CITIES OF NOSTALGIA:
COLLISION OF PAST, PRESENT AND MEMORY IN SPACE IN *NOSTALGIA, THE BLACK BOOK* AND *IGNORANCE*

by

BÜŞRA ÇOPUROĞLU

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Prof. Dr. M. Fazıl GÜLER
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master

Prof. Dr. Ali Budak
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of [Master of Science/Arts/Doctor of Philosophy].

Assoc. Prof. Adriana Luminita Raducanu
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

[Assoc. Prof. Adriana Luminita Raducanu] [Yeditepe University]

[Assoc. Prof. Charles Daniel Sabatos] [Yeditepe University]

[Assist. Prof. Fatih Altuğ] [Istanbul Şehir University]

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25/04/2017

Name, Last name : Büşra Coşuroğlu

Signature :

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada nostalji ile nostalji olgusunun şehirle olan ilişkisi, Mircea Cărtărescu'nın *Nostalji* (1989), Orhan Pamuk'un *Kara Kitap* (1990) and Milan Kundera'nın *Bilmemek* (2000) eserleri üzerinde incelenmiştir. Geçmişin, şimdiki zamanın ve belleğin şehir mekânı üzerine düşümünün gösterilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Tez boyunca şehirlerin bir alan olarak nostaljiyi hem tetiklediği ve hem de kendi bünyesinde barındırdığı savunulmuştur. Seçilmiş romanlarda şehir, nostaljik hafızayı tetikleyici bir mekân konumundadır. Bu bağlamda, eserlerde konusu geçen şehirler sırasıyla Bükreş, İstanbul ve Prag'dır. Her biri çalkantılı tarihsel süreçler geçirmiş bu şehirler, tarihsellikleriyle beraber nostaljik meditasyon için önemli bir alan oluştururlar. Nostalji ile şehir arasındaki diyalog kent çalışmaları ve mekânın fenomenolojisi üzerinden incelenmiştir. Bu çalışmada, şehirlerin kendi tarihsel süreçlerinin kalıntılarını kapsadığı gibi, politik veya kişisel bağlamlarda nostaljik bellek için aktif rol oynadığı sonucuna varılmıştır.

Ayrıca tez, nostalji ve şehir ilişkisi temalarının Batı kanonu dışındaki eserler üzerinden de tartışılmasını önermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Nostalji, şehir, bellek, mekan, Mircea Cărtărescu, Milan Kundera, Orhan Pamuk.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the notion of nostalgia and its connection with the city in literature in the selected contemporary works of Mircea Cărtărescu's *Nostalgia* (1989), Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* (1990) and Milan Kundera's *Ignorance* (2000). It aims to explicate the collision of past, present and memory in the urban space. This study argues that the city as space prompts and embodies nostalgia. The works chosen accumulate nostalgia in connection with their corresponding cities. In this context, cities in question are Bucharest, Istanbul and Prague respectively. Each of them bears tumultuous histories, which make them crucial spaces for nostalgic reflection. This dialogue between the city and nostalgia is explicated predominantly through urban studies and conceptions of space in phenomenology. Through these examinations this thesis suggests that as the cities contain the residues of their historical past, they fulfill an active role in the workings of nostalgic memories, either in a politicized or a private respect.

Furthermore, this study aims to suggest a discussion of the themes of nostalgia and the city, in works situated outside the Western canon.

Keywords: Nostalgia, city, memory, space, Mircea Cărtărescu, Milan Kundera, Orhan Pamuk.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Nostalgia encompasses a vast area of research in humanities and social sciences. Among others, this particular research field can be extended to consumer culture and design objects, fashion, and decoration. Nostalgia also provides a setting and an area for creative products, such as movies and TV series, for example.

However, a notion so ubiquitous and at everyone's disposal in various areas of knowledge started out as a concern strictly for the medical field. The word nostalgia exists as a result of a Swiss medical student Johannes Hofer's Ph.D. dissertation in 1688. Hofer coined the term to diagnose a condition he observed among Swiss soldiers. He formulated it by combining two Greek words: *nostos* and *algos*. Nostos means return home and algos means yearning, pain. Early theories of nostalgia from the 17th century until the 20th century linked nostalgia with homesickness and considered it as an ailment that manifested itself through physical symptoms. At first nostalgia was believed to be a European disease that mainly affected soldiers fighting away from home. It was also believed that the best cure was sending the afflicted back home or prescribing them opium. Then, gradually, as it entered the medical nosology, it spread out of the European continent, but continued to be considered for a long time as a soldier's disease or a disease of displacement, strictly connected with homesickness (i.e., people who go to work and live away from their homeland).

Every nation perceived nostalgia in a different manner. Among Europeans, the British believed themselves to be immune to it, due to their frequent travels for

business and their colonizing enterprise. On the other hand, in Russia nostalgia was not regarded sympathetically. A soldier suffering from nostalgia was severely punished. 19th century America believed nostalgia could be cured by progress and that efficient use of time would eliminate idleness and melancholy, allegedly the causes for nostalgia (Boym, 2001, p. 5-6). Gradually, towards the 20th century it disappeared from the medical nosology because the prescriptions that were supposed to treat it did not seem to work. Therefore, nostalgia became a subject of research predominantly for social sciences and humanities and started to be considered as "an incurable modern condition (ibid, xiv). The American belief in progress to cure nostalgia failed in the 20th century, a turbulent century marked by wars and communist expansion. Modernity and modernisms imposed a critical outlook on the past and progress. In fact, arguably, this critical outlook augmented nostalgia.

At its core nostalgia has a "sentiment of loss and displacement" and consists of "superimposition of two images: home and abroad, past and present, dream and everyday life" (Boym 2001, xiii-xiv). The basics of nostalgia reveal a state that is constantly oscillating between two temporal opposites, past and present. Past memories, which exist in a particular location, are selected depending on a current, present situation. Thus, by definition nostalgia begins with an absence of *something* in the present time. The nostalgic mind looks for or yearns for a time and place that is in the past. James G. Hart (1973) claims that nostalgia is not about dates but about times, and eras. The content of these times can be a biographical period of time such as childhood, or part of a collective memory such as the Jazz Age or 1968 generation. Regardless of its content, time and memory are not the sole components of nostalgia. Recounting a past memory of a specific time comes along with a sense of location. Hence, nostalgia's close ties with locality have been evident since its early studies in

the 17th century. In the beginning Jofer equates nostalgia with homesickness, which makes homeland, a particular place, indispensable in the case of nostalgia.

As the notion of nostalgia is investigated in various disciplines, it has also been part of literary criticisim and a theme in literature as well. Perhaps the most famous example noted at first glance is Homer's *Odysseus*, one of the oldest return home epic. The next widely known example in modern literature is Marcel Proust's seven-volume *À la Recherce du Temps Perdu* (1913-1927). In the context of nostalgia, his work is widely known for its famous madeleine and tea scene, in which a dip of madeleine into tea transports the character back to his childhood in Combray. *The Great Gatsby*, with its themes centered around decadence, idealism, and resistance to change is another classical example. These works explicitly position nostalgia at their core with their remembrance of past and memory stimulants, yearning for a Golden Age and a desire to go back to homeland.

In literary criticism, nostalgia can be traced through various aspects. One of the most obvious approaches would be a linguistic one, such as the use of past tenses and explicit references to temporality. On top of a linguistic approach, another way to extract a nostalgic theme in literature is exercising a reading through the background of a social and historical context. In this case, the setting of a literary piece can provide the necessary tools to reveal nostalgia. Although nostalgia is a democratic and personal emotion that belongs to everyone, it is not mechanically duplicated in the same manner. Besides personal memories, nostalgia also depends on cultural and historical backgrounds. For nations with tumultuous and traumatic historical events, personal memories can collide with a national memory in the background of a city. Therefore, from this point of view, cities provide a significant milieu for nostalgic recollections.

Every city contains its own story wrapped around its own memories; Aleide Assman (2011) refers to it as as "memory of places". According to her, "places retain memories" and she denotes a power to places as bearers of memories (Assman, p. 281). Assman's view on place and memory can be extended to the city as well: the city as the container of memories. Thus, Michel de Certeau in *The Practive of Everyday Life* (1988&1998) of two volumes[1] provide a significant source in this context. He writes about cities and how streets and places in a city constitute "diverse meanings", memories and "phantoms" of a city's past hovering around in the everyday life. Furthermore he explicates how these places can point to "presences of diverse abscences" in relation with individual memories (1988, p. 104-108). This entanglement of memory and meaning reflected in the city can be connected with nostalgic evocations and interpretations of a city as well.

Woody Allen's film *Midnight in Paris* (2011) can be used as one the best examples that depicts the relationship between city and nostalgia. Although it goes beyond the scope of this thesis, as it belongs to another discipline it is worth mentioning, since it directly shows how city and nostalgia work for each other's deepening. The film depicts the city's organic ties with nostalgia. The movie tells the story of a specific period of time in Paris: the bohemian scene of the 1920s filled with Hemingway, Fitzgreald, Gertrude Stein, Picasso, etc. The lead actor of the movie is an aspiring writer who is nostalgic for the Paris in 1920s. His nostalgia is wrapped around two particularities: one is Paris and the other is Paris in the 1920s. His yearning is not only for 1920s but specifically for the bohemian scene at the time in Paris. Thus, Paris is the container of cultural memories of that time and without the city his nostalgia would not exist. The film shows how places can bring about

[1] Originally published in 1980.

phantoms of its past. In literature, the same organic relationship can be found directly in memoirs and autobiographies, such as Ernest Heminway's *A Moveable Feast,* Vladimir Nabokov's *Speak Memory,* Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul,* Mircea Cărtărescu's *Blindness,* Walter Benjamin's *A Berlin Chronicle*, etc. All these memoirs are wrapped around a specific city that provides an active décor for them. Autobiographical writing enables the author to directly recount selective memories in a particular milieu, which makes the nostalgic theme easily detectable. Nonetheless, in literature, the piecing together of nostalgia and city is not confined to memoirs and autobiographical writings. The relationship between nostalgia and city can be detected in fictions through a close reading of the history of a city or a culture as well.

The relationship between urban experience and literature has been a widely discussed subject in literary criticism. Since the 19th century, with its main staples of mass industrialization and belief in progress, cities have been through significant transformations in a way that had an impact in cultural and everyday life. The collision of urban experience and literature both carry national and personal memories and they both constitute a significant milieu for human experience. Therefore, the urban experience provides a fruitful research topic; as a subject matter it has been widely examined in the Western canon. Some writers are also known – among other literary aspects- for a dominant presence of the city in their works. For instance the works of Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Gustave Flaubert, Emile Zola, Balzac, Dickens etc. Paris, London, Dublin play significant roles in their works. However, the turbulent 20th century with two world wars and communist expansion also led to diverse and local historical events that left various residues in different nations. Moreover, aside from the 20th century's common devastations –such as world wars- each nation has its own exclusive history and cultural transitions that also leave

a mark in their metropolises. In this aspect, due to their communist past, eventhough they are in the European continent and share the same political past, Eastern and Central Europe metropolitan centers differ in their individual history and each of them contains their own unique urban story.

