

OBJECTS AND INTERPRETATION: COMPREHENDING CULTURAL CRISIS IN ORHAN PAMUK'S *THE MUSEUM OF INNOCENCE*

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Abstract:

Westernization in Turkey is still one of the most contested issues highlighting the conflict among different cultural ideologies. Dissenting voices against state sponsored westernized culture necessitate the decoding of cultural objects from the lost Ottoman heritage. Stories of ordinary people and their struggle to define cultural sensibility are retold to resurrect everyday material objects representing forgotten culture. Inherent cultural indigenosity of these objects is highlighted in the times when it is abolished from communal memory by republican propaganda. The Museum of Innocence is a love story set in Istanbul during the eighth and ninth decade of twentieth century when Turkey, with the emergence of pro-European upper middle class, had convincingly inherited the spirit of east-west duality. The collaboration of objects with cultural fragmentation and forgetting lends this novel a unique place in the history of modern Turkish novel. Pamuk reverses the role of object through memory and nostalgia for lost love and documents the cultural complexity in Istanbul to initiate the social management of cultural memory where unnoticed and unqualified objects interpret the new cultural mores. This paper aims at pinpointing the social and personal implication of collecting the objects and how it transpires into the sufficiency of defining mitigated cultural space in the backdrop of a disastrous love story.

Key Words: *Objectification, Culture, Fragmentation, East-West, Post-Modern, Museology.*

Introduction:

Europeanization in Turkey has ushered into a complex process of modernization with a threat to its cultural legacy. Pamuk's arrival in this chaotic scene is an example of literary practice of an apolitical discourse on cultural definitions. This apolitical discourse is embedded in personal belongings and memories capable of resurrecting cultural inferences of one's society, in other words, objects can speak. The objects of personal belonging are seen as potential social signifiers for finding solutions for mitigated cultural space and individuality. *TMOI* narrates the story of an obsessed lover collecting objects associated with his lost love and at the same time depicts cultural values among elite class of Turkey during 1970s and 1980s. In a way, museum created by these collected objects is used as an alternative version of creating cultural dialogues which are silenced in Pamuk's earlier novel *Snow*.

Museums today are increasingly dynamic actors that work to contribute to positive societal development. They ask critical questions about established truths, highlight current social challenges, and bring out voices that have been forgotten. (Pabst 5)

The relation between objects and words is same as the relation between culture and its symbols. This practice of creating objects as cultural symbols warrants the interrogation of established belief that culture thrives only in popular and time honored practices practiced collectively by society. Cultural codification through subjective assessment is yet another emerging trope of narrating culture as “a more noticeable change these days is this turn towards the presentation of the personal past, instead of the collective one” (Leventaki 8). The idea to reframe cultural meanings through a personalized museum by

objectifying it as a collective cultural sensibility is itself a postmodern departure from metanarratives of cultural explanations. Unlike Pamuk's earlier novels, existential, cultural and historical realities of the nation are dealt with the representative and materialistic sense of truth in *TMOI*. One museum created through words in the novel and the other in Istanbul in material form, strengthens the notion of culture at multiple levels.

Pamuk uses his literary innovation and modernity to challenge westernization and republican apathy toward Turkish cultural ingenuity. *TMOI* comments on political representation with literary experimentation. "Using objects to explore the world in which they belong is at the heart of both novels and museums" (*TIOM* 69). The result is an act of analyzing behavioral patterns of a newly emerged neo-liberal upper middle-class in the backdrop of melancholy of being influenced by western way of life and nostalgia for the lost love. Pamuk on the pretext of his melancholic protagonist comments on larger cultural implications. Pamuk initiates the march beyond cultural metanarratives reduced deliberately to a common love story metamorphosed into a habit of collecting to establish Turkishness. "The new postmodern trend in the area of museology was grounded in the idea that museums had been elitist and thus isolated from the contemporary world and its needs" (Marta 20). Pamuk turns a personal story created through objects into mass expression to surface their individuality against encompassing frames of established inferences of culture and society.

The objects in the museum and the narratives in the novel are not the symbols of negation of western museology or cultural practices but a strategy to highlight own cultural derogations while to make an attempt to view cultural limitations of an inherently religious society for better understanding of the conflict between east and west. Museum is not for glorification of one's society but to tell a true story of the society.

