



# Making a Museum of the Past: Reading *A Mind at Peace* and *The Museum of Innocence* Through the Concepts of Museum and City

## Geçmişin Müzesini Yapmak: Huzur ve Masumiyet Müzesi'ni Müze ve Şehir Kavramları Etrafında Birlikte Okumak

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### ABSTRACT

One of the main themes in Orhan Pamuk's works is the idea of "making a museum of life," which represents remembering and preserving in his literary universe. This theme is not only present in *The Museum of Innocence*, but also appears as a core idea in the author's preceding novels, especially those set in the İstanbul of his period. This idea reaches its peak when the author simultaneously releases his novel *The Museum of Innocence* and an eponymous museum. Although Pamuk's novel-museum project emphasizes the story of the individual, the "home-museum", as a history of personal events, objects and emotions, as opposed to the official historical discourse and official museums, his project also displays the city of İstanbul and details of its social history. Thus, the novel also turns into a "city-museum". It is notable that Pamuk credits the idea of making a museum of the past to Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar and his novel *A Mind at Peace* in an 1995 article. It can be claimed that there are significant analogies between these two novels. One of them is the place where the beloved woman, who is fictionalized as a work of art or transformed into a work of art, stands in the triangle of museum-city-novel. In this article, *A Mind at Peace* and *The Museum of Innocence* will be discussed and criticized through the concepts of museum, city, social history, loss and preservation, as well as examining the idea of making a museum of their İstanbul in these two novelists.

**Keywords:** Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, Orhan Pamuk, Museum, City, Preservation

### ÖZET

Orhan Pamuk'un eserlerinin kurucu temalarından biri olan ve onun yazınsal evreninde hatırlama ve muhafaza etmenin karşılığı olarak biçimlenen "hayatın müzesini yapmak" fikri yazarın *Masumiyet Müzesi*'nden önceki -bilhassa yaşadığı devrin İstanbul'unu konu edinen- romanlarında bir nüve olarak karşımıza çıkar. Söz konusu fikir yazarın 2008'de yayımlanan *Masumiyet Müzesi* romanının ve 2012'de aynı adla açılan fiziksel müzenin kurgulanması ve inşasında zirveye ulaşır Pamuk'un roman-müze projesiyle resmi tarih söylemi ve resmi müzelerin karşısında bireyin hikayesine, "ev-müze"ye; yani bir şahsi olaylar, nesnelere ve duygulanımlar tarihine vurgu yapmış olmakla birlikte romanda şehri ve onun toplumsal yaşantısına dair ayrıntıları da vitrine koyduğu görülür. Böylece roman aynı zamanda bir "şehir-müze"ye dönüşür. Pamuk'un 1995 yılında yayımlanan bir yazısında geçmişin müzesini yapma fikrini Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar'a ve onun Huzur romanına atfetmesi ise dikkat çekicidir. *Huzur* ve *Masumiyet Müzesi* arasında ise dikkate değer ölçüde paralellik bulunduğu



söylenbilir. Bunlardan biri de müze-şehir-roman üçgeninde bir sanat eseri olarak kurgulanan ya da doğrudan sanat eserinin kendisi haline getirilen sevgilinin durduğu yerdir. Bu makalede Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar'ın Huzur ve Orhan Pamuk'un Masumiyet Müzesi romanları ele alınarak İstanbul, müze, sosyal tarih ve muhafaza etme kavramları etrafında eleştirel bir okuma yapılacak, bu iki romancıda kendi İstanbullarını müzeleştirme fikri irdelenecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, Orhan Pamuk, Müze, Şehir, Muhafaza etme

## Introduction

Whether the novel can be acknowledged as a historical and sociological source of reference is a matter of controversy, yet it is generally agreed that as a genre it often contains data regarding the temporal and spatial context in which it is fictionalized. As Harry C. Payne states, the novel can capture and record emotional resonances of the past and present in a manner that social historians are unable to capture, while helping us to enter the “mind” of the time (1978, p. 343). The novel is further distinguished by its representation of both experience and perception, along with spatial and social changes. In this context, the content of the novel is closely related to the writer’s perceptions of their setting, including its history, present sociability, and the social backgrounds of those who use it. This can be seen, for instance, in how the modernization process and the resulting spatial and social changes have influenced some of the most significant Turkish novels. According to Berna Moran, westernization determines the problems of the Turkish novel especially up to the 1950s. If the most well-known writers of this period and their novels are examined, it will be noticed that all of them focused on modernization. This issue not only constitutes the main problem of the Turkish novel but also significantly determines its function, establishment, and characters (2001, p.24).

This article will discuss how the novel, by recording and preserving the city and its makeup within the literary text, can be seen as a fictional museum. In particular, it will discuss the literary approaches of Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar and Orhan Pamuk towards recording and preserving Istanbul and its cultural and social history in *A Mind at Peace* and *The Museum of Innocence*, respectively. As an idea, museumization can be seen as the sorting out of historical memory and reconstructing history in a chosen context. According to Andreas Huyssen (1995, p.15) the concept of “museum” is a consequence of modernization and evolved as the paradigmatic institution that collects and preserves that which is in danger of being demolished by modernization; “but in doing so, it inevitably will construct the past in light of the discourses of the present and in terms of present-day interest.” He, therefore, says that the idea of museum is not just about losing the past and traditions but “a multi-layered desire for (re)construction.” The museum object, lifted out of the context of its daily function, transforms and establishes a potential dialogue with other ages and acquires a representation that requires an act of memory to be read “not as an ordinary piece of knowledge, but as a historical hieroglyph.” Therefore, it takes the aura of historical distance and temporal transcendence from its materiality. It can thus be claimed that “the museal gaze” can be associated with the Weberian disenchantment of the modern world and the feeling of non-synchronization with the past. (Huyssen 1995, p.33-34) In this context, the desire to reconstruct the past from the nostalgic view of the present paves the way for fictional narratives to museumize the past and that which belongs to it.