The after-effects of tumultuous historical and political periods in a country can be traced through its visual and written memory. Such trajectory puts city and literature in prominent roles as they embody national memories and reflect cultural codes. When personal memory collides with national memory, the landscape of the city becomes an important character in literature, denoting an aura to the literary piece. As modern novels and urban city posed a new dimension for literary criticism, the rise in the sociological studies of urban cities, effect of urbanization on people comprised an intriguing subject as well. In general, themes of alienation, immigration from rural area and immigrations due to wars and Soviet expansion were widely investigated. Therefore, since the city is one of the prominent themes examined in modern novels, its role can be augmented further by merging it with the study of nostalgia.

Edward S. Casey (2000) emphasizes the importance of place in memory and nostalgia. Michel de Certeau also highlights the workings of everyday life in a city, which inevitably point to destructions and reconstructions reflected in the urban façade. In his “Naples” essay Walter Benjamin uses the word “porous” to describe Naples’ ruins and renovations. Svetlana Boym (2001) interprets porosity as a city “reflecting the layers of time and history” (Boym, p. 77). This porosity reveals a historicity, a story, and creates an aura, a spirit of the city. Furthermore, Michel de Certeau refers to a city’s past, with streets and places as bearers of “phantoms”, as remains of past. According to him, these remains build a city’s saga which is founded

on the world's debris. Boym also suggests that the city is an ideal "crossroads" of memory, nostalgia, longing and estrangement. These arguments can be further linked with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's "perception of space". He argues that each individual has his own unique experience of a space and denotes personal significance to that space. This study will primarily focus on such arguments while explicating how a city can be one of the primary objects for nostalgia in the selected works for this study.

This thesis focuses on three contemporary authors: Mircea Cărtărescu (b. 1956), Orhan Pamuk (b. 1952) and Milan Kundera (b. 1929). Cities are one of the distinguishing characteristics of their works; therefore, they will also constitute the focus of the present study. For Mircea Cărtărescu this city is Bucharest; for Milan Kundera it is Prague and for Orhan Pamuk it is Istanbul. The novels examined are *Nostalgia* (1989)*, Ignorance* (2000) and *The Black Book* (1990), respectively. Besides an all-pervading presence of the city in their works, the theme of nostalgia can be traced in their works. Their fiction is usually embedded with nostalgic remembrances wrapped around their cities which trangress the status of a mere background and become active agents in the story lines; arguably, the storyline would vanish if the cities were effaced from the narrative.

City's history, along with its specific areas and places provide a memorative sign for the nostalgia in each novel. The cities in question are built upon crucial and devastating historical and political turbulances. Each of these metropolitan centers has a historical aura as they all had been through significant transitions, destructions and reconstructions. Inspired by Alfred Thomas' association of Prague with the word "palimpsest", this study extends such an analogy to the other cities as well. Palimpsest is derived from the Greek *palimpsestos*, meaning literally "rerubbed," "rewiped," or "rescraped", which provides a suitable analogy considering the fate of these three

cities. Each of them in their own way witnessed changes due to wars, political agendas and cultural transitions, thus exercising a "rescraping", a rebuilding and a renovating.

Communist rule is one of the significant periods in history that had a massive effect on many nations in Central and Eastern Europe. Lenka Pankova (2012) states "…regions with frequent and violent historical upheavals, such as Bohemia or Romania, germinate nostalgia of a particular type, currently illustrated by its post-socialist wave" (p.5). As Bucharest and Prague had gone through a communist regime, each of these nations wrote its own genuine history as well. Although Mircea Cărtărescu and Milan Kundera come from formerly communist states, their expression and depiction of nostalgia differs. Communist regime brings along political connotations to which Kundera frequently refers in his works. On the other hand, Cărtărescu chooses to stay away from the political and depicts his experience of Bucharest in a depoliticized manner.

In the case of Istanbul, there are the residues of Ottoman history and Westernization saga that started in the 19th century Ottoman Empire and continued during the foundational years of the today's Republic of Turkey. Such a large scale transition found resonance in Turkish cultural identity. Thus, Istanbul as a historical metropolitan provides one of the significant milieus to observe such a transition. Orhan Pamuk, an Istanbul native, gives a recurring and large presence to Istanbul in his works. The history of Ottoman-Turkish culture and the neighborhoods of Istanbul constitute the foundation of *The Black Book,* thus making it impossible to untangle nostalgia as a theme from the very fabric of the city.

In his Ph.D. dissertation which deals with the poetics of nostalgia in literature, Niklas Salmose (2012) talks about the nostalgic mood, which he defines as a nostalgic

fictive experience. He examines how certain texts evoke nostalgia in readers. The question Niklas Salmos asks have also inspired this thesis: “how certain texts evoke nostalgia in readers” (154). This study aims to answer this profound interrogation by ascribing a dominant and active role of cities in the novels under perusal. Since this thesis focuses on city’s role in nostalgia, it will place an emphasis on the study of space and city. Thus, in this respect, Michel de Certeau’s work on the urban life, Edward S. Casey’s arguments in the relationship between memory and place and Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s arguments about human experience with space will be explicated. Furthermore, Svetlana Boym’s thorough account on nostalgia will also be discussed in relation with the novels.

Chapter two will offer a historical account on the concept of nostalgia and its multiple implications, functions and employments in various contexts, ranging from political connotations, to homesickness and to the critique of modernity. Due to the extensiveness of the subject, nostalgia’s theoretical developments and historical accounts will focus on its associations with location and memorative signs. First, nostalgia’s early relationship with homesickness will be explicated, based on Johannes Hofer’s arguments. Then, Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s use of the term “memorative sign” and his account on how music prompts nostalgic yearnings among Swiss soldiers will be discussed. Through these arguments, the interaction between memorative signs and the manner in which they prompt a nostalgic memory will be analyzed, with a focus on locality. Furthermore, nostalgia’s relationship with the city will be examined.

The third chapter of the present study will scrutinize the novels *Nostalgia, The Black Book, Ignorance* in the context of the city’s relationship with nostalgia. Since Prague, Bucharest and Istanbul are a signifcant presence in the three novels, a brief

introduction on the corresponding city will be given. The conclusion will sum up the offered readings on the role of the cities in the narratives under perusal and will also point to the difference and similarities between the three authors regarding his literary employment of the urban space in conjunction with the theme of nostalgia.

The novels in this study are situated chronologically according to their publication dates.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY AND WORKINGS OF NOSTALGIA

2.1. A Short History: From Early Scientific Definitions to Ambiguity

As mentioned in the introduction, nostalgia is a ubiquitously used versatile and paradoxical notion in its both tangible and ineffable contexts. Its implications and scope depend on its interpretation and areas of use. Thus, in this chapter its early definitions and etymology will be discussed within the periphery of the notion's pertinence to the novels that are subjects of this thesis.

Fred Davis (1979) says nostalgia is no longer "what it had been when the Swiss physician Johannes Hofer first coined the term in 1688 … because experience is not what it used to be" (p. 142). What in the 21st century might seem like a poetic, romanticizing notion and commodity at the beginning was considered to be a medical condition with its specific list of symptoms and a list of suggestions to treat this physically manifested ailment. If we were to summarize nostalgia in a linear fashion such a list would emerge:

17th century : curable medical disease, homesickness

End of 18th : less curable, object of longing beyond motherland

19th century : not curable, beyond homesickness, idea of progress and industrialization

20th century or Modernity : incurable disease, from provincial ailment, maladie du pays, to modern age mal du siècle.

21st century or Postmodernism : mélange with popular culture, rehabilitation of nostalgia, end of quest for another temporality.

(Boym, 2001, p.3-7, 30)

The word nostalgia owes its existence to a Swiss medical student named Johannes Hofer. In 1688 in his Ph.D. dissertation, aiming to explicate and name a condition he observed among soldiers, he formulates the word nostalgia. He coined this term by combining two Greek words: nostos which means return home/native land and algos which means yearning, pain, suffering. He sees the combination of these two fit to explain this particular ailment, relating it with homesickness. For Johannes Hofer nostalgia existed in "the collective consciousness of the Swiss" (Illbruck, 2007, p. 1). So, basically, the word nostalgia is a product of a need to explicate a specific emotional state: missing one's homeland or in other words, homesickness. Hence, from the late 17th century until the 19th century, nostalgia was directly associated with homesickness, predominantly within a specific vicinity of Europe continent. Its synonyms generated in German, French, Spanish: *heimwech, maladie du pays*, *mal de corazón* respectively. Here is how Jofer announces the term in his dissertation:

> There came to my mind stories of certain youths thus afflicted, that unless they had been brought back to their native land, whether in a fever or consumed by

> the "Wasting Disease", they had met their last day on foreign shores… The very name presents itself for consideration before all things, which indeed the gifted Helvetians have introduced not long since into their vernacular language, chosen from the grief for the lost charm of the Native Land, which they called das Heimweh; … since the Helvetians in Gaul were taken often by this mood, among the same nation it merited la Maladie du Pays.
>
> However, it lacks a particular name in medicine, because from no doctor thus far had I learned that it was observed properly or explained carefully… Nor in truth, deliberating on a name, did a more suitable one occur to me, defining the thing to be explained, more concisely than the word Nostalgia, Greek in origin and indeed composed of two sounds, the one of which is Nostos, return to the native land; the other, Algos, signifies suffering or grief… (qtd in: Illbruck, 2007, p. 1)[2]

So, back in the 17th century nostalgia was a scientific subject matter, closely linked with locality and memory, with an "afflicted imagination feeding upon itself and consuming homesick patients" (Illbruck, 2007, p. 2)[3]. The nostalgee[4] was

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[2] Jofer also mentions two other alternative words that might fit to this condition: "If *nostomania* or the name *philopatridomania* is more pleasing to anyone, in truth denoting a spirit perturbed against holding fast to their native land from any cause whatsoever (denoting) return, it will entirely be approved by me" (ibid). Both of these passages are selected from Helmut Illbruck's Ph.D. Dissertation entitled "Figurations of Nostalgia: From the Pre-Enlightenment to Romanticism and Beyond" as he quoted it from: Johannes Hofer, "Dissertatio Medica de Nostalgia" (Basel, 1688). English trans. Carolyn Kiser Anspach, in *Bulletin of the History of Medecine* 2, 1934, p. 376-391. (Yale University, 2007. Dissertation Directors: Paul H. Fry, Cyrus Hamlin and Karsten Harries. This dissertation is later published by Northwestern University Press in October 2012).

