

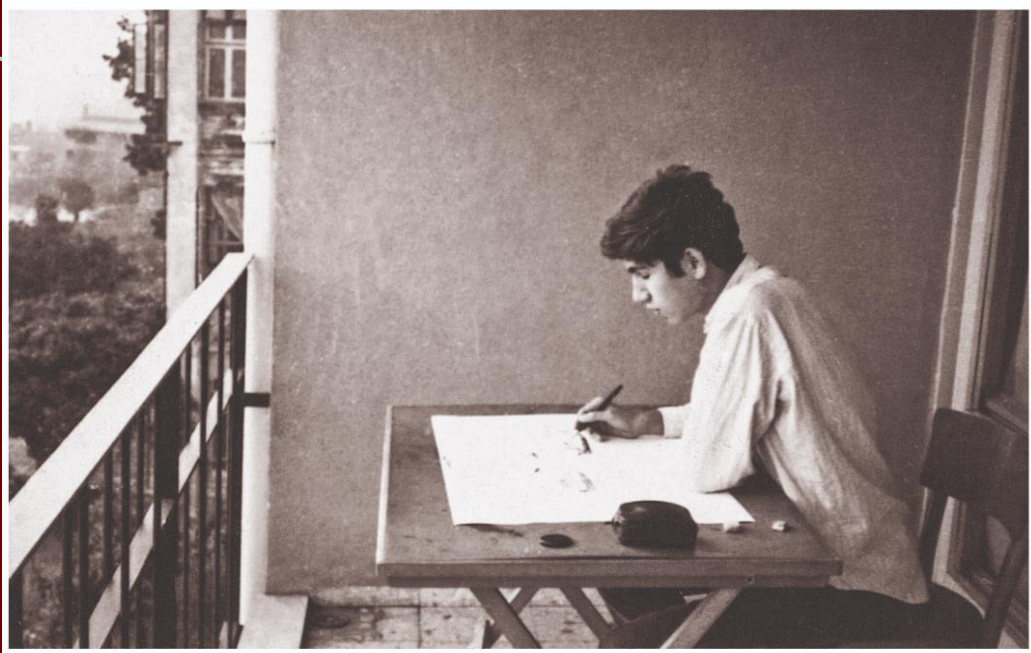
Session 7

All lies to tell history? Taking
inspiration from Orhan Pamuk's
The Museum of Innocence

HPHI7008 Fact or Fiction

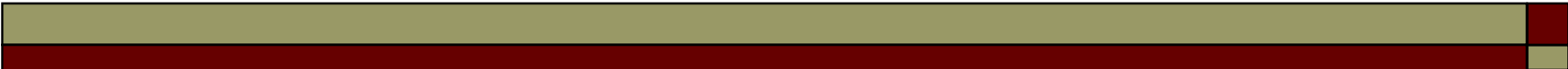
Dr. Katharina Zinn

Associate Professor in Egyptian Archaeology and Heritage



Memories and the City: Orhan Pamuk's Istanbul





Assmann, Jan: *The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs*. New York:

Metropolitan Books, 2002. p. 9.

- **We are what we remember, which is another way of saying that we are nothing other than the stories we can tell about ourselves and our past.**

Pamuk on Fact and Fiction in Novels

“The art of the novel draws its power from the *absence of a perfect consensus* between writer and reader on the understanding of fiction. Readers and authors acknowledge and agree on the fact that novels are neither completely imaginary nor completely factual. But as we read a novel, word after word, sentence after sentence, this awareness is transformed into questioning, into a strong and focused curiosity. Clearly the writer must have experienced something of that sort, the reader thinks, but perhaps he has exaggerated or imagined part of it. Or on the contrary, the reader, presuming that writers are capable of writing only what they have experienced, may begin to imagine the ‘truth’ about the writer.”

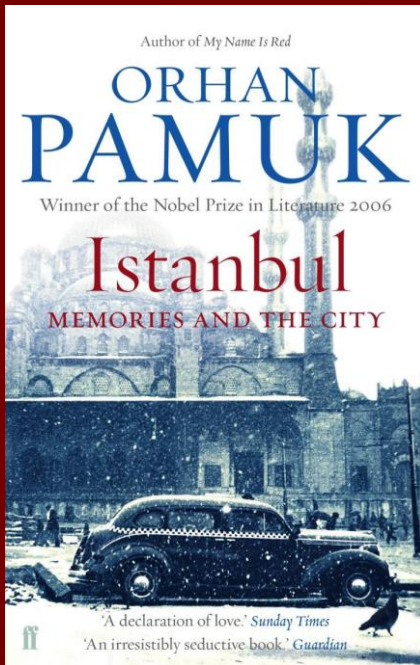


- Orhan Pamuk,
translated by Nazım
Dikbaş, *The Naïve
and Sentimental
Novelist:
Understanding What
Happens When We
Write and Read
Novels* (London:
Faber and Faber,
2010), p. 35.

