} (William Faulkner, 1930), \textit{The Third Policeman} (Flann O’Brien, 1967), \textit{In the Cut} (Susanna Moore, 1995), \textit{The Lovely Bones} (Alice Sebold, 2002), \textit{The Graveyard Book} (Neil Gaiman, 2008), \textit{Destiny and Desire} (Carlos Fuentes, 2011), and \textit{The Ministry of Utmost Happiness} (Arundhati Roy, 2017).

\textsuperscript{290} Shafak, \textit{10 Minutes 38 Seconds}, 3.
friends represent a different aspect of Istanbul society, suggesting the numerous colors and shades that underly national identity. Nostalgia Nalan is an outspoken transgender woman who is not given work so takes to the streets to earn her daily bread, Humerya ran away to Istanbul to avoid being subjugated to an honor killing and becomes an Arabesk singer in Beyoğlu’s nightclubs, Jameelah is a refugee who was trafficked to Istanbul from Somalia, Zaynab122 is a dwarf who traveled to Istanbul from Lebanon, and Sinan is a man with a wife and family who works in an office but still finds companionship with these outsiders. Through this unlikely group of almost all female companions, Shafak illustrates the suffering women are meant to suffer when they choose to avert accepted gender roles and traditions within a still overwhelmingly patriarchal society. The stories of these five figures translates into a process of action to deconstruct and redefine male control of women. Similar to her friends, the men of Tequila Leila’s life have a prevailing power over her ability to dictate her life decisions, and she finds her life a whirlwind of misfortunes that are the consequence of the traumas she suffers from male figures, including her father and the pair of men who ultimately murder her.

As Tequila Leila’s internalized memories of her childhood and adulthood are filtered into the narrative framework, the separation between realism and surrealism at the level of the grotesque becomes increasingly ambiguous, and Tequila Leila’s competing memories become an inseparable and intimate part of the psychological and geographical make-up of Istanbul. Philip Thomson describes the grotesque as “a mixture in some way or other of both the comic and the terrifying (or the disgusting, repulsive) in a problematical (not readily resolvable way.” The identified theme of the grotesque in the novel appears in the form of imagery, setting, and allusion. Tequila Leila continues to wonder how she ended up in this dumpster bin, in this grotesque place outside of the city, stuffed in a bin only to be buried in the outskirts of the city in a place that most Istanbullites do not even know exists: the Cemetery of the Companionless. She wants to know who is responsible for her death and why they would murder her so brutally and so carelessly, as if no one would even realize she was gone. However, to find these answers, she must first confront her own identity as a child from Van, who came to Istanbul many years


Following the novel’s conclusion, in “Note to the Reader,” Shafak discloses the socio-political reasons behind the existence of the Cemetery of the Companionless, which she confesses is a real place.
ago for freedom, only to be forced into prostitution for survival. The narrative of Istanbul that unfolds in the novel is the kind of Istanbul that is ‘hidden’. As the narrator states from the opening pages of the novel, “The Istanbul that Leila had known was not the Istanbul that the Ministry of Tourism would have wanted foreigners to see.”\textsuperscript{293} The concealed elements of Istanbul; the portions of the city that are masked from foreigners is what makes the novel useful in the study of Gendered Turkishness because in the novel, an intimate portrayal on the dangers of being an outcasted woman in Istanbul are revealed to the reader. Such a portrayal of Istanbul in the text is one which is filthy, and devoid of hope for the female, an Istanbul of crime, brothels, and corruption. Shafak depicts a world in which the reader is meant to turn attention towards the underlying misery and wicked circumstances tracing everyday life in the urban city.

The story of Tequila Leila and the social circumstances she finds herself struggling within is a two-fold task: while her everyday misfortunes as a woman whose life has become exploited is narrated, the context of Istanbul’s changing societal world is also traversed. The author’s use of the third person is not only a choice of narrative performance and structure, but rather is implicative of an interest to enhance the representation of Tequila Leila’s interactions with her environment. It is through Tequila Leila that the narrator translates Istanbul’s overshadowed cultural elements without forsaking the focalization of her fictional characters and their reactions to their often-dangerous circumstances. The novelist brings the reader through an exploration of themes and events concentrated within Istanbul: the trafficking of women, the violence against women, the injustices towards migrants, the political corruption, and the growing divide between secularism and fundamentalism. Between instances of internal focalization of Tequila Leila, and that of zero focalization to narrate the lives of Tequila Leila’s friends, Shafak’s portrayal of Istanbul’s sociocultural environment is presented to readers as omnipresent in her narration of the city’s abusive treatment of women, especially of sex workers and transgenders.\textsuperscript{294} For Tequila Leila, whose sensory recollections inform her position in Istanbul, familiarity is an avenue from which the individual breaks free from the collective, and articulates a sense of belonging within urban space. The task of reconnecting with the familiar reveals itself in the

\textsuperscript{293} Shafak, \textit{10 Minutes 38 Seconds}, 2.
process of memory recall that takes place and causes the narrative structure to alternate between flashbacks and varying temporalities to expose to the reader how Tequila Leila went from being a rebellious youth in a conservative city to a murdered prostitute in an Istanbul alleyway.

Tequila Leila views her memory as a “graveyard” – numerous lives and identities are buried, and it is with painful reluctance that she could have no choice but to revive and relive them. Upon discovering that she is dead, Tequila Leila recalls the night leading up to her untimely murder. She mentally goes over the minor details of each moment. She questions this surreal experience of having a regular evening, yet one that now seems so far disconnected from her universe that she has no choice but to question whether it was a part of her imagination or reality:

Last night she had left her fingerprints on a whisky glass, and a trace of her perfume – Paloma Picasso, a birthday present from her friends – on the silk scarf she had tossed aside on the bed of a stranger, in the top-floor suite of a luxury hotel. In the sky high above, a sliver of yesterday’s moon was visible, bright and unreachable, like the vestige of a happy memory. She was still part of this world, and there was still life inside her, so how could she be gone? How could she be no more, as though she were a dream that fades at the first hint of daylight? Only a few hours ago she was singing, smoking, swearing, thinking … well, even now she was thinking. It was remarkable that her mind was working at full tilt – though who knew for how long.

The ephemeral and rootless traces of Tequila Leila – her fingerprints, her perfume scent, her silk scarf which she had forgotten in the hotel room where she was last seen – appear as metaphors in the framing of Tequila Leila’s identity. Some of the other stimulating recollections that occupy Tequila Leila include lemon aromas, sugary sweets, cardamom coffee, wood-burning stoves, cakes, chocolate, watermelon, wedding cake, single-malt whiskey, dry and chalky soil, and sulfuric acid: “Although her heart had stopped beating, her brain was resisting, a fighter till the end […] Her memory surged forth, eager and diligent, collecting pieces of a life that was speeding to a close.” This enumeration of objects such as sweets and alcoholic beverages illuminates the methods from which memory may be manipulated because despite these foods and drinks appearing as innocent, practical things, for Tequila Leila, they become vividly significant and render her capable of remembering her past and the traumas and falls she has taken to end up where she is now. These vestiges of Tequila Leila’s everyday habits do not immediately evoke feelings of surprise, nor do they deserve documentation in historical archives,

295 Shafak, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds, 52.
296 Shafak, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds, 2-3.
297 Shafak, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds, 11.
but it is precisely because of such descriptions that appear throughout the novel that numerous socio-cultural themes are called into discussion. Several unrelated sensations alternate and are randomly recalled, ultimately leading to a lengthy series of separate narratives which address Istanbul life, unlikely events, and identity politics.

Shafak imbues the text with narratives of Istanbul’s geo-political and socio-cultural misgivings, indeed acknowledging the significance of the insignificance. The ‘clash of civilizations’ that appears to draw attention to the East-West theme rooted in much of Turkish social life can be traced through the narration of Tequila Leila’s childhood. Upon birth, it appears that Leila’s future is already mapped out by her father, Haroun. She is named Leyla Asife Kamile. Her religious father expects her to preserve her honor and grow up to be a conservative and devout Muslim woman. During a historical period during which Turkey is turning increasingly in the direction of Europe, Leila’s father grows increasingly fundamentalist and expects the same from those around him. With two wives who are instructed to remain in the home, Leila is raised within an environment that suppresses her ability to find her voice as well as engage in society such as in the form of education when she is forced to leave school and enter an arranged marriage in an effort to cover up her uncle’s incestuous sins against her. Leila’s childhood is cut short when she finds herself increasingly in danger of being further oppressed by her father. The following excerpt from Tequila Leila’s memory demonstrates the protagonist’s inability to sustain identity standards when she is expected to wear the headscarf following her transformation from girl to woman:

Not only did she [Leila] refuse to wear a headscarf, but she treated her body as if it were a mannequin she could shape and dress and paint to her heart’s content. She bleached her hair and eyebrows with lemon juice and chamomile tea, and when all the lemons and chamomile in the kitchen mysteriously disappeared, she turned to Mother’s henna. If she couldn’t be blonde, why not be a redhead?298

Leila thinks of her body as a canvas on which she can paint a life splashed of bright colors and hues; where she can create and become whoever she wants to be. Throughout Leila’s childhood the debate of the headscarf, symbolic of a devotedly conservative upbringing, is only one of several enforced changes to herself she is forced to confront. She discovers her inability to conform to her family’s fundamentalist codes, especially in relation to gender and religion, and

298 Shafak, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds, 87.
in doing so, succumbs to rebellion and quickly becomes an outsider not only to her family, but to her community as well. While she is expected to wear a headscarf and adapt to her family’s Islamic values, Leila wants to become a dancer; Leila wants to be free; Leila wants to see Istanbul. The persistent exchange between varying narrative time frames, such as that which is noted in Tequila’s memory of her teenage years, demonstrates the prevalent leverage of memory to the shaping of self, “[...] memory is produced by an individual but is always produced in relation to the larger interpersonal and cultural worlds in which that individual lives – for example, one remembers one’s childhood as part of a family.”

The human memory is described in the novel as a labyrinth of madness and obscurity, as the narrator compares the process of recollection to “a late-night traveler who has had a few too many drinks: hard as it tries, it just cannot follow in a straight line. It staggers through a maze of inversions, often moving in dizzying zigzags, immune to reason and liable to collapse altogether.” Tequila Leila’s adamant refusal to conform to her father’s expectations as well as those of her Eastern Anatolian community, is represented by the presence of the hula hoop.

Generally, a hula hoop is an inexpensive toy that children generally spin around their hips outdoors; there is typically very little gender, or religious meanings attached. For the young Leila, however, the hula hoop is much more symbolic than this, “The circle, the shape of captivity for an old Yazidi man, but a symbol of freedom for a young American model, thus became a sad memory for a girl in an Eastern town.” When Leila first sees the hula hoop in a magazine she immediately wants one; she wants to feel that she can be as American as she can despite living in Van. Her friend, Sinan, wishing to see Leila happy, gifts her one after persuading his progressive mother to order the hula hoops. However, when Leila’s family finds the hula hoop, it is taken away, and Leila realizes the significance this small, circular piece of plastic truly had for her sense of identity. What appears obvious through the metaphor of the hula hoop is the deep detachment Leila feels from her family, her community, her conservative, fundamentalist Eastern, Turkish culture. As the novel uncovers Leila’s sense of identity is in a persistent process of transformation. Instead of remaining fixated on internalized traumas or

300 Shafak, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds, 45.
301 Shafak, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds, 103.
pasts, Leila’s mind races before her as she becomes the subject of the novel’s subversion of history, politics, and enforced definitions of identity constructions.

As the protagonist struggles to meander through Turkey’s charms and conflicts, there are numerous transgressions in the novel to recount Tequila Leila’s peculiar, and unforgettable friends, all who represent ordinary people who have fallen under the heavy burden of increasingly patriarchal standards, religious codes, and societal expectations. Similarly, the areas surrounding Istanbul’s backstreets occupies Shafak’s endeavors to illuminate the overlooked portions of Istanbul everyday life. This includes young women walking around in seductive clothing, middle-aged drivers jeering from their windows, apprentices scurrying back-and-forth juggling multiple tea trays, and red-eyed vendors braving the cold to sell pickle juice and other traditional cuisines.302 Sinan, one of Tequila Leila’s oldest friends, embodies the in-betweenness of East-West that Turkey continues to experience. The son of a single mother in one of the most conservative regions of Turkey, Sinan grew up listening to his mother’s and late father’s supportive discourses on the new Republic’s beliefs in Westernization and progress in the model of Europe. The moral that Sinan received from his father’s speeches was that “One cannot change geography […] but one can trick destiny.”303 The coalescence of geography and identity, one of the overarching themes of this dissertation is mentioned by Sinan’s father to demonstrate the idea that despite a country’s position remaining static and unchanging, its history and culture can indeed be altered. Sinan’s parents believe in Western education, for it is only in the direction of Europe that Turkey can ever become a model of importance to the rest of the world. The presence and work of memories invites a kind of personal consciousness that resonates within the center of everyday portrayals of Turkishness as a struggling collective and individual identity in the political and cultural hands of Europe and North America. Humerya represents another figure who resembles Turkey’s overlapping identity politics. Humerya is a character whose presence in the novel points towards the treatment of women in Turkey. One example in the text that directly speaks to Turkey’s at once secularist and fundamentalist prototypes is the underlying allusion to the “honor killing”. Humerya escapes from her hometown of Mardin to Istanbul to avoid the fate that is written in her destiny. In order to not become a victim of an

302 Shafak, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds, 45.
303 Shafak, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds, 73.
honor-based murder by one of her male relatives as a means to free the family name from any shame inflicted upon them by the female. Humerya comes to Istanbul in the hopes of living a freer, and unbounded life; one in which she can be safe from the power systems that had endangered her. Humerya and Tequila Leila become friends and grow inseparable in a manner that only women who have experienced immeasurable suffering in their life can:

They supported each other with the kind of loyalty that only those with few to rely on could muster. Upon Leila’s advice, she dyed her hair blonde, put in turquoise contact lenses, and had a nose job and a total change of wardrobe. She did all these things and more, because she received word that her husband was in Istanbul, looking for her. Awake or asleep, Humerya was terrified she might become a victim of an honor killing. She couldn’t help imagining the moment of her murder, each time envisioning the worst end. Women accused of indecency weren’t always killed, she knew; sometimes they were persuaded to kill themselves. The number of forced suicides, partly in small towns in south-east Anatolia, had escalated to such a degree that there were articles about it in the foreign press. In Batman, not far from where she was born, suicide was the leading cause of mortality for young women.304

Tequila Leila and Hollywood Humerya elucidate the conviction of harmonizing different forms of claiming individuality within the same urban space. The presence of strong sentiments such as “support,” “loyalty,” and most importantly, “terror” demonstrates the strength of feelings to the ability to clearly recall events of trauma: “[…] emotions play an essential role in any recollection because memories not tagged by ongoing social emotions tend to fade out.”305 Tequila Leila’s memories, and the stories of her friends not only carry sentiments of alienation and disenchantment, but present often conflicting experiences of the personal and the collective, while also speaking to the thematic social imbalances present in Istanbul society. The overwhelming sense of pain and desperation exhibited by Tequila Leila as she continues to recollect her past as well as that of her friends, because of their rebellion against societal standards draws them close together, as if it is them against the entire city of Istanbul. By fusing the focalization of Tequila Leila with that of her friends, Shafak blends the fictional with the real, testing the confinements of storytelling in her exploration of Turkish cultural boundaries. Zainab, Tequila Leila’s other close friend, grew up in Lebanon, in a village where dwarfism was not an uncommon malady. Tequila Leila befriends Zaynab while working in the brothel, where Tequila Leila is a sex worker, and her friend is a cleaner. Zaynab often thinks back on her plight and uses the word “miserable” to describe the experiences of women in this industry, “Depression was

304 Shafak, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds, 159.
305 Misztal, Theories of Social Remembering, 80.
common among the women on this street, tearing into their souls as fire tears into wood. No one used the word though. Miserable, was what they said. Not about themselves, but everyone and everything else.”

The social marginality lived by streetwalkers betrays the dark, explicit social realities of life in the streets. Everyday women who earn their livelihood in the streets everyday trace the scenes of Shafak’s novel and bring attention to the boundaries that exist between the woman in the streets and the male observer.

In combining the stories of five friends, Shafak presents to her readers an overlapping narrative that both entwines and enciphers profane illuminations that speak to everyday life. These ‘profane illuminations’, as defined by Benjamin earlier in this chapter, further occurs at the level of character analysis. The five predominately female characters in the text are fictional, yet their memories and reactions to Istanbul’s cultural discrepancies are reflective of certain circumstances in society that has led to a call for more protocols for the safety of women, as well as numerous other reforms that, at its core speak to the reforming of Turkishness. Tequila Leila’s recollections legitimate the overall burden of memory of who she becomes from childhood, up to the moment she is murdered and abandoned in a garbage bin in a deserted Istanbul alleyway. As the narrator powerfully points out, “Istanbul was not a city of opportunities, but of scars. The descent, when it started, spiraled rapidly, like water sucked through a plug.”

Characters do not engage in or dream about the possibilities of an alternative life, and are therefore subjected and victimized within a society that is deeply rooted in religious traditions, yet also deeply concerned with turning itself in the vision of Europe. Istanbul’s multicultural history, like the memory of Tequila Leila’s childhood home in Van, is further enhanced through Tequila Leila’s memory, around minute three:

Hence Leila remembered: September 1967. A dead-end straight down by the harbor, just a stone’s throw from the port of Karaköy, near the Galata Horn, extending between rows of licensed brothels. There was an Armenian school nearby, a Greek church, a Sephardic synagogue, a Sufi lodge, a Russian Orthodox chapel – remnants of a past no longer remembered. The district, once a thriving commercial waterfront and home to prosperous Levantine and Jewish communities, and then the hub of Ottoman banking and shipping industries, nowadays witnessed transactions of a very different kind. Muted messages were conveyed through the wind, money changing hands as fast as it was acquired.

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308 Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds*, 45.
The focalization of this caption is characterized by multiple images of Istanbul’s multicultural past such as Armenian schools, Greek churches, and Russian chapels. For Leila, narrating the past turns into a process of sketching out her personal environment; one that is structured according to her childhood, feelings about the patriarchal culture she has become a victim to, and the stifling of Istanbul’s backstreets and hidden corners. Tequila Leila’s recollections of the city are staggering, and often are associated with the vengeful, troubling life she experienced as part of Istanbul’s brothel community. The details that find their way within the narrative structure can be understood according to Barthes’s idea of the “referential illusion.” Barthes describes this category of literature as such because of its confinement to details, “and because the most realistic narrative imaginable develops alongside unrealistic lines.”

In the narrator’s descriptions of Tequila Leila’s encounters with Istanbul’s bustling social life, the significance of these descriptions appear to justify the complicated narrative structure of enumerating memories elicited by smells and tastes.

Upon arriving in Istanbul, Tequila Leila unknowingly becomes a subject of bodily transaction, which foreshadows her fate as a sex worker. She is up for sale, sold, and sold again, all within Istanbul backstreet brothels, where so much of the abused, broken-hearted, and hopeless find themselves. It is not by choice that Tequila Leila falls into this part of Istanbul, but rather due to her original belief that she could find people in Istanbul who would help her find work and a place to sleep. Instead, she is locked away and forced into prostitution. As a result, Istanbul is no longer the place of freedom that Tequila Leila once imagined, but quickly turns into the monster that envelops her childhood dreams and innocence:

> It was this same man and the woman – who was, in truth, not his aunt but his business partner – who sold Leila to a stranger the same night, and within a week to several others. Alcohol, there was always alcohol, in her blood, in her drinks, on her breath, they made her drink a lot so that she could remember little. What she failed to see earlier she saw now: the doors were padlocked, the windows sealed, and Istanbul was not a city of opportunities, but a city of scars. [...] The men who visited the house were from different age groups, held various, low-skilled, low-paid jobs, and almost all had families of their own. They were fathers, husbands, brothers …Some had daughters her age.

The repetitive language that appears in this description accumulates impressions and subverts rules of grammatical structure through the presence of numerous commas that render the

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310 Shafak, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds*, 113.
sentences fragmented, as well as referential personification in the referencing of Istanbul as a “city of scars.” This same minor, deceitful character, who, upon meeting Leila upon her arrival from Van, had previously warned her, “[…] Istanbul will crush you.”<sup>311</sup> Tequila Leila is propelled into the streets of Istanbul by a male trafficker who abuses her vulnerability, as the protagonist represents the victim and the male pimp as the perpetrator of such vulgarity and victimization. Istanbul appears as a manipulative city that lures those who feel exiled, lost, and hopeless; it appears as a place made of “memories, myths, and messianic longings, forever elusive like a lover’s face receding in the mist.”<sup>312</sup> Moreover, Istanbul is characterized as a “schizophrenic city.”<sup>313</sup> The personification of Istanbul as a schizophrenic city inherits a connotation that finds itself present in much of Shafak’s writings as she uses her fiction to critically depict Istanbul as a city that breaks its promises, shifts its tone, abuses the abused, and alienates the strange. In Shafak’s description of Tequila Leila’s trauma, being sold into Istanbul’s culture of prostitution, the reader may note that in the stylistic elements attributed to brothels there is an indication of Istanbul’s contemporary social climate that suggests an inability for her character to completely overcome the intimate culture of patriarchy and exploitation of the female. In their study of the text, Mutazar Mehdi, Uzma Moen, and Shanza Abbasi underline the culture of sex work in this society, “Leila’s destiny was fixed and firmed simply by being born a female in an exceedingly male dominant society.”<sup>314</sup> The female character’s present in the novel do not morph into the perfect puzzle piece of a modest Islamic society, but rather resist violent and damaging systems of oppression, a kind of oppression that expects a woman to submit to a male’s objectification of her.