## Museumization of the Past in O. Pamuk and A.H. Tanpınar

The idea of “making a museum of life” is one of the main themes of Orhan Pamuk’s oeuvre and can be seen as the equivalent of remembering and preserving in his literary universe. The

idea appears as a founding idea in some of the author's novels written before *The Museum of Innocence* as well as his autobiographical narrative, *Istanbul: Memories and The City*.<sup>1</sup> Pamuk moves toward the central idea that novels, "in their accumulation of things and creation of spaces of contemplation, are museums; and that museums, in their ordering and display of objects, are novels." (Gökner, 2013, p. 237) He systematized the relationship he established between museums and novels with various articles he wrote after he inaugurated *The Museum of Innocence* novel/museum project, remarking that his novels are "themselves like museums" (2018, p. 169) due to their "archival quality" (2010, p. 137) and symbolic representation:

But the museum-like quality of novels that I wish to dwell on is less about provoking thought and more about preservation, conservation, and the resistance to being forgotten. Just like families who go to a museum on Sundays, thinking that it preserves something of their own past and deriving pleasure from this thought, readers, too, take great pleasure in finding that a novel incorporates facets of their actual life [...]. The reason for this happiness perhaps parallels the illusion and subsequent pride we feel in museums: the feeling that history is not hollow and meaningless, and that something from the life we live will be preserved. [...] The pleasure the novel-reader gains is different from that of the museum visitor because, rather than preserving objects themselves, novels preserve our encounters with those objects—that is, our perception of them" (Pamuk 2010, p. 143).

In his novel, *The New Life*, Doctor Fine (Dr. Narin) establishes a museum of his deceased son Nahit's life on the upper floor of his house (Pamuk, 1998, p.114). In *The Black Book*, the idea of a museum appears in two different axes as "to make a museum of his own life" and "to make a museum of our past (as society)".<sup>2</sup> Celal Sâlik turns his house into a museum of his life, and the museum-house he organizes is "so carefully tended it verged on madness" (Pamuk, 2011, p. 426). He does so to preserve his memory -and pass it on to Galip- exactly the same "as [...] arranged forty years ago, when Celal first lived here with his mother." (p. 419). The museumized house is a representation of the reconstruction of the past:

If there was anything new, it was a simulation of something old; Galip had to ask himself if this was part of the game, as if these things were meant to trick him into thinking the last quarter century had never happened. But then, as he looked more

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- 1 In an interview with Orhan Pamuk about *The Museum of Innocence*, he says: "I have this idea. I have it in *The New Life* as well. The idea of making a museum of your own life." (2017b, p. 390) Jale Parla points out that the idea of "museum" in Orhan Pamuk can be traced back to his first novel, *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* (2018, p. 61). This idea should also be considered in connection with the autobiographical content of Pamuk's works.
  - 2 According to Erdağ Gökner, there are also "museum-like spaces" that appears in *The Silent House*, *The White Castle* and *My Name is Red*. He says: "These museum spaces serve to write an alternative history to official narratives. The significance of the archival space to cultural memory and history, and more importantly to the redefinition of the novel, has already been discussed. By foregrounding material culture and objects, the kernels of independent stories, Pamuk is able to move away from the ideological constraints of Republican modernity. The objects, in a sense, speak for themselves. The personas of archivist and collector are indispensable to Pamuk's literary production." (Gökner, 2013, p. 237-238).

closely, he decided that nothing in this room was playing a game with him; he felt instead as if everything he'd lived through since the time he was a child had melted away and vanished. The objects emerging from the terrible darkness were not new. They radiated the enchantment of newness only because they were things Galip would have expected to have aged, fallen apart, vanished, gone the way of his own memories, yet here they were, just where he'd last seen and forgotten them (2011, p. 399-400).

Through the museum-house, Galip will inherit Celal's memory and, in a way, reconstruct the past with his preserved memories. In this sense, the memory preserved in the museum-house is meaningful to the extent that it merges with Galip's memory. The second museum in *The Black Book* takes on a more social nature. Master Bedii's son establishes an underground museum of the mannequins his father had been producing for years, after they were returned because they were unorthodox and not dignified enough to be displayed in the European style grand department stores' (bonmarches) windows. The museum is made up of mannequins that are replicas of hundreds of different faces from Turkish society and cultural history, and which represents "the malcontents, our history, the things that make us who we are" (2011, p. 321). The "rat -and spider- infested, skeleton-strewn" (p. 329) underground mannequin museum, is also implied to be a burial ground for memories. The inhabitants of this tomb museum "all lived together [once upon a time], and their lives had had meaning, but then, for some unknown reason, they had lost that meaning, just as they'd also lost their memories." (p.333) But Master Bedii's successors dream of a carnivalesque revolt in which the patient skeletons and mannequins will come to life and organize a great feast that celebrates life and death and goes beyond time, history, laws and prohibitions. As Huyssen says (1995, p. 15), "the museum serves both as burial chamber of the past -with all that entails in terms of decay, erosion, forgetting- and as site of possible resurrections, however mediated and contaminated, in the eyes of the beholder." Yet, museums also have a surplus of meaning that transcends ideological boundaries and opens space for a "counter-hegemonic" recollection.

Even though the relationship between past and present and the idea of a "museum" are core ideas in Orhan Pamuk's earlier works, in *The Museum of Innocence* they take on a more deliberate purpose of building a fictional sphere. The museum, which was built in reference to the contents of the novel, makes use of not only objects, but also photographs and sound recordings. Its showcases are designed in a way to tell the relationship of objects with daily life as well as their relationship with the novel's chapters. Thus, the actual museum contains fictional content as well.<sup>3</sup>

3 For an article that examines *The Museum of Innocence* as a museum-novel, see: Xing, Y. (2013). The novel as museum: curating memory in Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*. *Critique*, 54:198-210.