[3] Similar to Hofer's perspective in this matter, Kant also makes a connection between "the strength of the human power of imagination" and "homesickness of the Swiss". *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, Book I "On the Cognitive Faculty, §32.

believed to be suffering from "erroneous representations" which lead to a loss of touch with the present, and consequently, to a confusion between past and present, real and imaginary events. According to Hofer the first victims of this disease were "various displaced people of the 17th century: freedom loving students from the Republic of Berne studying in Basel", Swiss soldiers fighting abroad, domestic help and servants working in France and Germany (Boym, 2001, p.3). Nostalgia was believed to be a physically manifesting disease through nausea, loss of appetite, pathological changes in the lungs, brain inflammation, cardiac arrests, high fever, tendency for suicide. In order to soothe this "mania of longing", leeches, opium, return to Alps were prescribed by the doctors.

However not every country was patient or sympathetic to this 'disease'. For example, in the Russian army those who succumbed to nostalgia were threatened to be burned alive. Meanwhile in America, this 'epidemic' did not surface until the American Civil War and when it did, the attitude towards it was very different from those in Europe and Russia. The American military doctor Theodore Calhoun believed nostalgia to be a shameful disease resulting from "lack of manliness" and "unprogressive attitudes". In the 19th century America nostalgia, (a.k.a. homesickness), was considered to be a result of "idleness, a slow and inefficient use of time conducive to daydreaming, erotomania and onanism". So, Dr. Calhoun found "public ridicule and bullying by fellow soldiers… manly marches, battles and improvement in personal hygiene" to be the cures. He also believed that "strength of character and social background" played role in nostalgia.

As humanity and world progressed, depending on current conditions, different receptions of nostalgia surfaced. Nostalgia's exclusivity to homesickness started to

[4] Niklas Salmos in his Ph.D. dissertation entitled "Towards a Poetics of Nostalgia: The Nostalgic Experience in Modern Fiction" uses the word the *nostalgee*. He defines nostalgee as the person who experiences nostalgic experience. In this thesis this word will be used in the same context.

deviate during the 18th and 19th centuries. Starting from the late 18th century, doctors discovered that going back to homeland did not cure nostalgia. With the the spread of industrialization and massive transportation systems in the 19th century nostalgia, in the form of homesickness lost its privileged status as an ailment. In order to cure their homesickness, the nostalgee could simply hop on a train to visit their home and 'cure' this condition. Thus, in the late 1800s it disappeared from the medical nosology (Casey, 1987, p. 371). However, the prescription of railroad systems did not cure nostalgia as expected. Since perception and conception of nostalgia is concomitant with the changing times, gradually, it left its status as a curable disease to an incurable condition and "the task of exploring nostalgia passed from doctors to poets and philosophers" (Boym, 2001, p. 5-7; 11). For instance: Kant, in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* associates nostalgia with imagination and its power to produce a recollection of images, which he refers to as "fantasy" (Book I, § 32); for Jean Baudrilliard nostalgia is an "artificial resurrection" that assumes the meaning of what is real (*Simulacres et Simulation*, 1981); Walter Benjamin's "Angel of History" and his contemplation on the ruins of history. In literature the following examples can be recounted: Honoré de Balzac in *Pierette* (1840) presents the heroine suffering from nostalgia in the form of homesickness. Moreover, aside from his fiction, Balzac also expresses a nostalgia in his writings on Paris, where he contemplates the lost splendor of Paris in relation with the ruins of bourgeoisie[5]. In *A Journey to Sakhalin* (1890) Anton Chekhov uses nostalgia in the sense of homesickness. Furthermore, there are the modern examples as previously mentioned such as *The Great Gatsby, À la Recherce du Temps Perdu* etc.

[5] His aforementioned writings appeared in a periodical named "Le Diable à Paris" which contains pieces on the Parisian life and was published in 1845-1846.

In the 20th century, on the contrary of what Americans believed, progress did not heal nostalgia. In the 20th century it "became associated with a sentimental longing for the past" For Jean Starobinski and Michael Ruth, in the 20th century nostalgia was privatized and internalized (Boym, 2001, p. 53).

20th century marked the birth of urbanization and modernization. What is modern, what is modernity and what is modernism were central in the discussions of this tumultuous century. Modernization is concerned with "social practice" and refers to progress, such as industrialization, urbanization etc. Modernity and modernisms, on the other hand, are "responses to the condition of modernization" and are "reflective on the nature of time… with longing for another time" (ibid, p. 22). At first modernization, like the rail systems, with the emergence of metropolis and the excitement it might provoke, was expected to soothe nostalgia (ibid, p. 346). However, this expectation proved to be in vain, on the contrary modernization enhanced nostalgia, denoting it different aspects concomitant with changing times.

Therefore, it would be safe to assume, the modern times of the 20th century, with its massive transitions in every aspect of life, prepared pertinent circumstances for one of the basic aspects of nostalgia: contemplation on the nature of time in the midst of rapid growth and yearning for different times and places. This overall atmosphere can be associated with the abundance of productions in literature, art and philosophy of the 20th century, which deal with the notion of time and the inner world of the individual in the midst of transitions, all of which can be the potential subjects for nostalgia.

20th century, a cradle for many tumultuous events all over world, brings to one's mind Benjamin's angel of history, and his famous lines in his essay "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (2007):

> A Klee painting named ‘Angelus Novus’ shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet (p. 257).

At first glance we can list two world wars and communist expansion as the major earth shattering events that accumulated such a “wreckage” in this long century, each of them leaving behind massive devastations, destructions and displaced people. These massive such destructions and critical transitions lead to “rosy reconstruction[s] of the past”, in Boym’s words (2001, p. 28). Furthermore, on top of these events on global-scale, each nation had gone through its own inner battles and processes as well. Naturally, the notion of nostalgia can incorporate different contexts and breed different cultural connotations, due to different historical circumstances. Such as aspect can be connected with what Svetlana Boym states about how every culture and language has its own untranslatable word ascribed to nostalgia, with an emphasis on “emerging nations” that insist “on their cultural uniqueness”. This linguistic particularity can be considered as an indicator of the uniqueness of nostalgia in synch with the society in which it exists:

> Czechs had the word *litost* which meant…sympathy, grief, remorse and undefinable longing. According to Milan Kundera, litost suggested a ‘feeling as infinite as an open accordion’ where the ‘first syllable when long and

stressed sounds like the wail of an abandoned dog.' The whispering sibilants of the Russian *toska*, made famous in the literature of exiles, evoke a claustrophobic intimacy of the crammed space from where one pines for the infinite. Toska suggests, literally, a stifling, almost asthmatic sensation of incredible deprivation that is found also in the shimmering sounds of the Polish *tesknota*. Usually opposed to the Russian *toska* (even though they came from the same root), *tesknota* gives a similar sense of confining and overwhelming yearning with a touch of moody artistry unknown to the Russians, enamored by the gigantic and the absolute… The Portuguese and Brazilians have their *saudade*, a tender sorrow, breezy and erotic, not as melodramatic as its Slavic counterpart, yet no less profound and haunting. Romanians claim that the word *dor*, sonorous and sharp like a dagger, is unknown to the other nations and speaks of a specifically Romanian dolorous ache. While each term preserves the specific rhythms of the language, one is struck by the fact that all these untranslatable words are in fact synonyms; and all share the desire for untranslatability, the longing for uniqueness (Boym, 2001, p. 12-13) [6].

[6] In the Turkish translation of Boym's book, the Turkish Word *hüzün* is added in this chapter, taken from Orhan Pamuk's memoir *Istanbul: Memories and the City,* trans. Maureen Freely, Vintage Books, New York, 2006. *(İstanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir,*Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul 2003). (*Nostaljinin Geleceği*, Istanbul: Metis Yayıncılık, 2005, p. 39). However, Boym does not mention any Turkish words or Pamuk in the original 2001 English version. I contacted the Turkish publishing company about this and they said Boym herself wanted "hüzün" to be included in the Turkish translation. However, they have not provided me with any proof of such a statement. Nonetheless, due its relevancy, I would like to include this information here. According to the Turkish edition, taken from Orhan Pamuk's memoir, Turkish language has "hüzün" for nostalgia. Pamuk associates hüzün and nostalgia with Istanbul. Because the word has Arabic roots, its connotations differ, which Pamuk writes about extensively. Hüzün depends on two different traditions: first one, as it appears in the Koran "conveys a feeling of deep spiritual loss"; the second tradition relates to the Sufi mysticism where hüzün means "the spiritual anguish we feel because we cannot be close enough to Allah, because we cannot do enough for Allah in this world. "If I am to convey the intensity of the hüzün that Istanbul caused me to feel as a child, I must describe the history of the city following the destruction of the Ottoman Empire and—even more important—the way this history is reflected in the city's "beautiful" landscapes and its people. The *hüzün* of Istanbul is not just the mood evoked by its music and its poetry, it is a way of looking at life that implicates us all, not only a spiritual state but a state of mind

These words point out to the uniqueness and diversity of nostalgic perception in relation with different societies, and show how nostalgia coexists with the conditions of different societies. Every nation, with its own conditions, traditions and history, creates its own objects of yearning. Such objects are not limited to concrete, tangible entities, they can also include certain past times, eras, traditions and lifestyles. This different and exclusive terminology also suggests that although nostalgia is a global, democratic emotion that belongs to everyone, it can also differ depending on various circumstances. So, a universal formula cannot be bestowed upon nostalgia regarding where, when, how this emotional state emerges. Such differentiations also support Edward S. Casey's (1987) claim when he draws attention to the ambiguous nature of the notion. According to him:

> … what are we nostalgic about- what is the proper object of nostalgia?... Is there a definite object of nostalgia such as a thing, or is it a question of something quite indefinite such as an ambiance or an atmosphere?... Do we get nostalgic over the past as past… or do we become nostalgic only when a remnant of the past lingers into present (e.g., in the guise of photographs,

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that is ultimately as life-affirming as it is negating…To explore the ambiguities of the word, we must return to the thinkers who see hüzün not as a poetic concept or a state of grace but as an illness. According to El Kindi, hüzün was associated not just with the loss or death of a loved one but also with other spiritual afflictions, like anger, love, rancor, and groundless fear. The philosopher-doctor Ibn Sina saw hüzün in the same broad terms, and this was why he suggested that the proper way of diagnosing a youth in the grip of a helpless passion was to ask the boy for the girl's name while taking his pulse. The approach outlined by these classic Islamic thinkers is similar to the one proposed in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Robert Burton's enigmatic but entertaining tome of the early seventeenth century. Like Ibn Sina, Burton takes an encyclopedic view of the 'black pain' listing fear of death, love, defeat, evil deeds, and any number of drinks and foods as its possible causes, and his list of cures ranges just as broadly… So hüzün stems from the same 'black passion' as melancholy…My starting point was the emotion that a child might feel while looking through a steamy window. Now we begin to understand hüzün not as the melancholy of a solitary person but the black mood shared by millions of people together. What I am trying to explain is the hüzün of an entire city: of Istanbul." (Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, 2006, p. 82-83)

> souvenirs, etc.) … what we miss in nostalgia... is the past we (or others) once experienced it, not the cultural, epistemological, metaphysical foundations of that world. What is 'nostalged' is a past that we cannot rejoin. We cannot rejoin it precisely because we cannot re-experience it in propria persona, even it it has left tantalizing marks in the present (The World of Nostalgia, p. 361-365).