The narrator’s choice to narrate the culture of prostitution in Istanbul through her protagonist points to the system of patriarchy that persists in the city, which subjectifies the woman figure, rendering her an economic profit. Building on this observation, I would further make the claim that the figure of the prostitute in the narrative of Istanbul creates an identity for the female that

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<sup>311</sup> Shafak, <i>10 Minutes 38 Seconds</i>, 113.
<sup>312</sup> Shafak, <i>10 Minutes 38 Seconds</i>, 202.
<sup>313</sup> Shafak, <i>10 Minutes 38 Seconds</i>, 204.
is concentrated in the battles and scars that the female suffers from male exploitation. Therefore, Shafak assesses the system of prostitution and the treatment of women in Istanbul. The author’s decision to narrate the life of a young woman whose life has been swallowed by the violent world of prostitution draws further distinctions on the male/female experience in urban space. Linda LeMoncheck describes sex work as a process of direct dehumanization of the woman, underlining the imbalance of power that exists between the male and female:

Sex work is not merely about treating a woman as an object nor merely about dehumanizing her. Sex work is a complex dialectic between subject and object in which a woman’s dehumanization is successful precisely because she is perceived as a person whose will, seductiveness, and power is properly subordinate to men.315

The sexually dehumanized woman is subjected to abuses because of her gender as her body and beauty become a means of commodity and pleasure for the male. As Deborah Epstein Nord explains in her study of the woman, “From the early to the middle decades of the nineteenth century the image of the prostitute shifts from isolated reminder of human alienation to reflector of the social or collective state.”316 The prostitute is a woman who is alone and desperate; alienated from a society that has become cruel towards her gender and has manipulated her sexuality into something to be purchased, used, and forgotten about, demonstrating the nature of society that has placed women under constant threat and danger of assault and dehumanization. The theme of prostitution and trafficking is even more pronounced through the presence of Jameelah, which becomes another avenue from which Shafak pursues a study of Istanbul’s culture of refugee exploitation:

The Africans in Istanbul came from all sides of the old continent – Tanganyika, Sudan, Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, Upper Volta, Ethiopia – escaping civil war, religious violence, political insurgency. The number of asylum seekers had increased daily over the years. Among them were students, professionals, artists, journalists, scholars … But the only Africans mentioned in the newspapers were those who, like her, had been trafficked.317

Throughout this illustrative excerpt, there is a close blurring between sensory description and structural narration, which displays the close relationship between style and content for the writer, to the creation of a realistic novel that could speak to representations of identity. Although the backstories of Tequila Leila’s friends are brief and do not take more than one

317 Shafak, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds, 120.
chapter, they are replete with the fine points of their lives, and how they came to be swallowed by Istanbul, without forgoing the emotional impacts that the city has had on their ability to choose their destiny. These interactions with the everyday may amount to feelings of disorientation from a changing urban space, the growing tensions of secularists and fundamentalists, or the ambivalent treatment of refugees in Istanbul. Shafak’s illustrations of Istanbul reflect an envisioning of Turkey as perhaps more of an impression made up of several colorful specs and disagreeable blocks. On the night that Tequila Leila is murdered she is instructed by her previous supervisor, Bitter Ma, of the meeting place and the exact outfit she must wear to meet her next client. As Bitter Ma instructs her, “[…] You must wear a dress: long sleeves, low cut, gold, glittery – mini […].” The importance of Tequila Leila’s attire is one of statute and will attract attention and must stop by the famous shopping street, Istiklal Avenue to find such a garment. As she strolls down the street leading to Galata, “Women glared, men leered at her.” However, as de Beauvoir has already assessed in her work, the attire of a prostitute also speaks to the woman’s social situation:

Only the prostitute whose function is exclusively that of a sex object displays herself exclusively in this light; in the past it was her saffron hair and the flowers that dotted her dress; today it is her high heels, skimpy satin, harsh makeup, and heavy perfume that are the signature of her profession.

What is interesting of the prostitute is that she is gazed upon by society, but rarely does the gazing herself. Her occupation is dependent upon being watched and desired by the onlooker. Walking as a woman in urban space, especially as a prostitute, means to evoke the desirous look of men and to become the subject of their erotic fantasies. The prostitute is in full awareness of the power she momentarily holds over the male, using her conscious awareness that her gender renders her into the position to manipulate male virtue. Tequila Leila therefore dresses and assumes a confidence that will earn her the attention to be noticed and wanted, as is her professional occupation. Tequila Leila’s presence in the novel represents a symbol of pain and the experience of falling through the grime of society for the purposes of surviving it. Tequila Leila becomes in the novel an instrument of male pleasure, all the while suffering to understand her sins and how she fell into the darkest of places in a city where she once believed she could become anyone she wanted to be. Tequila Leila is murdered in a gruesome manner that is

318 Shafak, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds, 172.
319 Shafak, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds, 172.
320 De Beauvoir, The Second Sex, 574.
undeserved and painful to witness. However, despite the empathy that the reader may feel for the protagonist that is evoked throughout the novel, Tequila Leila’s death is also a liberation from the ugly and merciless world that she had been brought into: from the family that disowned her, to the connivers who tricked her and sold her to the slave trade, to the pair of men who brutally dumped her into a garbage bin to be found and sent away to the Cemetery of the Companionless.

Upon arriving to 10 minutes and 38 seconds, the text transforms from a labyrinth of convoluted stories, narrative voices, time frames, and settings to a conducive novel that is both temporally and spatially fluid. Focalization, from this point until the end of the novel remains in the third person, and the narrative time frame no longer shifts but is concentrated on the aftermath of Tequila Leila’s murder. Tequila Leila is dead, and her five best friends are mourning, yet furious. They do not want her to be buried in the Cemetery of the Companionless. This graveyard, faraway from Istanbul’s center, is the home to “crack addicts, alcoholics, gamblers, small-time criminals, rough sleepers, runaways, throwaways, missing citizens, the mentally ill, derelicts, unwed mothers, prostitutes, pimps, transvestites, AIDS patients…The undesirables. Social pariahs. Cultural lepers.” Unwilling to be claimed by her immediate family for a proper burial, Tequila Leila’s body is exiled to this sad cemetery, where those who are the outcasts of Istanbul’s acceptable societal standards are laid to be forgotten. The victim’s injustices do not cease when she is murdered, but even continue, well into death, when she exiled is here, as the authorities refuse to give her, like others, a traditional, Islamic burial. Her unwillingness to conform to Islamic, or acceptable Turkish societal standards effectively rendered Tequila Leila a misfit in a small petri dish all her life, unable to escape from the cruel wrath of society. However, Tequila Leila’s friends are unwilling to accept this heartless punishment. If Tequila Leila had to suffer so much in her life and had so little happiness, she should at least be able to lay in peace upon her death. For this reason, the friends set out to dig up Tequila Leila’s body, only to be pursued by police, and ultimately throw her body overboard into the Bosphorus, finally setting her soul to rest. Although the Cemetery of the Companionless is indeed a real place in Istanbul Shafak situates the eerie graveyard within her fictional historiography, bringing together the real and the imagined and creating an intriguing fluidity between them. As Tequila Leila’s body falls

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321 Shafak, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds. 256.
322 Shafak, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds, 302
quickly into the Bosphorus, a last rush of sensory memories flood through her memory, and her life reaches its tragic end.

In narrating the everyday suffering of a prostitute in Istanbul, Shafak demonstrates an interest in navigating the intricacies associated with narration and how through narration, the lives of everyday citizens, particularly women, can be understood. *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World* demonstrates Shafak’s interest to develop an association between the profession of prostitution and the treatment of women as gendered objects and commodities, social marginality, and the ugliness hiding in the backstreets of Istanbul. Through the focalization of one slain prostitute and the narratives of her five friends, the reader engages with some of the most brutal realities that are hidden from the touristic images of Istanbul. The descriptions of Tequila Leila and her socially marginalized friends can be understood by the reader as a projection of Istanbul’s everyday urban life. *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World* is a novel that reveals different approaches to spectatorship within an intricate narrative environment within which the individual being looked at is positioned within different spatial and temporal contexts that demonstrate the manipulative tendencies of the gaze. Through her protagonist and the protagonist’s five friends, Shafak describes how being looked at constructs a sense of identity that is bounded by gender and sexualized notions of being a woman in the metropolis. As will be emphasized in the following exploration of *The Black Book*, the quotidian embodies a peculiar dimension of the human experience that explodes into details and creates profane illuminations of the banal, the habitual, and the very basic qualities that form nations and therefore, identity. The obscurity felt in the everyday through the presence of sensory experiences is an inevitable overarching theme in Shafak who narrates such equivocally as an indication of estrangement. Similar to Shafak’s, Pamuk’s work, which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter brings together notions of looking and the importance of the everyday to the constitution of recall and therefore representative of influential counterparts in the reduction of society into details that can be enhanced and illuminated in the pursuit of identity formation. In the following close reading of *The Black Book*, I will continue to navigate through the dynamics of Gendered Turkishness through the surrealist experiment, which will take the form of exploring gender dynamics and the exploration of the cityscape through the protagonists surreal-like quest for his wife’s hiding place.
3.4 *The Black Book*: Galip’s Patriarchal Gaze and the Search for Rüya

*The Black Book* is a novel with overlapping narrative structures between alternating focalization, spatiality, and temporality in a pursuit to regard the importance of fictional characters’ stories to the development of plot and the overarching theme of Turkishness. Through the narration of a man’s existential identity crisis, the text revisits the time frame surrounding 1980, during which Turkey witnessed some of its most politically tumultuous events. As a result, the novel interprets the protagonist’s quest for an authentic identity to satirize frames present in Turkey’s political memory. Kürşad Ertuğrul refers to *The Black Book* as a “‘black’ depiction of Turkish society in the microcosm (or macrocosm) of Istanbul. [...] People are overwhelmed by defeat, misery, loss of memory, and hopeful efforts to imitate ‘someone else.’” Through the narrative structure, the reader engages with a very centralized notion of experiencing the city through varying temporalities and spatiality’s that present the male figure as capable of existing in Istanbul in a manner that the female cannot. In this section, I question how the novel’s protagonist, Galip, becomes the subject of a surrealist experiment to understand the alienating peculiarities of the everyday, and its impact on everyday citizens’ sense of self as an observer of the cityscape.

*The Black Book* begins with Galip, whose memories of Istanbul the narrative is introduced. A middle-aged lawyer and borderline clingy to his beautiful, if not slightly lazy wife, Galip’s daily routines are illustrated in excruciating details that range from the methods of transportation he uses every morning, to the excuses he makes to telephone his wife throughout the day, which leads to an intimate comparison between himself and his desire to resemble the American husbands he sees in Hollywood films. Although the time frame of the novel occurs over a period of several months leading up to the 1980 coup, the storyline is mostly concentrated on the span of one week consisting of the protagonist’s manic, desperate, and lonely search for his wife who has suddenly gone missing with his distant cousin, Celâl. In *The Black Book*, Pamuk’s characters exhibit similar patterns of looking and placing emphasis on the gaze that is largely attributed to the protagonist’s ultimate obsession with his distant cousin Celâl. The narrative

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324 Kürşad Ertuğrul, “A Reading of the Turkish Novel: Three Ways of Constituting the ‘Turkish Modern,’” 649.
structure and literary techniques woven within the text demonstrate a recurring theme that is dispersed through alternating focalizations and spatial temporalities. Although I will study selected areas of the novel for the purposes of furthering understanding gendered Turkishness, the text can be perceived as a narrative of interwoven short stories that are unified in their approach to looking and how spectatorship can be exploited in both private and public life. Segregated areas of the novel, which are constructed through alternating spatiality’s and narrators within the same storyline appear to offer varying visualizations of existing within the city and how looking and being objectified are themes subtly exposed to reveal the larger influence that looking has on everyday experiences in urban space.

The narrator of *The Black Book* engages with the complexities connected to the city that is narrated through the protagonist’s obsessive search for his wife and the personal conflitcions he must navigate about. Celâl’s chapters, which are written in the first person, are reproduced selections of his newspaper columns, which only occur in the novel as Galip himself discovers them during his search for Rüya’s whereabouts. These texts can be described as ontological and philosophical accounts of Istanbul, and what it means to be a part of the city of Istanbul, relating back to the question of geography’s influence over fate and identity. Although both characters are largely concerned with who they are, including concerns with their professions, their quest into their identity is often found to occur within the context of meandering throughout Istanbul. Celâl’s pseudonymous newspaper columns are varied yet are all preoccupied with the transformation of life in Istanbul, which is manifested through probes into the brothels hiding in Beyoğlu’s backstreets, memory investigations, intimate tales of everyday Istanbullite’s everyday experiences, as well as traditional Ottoman and Sufi tales. Framed similarly to the detective novels that Rüya passes her time reading, the narrative structure of *The Black Book* inherits both sociological and cultural dimensions that are deepened by contradictory studies into Turkishness, history, and distant memories. While in the first few chapters, *The Black Book* appears as a classic detective novel, it gradually grows into a metaphysical study of the fragilities attached to identity and belonging. The writing is made up of a series of Galip’s and Celâl’s evaluations of the cityscape, leading to an oscillating labyrinth of memories and intimate confessions. For Galip, this takes the form of third-person, wavering stream-of-consciousness monologues, historical narratives related to Ottoman cultural memory such as brief storylines surrounding the
Hurufis, careful and detailed evaluations of his marriage to Rüya, and recollections of his family life over the past several decades, which includes excruciating details of each one of his relatives’ misgivings. The first chapter of the novel, “The First Time Galip Saw Rüya” travels backwards and forwards in narrative time to recount Galip’s infatuation with Rüya, which prevalently introduces the reader to the theme of the gaze. In the first paragraph of the novel, the narrator describes Galip as he gazes at his wife sleeping:

Languid with sleep, Galp gazed at his wife’s head: Rüya’s chin was nestling in the down pillow. The wondrous sights playing in her mind gave her an unearthly glow that pulled him toward her even as it suffused him with fear. Memory, Celâl had once written in a column, is a garden. Rüya’s gardens… Galip thought. Don’t think, don’t think, it will make you jealous! But as he gazed at his wife’s forehead, he still let himself think.326

Identity categories are created in this passage that can be labeled as all-knowing spectator and unknowing, aesthetic object of desire. The depiction of Galip in this passage underlines the gendered gaze as a powerful element to the delineation of female subjectivity. As Galip looks on at his sleeping wife, the reader notes the sense of agency the protagonist exhibits, in contrast to Rüya who soundlessly sleeps without the knowledge that she is being watched. On a private display, Galip looks at Rüya as if she is an object in his personal museum of memories and through the gaze, memories of a garden and reminders of a column Celâl had written are evoked. As Galip muses over what kinds of dreams Rüya may be having, she simultaneously becomes an art object offered to Galip’s desires and imagination as he is in the position of spectator as well as exhibiting a sense of possession over his sleeping wife. The elemental distinctions between Galip and Rüya are narrated through memories as these, often filtered through Galip’s consumption of Celâl’s archived columns, prevalently becoming foundational clues for Rüya’s whereabouts, which are blurred within Galip’s simultaneous meandering of Istanbul that develops into an existential search for his place within the city.

During the week following Rüya (and Celâl’s) disappearance, Galip engages in some strange experiences to find where Rüya and Celâl are hiding. Even so, Galip still takes part in everyday routines, and it is through such narration of banal habits that the protagonist’s engagement with urban space appears even more peculiar. Galip rinses teacups, scours the kitchen for unused

326 Pamuk, Black Book, 3.
utensils, heats up water to self-groom, and sits down to eat yesterday’s bread. The green ballpoint pen that occurs persistently throughout the novel, is one such mundane object that gains significance through its description, and the memories that its presence evokes. It was originally Celâl’s pen, then Galip admired it, and eventually it became Rüya’s favorite pen, the same pen that she used to write Galip a farewell letter before running away. The ballpoint pen was purchased in Alâaddin’s shop, which grows to become an important space in the novel for both Galip, as well as for Celâl’s columns. As a mixture of memories of Rüya develops as Galip tries to figure out where Rüya could disappeared to and why, there are several pauses to elaborate on minute details, that otherwise, would have been overlooked. However, Pamuk does not ignore such seemingly forgettable specifics, but rather details their ordinariness as an important part of his literary endeavors:

Details: Before leaving the apartment, Rüya had used that terrifying insect killer (the one with an enormous black beetle and three cockroaches pictured on the front) and sprayed it all over the bathroom, the corridor, and the kitchen. (The stink was still in the air.) She’d turned on the electric chauffe-bain (probably without thinking, and needlessly because Thursdays were hot-water days in their building); she’d spent some time reading Milliyet (its pages were wrinkled); she’d even done a bit of the crossword with the lead pencil she must have taken with her: tomb, interval, moon, difficult, division, pious, secret, listen.

The narrator pauses the narrative to describe the environment of the protagonist’s wife. The detention in the storyline manifests itself as a clear focus on the elements of details that are part of Rüya’s character as a housewife. Rüya’s routine: cleaning, reading, doing the crossword, are described in excruciating detail. It is not immediately obvious why the narrator chose to highlight such banal actions within the narrative structure, when what is really at stake is the disappearance of Rüya, and where she could be hiding. While at work, Galip thinks about his wife nonstop and Rüya’s everyday life is often interrupted by the dominant male figure in her life. For Galip, Rüya’s place is in the home, no matter how much more banal her life is closed indoors, as opposed to building new relationships out in public space. Galip’s expectations of his wife illustrates a patriarchal perception of the roles of males and females in society. As Highmore points out when he studies the traditional gender expectations in society, “Women ‘belonged’ in the private, while the public sphere ‘belonged’ to men.” Furthermore, Highmore

327 Pamuk, Black Book, 14.  
328 Pamuk, Black Book, 21.  
329 Pamuk, Black Book, 50.  
330 Highmore, Cityscapes, 58.
theorizes “If the domestic sphere was discursively nominated as female and the street as male, the transformation of the street into an intérieur should suggest a general feminization of the urban, even if it is only at the symbolic level.” 331 It would appear then, that the metropolis is symbolic of gender boundaries and suggests women’s forbidden place within it and an uncertainty of how they can navigate about the city without the male figure. Social spaces appear to be obliterated for women, as they are only accessible to men. This suggests that the city is not only a categorization of inhabitation but rather determines how households should function. The gendering of how Rüya passes her time as a housewife is described as biologically and sexually separate from Galip, the male figure in the household. The framework of their lives as husband and wife is fundamental to the understanding of the cultural dynamics that exist between them as subjects of gender whose biological and sexual existence determines their roles within the household. While Galip believes he is free to leave the home every morning and go to work, Rüya stays home and appears to lack the same liberties, as Galip continues to think about her throughout the day and constantly wonders where she is and what she is doing, and if he should call her or rush home for a few minutes to check if she is still there. 332 Galip demonstrates a traditional form of masculinity in his desire to control Rüya’s everyday life and her behavior in private and public space. He reminisces her marriage randomly throughout his search which is usually projected through his gaze:

Throughout their three-year marriage, it had been Rüya’s chair; he would sit across from her, watching her devour her detective novels, watching her sign with longing and tug at her hair and swing her legs with ever-growing impatience as she raced furiously from page to page. On the night she left him, whenever he sat there in her place, it was always the same scene playing before his eyes. 333

This passage embodies a surreal detaching of Rüya by Galip into fragmentary pieces of her being through her possessions and routines as her identity becomes filtered through Galip as narrator. Rüya’s thoughts and feelings are compromised by Galip’s artificial understanding of his wife, and her presence throughout the novel is limited to Galip’s memories of her. In the process of reminiscing his wife and grieving over her disappearance Galip continues to remember her through the things of her world, especially the detective novels she endlessly consumes, defining her in an objectified manner. The precariousness of Rüya’s identity in turning attention to objects

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331 Highmore, Cityscapes, 61.
332 Pamuk, Black Book, 23.
333 Pamuk, Black Book, 52.
affirms the protagonist’s inability to dissociate his wife from the things that belong to her in everyday life. Instead, Rüya’s identity and consumerist objects become intertwined as Galip proceeds through the quest for her to find clues through these objects. As a result, the romantic relationship that may have existed between Galip and Rüya – husband and wife – is essentially undermined. Objects are rendered the foundation of who Galip sees his wife to be and the ordinariness of detective novels and the tedious tasks she performs in everyday life that are narrated in detail assume the identity of Rüya’s identity.

The details and clues that stand above and below Galip’s conscious awareness call into question his role in the novel as a ‘detective.’ The hints that lay scattered around the home he shares with Rüya, throughout Istanbul, and later, in Celâl’s attic home that he begins to live in appear to speak to the truth of his wife’s disappearance. However, Galip appears unable, or unwilling, to concede, instead displaying intentional behaviors verging on naïveté:

“When he looks at these clues, this man sees his own past, the past he shared with his beautiful wife. He doesn’t know who she’s run off with, or else he doesn’t want to know, because wherever he goes, whenever he stumbles onto another clue that talks to him of the past he shared with his wife, he can’t help thinking that the man she’s run off with, and the place she’s hiding resides somewhere in his past.”334

The objects, details, and memories, such as those surrounding the recurring green ballpoint pen appear as strange, eerie symbols that, throughout the novel, foreshadow Galip’s future, along with Rüya’s and Celâl’s fate. As the narration of Galip’s search for his wife develops into a frantic reflection on memories and the alienating qualities attached to everyday life, the reader turns their attention away from where Rüya and Celâl may possibly be hiding, and instead completely immerse themselves into Galip’s habits, and the processes that lead to him transforming from the detective of a disappearance into the detective of Turkishness. Galip’s spectacular ability to remember details of the past and the sensory experiences that allowed him to hold onto these memories becomes a significant element of the novel that later allows Galip to explore the abyss of his psyche. The memory theme that was identified in 10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World, reappears in The Black Book as a method from which to acknowledge the nation-state’s multiple, and often fluctuating ideological positions. In the early chapters of the novel for instance, Galip recalls his early childhood and teenage years, often in relation to Rüya.

These memories offer Galip a channel from which he articulates the world of Turkey’s new Republic. In the following caption, through a narration of Galip’s and Rüya’s experiences as schoolchildren, Turkey’s nationalist language is brought to the foreground:

A memory: Many years ago, in middle school, when [Galip] and Rüya were in the same class, sitting in the same row, listening to their hideous history teacher with all the patience and goodwill they could muster, there’d be times when this teacher would grimace all of a sudden and yell, “Get out your pens and paper at once!” As they sat in cowering silence, dreading the test for which they were unprepared, someone somewhere would tear a sheet of paper from a notebook, even though they all knew how she hated this sound. “Don’t tear pages from your notebooks!” She’d scream in that shrill voice of hers. “I want loose sheets! People who tear up our nation’s notebooks, people who destroy our nation’s property – they’re not Turks, they’re degenerates! I’ll give them zeros!” And she did.335

This vivid memory is not present for the sole purpose of describing the characters’ schooldays, but rather begs attention for the nationalist sentiment that is expressed by Galip’s and Rüya’s schoolteacher during a period in Turkish history when nationalist language was continuously on the rise. This flashback is one which portrays to the reader the victims of the Kemalist agenda, and its impact on everyday life, which in this passage, takes place in the institution of education.