Yin Xing says: "The readers of Pamuk's novel as museum, rely on their own understandings, memories, and imaginations to fully access the objects in the novel, and the objects in the novel perform a series of functions like the objects in the museum: first, through the displayed or described objects, we can observe the social reality closely related to them; second, readers of the novel resemble visitors to the museum, in that they all make different interpretations about the objects narrated in the novel and displayed in the museum; third, as long as

At this point, it should be noted that Pamuk inherited the idea of making a museum of the past from Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar. As is well-known, Tanpınar is one of the most important sources for Pamuk's literary universe. Pamuk expresses this in his various writings and calls Tanpınar "the greatest local writer of the 20th century" (2020, p.162)<sup>4</sup> and the novelist "with whom [he] feel[s] the closest bond" (2017, p. 335) among the writers he mentions in *Istanbul: Memories and The City*. In 1994<sup>5</sup>, in a speech on Tanpınar, Modernism and *A Mind in Peace*, which he later authored, Pamuk points to Tanpınar's "desire to establish the museum of our past culture with authority and splendor" as an aspect that makes him inspiring and exceptional. (1995, p. 45). So, is it possible to talk about the desire to make the novel a museum in Tanpınar, as Orhan Pamuk points out?

The concepts of loss and preservation have an important place in Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's literary aesthetics, particularly in his novels *Mahur Beste*, *Sahnenin Dışındakiler*, *Huzur [A Mind at Peace]*. This is particularly the case in *Beş Şehir [Tanpınar's Five Cities]*, where Tanpınar discusses the cultural and historical aspects of Ottoman/Turkish society and the cities he refers to as "the coincidences of my life", but most intensely in Istanbul, which he sees as the cultural capital. The concepts of loss and preservation can also be seen in his work *Yaşadığım Gibi [As I Live]*, which collects his writings on various cultural and historical issues. Tanpınar approaches the cultural and social history of Ottoman/Turkish society and cities with a nostalgic look and protective instinct, with his conservation/preservation awareness centered around Istanbul at the cultural level. In *Mahur Beste* and *Sahnenin Dışındakiler*, while weaving the main subject of the novel around the social history of his childhood and youth, he also records the content of that life, social figures and changes. *Huzur [A Mind at Peace]* is in itself a beautification of the cultural treasure and social history of our "old culture", of which Istanbul is the center, in Tanpınar's selective memory. According to Nurdan Gürbilek (2007, p.131), one of the most important components in Tanpınar's world of inspiration is the "aesthetics of loss." In his sentiment, "the past is precious because we couldn't find what we were looking for, because of the feeling their absence aroused in us", that is, the feeling of emptiness it leaves. (p.131) Yet, the emptiness left by all kinds of elements of our past and culture that are about to disappear does not point to an irreversible loss to be mourned, but also to the possibility of reconstructing it through social memory. While talking about all the things that were "impossible to resurrect" at the end of the part dealing with Istanbul in *Beş Şehir [Tanpınar's Five Cities]*, which we know to be a significant source of inspiration for Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, he clearly states the fact that he has no longing for those times and no desire to return:

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the objects are envisioned within a narrative context, they can perform the function of souvenirs to bring back the past and endow it with memorable value. More important, what novels preserve are in fact not the objects per se but the encounter between the reader and these objects through the medium of language; the fate of these objects in turn is in the hands of the reader as of the museum's visitors." (2013, p. 201)

4 Although *Other Colors* has been translated into English, the article about Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar was not included in this edition. Therefore, reference is given to the Turkish edition.

5 The date of the speech is very close to the time period that Pamuk says that the idea of establishing a museum awakened in him: "I started thinking in the early 1990s about a linked novel and museum." (Pamuk, 2018, p.134)

So many memories, so many people. In discussing Istanbul and the Bosphorus, why have I evoked everything so impossible to resurrect? Why are we drawn to time past as to an empty well? I realize it is not the people themselves I look for, nor am I nostalgic for the era in which they lived (Tanpınar, 2018, p. 209).

Adorno has remarked on the connection between the museum and mausoleum as being “more than phonetic association” at the beginning of his essay “Valery, Proust, and the Museum” (1967, p. 175). However, in another sense, museums paradoxically are places where the dead is preserved by aestheticization and integrated into culture, ensuring that the cultural element displayed in its showcase continues to live. Drawing attention to this aspect of the museum, Marcel Proust identifies it with memory. In Proust’s opinion, life acquires its significance and expression in memory. “Therefore, the most important thing for works of art is their lives, which go down in history, which are reflected in the memories after the end of their era. This place of resurrection is museums.” (Artun, 2012, p. 237.). For Proust, “it is only the death of the work of art in the museum which brings it to life.” (Adorno, 1967, p. 182). On the other hand, the essential feature of the museum of “keeping alive,” brings with it a rebuilding process, as the cultural element is taken out of its context and becomes a work of art.

While the aesthetic view of “impossible to resurrect” accepts that the old is “dead”, Tanpınar also questions where the dead stands in life, which is in the process of modernization, and how old things can gain a new representation in the present day.<sup>6</sup> He is aware that the past life cannot be kept alive, and that its living components cannot be experienced in the same way in the present day. Nonetheless, culture can be kept alive and it is important to keep what belongs to culture, if not the old life, by “preserving what already exists”:

All over Istanbul, in every quarter, there are columns toppled, roofs collapsed, old religious colleges full of rubbish and charming little neighborhood mosques and fountains in ruins. It would take little effort to restore them<sup>7</sup>, but they deteriorate a bit more every day. They lie prone on the ground like the dead in an epidemic whom the living have not the strength to remove. The day that we realize that true creativity begins with preserving what already exists will make us happy (Tanpınar, 2018, p. 158).