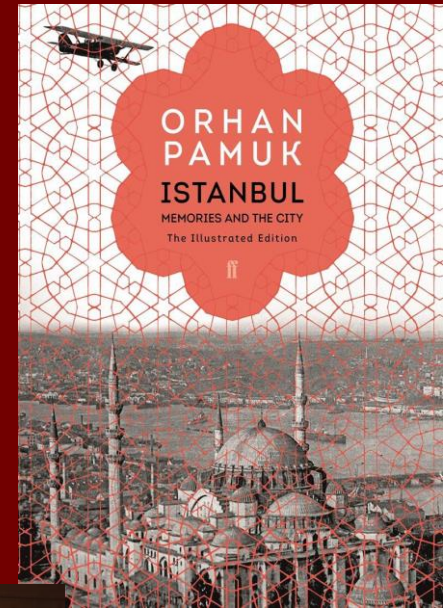
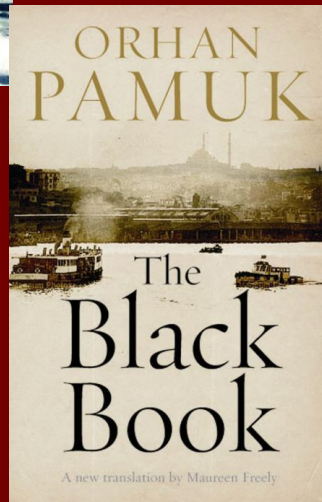
Pamuk and Istanbul

For me, the centre of the world *is* Istanbul. This is not just because I have lived there all my life but because, [in my novels] I have been narrating its streets, its bridges, its people, its dogs, its houses, its mosques, its fountains, its strange heroes, its shops, its famous characters, its dark spots, its days, and its nights, making them a part of me, embracing them all. A point arrived when this world that I had made with my own hands, this world that existed only in my head, was more real to me than the city in which I actually live

- Pamuk, 'My Father's Suitcase,' Nobel Prize speech (2006) printed in *Other Colours: Essays and a Story* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), p. 414



What is the connection of:
memories/memoirs/autobiography
literature, history and cities?



Biographical Sketch

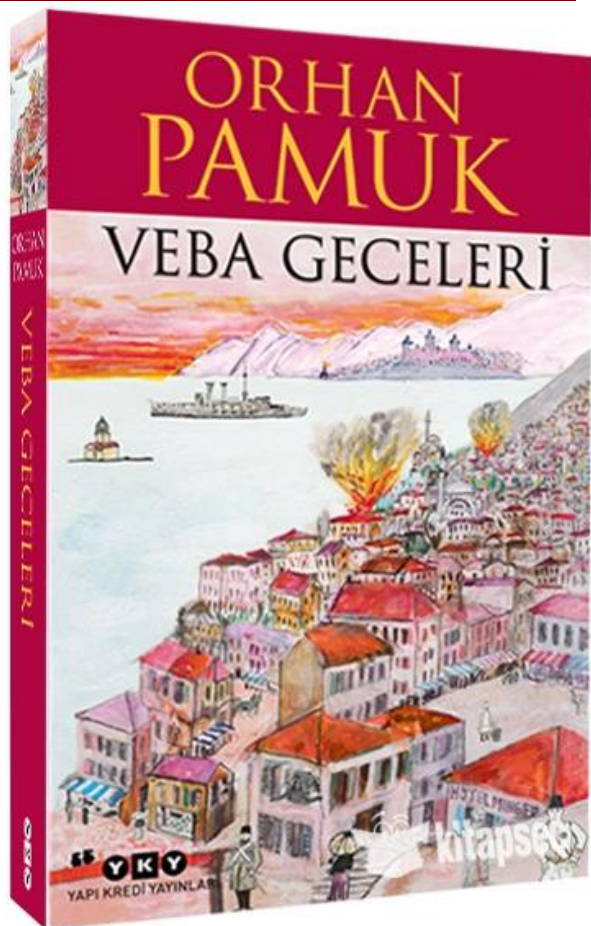
- b. Istanbul, 1952
- Professor in Humanities, Columbia University, New York
- Turkey's most famous author internationally – awarded Nobel Prize for Literature, 2006



Biographical Sketch

- Controversy:
 - 2005–2006, charged with “insulting Turkishness” for comments which addressed the issue of the Armenian Genocide, 1915, and the treatment of Turkey’s Kurdish minority
 - Recipient of bodyguard security from Turkish state
 - A critic of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan





Orhan Pamuk

This article is more than 4 months old

Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk charged again with 'insulting Turkishness'

Case based on his new novel *Nights of the Plague*, initially dismissed in April, has been reopened after an appeal

Alison Flood

Tue 16 Nov 2021 16:56 GMT



Orhan Pamuk won the Nobel prize in 2006. Photograph: Mustafa Ozer/AFP/Getty Images

Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk is being investigated by the Turkish state for “insulting” the founder of modern Turkey and ridiculing the Turkish flag in his new novel *Nights of Plague*.

Pamuk, who denies the accusations, published the book in Turkey in March. The first complaint against the book - set on a fictional Ottoman island during an outbreak of the bubonic plague in the early 1900s - came in April, when a lawyer accused Pamuk of inciting “hatred and animosity” by insulting Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and ridiculing the flag of Turkey in the work. An Istanbul court decided not to take the claim forward due to lack of evidence, but the lawyer who brought the case, Tarcan Ülük, appealed against the decision and the investigation has now been reopened.