The students’ history teacher is angry not because of the tearing of papers from notebooks; the tearing of pages is a trigger and points to the teacher’s personality as one that is streaked with learned, yet rooted nationalism. This action has symbolic value in the novel: the fragility attached to respecting the new Republic’s cultural discourse. Any student who chooses to rip pages from their notebook embody a population of Turkish culture that does not respect or honor the founder of the Republic because if they did, they would never separate a page from a notebook in such an unforgivable manner. As an agent of Turkey’s distant history, the novel, in this manner, often returns to the virtues of Istanbul’s past to describe the ongoing crisis of identity that has resulted from the modernization process of the twentieth century that essentially stripped the nation of what was familiar, in favor of the unfamiliar. The environment of surrounding political instability that historically grounds the novel can be understood by the image of the “countless flowers, wreaths, flies, dusty buses and horse carts that had encircled them over the years, and the soldiers […], and the schoolgirls, […] gazing up at these stone Atatürks, year in and year out, as they sang the national anthem.”336 The eerie language noted in this quotation is implicative of the revolutionary qualities central to the period surrounding the 1980 coup. Galip translates such socio-political impacts of Kemalism on the nation in the

335 Pamuk, Black Book, 49.
336 Pamuk, Black Book, 357.
following passage, which stands as an interior monologue in the novel that reflects upon the ethos related to a new version of Turkish identity. There is a merging of the everyday and the theme of collective amnesia experienced by everyday citizens because of Kemalism’s foundational transformations of Ottoman society.

There is a noted oppression determined by perceivers of the city’s changing colors and sentiments, speaking to Pamuk’s preoccupation with Istanbul as his protagonist. Everyday citizens find themselves in a boundary space between different versions of Istanbul. Galip is unable, despite his misgivings and tremendous efforts, to rid himself of the city’s mystical undertones that consistently penetrates his consciousness. He looks for signs into the city, including watching those around him, as a means to understand himself:

Gazing across the bridge at the skyline, he [Galip] thought he saw each and every one of their faces shimmering behind its dull veil, but this too was an illusion. It was perhaps possible to look into the faces of his fellow citizens and see in them the city’s long history – its misfortunes, its lost magnificence, its melancholy and pain – but these were not carefully arranged clues pointing to a secret world; they came from a shared defeat, a shared history, a shared shame.337

This scene depicts the protagonist’s observations of the city and its residents, treating both space and its occupants as perceived objects. Through the focalization of the protagonist, the reader engages with everyday citizens in the Turkish nation to understand the memories they share, which bring them closer to understanding their connectedness to Istanbul. The reader also becomes the viewer of faces and the protagonist’s environment, allowing for a chance to visualize Istanbul and its world of everyday troubles and beauties. The Turkish nation is represented in the character of Galip who is bewitched by the rapidly changing city and ridden by an intimate sense of social and psychological exile. Alienation from the everyday and estrangement from what is in front of oneself becomes an aesthetic technique for the novelist. There is an ongoing movement between reality, the imagination, and the process of embodying reality within fiction, like how Turkishness alternates between embodying reality and presenting to everyday lives of Turkish citizens, and their experiences with grasping the ontologies attached to identity. Galip represents an oblivious ego that appears cornered in a distressing territory of in-betweenness where he neither exists in the real, modern Istanbul, nor in the imaginary, underground Istanbul. From the novelist, notions and truths of Turkish national history and its

337 Pamuk, Black Book, 218.
confusing relationship with its collective identity are deciphered through the text, with the characters acting as all but tools utilized by their creator. The figure of Galip impels readers to reflect upon the effects of changing geographical sentiments on identity. Similarly, Celâl’s character frames readers into the context of a city undergoing a cultural crisis that results in a nation of forgetters.

Pamuk uses Celâl’s occupation as columnist to meander through Istanbul’s complex landscape, which only appears in the novel as Galip himself discovers and reads them. Celâl is an important figure because he is not only a part of the narrative’s plot fluidity, but is also the creator of plots, through his isolating columns, which refocus the reader’s attention on various forms of understanding the self. Galip reads Celâl’s columns because of his human desire to experience the world as Celâl’s does. Galip would prefer living in a world imagined and described by Celâl instead of experiencing life within the perceptual world that surrounds him. As one character, Saim mentions, “everything that had ever been written, even the greatest and most authoritative texts in the world, were about dreams, not real life, dreams conjured up by words.” Through his columns, Celâl satirizes Istanbul’s larger political, social, and cultural environment; the atmosphere of superficiality, inauthenticity, and forced upon structures of belonging. As Celâl develops as storyteller, numerous shifts in focus and plot begin to emerge. When read exclusively of one another, Celâl’s columns, regardless of the similar themes they allude to, present to the reader a singular narrative structure that makes it possible for them to be read as detached columns, or as unrelated short stories. Nonetheless, the unifying implications that tie these columns together as they appear in the novel advert Pamuk’s stylistic approach as a writer in the pursuit to render the ordinary, extraordinary, and revolutionary; indeed, a profane illumination. The process of estranging characters from the mundane world creates an atmosphere that is synonymous with Benjamin’s aesthetic values. Thus, the narratives that unravel in these columns can be perceived as numerous re-interpretations of the theme of sensory experiences manifested in the storyline of Istanbul and identity. It is because of such sensory experiences in which identity is illustrated that leads Turkishness to become ever more imaginary and dependent upon human perception, instead of only on official narratives referring

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338 Pamuk, Black Book, 82.
339 For more on the concept of ‘profane illumination’ refer to section one of this chapter.
to identity. Chapter four, “Alâaddin’s Shop” appears centered around the importance of banality to the process of recollection. This fictional place in the novel is important to the psychological development of Celâl. The chapter is a character illustration of Alâaddin, the shop’s owner, who is described as possessing “surreal” qualities, which render him the sort of figure who eludes everyday rationale. In his meanderings of Istanbul’s growing commodity culture, Celâl looks for familiarity and comfort in his desire to listen to Alâaddin’s stories about the “cologne bottles, revenue stamps, illustrated matchboxes, nylon stockings, postcards, artists’ drawings, sexology annuals, hairpins, and prayer books that [Celâl] had seen in his shop once upon a time, only to have memories of them vanish without a trace.” Celâl recollects the fragrances, flavors, colors, and textures of the numerous products and experiences he had in the shop. Alâadin’s Shop becomes a significant site in the novel, but it is only later, towards the end of the novel that the reader comes to the realization of the shop’s significance, causing one to come to terms with the enumeration of descriptions that occur throughout the novel of Alâadin’s shop. Situated just across the street from the City-of Hearts apartment where Celâl had lived, the store has long-lasting memories for the characters because of its ability to evoke increasingly fuzzy memories, which, when read as columns, lead Galip to Rüya’s and Celâl’s nearby hiding placed.

Most of Celâl’s writings appear related to the theme of identity, and the quest to retrieve an ‘authentic’ identity within a society slowly being absorbed into ‘imitative’ activities. Celâl is inadvertently worried about the dangers of Western interference in Istanbul and the unreliability of imitation to the representation of an authentic sense of Turkishness. In the chapter entitled “Bedii Usta’s Children” Celâl continues to unravel the surrealist experiment through a tale of the “fearsome secret history of Turkey’s mannequins.” This section of the novel is very telling because it explores the burrowing ‘underground’ by Turkey’s Kemalist project. Kemalism’s Westernization enterprise that wished for the expulsion of a natural sense of togetherness between the Ottoman memory and the new Republic confronted Turks in their process of becoming new Turks. The building of mannequins by Bedii Usta, under the order of Abdülhamit to create mannequins for the Naval Museum, quickly manifests itself into a research

340 Pamuk, Black Book, 42.  
341 Pamuk, Black Book, 41.  
342 Pamuk, Black Book, 59.  
343 See Chapter 1, Section 1: “Formations of Identity in the Nation-State.”
endeavor into the growing culture of imitation enforced by Kemalism. It is not that Bedii Usta’s
mannequins are rejected for their craftsmanship. In fact, they look exactly like the Turks, yet,
that is exactly why they are not accepted into department stores. His mannequins do not look like
the westerners that much of Turkish society is described to aspire to be like. In consequence, the
mannequins are rendered rather haunting in their portrayal of a person who the Turks wish to
forget. Bedii Usta’s craft is criticized by shops, who explain to the creator, “Turks no longer
wanted to be Turks, they wanted to be something else altogether.”³⁴⁴ Bedii Usta resultantly
becomes secluded in his underground workshop, continuing to create these mannequins that are
described as “dark, painful, irksome, even terrifying!”³⁴⁵ The world above his workshop
proceeds to modernize and becomes more and more foreign as it morphs into an imitation of
Europe. Celâl narrates Bedii Usta’s story as an exemplary model of the imitation characteristic of
the Kemalist project, describing everyday shopping habits of Turkish society and their desire to
dress like Europeans, therefore desiring a complete identity reversal.

The everyday in Celâl’s columns comes to embody an anxious effort of the formation of
Turkey’s unstable identity politics, a foreshadowing of the years of cultural upheaval that would
proceed to impact Turkish private and public life, and the theme of the gaze which he believes
allows him to delve deeper into the lives of everyday citizens. The imposition of imitation of the
West and state-enforcing of national identity causes Celâl to often admit to the nation-states
numerous existential crises related to its admission to an identity tainted by Ottoman and Islamic
memories. In the chapter titled, “I Must be Myself,” Celâl chillingly engages in an interior
monologue in which he repeatedly reminds himself, “I must be myself.” This chapter appears
burdened by the character’s inability to naturally remain untainted by Kemalist promises, and
engages with daily conflicts with himself to cling to a sense of authenticity:

I must be myself. I said over and over. I must forget these people buzzing inside my head, I must
forget their voices, their smells, their demands, their love, their hate, and be myself, I must be myself;
I told myself as I gazed down at the legs resting so happily on the stool and I told myself again as I
looked up to watch the smoke I’d blown up to the ceiling; I must be myself, because if I failed to be
myself, I became the person they wanted me to be, and I can’t bear the person they want me to be;
if I had to be that insufferable person, I’d rather be nothing at all.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁴ Pamuk, Black Book, 61.
³⁴⁵ Pamuk, Black Book, 63.
³⁴⁶ Pamuk, Black Book, 181.
Not unlike Tequila Leila, Celâl is reliant on memory in his efforts to present to his readers, through a mystified writing style, the toxic traits of imitation within the formation of an individualized form of self. The columnist is as much haunted as he is alienated from his identity as he exhibits a strange sense of conflicting selves. As he progresses through his career as a columnist, he comes to the stark and uncanny conclusion that the real subject of his writings has been the gaze: “I am finally aware that there is no other subject: From now on I shall devote myself utterly to the hidden poetry of our faces, the terrifying secret that lurks inside our human gaze.”

As a male spectator who translates his perceptions of the city to the readers of his columns, Celâl views from a privileged position in accordance to gender as well as occupation because it appears that only he can persuade his readers of the significance in the human gaze. Galip’s passionate reactions to Celâl’s writings on the gaze inspires vignettes of viewing scenes that invite him to observe Istanbul as a visual stimulus that may offer clues to not only his wife’s hiding place but also to the hiding place of his identity. Via his quest to uncover the whereabouts of his wife and Celâl through reading through Celâl’s old columns, Galip also comes to realize that the secret to understanding Istanbul’s identity depends upon understanding faces, thus again eliciting the importance of the gaze:

After a time, he [Galip] decided that these faces Celâl had been collecting for thirty years might offer him glimpses of this other realm to which he longed to escape, and with this in mind he settled into an armchair. Taking photographs out of the boxes at random, he tried to look into the faces without seeking either signs or secrets. Soon they became as anonymous as the physical descriptions on identity cards: random arrangements of noses, eyes, and mouths. From time to time, he’d catch sign of an unusually sad and beautiful woman on a photograph affixed to an insurance document, but before he could sink into her sad mystery, he’d quickly turn his attention to another face that harbored no pain, no untold story.

By assuming a position of spectator Celâl, Galip explores the components of faces. He thinks about the emotions and thoughts that give faces their shapes and meanings. I would suggest that the relationship between Galip and that which he perceives in the city is not entirely an aesthetic view but rather intimate and personal in that he strives to capture the very essence of the metropolis by connecting its inhabitants with its nature. The qualities of each individual are defined for Galip in accordance to elements such as beauty and expressive meanings. The juxtaposition of different faces between the spectator and the perceived fluctuates between

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different stories and is an implication of the roles taken between seeing and being seen. The engagement that the narrator describes in the exploration of the gaze considers the diverse spatial and identity-related constructions that can be created through different ways of looking at the gazers object of the gazed. By observing the plurality of face in his surroundings, Galip realizes the significance of Istanbul as a territory of surreal identities. By revising the city in such a way as to define it based on reading faces, Galip narrows his perceptions of the city as a space of illuminating a diverse array of identities that can only be understood through looking. Galip realizes that the city in which he is on a quest to understand his place within it is rather a fluid and decentered space that is constructed from individual lives and subjective everyday experiences that he knows nothing about; all he can do is keep on looking.

The latter portions of the novel witness Galip’s almost complete immersion into Celâl, as the two characters become one. Effectively, Galip, physically, psychologically, and metaphorically becomes a ghostly imitation of Celâl, representative of the missing columnist’s doppelgänger. Galip’s allusive fascination with Celâl, as his more desirable, uncanny self is the result of the inescapable feelings of exclusion and disenchantment he has felt with himself throughout the entire novel. Galip appears to be desperate to abandon the world as he sees it and replace it by a surreal lens from which to experience this surprising, new Istanbul. Galip does this by gaining access into Celâl’s home by tricking the building’s janitor to give him the keys to Celâl’s flat and roams through old columns, photos, literatures, and other belongings.\(^{349}\) The presence of Celâl in Galip’s body translates into a narrative of imitation, in which the stifling subject-object perception related to the imitator and the imitated is reflected as an avenue from which to translate the repercussions of Kemalism. This adopting of the columnist’s views of the world leads Galip to render Celâl’s identity, his own, therefore transforming into a hybrid character. In doing so, Galip is no longer the unsuccessful lawyer who is overly attached to his unhappy wife, as he was in the beginning of the novel. He instead finds himself living through Celâl’s world as a columnist. Galip’s everyday world is completely transformed as he becomes the journalist Celâl was, wears the clothes Celâl once wore, and works in the office Celâl once worked in.\(^{350}\) The swaying between alternating narrative voices and spaces, even though they appear at times

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\(^{350}\) Pamuk, *Black Book*, 245.
complex and daunting, ultimately merge, similar to the content of the novel that narrates the identity assimilation of Galip and Celâl. Galip’s identity deconstruction and adoption of Celâl’s identity is representative of the failure of citizens to completely emulate the desirable. As a result, a trap occurs in which citizens do not want to be themselves yet are unable to completely transform into the other. This persistent, stubborn oscillation between authenticity and imitation is often expressed by Galip, as he struggles to become someone who could fit into this new Istanbul: “To be a bad imitation of someone else, wasn’t that better than being someone who’d lost his past, his memory, his dreams?”

Celâl nor Galip are immediately vindictive of the imitative process of Turkishness. In paradox, both characters appear to be defined by the blurring between imitation and authenticity, rather becoming victims of Kemalism’s defining principles.

By virtue of Galip’s long series of encounters within Istanbul, with sites, characters and ideas, his identity and relations with the perceptual world are radically transformed. Unlike in 10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World where the murder is the opening scene, in The Black Book, it does not occur until the end. For the breadth of the novel, the reader does not realize that Galip’s search for the pair will ultimately amount to a double murder, in a way opposite of a typical detective novel. Instead of a detective’s intense pursuit of a suspect and his eventual capture of the murderer via the clues left behind at a crime scene, The Black Book is a metaphysical confrontation of a detective figure with his sense of self through the clues left behind in his perceptual universe. Upon Celâl’s and Rüya’s ambiguous murder, Galip does not re-become himself, but rather turns into a hybrid form of the Turk who imitates. He takes over his cousin’s column and continues to alter his own identity into that of Celâl. Galip realizes he is better off as Celâl, and therefore decides to continue Celâl’s profession as a journalist “in Celâl’s space, under Celâl’s name.”

In a metaphorical sense, it is not so much death that is made to be an enigma in the novel, but rather the foundations of Turkishness through the ongoing presence of the gaze. It is identity that is the site of secrets, clues, and discovery, which in turns enables the characters to delve deep into themselves, including their everyday habits and everyday encounters with Istanbul as the site where they may uncover their memories. In such a mystical

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351 Pamuk, Black Book, 194.
352 Pamuk, Black Book, 439.
353 Pamuk, Black Book, 445.
way, *The Black Book* is a speculation of the structure of the mystery and its deconstruction to alleviate the desperation for identity.

Pamuk’s oeuvre delivers to readers a creative representation of forms of the everyday in relation to the cultural influence of Kemalism that leads to a society of doubles – the imitated and the imitator. *The Black Book*’s narration of Istanbul’s various spaces and their eerie qualities echos the personalities of the characters Galip and Celâl in their struggle to pursue an authentic version of identity. The peculiarities of memories and details that become Galip’s monologues and Celâl’s columns create purpose. These characters and the narrator appropriate Turkey’s recent cultural history, allowing for an authenticated and archival depiction of society’s sensory reactions to the conflicts that they experience. Through his characters, Pamuk transcends Turkey’s sociocultural context to highlight Turkish identity through the individual’s engagement with urban space, which occurs through an interaction with the self and its sensory experiences. By rendering possible the reenactment of memories and their details, the narrative structure symbolizes an importance to the controlling and depiction of memories within the conflicts of identity. With many scenes taking place within Istanbul’s streets and numerous sites significance becomes connected to the city in which society and nation mesh together and determine fate. In the novel, the everyday is more significant than a purpose of context. The metaphorical style in which the conflicts of *The Black Book* speak to the everyday are enriched with fluid details that instead of reducing identity to a series of spectacular moments, present to readers the habitual and trivial as a profane phenomenon.
3.5 Conclusion

10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World and The Black Book have been researched as explorations of the everyday world in which we live in, yet ambivalently remains at the front of, yet in the foreground of our notice. The shapes, sounds, and structure of the city is essentially defined by its people and to study faces and one’s place within the city has become largely a discussion of the distinction between male and female experiences, which are simultaneously bounded together and separated from one another. The city becomes real in the novel because of its embodiment of everyday sensations and intimate interactions. Istanbul is narrated by Shafak and Pamuk as a place of contradictions, where gender is paramount to how one lives and navigates about space. This chapter has asked: How does everyday life effect one’s sensory experiences and how does the everyday influence the ways in which society feels, acts, and reacts to the world around them? It has brought the female character to the forefront in a subversive way to explore the presence of the woman in the cityscape within a society that is largely patriarchal and bounded by the power it endows on the male. In the last chapter of this dissertation, I will proceed in studying Shafak’s and Pamuk’s assessment of new ways of looking at identity dynamics through close readings of The Museum of Innocence (Pamuk), The Flea Palace (Shafak), and Three Daughters of Eve (Shafak). Themes further related to spectatorship and the gaze will be elucidated upon including fetishism, hoarding, the possessor/possessed dichotomy, and spectatorship. In this final analytical area of the dissertation, I will introduce the reader to the museum-novel binary to develop upon the idea of the Turkish novel as a Museum of Turkishness.
CHAPTER 4: THE MUSEUM OF TURKISHNESS: A DOUBLE STAGING OF IDENTITY REPRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

The Turkish novel reveals a double staging of Turkishness: A Turkishness that is synonymous with that which is perceived within the nation in real time and space; and one that is refracted from a fictional lens between the literary and the visual. This second principle closely aligns the novel with the museum: both resemble institutions that curate sensory experiences expressed through material objects as a means of preserving an era and perception of the self in relation to the nation. In this area of the dissertation, I will research this resulting novel-museum binary to understand by what virtues the novel functions similarly to the museum, as spaces where histories and memories are recontextualized and archived. This leads me to refer to the resulting construct as a “Museum of Turkishness.” The gaze is an important element to the structure of museums because, as Margaret Olin explains, “the term ‘gaze’ […] leaves no room to comprehend the visual without reference to someone whose vision is under discussion.” As I will explore in this chapter, the museum and the installations and artwork which take up the museum’s space carry an inspiration within them that often originates from memories of sentimental relationships with space or a person. The gaze therefore becomes an instrument of visualization and inherits the abrupt ability to manipulate and assert power over subjects of one’s gaze. In the language of museums, personal histories are amassed through the collection of memories and objects as collectors find themselves in danger of becoming victims of their collection. This often leads to a back-and-forth association, begging the question: Are the resulting collections controlled by the collectors, or is there a point in which the collections themselves begin possessing their original creators?

Speaking to this dissertation’s interest in gender and the notion of spectatorship, I visit the sociocultural and aesthetic implications that are attributed to the gendered gaze, and the different

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ways from which identity is manipulated through the idea of seeing and being seen. When visual perception is interpreted in such a way, attention is drawn again to systems of power and how this structure is shaped by gender. This chapter focuses on spaces of representation, bringing together the novel and the museum as institutions of archiving distinct vignettes of Turkishness, pointing to the aesthetic fluidity and dynamism associated with identity. In this chapter, I argue that novel-writing originates from the same compulsive obsession as collecting: each process represents and equal effort to create, control, and manipulate one’s perceptions of the world and of their recollection of the past.