Tanpınar’s “looking back with concern” towards old Istanbul and “recalling the lost to present with the power of art” merges with a protective aesthetic aspect (Gürbilek, 2012, p.102). What he tries to do in *Beş Şehir* [Tanpınar’s Five Cities] is to ensure that these lost

6 Tanpınar’s relationship with the past is considered and discussed together with the idea of a continuity that does not evaluate the past separately from the present and the future, and one of the foundations of philosophy of Henri Bergson, pure duration (la durée). Within this framework, Tanpınar’s perception of the past is more about the durability of the past in the present rather than the idea of a disconnection between the time periods. For more information on the subject, see: Eskin, M. Şerif (2014). *Zaman ve hafızanın kıyısında: Tanpınar’ın edebiyat estetik ve düşünce dünyasında Bergson*. İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları.

7 The expression “to be at the disposal of the present” in the original text -translated as restored here- is important.

things of our past culture, these “treasures” are preserved by means of art, making the past an inseparable part of our culture transformed by modernization, and that what is destined to disappear is at least recorded. This desire to record appears in his diaries. When the author sees that a mosque he commemorates in *Beş Şehir* has changed in terms of identity and shape, he is glad to have recorded the old version, and this passage also reveals his desire to record in *A Mind at Peace*:

The İvaz Ağa Mosque is indeed the Manavkadı Mosque. But then I had seen this mosque on the wall. So that place has changed tremendously. So, apart from the hammams, the Bitpazarı (flea market), and the Beyazıt coffeehouses, I recorded another side of old Istanbul (Kerman and Enginün, 2007, p. 273).

[İvaz Ağa Camii hakikaten Manavkadı Camii imiş. Fakat ben o zaman bu camii surun üstünde görmüştüm. Demek oralar müthiş değişmiş. O halde hamamlardan, Bitpazarı’ndan, Beyazıt kahvelerinden başka, eski İstanbul’un bir tarafını daha kaydetmişim (Kerman ve Enginün, 2007, p. 273).]<sup>8</sup>

Tanpınar’s desire to remember, preserve and record the elements of Istanbul’s past, which is the core idea of *Tanpınar’s Five Cities’* longest chapter, turns into an artistic production in *A Mind at Peace*. Thus, with the help of selective memory and artistic perspective, this novel can be read as a museum of Istanbul’s culture that simultaneously contains elements of recent and distant history. It is meaningful that Pamuk chooses *A Mind at Peace* as his starting point while attributing to Tanpınar the museum of our past culture. At this point, what distinguishes *A Mind at Peace* from Tanpınar’s other novels, in which he records elements of the social history of Istanbul, is the aestheticization of Istanbul and its cultural elements, and the selective placement of his own Istanbul, which he wants to protect, in the novel.

### ***The Museum of Innocence and A Mind in Peace as Fictional City-Museums***

It can be said that Orhan Pamuk was inspired by Tanpınar in *The Museum of Innocence*, as well as many of his other works.<sup>9</sup> *A Mind at Peace*, on its own, is one of the primary sources of inspiration for this novel, as well as the idea of “museum” in Pamuk’s works. Both novels stand out as texts in which their authors place Istanbul at the center and strive to preserve a significant part of it. As is common knowledge, Tanpınar sees Istanbul as the imperial capital of his “five cities” and a city of splendor and discusses the past, traditional culture, historical

8 The original text is also given in translations made by the author.

9 There is even an epigraph from Tanpınar in the novel that we can easily think came out of Kemal’s mouth: “First I surveyed the little trinkets on the table, her lotions and her perfumes. I picked them up and examined them one by one. I turned her little watch over in my hand. Then I looked at her wardrobe. All those dresses and accessories piled one on top of the other. These things that every woman used to complete herself-they induced in me a painful and desperate loneliness; I felt myself hers, I longed to be hers.” (Pamuk, 2010, p.3).

It is important to note here: The issue of “object desire”, which is one of the most important analogies between the two authors and therefore between these two novels, will not be discussed in this article.



social figures, the architectural heritage of ancient Istanbul, and their loss. Pamuk, on the other hand, identifies his own Istanbul with his autobiography and personal urban experience and sees not splendor like Tanpınar, but “the melancholy of the ruins” in the past of his city. Around these two narratives, it can be claimed that while Tanpınar prioritizes the construction and preservation of collective memory, Pamuk emphasizes the individual experience. However, when we examine *A Mind at Peace* and *The Museum of Innocence*, it is seen that both authors greatly benefited from previous Istanbul narratives and placed Istanbul, which they tried to preserve and remember, at the center of their novels.<sup>10</sup> While Tanpınar’s attitude towards preserving collective memory includes individual memory, Pamuk is concerned to display not only his Istanbul, but also the social memory of the city. Thus, these two novels can be considered alternative museums that are constructed through fiction and that preserve the memory of different periods of the city’s social life through the authors’ selective memories.

In this context, it is necessary to discuss the possibilities of reading *A Mind at Peace* as a novel museum or city museum. Let us recall Proust’s thoughts on how works of art live on in the memory, in the lives reflected in memories, long after their era has passed, and how museums resurrect them (Artun, 2012, p. 237). In *A Mind at Peace*, many districts of Istanbul such as Beyazıt, Büyükkada, Üsküdar, Sirkeci, Kocamustafapaşa, Çekmecerler, Kandilli, Yeniköy, Emirgan..., Bosphorus and Beyazıt coffeehouses, magnificent and modest mosques, bazaars, Prince Islands and Bosphorus ferries, all these places that Mümtaz experiences alone or with Nuran are presented through a perception that oscillates between the narrator, Mümtaz and Tanpınar. In his essays, while mentioning his Istanbul tours, alone or with Yahya Kemal, Tanpınar seeks ways “to benefit from these tours in the novels”, thereby “catching the old Istanbul from within today” (Kerman and Enginün, 2007, p. 272). The places mentioned in *A Mind at Peace* appear not as a background in the novel, but with the aim of placing the cultural and social content that is desired to be kept alive. Among them, the Bosphorus and its social life have a special importance, as according to the author, it is in the Bosphorus that the old Istanbul culture lives in its most intense form. The Bosphorus is important because it reminds us of a common life, a “solid” time, which every class, rich or poor, enjoys together, through practices such as watching the moonlight and walking on a promenade (Gürbilek, 1998, p. 101).