Contextual Concerns in *the Museum of Innocence*:

Republican obsession for western codes and objects is undoubtedly the dominant spirit of contemporary Turkish cultural spirit. However, cultural explanations are dynamic as construction and deconstruction of these objectified cultural codes remain a persistent reality in post-modern societies. Dominant cultural codes and objects of national identity constantly confront the counter cultural version of ordinary objects defining parallel principle of cultural reality. *TMOI* is also one such attempt that with the help of a common love story traces out the forgotten cultural history of the nation as a symbol of resistance because in this novel the strategies of, "writing the novel and collecting the objects share the same objective, the preservation of a half forgotten era of the nation's cultural history" (Xing 213).

Kemal, an upper-class westernized young man is all set to marry his girlfriend Sibel. On one fine day, Kemal comes across Fusun in a gift boutique where she is working as a salesgirl. He continues meeting Fusun but also gets engaged with Sibel as his class inflicted mentality doesn't allow deserting Sibel because "any intelligent person knows that life is a beautiful thing and the purpose of life is to be happy" (*TMOI* 105). Suddenly Fusun also disappears and Kemal proceeds with Sibel once again. But his love expedition doesn't end here as he realizes that he is head over heel in love with Fusun and her absence starts paining him. "It was during these important days- as I was collecting the first objects for my museum" (*TMOI* 179).

In a turn-around of events, Kemal starts collecting all the objects he finds associated to Fusun and her memories especially of the time he spent with Fusun at Mehramat apartment. This passion turns into obsession and resulted in his deserting of Sibel. Meanwhile, the death of Kemal's father brought in a condolence letter from Fusun's family enabling Kemal to find out Fusun with the revelations that Fusun is married to an aspiring filmmaker Feridun. Unperturbed by Fusun's marriage with Feridun, Kemal starts visiting Fusun's house regularly and stealing the ordinary objects to maintain the psychological closeness with Fusun. "During my eight years of going to the Keskins' for supper, I was able to squirrel away 4,213 of

Fusun's cigarette butts" (*TMOI* 393). Fusun deserts Feridun and about to marry Kemal but in another major turn-around of events Fusun dies in a car accident and leaving Kemal half dead. After being recuperated Kemal devotes himself to build a museum of objects in which whatever objects he could collect throughout these years with Fusun and without Fusun.

By creating a text out of an exhibit and an exhibit out of a text, Pamuk is situating the collecting impulse in individual desire that is nonetheless the kernel of literary modernity as well as a material-mystical quest and an allegory for the fragmentation of the secular nation. (Gokner 236)

Creating A Personal Museum to Tell The Hidden Truths:

[w]e don't need more museums that try to construct the historical narratives of a society, community, team, nation ... We all know that the ordinary, everyday stories of individuals are richer, more humane, and much more joyful. (Pamuk 55)

Elevation of an ordinary love story to a document of cultural change in Turkey revolves around three dimensions. First is the mission to abandon imposed uniform cultural identity by creating a personal museum because, "the museum promotes heterogeneity over homogeneity in terms of representation of the national culture" (Lawrence 102), second is the role of individuals in creating parallel national cultural stories by talking on their own life and changes as this practice, "creates daily objects to subvert traditional notions of love and desire" (Serrano 209), and third is the repudiation of this westernized cultural sensibility by collecting and preserving objects to assert the change in culture to, "disrupt the grand taxonomies of official culture" (Patey & Scuriatti 4-5). This word-object dichotomy enlarges the cultural discourse with a keen observation on changes and a vision of harmony.

Kemal's obsession for objects and documenting of his social milieu creates a space for new cultural realities. Object associated with Fusun are metamorphosed into tools of cultural memory and nostalgia. Kemal not just merely remembers Fusun through these objects but in fact chronicles the inherent change his society undergoes during all these years. Expectedly, objects not only reincarnate Fusun but also recompose the experience of modernity in a religious society. This new experience of westernized cultural identity is shown as a troubled affair and narrated from an extremely individualistic point of view comprising many voices of people known to Kemal contrary to republican propaganda of a harmonious adaptation of europeanization in Turkey. Pamuk reveals that, "describing objects and interiors was a way of allowing the reader to deduce the social status and psychological makeup of the novel's protagonist" (*TNASN* 109), and at the same time other characters associated to this story.