In the first section, “Museum-Novel, Curator-Novelist, and the Collection Model” I stretch the boundaries of the role of the writer of a novel and the curator of a museum, and rather bring them together as figures who archive sensory experiences as historical evidence that speaks to sociopolitical contexts. I argue that novelists’ writing of the collector figure in their task of curating their personal collection is a poetic device taken up as a means of archiving Istanbul and the city’s identity oscillations. In her English Literature dissertation thesis of Pamuk’s The Museum of Innocence and Edith Wharton’s The Age of Innocence, Hülya Yağcıoğlu uses the term “textual museums” to describe the novels as “preserving the past in and through the detailed descriptions of material plethora.” I likewise understand Pamuk’s and Shafak’s texts as ‘textual museums’ in their process of illustrating elements of Gendered Turkishness through protagonist’s collecting of objects in a transcendental manner that often takes the form of replacing lost memories, loves, and histories. The character of the collector captures bits and pieces from personal and national interactions with Turkishness. What is done with them? They are annihilated from the context of which they deteriorated and are taken up by the authors in revolutionary ways. In the next two sections, “The Collector as Destructor of Accumulated Pasts: The Case of Kemal” and “The Collector as Possessor: The Case of Madam Auntie” I draw comparisons between Kemal’s manic hoarding of objects of his lost love, and Madam Auntie’s neurotic compilations of garbage to preserve the Ottoman past. I orient these characters as displaced exiles within a society that they are not prepared to accept. Collecting for Kemal and

Madam Auntie become rituals of protection; they want to shield themselves off from the unknown universe of modernity. In the last section, “The Curator of Everyday Experience: Three Daughters of Eve and the Bourgeois Dinner Party,” Shafak’s writing of Peri as an evasive and introverted figure is reflected through the novelist’s indirect descriptions of objects, as they take precedence in the novel and often signify to flashbacks of the protagonist’s relationship with the mentioned things. I consider the similarities between the realities of Turkishness portrayed in the novel, and the historical implications Peri’s memories have within the larger epistemological context. Speaking to the museum-novel binary, Kemal, Madam Auntie, and Peri are characters whose associations with collections, represents intimate processes of archiving everyday life for the purposes of attaching oneself onto a form of identity that is dependent upon personal choice.
4.2 Museum-Novel, Curator-Novelist, and the Collection Model

How can the museum and the novel be understood as selectively curated, alterations of a selected past that is dependent upon certain epistemological conditions? Shafak and Pamuk are indeed collectors, and their creative process is subjected to their tendency to bring together memories, observations, and experiences of Turkish everyday life within their museum-like novels. The museum visitor is comparable to the reader because of the process that takes place when they gaze at the object of speculation. While in the case of the museum visitor it may be a painting, for a reader it is the novel, a dichotomy that Pamuk describes in *The Naïve and Sentimental Novelist*. During the reading process, the reader traverses through numerous details of the narrative structure, and often embeds certain aspects into their lives, much in the same way that a museum visitor picks and chooses which objects will have the most impacts on their opinions of certain conditions and scenes of the world. Pamuk interprets the novel as an archive of the small details that are witnessed from everyday life; no detail remains too small for consideration:

> Novels also form a rich and powerful archive – of common human feelings, our perceptions of ordinary things, our gestures, utterances, and attitudes. Various sounds, words, colloquialisms, smells, images, tastes, objects, and colors are remembered only because novelists observe them and carefully make note of them in their writings.  

Thinking about how artefacts of the past provoke hidden qualities of the human condition, Pamuk’s perceptions within everyday life are accumulations of disguised meanings that are later uncovered within his texts as extraordinarily relatable stories that speak to the psyche and how lifeless pieces of things can provoke collective experiences. The novelist is an exceptional individual because they are not only curators of everyday life, but also archivists of culture, intimately interacting with and disentangling scenes of everyday life to test the boundaries of reality truth-telling. Collections and their role in the novel and museum are profound in that each exist for their archival qualities:

> Just as museums preserve objects, novels preserve the nuances, tones, and colors of language, expressing in colloquial terms people’s ordinary thoughts and the haphazard way in which the mind skips from one topic to the next. Novels not only preserve words, verbal formulas, and idioms, but they also record how they are used in daily exchanges.

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Alongside his fictional characters, Pamuk archives the world and writes it into space as a collection of memories and observations of the real world, emphasizing a rootedness within quotidian realities over imaginative universes. Similar to his characters, Pamuk sees himself as a storyteller whose role is not unlike that of a historian. Pamuk and his characters initiate rational worlds in which very relatable odds and ends of everyday life, from traumas relating to death to joys relating to romance welcome an empathetic, ethereal world absorbed by memories and impulses. It is the valorization of moments of Turkish culture that renders his novels as collections of the Turkish experience; a Museum of Turkishness.

Museum objects are subjective representations of historical discourse and are collected as a means to curate selections of cultural memory. Susan Stewart describes collections as similar to many other forms of art in which their overarching purpose is “the creation of new context.” In “Collecting Practices” Sharon Macdonald translates collecting as the “gathering or accumulation of material things.” Museums recontextualize objects of collections by removing them from their original contexts and placing them in new contexts. Primarily, the design of the museum is to “remove artifacts from their current context and use; from their circulation in the world of private property, and insert them into a new environment which would impose upon them a different meaning.” Museums do not endure in a neutral territory because they are in a movement through a life-cycle that results in transforming epistemological readings. As a result, the idea that museums represent authentic versions of culture is a misconception. Instead, curators frame moments of a nation’s socio-cultural history within their exhibitions, therefore only presenting a selection of a nation’s identity that is prevalently personalized. The collector figure, although their collection practice may begin rather innocently, and with a mixture of feelings and thoughts, grows into a rather anxious practice about preservation, and a compulsion to latch themselves onto the memories and ideas that caused them to become fixated on these objects to begin with. Collecting inherits a breath of its own that relies upon sensory experience

359 Susan Stewart, On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984), 151.
361 Macdonald, A Companion to Museum Studies, 82.
363 Saumarez, “Museums, Artefacts, and Meanings, 12.
that goes beyond those of the curator. Macdonald introduces readers to the theme of possession in relation to the collection, which is a theme I will proceed to explore in representing the collector/collection dichotomy as one that is figured in the possessor/possession binary:

Possessing a collection became a mark of statues, injecting a new dynamic possibility into existing social hierarchies; and the relative qualities of collections themselves became a basis for identifying and expressing social distinctions. Collecting was a means of fashioning and performing the self via material things; and the new figure of the collector became the epitome of the then relatively novel idea that personal identities could be made rather than being definitely ascribed at birth.365

The claim that identities can indeed be made rather than be dependent upon inherent characteristic assigned at birth is particularly telling because it demonstrates the signification of collecting to the formation of the self. Possession is important to the blurring of boundaries between the writer and the collector because “the writer possesses experience through the image, the collector through ownership of the object.”366 The concept of possessing a collection is equally stunting to the representation of the collector as an independent figure who is free from constraints. The possession method of attaching oneself onto cultural memories to preserve culture leads to a contradictory experience that results in a role reversal. Possession connotes a process of authority and control, and it is a word that can be questioned and unriddled because what may begin as possession can turn into being possessed. Walter Benjamin believes in the possession quality inherent in each collector, “Every passion borders on the chaotic, but the collector’s passion borders on the chaos of memories.”367 Both thinkers experiment with objects to find the aspects of life concealed within them. They are curious of objects’ lifelike qualities, otherwise known as their haunting characteristics. Whimsical, yet distraught in personality, the collector figure’s actions are often dictated by memory. That is to say that memories are an inevitable ingredient that motivates the collectors’ decisions. Benjamin’s book collection was built from a similar series of accumulated pasts when he describes his book collection:

Memories of the cities in which I found so many things: Riga, Naples, Munich, Danzig, Moscow, Florence, Basel, Paris; memories of Rosenthal’s sumptuous rooms in Munich, of the Danzig Stockturm where the late Hans Rhaue was domiciled, of Süssengut’s musty book cellar in Northern Berlin; memories of the rooms where these books had been housed, of my many students den in Munich, of my room in Bern, of the solitude of Iseltwald, on the Lake of Brienz, and finally of my

Benjamin describes a very personal relationship with his book collection because for him, the objects in his possession conceal very particular and individual lives, or souls that only he is able to understand due to the self-reflective possession-possessed affinity. Benjamin appears more interested in the process of collecting as a means of memory preservation, than the actual collection itself. He describes collecting as “merely a dam against the spring tide of memories which surges toward any collector as he contemplates his possessions.” Collectors ache to keep alive the past, but in collecting, they give themselves in to the passions of manifesting the souls of objects. Collecting becomes a self-destructive obsession, so the collector also becomes rather destructive, likely experiencing a change of lifestyle that can seem quite solitary and lonely. The collector looks to the collection, as one would look to their last love, with desperation; dependence; distress. In “The Destructive Character,” Benjamin describes possessions as accumulations of experience that are facilitated by a quality of ownership: “Some pass things down to posterity, by making them untouchable and thus conserving them, others pass on situations, by making them practicable and thus liquidating them. The latter are called destructive.” This kind of collector is an interpreter of objects, experiences, and memories. It grows and transforms into a disastrous behavior concentrated in deception; in realities that were once there but are no longer. Benjamin refers to the passion of a collector as synonymous with the “chaos of memories.” Where the object ends up and the soul is unveiled is referred to as the “object’s fate,” and “for a true collector, the whole background of an item adds up to a magic encyclopedia whose quintessence is the fate of his object.” The collector loses control and transforms from the perpetrators of the collection to rather the victim.

Collecting and the formation of the collection, a toxic and addictive process, can be interpreted from here as a practice of possession and of being possessed. Collections alter sensory

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369 Benjamin, “Unpacking My Library”, 60.
371 Benjamin, “Unpacking My Library,” 60.
experiences and reveal unsecured relations between the individual and objects indicating definitive elements of identity. At the same time collective and personal, there is an archival tendency that emerges that can be thought of as “ordinary affects”; both the individual and the collective experience designates convincing alterations to identity, or as a “something coming together.” The collector is regressive and poisoned by the subjects of his collection and is therefore characterized as admitting to a restless type of blind mania. These provocative objects, no matter how aged or used, feather or diamonds, become more powerful with time. They will come to be the ruin of him, acting as a parasitic stain that will finally cause the collector to be the subject of the collection’s act of destruction. Collecting itself is a dialectic development that unveils the tensions masked below its surface. It is through the writer’s capturing of memories that they can write experiences into their collections, therefore manifesting the inherent collective qualities of the everyday. Objects of collection hold a symbolic value that can only be determined by the collector. When part of a curated collection, objects no longer have a singular purpose but rather are representative of the collector’s desires; of what they value and feel.

As a collector, Pamuk can be compared to Benjamin because of both figures’ fascination and fear of their collections. They appear as equally possessed by the book collections which they have become so infatuated with that they have fallen under their collections as submissive victims of the surrealistic, possession qualities that are passed onto the collections. For Pamuk, freedom is the antithesis of being possessed by collection, which awaits an ironic result, freeing oneself from attachments. Pamuk expresses this kind of bitter-sweet sensation following his discarding of books that he found himself impelled to do after two life-changing earthquakes:

What I was punishing was my own past, the dreams I’d nurtured when I’d first found these books and picked them up, bought them, taken them home, hidden them, read them, and labored over them so lovingly, imagining what I would think when reading them in the future. On reflection, this seemed less like punishment than liberation.

Pamuk has profuse, aesthetic sensitivities for collections which he separates between being punished and being liberated, acknowledging the possessive nature of the collecting task. He looks at the collector-collection relationship as a form of “self-revenge and oppression.”

Pamuk’s feelings towards his books are not of magical origins but are rather negative; he

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374 Pamuk, Other Colors, 107.
375 Pamuk, Other Colors, 108.
indicates an involuntary type of “attachment” he feels towards his books.\textsuperscript{376} To prove to himself that he is not haunted by his collection, he discards of certain books, taking part in a brief and satisfactory liberation process. Throwing away books is a welcoming into the freedom to choose being the possessor or being the possessed. This world of Pamuk’s is an ongoing mediation between human beings and their things; possessor-possessed and the role reversal that ultimately occurs. By means of an obsessive valorization of objects of memory to disperse ideas of Turkishness, Pamuk negotiates with subjective forms of collecting that resembles the same toxic behavior that his characters exhibit.

The mental climate at the heart of collecting confirms the revolutionary passions that underlie literature surrounding the collector figure. As I will maintain in the following close readings, it is the degenerative behavior associated with collecting that marks the collector figure, both in fiction and reality, as one stained with a reputation that I describe as neurotic, possessive, alienated, and manic. Collectors’ frequent personification of objects as beings with souls, and their ironic objectification of people is problematized and described as elemental to their selfhood. Building upon the theoretical research outlined here, I will continue in the following sections to recapture the collector figure in the Turkish context as an archivist preoccupied with the task of recontextualizing and preserving Turkish identity, in essence building a highly intimate and intricate Museum of Turkishness.

\textsuperscript{376} Pamuk, \textit{Other Colors}, 109.
4.3 The Collector as Destructor of Female Agency: The Case of Kemal

_The Museum of Innocence_ embodies a double staging of the principles of novels and museums to negotiate with Istanbul’s history and Turkishness within the context of Istanbul between 1975 and 1984. Told through the focalization of one wealthy man’s infatuation with a lower-class distant cousin, the plot is deeply emotional and ridden with nostalgic flashbacks and interior monologues. In this section I will analyze the lack of agency that the woman encounters; a form of control that is facilitated by the agency that the male benefits from. Although there are other female characters in the novel whose plight amongst the patriarchal system could be equally interesting to research, Füsun Keskin is the figure whose experiences are most striking due to her inability throughout her life to break free from the control and prescribed attention by men, especially the male protagonist, Kemal Basmaci. It is through Kemal’s patriarchal gaze that Füsun is described in the novel. John Berger makes a point of the influential power of male spectatorship in _Ways of Seeing_, “Men act and women appear. Men look at women […] The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female.” The woman character in _The Museum of Innocence_ undergoes relentless objectification by the male protagonist’s gaze, and as a result, the reader never understands her identity because it is persistently filtered through the male’s desirous perception. Her existence as a woman with her own desires and hopes for a future are overlooked by the protagonist as her identity is recycled through idolized objects and she becomes a woman without depth as she is fragmented and objectified image of the protagonist’s imagination. Füsun does not have a voice in the text that expresses her identity, already revealing the system of power that exist within the storyline because the reader only is able to understand her character through Kemal’s obsessive perception of her. The text is divided between chapters of narration, and nostalgic descriptions of objects present within protagonist’s collection, which later make it into this sentimental museum, therefore introducing the process of curation into the narrative structure. The beginning of the novel presents to the reader or museum visitor a map of Istanbul and precise directions to The Museum of Innocence on Çukurcuma Avenue. These detailed instructions are proceeded by a catalogue of the museum’s installations: everyday objects that have contributed to the decay and deterioration of the protagonist’s

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association with reality. The Museum of Innocence is described by Duygu Tekgül as a “quasi-ethnographic literary museum.” Ansari describes the novel as positioning material objects from different parts of Turkish history on public display and, “In doing so it has become a dialectical space that turns the notion of modernity on itself by subjecting the modern lifestyle to the modern gaze.” The fictional universe of the novel is conceived of through the narrator’s observations of the cityscape, after the effects of reality are recreated through the literary structure. As a convoluted story that explores themes of patriarchy, the gaze, modernity, and national memory, the love story of loss becomes a channel from which Pamuk traverses the nature of novels and museums, which allows for a coexistence between the novel and the museum as they take on overlapping roles in their similar quest to curate Gendered Turkishness.

The protagonist, Kemal, falls fanatically in love with the young and beautiful Füsun. One compulsive action leads to another, and results in Kemal’s self-destruction. He can only hold onto his sanity through the ghostly accumulations of objects that Füsun once held in her hands, or that remind Kemal in one way or another, of the possibility of a life of love that he missed out on. In doing so, he not only presents to his readers the life of Füsun, but also puts on display the everyday socio-cultural dynamics of Istanbul during the 1970s and 1980s. While Kemal is educated, from the upper-middle class bourgeoisie and is engaged to the elegant, Sorbonne-educated Sibel, he nevertheless goes on to seduce Füsun, an 18-year-old shopgirl who he comes across while purchasing an unknowingly fake designer bag for his fiancée. Kemal and Sibel appear as an admired, wealthy couple in Istanbul society, whose aspirations are directed towards resembling European culture. However, Kemal enters a dualistic kind of identity that presents him as a respectable Turkish businessman on the outside, but internally becomes a troubled and melancholic Turkish man. Though Kemal does not realize it at the time, his amassing of objects begins during the early days of his love affair with Füsun, when she loses her earring during their love-making, and would remain tainted by the purchasing of a fake, brand-named Jenny Colon bag. Pamuk’s poetic language to describe Kemal’s treasures of Füsun are stimulants that carry

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380 Ansari, “Orhan Pamuk’s City and the Turkish Republic: An Engagement with the Modern Nation State,” 125.
381 Pamuk, Museum of Innocence, 4.
Kemal to a bitter period of the past, one that he romanticizes as having been more whimsical than it actually was.

Kemal’s and Füsun’s rendezvous are spontaneous, daring, and desire driven. Kemal looks at Füsun not as a woman he can love and have a real intimate relationship with, but rather a means from which to gratify his sexual longing, therefore seeing Füsun as an object that he wants to possess. Meeting in brief increments inside the Merhamet Apartments where Kemal’s mother usually discards of unwanted purchases, Kemal’s and Füsun’s relationship never truly blossoms but is marked as territorial and just as quick to rise as it is to fall. Prototypical gender roles and the favorable position of the man in comparison to the powerless woman appears often throughout the novel to portray the perceived tensions of Turkey’s social structure. The theme of patriarchy is overtly exhausted by Pamuk in the chapter entitled “A Few Unpalatable Anthropological Truths” during which he explains some of the sexual taboos’ existent within Turkish society during the 1970s, further distinguishing Kemal’s attraction between Sibel and Füsun. In the following passage, the narrator explains to his readers the varying circumstances surrounding sexual relations, and the treatment of women in Turkey’s cultural society:

If the man tried to wriggle out of marrying the girl, and the girl in question was under eighteen years of age, an angry father might take the philanderer to court to force him to marry her. Some such cases would attract press attention, and in those days it was the custom for newspapers to run the photographs with black bands over the “violated” girls’ eyes, to spare their being identified in this shameful situation. Because the press used the same device in photographs of adulteresses, rape victims, and criminals, there were so many photographs of women with black bands over their eyes that to read a Turkish newspaper in those days was like wandering through a masquerade. All in all, Turkish newspapers ran very few photographs of Turkish women without bands over their eyes, unless they were singers, actresses, or beauty contestants (all occupations suggestive of easy virtue, anyway), while in advertisements there was a preference for women and faces that were evidently foreign and non-Muslim.382

This excerpt accents the normalization of males’ expected power over women during the time. While men have the authority to treat women as disposable commodities, it is the woman who bears the consequences of the male’s actions. The narrator describes the shaming that women must undergo because of being subjected by the male gaze. No matter singer, actress, beauty contestant, or a girl who fell in love, females experience societal exposure, and are treated as objects that may be manipulated and controlled. Kemal’s determined lust to assume domination

382 Pamuk, Museum of Innocence, 62.
over Füsun is written to be an unoriginal tendency of many Turkish men. When Füsun comes to the dreaded realization that Kemal will keep his engagement with Sibel, despite declaring his love for her, she refuses to see Kemal again.

Istanbul’s Hilton Hotel becomes an especially significant place in Kemal’s memories because it is where his engagement party with Sibel took place and was the last place he saw Füsun before her lengthy absence from his life. It symbolizes the moment when Kemal completely fell into a deep free fall from his identity as a comfortably European, bourgeois Turkish businessman, and into a sad, depleted, and love-lorn maniac.383 A postcard of the Hilton hotel can also be found later in Kemal’s museum, emphasizing the differences between Istanbul’s Westernized, bureaucratic, wealthy class, from Füsun’s small world, living in a poor neighborhood of Istanbul. In the beginning of this chapter, the narrator describes the postcard with a nostalgic kind of anguish, yet also imbued with hope, “These postcards of the Istanbul Hilton were acquired some twenty years after the events I describe; I picked up some of them while strolling through small museums and flea markets in this city and elsewhere in Europe, and others I purchased in transactions with Istanbul’s foremost collectors in the course of assembling the Museum of Innocence.”384 Following the engagement party, Kemal breaks off his engagement, much to Sibel’s shock, shame, and stress, and proceeds to disquiet himself from his friends. He is no longer trusted as a successful Turkish businessman and is often mocked by those of his social circle. Following Füsun’s temporary disappearance from his life, Kemal does not recall his memories with Füsun as flawed and one-sided, but rather remembers them as some of the happiest moments of his life, unable to let them go. Kemal changes and his whole world – Istanbul and his position in the petit bourgeoisie becomes dependent upon his delusions and the almost schizophrenic phantoms of Füsun that follow him, “Discounting the second or two of the consolations that the first sightings of these ghosts brought me, I never for long forgot that they were not Füsun but figments of my unhappy imagination.”385 Following Kemal’s loss of Füsun, he cannot go on. When Kemal finally finds Füsun after a year of separation, she is married to a man, Feridun, who she does not love and has dreams of becoming an actress. Füsun marries

383 Pamuk, Museum of Innocence, 102.
384 Pamuk, Museum of Innocence, 102.
385 Pamuk, Museum of Innocence, 167.
Feridun because of his connections within the film industry, which may help Füsun to be discovered, and allow for her dreams to be fulfilled. However, years pass and Feridun does no such thing. Füsun spends most of her evenings watching television with her parents. As Kemal cannot immediately make her his since she is now married to a man she does not love, he instead visits Füsun multiple times a week, and has dinner with her parents. Similarly, despite Kemal’s financial resources to help Füsun achieve her dreams of becoming a famous actress, he forgoes her happiness for his own one goal: possession. He comes to the realization that if he helps Füsun to become an actress, he will in fact be ruining himself as well because he will no longer be able to control her in the way that he has and Füsun will likely be similarly rendered an object of gratification by others in the film industry.

Throughout the text Füsun remains someone unreachable and intangible for Kemal, speaking to his desperation to clutch onto objects that have Füsun’s traces on them instead. She is objectified and her dreams are suppressed by the male figure who views her as an object of his erotic desires. Kemal watches and observes Füsun as she eats dinner with her and her parents, often contemplating how he will ever be able to fully own her. The challenge put forth towards Füsun by the male gaze – Kemal’s gaze – is reputed as Füsun continues to reject Kemal’s advances and she presents herself as unpossessable. While Kemal is unable to take absolute control of Füsun, he is indeed able to recreate and assign meaning to objects that in essence lead him to reimagine his relationship with her. Throughout the eight years that Kemal does this, he goes into a ruinous state of hypnotism in which his actions, choices, and behaviors from then on are dependent upon his desire to one day fully own Füsun. The theme of possession that is identified within Kemal’s infatuation with Füsun may be best explained through de Beauvoir’s study of the patriarchal form of the male:

[…] terrified by the dangerous magic woman possesses, he [the male] posits her [the female] as the essential, it is he who posits her, and he who realizes himself thereby as the essential in this alienation he grants; in spite of the fecund virtues that infuse her, man remains her master […]; she is destined to be subordinated, possessed, and exploited […]

Thinking within the context of the novel being studied, Kemal’s perception of the woman is powerful and in watching Füsun and yearning to possess her, the narration is often suspended.