One of the things that Tanpınar refers to as an important aspect of traditional life in Istanbul is the calendar-based social memory that is preserved in the people’s memory. One of the folk calendar events that turned Istanbul into a “season museum” (2013, p.183), as Tanpınar calls it, is the “bluefish season”:

Toward the end of September, the bluefish runs offered another excuse to savor the Bosphorus. Bluefish outings were among the most alluring amusements on the straits. An illuminated diversion stretching out along both shores beginning

10 Selmin Kuş, who has done an extensive study on the novel *The Museum of Innocence*, points out that the novel can also be read as a city-museum, in her work titled *Sözcüklerin Nesnelere Dönüştüğü Yer: Masumiyet Müzesi* (2015, p.76).

from Beylerbeyi and Kabataş in the south, extending north to Telli Tabya and the Kavaklar near the Black Sea, and gathering around the confluence of currents, the bluefish catches gave rise, here and there, to water-borne fetes, especially on darkened nights of the new moon. In contrast to other excursions that developed as part of a venture demanding long outings, this carnival dance developed right then and there, together with everyone (p.227).

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At this hour, wherein everything struggled under its own weight, they walked until Anadoluhisarı, holding hands and harboring intense intimations of fate. There they entered the small coffeehouse to the right of the pier. Night had completed its thorough descent. The dock was crowded with rowboats returning from bluefish runs. They watched their customary evening's entertainment as if it were a rather exotic ritual (p.244).

This ritual, identified with traditional Istanbul and which is an important part of collective memory, is one of the examples of the arrangement of social life in the city and a practice aimed at aesthetic pleasure according to the conventional calendar of nature. As a result, the author preserved this practice which is on the verge of disappearing and transformed it into a piece of art, which we will discuss afterward. Therefore, it can be claimed that one of the novel's critical concerns is to preserve the elements of the city and its material and spiritual culture, as well as the protection of the socio-cultural elements that ensure the continuity of these elements. Due to this, social settings (such as movie theaters, beaches, ballrooms, and Paris-style cafes) that represent the lifestyles of "imitation" as brought about by Western modernization are not a part of the novel.<sup>11</sup>

*The Museum of Innocence* differs from *A Mind at Peace* in this regard. While Tanpınar has a selective view that almost excludes European lifestyles – of which he is a part in his personal life – while constructing the Istanbul of his novel, *The Museum of Innocence's* selective memory and nostalgic view of the city's past is autobiographical. Pamuk, who says "I am not nostalgic for the Ottoman Empire, I am only nostalgic for the Istanbul of my youth" (Puchner, 2014, p.101), puts the Istanbul of his youth on display in his novel and wants to preserve it by bringing it to collective memory:

If I wrote one page of this book, I was a happy person that day. It is also one of my favorite books in the sense that it's based on first-hand experience. I've been to the clubs and the places that Kemal had been to, the restaurants and movie houses and so many weddings and engagement parties at the Hilton Hotel in Istanbul. It's all based on my life (Lakshman, 2010).

11 Although Beyoğlu is not left out of the narrative in the novel, it is noticed that it is used as a decoration for negative situations. Mümtaz wanders twice in Beyoğlu throughout the novel. These trips take place in the most troubled times of the character, who perceives the outside world with his emotions, and Beyoğlu is used to create a negative atmosphere in these scenes. The apartment in Beyoğlu, which Mümtaz and Nuran later rented, puts Mümtaz through discomfort and plays a key role in the destruction of the love affair at the center of the novel.

While Pamuk states in his essays that the city is “a part of his soul and body” (2017b, p. 126), behind his desire to protect it, the desire to record and protect his past and existence comes to the fore. The museum is an attempt to extract the story from memory and history. On the other hand, Pamuk indicates that “Istanbul does not have a city museum. Other rich museums in the city serve to store some expensive items rather than to understand and tell the past” (2017b, p. 128). The author states that with *The Museum of Innocence* project, he focuses on the story of the individual against official history and great national museums, and emphasizes the place of the house museum in the story. Nonetheless, he also showcases the social life of the city, both in the novel and in the physical museum he established. Thus, the novel turns into a city museum that also has a social context. The diversity of the use of space stands out as an important aspect of the city-museum design in the novel and when the display cases of the city-museum are imagined, a wide range of content is encountered:

Districts: Nişantaşı, Beyoğlu, Beşiktaş, Maçka, Çukurcuma, Fatih, Vefa, Kocamustafapaşa, Emirgan, Anadolu Hisarı, Suadiye, Bakırköy, Florya, Arnavutköy, Üsküdar, Haliç, Edirnekapı, Büyükdere, Yeniköy...

Cinemas: New İpek, Yıldız Garden, Çiçek, İncirli, Yumurcak, Arzu, Halk, Çampark, Kulüp, Majestik Garden, Konak, Site, Kent, Emek, Fitaş, Atlas, Rüya, Alkazar, Lâle, Saray...

Eating and entertainment venues: Fuaye, Pelür, Pera Palace, Hilton, Maksim, İnci Patisserie, Passage of Mirrors, Abdullah’s, Parizyen, Andon’s Restaurant, Yani’s, Aleko, Zeynel, Mücevher Gazino

Parks and beaches: Yıldız, Maçka, Fındıklı, Emirgan parks; Sarıyer, Tarabya, Florya, Kilyos, Suadiye beaches... (Pamuk, 2010)

According to Gökner, “the novel’s themes are not focused on textual production, but on the accumulation, representation, and display of fetishized things” and in *Istanbul* he states his fetishization of “pieces” of the city. (2013, p. 235-237) All those places can also be seen as “pieces” that contain social history. The deliberate placement of all these in the novel, where the protagonist Kemal went alone or with Füsün between 1975 and 1984, can be read as recording the social life of Istanbul’s middle-upper class in those years, including Pamuk himself. What distinguishes Pamuk from Tanpınar at this point is that the depictions of social settings in the novel also include the people of the era, their social environment, and social class behavior patterns. The social environment in public spaces, on the other hand, is depicted in broad strokes and defined as the “crowd” in *A Mind at Peace*, and as mere decorations that round out the composition. In *The Museum of Innocence*, settings such as the Hilton Hotel and Fuaye Restaurant, where the bourgeois class socializes; cinemas, which are the entertainment venues of the middle class; Pelür, where film industry employees gather; and many other places of 70s and 80s Istanbul, are preserved and become a part of the display with details about those who used the space, and their appearances and behaviors.