Pamuk labels this cultural invasion as a negation of subjective cultural experiences in a society just entered the threshold of cultural change. The need of asserting one's perception of culture is sought necessary to question elite cultural practices that had been defying any counter view of cultural representation. For him objects preserve the colloquialism of ordinary interactions among masses based on multiple inferences of culture, "This is how I wrote my novel *The Museum of Innocence* by finding, studying, and describing objects that inspired me" (*TNASN* 122). These cultural inferences mirror the growing dissent among masses and showcases popular apathy of being generalized culturally. Pamuk generated the archival capacity of objects in preserving and expressing common sentiments and prejudices in the way of living. It is interesting to mention that Pamuk has built a real museum in Istanbul which exhibits all the objects mentioned in the novel. This real-imagined dichotomy creates a space where the cultural bounds melt and the ordinary objects develop a sense of belongingness among all who read the novel or visit the museum.

The Istanbul of 70s and 80s emerges out of objects collected in a love story. Kemal offers a new insight on the cultural domain by memorizing his beloved as he not only feels the agony of lost love but

also the existential incapacities of his class in surge of westernization because, “culture is to society what memory is to individual” (Triandis 4). An issue of infidelity and sexuality becomes touchstone to measure the pseudo modernity of a half western and half eastern society. Kemal manifests this cultural sensibility while showcasing and narrating the indigenous objects, because he stresses the need of one's own museum to identify with one's true cultural self and stop, “western civilization ... allowing it to rule the world” (*TMOI* 73).

Kemal's deserting of Sibel is the first instance where authorial concerns to keep his relatives' responses out of dominant cultural generalization grow intense. Pamuk sidelines the linearity of westernized cultural sensibility which as per his vision should be viewed the other way around informing basic trouble ridden characteristic of Turkish cultural sensibility. This issue of breaking social norms is treated from a more locale perspective. The cultural elitism of his class is narrated not through introspections and observations but by using the objects used by this class during this whole episode. How the earrings Kemal gets from his father which he gives to Fusun serendipitously narrates the cultural bearings of his society. Earrings initiate the discussion on modernity introduced in Turkey by western world and the declaration of Turkey as primitive society in pre-Kemalist times.

Women's empowerment in Turkey associated with Kemalist reforms finds its lineage to pre-Kemalist period to highlight the instinctual positivity of male psychology in Turkey which has to do nothing with modernization or westernization. His father is a symbol of this male benevolence towards women which is thoroughly against the republican cultural codes criticizing traditional society for its patriarchal sexuality. Kemal's father statement on knowing his estrangement from Sibel consolidates this inherent modernity of male class, “my son, you must know how important it is to treat women well ... let my words remain on your ears as the earrings remain on Sibel's” (*TMOI* 93). This whole episode revolves around the pair of earrings but offers a deep insight on the contradiction between cultural claims of metanarratives and cultural sensibilities of Turkish people. In a way earring as an object narrate the cultural misrepresentations in Kemal's society. Alleging traditional society as exploitative of women because of its Islamic texture is a misrepresented propaganda and , “the problem rooted not so much in Islam as in patriarchal attitudes that diehard secularists have also failed to tackle” (Finkel 167).

Kemal keeps on accumulating objects not only to retain Fusun's memories in his mind but to understand the heterogeneity of views on love and desire and at the same time exploring the cultural essentialism of the society on the march of cultural singularity. Kemal opens the space for reconsideration of the westernized cultural elitism prevailed in the neo-liberal faction of the society which he himself is part of. He unhesitatingly shows his anguish over this recently inherited pseudo westernized sensibility by displaying the objects like women dress, electronic gadgets and soda bottles. All these objects present a contrary version of reality associated with dominant cultural patterns in his society to authenticate the multi-perspectivity of this neo-liberal class in accepting the culture. There are many colors of this solidarity to western culture in Istanbul and one of them is the attitudinal inability of people to inherit westernization psychologically though claiming to inherit it materialistically. Kemal on the pretext of remembering Fusun recalls all those moments of togetherness and shrewdly parodies this cultural obsession highlighting the emergence of new cultural patterns clutched in the duality of choice between traditionalism and modernism.

However it's pertinent to understand that this repudiation of republican propaganda of Islamic patriarchy is not to declare the impeccability and integrity of characters of Istanbul. Kemal at the same time lays bare the voluptuous nature of his countrymen to show the cultural complexity and ill-perceived westernization. Interestingly to highlight the instinctual sexuality of this upper-middle class Kemal again resorts to objects. When he talks about Fusun's sexual exploitation during her childhood he reincarnates the objects like ashtray, cigarette packets and cupboard to reveal this cultural inexactitude and deformity.