Not only does nostalgia have its own exclusive connotations and associations in different cultures, as stated by Boym above with the list of untranslatable lexicology, it also lacks a definitive formula in regards to the question of yearning, as Casey addresses above. Thus, for nostalgia, there is not one concrete formula but there are various other factors at play, which makes it dependent on different interpretations and circumstances.

Mainly nostalgia is about the "irreversibility of time and of ability to revisit other times and places" (Boym, 2001, p. 347). Nostalgia acts as a bridgeing agent in regards to our past, present and future and in our quest for meaning in our lives which renders nostalgia a personal dimension. As Fred Davis (1979) states: "Nostalgia derives from and has continuing implications for our lives as social actors. It leads us to search among remembrances of persons and places of our past in an effort to bestow meaning upon persons and places of our present (and to some degree our future)" (p. vii).

However different the perspectives on nostalgia are, one universal definition of this particular condition is, as Starobinski (1966) says: "an emotional upheaval which is related to the workings of memory" (p. 88-89). Three distinct common components reside in the prompting of this upheaval: memory, time and place. Aside

from this triad, some seminal scholarly studies propose different types of nostalgia. The following section will explicate Fred Davis's and Svetlana Boym's categorizations. In addition, post-communist nostalgia (which Boym examines separately) will be included as one of the types of nostalgia. Post-communist nostalgia is another subject matter on its own, around which many scholarly researches are published. However, a brief account will be delivered, in value of its relevance to this thesis.

2.2. Types of Nostalgia: Restorative, Reflective and Post-Communist

As nostalgia left its medical position to humanities, it has moved to a more abstract and conceptual realm. Fred Davis and Svetlana Boym, two scholars who authored two of the widely used books on nostalgia, presented their own specifications.

Fred Davis in his seminal work on the subject titled *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (1979) says with the "demilitarized and demedicalized" status of the word, nostalgia gradually drifted from its "pathological" and "homesickness" referent to "inchoate amalgam of sentiments" (p. 4-5). He then points to its complicated "cognitive and emotional qualifiers" due to the "reflexive" quality of men and proposes three types of nostalgia:

1. First Order (or Simple) Nostalgia: Subjective state that sees the present in a negative context with a belief that things were better in the past. A positive evocation of the past.

2. Second Order (or Reflexive) Nostalgia: The person does more than sentimentalizing the past by posing questions in the present regarding the accuracy of nostalgic representations by saying “was it really that way?”. He/she adds dimension to a nostalgic experience.

3. Third Order (or Interpreted) Nostalgia: This one is beyond the historical accuracy or felicity of nostalgic claim. The nostalgee [my addition] asks analytical questions such as: Why am I feeling nostalgic, what may this mean for my past, is it that I am likely to feel nostalgia at certain times and places and not at others; if so when and where, what uses does nostalgia serve for me? (David, 1979, p. 16-25)

He also makes the distinction of private and collective nostalgia. For collective nostalgia he states that symbolic objects are public and shared; as for private nostalgia symbolic images or allusions from the past are exclusive to person’s biography, they are individual and particular in their reference. As an example he gives Proust’s famous madeleines from his childhood at Combray. Furthermore, he adds that a collective symbol can denote a subjective specificity, giving way to “private reminiscences of a particular romance in a particular place” (Davis, 1979, p. 123-124). Thus, in private nostalgia, a collective place that belongs to a general community can also generate private memories for every individual.

Furtheron, Svetlana Boym proposes two types of nostalgia in her book *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001): Restorative and Reflective. While restorative nostalgia is more concerned with revival of a certain time in a nationhood, reflective nostalgia is concerned with “historical and individual time” and with “meditation on history and

passage of time" (p. 49). Boym's reflective nostalgia can be considered as an enchanced combination of Davis' "second and third order nostalgia" categorizations.

Restorative nostalgia, as the word itself suggests, seeks to restore, to re-establish. Since nostalgia deals with the past, a mot-à-mot definition of this conception would be restoring the past, where the past would be considered an "absolute truth" (Boym, 2001, p.53). Thus, it can be deduced that restorative nostalgia also seeks to recover a particular past, most probably an ideal one. It is primarily concerned with evocation of a national memory wrapped aroud a "single teleological plot", as it spatializes time. Reflective nostalgia, however, does not seek to re-establish or recover but to mediate on the past; it is a "new flexibility" and is concerned with "individual and cultural memory", temporalizing space. Here, "place names open up mental maps and space unfolds into time". She adds that these two types might also overlap, without necessarily sharing a common narrative. Restorative nostalgia is more concerned with restoration. The restoration can be in the form of restoration of a monument, a national narrative or invention of a tradition. It can be argued that restorative nostalgia contains more nationalistic tendencies, whereas reflective nostalgia has a more personal nature. "Recollections of an individual" can collide with collective memories. It has a personal nature even if it derives from a national or a collective memory (Boym, 2001, p. 41-53). On the subject of collective and national memory, it is necessary to state their disparity. As the issue of collective memory is a large discipline on its own, a brief explanation will be given for the purposes of this thesis:

Svetlana Boym (2001) makes the distinction between two by associating collective memory with "common landmarks" which "constitute shared social frameworks of individual recollection". Whereas national memory "tends to make a single teleological plot out of shared everyday recollections" (p. 53). Therefore

national memory also seeks to establish or restore a national identity whereas collective memory offers a more cultural and individual milieu. Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) is one of the prominent scholars who analyzed the concept of collective memory. In his *La Mémoire Collective* (1950) he gives an extensive account on the subject. However, for the purposes of this study, its foundational definition will suffice. For Halbwachs memory essentially depends on social interaction and they do not have a sticking power on their own (Assman, 2011, p.121). According to him every indivual memory works on two levels that are interwoven in each other:

> … the individual participates in two types of memory… [H]e places his own remembrances within the framework of his personality, his own personal life… On the other hand, he is able to act merely as a group member, helping to evoke and maintain impersonal remembrances of interest to the group. These two memories are often intermingled …the individual memory, in order to corroborate and make precise and even to cover the gaps in its remembrances, relies upon, relocates itself within, momentarily merges with, the collective memory. Nonetheless, it still goes its own way, gradually assimilating any acquired deposits. The collective memory, for its part, encompasses the individual memories while remaining distinct from them (Halbwachs, 1980, p. 50-51).

Furthermore, for him, history, aside from an official written chronicle, is also an active organism fed by the collective memory, which is a memory shaped by the nature of a particular social group: “The historical world is like an ocean fed by the many partial histories… Every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time” (ibid, 84). According to Jeffrey K. Olick’s take on

Halbwachs' collective memory, it works in a society and these workings of the mind are "structured by social arrangements": "[It] is in society that people normally acquire their memories" (qtd in: Olick, 2010, p. 155). For Halbwachs all personal remembering takes place within social contexts (ibid, p. 156). Svetlana Boym (2001) departing from Halbwachs, further specifizes nostalgia's connection with collective memory. According to her, collective memory is in between collective and individual memory with collective memory "as a playground of individual recollection" (p. 54).

Another type of nostalgia can be considered to be the relationship between post-communist memory and nostalgia. Communist expansion has been one of the highly resonating events that took place in the 20th century on top of two world wars and Holocaust. Its imposition and effect have been massive. It spread over a large geography, which, in a sense, caused division in Europe by differentiating Central and Eastern Europe, a.k.a. Eastern Block, from Western Europe. Fall of communism equally resulted in another major aftermath that affected politics, art and culture in the formerly communist states, so much so that post-communist era generated its own scholarly canon dealing with the subject from different disciplines, with specifications in the periphery of individual nations[7].

Post-Communist nostalgia varies for each former communist states in Europe, as each of them had its own exclusive experiences which resulted in different aftereffect with the fall of Communism. Svetlana Boym (2001) writes that, although USSR and Eastern and Central Europe can merge under the titles such as Communism and Post-Communism, they also differ in terms of experiencing these times. However one thing they all had common was an "alternative intellectual life from 1960s to the 1980s" and she caracterizes this as the development of countermemory.

[7] i.e.: for a detailed account on Post-Communist nostalgia in Eastern Europe see: *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, ed. Maria Todorava and Zsuzsa Gille, Berghahn Books, New York, 2010.

Countermemory means an orally transmitted history through a network of family members and friends, proposing an alternative vision of past, present and future (Boym, 2001, p. 61). Such a transmition can be argued to have generated personalized outlook on the past, present and future, thus evoking different perspectives of nostalgia. Two of the novels in this thesis belong to formerly communist Central and Eastern European national literatures. As stated above, each of them had gone through their own unique experiences and process alongside with their local countermemory movement. Thus, in the vicinity of the novels that are subjects of this thesis, post-communist nostalgia can be considered within the realm of reflective nostalgia.

Boym (2001) writes that "nostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory" (p. xvi). Then later on, this statement unfolds as restorative, reflective and post-communist nostalgia mentioned above. As memory is inherent in nostalgia and is prompted through different stimulants, the stimulating agents also play an active role in this notion. At this point, in relation with nostalgia, questions of *associanistism* and *memorative sign* will be explicated in the following part.

2.3. Associations and Memorative Signs

Particularities of our surroundings such as our home, furniture in our home, the city, neighborhood we live in, etc. play formative roles for the nostalgic mind. Voluntary or involuntary, there is always an object either as a tangible entity or as a place that function as memory stimulis, which consequently recreates or returns to a certain time and place in the past. As nostalgia's associations with homesickness shows, since its early theorizations question of place has been one of its central components. Whether in the form a homeland, a pastoral scenery for people who

made the move from suburbs to the city or a childhood home; or, as in one of most famous and most frequently used example: the case of Proust's madeleine, where a madeleine dipped in the tea incites the narrator's nostalgia and transports him to his childhood memories in Combray.