## A City Made of Artworks

When it comes to reading the novel as a city museum, it is essential to mention the fictionalization of the city and its elements as a work of art as much as, and perhaps more than, recording the spatial past and social history of the city. This should be thought about together with the fact that an artwork displayed at a museum is detached from its context in daily life and reduced to the status of a mere piece of art removed from the passage of time.

Unfortunately, we do not know enough about Tanpınar's views on museums. Tanpınar is a professor of fine arts, and we learn from his essays and diaries that he suffered from the absence of art museums<sup>12</sup>, that he visited many museums when he went abroad, and that he complained about the lack of museums that would enable the development of art in his country. According to his diaries, he intended to write an article titled "Museum", but did not continue this article after a few lines. In these lines, which begin with the words "I spent my life longing for museums", the author says that he always rebelled against the idea of a museum and that a work of art should exist on its own. According to him, although we initially accept the logic of bringing together works in a *terkip* (composition/ synthesis) in the museum, we eventually succumb to a sense of choice and appreciation. (Kerman and Enginün, 2007, p. 120) These phrases indicate that Tanpınar believes that displaying a work of art in a museum causes it to become part of a *terkip*, thus damaging the autonomous existence of the work. However, it is important for us that the author defines the museum as a *terkip*.<sup>13</sup> In saying that old Istanbul is a *terkip* with all the elements living together, Tanpınar brings together the components of this composition in his works, especially in *A Mind at Peace*. Reading this in light of the aestheticization of elements of Istanbul's past in *A Mind at Peace* and the fictionalization of each scene in the depictions of the city intertwined with nature, people or objects, allows the text to be read as a museum.

Architectural structures remaining from Istanbul's Ottoman past have an important place in the novel. During the summer they spend together, Mümtaz and Nuran visit these old mosques, madrasahs, fountains and mansions in various districts. We know the importance Tanpınar attaches to these structures and their preservation, and his sensitivity to the preservation of religious practices and traditions as a part of daily life, so he makes Mümtaz say, these are "the roots of national life" (p.219) and "everything that might be termed national is a thing of beauty... and must persist eternally." (p.395) However, all these structures visited by Mümtaz and Nuran are located outside of their daily context in the novel and are perceived as works of art that are aestheticized and experienced through the gaze. The lovers read the inscriptions of the mosques, madrasahs, and mausoleums they visit, examine the architecture, and discuss its

12 For Tanpınar's views on the lack of museums in Turkey, see: Tanpınar, A.H. (2019). *Müzesiz Ülke. Hep Aynı Boşluk*. İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları.

13 As Gökner says "Tanpınar [...] defines his crisis as an intellectual [as]: How shall I live in a nation that doesn't acknowledge its own cultural history and collective memory? Tanpınar's 'answer' is a grand synthesis, the *terkip* that will resolve this pervasive crisis." (2013, p. 115)

history. Another time, Mümtaz sits in the cafe next to Beyazıt Mosque and watches the pigeons and wanders in its courtyard. Both characters do not experience these places through their traditional function of praying. Great mosques and mansions, which are considered significant works of art, are aestheticized by associating them with the magnificence of the past, while more modest and dilapidated structures are placed alongside beggars, poor children and the elderly. On the other hand, Mümtaz and Nuran constantly talk about the dead and the past, which Mümtaz made a part of memory by saying “they live in our minds” while they wander around old Istanbul’s architectural and cultural heritage like museum visitors. Therefore, rather than being a living component of Istanbul in the novel, these structures become museum items centered around mortality and aesthetics.

The scenes of the present time (in this case, the plot time) in Istanbul are also aestheticized in the novel. Around the idea of the “season museum” that we mentioned before, the depictions of flowers unique to Istanbul, rituals of watching the moonlight and bluefish catch, watching the sunlight play from a Bosphorus ferry, natural events such as sunsets, the city’s crowds and everyday life scenes are all fictionalized like paintings.<sup>14</sup> While doing this, the author uses light, color and composition, which are the most important elements of a painting. In Tanpınar’s perspective, Istanbul itself, which has no museum, thus becomes a museum that gives life to the work of art:

I guess that’s what art ultimately does. Istanbul knows how to change, sometimes to such an extent that it makes art superfluous. I have always claimed that our real great seasonal museum, at least for now, is this ever-changing, dimming Istanbul. In some of its landscapes, this museum goes as far as a kind of Wagner opera, those fantastic ballets conceived by some film genius (2013, p. 184).

[Galiba sanatın da eninde sonunda yaptığı şey budur. İstanbul bazan sanatı lüzumsuz kılacak derecede değişmesini biliyor. Daima iddia etmişimdir: Bizim, hiç olmazsa şimdilik asıl büyük mevsim müzemiz, bu durmadan değişen, ışığını kısıp açan İstanbul’dur. Bazı manzaralarında bu müze, bir çeşit Wagner operasına, bazı film dâhilerinin tasavvur ettikleri o fantastik balelere kadar gider.]