The cigarette packets exhibited alongside this Kutahya ashtray retrieved from a cupboard elsewhere in the flat...assembled here to evoke the room's heavy, draining, crushing atmosphere at that moment. Fusun's girlish hair clip should remind us that the stories she told had happened to a child. (*TMOI*55)

Thus, Kemal's obsession for Fusun is not limited to his personal sense of loss but in fact enlarged up to the loss of cultural sense also. The other side of westernization in Istanbul is highlighted with the refrain of multiple meanings of cultural inherency which at one side propagated as emancipation but at the other side viewed as mere imitation. The question whether Kemal is right in abandoning Sibel for Fusun is analyzed against the backdrop of a society responding to this infidelity or love in multiple way. Although Kemal's audacity may seem acceptable to this neo-liberal class but the inherent conservatism is impossible to suppress. "Following the drive to Westernize and modernize, and (even more significantly) the haste to urbanize, it became common practice for girls to defer marriage until they were older ... but in those days, even in Istanbul's most affluent Westernized circles, a young girl who surrendered her chastity before marriage could still be judged in certain ways" (*TMOI* 61). Kemal's pathology symbolizes the national pathology mounting in a new cultural sense struggling to synthesis tradition and modernity. His quest for objects and lost love can be contextualized in new culture in Istanbul where, "different classes portrayed in the novel represent different attitudes towards modernity" (Ozgul 207) and this novel highlights this cultural dualism in context of comparatively unconventional subject of sexuality.

Dissolving the Boundary between Objectification and Interpretation:

Next agenda of decoding culture is to narrate common stories so that modern hegemony objectifying cultural ingenuity with dominant symbols can be unveiled. In the chapter "4,213 Cigarette" Stubs Kemal tells how he had been stealing the stubs of cigarettes smoked by Fusun. This is an interesting revelation about the connectivity of objects and cultural crisis in Istanbul. Ironically the metanarratives of western influence exerted on Turkey are reversed to convey the impulsion of Kemal and at the same time his extreme personal connotation of cigarette stubs. Smoking cigarettes is considered as an influence exerted by West and is deemed unfit in Turkish society. Kemal views cigarettes from two perspectives which construct Kemal's dexterity in constructing cultural dilemma through objects. First at personal level that he collects these stubs because they are puffed by Fusun and in this way "touched her rosy lips and entered her mouth, some even touching her tongue and becoming moist" (*TMOI* 393).

Second, Kemal narrates the cultural inexactitude associated with smoking in Turkey when he is sitting with Fusun's father, he opines:

The anxious adherence to the forms of deference that we associate with traditional families - sitting straight ... or smoking in front of one's father - had over time slowly disappeared. Tarik Bey certainly saw his daughter smoking, but he didn't respond as one might expect a traditional father would. It was a great joy to study the myriad social refinements of which anthropologists seem to have so little understanding. (*TMOI* 394)

These cigarettes are symbolized as split-soul of Istanbul which is vacillating between East and West. Kemal by an act of reminding Fusun through cigarette stubs delves deep into cultural bearings of a traditional Turkish family which is still in hiatus of traditionalism to modernization and unable to decide its cultural affiliations resulting in a identity crisis. Even Fusun's is also uncomfortable to this new cultural practice but the instinctual indeterminism is the barrier in way of any kind of cultural exclusivity in Turkish social life. Fusun and her father seem to accustomed to this newly inherited cultural practice but instinctually they both become as the symbol of cultural mockery, "but when she has to exhale, Fusun would suddenly turn her head to the right, directing the fast cloud of dark blue smoke to appoint far from

the table... her face clouding with guilt, panic, and affected shame” (*TMOI* 394).

Further Kemal associates the introduction of local Turkish soda in civil society with the optimism of western industrialization in Turkey. Industrialization during the eighth and ninth decade in last century consolidated the Republic sense of development through western model of commodity culture. Moreover it also shows the dominance of soda over traditional sherbet in Turkey. Zaim, a local entrepreneur, was “celebrating the launch of his new product ... Turkey's first domestic fruit soda, Meltem, in memory of our optimism and happy-go-lucky spirit of the day” (*TMOI* 26). Coca Cola bottle is an object communicating the cultural contestation among different factions of the society. Kemal's friend Zaim highlights this conflict between modern Turkey and provincial Turkey when he laments on the depleting brand value of his Turkish made drink where one section is obsessed with this western object and, “once they've seen Maradona ... holding a Coca-Cola, they couldn't care less about a Turkish-made drink, even though it's cheaper and healthier” (*TMOI* 411). On the other side there is another section which still savors the ingenuity of these drinks, “because people in the provinces haven't corrupted their palates yet, because they're pure Turks, that's why” (*TMOI* 411).