387 De Beauvoir, 82.
Despite Füsun’s indifference towards Kemal’s advances, which may appear as her resistance to traditional male authority, Kemal proceeds in his efforts to possess his muse. For, as strong or as independent that Füsun may seem in her rejection of Kemal, it is Kemal who is aware, in the back of his mind, that he will eventually be able to subjugate Füsun to his own masculine consciousness. For almost a decade, Kemal steals meaningless trinkets from Füsun’s family, objects that often go forgotten anyway, thereby endowing himself with the liberty to collect the soul of Füsun that remains in these objects, rendering Füsun a fragmented and objectified female subject. Sometimes, he would replace these objects with others, only to steal them again weeks later. The link between Füsun’s objects and Füsun, for Kemal, are interchangeable as the male protagonist becomes obsessed with the concept of objectifying Füsun. It is this overwhelming sense of anguish and desperation that turns into obsession, compulsion, possession, and finally, being possessed. What begins as a remedy to alleviate Kemal’s heartache, turns into a strategy with which to dominate Füsun. It is a disastrous rotation that Kemal keeps reminding himself that he must break from, but similar to an addict, he is unable to and resigns to his fate, shutting out any possibility of freedom from the possession he has become victim to by his stolen objects. The deeper that Kemal falls into an end-of-life melancholy, the more and more that objects transform from having functions of commodity and become streaked with tearful memories and slam close the doors against a hopeful future. Furthermore, Kemal appears far removed from the political and economic troubles of Turkey. He remains detached from the social violence and coup-plotting rumors that effect society, only to be briefly disappointed that due to military curfews, he does not get to see Füsun as much as he would like. Füsun’s used cigarettes, old hair barrettes, single earrings, and the family’s many household items become part of a long storyline Kemal uses to chronicle to viewers his fantasies of owning her.  

Kemal touches, hides, and often nostalgically embraces these objects, exposing a fetishistic craving that compels him to be seduced by objects Füsun once held. William Pietz describes the fetishistic as one that is “personalized” and elicits an intimate reaction from the subject:

This reified, territorialized historical object is also “personalized” in the sense that beyond its status as a collective social object it evokes an intensely personal response from individuals. This intense relation to the individual’s experience of his or her own living self through an impassioned response.

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to the fetish object is always incommensurable with (whether in a way that reinforces or undercuts) the social value codes within which the fetish holds the status of a material signifier.390

In effect, the object of the fetish becomes a space of intimate value; a very personalized relationship forms between the individual and the object that has transcended beyond its consumerist value. Material things form lives of their own by Kemal because of his desire to replace his longing for Füsun, the female subject that he cannot possess. As a result, material objects take on a fetishistic nature as they become detached from their nature as consumerist things and rather transform into transcendental signifiers that remind Kemal of a woman, he is unable to own. It is Kemal’s agony and affliction with loss that leads him to have a completely different perception of objects than he did in the beginning of the novel. The reader need only remember the early days when objects to Kemal were only consumeristic phenomena, not things with souls and powers of manipulation. This is evident in the novel’s first scene when Kemal plans to buy Sibel a brand name bag, not realizing it to be a fake.391 At this time in his life, Kemal is of yet unable to grasp the symbolism and nostalgia that this bag would have for him when he later falls in love with, and after several years of struggling for her love, ultimately loses Füsun. While the bag indeed ends up being an imitation of the real, it opens the door to Kemal’s puzzling feelings towards commodities and foreshadows his later complete dependence on the world of things as a means to access the world of Füsun. Following his initial interactions with Füsun, who worked at the time at the Şanzelize boutique, where Kemal had originally purchased the handbag from, Kemal realizes the foreshadowing the handbag had on his fate and failed future with Füsun. Many years later, when Kemal decides to create a museum to display these objects, he finally comes to realize the feelings and memories that these things, such as the bag held all along. As a result, objects are no longer lifeless and discardable, but rather alive and intimately valuable. The soul that Kemal posits in objects such as the Jenny Colon bag come to control his instincts and lose their innocence, such as when he returns to the boutique where Füsun worked and ask the proprietress if he may keep the shop sign for later display in his museum:

The fact that she gave me the shop sign that had once hung on the door as well as any other object connected to Füsun without once questioning the reasons for my excessive interest in the since-

391 Pamuk, Museum of Innocence, 5.
shuttered establishment led me to understand that some of the odder details of our story were known to her, and indeed had had a much wider circulation than I had assumed.392

At the point that Kemal becomes a collector, objects such as the Jenny Colon bag, the shop sign, and the earrings that he tries to give Füsun to replace the ones of hers that he lost, are no longer thought of as replaceable commodities. Kemal really does not find a sense of contentment with his losses in life until he holds onto objects and connects them with his own life within the changing cityscape of Istanbul. The objects are keepsakes of his passion and the chaos that have overturned his sanity. Kemal feels obliged to search for a consoling hope through material objects, hinting that there is more to the protagonist’s compulsive urges that point to the symbolism of objects rather than their physical characteristics and practical use value.

Unlike Kemal, Füsun remains a static and unchanging character through to the end of the novel, predominately because her identity is filtered through the focalization of Kemal. However, Füsun’s inability to achieve her dreams has little to do with her choices in life but is rather due to the suffocating oppression she suffers due to male authority, and the obsession that is exhibited to keep Füsun from fulfilling her dreams. She is the repressed female whose beauty is a threat and must be protected by the power of the male. Füsun’s unwillingness to acquiesce to the normalization of patriarchy in Turkish society turns into an act of revenge and a fearless attempt to determine her own destiny. She regains her power and finally rejects male objectification through an ultimate, yet extreme suicidal act. During her last moments alive, Füsun confronts Kemal’s refusal throughout the years to allow her to make her own choices, which Kemal appears unable to take seriously, nor pay much mind to, ‘‘Because of you, I haven’t had the chance to live my own life, Kemal,’ she said. ‘I wanted to become an actress.’”393 Füsun’s decision to resist male autocracy through suicide bares the tense reality of Kemal’s inability to control reality. He is increasingly gripped by the phantasmagoric qualities of objects, and remains blind to Füsun’s desire to be free, demonstrating a blatant lack of understanding. Although rather extreme and ending in tragedy, Füsun’s final decision to end her life through suicide allows her to finally find her voice in the text because until this point, her identity is filtered through Kemal’s obsessive gaze of her. Füsun’s active assertion of her fate is an

illustration of Pamuk’s use narrative technique to transform the world of the novel into one that is complicated, where the exploitation of the woman can be overcome, and the power of the male can be undermined.

When Füsun commits suicide by aggressively driving a car straight into a tree, Kemal’s sadness is too strong and he holds ever more tightly onto his objects. He continues to hoard things, and visits museums all over Europe and the Western world, including Paris, Hamburg, Milan, Lisbon, Rio de Janeiro, amongst others. Kemal seeks out smaller, lesser-known museums that have deeply intimate and personal resonance. Inside these sentimental museums, he studies objects and the ways in which space speaks to their ability to soothe his melancholy. Like the sentimental museums that Kemal visits during this period of awakening following Füsun’s death, he comes to realize that the spaces where these items are housed, are rather small and secluded spaces. In these house-like museums, collectors may communicate their memories and their sequential pain with the world, and in doing so, preserve what is already gone. After visiting these museums, Kemal realizes he can tell his story and share his pain with the rest of Istanbul and even the world. Kemal’s collection becomes a living soul of Füsun that leads him to care and consider its needs in a way he was unable to do for Füsun:

At the pristine and perfectly maintained Rockox House in Antwerp, I had occasion to remember that in small museum houses the past is preserved within objects similar souls are kept in earthen bodies, and in that awareness I found a consoling beauty that bound me to life. But still I wonder if I could ever have learned to appreciate my own collection in the Merhamet Apartments, let alone nurtured any home of showing it proudly to others, had I not first gone to Vienna to see the Sigmund Freud Museum, crammed with the statues and furniture of the famous psychoanalyst.

Despite the museum objects existing in imaginary, sensory experiences, that does not cancel the truth that they make up the overarching situations of the storyline. During the process of transforming the text into visual and the visual into text, both worlds are blended. They go on to present a double staging of the approach that Pamuk takes to narrating personal and national identity. Following Füsun’s ultimate liberation from Kemal’s hopeful control, the protagonist turns his accumulation of ‘Füsun objects’ into a museum. At this point in the story, the reader notes the sharp transition from private obsession into public art performance. It is through the

394 Pamuk, Museum of Innocence, 488
395 Pamuk, Museum of Innocence, 495.
396 Pamuk, Museum of Innocence, 500.
display of his archive of Füsun that Kemal narrates not only his obsession with her, but also Turkey’s socio-cultural and political climate. The objects of the museum are not only about a failed love, but rather an era of Turkish society at the time of rising modernization, interest in Western habits, solidifying gender roles, and memories of political violence.

For years prior to writing *The Museum of Innocence*, Pamuk collected objects he found in antique and second-hand shops that would inspire the novel’s conflicts. The symbolic reconstruction of these objects for Pamuk and his narrator is carefully mended and restored, enabling a recontextualization of the purchased objects from their original environment. The more Pamuk collected, the more the story developed in his mind, and it was only at these points that he was able to take the romance unraveling in his mind to the papers that would later come together to constitute the novel and later the structure of the museum in Istanbul:

> And as the city grew wealthier and more modern between 1950 and 1980, the things left behind from its Ottoman past and its non-Muslim inhabitants – printed matter, almost unlimited quantities of photographic equipment, and vast amounts of papers, furniture, books, old money, and other assorted knickknacks that filled the used bookshops, antique shops, and flea markets across the city – were incinerated, pulped, or otherwise destroyed. The only survivors of this massacre were those lucky objects that were useful or pretty enough to find a place in the daily lives of Istanbul’s fluid, constantly evolving population – ashtrays, jugs, nutcrackers, coffee grinders, and carousel clocks, for example.397

In collecting objects thrown away from an older Istanbul, Pamuk clings to the traditional, Ottoman past that the process of modernization had been quickly eliminating. As Tekgül indicates, the objects Pamuk collects for his novel, and later for his museum have been “doubly re-contextualized” because they not only represent the objects that remind Kemal of Füsun, but also represent Pamuk’s collecting habits of objects from flea markets and junk shops.398 Tracy Ireland understands Pamuk’s museum as an effort to reclaim Turkish heritage, “by creating new kinds of beauty around the quotidian fabric of ordinary human lives; thus his museum is his utopia.”399 In referring to the museum as Kemal’s utopia, there is the sense that within Kemal’s adopted universe of objects, there exists a delusional, one-sided image of the ways in which he has fantasized about Füsun upon gaining power over her; a fantasy that remains a fantasy within

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the escapist world of his museum. In one of his Norton lectures at Harvard, “Museum and Novels,” Pamuk discloses to the reader how his obsession with collecting fostered the literary production of *The Museum of Innocence*:

> Intending to use them in my novel, I was imagining situations, moments, and scenes suited to these objects, many of which (such as a quince grater) I had bought on impulse. Once, when browsing in a secondhand shop, I found a dress in a bright fabric with orange roses and green leaves on it, and I decided it was just right for Füsun, the heroine of my novel. With the dress laid out before me, I proceeded to write the details of a scene in which Füsun is learning to drive while wearing that very dress. On another occasion, in an antiquarian bookshop in Istanbul, I spotted a black-and-white photo from the 1930s. I imagined it showed a scene from the early life of one of my characters, and I decided to channel my story through the objects it depicted, even to insert descriptions of the photo itself.\(^{400}\)

Pamuk expresses the strong impacts that the museums’ aesthetics have had on his writing, drawing similarities through the process of reimagining certain life experiences. This passage furthermore establishes the close and intimate relationship that Pamuk paradoxically feels with the events that he describes in the novel. The collection does not specifically harken to an authentic Istanbul past that would render identity either ‘this’ or ‘that’, but rather speaks to several habits and ideals shared by much of the Turkish public, therefore adopting a version of Turkish identity through the collecting of everyday life experienced by everyday Turkish individuals. It alludes to the everydayness of its reality; forgettable habits that are done not out of necessity, but rather out of habit such as chain smoking, the manufacturing of imitation designer accessories, and the introduction of Western consumerism to the Istanbullites.

The three-story home of Füsun and her family becomes the site of this museum that reinforces this shift from private to public as well as a recontextualization of everyday objects from household items to cultural artefacts. The site of the museum is tucked into the neighborhood of Çukurcuma, not far from Taksim, the cultural and tourist center of the city. Pamuk expresses a deep attachment to the streets surrounding Çukurcuma. He describes his intention to immerse himself in the daily life of the neighborhood,

> […] I explored streets I’d never seen before. Breathing in the smell of sesame bread and pastry wafting out of bakeries, buying the newspaper at the corner shop as it opened in the morning, purchasing a piece of fruit from the grocer for the working day, and watching schoolchildren running about – all these things made me happy.\(^{401}\)

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\(^{400}\) Pamuk, *Naïve and Sentimental Novelist*, 121-122.

These simple things deeply attach Pamuk to the neighborhood in which his novel is set. The observations of the area’s aura evoke Pamuk’s emotional responses, leading him to recontextualize this urban space, choosing it as the site where Kemal would establish his museum in the memory of Füsun by turning her family’s home into a museum to archive his love for her. The home is a space, for Pamuk, that harkens to the reserved qualities of museums in that interiors and the objects which fill areas of living are indeed museums of one’s private life. Homes bare the traces of their inhabitants. Souls occupy homes just as much as objects and carry their own identity. Pamuk claims: “The future of museums is inside our own houses.”402 The home as museum and the museum as home is a pluralistic avenue from which to bring together objects in private and public spaces that appeal to everyday sensory experiences. Kemal comes to the epiphany that his identity and the way he can preserve his memories of Füsun is by revisiting the unfortunate, impoverished districts of Istanbul, “with their empty lots, their muddy cobblestones streets, their cars, rubbish bins, and side walks, and the children playing with a half-inflated football under the streetlamps.”403 In portraying these gloomy, unridden details of Istanbul, very far removed from his memories living in Nişantaşı, Kemal appears deeply predisposed to Istanbul and sentimental about its many contrasting appearances.

Each installation of the house-museum is aesthetically designed to narrate Kemal’s failed desire of possessing Füsun. In the museum, Pamuk’s use of iconography creates a mise en scene within the museum’s interior “which would enable the visitor to visualize the way artifacts worked and were used in their original environment […]”.404 In each wooden cabinet are found, stolen, and recovered objects that attach Kemal to the past, as well as to Turkey’s socio-cultural memory. The functional qualities of the objects are foregone for the sake of narrative structure. Pamuk often pauses the narrative and adopts aesthetic language to describe a certain installation within the museum, such as the postcard of the Hilton, as was earlier described. Kemal’s perceptions of objects as interchangeable with Füsun emerges as a prevalent trope in the novel. Each scene in the museum is reminiscent for Kemal of his strong attachment for Füsun. However, it is not so clear whether what he felt for her was love, or obsession:

402 Pamuk, Innocence of Objects, 57.
403 Pamuk, Museum of Innocence, 212.
This depiction of the internal organs of the human body is taken from an advertisement for Paradison, a painkiller on display in the window of every pharmacy in Istanbul at the time, and I use it here to illustrate to the museum visitor where the agony of love first appeared, where it became most pronounced, and how far it spread. Let me explain to readers without access to our museum that the deepest pain was initially felt in the upper left-hand quadrant of my stomach. As the pain increased, it would, as the overlay indicates, radiate to the cavity between my lungs and my stomach.  

The museum’s objects are fluidly described, similar to how one would speak of a painting – intricately, intimately, indefatigably. The installations are afforded with a certain significance and are noticed in a way that one stops to wonder how they did not think such things in such a way before. Numerous layers of Turkey’s history are narrated through the coming across of palpable remainders of a culture that has not yet been influenced by mass industrialization streaming in from the West. Personal and national memories are filtered through interactions with them, demonstrating the dynamic and transcendental strokes embedded within them. When relating his novel and resulting museum, Pamuk reflects the similarities with both institutions as spaces from which to aesthetically archive everyday life:

> Both are products of my imagination, dreamed up word by word, object by object, and picture by picture over a long period of time. This is perhaps also why the novel and the museum each tell a story. The objects exhibited in the museum are described in the novel. Still words are one thing, objects another. The images that words generated in our minds are one thing; the memory of an old object used once upon a time is another. But imagination and memory have a strong affinity, and this is the basis of the affinity between the novel and the museum.”

Kemal is capable of rearranging and rendering his fantasies of Füsun as factual as history itself. The style of curation illustrates the strength and masculinity of his gaze in recreating the life and romance he had fantasized as one day living with Füsun. Each object, no matter how trivial, connects with the storyline and takes up a particular scene of Kemal’s observations of Füsun and her contact with that object. Throughout his museum, Kemal objectifies Füsun and becomes enveloped in the mysterious territory of possession of, yet losing control over, and becoming possessed by the domain of objects. The textual descriptions that appear alongside the installations in the museum do not speak to the objects themselves, but rather the emotions and memories evoked by the object’s presence. Within vintage-like wooden cabinets, the curator of the Museum of Innocence creates a three-dimensional experience, displaying bric-a-brac such as rakı glasses, fragile teacups, half empty cups of Turkish coffee, and portions leftover of börek

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pastry, which point to the inability of traditional Turkish culture to be remitted from the introduction of Western habits that appear to deluge much of the novel. All the objects within the museum can be thought of as having their own egos with histories that appear to forsake their commodity value and instead gain a value dependent upon temporality and spatiality. The objects themselves did not at first have any real meaning to Pamuk, as they were just discarded items belonging to displaced families from the 1970s and 1980s, but the narrative Pamuk constructs because of these objects, leads to their multiplying meaning.

“Let everyone know, I lived a very happy life.” These are the final words Kemal passes onto the museum’s architect, Orhan, who would be responsible for the designing of the museum. Kemal, despite the memories and internal demons that haunt him throughout his life, nonetheless latches onto his fantasies and persists in his longing for Füsun, even if it is a spiritual kind of desire. The insistence upon Füsun as an object perceived by Kemal is facilitated by his fetishistic views that by surrounding himself with belongings, the female will become submissive and relent to being possessed by the male of power. *The Museum of Innocence* metonymizes a complex reality that enhances sensory experiences of objects to unravel heavily guarded historical and political atmospheres. Despite the museum of the novel and the museum existing in two opposite realms, their separation blurs as they become increasingly dependent upon one another. This close linking between novel and museum is important because of the ability of the museum space to visualize and materialize a fictional reality in the same way that a novel does through descriptions that appeal to perceptions, being further drawn upon by social reality. The blending of the real and the fictional is crystalized throughout the presence of the museum in the novel and the museum, with reality and imagination existing in both universes. The fictional love of *The Museum of Innocence* is imbued with strokes of truth, as Pamuk archives very real observations of Turkish reality, including moments of male authority, Western consumerist culture, and political turmoil as the country suffers from military coups and nationalist interests. From the façade of Kemal’s and Füsun’s troubling relationship, Pamuk layers in the narrative Turkey’s collective history and questions numerous inconsistencies of Turkish identity that contributes to the project of creating a Museum of Turkishness.

4.4 The Collector as Possessor: The Case of Madam Auntie

In *The Flea Palace*, similar to in *The Museum of Innocence*, there is an attachment between objects and owners that takes the form of toxic possession. This irony leads the reader to wonder, who is the possessor and who is being possessed? In this chapter I will not so much analyze the notion of the male gaze and the objectification of the female as was done in the previous chapter, but rather focus on how one character’s accumulation of consumerist objects leads her to become possessed by them, and in effect results in the disintegration of her identity. The overarching events that take place in *The Flea Palace* almost entirely occur in an apartment building dating back to the 1960s called Bonbon Palace, in the center of Istanbul. Bonbon Palace was originally purchased in the 1920s by a Russian man named Pavel Pavlovich Antipov, for his wife Agripina, who enjoyed the delicacies of various flavored bonbons: strawberry; cinnamon; mint; caramel; vanilla. The first several pages of the novel are infused with the history of Pavel and his wife, taking the form of flashbacks. After the death of Pavel and Agripina, who had lived in flat #10, the novel returns to the ‘present day’: 2002. Pavel’s daughter, Valerie Germain, lives in France and is unwilling to come to Istanbul to clean up Bonbon Palace or look through her father’s old things, finding Bonbon Palace “colorless and soulless.” Instead, she rents out the flats, and allows her tenants to keep or throw away anything that old tenants may have left behind. Since the death of the original occupants, Bonbon Palace has grown increasingly unlivable: flea-ridden, old, unmanageable, and smelly.

Alev Adil describes Bonbon Palace as a “microcosm of contemporary Istanbul: a city of contrasts and contestations, where both continents and cultures meet. The old and the new; Orthodox Christianity, secularism and Islam; the rich and the poor; the East and West; the ancient and the postmodern – all co-exist in an urban kaleidoscope.” Shafak writes Bonbon Palace as a catalyst for the storyline’s central events because it is Bonbon Palace that frames

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characters’ lives and associations with Turkishness. In fiction, the home can be a locus and focus of conflict; a character with human-like qualities whose life is reflected in his dwelling:

Any novel may be thought of as an edifice: a structure either intimate or vast and alienating wherein characters must live and confront one another, carving out spaces for themselves within a cacophony of imagined lives. And so it hardly surprises to find human dwelling places as fictional settings that sell to become more than simple backdrops, and make and curtail memorable fictional characters.\(^{412}\)

The presence of the home as setting as well as character in *The Flea Palace* curates and frames the lives of various figures, but also demonstrates the estranging qualities that separate one tenant from another. Bonbon Palace becomes an allegory of Istanbul’s various cultural, ethnical, and religious fragments, yet also emphasizes the alienation that is notably expressed within the modernized city. The apartment complex is occupied by several peculiar and spontaneous characters, all who lead their own lives, and come from varying cultural and social backgrounds. The novel progresses slowly, switching between residents to narrate their daily lives, and the ongoings that occur within the building. Many of the occupants, similar to the original owners of the building, are geographical, social, or cultural exiles. They all, however, find a certain level of solitude and escape by living in Bonbon Palace; a kind of escapism that they have not been able to locate outside. There are a pair of hairstylists who live on the ground floor, a depressed stoner who lives in the second flat, and a woman who is obsessed with hygiene who lives in flat #9 with her daughter, Su. In flat #7, lives a character dubbed “Me”, who is the novel’s overarching narrator, a divorced university professor who only recently moved into Bonbon Palace.