Nostalgia has a personal quality and cooperates with a stimulant that acts as a memorative sign. Our surroundings, the place and the city we live besides its own memory, embody a personal sign for each individual. This private individual relationship is what finds resonance in the mind of the nostalgee. Thus, notions such as *memorative signs* and *association* appear along with the early emergence of nostalgia. Sensory experiences which function as trigger mechanisms in our memory, constitute main components of nostalgia. Keyword in nostalgia, as Jean Starobinski states, is the memorative sign. The nostalgic was believed to have a capacity for remembering sensations, tastes, sounds, smells. Gastronomy and music particularly stood out for nostalgia. According to the Swiss scientists, mother's soups, village milk and folk melodies of Alpine valleys triggered nostalgic reactions. Aside from the Swiss, Scots were also believed sensitive to music. They were known for "succumbing" to "incapacitating" nostalgia with sound of bagpipes (Boym, 2001, p. 4). Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his *Dictionary of Music* (1768) talks about the effect cowbells (rans-des-vaches) and defines *memorative sign*:

> I have added the celebrated Rans-des-vaches, that tune so cherished by the Swiss that they have forbidden it from being played in their troops…since it would cause who heard it to dissolve in tears, desert or die, so much it would arouse in them the ardent desire to see their country again. One would seek in vain in this Tune the energetic accents capable of producing such astonishing effects. These

> effects, which do not take place on foreigners, come solely from habit, from memories… those who hear it [recall] their country, their pleasures, their youth and all their ways of living, arouse in them a bitter pain for having lost all that. The Music therefore does not precisely act as music but as a memorative sign (Illbruck, 2007, p. 64-65)[8].

Here Rousseau explicitly constructs a link between melody and a desire it incites of a specific place (in this case homeland of soldiers) and for him this desire to be back home stems from memories. In this case, according to Rousseau, the effect of a music tune does not belong to everyone, but targets a highly partiular audience. What Rousseau states can be summarized in the following path:

Music tune (memorative sign) → triggers → Memory → results in → yearning for home (Nostalgia)

Of course here Rousseau's account targets a very specific audience (Swiss soldiers) with very specific tools (ranz-des-vaches). However, this formula can be applied to the general awakening of nostalgia: a memorative sign in any shape of form, is a trigger that works for the deepening in memory, which evokes a desired time and place.

Associanist theory in thought process is a broad subject that encompasses cognitive science, philosophy and social psychology. It is believed to be the background of empricism for centuries. Associationism is a theory that connects

[8] This passage is selected from Helmut Illbruck's disseration, which he quoted from: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Dictionary of Music", in *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music,* trans. and ed. John T. Scott (The Collected Writings of Rousseau, vol. 7; Hanover and London: Univ. Press of New England, 1998).

learning to thought on the principles of a past causal history. Associationists use the history of an organism's experience as the "main sculptor of cognitive architecture". Associationism claims that thoughts are based on a past experience. A creature's mental states are associated with some facts about its causal history. Once a mind, stimulated by a pair of associations from the past is activated, it calls for other associations (Mandelbaum, 2016). For example in the case of Rousseau's ranz-des-vaches: Music tune stimulates the mind of a soldier and this activates his past. This activation makes him recall the cowbells he has been accustomed to in his homeland, which consequently makes him remember his homeland and his yearning for it. Here in this case, the cowbells are associated with his homeland. From Aristotle to Locke and Kant there had been discussions regarding this associanistic theory, whether is it solely reproductive or productive; which means whether association is backed up by memory or by imagination, respectively (Illbruck, 2007, p. 65).

Leaving all the philosophical semantics and particularities aside, since the very early studies, it can be observed that nostalgia excels upon a trigger mechanism based on sensual memorative signs, predominantly music and taste. Nonetheless, since the 17th century, there has been an intriguing association and a strong emphasis between nostalgia and location (homeland).

Edward S. Casey in *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (2000) emphasizes the strength of the relationship between memory and place: "only consider how often a memory is either of a place itself (e.g. of one's childhood home) or of an event or person in a place and … how unusual it is to remember a placeless person or an event not situated in some specific locale" (p. 183). He writes that "one of the most eloquent testimonies to place's extraordinary memorability is found in nostalgia. We are nostalgic primarily about particular places that have been

emotionally significant to us and which we now miss" and he believes in an organic bond between nostalgia and memory of a place: "… the poignant power of the phenomenon [nostalgia] has everything to do with memory of place". Furthermore he adds that nostalgia allows us to "be thrust back, transported into the place we recall" (p. 201). Such a tranportation back to a place, inevitably includes a particular time in our lives i.e. childhood, teenage years; more specifically as in James G. Hart's (1973) interpretation of the nostalgic mind: "nostalgia is not about passing time but about eras, seasons or aeons. It is not about dates but about times" (p. 406).

Therefore to sum it up, combined with Casey's claim between the relationship of a place and nostalgia and considering nostalgia's early ties with a homeland, specific places can be considered within the realm of memorative signs and their associations (as shown in the example of cowbells).

People are highly inclined to get nostalgic about particular places that have been emotionally significant to them in their past and for which they long. The next section will further explicate the relationship between memory and place in their connection with nostalgia.

2.4. Place and Memory

> Great is the power of memory that resides in places (qtd in: Assmann, 2010, p.281/Cicero, De Finibus bonorum et malorum, 392f).

> The power of place is a remarkable one. Aristotle (qtd in: Casey, 2000, p. 213).

According to the legend told by Cicero in his *De Oratore*, the poet Simonides of Ceos attends a banquet given by a nobleman. As he chants lyrical poems to his host and to Gods Castor and Pollux, he is called outside by a messenger. Therefore, he leaves the banquet to see the messenger, however he sees no one waiting for him. Meanwhile, during his absence the roof collapses, crushing everyone and everything at the banquet. When the relatives of the guests come to claim the bodies for burial they are unable to identify them. Simonides is the only one who recalls where the guests were seated, reconstructing in his memory the whole banquet and thus helps the relatives to identify the bodies of their loved ones. This legend introduces "the art of memory", the mnemonic technique of associating places and images (loci and imagines) (Yates, 1999, p. 1-2). Among the key aspects this ancient embodies in the workings of memory is the relationship between remembering and images.

The analogies Svetlana Boym makes with Walter Benjamin's approach to memory and Gaston Bachelard's choice of words in regards to memory suits well with nostalgia: an archeology of memory and excavation, respectively[9]. Nostalgia is certainly like an archeological digging and excavation of selective memories that surface as a result of memorative signs. In a lexicological frame, memory is defined as the power or process of reproducing or recalling what has been learned and retained especially through associative mechanisms. As explained previously, associative aspect of memory is one of the key components in dealing with nostalgia. Each object of association plays a stimulating role in the cognitive faculties of the mind. One of the sensory agents in the respect is the relationship between a place and a personal or collective history or memory.

[9] Svetlana Boym makes frequent use of this analogy throughout her book *The Future of Nostalgia* and Gaston Bachelord uses this word in his *The Poetics of Space* where he makes association with the cellar of a house and memory.

Aleide Assmann (2011) explicates the *memory of places* expression in her book *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization* in following words:

> [This expression] is both convenient and evocative. It is convenient because it leaves open the question whether this is a generivus objectivus, meaning that we remember places, or a genetivus subjectivus, meaning that places retain memories. It is evocative because it suggests the possiblity that places themselves may become the agents and bearers of memory, endowed with a mnemonic power that far exceeds humans (p. 281).

Then she brings up the debate between Goethe and Schiller where they discuss whether is it the "observer who loads" objects with meaning or the other way around, the objects possessing their own meanings? Goethe takes the position of observer not loading the meaning but that the objects are significant in themselve. Whereas Schiller contests by saying "ultimately it depends on the mind whether or not an object is to mean something" (qtd in ibid, p. 282). Here, although the word "object" is used, this discussion between Goethe and Schiller can be substituted with places by referring to them as the objects of memory. As Assmann states in the beginning, "places retain memories", they inherently have meanings by themselves, however this does not exclude the meaning "the mind" bestows upon the place, (which is what Schiller supports as mentioned above). Moreover, that meaning is tied with the mind's own experience and memory in that particular place.

Gaston Bachelard (1994) states that memories are motionless and "the more securely they are fixed in space, the sounder they are"; he further adds "localization in the spaces of our intimacy is more urgent that determination of dates" (p. 9).

Bachelard emphasizes and prioritizes space over time in the evocation of memories. As will be evident in further chapters, places play a particular active role in the depiction and prompting of memories in the novels that are the subjects of this study. Thus, on top of food and music, locations can also trigger one's memory and act as a "memorative sign". Regardless of the nature of this sign, as Boym (2001) writes, "from the ancient Greek mnemonic art to Proust's famous madeleines, memory has always been encoded through a trace, a detail, a suggestive synecdoche" (p. 54). She then mentions Reinhart Koselleck's conception "space of experience" for nostalgia. However, the word "space" in phenomenology gains a more specific and deeper meanings. Next section explicates this difference.

2.5.Space and Place

So far, it is established that nostalgia cooperates with a memory stimulant. As Boym (2001) writes, "nostalgia like memory depends on mnemonic devices" (p. 346). The particularities of these mnemonic devices can vary. Only a tap into memory is necessary for the mind to commence its nostalgic wanderings. A music tune, a taste of a homemade something, just as our mothers used to make, or a smell, like a perfume, these mnemonic devices can also be our surroundings, spaces. Since the aim here is to show how city as a space, with its network of places can serve as a memory stimulant for the nostalgee, the difference in semantics serves right for the purposes of this study. Before moving into the role of the city for nostalgia, stating the phenomenological difference between the frequently used "place" and "space" is necessary.

Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life*[10] states the distinction between space and place. He also points out Maurice Merleau-Ponty's specifications in the realm of "space". According to Michel de Certeau "place (lieu)" designates a "proper and distinct location", an "order in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence" excluding "the possibility of two things being in the same location (place)". As far as space is concerned, he says that it "occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities". He associates space with "practiced place" and further adds that space is "a phenomenology of existing in the world" (Certeau, 1988, p. 117-118). As Certeau points out, Merleau-Ponty makes further specifications concerning space, which one can more closely relate to the perception of space in nostalgia. In his seminal work *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty (2002) further explicates the subject of space by making distinctions between "geometrical space (l'espace géometrique)" and "human space (l'espace anthropologique)"[11]. Geometrical space, which Certeau associates with his definition of place, according to Merleau-Ponty, is concerned with "perception of space" which means "a disinterested subject [acquiring] spatial relationships between objects and their geometrical characteristics". What he states can be interpreted as each individual having their own exclusive experiences and memories in place:

[10] Certeau's book is composed of two volumes. First one was published in 1988, the second one in 1998. In this study two of these volumes are used.