Pamuk was previously prosecuted for “insulting Turkishness” after raising



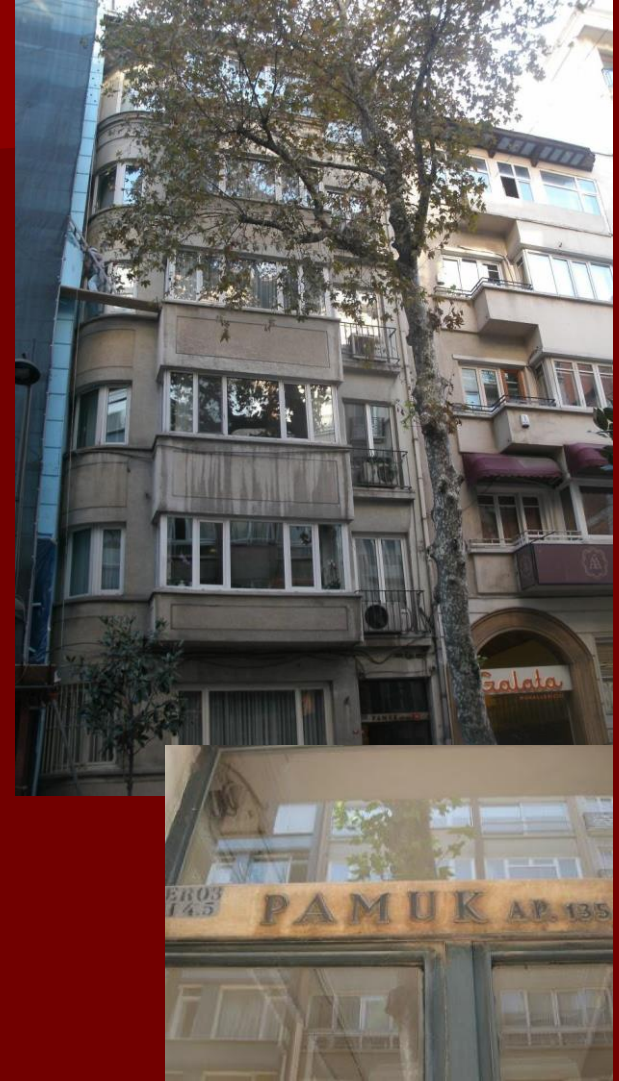
“Since I have lived all my life on the European shores of Istanbul – in other words, in Europe – it is not at all hard for me to feel myself a European in a geographical sense.”

- Orhan Pamuk, 'Where is Europe?' *Other Colours: Essays and a Story* (Faber and Faber: London, 2007),

translated by Maureen Freely, p. 192

Biographical Sketch

- b. Istanbul, 1952
- From wealthy upper-middle-class family
- Educated at Robert College
- Grew up in-and-around Nişantaşı

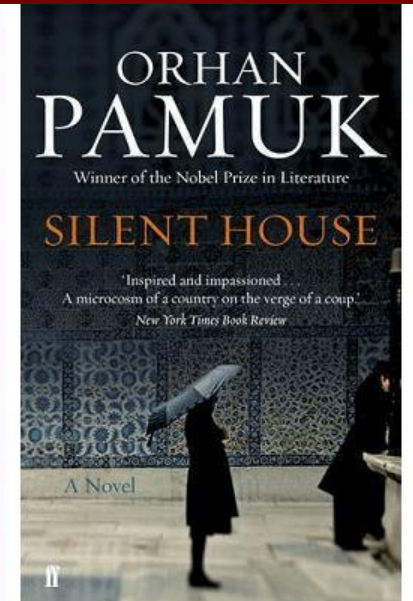
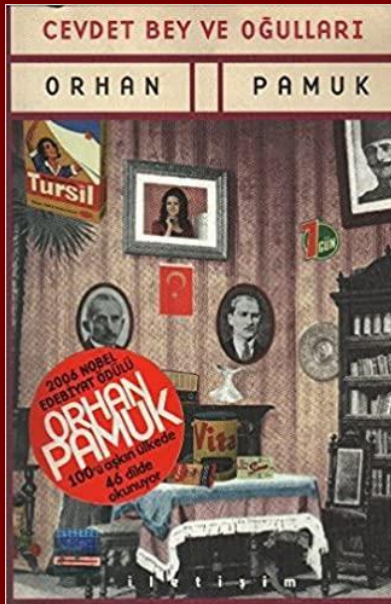




Europe
Europe

Asia
Asia

Pamuk's Family novels



As we in Nişantaşı saw it, the Republic had done away with the pashas, princes and high officials and so the empty mansions they had left behind were only decrepit anomalies.

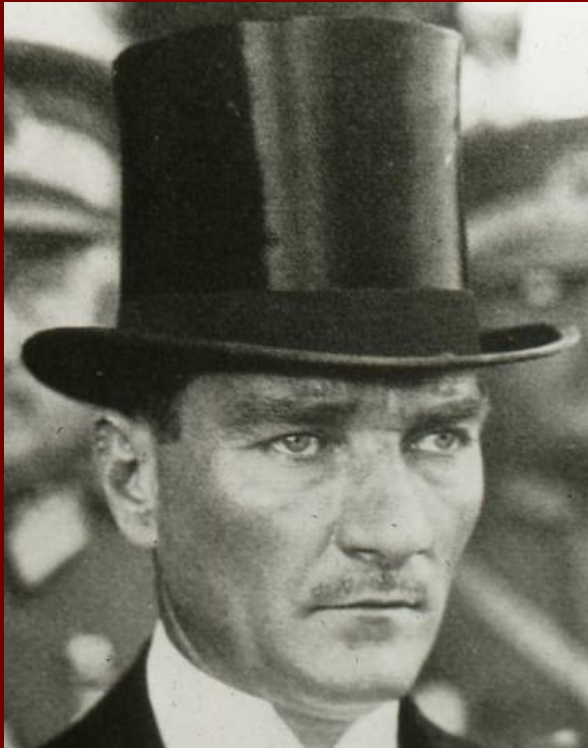
- Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, translated by Maureen Freely (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), p. 27

ATATURK REVOLUTION

Zeki Faik
İzler, *Road
To
Revolution*,
1933

- Defeat in WWI
- Turkish War of Independence, 1919–1923
- New Republic forged – Ottoman Empire abolished
- Ankara replaces Istanbul as capital of new Turkish Republic
- New Latin alphabet
- Westernized naming practices





It was necessary to abolish the fez, emblem of ignorance, negligence, fanaticism, and hatred of progress and civilization, to accept in its place the hat—the headgear worn by the whole civilized world.