The Bosphorus ferry scene, in which Nuran is made a part of the composition, is one of the artworks of this museum:

The ferry gathered civil servants returning from their city jobs, sight-seers, beachgoers, young students, military officers, elderly women, and congregants on deck, the remorse of whose lives, and the day’s fatigue, dripping from their faces, intentionally or not, seemed to surrender to this waning evening hour. Like

14 For an article about the connection that Tanpınar established with painting in his works, see: Anar, T. (2012). Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar’ın resim sanatı, ressamların eserleri ve kendi hayatından inşa ettiği estetik. *The journal of international social research*: 5 (22): 22-36.

the potter described by Omar Khayyam, the evening took up all those heads and worked them from the inside and outside, transfigured their lines, painted them, varnished and shellacked them, made their eyes dreamier, softened their lips, and filled their stares with renewed glimmers of yearning and hope. They came to the center of this radiance as themselves, but, as if fallen into the midst of sorcery, they changed with the transformations of light (p.133).

...

Through its radiance, Nuran had become a fruit of arboreal silence, with her stony expression, her small, protruding chin ready to reject him, her narrowed eyes, and her hands clenching her purse (p.134).

In another passage, the author transforms the scene of daily life at Kanlıca into an artistic composition of light and color, where “a final wave that mixed deep mosaic gold and gemstone dust into phthalo blue as if a Fra Angelico canvas were being painted, the wave infused by effulgence like a downpour of divine absolution” tossed them onto the ferry landing:

Mümtaz had never in his life seen such a carnivalesque setting. This was no projection of the felicity of his inner self. Maybe all Creation, including people, houses, trees, the phalanx of Bosphorus shearwaters that soared past sipping the sea, pigeons and cats, the watermelons and casabas piled off to the side, had been roused from a deep hibernation. As if living the greatest moment of its life dangling from the fishing line of a police officer, even the sea bream flopping in the luminance and the to and fro of the fishing pole appeared satisfied to be a pendulum ticking out the remainder of its ephemeral existence. (...) They took seats before Ismail Aga’s coffeehouse. Opposite them, two ladies waited for the ferry; behind them, a few aged gentlemen savored the evening in quietude (p.242-243).

Every component of Istanbul in the novel is referred to as the “Istanbul *paysage*” and is considered a “work of art.” What completes the *paysage* (scenery) and makes it a *terkip* is traditional music. Therefore, music is the complement and unifier of the Istanbul cultural museum. As Mümtaz says, “everything from an Istanbul *paysage* to the entire Turkish culture, its filth, its decay, and its splendor was contained in traditional music” and “many a vista appeared before our eyes accompanied by an inherent melody.”<sup>15</sup>

In *The Museum of Innocence*, scenes of the city and “landscapes” are not aestheticized. In the novel, Istanbul’s districts, streets, social places, and scenes are displayed with all their realities, not as idealized works of art. The reality of the setting in the novel is reinforced by exhibiting the objects and photographs of these places in the physical museum. The purpose

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15 In his essay titled “About the Lodos, The Fog and The Bluefish”, Tanpınar indicates he felt he lived the “Istanbul opera” after experiencing these three elements of the seasonal museum on the same day as an intertwined painting, and calls this experience a “revel of novel and music”. Tanpınar’s seeing the artistic composition in which these images and landscapes take place as a novel shows the relationship he established between the novel and the work of art. (2013, p.191)

of the depictions, which the author has worked with meticulously and placed in the novel, working like a curator, is to be able to witness that element of the city and its history, and thus stop time. Some passages in the novel seem especially constructed to record a side or ritual of the city. Passages such as Kemal's walking around poor neighborhoods such as Gümrük, Vefa, Balat, and Zeyrek, where he believed that he would see Füsün's ghost when he lost her, or driving around Istanbul to buy liquor during the feast of sacrifice (Eid Al-Adha/Kurban Bayramı), a memory from the childhood of Kemal and Füsün, ensures that these places and scenes of social memory, such as an Islamic holiday, are included in the city-museum:

I remember going from Fatih to Edirnekapi, and from there we turned right to follow the city walls all the way to the Golden Horn. As we passed the poor neighborhoods, as we advanced along the crumbling city walls, the three of us fell silent, and we remained so for a very long time. As we gazed upon the orchards between the old castle walls, and the empty lots strewn with rubbish, discarded barrels, and debris, and the run-down factories and workshops, we saw the occasional slaughtered lamb, and skins that had been tossed to one side, with their innards and horns, but in the poor neighborhoods, with their unpainted wooden houses, there was less sacrifice, and more festivity. I remember how delighted Füsün and I were to look out over the lots where carousels and swings had been set up for the celebrations, and at the children buying gum with their holiday money, and the Turkish flags set like little horns on the tops of buses, and all the scenes that I would later find in photographs and postcards, and collect so ardently (2010b, p. 55).

While the depictions of spaces reminiscent of American realist paintings take place as a part of the social history of Istanbul, the light sources of the composition are “yellow lamplight filtering through drawn curtains”, “the reflected glow of televisions in windows and shop fronts” (p. 293) “the orange glow on the faces of those watching the fire with such fear and awe” (p.506), “the searchlights of the City Lines ferries as they lit up the landing stations and the high branches of hundred-year-old plane trees receding in the rearview mirror”(p.89) and “the streetlamps reflected on the cobblestones” (p.410).

### **The Beloved as the Most Important Piece of the Museum and the City**

One of the most important analogies between *The Museum of Innocence* and *A Mind at Peace* is that the novel's protagonist experiences the city under the influence of love and in the company of his beloved. Throughout the novel, the effect of love has an important place in their view of the city and their perception of it. Thus, in both novels, the city, where the protagonists travel individually and with their beloved ones, displays different views in both experiences. On the other hand, while the obsessive attachment to the beloved results in aestheticizing her and everything that belongs to her, the woman becomes the most important object of the instinct of protection and preservation. The woman identified with Istanbul represents the past and times of felicity. According to Gürbilek, women in Tanpınar are symbols of the past and our old culture:

The women in Tanpınar's novels are the symbols of a past whose return is desired, of a culture whose continuity is desired, or of a unity whose achievement is sought, but always of truth beyond themselves. The beloved woman is the key that opens the past; The past shows itself in the face of the beloved woman. In Tanpınar, the past, culture and love are experiences that are lived together and form an "organic wholeness". One can only happen if the other is possible; none of them attain their own specificity, they are all mirrors reflecting each other. In *A Mind at Peace*, Nuran is the symbol of "all the old and beautiful things" for Mümtaz: the Bosphorus, Mahur Beste, speaking Turkish as if singing... Longing for a lover, old music or the past combines in a single experience with a common good fortune (Gürbilek, 1998, p.104).