[11] In the English translation of Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* "anthropologique" is given as "anthropologique" and in Merleau-Ponty's English translation it is given as "human space". In this study the term "human space" will be used in accord with the English translation of *Phénoménologie de la Perception*.

> I have a flow of experiences which imply and explain each other [objects] both simultaneously and successively. Paris for me is not an object of many facets, a collection of perceptions, nor is it the law governing all these perceptions. Just as a person gives evidence of the same emotional essence in his gestures with his hands, in his way of walking and in the sound of his voice, each express perception occurring in my journey through Paris—the cafés, people's faces, the poplars along the quays, the bends of the Seine—stands out against the city's whole being, and merely confirms that there is a certain style or a certain significance which Paris possesses…There is present a latent significance, diffused throughout the landscape or the city, which we find in some- thing specific and self-evident which we feel no need to define. Only the ambiguous perceptions emerge as explicit acts: perceptions, that is, to which we ourselves give a significance through the attitude which we take up (p. 327-328).

As for the human space, he says that it signifies our relation and experience to the world (such as dreams and perceptions) and has a more existential dimension:

> Our body and our perception always summon us to take as the centre of the world that environment with which they present us. But this environment is not necessarily that of our own life. I can 'be somewhere else' while staying here, and if I am kept far away from what I love, I feel out of touch with real life… the description of human space can be developed indefinitely… existence is spatial, that is, that through an inner necessity it opens on to an 'outside', so that one can speak of a mental space and a 'world of meanings

and objects of thought which are constituted in terms of those meanings' (p. 333- 342).

Merleau-Ponty's claims can be associated with the dwellings of a nostalgic mind: cognitive transportation in memories to elsewhere, which means creation of a human space, while occupying the "geometrical space" bodily. As he says "there are as many spaces as there are distinct spatial experiences" (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 340). One's experiences and practices in a place creates a human space, and such a space created in mind can be in the form of a nostalgic memory.

The specifities regarding the question of space, can be merged with Reinhart Koselleck's (2004) "space of experience" conception, According to Koselleck "experience is present past whose events have been incorporated and could be remembered" (p. 259). Then, Boym (2001) charactrizes "space of experience" as a milieu allowing one "to account for the assimiliation of the past into the present" (p. 10). Koselleck's space of experience conception and Boym's interpretation of it can be used for the relationship between nostalgia and city. Here, in this context, city becomes, with certain places contained in it, a "space of experience" where past and present collide in the nostalgic memory.

2.6. City and Nostalgia

> Once in place, the city is a power container, a source of material order and control"
> (Richard Lehan, p. 14).

> Cities, like bodies, have their smell, their skin
> (Sylvie Germain, e-pub edition, p.15).

Our surroundings whether we are aware of them or not, carry their own story and aura. These stories and aura refer to a certain time in history for the collective memory or a particular private memory. If a city had been a crucial milieu for cultural and historical transitions, we are inevitably surrounded by memories exude either through the ruins or restorations. As Richard Lehan (1998) says "from the earliest of times, the city contained both spiritual and material power" (p. 14). Whether we experience those memories or not, in the least case these surroundings convey a meaning, a-time-back-when. For the urban cities this meaning conveyance can occur through restoration of a building, (since restoration implies a destruction), or through an old building still standing in its original form or through residues of a war. Ultimately, our surroundings represent a story. The legend of Simonides is about connecting places and images. This centuries old story in the mnemonic technique shows that place and story are central keywords in the art of memory. Considering how our memories -which are also our own stories- are embedded in particular places, this duo also take a central role in the workings of nostalgia. To put it Edward Casey's (2000) words: "nostalgia leads us to invoke the following principle: in remembering we can be thrust back, transported into the place we recall" (p. 201). Thus, as mentioned previously, city can be considered as a space of experience with particular places (i.e. streets, stores, monuments, buildings etc.) where past and present collides in the nostalgic memory.

Since antiquity cities constituted a valuable subject of study in trying to understand the human life, as they provide a vast canvas through which changing times find a reflection. Cities are also tightly linked to modernity. Process of

modernization[12] immediately finds a reflection in the confinements of the city. Dissappearance of a historical façade conveys an effect on two levels: If one is aware of the change, of the former image and the historicity of its original form, then one is also aware of its disappearance, knowing that now, the only source to sustain the image of the former aura depends on one's memory and on the books. Being aware of the history of a place or a neighborhood and witnessing its disapperance through change, in the name of restoration, both means acknowedging what it used to be, its history, and knowing the disappearance of all that history. These reflections which render a narrative of the city, inevitably, find a generous place in literature. In Doreen Massey's words, cities are "the intersections of multiple narratives" and "a nexus of distinctive coexisting stories (qtd in: Brooker, 2002, p. 1).

A city can be treated as one of the sub-categories derived from space and place specifictions in the phenomenological sense as mentioned above. Each city carries its own historical scars and embodies various meanings for personal memories, exclusive to each individual's own experience. In some cases both a historical story and personal association can collide thus personal meaning inevitably work together with the historicity of the city. As Boym (2001) says:

> Urban identity is common memory and common past rooted in man-made place. City is ideal crossroads between longing and estrangement, memory and freedom, nostalgia and modernity. Past of the city suggests other dimensions of the lived experience and haunts the city like a ghost (p. 76).

Such a "crossroad" usually happens in cities that have been cradle of wars and transitions on historical, cultural and/or political level. These turbulences make cities

[12] Modernization is concerned with "social practice" and refers to progress, such as industrialization, urbanization etc. Modernity and modernisms, on the other hand, are "responses to the condition of modernization".

visual archives of history and memory. Each nation fights its own battle, writes its own history and thus has its own genuine stories, making the memories exclusive to its own. Remnants of a past, the "uncanniness that lurks… in the everyday life of the city…"[t]he remains of a waning past open up in the streets" are all building blocks of "the city saga" (Certeau, 1998, p.133-134). Destructions, reconstructions, renovations all embody and reflect an aura and, consequently, a memory. As Certeau (1988) says, "Stories about places are makeshift things. They are composed with the world's debris" (p. 107).

The content of nostalgic recollection provides us with the nature and specifity of the memory in relation with its associated places. In the case of a nostalgee's association with a city, detailed descriptions of that city's particularities, -such as its surroundings, buildings, monuments, streets- gives one a "spatial trajectory" as Certeau (1988) claims. Direct associations of places in memory partake in the mind of a nostalgee, as places act as stimulating associations for the mind, like Rousseau's ranz-des-vaches mentioned previously. Thus, in a "space of experience" a nostalgic mind can make references to a past. In this context, the spirit of a place can be considered as an associatistic agent for the nostalgic mind.

Walter Benjamin (1979) claims in his essay "Naples", that "architecture is the most binding form of communal rhythm" and "shops, wells and churches are reference points", not house numbers (p. 166). He sees city a vibrant space by stripping the numbers of the buildings and refers to the constructions in the city with their proper names, sort of denoting a characterization and aura. Benjamin's perception can be read together with what Certeau says about how proper names of places recall or suggest phantoms (1988, p.105). These "proper names", "reference points" which recall "phantoms" can all be denoting a nostalgia. A city, with its

monuments, places and buildings belongs to its citizens. As such spots can generate a common memory stemming from a historical importance, they can also carry different meanings for different individuals who possess their own private memories attached to particular places in that city. Therefore, a city, as a "space of experience" constitute a milieu in the realm of both collective and private memories. In the case of private memories, inspired by the associanistic theory mentioned earlier, they are an object for the nostalgic mind, since each individual in his own course of life, goes through his own experiences. Thus, a place, with its specific location in a city, and with its proper name has the potential to allude to nostalgic memories.

When Michel de Certeau writes about "spatial practices" and city, he refers to the city in the realm of a literary terminology: reading a city. When he merges the vocabulary of two separate disciplines and associates an act used to engage with a text to an inhabited space, thus attributing the city a quality of a story or storyteller. This mélange of metaphoric utilization can be interpreted as, the city as being a canvas of a massive story through which a memory and history exudes, telling people experiencing the city, something that had occured once-upon-a-time. Certeau inspires an interpretation which points out that the city we live in is the home of human practices that tell a story which is also derived from the city's past. He writes how names in a city are given "diverse meanings…by passer-by"s, detaching "themselves from the places they were supposed to define". He refers to this situation as "geography of meaning" and denotes "magical powers" to proper names. He further says that this "semantic rarefaction, the function of articulating a second, poetic geography…insinuate other routes into the functionalist and historical order of movement". Following the footsteps of Certeau, it can be deduced that each place, aside from its given name and assigned position on a map, creates a different meaning

for each individual, especially for those who have their own particular relationship or history with the place. The names of places in a city have are also providers of meanings, which derive from the memories associated with those places. In a sense it can be assumed that memories and meaning making are intrinsic, embedded in each other. For every passerby, places, monuments, street names and numbers carry various meanings aside from their assigned function to occupy a point on a map. This process of meaning production and memory linked with places and spaces are part of nostalgia, since they act as signifiers in memory stimulation. This meaning making process and revival of memories constitute a "topoi of discourse on/of the city". In Certeau's words, this alteration in the functionalist identity of a city also show its connection with the nostalgic mind, since "places people live in are like the presences of diverse absences" (Certeau, 1988, p. 104-108).

Again, taking Certeau (1998) as a reference point: "living is narrativizing" (p. 142), which is what nostalgia is all about: recounting selected memories prompted by stimulants and associations. Nostalgic memories are part of each individual's narrative and these narratives come to life with the absence of the object, toward which one feels nostalgic: the presence of an absence. At this point, what Certeau (1988) quotes from Michelet, also suits for the nostalgic spirit: Michelet states that the collapse of the Olympian Gods at the end of Antiquity "did not take down with it 'the mass of indigenous gods, the populace of gods that still possessed the immensity of fields, forests, woods, mountains, springs intimately associated with the life of the country… [They are] in the home, liv[ing] on in the most intimate of domestic habits (p. 129). Inspired by this analogy, it can be concluded that disappearance of certain times of our lives or disappearance of places, does not indicate their disappearance from our memories and personal identities. One's childhood, including the place in

which it was spent and one's own personal history are always the subjects of nostalgia and their absence only enhances the "emotional upheaval".