(Mustafa Kemal Atatürk)

Still, the melancholy of this dying culture [of the Ottoman Empire] was all around us. Great as the desire to Westernise and modernise may have been, the more desperate wish, it seemed, was to be rid of all the bitter memories of the fallen empire: rather as a spurned lover throws away his lost beloved's clothes, possessions and photographs. But as nothing, Western or local, came to fill the void, the great drive to Westernise amounted mostly to the erasure of the past; the effect on culture was reductive and stunting, leading families like mine, otherwise glad of Republican progress, to furnish their houses like museums.

- Pamuk, *Istanbul*, p. 27

After the Ottoman Empire collapsed the world almost forgot that Istanbul existed. The city I was born into was poorer, shabbier, and more isolated than it had been in its two-thousand-year history. For me, it has always been a city of ruins and of end-of-empire melancholy.

- Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (Faber and Faber: London, 2005) translated by Maureen Freely, p. 6

Pamuk's Istanbul Literature

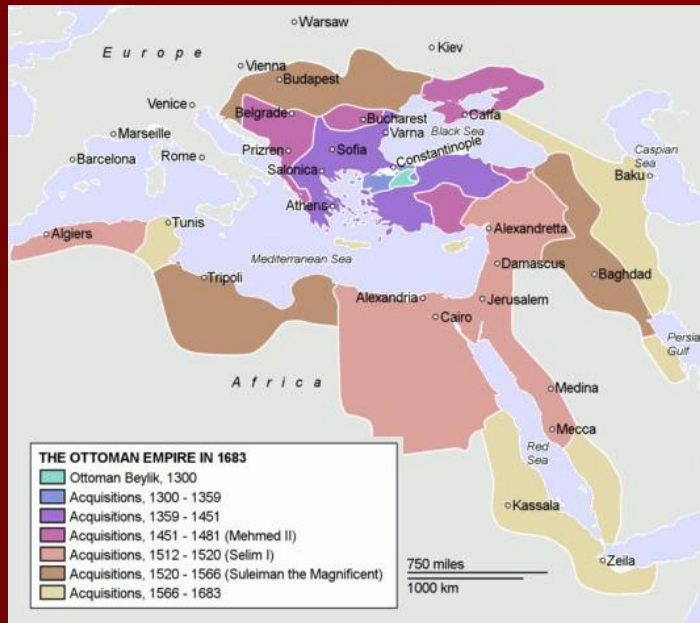
Novels:

- ***Cevdet Bey and His Sons (Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları)*** (Turkish 1982)
- ***The Silent House*** (Turkish 1983; English 2012)
- ***The White Castle*** (Turkish 1985; English 1990)
- ***The Black Book*** (Turkish 1990; English 1994/2006)
- ***The New Life*** (Turkish 1994; English 1997)
- ***My Name is Red*** (Turkish 1998; English, 2004)
- ***Snow*** (Turkish 2002; English 2004)
- ***The Museum of Innocence*** (Turkish 2008; English 2009)
- ***A Strangeness in My Mind*** (Turkish 2014; English 2015)
- ***The Red-Haired Woman*** (2017)

■ Nonfiction:

- ***Istanbul: Memories and the City*** (Turkish 2003; English 2005)
- ***Other Colours*** (Turkish 1999; English 2007)
- ***The Naive and Sentimental Novelist*** (2010)
- ***The Innocence of Objects*** (2012)

■ Yellow denotes
Istanbul-theme/setting



History of Istanbul: Ottoman Empire

- Ottoman dynasty – originally from modern-day Turkmenistan – est. powerbase in Anatolia in late 13th century
- Spread throughout Asia Minor and Southern/Central Europe, 14th and 15th centuries
 - Conquest of Istanbul 1453
- Continued expansion through to 17th century