Magnitude of these ordinary objects rests on the longevity they provide to changing social milieu in the backdrop of a love story. If soda bottle is a symbol of optimism then it also reflects the slavish imitation of western objects because, “already very poor imitations of our first great national soda brand were turning up everywhere” (*TMOI* 272), thus remains a cultural representation of Istanbul, “This bottle would remain for many years on the bedside table at the Merhamet Apartments, meticulously preserved ... a bottle of Meltem soda, the soda launched at the time of our story begins, and now available throughout the country” (*TMOI* 272).

The postcards of Hilton hotel in Istanbul where Kemal's engagement party was celebrated are yet another example of asserting cultural realities through ordinary objects. Not only for their power of resurfacing the events that took place in Hilton during engagement party but these postcards capture the surge of westernized luxury creeping in Istanbul. How interestingly, Kemal, reminding of the most crucial phase of his love story, turns this event into a cultural commentary:

I was able to acquire one of these postcards depicting the hotel's modernist international style façade ... In those years so many Western innovations made their first appearance in this hotel that the leading newspapers even posted reporters there. (*TMOI* 103)

The grandiose of westernization is narrated here from many perspectives. First is undoubtedly, Kemal's sense of nostalgia, looking back to his life and its course of his love story with Fusun. Second, it is the commentary on westernization surge during that time in Istanbul which is unavoidable to ignore in relation to societal and cultural intricacies of their love affair. And third, the most important is the crisis emerging out of this cultural transition where the process of modernization is stuck between traditionalism and modernism or east vs. west. During this whole episode of engagement party cultural crisis is talked about consistently. One of Kemal's relative highlights this crisis, “You are in the world of business, so you know better than I do that we are swamped by ill-mannered nouveaux riches and provincials with their headscarf-wearing wives and daughters. Just the other day I saw a man with two wives trailing him, draped in black from head to toe, like Arabs” (*TMOI* 110).

The whole episode at Hilton hotel gives a fine view of the growing idiosyncrasies of the elite class in Istanbul falling under the influence of western style of living. Kemal's love story grows as a parallel to the seismic shifts in cultural bearings of Istanbul and the objects incarnate into a saga of Turkey, “The postmodern way of thinking has influenced all aspects of life, including the way an exhibition is perceived and experienced. As a result, even a very personal collection can become a public exhibition, or inspire the creation of a whole museum” (Leventaki 19). *The Museum of Innocence* intensifies the experiences of

objects in order to sustain lost love and at the same time the social circumstances at its backdrop to present a less popular yet indigenous notions of these objects. Objects decode cultural codes and reveal that, “how the Istanbul bourgeoisie had trampled over one another to be the first to own an electric shaver, a can opener ... lacerating their hands and faces as they struggled to learn how to use them” (*TMOI* 125).

Even the cosmetic objects serve the purpose of highlighting new brand obsession of this nouveau riche class. It, “was the merciless reminder to the women of Istanbul society that even they bleached their hair, plucked their eyebrows, and scoured outfits that might let them feel more European, their darker skin and fuller figures were never entirely redeemed by such efforts” (*TMOI* 79). In another incident when Fusun sells a fake Jenny Colon hand bag to Sibel. Sibel shows her anger but Fusun's response surprisingly resonates with Turkish anxiety for modernization resulting in fake expressions of people. She retorts, “For me, it's not in the least important whether something is or isn't a European product ... if a thing is genuine or fake ... people's dislike of imitations has nothing to do with fake or real, but for the fear that others might think that they'd bought it cheap” (*TMOI* 144).

This concern of mounting modernization resurfaces once again when Kemal understands the basic reason of Feridun's failure in making a popular film. Feridun intends to make a Turkish art film on the western model but he is failed because he can't compete with the popular Turkish movies made by cheap imitation of western movies. “He had very astutely identified their typical mistakes (imitation, artificiality, moralism, vulgarity, melodrama, and commercial populism, etc.)” (*TMOI* 302). Myriad other objects ranging from Fusun's earrings, cologne, clocks to clothespins, matchboxes and restaurant menus exhibit the cultural patterns of Istanbul from 1975 to 1984.