The next chapter will focus on the tight association between a city and nostalgia in the chosen novels demonstrate The cities that so ubiquitously dominate these novels are not randomly thrown in the story lines. As each of the city that is the subject in these works has a historical and iconic status on its own, transgress the status of setting and become another character in the narratives.

CHAPTER 3

DISCUSSION OF WORKS:

NOSTALGIA, THE BLACK BOOK, IGNORANCE

Interpretation of nostalgia in art can cause speculation. As Niklas Salmos in his Ph.D. dissertation (2012) investigates, not all the evocations of past necessarily indicate a nostalgia. Nostalgic experience can depend on the audience, meaning it is also a very internal personal experience. Nonetheless, putting the personal dimension aside, all in all nostalgia expresses a loss. In other words, it can be concluded that what distinguishes a mere past memory from a nostalgic memory is a theme of loss. This loss can come in various shapes and forms. It can be recollection of a specific period in one's life, a selective memory. That specifically chosen memory from one's past points a meditation over a loss of an era or time in one's biographical memory. Another theme of loss can exceed personal dimension and take a more cultural or national turn, by expressing a loss of a national identity. Another loss can be the combination of two: a selected biographical memory in the background of a collective memory. All these three are present in the selected works of this thesis.

3.1. Mircea Cărtărescu's *Nostalgia*

3.1.1. Bucharest

Aristotle talks about a place's "active influence", its "distinct potencies" and Romans suggest "genius loci" which means an "in-dwelling spirit" for a significant place (i.e. an owl for the home, the Lares for public places etc.). Then in English there is the saying "the spirit of a place", ascribed to places with "attractive or repelling forces beyond what their position in geographic space or historic time might indicate" (Casey, 2000, p. 197).

Bucharest, once called the Paris of Eastern Europe, exudes a nostalgic aura given its own history. It has its own "spirit" and "distinct potency". It had been through devastations such as war, communist regime and systemic rebuilding of city's landscape under Nicolae Caeuşescu's rule. All of these make the city inevitably a host for its own unique "spirit", which can lead to nostalgic remembrances of Bucharest for its citizens. As mentioned earlier, Certeau writes that the proper place names in a city can recall or suggest phantoms. He claims that these place names contain diverse meanings for each passer-by which create a "geography of meaning" denoting a power on the place (1988, p.104-108). Thus, this effect is what makes a city with its streets, places and monuments transcend its mere function as a point on a map. This geography of meaning is a potential container or creater of a memory and story for different individuals. Therefore, place names can be considered in the realm of memory stimulants that make associations with the past and prompt nostalgia.

Bucharest itself, like every other big metropolis has been the face and bearer of transitions in history and has its own story. As mentioned above, it was considered to be like Paris before the earthquakes in 1940 and 1977, World War II bombings and Ceauşescu's rule (Davis, 2008, p. 144). Bucharest's history constitutes four decades of communist rule and in this span of time it also comprised Ceauşescu's period which lasts between 1965 and 1989. His influence on Romania's history is significant as among his many aims, he also set out to modernize Romania and transform Bucharest's landscape by demolishing and reconstructing. The devastating 1977 earthquake constituted a significant trigger for his reconstruction agenda. His remodeling of Bucharest consisted of a systemization of the city, out of which uniform apartment buildings was born (Oliver, 2014, p. 8-9).

A combination of Ceauşescu and communist rule affected the literary scene as well. Years of communist domination also meant state controlled publication and isolation from Western influence, all of which translate into censorship and socialist realist depiction in literature. This sense of restriction was relinquished to a certain extent, for Romanian Postmodernists, referred to as *80s-Blue Jean Generation* due to the implicit content of their works (Davis, 2008, p. 155).

3.1.2.*Nostalgia*[13]

> Memories tie us to that place…[they are] personal, not interesting to anyone else, but after all [they] give a neighborhood its character" (qtd in: Certeau, 1988, p. 108)
>
> We are nostalgic animals (Cărtărescu, 2014, p. 82)[14]
>
> When the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full meaning (Jean Baudrillard, 1983, p. 12).[15]

Widely known as a poet for Romanian readers and a novelist for English language readers, Mircea Cărtărescu (1956-) has been in the talks for Nobel Prize for a while now. His odds were seen to be 33/1 in 2016 and it is predicted that he will win the prize in mid 2020s (Shephard, 2016). Although *Nostalgia* was his first prose work, he entered the world literature scene with *Blindness*[16]an autobiography of three volumes. Regardless of his ambiguous biography as a writer in the world's literature scene, one thing that is constant in his writings is the attachment to his native Bucharest. Bucharest is an important character for Cărtărescu's works. In *Blindness*

[13] Only page numbers are indicated next to the quotes made from this book: *Nostalgia,* Trans. Julian Semilian, New Direction Paperbook, New York, 2005.
[14] My translation from the Turkish edition: Mircea Cărtărescu *Orbitor* (Vol. 1), Ayrıntı Yayınları
[15] *Simulacre et Simulation*, Edition Galilée 1981, 17)
[16] First two volumes were translated to Turkish by Ayrıntı Yayınları.

he says "the past is everything, the future is nothing" [17]. He memorializes, commemorates, remembers and reconstructs the past in the streets of Bucharest. His writings trace a map of the city and he ceaselessly provides routes for his characters. These emphatic and specific depictions of Bucharest streets denote a sense of map emerging out of the novel.

Cărtărescu belongs to the *Blue Jean Generation* writers of the 1980s Romanian Postmodernism. Not only does he partake in this group of writers with his fiction but he is also a theoretician on this particular subject. He authored a book on Romanian Postmodernism, which was also his Ph.D. dissertation: *Postmodernismul Românesc* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1999). Romanian Postmodernism in the 1980s coincided with the post-communist era, which signify a hot-bed for questions related to European identity. After the fall of the Iron Curtain Eastern Europe was compelled to deal with, the issue of "other" set by the Western Europe:

> In the postcommunist era, the ongoing hegemony of the nationalist model and East European ethnic strife, in particular, have consolidated in the West a set of assumptions about what the East European writer should be like. Based on them, according to Cărtărescu, a new division is about to replace previous walls and curtains and threatens to muffle his voice, put new constraints on what he can be, and prevent others from seeing who he truly is. Thus, he points out that a new, convenient "othering" of Eastern Europe is afoot. East European lands and people, artists like himself included, are seen as completely determined by past and present history, hence spatially and culturally outside "true," forward-moving Europe, expected as they are to convey their "uniqueness" from a position of radical alterity, in idiomatic

[17] My translation from the Turkish edition: *Orbitor* (Vol. 1), Ayrıntı Yayınları, İstanbul, 2014, p. 77.

> rhetorics of sectarian resentment, necessarily "bearing witness" to communist-era unspeakable pain, and so forth. (Moraru, 2006, p. 42)

This generation of writers rebelled against the orientalistic expectations of Western Europe in their works. Instead of depicting "localist aesthetics" as "the Other" of the Europe, they opted for a "'chtonian' art organically anchored in the motherland's soil" (qtd in: Moraru, 2006, p. 43). Cărtărescu, (who is usually considered in the same realm with Kafka, Borges, Cortázar and American Postmodernists such as Pynchon and the Beat Generation) as if an advocate for this view depicts his own Bucharest.

Publication date is a significant indicator in understanding Cărtărescu's work, since the date very explicately states the conditions under which he worked and which play an active role in the interpretation of the novel. *Nostalgia* was first published under the Romanian name *Visul,* which means "dream", in 1989. The publication date suggests that Cărtărescu wrote it during the communist regime and under Nicolae Ceauşescu rule.

Although Bucharest bears heavy political connotations, Cărtărescu is not particularly interested in the political and historical scene. His claim is of a different nature. He says: "When everyone will go towards the social, political and historical, I will go backwards, towards the interior" (qtd: in Manolescu, p. 1349)[18]. In this movement towards interiority lies the phantasmal Bucharest he evokes. Nonetheless, regardless of how surreal the atmosphere he creates is, places and streets of Bucharest are very real in the book. The city itself becomes another character which mirrors the characters' childhood, young adulthood and adult nostalgia. Nostalgic memories metamorphose into a reverie like quality in a real-life Bucharest. Devoid of politics

[18] Nicolae Manolescu's book, where this quote is taken, is not available in English. I am grateful to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Adriana Raducanu for bringing this book to my attention and for all the translations.

and historicity, city as a memorative sign serves as an associanistic tool in the memories of his characters. For Romanian readers its effect can be very realistic, surpassing all the magical, surreal scenes. A cautionary opening remark like the one in *Justine*, the first volume of Lawrence Durrell's *The Alexandria Quartet*, would fit well for *Nostalgia* too: "The characters in this story, the first of a group, are all inventions together with the personality of the narrator, and bear no resemblance to living persons. Only the city is real". The most significant syntagm here is "only the city is real". This opening might offer clues to the reader and grant access into his phantasmic, oneiric world. As his scenes blur the panorama of what is real, assurance concerning the verisimilitude of the city might keep the reader's feet on the ground. *Nostalgia* is a text that can be read in the aid of a Bucharest map, and the reader can literally trace the geography of the memories. The central point in all of his characters' nostalgia, is the concrete representation of mental maps narrated through the names of specific places. Bucharest, and more specifically recurring Ştefan cel Mare Boulevard act as a "space of experience" in these narratives.

Nostalgia has a controversial status regarding its genre as a novel. On the surface it is composed of five stories. One of the stories entitled "REM" is considered as a novella in its own right. However, the five stories can also be regarded as a novel considering its unifying theme; that of memories unfolding in Bucharest. Cărtărescu himself refers to it as "a Book, in the old and precious sense of the word" where stories connect "in the web of the same magical and symbolist thought" (qtd: by Semilian from Cărtărescu: *Nostalgia*, Afterword, p.318). As previously mentioned the Book is composed of five stories: "The Roulette Player", "Mentardy", "The Twins", "REM", "The Architect". Stories are based on characters recalling certain periods in their life, and the places in which they occurred. The places can be read as a vast

canvas on which nostalgic memories are painted. Cărtărescu constantly mentions specific places in Bucharest while depicting characters' memories. Thus, specific places become active agents in the nostalgic evocations in his stories. This structure which at first seems to be five independent parts, eventually forms a unified novel. Their common denominator is not a storyline but nostalgic memories in Bucharest, as mentioned above. The self-defining title of the book contains key historical and memorial places and times. Magic reality veils the indigenous codes of Bucharest. However once these codes are deciphered, the Book sets the time frame of stories, which also reveals an overall nostalgic remembrance of Bucharest. As the verse quoted from a Romanian poet Tudor Arghezi in prologue of the Book inscribes: "I open the book, the book moans / I cast for the times, the times are gone". These lines exuding a sense of nostalgia, supporting James G. Hart's (1973) claim: "nostalgia is not about passing time but about eras, seasons or aeons. It is not about dates but about times" (p. 406).