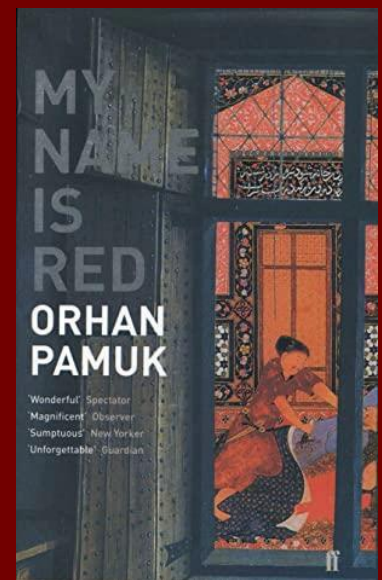
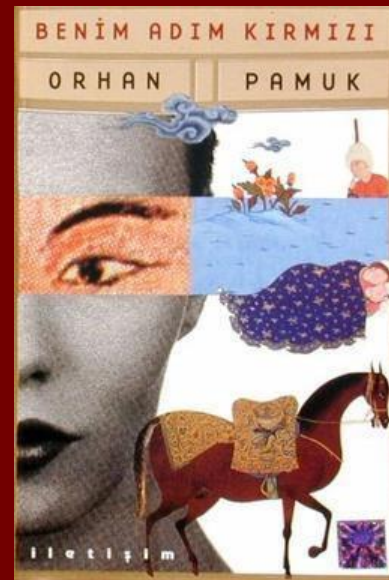
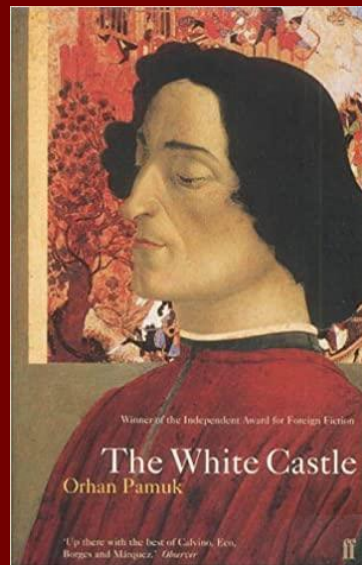
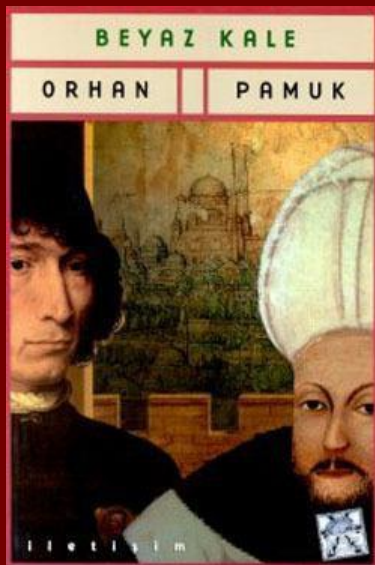
History of Istanbul: Ottoman Empire

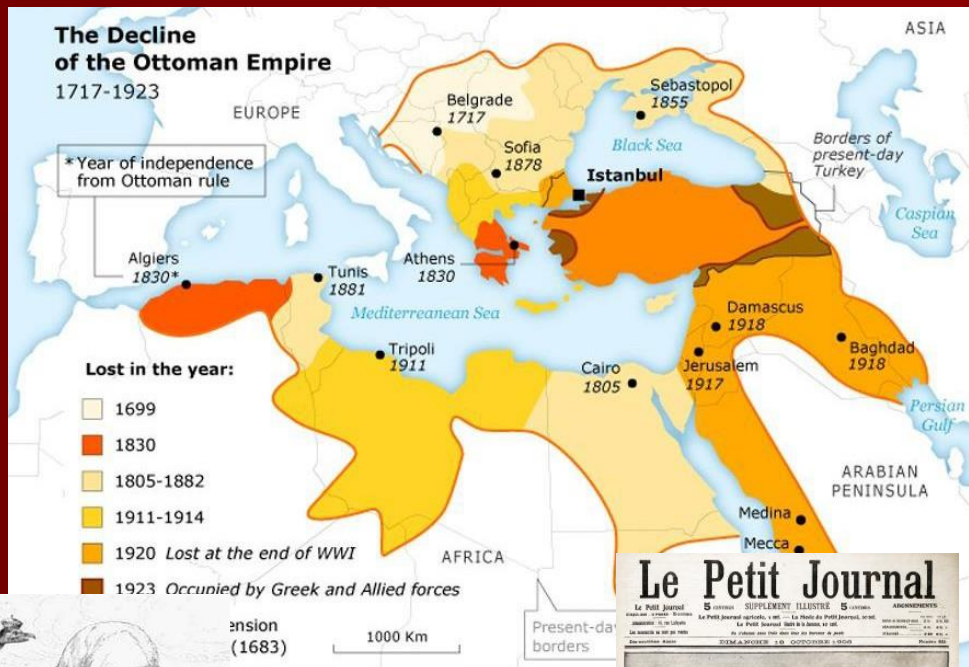
Refitted interior of Aya Sofya

History of Istanbul: Ottoman Empire



Pamuk's Ottoman 'Golden Age' Novels





The Sick Man of Europe
Tsar Nicholas I of Russia: Ottoman Empire = "a sick man—a very sick man ... in a state of decrepitude," 1853