The home is as much a setting as it is a theme in *The Flea Palace*, due to the many histories and stories that unravel about the building’s residents. Imbued with an array of meanings, Ann Valery understands the home “as a space of belonging and alienation, intimacy and violence, desire and fear, the home is invested with meanings, emotions, experiences and relationships that lie at the heart of human life.”\(^{413}\) Shafak traces the world of Bonbon Palace through the associations that occur between its occupants. She draws parallels between her observations of human behavior in Turkish everyday life and the external universe of things to coalesce.


memories and happenings, as well as objects and nature. A disorienting novelistic allegory, Bonbon Palace becomes a symbolic space due to its architectural past, having been built during the Ottoman Empire. It witnessed generations of minority settlers and young Turkish couples coming to Istanbul from Anatolian villages, as well as from abroad. It is now neglected, rundown and occupied by a series of characters who represent Turkishness’s diverse intricacies. Bonbon Palace’s history has long been forgotten and many do not bother to uncover the past lives that once occupied the area:

In no more than fifteen years, the appearance of the vicinity was entirely transformed. Not a single person remembered that there had once been, and still were, hundreds of graves under these grandiose offices, stylish stores and fancy apartments shining along the avenue with the perfection of porcelain teeth.⁴¹⁴

Shafak appears preoccupied with tracing elements of dislocation and displacement, with Bonbon Palace being a visual representation of the factors of disillusionment that became one of the most prevalent consequences of rapid modernization. Bonbon Palace is not described for the purposes of setting up the environment within which the novel is unriddled. The inhabitants to move into the area arrived with modern hopes and dreams, expecting the Islamic and Ottoman past to be completely torn down and eradicated, much like the historical buildings that would be destroyed and the concrete and banal apartment complexes that would take its place. Vast and alienating, or tight and intimate, the home is a thriving character in the premise of daily life. Characters’ lack of interaction between one another creates a mood of physical intimacy yet psychological alienation, that is fragmented through multiple perspectives and histories told through the inhabitants of the home, embodying a critique of society – modernity and Kemalism. The novel parodies the past through nostalgic scenes of what once was:

Occasionally, some people were heard to mutter softly as if to themselves, ‘Once upon a time there were graves all over this place… ‘Yet these had a somewhat surreal sound to them though the time referred to dated no further than fifteen or twenty years ago. It was reminiscent of saying ‘Once upon a time, girls more beautiful than fairies took baths of light in the thousand room crystal palace of the sultan of the moon.’⁴¹⁵

The reminders of the past in the text creates an eerie, surrealistic tone that draws the reader to Bonbon Palace not as a setting, but rather as an embodiment of Turkish cultural memory. By focusing on the close quarters in which ordinary people go about their daily lives; where they cry and laugh; fight and make up; work and rest; zeroing in on private moments that separate them

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⁴¹⁴ Shafak, *Flea Palace*, 35.
from the world beyond their bedroom windows, Shafak draws attention to the incongruous episodes that take place in the home. Residents are made to confront one another, and their lives quickly become embedded with others, being separated by thin walls and creaky staircases. Communication between one another is fleeting, brief, and contingent.

A centering theme that appears in The Flea Palace is one of the residents’ absolute resistances against the making of a modern, Westernized Istanbul. Of all the residents whose lives are enhanced and narrated, Madam Auntie is perhaps the most allegorical due to her compulsion to accumulate the belongings thrown away by other residents. Madam Auntie, who lives in flat number ten, is representative of a generation of Turkish history that has been severed by the introduction of Kemalism. She is a figure who combats society and is against the undoing of the Ottoman past. Living now in Pavel’s and Agripina’s old flat, she cannot bring herself to discard of their old belongs, and so she collects them. This decision marks the beginning of her frantic collecting habit. However, this event occurs at a time in her life when she is already mourning the death of her husband and is therefore especially emotionally vulnerable. As the eldest resident living in Bonbon Palace, Madam Auntie is often portrayed in the novel as the only authentic Istanbullite living in the apartment building. The narrator describes her in relation to her pre-Republic identity, therefore acknowledging the existence of world, society, and culture that was distinct from the new Kemalist structure that has been recently put into place:

Besides, having been here for so many years she had much older roots than anyone else, she was the only one among them who was born and raised in Istanbul. While most of the neighbors were immigrants, her entire life had been spent in this neighbourhood. Unlike the others, she had not popped up out of nowhere, turning her back to a future that never came and a past that was never left behind. Here she was, neither dragged along by others nor having dragged others behind her. Her name was “Auntie” because her very being was a residue of a past none of them had lived.⁴¹⁶

Madam Auntie therefore embodies a human relic, or artifact, of the Ottoman Empire, or rather the distant past, in having lived a history that none of the other residents witnessed and therefore could not or choose not to relate to. Unlike the other residents who do not appear to be closely connected or concerned with the Ottoman past, Madam Auntie seeks solace from the outside world, in a world of her own making; a world that is built through a foundation of miscellaneous things that allow her the freedom to control the world around her. Madam Auntie’s fear of losing

⁴¹⁶ Shafak, The Flea Palace, 90.
her relations with the identity she has been connected to, or the person she was born as and became as someone living under Ottoman society, is suggestive of a burrowing conscious that remains afraid or suspicious of the future. Madam Auntie demonstrates an eager longing to both manipulate and secure history and recreate an environment of unchanging permanence. She can be thought of as suffering from what Jacques Derrida has referred to as “archive fever,” that speaks to the passions which elicit compulsions:

It is never to rest, interminable, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive, even if there’s too much of it, right where something in it archives itself. It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement.417

Madam Auntie appears to “run after the archive” in her desperation to keep mementos of the world and create her own archive that may attach her to the missing pieces of her prior Ottoman identity. She believes that the more she collects, the more likely she is to preserve cultural memories in a way that the Ottoman memory could not be preserved. Madam Auntie engages in the strange activity of collecting thrown out items because she believes that in keeping these things, she is freezing over the past and crystallizing her pre-Republic memories. In all three rooms of her apartment, Madam Auntie stores items that other residents discarded, and that she can find scattered throughout Istanbul. As a result, rodents and atrocious smells start to infest Bonbon Palace, quickly transforming it into a rotting and foul place for anyone to live. Madam Auntie’s manic collecting began, like most other collectors, with a largely overwhelming trauma. For many, this has to do with the sudden loss of a person, object, or era; a loss that is so strong and a bond that is so abruptly severed that the only way that the grieving individual can survive is by holding onto relics, no matter how closely they resemble filth:

When, after losing her husband in an accident twenty-five years ago, Madam Auntie had moved alone into Flat Number 10 of Bonbon Palace, she had encountered the objects belonging to the former residents: a hundred and eighty-one ownerless and out-of-date objects. Even though the letter from the buildings’ new owner in France had openly stated that she could dispense with these objects in any manner she chose, she hadn’t felt like throwing away even a single one of them. […] When she had been a young woman, her mother had thrown away her novels and diaries and years later, when she had suddenly lost her husband, her brother had dispersed all photographs she had of him to friends and relatives.418

Throwing away the objects owned by a deceased person, for Madam Auntie, is very similar to an attempt to disregard and erase any possible sign that they were real and existed. Discarding of photographs, diaries, and such mementos is not only a matter of being rid of clutter but also symbolizes a complete severing with the soul of that person, an idea that Madam Auntie’s brother seemed to have understood well. Madam Auntie exhibits a strong yearning to possess a period in history that is gone and feels the need to intrude upon objects discarded. Furthermore, Madam Auntie appears to be poisoned by the past in her effort to possess objects of the past. As a rundown apartment building that is crawling with rodents, fowl smells, and troubling identities, Madam Auntie finds peace and comfort in surrounding herself with garbage and closing out the rest of the world, for fear that they may do something very similar, and throw away her memories and sentiments. Madam Auntie’s peculiar habit seems almost involuntary, as though the garbage creates an even more excruciating burden that she is unable to rid herself of. As a result, she continues to collect, and in effect burrows deeper into the sorrows that such rubble and junk could be all that she has left of her identity:

Istanbul poured the pus oozing from her festering wounds into hills of garbage. That she could still persevere, she owed to the garbage mounting in piles upon piles even when buried deep in holes, emerging from its ashes even if burned shovel by shovel, never to wane even when carried far away. It was thanks to the glorious garbage that Istanbul could carry on.419

This passage contradicts any romanticization of Istanbul, and rather depicts the city as an eerie pile of negligence, not a romantic place of shifting identities and ideals. Madam Auntie’s relationship with the objects she piles in her apartment remains unchanged and does not evolve, the way Füsun’s oppression under Kemal becomes stronger and ultimately objectified through the replacing of Füsun as a person by objects that represent her. Instead, the objects continue to consume space. Madam Auntie persists in mentally categorizing them as guardians of her Ottoman-Islamic memories; keepers of her ability to choose for herself who she is and who she is not. Madam Auntie is part of a community of individuals who, unlike garbage collectors who collect to discard of items, collect to preserve items.420 This is a last desperate effort to withhold from the state modernization project, the authenticity that once characterized Turkish identity. Madam Auntie’s cryptic bond with thrown away objects that she undoubtedly will never use herself is not recounted to emphasize the objects themselves. It rather highlights the possession

that they grow to have on Madam Auntie as she increasingly separates herself from reality and delves further and more dangerously into her collection. These objects are not kept for the purposes of transferring them from the private to the public sphere, but is rather highly personal and manic for Madam Auntie:

Whenever a house turned into ashes in Istanbul, the city of fires, they carried away the wreckage. Just like from the garbage, from the ashes too, they collected items. The seekers would gather to sift throughout. Yet the garbage men collected to throw away. For the city to modernize the order of things had to be capsized. Once what was thrown away on all sides was gathered in one place by the seashore, now what was gathered on all sides was thrown away in one place by the Garbage Hills.421

Madam Auntie’s garbage sites demonstrate her ability to remake and enhance her personal world and surroundings through a prescribed importance of trash. This group of ‘seekers’ that visits the Garbage Hills are the dissidents, or the social outcasts of modern Turkish society. Madam Auntie’s apartment of garbage can be described as a blatant ensemble of social alienation, extreme self-destruction, and an inability to separate oneself from the objects that have come to be the possessors. Paul Martin has claimed that collecting is synonymous with a “masquerade,” during which the collector holds onto objects at increasingly overwhelming speed in order to cope with moments of anxiety and frustration.422 Madam Auntie partakes in this kind of frantic masquerade, almost at war against time in her quick and desperate attempts to get as many pieces of garbage as she can into her possession. She is a woman whose mind and body have become rundown and overshadowed by the losses in her life: her husband, the soul of her husband in the form of objects, and the pre-Republic Istanbul she was born into. Madam Auntie is therefore determined to render the past immortal, and never lose it again. This happens despite the self-destruction that ultimately becomes her fate.423 The relationship that Madam Auntie has with these objects closely aligns with Benjamin’s designs on the typical traits of the collector:

The relationship that the collector has with objects does not emphasize their functional, utilitarian value- that is, their usefulness – but studies and loves them as the scene, the state of their fate… Everything remembered and thought, everything conscious, becomes the pedestal, the frame, the base, the lock of his property. […] it may be surmised how the great physiognomists – and collectors the physiognomists of the world of objects – turn into interpreters of fate.424

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Madam Auntie finds hope when she ravages the other tenants’ garbage. Through her hoard of garbage and the formation of a collection that she curates, she can also possibly be understood as a hopeful individual in latching onto these objects that connect her to the past. Hoarding, for Madam Auntie, can by compared with the figure of the ragpicker that Benjamin describes in his *Arcades Project*. The ragpicker is an individual who “collects and catalogues everything that the great city has cast off, everything it has lost, and discarded, and broken.” In a sense, she can be read as not only a garbage collector in the literal meaning of the term, but rather a ragpicker who salvages and hoards the remnants of a forgotten history. However, in contrast to Kemal who recontextualizes his collection in radical and sentimental new ways, Madam Auntie does no such thing. She rather leaves every object or piece of trash as she finds it, but only changes its spatiality by storing the trash in her apartment. Madam Auntie’s garbage collection offers her a solace, or an escape from the tremendous losses of her life and could be seen as similar to monetary compensation for a damaged product. It is a secretive pursuit that does not move beyond the phase of collecting to displaying, as is the case with Kemal’s collection. The fervent characteristics inherent to Madam Auntie, along with Kemal’s compulsive collecting comes from somewhere, and that place exists in the form of nostalgia signaling to a lost time that cannot be recovered. Madam Auntie is distraught by her displacement in Turkish society that was brought upon by the modernization process. She reacts to it by aggregating everything that connects her with the Ottoman past. Her acts are psychologically dangerous and go so far as being the catalyst of her death. Madam Auntie’s suffering can be best cognitively understood according to Jennifer Holt’s meditation:

> What is dangerous about the figure of the collector is his obsession or refusal to let go of his treasures, his miserly, hoarding potential. In this potential lies an unconscious melancholic energy, and/or nostalgic longing for a lost past and for lost opportunity. The collector, in our everyday view of him, appears to have habits dangerously akin to the repetition compulsion of the traumatized subject. He acquires and accumulates objects perhaps out of a fascination that does not provide insight or understanding either into his own compulsion or into the histories of the objects secured.426

The collection for Madam Auntie functions as a source of oppression in which possessive forces of the Turkification process are represented. Her relationship with her things is disparate and rather ruptured between her desire to preserve and her actions in removing items from their

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context of origin, therefore claiming them different meanings in her curatorial process. Madam Auntie’s collection does not conceal political meanings, nor do they disclose layers of sentimental interests. All the components of her collection are instead mass-produced commodities that contain capitalistic anonymity. There is an abundant absence of genuine, cultural identity. However, for Madam Auntie, they possess a claim to an authentic version of Turkishness. The objects allude to harmless and inconsequential human activities, such as eating ice cream, gifting trinkets, and celebrating holidays with balloons. The comfort they offer Madam Auntie leads her to continue to secure these remnants of quotidian lives in her apartment, unaware of the consequences they will have over her connections with reality. Throughout the novel, the residents of Bonbon Palace are all discouraged by a potent stench that they cannot seem to pinpoint. It is not until Madam Auntie befriends one of the other residents’ daughter, Su, that it becomes increasingly clear the crisis that she suffers in her hoarding habits. When, one day, Su decides to unexpectedly visit Madam Auntie, she is astounded by the overwhelming amount of stuff that takes up every corner of the cramped flat:

There were ballpoint pens everywhere… and burnt-out bulbs, used up batteries, torn tulles, burst balloons, expired medicine, used clothing, buttons with no two looking alike, stickers that had lost their adhesive, empty cartridges, lighters without gas, glasses with broken lenses, jar-lids of all sizes, money no longer in circulation, torn pieces of cloth, cracked trinkets, photographs turned yellow, pictures with no frames left, torn tassels, tattered wigs, keys that had lost their key chains, mugs with broken handles, baby bottles without the nipples, threadbare lampshades, worn out books, boxes of all sizes (some plastic, others wood), lustreless mother-of-pearl, cardboard, empty mild bottled, candied apple sticks, ice-cream sticks, food bowls, dolls with missing heads or limbs, umbrellas with wires sticking out, strainers turned black, doorbells that even themselves could not recall which doors they used to make ring, pantyhose with runs stopped by nail polish, wrapping paper, door knobs, broken household items, filled out notebooks, journals turned yellow, empty perfume bottles, single odd shoes, shattered remote-controls, rusty metals, stale candy, rings with missing stones, macrame flower-holders, shoe liners, rubber bands, bird cages, typewriters with missing letters, mildewed tea in tin boxes, tobacco parcels, bracelets of all colors, barrettes each more beautiful than the other, binocular lenses…

Su describes Madam Auntie’s apartment as the “Castle of Garbage,” clearly unable to identify with Madam Auntie’s desperate desire to archive the past, instead being clearly disgusted by the putrid smell and rodents luring within the garbage piles. There is an enigmatic void in cultural identity present in these objects, none of which points to spatiality nor temporality. These things contain complete anonymity in terms of time and place; they are mass-produced industrial products that do not immediately astound or even have relevance to the ontologies of

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427 Shafak, Flea Palace, 383.  
428 Shafak, Flea Palace, 385.
Turkishness. A long enumeration of household items and other miscellaneous junk, the function of these objects is of no matter. They have little to no relation to one another but appear to attain symbolic value for Madam Auntie. They develop a fabled-seeming position as they are actively “seeked” by Madam Auntie in Istanbul’s rubbish piles, brought home to Bonbon Palace, and stored in the private space. Madam Auntie’s inability to preserve the lasting effects of her collection is embodied through the grotesque imagery of flies, cockroaches, and other rodents that occupy the space because of the overly indulgent buildup of garbage. However, the narrator emphasizes the tendency of Istanbullites as citizens who are in the habit of constantly throwing things away:

> From the moment they wake up till they go to bed the denizens of Istanbul pass their days incessantly, unconsciously throwing things away. When calculated in terms of weeks, months, and years, a considerable garbage heap accumulates behind each and every person and just like flies and cockroaches and food and objects, humans too have an expiration date. The average life expectancy is sixty-five years for males and seventy years for females. Then the inevitable end comes and they too die. They rot and decompose, break apart and scatter, are no longer themselves and get muddled up with different things.429

The ambiguous encounters between Madam Auntie and Istanbul are facilitated through her need to keep everything that Istanbullites throw away every single day, for the purposes of preserving the pre-Republic past. For Madam Auntie, collecting amounts to a need to rescue her memories and her nation’s past from absolute oblivion and amnesia. Madam Auntie’s associations with other people becomes rare as her poisonous attachment to garbage takes on a more powerful role in which the objects’ importance to Madam Auntie eliminate her capability and willingness to find happiness. Here, it is common and perhaps inevitable that the collector forgets and falls into a state of oblivion of the functional practicality of the object they are collecting.

For Kemal, collecting is a creative task that leads to the building of a museum, yet also destructive in that it isolates him and inhibits him from forming any lasting human relationships. Collecting, for Madam Auntie however, can only be understood as destructive. She literally drowns in the scads of garbage she keeps in her apartment. Collecting is an overly determined human procedure in which the main ingredients involve desperation, obsession, and overwhelming defeat, typically without health benefits due to the distinct separation from reality that ultimately becomes their ruin. Both collectors, Kemal and Madam Auntie harbor perilous

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429 Shafak, Flea Palace, 402.
habits that become self-destructive. Their relationships with objects eclipse those that they had with the humans surrounding them. Kemal is closer to the objects that remind him of Füsun, than he ever was with Füsun herself. Madam Auntie feels more at home in Bonbon Palace with the garbage thrown away than she feels with the people who threw away the garbage. This leads to Madam Auntie’s ultimate collapse as all her connections with the past, through garbage, are taken away from her, leading to her refusal to modernize, which is manifested by her eventual death with the entrance of the exterminators who come to her home to annihilate the garbage she has kept secret for years:

> When the door was broken, men with masks fully clad in white dashed inside. They placed the stinking corpse on a stretcher and carried it away. The old widow’s corpse was so light, so petite…the residue of a body that had refused for days to eat-to-drink-to take its pills… Madam Auntie had not been half as resistant to thirst and hunger as cockroaches.430

Madam Auntie’s strong will to possess history and memories through the collecting process fails. Her adamant hoarding of objects spirals out of her control and overcomes her, leading to her destruction. Madam Auntie’s home exists out of the realm of reality; she socially alienates herself as much as possible from the lives of the other residents at Bonbon Palace. It is the antithesis of hygiene, progress, and the kind of orderly conduct that is expected within a new, modernized nation-state. The bonds Madam Auntie and Kemal hold with their collections are imbued with emotion and dissolve into a kind of mania that leads them to harbor delusions that their happiness is dependent upon their pathological hoarding practices. What ties them together as collectors can be summarized by Susan Sontag, in which she describes collecting as an act of salvation, “to collect is to rescue things, valuable things, from neglect, from oblivion.”431 The concept of accumulating things is not as intimate nor as passionately driven as it was with Kemal in The Museum of Innocence. Instead, Madam Auntie’s longing for the past is so strong that it takes a haunting turn to the point that she becomes a victim of the garbage that she herself collects. Madam Auntie’s death within her ‘Garbage Castle’ contributes to the overall repertoire of possession, with the collector ultimately becoming the subject of his or her collection, thereby possessed by it.

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The Flea Palace ends with a rather unexpected disclosing statement offered by the narrator. He confesses that the entire story that the reader has just read is in fact a figment of his imagination. It has been one of the ways he has occupied himself while in prison. The melancholy Kemal and Madam Auntie exhibit represents mourning and regression. The domination of objects is not one to be proud of, but rather illustrates a loss of awareness with their environs. The collector characters in the novels become separated from reality, and they find themselves entrapped within the powerful world of objects. These characters’ apparent decay of psychoanalytic perspective is repressed within circumstances that they refuse to accept, and therefore allow objects to control their minds. Their devastating neurosis is suggested by an increasingly phobic attachment to objects, preferring to touch the untouchable than reach ground within the real. The centrality of collections with the plot and lives of Pamuk’s and Shafak’s characters appears to reiterate Benjamin’s observation about the possessor/possession quality that is innate to the collector/collection relationship. The Flea Palace and The Museum of Innocence are concerned with the possessive authority of collections within the socio-political context surrounding Turkishness. However, both novels carefully and poetically communicate a romantic portrayal of individual experiences with objects and their symbolic importance for identity representation. To follow I will reinterpret the notion of museum metaphorically in my close reading of the protagonist, Peri in Three Daughters of Eve.

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432 Shafak, Flea Palace, 441.
4.5 The Curator of Everyday Experience: Three Daughters of Eve and the Bourgeois Dinner Party

In *Three Daughters of Eve*, the protagonist’s preservation of certain objects enables her to collect important moments of her adolescence and adulthood in the storage of her memory, and, in effect, assert a certain level of power and control over the ephemerality of time and human sentiments.\(^{433}\) This section explores the following research question through close reading of the selected alongside appropriate theoretical ideas: How is the protagonist perceived as a self-destructive figure, at odds with her identity, striving to collect the things of a past when identity was not as unattainable as she feels it to be now? The concept of gender in this section of the chapter is addressed through the female characters’ experiences with categories including religion as well as fashion. The overlapping association of cultural elements in Istanbul society is revealing in the novel as it addresses the underlying discourse relating to feminist criticism and the significance of gender in private and public space. In traversing throughout the narrative structure of the novel, I seek to enhance the aesthetic tensions that arise due to objects that overwhelm predicaments of identity that the protagonist confronts between her homeland and abroad. Taking place over one evening at a dinner party that is interrupted by a terrorist attack in 2016, Nazperi (Peri) Nalbantoğlu is an upper-middle class housewife who, following a traumatic event, recalls memories of her youth that are provoked through the presence of objects. These remembrance artifacts overstep their boundaries and provide flashbacks into Peri’s life as a woman in a modernizing Turkish society who is straddled between Islam and Secularism; East and West values. Even though the plot structure tells a rather boring story of a wealthy woman and her acquaintances’ conversations at a dinner party with some of Istanbul’s social elite as well as its expats, what makes the text particularly meaningful is the consciousness of the protagonist. Three objects: a handbag, a polaroid, and a God-journal become the actors of the complex plot in *Three Daughters of Eve*. Peri’s collection is made up of a narrative that is restrained by her memories and compelled by objects that signal her to various moments of her past. A Turkish woman at odds with her Turkishness within a broken socio-political climate, Peri holds onto objects and despite storing them away for years at a time, ultimately reconnects with them, and the objects ultimately grow to have a possessive hold over her.