The memories of watching TV at Fusun's house is not a mere nostalgic evocation of TV for reliving the experience of togetherness with Fusun but in fact reconstruction of cultural memory which undoubtedly emerges from a western object i.e. TV. These objects are invaluable for their larger cultural sense of Kemal's city. Watching TV together is a symbol of inherent Turkish value of family togetherness surprisingly associated with a western object, “that even though we were meeting together in the same house to watch television every evening, life was an adventure, and there was a beauty in doing things together” (*TMOI* 391).

Locating the New Cultural Codes:

This newly emerged section of Turkish society transcends the cultural realities to a higher level of objectification with the postmodern dexterity of placing one's cultural experiences into collective realm. Pamuk creates a museum which can exhibit the communal destiny of people who are clutched in morality and free will. Ordinary objects are ordinary in a sense that they are more representational and familiar than the objects of exalted ideologies, “These museum spaces serve to write an alternative history to official narratives” (Gokner 237). Common stories replete with clues of cultural secrets and create an opportunity to rewrite the cultural history from an alternative perspective with the least celebrated objects of ordinary life. Culture is not what is defined in metanarratives but it soars in strengths and shortcomings of people. For republican narratives this habitual change among Turkish people in favor of western objects is assertion of westernization in Turkey but Pamuk is more concerned about this half-baked cultural maturity of people.

Kemal's reliance on objects necessitates the importance of positivism in Turkish society. Miasma around the defeated sense of cultural identity like the loss of Fusun for Kemal and the loss of cultural richness in Turkey for its people is converted into a source of reframing cultural insufficiencies into a new symbol of resistance. The objects of cultural memory and the objects of beloved's memory are elevated to, “syncreticism- its ability to blend the traditionalism and modern together” (Yuvaj 59), so that, “what Turks should be viewing in their own museums are not bad imitations of western art but their own lives” (*TMOI* 524).

Acceptance of inability in defining the cultural orientations amidst nationalism and modernization is the new feature of Turkish culture. At last, beyond fierce contestation a broader view is looked upon by this new emerging upper middle class that narrates everyday stories not to gather semblance of dominant struggle in society but to look into their own shortcomings in embracing either west or east. *TMOI* is an apt example of this blatant revelation of one's own failure before it falls into dominant cultural definitions on existential crisis and Pamuk, “did this by writing (and speaking) evocatively about things that Turks find embarrassing while simultaneously ridiculing things that Turks lionize” (Zarakol 2).

Highly intense is the magnetic power of Kemal's evocation of objects that menus of restaurant, wine glasses, stones, shell of snail can transport Kemal to remember the days of his guilty stricken happiness with Sibel and family friends with a sharp observation on the elite's neutrality on fierce clashes in the outer society, “outside in the streets of Istanbul, communists and nationalist were gunning each other down, robbing banks, throwing bombs, and spraying coffeehouses with bullets, but we had occasion, and license, to forget the entire world” (*TMOI* 175). Kemal presents the hidden symmetries of Istanbul which are not laced with dominant spirit of unrest in society. His world is also in trouble and pain but surprisingly not like the trouble and pain of common Turkish people. It's a consolidation of the postmodern response of irony and celebration on fragmentation. Cultural unrest is perceived through a subjective, objective and detached narrative of Kemal's memories for Fusun.

Kemal himself reveals his desire to transform his obsession of collection into broader frameworks of cultural representation. In reality, he is not only telling his failed love story through these objects but also feeling the pulsating nerve of Istanbul, he states:

With my museum I want to teach not just the Turkish people but all the people of the world to take pride in the lives they live ... if the objects that bring us shame are displayed in a museum, they are immediately transformed into possessions in which to take pride.
(*TMOI* 518)

Conclusion:

TMOI is in true sense an expression of literary modernity transcending the interpretative values of story-telling to representational inherence. Pamuk evokes everyday objects in the backdrop of a love story to lay bare the idiosyncrasies of his countrymen struggling to come in the term with the project of modernization in Turkey. Objects, for him, are the source of self-denial and self-assertion; pride and shame to consolidate own museums on the line of postmodern celebration of fragmentation and here in this story objects represent this fragmented cultural experience suspended in a hiatus in the march towards modernization.

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