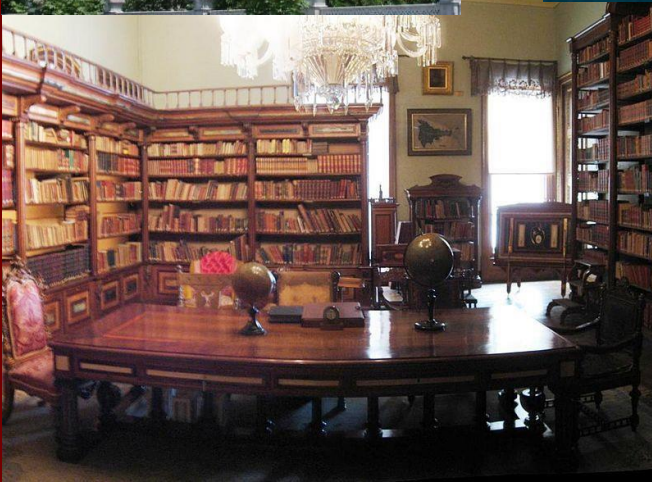


Tanzimat Istanbul: Reforms

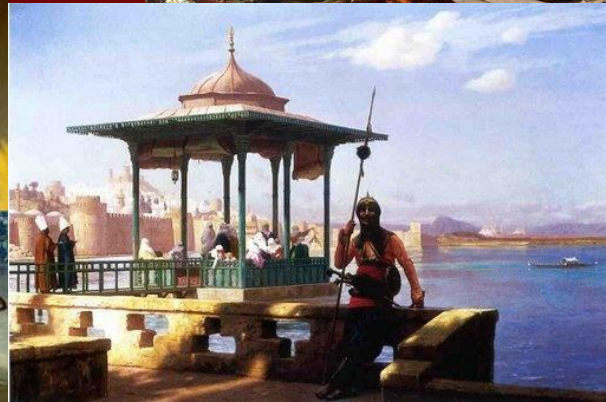
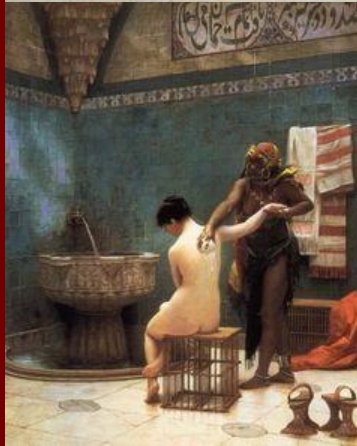
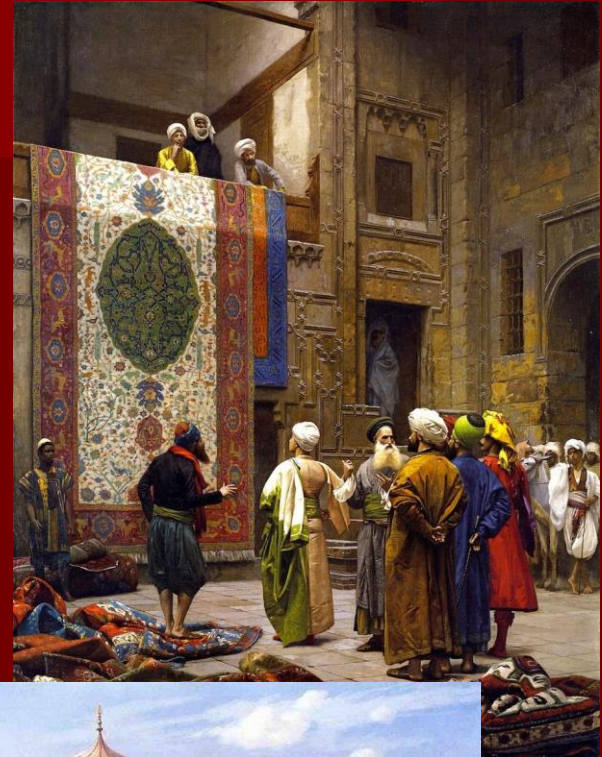


- 1839: *Edict of Gülhane* created a bureaucratic system of taxation with salaried tax collectors, and ensured rule of law to all Ottoman citizens
- 1840: first paper banknotes, post office
- 1844: adoption of national anthem and flag; first census and national identity cards
- 1845: est. of a Council of Public Instruction
- 1847: est. Ministry of Education; abolition of slavery and slave trade
- 1848: est. of universities, academies, teacher training schools

Tanzimat Istanbul: Modernisation
Dolmabahçe Palace (built 1856)



Tanzimat Istanbul: Ottoman
Orientalism
Jean-Léon Gérôme paintings of
Ottoman Empire





'European
Istanbul' -
Pera and
Beyoğlu

ATATURK REVOLUTION

Zeki Faik
İzler, *Road
To
Revolution*,
1933

- Defeat in WWI
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Pamuk on Changing Istanbul

Still, the melancholy of this dying culture [of the Ottoman Empire] was all around us. Great as the desire to **Westernise and modernise** may have been, the more **desperate** wish, it seemed, was to be rid of all the bitter memories of the fallen empire: rather as a spurned lover throws away his lost beloved's clothes, possessions and photographs. **But as nothing, Western or local, came to fill the void, the great drive to Westernise amounted mostly to the erasure of the past; the effect on culture was reductive and stunting, leading families like mine, otherwise glad of Republican progress, to furnish their houses like museums.**

- Pamuk, *Istanbul*, p. 27



Pamuk Apartments

The Pamuk Apartments were built at the edge of a large lot in Nişantaşı that had once been the garden of a pasha's mansion ... My first schools were housed in the Crown Prince Yusuf İzzeddin Pasha Mansion, and in the Grand Vizier Halil Rifat Pasha Mansion. Each would be burned and demolished while I was studying there, even as I played soccer in the gardens

Watching the pashas' mansions burn to the ground, **my family maintained a stony equanimity**—much as we had done in the face of all those stories about crazy princes, opium addicts in the palace harem, children locked in attics, treacherous sultans' daughters, and exiled or murdered pashas, and ultimately the decline and fall of the empire itself. As we in Nişantaşı saw it, the Republic had done away with the pashas, princes, and high officials, so the empty mansions they had left behind were only decrepit anomalies.-



Life in Pamuk Apartments

Sitting rooms were not meant to be places where you could sit comfortably; they were **little museums designed to demonstrate that the householders were Westernised** ... you could find these **haphazard and gloomy** (but sometimes also poetic) displays of Western influence in sitting rooms all over Turkey; it was only the arrival of television in the 1970s that they went out of fashion [and] sitting rooms changed from little museums to little cinemas.