The first pages of the novel illustrate Peri as an upper-class Turkish woman who is on her way to a fancy evening. She dreads the prospect of having to interact with several personalities from moderate Islamists to hard-lined secularists. Similar to in *The Museum of Innocence*, handbags become symbolic due to their ability to represent themselves as one thing, in order to veil their actuality, speaking to various layers of inauthenticity. In thinking about the chaos and madness that she relates to these upper-middle class dinners, Peri highlights the inevitable pride

Istanbullite women show in their handbags:

Women paraded their handbags like trophies won in faraway battles. Who knew which ones were original, which ones fake. Istanbul’s middle-to-upper-class ladies, not wanting to be seen purchasing counterfeit goods, instead of visiting dubious stores in and around the Grand Bazaar invited shipowners to their houses. Vans full of Chanel, Louis Vuitton and Bottega Veneta, their windows blackened, their number plates obscured by mud (though the rest of the vehicles were utterly spotless), zipped back and forth between the affluent quarters, and were admitted into the private garages of villas through back gates, as in a film noir or spy movie. Payments were made in cash, no receipts issued, no further questions asked. At the next social gathering, the same ladies would furtively inspect one another’s handbags not only to identify the luxury brand, but also to judge the authenticity – or the quality of the knockoff. It was a lot of effort. Optical effort.⁴³⁴

The Turkish bourgeoisie is studied in this passage and appears encouraged to be an imitation of the West, which is confirmed by the dependence on handbags to assert status. For these women, it is not about collecting these objects for the sake of possession but rather displaying them for the sake of belonging to a world of Western ideals and habits. It is such kinds of women that Peri expects to see at this dinner party that further sends her into a deep state of agitation and frustration with the unescapable reality that she must fulfill these social responsibilities. The museum collection stored in Peri’s memories, initiated by the symbolism held by handbags, conceptualizes Turkey’s complicated history, and displays the protagonist’s resistance against falsified versions of self. In describing the socio-cultural symbolism of these assumedly fake handbags, Peri describes an alternating dimension of collecting that is subjected to the principle of hoarding for the purposes of fulfilling desire. Handbags carry an ambivalent position relative to the middle-upper class, modern woman. They at once support the concept of aggregating objects for the purposes of identity confirmation as well as act as a moral aid for desperate consumption that is dependent upon seeking societal approval. The importance of woman’s attire within the Turkish middle-upper class illuminates itself as a representation of wealth and social status, a concept that is largely reminiscent of Volume 2 of de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*:

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Dressing has a twofold significance: it is meant to show the woman’s social standing (her standard of living, her wealth, the social class she belongs to), but at the same time it concretizes feminine narcissism; it is her uniform and her attire; the woman who suffers from not doing anything thinks she is expressing her being through dress.\textsuperscript{435}

Fashion is a medium of art that is employed to represent a woman’s place within society. The colors, style, brand, and accessories with which women represent themselves within urban space and to their social communities induces a sensibility of stylistic depth that is staged between looking and being looked at. It communicates her financial bearings, confidence in her body, and her ability to enhance the beauty of her sex. The feminization of mass commodities allows women to put on display alluring items of modernity that points to their privilege in space and allows for an illusion of proximity between commodity culture and gender. Using fashion and dress as a form of expressing these cultural components of a woman creates an observed space with both private and public. Additionally, the way in which a woman dresses allows her to become almost an exhibitionist subject within society that endows her with the role of being looked at. In her essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” Laura Mulvey explores the exhibitionist role of the female, acknowledging its roots in the imbalances that exist between men and women:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impacts so they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness.\textsuperscript{436}

It is through fashionable items such as designer handbags that the woman finds herself capable of asserting her status within her social class, therefore demonstrating the importance of fashion and femininity to identity for the woman. Appearance matters for the female figure as she proceeds to style her body and appearance in a manner that provokes the male gaze as she becomes the passive exhibition object that the active male inherits the pleasure to look at. Peri notes the importance of objects and their ability to transcend the body of the woman to museum object capable of being looked at as though she was curated and recontextualized into a museum. As the text progresses, object such as the handbag become significant as the protagonist realizes

\textsuperscript{435} De Beauvoir,\textit{ Second Sex}, 571.

the role they have in the construction of identity, as well as in the process of asserting one’s status within Istanbul’s emerging social classes.

The flashbacks that take place in the novel as Peri tries to regain her composure following a harsh and violent interaction with a beggar causes the protagonist to navigate between distinct areas of her memory and her relationship with her country such as East and West, Islam and secularism, wealth and poverty, and education or the lack thereof. On the way to the event, Peri’s handbag is smuggled by a street urchin, who reaches into her unlocked car, grabs it, and runs away. Surprising herself and her horrified daughter, Peri jumps out of the car and runs after the beggar all the way into an empty alley, “Her legs, almost independently, as if with a memory of their own, kept going faster and faster, remembering the time long ago at Oxford when she would jog three to four miles every day, rain or shine.”\(^{437}\) It would not have been worth the effort to chase the mugger just to retrieve an imitation designer handbag purchased in one of the European boutiques in Şişli, but a special polaroid was in that purse. This old snapshot, falling from Peri’s maybe fake, maybe authentic purse would be just one of the three artifacts that form the collection of everyday objects that fulfill Peri’s museum of identity. This photograph, upon watching it flutter slowly to the ground, brings Peri is brought back to her days at Oxford University, during a time where she was not only questioning her own existence, but also at odds with the existence of God, “There were four faces there: a man and three young women. A professor and his students. Wrapped in coats, hats, and scarves, they stood with their backs to the Bodleian Library in Oxford, huddled together for warmth or out of habit, forever trapped inside one of the coldest days of that winter.”\(^{438}\) Peri’s bitter and somber reactions to this polaroid, whose significance remains thus far ambiguous, is destructive and occurs by chancing fate. The randomness that underlines many individuals’ relationship and reactions to objects cannot be clearly explained nor answered for. Benjamin acknowledges this in his description of the destructive character that envelops many collectors:

> It could happen to someone looking back over his life that he realized that almost all the deeper obligations he had endured in its course originated in people on whose “destructive character” everyone was agreed. He would stumble on this fact one day, perhaps by chance, and the heavier the blows it deals him, the better are his chances of picturing the destructive character.\(^{439}\)


\(^{439}\) Benjamin, “The Destructive Character,” 301.
The destructive components of collecting for Peri are represented through her decision to put herself in danger by chasing the street urchin who stole her purse, and the polaroid that has been in her bag for years now, the only item she would desperately run after to save. Peri’s position relative to the objective world is dismantled because of the conflicts against her identity that shows her to be an insecure Turkish woman who is unable to plant roots, nor feel a sense of belonging to place. Her reality is enveloped by a world of objects that appears suffocated by religion, political conflict, and geographical suspension. This means that the novel is not limited to the protagonist’s occasioning to a dinner party; it also suggests a considerable depiction of the social, political, and cultural climate of the period. The morals and conduct of the upper-middle class in Turkey, along with the ironic sense of inauthenticity and hypocrisy appears unavoidable due to the romanticization of Western ideals.

The theme of collecting that is alluded to throughout the novel elucidates aspects of the protagonist’s childhood and how Turkishness has molded her perceptions on identity and the influence it has on her ability to form relationships in the outside world. In preserving this photograph Peri is very similar to a museum curator in her desperate desire to have a level of control and possession over her memories and objects of her memories. As a result, it can be claimed that Peri is indeed the curator of her memories, which become a metaphorical museum for Peri. The polaroid shows her, one of her controversial professors, and two of her friends at the time, Mona and Shirin during a seminar they are taking about God. The friendship that evolves between these three female Oxford students builds upon the framework of religion that is explored in the novel as each young woman has a very personal experience with Islam that connects her with her identity. The presence of this polaroid, which she has kept hidden deep in her purse for years, becomes the catalyst of a floodgate of memories and suppressed feelings. In the following passage, the reader notes the labyrinth of emotions, such as anxiety and guilt, which only appear to grow as Peri’s flashbacks become stronger:

> How bizarre it was that the past came flooding it at the very moment disorder breached the banks or the present. Random memories, repressed anxieties, untold secrets, and guilt, plenty of guilt. All her sense dimmed, the world became a blurry backdrop. Engulfed by a feeling of placidity, almost a kind of numbness, that separated her from everything else, including the pain from a place in her body she couldn’t locate, Peri remembered things from her life that she thought she had forever left behind.440

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440 Shafak, *Three Daughters of Eve*, 44.
Similar to Kemal’s chancing upon of the Jenny Colon bag, and the spiraling downwards, away from reality that would follow, Peri experiences a similar coincidence that highlights the importance of randomness for destiny. Peri’s relationship with objects is further cultivated through the memories and histories that she attaches to them. The reader in this scene is led to wonder, if Peri had not been mugged, if she had locked her car doors so the mugger could not have stolen her purse, would she ever had seen the polaroid again? Would the polaroid have been so important if it had not fallen out of her purse at the moment, she is supposed to be attending a highly Westernized dinner party? The old polaroid emerges in the novel as a significant source of pain and anxiety for Peri. This observed pain and anxiety create a labyrinth of conflicting emotions and ideas as Peri struggles thereafter to remain in the present and finds herself spiraling into the long hallways of her repressed memories. It is an object that connects her to a traumatic, convoluted memory that she has returned to Istanbul, as an Oxford-dropout, to forget. However, the presence of the polaroid and Peri’s possession of it throughout the years demonstrates her failure to forgo the past, and instead, this polaroid takes on a large role in Peri’s Museum of Turkishness as a figure who is unable to overcome the anxiety caused by the unsolved mysteries of her identity. Peri thinks about Shirin, her rebellious Iranian friend, and Mona, her devoutly religious Egyptian-American friend. Her relationship at Oxford with these two fellow female students is two-fold and complicated. On the one hand, it leads her to think and delve more deeply into her own relationship with her religion, but also causes her to become further confused, especially as a Turkish girl in the United Kingdom. Together, the friends often like to refer to themselves as “the Sinner, the Believer, and the Confused.” Upon arrival at Oxford, Peri suffers from alienation and estrangement; she cannot locate herself in this foreign country that acts, looks, and smells so differently than Istanbul. In embarking on a quest to find herself as a culturally Muslim woman, she looks to Shirin who does not accept the strict decorum expected of her, and Mona who respectfully wears a headscarf and identifies herself nonetheless as a stark feminist. Throughout the novel, Peri, Shirin, and Mona all represent varying degrees and categories of modern Muslim women who resist against systemized discrimination, sexism, and class. These three daughters of Eve are significant characters in the novel because for the “Confused” – Peri – the difficulties of uncovering identity as a Muslim woman is a reflection of

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441 Shafak, *Three Daughters of Eve*, 152.
traditions that become challenged and shape Peri as she matures. As Shuaa S. Al-Zahrani and Laila M. Al-Sharqi contends:

[...] while Shafak portrays the difficulties that Muslim women encounter due to their faith and gender identity, she also represents their multifaceted beliefs and assumptions regarding Islam and women, thus reflecting intersectional feminism’s concerns with the ways in which factors such as gender and religion intersect.442

The overlapping of the three female characters’ experiences being women and their relationship with Islam in the novel is constructed to explore how elements of gender and religion frame the ontologies of the consciousness. Religion in relation to gender appear to coalesce and cause all three women to diverge in how they understand their identity. While Shirin appears to rebel against it, Mona immerses herself, and lastly, Peri persists in straddling between the two, therefore representing the confused. Shirin, Mona, and Peri appear in constant conflict with themselves as individuals, but also as part of a nation, as girls who feel they are tied strongly to their homelands, no matter if they were born there or have origins, similar to the differences between an identity and a passport nationality. The metaphoric dimension of Peri’s collecting of objects is rooted in the ways she connects these items to her museum of memories.

The presence of such flashbacks offers Peri an alternate world that the bourgeois dinner party lacks. When Peri arrives with her daughter, she is late, her dress is torn and dirty, and she immediately appears nervous and uneasy. Following a rather violent confrontation with the beggar in the alley, Peri manages to successfully retrieve her purse and finally makes it to the dinner party with her daughter. Although arriving to the house safe and unharmed, her mind and memories are racing forth and full speed, interrupting her ability to naturally interact with the other guests. Peri often excuses herself to places such as the restroom, where she can be alone with her thoughts. Alone, she thinks about her life as a bourgeois Turkish woman, and how Istanbul has been an influential catalyst in dictating her identity. She stares into a fish tank and thinks about what it would be like to leave this world of imitation behind, “Daily habits were altered personalities reformed, allegiances renounced, friendships broken, even addictions spurned, but the hardest thing to change in this life was one’s attachment to place.”443 Peri

443 Shafak, Three Daughters of Eve, 79.
ignores the roars of laughter and dining occurring outside of the bathroom and finds herself lamenting over the boredom that she knows she will have to endure, yet again, just like every other bourgeois dinner party she has attended in Istanbul. The polaroid and handbag have clearly released a melting pot of emotions and thoughts in Peri that she believed she had suppressed or forgotten. However, these objects come alive and return to her at a furious, desperate speed. Everyday life signifiers conjure a very vivid retrospection of Peri’s childhood. By subconsciously taking objects from their context and storing them in her personal museum of Turkishness, Peri exploits their presence in revolutionary ways. Peri mentally distinguishes the authentic from the inauthentic, a theme that overruns most of the novel and pushes Peri to contradict herself several times. Like a clock that has no tick-tock, the emerging bourgeois class seems to wobble between points of political loyalty and political dissatisfaction. This new group of stylish housewives and intellectual husbands are not shocked by the brazenness of the country, but rather welcome its reverberations, as Peri wittingly observes:

Peri glanced at the faces around the table. The rich, the wannabe rich and the ultra-rich were all equally insecure. Much of their peace of mind depended on the whim of the State. Even the most powerful worried about losing control, even the most affluent dreaded hardship. You were expected to believe in the State for the same reason you were expected to believe in God: fear. The bourgeoisie, despite its glamour and glitz, resembled a child afraid of its father – the eternal patriarch, the Baba. Amidst uncertainty, unlike their counterparts in Europe, the local bourgeoisie had neither audacity nor autonomy, neither tradition nor memory – squeezed between what they were expected to be and what they wished to be.  

In this passage, Peri gazes at the society that surrounds her. She is not astounded, nor does she admire her company. Instead, she attributes her class as one which is dependent on the somewhat invisible rules put in place by the state and taken to extremes by the nation. Peri notices both devout Muslims and secular, raki-sipping secularists, further adding to her discontent and lack of participation in conversations surrounding events, such as when the guests debate the repercussions of the 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States. The juxtaposition between secularism and Islam that is embodied through those who attend the dinner party and reminds Peri of her own confusing identity dynamics. Peri’s preoccupation with scrutinizing the dinner guests causes her to think more deeply about her own contradictions. Peri’s inability to relate with the rest of the dinner guests compels her to reevaluate herself by reminiscing her adolescent years, especially as a student at Oxford.

[Shafak, Three Daughters of Eve, 121.]
Throughout her youth, Peri observes her mother, Selma, tightening grip over her Islamic faith. Meanwhile her father, Mesur, does quite the opposite, and separates himself from his wife’s seemingly growing fanaticism. Peri has two older brothers who also appear to be at opposite ends of Turkey’s ideology scales. The oldest son, Umut, is arrested for allegedly spreading leftist, revolutionary propaganda and spends years in prison. Hakan, however, is religious and nationalistic, finding solitude in writing for a right-wing newspaper. Meanwhile, Peri spends her childhood reading, and wondering about her faith: Is she more like her mother and Hakan in embracing her Islamic faith to extremes, or does she sympathize more with her secular father and imprisoned oldest brother?:

Religion had plummeted into their lives as unexpectedly as a meteor, and created a chasm, separating the family into two clashing camps. The younger son, Hakan, irredeemably religious and excessively nationalistic, took his mother’s side; the elder son, Umut, in his effort to diffuse the conflict, remained for a while neutral, though it was clear from everything he said and did that he leaned towards the left. [...] All of that put Peri, the youngest child, in an awkward position, with both parents striving to win her over; her very existence became a battleground between competing worldviews.  

The question of faith persists to haunt Peri throughout the rest of her childhood and into adulthood. More than anything, Peri is confused. This disorientation is most pronounced through Peri’s relationship with Islam, which also leads this study towards the third object of Peri’s collection, the God-journal. Peri loves Islamic customs, but she also loves to read Western authors. She is at odds with her identity, and in this way is representative of the everyday Turkish citizen. Peri expressed a deeply rooted attachment to the traditions of Islam. However, she remains in a constant state of in-betweenness which interrupts her ability to completely embrace her religion, but she is also unable to entirely adapt to secularism in the likes of her father or oldest brother:

Culturally, she was Muslim, of course. She loved the Ramadans and the Eids, each of which filled her heart with warmth and her mind with visceral recollections of smells and tastes. Islam, for her, was reminiscent of a childhood memory – so very familiar and personal but also somehow vague, far removed in space and time. Like a cube of sugar dissolved in her coffee, there and not there.  

Peri’s recollections of her Islamic culture are influenced by the more generalized social and geographical environment within Turkey, as torn between secular and Islamic predispositions. Peri exhibits a form of Turkishness that is angled from the lens of cultural and political tensions

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446 Shafak, *Three Daughters of Eve*, 143.
within the country. When Peri is young, her secular father gives her a notebook that he refers to as a “God journal” or a “lifelong diary” wherein she could freely write down all her confrontations, memories and confusions that occur throughout her life. Similar to the handbag and polaroid, the strength of the God journal for informing Peri’s identity places her in the role of observer of Turkishness; as an archivist. The elements and intricacies of her Islamic identity allows her to collect and rearrange aspects of herself and enables her to assume a certain margin of control over her fate. However, the journal is not reasonably large enough to treasure all her dark thoughts, to which her father replies, “‘Exactly, the only way is to erase previous writings. Do you get it? Write and erase, my soul. I can’t teach you not to have dark thoughts. Never really figured it out myself.’ Mensur paused. ‘But I was hoping you could at least rub them out.’”

Through this erase-and-repeat exercise, Peri’s God journal ages and secures a soul that connects Peri with her Islamic faith, allowing her to make sense of her unsettling identity. The notebook, apart from its practical use-value as a space to write things down, such as arguments had with one’s siblings or the butterflies felt during a first date, also has a psychological function, and contains veiled motivations for Peri. It manifests itself as having a double-life and begins to function as a puzzle of self-awareness that only Peri can solve. By the act of writing and erasing, Peri chooses what to omit and what to render significant in relation to her position against and for her Islamic faith. She has the choice to follow her mother’s rather extremist route, or her father’s ultra-secularist route.

Everyday experiences and interactions with her faith allow Peri to reflect on this process and becomes akin to a pun that will subject her ordinary life into a mysterious quest for identity. This routine of erasing, writing, and erasing again suggests a direct correlation between forgetting and remembering that will go on to effect Peri’s relationship with objects, and their influence over her perceptions of herself as a Turkish woman torn between Islamic and secular values. Her father’s discussion of the notebook as a source of preserving and erasing the past indirectly proposes that objects do indeed harbor a sense of agency over their owners. This event in Peri’s life, though seemingly vague at the time, would constitute the foundation of the collection of sensory experiences triggered by the life of objects:

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Memories, such as through this God journal, hauntingly occupy Peri’s mind, and appear as ghosts that have been abandoned for a temporary, yet unknown length of time. These memories both cultivate and threaten her Turkishness as it spreads into a life-long struggle between varying forms of identity. The obscure emotions Peri expresses towards the notebook reveals the humanizing aims that cause objects and memories to become inseparable; religion is confined to the God diary and what Peri chooses to write and erase from it. In her first entry, Peri expresses her deep feelings of confusion to her faith. As a result, she decides that God is a figment of her own imagination, “I think God comes in many pieces and colors. I can build a peaceful God, all-loving. Or I can build an angry God, punishing. Or maybe I’ll build nothing. God is a Lego set.” Peri’s ambiguous relationship with her faith is very much linked with her family, who appears divided in the novel between Islam and secularism. While the reliance on objects is not immediately central to the novel, there is a clear overlapping between the narration of objects and Peri’s interaction between aspects of her Turkish identity.

What separates Peri’s objects – the handbag, notebook, and polaroid – from those in the surroundings is the shift in character. The objects which Peri cherishes are unified by their ghostly impact on Peri’s memories and her identity. These chosen souvenirs of childhood trigger a change in perception for Peri. They cause her to reflect on several aspects of her Turkishness, such as faith and geographical conditions in a way that she may not have noticed before, therefore highlighting the transformation of insignificance into significance. Her manner of recalling certain events of her adolescence that are largely related to her religious faith indicate her worldview as one that is imbued with suspicions and inabilities to coalesce with a singular system of belief. The procedure of collecting is one that creates an irrational tension and ambiguous relations between Peri and her sense of Turkishness. Objects and memories seek to reconstruct the immediate reality and are suggestive of Peri’s awareness of the forced confrontation she must have with her sense of homeland. Religion’s ambiguous control over her

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opinions of her identity reveals her fascination with the past and how memories evoke in her an imaginary realm; a collection that surrounds her consciousness.