[Tanpınar'ın romanlarındaki kadınlar, geri dönülmek istenen bir geçmişin, sürekliliği kurulmak istenen bir kültürün ya da ulaşılmaya çalışılan bir bütünlüğün, ama her zaman kendilerinden öte bir hakikatin simgeleridir. Sevilen kadın, geçmişe açan anahtardır; geçmiş, sevilen kadının çehresinde kendini gösterir. Tanpınar'da geçmiş, kültür ya da aşk, iç içe yaşanan, "organik bir bütünlük" oluşturan tecrübelerdir. Biri, ancak bir diğeri mümkünse gerçekleştirebilir; hiçbiri kendi özgüllüğüne kavuşamaz, hepsi birbirini yansıtan aynalardır. Huzur'da Nuran, Mümtaz için "bütün eski ve güzel şeylerin" simgesidir: Boğaz, Mahur Beste, Türkçe'yi teganni eder gibi konuşmak... Sevgiliye, eski musikiye ya da geçmişe duyulan hasret, ortak bir talihi olan tek bir tecrübeye birleşir.]

Mümtaz combines all of these in the past, unable to separate Istanbul, the Bosphorus, old music, or the woman he loves. Nuran is fictionalized as the last corner of the city-museum combination established with the Bosphorus, the reign of the past, nature and music, and associated with each of these in the novel. While Mümtaz's imagination casts her "as a beloved of old, like a favorite odalisque" dressed with "jewelry, shawls, fabric adorned with silver embroider, Venetian tulle, rose-peach slippers", she rejects that and says: "No thanks. I'm Nuran. I live in Kandilli, in the year 1938 and I wear more or less the fashions of my day. I have no desire to change my style or my identity" (p. 147). In this passage, while Mümtaz is preoccupied with the dead, the past, and the lost "in his head," Nuran wants to live in the present, and refuses to be a part of the museum. Mümtaz's obsession with things past gives Nuran the fear that he wants to put her in a catacomb. She sees the city in a more realistic light than Mümtaz, and the concept of the catacomb reveals her fear of being locked up (p.198). However, Nuran, whom Tanpınar gave the task of being the symbol of culture and the past, eventually accepts to be locked in the museum of the past and Mümtaz's, when she ends her social life in Beyoğlu and puts on the old clothes that Mümtaz bought for her. While she says that women were more comfortable and safer in old times, she turns again to an artwork in Mümtaz's imagination: "Purely the early Renaissance of Pisanello! Or one of our own miniatures!" (p.364) Nuran, who says throughout the novel that she wants to live in her own



time and is afraid of old-time mirrors, ultimately leaves Mümtaz and Istanbul at the end of the novel, completing her refusal to be a part of the museum.

In *The Museum of Innocence*, Kemal similarly perceives and experiences Istanbul and its environment around his love for Füsün throughout the novel. While the streets that remind him of Füsün, the districts he visits to seek or forget her, the cinemas and entertainment places they went to and the neighborhood she lives in complete Kemal's love story, Füsün takes part in the novel as an element that beautifies all these past places and experiences. Even when Kemal loses Füsün, he combines the picturesque images of the city with the pleasure of the pain of love. In addition to being the reason to establish the museum, the beloved woman in the novel is also made a part of the museum as a focal object. Jale Parla says that *The Museum of Innocence* is a novel about "closure and being closed down" and in the novel where love is the only emotion from beginning to end, the museum is the place where the magic of art (Füsün means magic) is fictionally imprisoned in a life where she cannot be free. (Parla, 2018, p. 55) Ultimately, Füsün, similar to Nuran, refuses to be kept in the museum and chooses death while leaving Istanbul.

## Conclusion

Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar and especially his novel *A Mind at Peace*, are among the sources for the idea of a museum in Orhan Pamuk's works as a whole, and especially the museum novel that the author built on this idea. There are many analogies between the two novels, such as Istanbul, the authors' giving meaning to old objects and their interest in them and the relationship between the beloved woman and the city. Another analogy is the approach towards representing the city and its social and cultural history and thus preserving, collecting and rebuilding the past. Pamuk stated that while he was developing the idea of constructing his novel as a city museum, Tanpınar was also building a museum of our past, and was fed by it. These two novels can be accepted as the novels that the authors dedicate to the past of Istanbul within the framework of their own periods and literary aesthetics. Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar was concerned with preserving or at least recording old Istanbul, every element of it that has remained in the past and continues to exist. At the same time, he considered each of them as a work of art and created a museum composition by bringing them together in the novel. While doing this, he prioritized collective memory, but also benefited from his personal selective memory and aesthetic point of view. However, while Tanpınar's fictionalization of old Istanbul as a museum composition in which he perceives every element as a work of art, Pamuk assigns the novel the task of being an archive of the social life of certain circles in a much more conscious manner. While Tanpınar handles the landscapes and instant scenes of Istanbul with an impressionist view, the compositions of Istanbul in Pamuk's novel are quite realistic and elaborate. Although there are important differences in the perspectives on social and cultural issues of these two writers, who were born half a century apart, it is obvious that Pamuk established a deep connection with *A Mind at Peace* in his museum novel. After all, it is perhaps no coincidence that Kemal's father's name is Mümtaz in *The Museum of Innocence*.

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