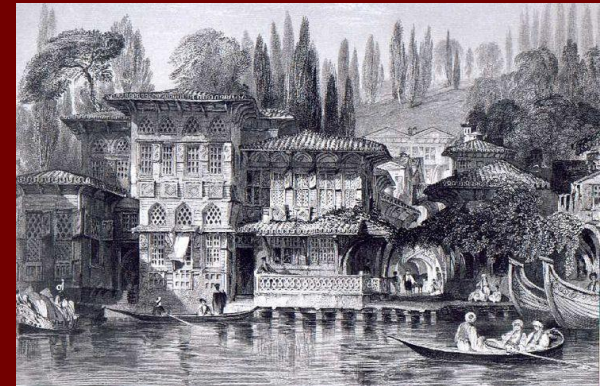
... Never having seen them put to any use, I assumed pianos were places for exhibiting photographs. There was not a single surface in my grandmother's sitting room that wasn't covered with frames of all sizes.

-Pamuk, *Istanbul*, pp. 10—11.



Istanbul through 'Western Eyes'

If we see our city in black and white, it's partly because we know it from the engravings left to us by Western artists: the glorious colours of its past were never painted by local hands. There is no Ottoman painting that can easily accommodate our visual tastes. Nor is there a single piece of writing or work in today's world that can teach us how to take pleasure in Ottoman art or the classic Persian art that influenced it ... when magazines or schoolbooks need an image of old Istanbul, they use black-and-white engravings produced by Western travellers and artists. My contemporaries ... prefer to see their past in a more easily reproduced monochrome. For when they gaze into a colourless image, they see their melancholy confirmed.



Pamuk on Religion

“Our republican, European household reduced religion to a strange and sometimes amusing set of rules on which the lower classes depended; having stripped religion of its power, we were able to accept it into our home, as a sort of strange background music to accompany our oscillations between East and West.”

■ - Pamuk, *Istanbul*, pp. 163—164.

Military Coups in Turkey

1960: Military coup

1971: Coup by military
"memorandum"

1980: Military coup

1997: Coup by military
"memorandum"

2016: Attempted military coup



Turkey's Islamist Dream Finally Becomes a Reality

The Hagia Sophia has been designated as a mosque again, its status as a museum viewed for decades as a seal on the country's spirit.

July 14, 2020

Erdoğan leads first prayers at Hagia Sophia museum reverted to mosque



THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

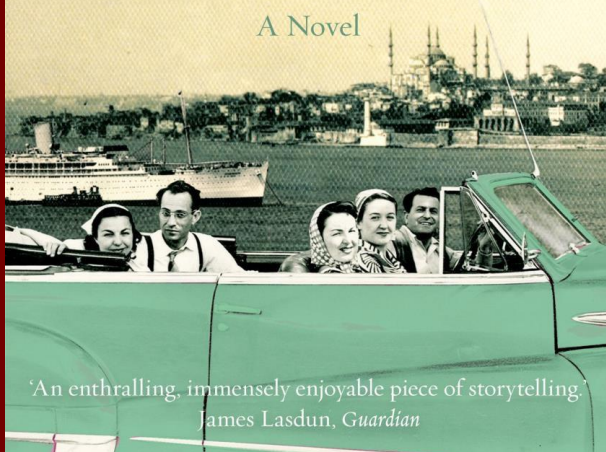


ORHAN PAMUK

Winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature

The Museum of Innocence

A Novel



'An enthralling, immensely enjoyable piece of storytelling.'
James Lasdun, *Guardian*

ORHAN PAMUK MASUMİYET MÜZESİ

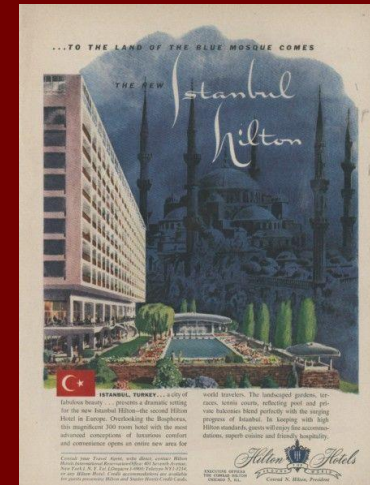
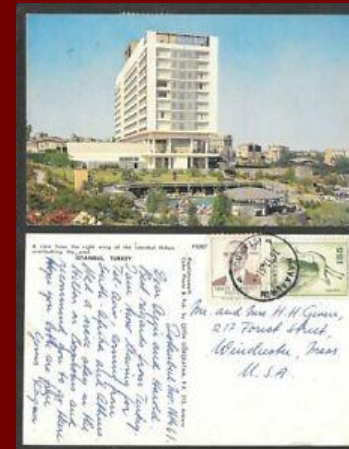


Pamuk on Istanbul Hilton

The Hilton had been, since the day it opened [in 1955], one of the few civilised establishments in Turkey where a well-heeled gentleman and a courageous lady could obtain a room without being asked for a marriage certificate.