Throughout her childhood, Peri’s father encourages Peri’s love for literature and persistently reminds her that only in the West, outside of Turkey, can she really receive the quality education that she deserves, and it must be Oxford University in the United Kingdom. When Peri is finally accepted, much to her mother’s remorse, she brings her questions of faith along with her for the ride. As Peri leaves Istanbul for Oxford, it is not so much the prospect of leaving that troubles the collection of memories she stores in her mind, but rather the objects of these memories:

> Holding herself tense against the wind, so unlike the salty breeze of a late afternoon in Istanbul, she took a breath and slowly let it out. Her nose searched for habitual smells – deep-fried mussels, roasted chestnuts, sesame bagels, grilled sheep intestines blended with the aromas of Judas trees in spring, Daphne plants in winter. Like a demented sorceress who had forgotten the formulas of her potion, Istanbul mixed unlikely aromas in the same cauldron: rancid and sweet; stomach-churning and mouth-watering. Here in Oxford, however, the resinous odor hanging in the air seemed unwavering, reliable.450

Peri emerges as a character who depicts a subjective delusion through the archive she builds, which reminds her of a I childhood and ongoing conflicts with how she should interpret her role in Turkish society. While in Oxford, Peri befriends Shirin and Mona who are complete antitheses of one another. It is through her infatuation with their differences that leads Peri to enroll in a course about God with the handsome yet controversial Professor Azur. The class does not immediately alleviate Peri’s troubles, but rather multiplies them, “When Azur spoke of God and life and faith and science, his words clung together like tiny grains of steamed rice, ready to feed hungry minds. In his company, Peri felt consummate, undivided, as if there were, after all, another way of looking at things – different from her father’s approach as well as her mother’s.”451 In enrolling in Professor Azur’s seminar, Peri finds herself even more strongly questioning her faith, and who she is expected to be in a Western country as a culturally Muslim young woman. As a result, Peri’s sense of Turkishness becomes further dependent upon her understanding of God, and how she may express her beliefs without having to suppress her faith nor her suspicions of her faith to appease her parents. Following a scandal involving Professor Azur and another student, Peri leaves Oxford and returns to Turkey where she marries a caring

450 Shafak, Three Daughters of Eve, 110.
451 Shafak, Three Daughters of Eve, 243.
Turkish businessman and carries on with her life, as though Oxford was only a fantasy and not a reality that became tainted by her battles of faith. The frustration that Peri feels during her youth towards her religion leads to her reliance on the polaroid, God journal, and later the handbag as a few of many sources of her anxiety. Similar to Peri’s first impressions of Oxford and the imagery that her surroundings evoke, these objects build allusive situations that often brings Peri back to the past, therefore being imbued with increasingly greater memorable reverence. The common aspect of these three things is the emotional rumination of the past that seem to impress Peri. Shafak’s aesthetic use of the collection theme to connect Peri’s past and present in terms of her relationship with Turkish identity also positions Peri herself as a collectible. She is indeed a souvenir of Turkishness and a collector of its remnants throughout the narrative. I use the word “souvenir” here in terms of Susan Pearce’s definition:

Souvenirs are intrinsic parts of a past experience…they alone have the power to carry the past into the present. Souvenirs are samples of events that can be remembered, but not relived. Their tone is intimate and bittersweet, with roots in nostalgic longing for a past which is seen as better and fuller than the difficult present.452

Peri’s fortified relationships with objects articulate her desperate crisis, and the threatening nature of these objects’ power in relation to her personhood, creating a certain aesthetic tone associated with memory. The polaroid, God journal, and handbag are recontextualized and become artefacts evocative of her unstable relationship with Turkishness. The objects are closely interlaced into Peri’s everyday encounters with self and nationhood. Each of these memory artifacts contribute to the archive that diaries very relatable situations and scenes to the extent that the objects become the central components of the overall storyline, framing a network of congruities that encapsulates Peri’s memories of her identity. Peri’s museum of Turkishness is made up by the protagonist from questions she continues to seek answers for, concerning the transcendental value of her belongings, their influence over her adolescence, and their relationship to her personal and Turkish identity. As stimulatores of memory, the objects in Peri’s personal collection of Turkishness speak to Shafak’s use of her literary works to encompass the totalities of Istanbul’s various dichotomies.

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By the end of the text, the temporality returns to the present day when Peri is at the dinner party. She has directly confronted the demons of her past through a telephone call to Shirin and her old professor from Oxford, Professor Azur. Just as she begins to have hope, it appears that a terrorist attack is about to erupt at the dinner party, thus bringing the storyline to an unexpected close. A novel that overlaps in time between Peri’s childhood and her adulthood, the obtainment, pursuit, and preservation of objects allows the protagonist to feel a sense of authority over her identity, the ephemerality of experiences, and the permanence of memories. By way of imagery and recall of the everyday world, the collection theme in the novel emerges as the archetype of rooted human behavior and the consistent desperation to control the self and have freedom of choice. The events that unravel in Three Daughters of Eve are random and occur by chance, speaking to an ambiguous absurdity that questions the conditions of the novel’s world. The use of memories and objects in Three Daughters of Eve to speak to representations of Turkish identity illustrates individualistic experiences and reactions to the Istanbul’s modernity and the element of multiplicity that has led it to become a complicated space to theoretically interpret.

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453 Shafak, Three Daughters of Eve, 367.
4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has traced the psychological shifts that the collector figure experiences between the position of acting as possessor of a collection, to the consequence of being possessed by a collection. The process of writing, for Shafak and Pamuk, resembles a deep interest in compiling and recontextualizing everyday Turkish citizens and their lives within Istanbul. As a result, both writers are collectors who curate their collections of everyday experiences. Broadly thematic and written with a sense of fascination with the possessor-possessed dichotomy, Shafak’s and Pamuk’s fiction has addressed these concepts both metaphorically as collectors of human experience, as well as literally, as collectors of objects. Through the process of reframing, recontextualizing, and revisualizing scenes from everyday Turkish society, Shafak and Pamuk narrate Turkishness in revolutionary ways that demonstrates the ways in which collecting can have stunning repercussions in reaction to the nation’s socio-political climate. Shafak’s and Pamuk’s characters not only collect objects with a compulsive fury, but rather understand them as inheriting the souls of what they have lost, gifting them life and then power over themselves, therefore granting the opportunity to switch roles and change the dynamics between themselves and the objects. Collecting, which is manifested through the presence of the museum-novel, both museum as institution and museum as novel, implicitly draws awareness to the aesthetic potential of the novel to transform itself from writing material to an archival representation of Turkishness. Throughout this area of the dissertation, I have argued that collections of objects are facilitated by the haunting and independent presence of memories without overlooking the importance of gender as an elemental component to the understanding of individual experiences within the cityscape. This final chapter of the dissertation has assessed Shafak’s and Pamuk’s literary production of Turkishness in pursuit of identifying new ways of looking at identity through aesthetics, feminist-criticism, and socio-cultural concepts.
CONCLUSION TO THE DISSERTATION

As this dissertation comes to a close, I would like to reemphasize the significance I found of navigating Turkishness through the literary landscapes narrated by Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk. At the center of my research endeavor has been an exploration of the aesthetic dimensions that transform the Turkish novel into a platform on which to engage with the notion of Gendered Turkishness. As I wrote my thesis, I was focused on asserting Turkishness as a multilayered concept that is intricately intertwined with geography and the everyday experiences shaped by gender dynamics. I explored Turkishness as a literary theme to highlight the topic as a gendered phenomenon by focusing on the aesthetic, feminist, and socio-cultural elements that make up the elements of identity and belonging within the cityscape. Studying the gendered angles of everyday life in Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk to research the aesthetic, feminist, and socio-cultural components attached to Turkishness has created a framework from which to assess the overlooked details that underly the construction of identity.

The novels I have deliberated in this thesis illustrate how the socio-cultural environment regarding the gender-dichotomy in Istanbul are simultaneously adhered to as well as allegorized. In the close readings and theoretical criticisms, I explored in this PhD, the female as a topic of evaluation has created a unique avenue in my questioning of in what ways is the woman’s presence in the cityscape influential. Furthermore, I researched how the expectations of gender and sexuality glean to have profound impacts on how identity defined. Shafak’s and Pamuk’s literature have demonstrated how the delineation of the male gaze is a critical component in the determination of female agency within the cityscape. The dichotomy created between the male gaze and the subjectivity of the female being gaze upon in everyday life was developed throughout this dissertation to explore how identity is stimulated by gender dynamics. In describing Turkishness as a gendered phenomenon, I have refrained from strict categorizations of national identity as being monochrome and defined by official apparatuses and have instead chosen to explore to what extent Turkishness is predicated by the dynamic power structures that exist between men and women in urban space. The findings of my dissertation have revealed that Elif Shafak’s and Orhan Pamuk’s literature have engaged with narrative structure, such as the depiction of urban space, the geo-politics of Istanbul, characterization, focalization, the novel
and museum in dialogue, and the illustration of everyday events to observe the progression of identity within Istanbul and the dependence of gender to its definition.

Divided into three analytical chapters preceded by a historiographical narrative of Turkish recent history, this dissertation has studied Istanbul as a metaphor city, engaged with the principles of surrealism and the ‘profane illumination’, and has considered the museum-novel binary to assess the ways in which Shafak’s and Pamuk’s novels each represent framed museums of Turkishness. In the writers’ stylistic use of the everyday, the selected texts have been distinguished as aesthetic portraits that highlight the often-overlooked aspects of everyday realities. Through a methodological approach that studies Shafak’s and Pamuk’s novels through everyday studies and feminist criticism in consideration of socio-cultural conditions within the cityscape, this dissertation has allowed me to traverse the numerous vignettes of inhabitants’ sense of belonging, which led me to discourses surrounding the East-West dichotomy, the debates between Islam and secularism, the treatment of women in Turkish society, and the ongoing presence of objects within the metropolis. As I have engaged with theoretical readings that refer to Turkey’s socio-cultural memory and turbulent political history, Shafak’s and Pamuk’s texts have acted as curatorial-like archives in the writers’ pursuit to gather the overlooked aspects of the perceptual world and recontextualize them within the confines of the novel, framing and focalizing how Turkishness is facilitated with urban space. Rather than acting as a background against which identities are staked, Istanbul became a revolutionary protagonist in Shafak’s and Pamuk’s novels and caused characters to engage with their own Turkishness as a projection of Istanbul itself.

To write a unique and contributive thesis of Turkishness in the contemporary Turkish novel, I have researched the topic of how Turkishness is largely facilitated by the gender dichotomy in relation to the close readings I have done alongside the theoretical criticisms I explore within fields of everyday studies and feminist criticisms. Throughout the analyses of each selected novel, I have thought about the texts’ literary structure, and the stylistic devices implemented. Meanwhile, I have considered how the writers’ structural and stylistic choices have contributed to their interest of satirizing vignettes of everyday life within a particular temporal context.
Shafak and Pamuk have, for instance, creatively approached the task of focalization in their novels to connect various narrative voices, and tie them together into a series of experiences, leading to diverging representations with identity within urban space. This was particularly the case in *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World* and *The Black Book* in which both writers oscillated between narrative voice and perspective, oftentimes disrupting the logical flow of the text. Although narrative structure and research on the literary techniques that Shafak and Pamuk implement was identified throughout the dissertation, they have been studied in pursuit of establishing meaning. As a result, it was through the narrative structure, that I was able to identify themes such as the East-West dichotomy and the modernization project, rendering my studies of Shafak and Pamuk interdisciplinary and dependent upon theories related not only to aesthetics, but also to questions of geo-politics and history.

The selected texts by Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk satirize some of the conceptions of Turkish socio-cultural history that was assessed in chapter one of the dissertation. Characteristics of the Turkish modernization project taking place during the twentieth century, the Islam and secularism dichotomy, and the Ottoman memory appear to be reflected in various forms in the Turkish novel through the narration of everyday Turkish life. The first chapter of the dissertation was especially important in my effort to establish, for the reader’s clarity, the socio-cultural and geo-political environment to which the contemporary Turkish novel often alludes. In this chapter, I explained the political definitions associated with Turkishness by explaining Article 301 of the Turkish penal code, followed by an explanation of how Turkishness would be used throughout the dissertation quite loosely, to refer to Turkey’s aesthetic, geo-political, and socio-cultural manifestations. In this chapter, I assessed the political definition of Turkishness, by explaining Article 301 of the Turkish penal code, followed by an explanation of how Turkishness would be used throughout the dissertation. The three sections included in this chapter, “Formations of Identity in the Nation-State” and “The Paradigm of Religion and Secularism in the Republic of Turkey” introduced the reader to Turkey’s turbulent history, and how discourses surrounding Turkish identity have evolved. I was especially interested in outlining the dynamics of Turkey’s founding nationalistic ideology, Kemalism, and how it presented a revolutionary agenda that would turn once-Ottoman subjects away from the Islamic,
and Ottoman past, towards a European and secular future without forgoing what the effects of the cultural revolution had on the new status of women within the public space. The three analytical chapters that make up much of the dissertation blur the boundaries between truth and fiction because it is through the descriptions of fictional characters' interactions with Istanbul’s urban landscape that stories and realities related to Turkishness are revealed. My comparative approach to Shafak’s and Pamuk’s novels was deeply rooted in spatial and temporal considerations to contextualize and trace the development of Turkishness and how individual Turks have reacted to Turkishness. As Anne-Marie Evans and Kaley Kramer claim, “Literature about cities brings to the forefront the relationship between individual and communal experience and time.” How the individual navigates within urban space largely contributes to how they understand the self. Such a process cannot occur without first acknowledging the importance of everyday experience, with particular attention to how women’s experiences in the cityscape are undermined by male authority. By exploring and often taking apart, piece-by-piece the narrative structure of the texts, such as in terms of focalization, character development, conflict, and temporality, I identified themes which have allowed me to comment on and study much of Turkey’s recent past, and contemporary societal issues. Chapter two, “Istanbul as a City of Metaphors: Geography and the Perception of Belonging” embodied an approach to Turkishness by posing the question, “What are the effects of geography on perceptions of belonging?” As a means to explore this question, I studied Istanbul as Ben Highmore would say, “a metaphor city” to explore the various understandings of the cityscape. In doing so, I engaged with the importance of Istanbul’s geography to the understanding of Turkishness as an in-between identity, due to Istanbul’s positioning as a city between Europe and Asia. Istanbul was narrated to the reader as a protagonist using metaphors to embody the city as a significant, constitutive element in the determination of fate, or the individual’s freedom of choice. The primary texts present in this chapter were Istanbul: Memories and the City (Pamuk), The Bastard of Istanbul (Shafak), and A Strangeness in My Mind (Pamuk). Through narrative descriptions that color the physical and psychological remnants of a city’s change, these novels informed my understanding of Turkishness via urban space and geo-politics. Shafak’s and Pamuk’s use of literary techniques projected to readers a sense of reality through the focalization of fictional characters who often

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454 Evans and Kramer, Time, the City, and the Literary Imagination, 1.
expressed an attachment to Istanbul as not only a lived place, but also as a place where there
Turkishness is dictated. Pamuk as the protagonist of his autobiography, and the fictional
characters of Zeliha, Asya, and Amy in The Bastard of Istanbul, and Mevlüt in A Strangeness in
My Mind have, via various narrative approaches, sought to describe the elements of Istanbul’s
landscape, and the varying experiences that women have within a male-centered society.
Turkishness became a profoundly emotional and psychological experience that reshapes
individual perception as it is experienced in urban space through spontaneous interactions, banal
habits, and melancholic memories. The ambiguous symbolism attached to characters’
experiences in relation to Istanbul as a geographical space as well as a determinant of identity
demonstrated the profound importance of belonging and how it is often dictated by one’s
relationship with urban space as well as how they perceive themselves. I have concentrated both
here and throughout the rest of the dissertation on the power of urban space in the determination
of Turkishness as an identity that is enforced by the metaphoricity of Istanbul.

The representation of daily life in the Turkish novel was further developed in Chapter 3,
“Tequila Leila’s Galip’s, and Celâl’s ‘Profane Illuminations’.” Here, I was interested in the
surrealist experiment, especially in relation to what Benjamin has termed the “profane
illumination.”455 The question posed in this chapter was: how does everyday life effect one’s
sensory experiences, and how do they influence the ways in which society feels, acts, and reacts
to the world around them? The primary texts selected for this chapter, 10 Minutes 38 Seconds in
this Strange World (Shafak) and The Black Book (Pamuk) were concerned with the descriptions
of sensory experiences and how, through the process of memory recall, certain seemingly
unimportant objects and events gain personal significance. To address the theme of gender, I
evaluated the woman as commodity and the subject of prostitution, as well as the male gaze and
the identity of the female being filtered by the male protagonist. As portrayed through the
protagonists in each of these novels, subtle scents and touches, and minor appearances of objects
such as pens and cakes can become quite impactful catalysts for the evocation of the past, and
therefore can elicit vivid feelings and emotions that may affect ones sense of self and perception
of the world around them. I suggested throughout this chapter that the desire to illuminate the
forgettable and often banal aspects of everyday lives led by everyday citizens becomes

meaningful in Shafak’s and Pamuk’s desire to approach Turkishness through the methods described within the surrealist experiment outlined by André Breton, Sigmund Freud, and Walter Benjamin. Both European scholars have been concerned with the question of identity, and, like the Turkish novelists, have looked towards everyday experiences that occur in urban space, to study the feelings of alienation and estrangement that individuals often exhibit. Shafak’s and Pamuk’s characters are rooted in the mundane world where they take part in habitual tasks that appear to have no relation to the ontological elements of identity. However, as the protagonists quickly realized, the significance in all this insignificance manifests itself as profound illuminations which only further lead them into existential quests for identity, which often occurred through a labyrinth exploration throughout Istanbul. Shafak nor Pamuk did not present to their readers a chronological and linear plot presented by one narrator. 10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World and The Black Book presented a series of fragmented stories told through different time frames, political conditions, and through alternating narrative voices as a means to pose the possibility of Turkishness’s plurality and dynamism. Through such a complex narrative structure that allows the writers to make sense of Turkey’s recent past, Shafak and Pamuk recontextualized the Republic’s history, and in doing so, coalesced fiction with framed areas of reality.

The last chapter of this thesis, “The Museum of Turkishness: A Double Staging of Identity Representation” revolved around the idea of the Turkish novel signifying a museum of Turkishness. The proposal of this phrase, Museum of Turkishness sought to point to Shafak and Pamuk as embodying curators of everyday life whose observations of the Turkish experience are archived by the novelists and recontextualized for the purposes of drawing attention to components of the perceptual world which would have been otherwise forgotten. The texts I chose to study throughout this chapter included The Museum of Innocence (Pamuk), The Flea Palace (Shafak), and Three Daughters of Eve (Shafak). Each novel manifested itself as a Museum of Turkishness because Shafak and Pamuk framed their texts around very particular historical contexts and place fictional characters in these very realistic worlds as a means to narrate what Turkish everyday life may have been like for everyday people under varying circumstances. While Kemal and Madam Auntie seek refuge in the possession of everyday objects which quickly turned into the possessors being possessed, and lastly, Peri’s attachment to
several items represents her desire to attain a certain level of power and control over her feelings and thoughts in relation to her identity. The gender dichotomy in this chapter further unfolded in the forms of the male gaze and his undermining of the female character, fetishism, hoarding, the possessor/possessed dichotomy, and spectatorship. My analyses of these texts have demonstrated how both metaphorically and literally, the museum becomes a theme from which to negotiate with the ontologies rooted in the pursuit of uncovering the hidden realities of national identity. This chapter described the stunning emotional and psychological changes that the figure of the collector has undergone in each novel, drawing upon how the process of collecting had developed into a manic quest to preserve memories. The idea of the museum-novel that was introduced in this chapter gleaned the aesthetic implications attached to rendering the writing of a novel and curation of a museum exhibition as synonymous in their objective of creating archival representations of elements of a society’s history, culture, and in doing so, its national, collective identity.

While writing this dissertation, I have often fallen off tangent and wondered how, had I come from a different cultural background and had different personal and academic experiences, my position relative to the study of Turkishness through the contemporary Turkish novel may have been different, and if so, what would this have meant in terms of my contribution to scholarship within the field. Maybe, had I been more influenced by one scholar over another, or if I did not feel so closely connected to the ambiguities definitive of identity, I may not have dedicated such time and research to the study of Turkishness at all. Feeling a particular relation to Shafak and Pamuk not only as novelists, but also as individuals who have been troubled by their identity because of geography has led me to continue to study identity and become deeply attached to the progression of this dissertation. It would follow, then, that this dissertation on Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk could have been approached much more differently. For instance, I could have delved more deeply into themes of urban space, surrealism, and museums, rather than limiting myself to one chapter each. Future studies on Shafak’s and/or Pamuk’s novels may be done with a particular focus on narratology, particularly concerning how the structure of selected texts and choice of symbols, themes, and description of conflicts shapes the reader’s perception of the real world. Such an approach would inevitably touch upon questions of identity and Turkishness. However, the center of such a study would be concentrated on the texts as aesthetic and creative
objects that inform a reader’s awareness of themes such as identity. As a result, it is not so much the identification of themes that is of value, but rather the process by which such themes are identified, hence the significance of the narrative structure. The study of Turkishness has been explored for almost a century and continues to be one of the most fascinating subjects of discourse. With the knowledge that identity is particular to nation-forming and collective experiences, I would like to mention that everyday studies have been a rather unconventional decision in the pursuit of comprehending the ontologies rooted in Turkishness, especially as they relate to the novels of Elif Shafak and Orhan Pamuk. However, everyday studies have given me the academic freedom to explore different ways of approaching very cultural, geo-political, and historical topics. As result, as I wrote this dissertation, I did not feel limited, nor was I placed in the position of glossing over certain details of culture for the sake of remaining within the respective frames of history-writing. For this reason, I am pleased to have researched Turkishness through the everyday representations of Turkish life in the contemporary novel.

As I wrote this dissertation, I was not so much concerned about how Turkishness should be comprehended. Instead, I was fascinated with how Shafak and Pamuk, through their novels, created new ways of looking at Turkishness against the angle of the gender dichotomy. In researching Shafak’s and Pamuk’s novels through everyday studies, I distinguished numerous discourses from which to understand the question of Turkish identity. In coming to a conclusion, I would like to note that in writing this thesis, several new questions in relation to gender in Turkish literature have evolved, rendering the theme of identity in fiction all the more complex. In acknowledgement of the prevalence of concepts of the male gaze, and the flâneur figure within the cityscape, further questions related to voyeurism the role of the male spectator unravel such as how the female can be illustrated as the flâneur and how this may undermine the patriarchal existence of the male flâneur within the cityscape. The concept of positioning the woman as spectator as opposed to object of the gaze, I think about Mary Ann Doane’s essay, “Caught and Rebecca: The Inscription of Femininity as Absence.” In analyzing the presence of the female audience in viewing these films, Doane claims, “The woman’s sexuality, as spectator, must undergo a constant process of transformation. She must look, as if she were a man with the

456 For reading on the theory of narratology, I would recommend the following text:
phallic power of the gaze, in order to be that woman.\textsuperscript{457} Being a woman, the new spectator is expected to assert a certain power through looking that before was one that was only controlled by the male. It would be interesting to further research this reversal of roles in creating an active female – passive male dichotomy.

In conclusion, within the context of Elif Shafak’s and Orhan Pamuk’s oeuvres, I have endeavored to traverse within the many themes and binaries posed in studying Turkishness. Through an engagement with selected texts and numerous interdisciplinary theories, I have sought to contribute to present scholarship by demonstrating how Shafak and Pamuk are writers who are particularly interested in archiving the experiences and observations of Turkish everyday life. The vignettes within which Shafak and Pamuk establish representations of Turkishness have been comparatively researched in various forms and through various theoretical ideas throughout this dissertation as a means to pose new ways of thinking about national identity and how novels and other aesthetic mediums may indeed be relevant. I look forward to and invite future researchers and academic scholarship to engage with compelling, new methodologies from which to study the Turkish novel, as a deeply intimate portrait that may reveal profound truths about the human condition as dependent upon assigned gender roles.

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