... We could see the new building from our house, and though at first it looked foreign against Istanbul's tired old silhouette, during the years that followed my parents grew accustomed to it, going there whenever they could. In those years so many Western innovations made their first appearance in this hotel that the leading newspapers even posted reporters there. If one of my mother's favourite suits got stained she would send it to the dry cleaner at the Hilton, and she liked to drink tea with her friends at the patisserie in the lobby. Quite a few of my friends had their weddings in the grand ballroom ...

- Orhan Pamuk, translated by Maureen Freely, *The Museum of Innocence* (London: Faber and Faber,, 2010 [2008]), pp. 141—142.





The Museum
of Innocence,
Çukurcuma,
İstanbul





The novel as museum, the novel makes objects and a museum

Orhan Pamuk's Museum of Innocence



A manifesto for the object?

(Following O. Pamuk's *Manifesto for Museums*)

WE HAD

Epics
Representations
Monuments
Histories
Nations, Groups,
Teams
Large and expensive

WE NEED

Novels
Expression
Homes
Stories
Persons, Individuals
Small and Cheap

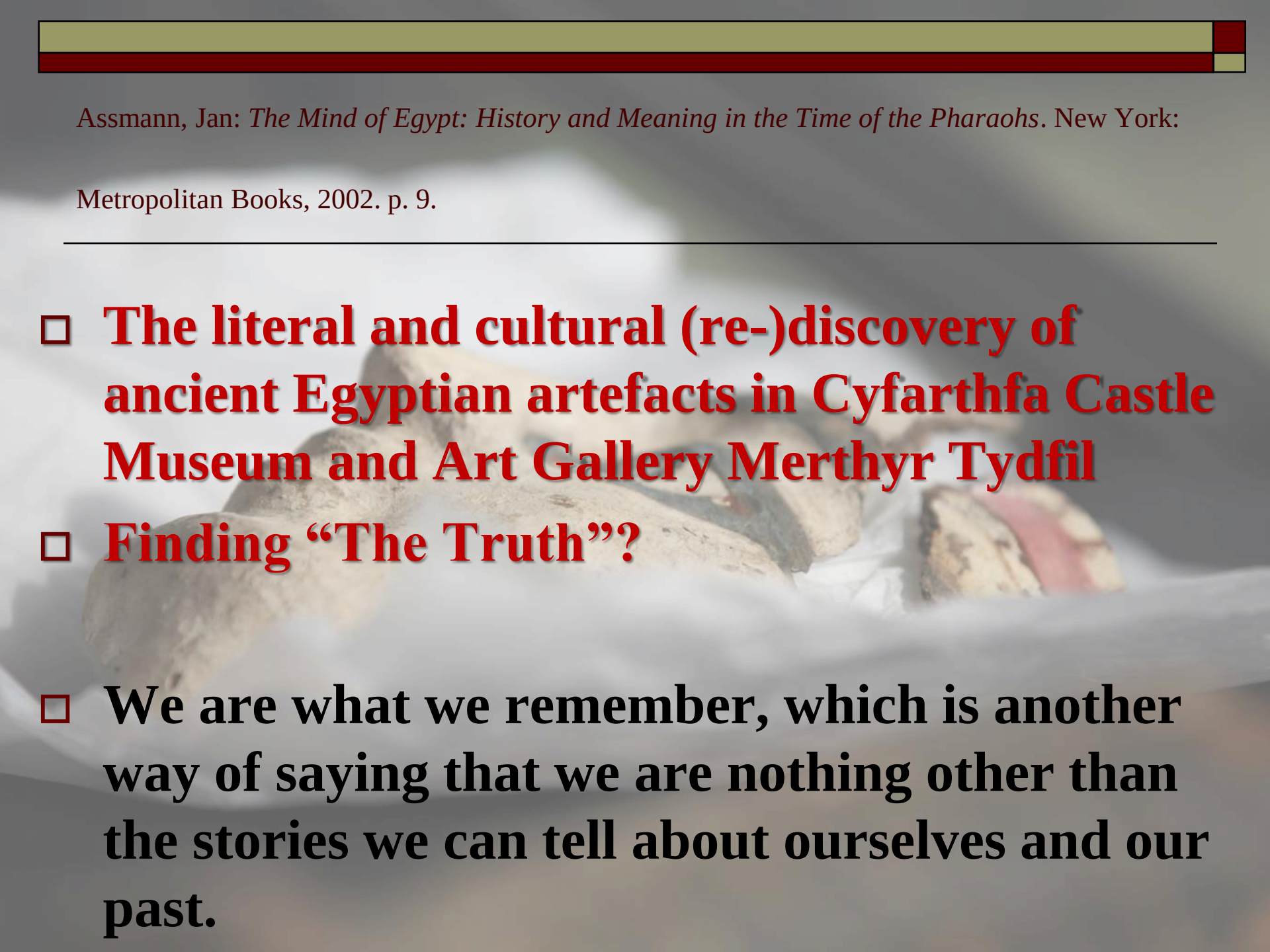
OBJECTS NEED

Stories
Attention
Awareness for
materiality
Identity (receiving
and giving)
Any scale



Assmann, Jan: *The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs*. New York:

Metropolitan Books, 2002. p. 9.

- 
- ❑ **The literal and cultural (re-)discovery of ancient Egyptian artefacts in Cyfarthfa Castle Museum and Art Gallery Merthyr Tydfil**
 - ❑ **Finding “The Truth”?**
 - ❑ **We are what we remember, which is another way of saying that we are nothing other than the stories we can tell about ourselves and our past.**