When the codes in the first and last story are cracked the time frame and theme of *Nostalgia* are inevitably revealed. The first story "The Roulette Player" takes place before communism, a period of time that is perhaps passed on to Cărtărescu's generation by the parents, as orally transmitted counter-memories, as defined by Boym (mentioned in the previous chapter). The last story "The Architect" comes under the title "Epilogue". It takes place around late 80s, more specifically and most probably in 1989. Establishing these dates places the three stories in between "The Roulette Player" and "The Architect" in Communist Bucharest, roughly between late 1950s to 1970s, which falls under the rule of long years of Caeuşescu and his transformations on the city's landscape. Cărtărescu evokes three Bucharests: One of his parents', pre-communist Bucharest; one of his youth, communist Bucharest; one is

in between and in combination of these two: his own oneiric Bucharest. One constant variable is the evocation of the real Bucharest, regardless the dream-like scenes he depicts.

"The Roulette Player" takes place during the 1940 earthquake, one of the two major Bucharest earthquakes (1940 and 1977) which devastated the capital. This fact combined with underground nightlife depictions establishes the time of this story, which is in the 1940s, pre-Communist Bucharest, that of Cărtărescu's parents. It tells the story of a roulette player, of the underground nightlife in Bucharest through the eyes of his friend. Every night the roulette player gambles with his life and despite the increasing bullets in his revolver he always manages to escape death. The last story "The Architect" begins with a married couple purchasing a Dacia automobile, a brand made in Romania. This situates the time frame of the story in late 80s, perhaps 1989 more specifically. Those were the times when limited car ownership during the communist period started to loosen and the ability of importing and purchasing cars increased. Opels, Volkswagens, and Dacias were available to Romanians at the time (Oliver, 2014, p. 17). Thus, first and last stories establishes a time frame for the middle stories, which place them during the communist times. However, political implications in the stories are almost non-existent. Cărtărescu stays true to his motto stated above: "When everyone will go towards the social, political and historical, I will go backwards, towards the interior". In Laura Savu's words:

> Cărtărescu weaves together a kaleidoscopic narrative charting his partly real, partly imagined personal history during communist rule… [with his] poetic excursions into the soul's intimate spaces, the womblike environments of dreams, and the magical world of games, all providing an alternative to the confining official culture. [He] shares this visionary capacity to treat the

> imaginary as if it were real and the real as if it were imaginary… the Bucharest conjured up in Nostalgia is a literal and figurative underground, labyrinthine and apocalyptic… "Reality" is constituted by endlessly interwoven layers of fiction. (Savu, 2006, p. 64).

The remaining three stories "Mentardy", "The Twins" and "REM" depict the memories of the narrators from their childhood, teenage and young adulthood and they all unfold in Bucharest. "Mentardy" recounts the childhood memories of the narrator, back when he was living the apartment block in Ştefan cel Mare. "The Twins" opens with a cross-dresser man applying make up as he also gets ready to commit suicide. After completing his make-up, he starts recalling his childhood which also had as a background the recurring place Ştefan cel Mare boulevard. His return to childhood creates the timeframe of two Bucharests: Pre-Communist era and Communist era. This time frame is also hinted in the story when the narrator mentions a movie played in his childhood in Bucharest: *Venice, The Moon and You*, an Italian comedy made in 1958. In this story, the narrator's nostalgia goes back to the Bucharest of his parents' time, pre-communist era. "REM" is also set in the background of Bucharest. One of the characters, Svetlana recounts her childhood memories when she spent several weeks at her aunt Anna during her mother's hospitalization. As she tells her memories she refers to several specific places and neighborhoods in the city.

As previously stated Cărtărescu's concern is not to make a political statement or exude the political aura of communist Bucharest under Caeuşescu rule. His primary concern seems to be the Bucharest itself, his romance with the city. Nicolae Manolescu's comment on Cărtărescu's poetry can also be employed on his *Nostalgia*: "Rarely has a poet been more creative with the details that constitute the décor of his

sentimental events. The quotidian reality of the city – of modern Bucharest – invades the poem", (Manolescu, 2008, p. 1342). Characters' nostalgic reminiscences from their childhood, colored with Cărtărescu's magical and fantasy-like depictions create a contrast in the background of Communist Bucharest's univocal buildings.

A close reading of the book almost reveals a map of Bucharest, making it a place experienced by the characters. In phenomenological terms, Bucharest is a space, and more specifically "a space of experience" which Boym (2001) interprets as a milieu allowing one "to account for the assimiliation of the past into the present" (p. 10). In each story a specific part of Bucharest's spirit exudes and the city itself is always active in characters' memories. Here we can go back to Assmann's "memory of places" perception where she states that "places retain memories, they inherently have meanings by themselves, places themselves may become the agents and bearers of memory" (281). Cărtărescu takes the reader through a tour of Bucharest with his mapping, which constitutes for a "spatial story" to put it in Certeau's words. The key factor in characters' memories is that they associate their memories with specific places of Bucharest. If we take Bucharest as a general "space of experience" in Kolleck's terms, the places in this space acquire significance in accordance with characters' own experience. This also supports Merleau-Ponty's (2002) claim about space based on our relation to things (p. 334).

One predominantly recurring place in all the five stories is the Ştefan cel Mare Boulevard. It acts as a huge "space of experience" containing the memories of different lives on the boulevard. Specific places and streets are mentioned in the stories: i.e. Victoria mall, Athénée Palace, Venera Street, apartment building on Ştefan cel Mare. As characters reminiscence helped by their tight attachment to places in those memories, the memory of Bucharest also comes alive. On top of locations,

other signifiers of the communist rule also surface through the mentions of two magazines in "Mentardy" and "REM": *The Spark* and *The Morning Star*, respectively. Although their presence is not as in abundance as the streets of Bucharest, still a Romanian memory is evoked via these objects.

Thus, although each story has its own set of worlds, the overall book cannot be read independent from Bucharest's own story. The structure of the overall book fits into what Aleide Assmann referes to as "memory of places" where she says: "…it suggests the possiblity that places themselves may become the agents and bearers of memory, endowed with a mnemonic power that far exceeds humans" (Assmann, 2011, p. 281)

Furthermore, what Manolescu argues about Cărtărescu's "Love Poems" can also be applied to this novel:

> Love at past tense comes to life again in the present of the poem, with its places, its atmosphere, its fever, its phantasms and its vocabulary. Rarely has a poet been more creative with the details that constitute the décor of his sentimental events. The quotidian reality of the city – of modern Bucharest – invades the poem (Manolescu, 2008, p. 1342).

Places and Bucharest constantly "constitute the décor" in the novel. Streets and places in the book are almost common in all the five stories. Instead of pointing out each each story's characteristics separately, in this study all of them will be considered as a whole, under one common theme: memories unfolding in Bucharest.

In "Mentardy", apartment building on Ştefan cel Mare and Obor district are the central milieus where the narrator's nostalgia unfolds. The spirit of the place empowers nostalgia. As Edward Casey (2000) claims, the nostalgee travels "into the

place he recalls" along with "the time in which the remembered event occurred" (p. 201):

> … my oldest memory came to my mind: I was at most two years old and my parents lived on Silistra Street … I was cornered by a memory: … I had before my eyes the glass door of Entrance One in our apartment building, which was so difficult to open, the Dambovita Mill… and the image of Bucharest viewed from the balcony, illuminated at night by red and green billboards that flashed off and on… I disinterred from memory in a few minutes a number of things I was certain I knew nothing about anymore. More I realized that it was that period of my life which infused me with all that is original and perhaps even unusual… Behind the apartment building the earth was ransacked by sewage ditches… This was our playing field… It was a new world, strange and dirty, full of places to hide; and we, seven or eight boys, aged between five to twelve, armed with blue and pink water pistols we bought for two lei at Little Red Riding Hood, the toy store at the time in the Obor District, became every morning its masters and explorers. That was the old Obor, the true one, where it always smelled of turpentine (30-32).

In this story the character brings his childhood alive. He recalls his memories, through providing a map of Bucharest. This map can be perceived in the context of Certeau's characterization of spatial stories. He associates, as previously mentioned, walking or moving about the city with a "social experience" that "lacks a place" which point to a "nowhere or a dreamed of places" (Certeau, 1988, p. 103). For him "oral descriptions of places, narrations concerning the home, the stories about the streets" represent a narrative "corpus" (ibid, p. 118). Thus, in this context, the passage above can be regarded as a "spatial story". This spatial story, through the description of places, is

connected with particular memories. All these memories and spatial stories mirror a narrative on the city. Thus, a phantom associated with a past memory, lurks around these places.

In the following passage of "Mentardy" the whole package of nostalgia is depicted. The narrator, walking around the city, passes by a specific place and is struck by Proustian madeleine effect:

> About five or six years ago, around February, I was on a short recess and took a stroll through the city. I was walking out of the Sadoveanu Bookstore and was passing by the Cyclops mall when something like a violent flame sent a shock through my stomach like an unbearable nostalgia… The color of this lighter like a Proustian madeleine, elicited a memory from the time of this tale… It was exactly the same color as the little watch I bought for fifty bani the summer of that year, my first watch during the twenty-one years I lived on the building on Ştefan cel Mare Boulevard (49)

Here, as Certeau (1988) suggests, the name of a place, (a.k.a. container of a memory), brings about "phantoms" (p.105). The lighter gains significance, passing through layers of places: Sadovanu Bookstore, Cyclops mall and Ştefan cel Mare. As previously mentioned, in Merleau-Ponty's (2002) words, a "self-evident" nostalgia surfaces via "a latent significance, diffused throughout the landscape or the city, which we find in something specific" (p. 328).

In "The Twins", the story takes place around Ştefan cel Mare boulevard and surrounding neighborhoods. Cărtărescu again explicitly refers to Proust's madeleines, which can be considered as an allusion to the stimulant aspect of the city, a memorative sign which instigates nostalgic memories:

> I would like like only to recall my past, or to remodel my past or to invent it… All you hear these golden and nostalgic afternoons is the rustling of a few sunlit leaves and the numbers counted out by some girl playing by herself on Venera Street… I know Proust's madeleine effect- the discoidal candies, spongy, pink and excessively perfumed; or the gleaming badge on the chest of a passer-by that engendered in me the powerful emotion of recalling a place, of recreating an atmosphere (71).

Casey (2000) states "place is a mise-en-scène for remembered events… it guards and keeps the events within its self-delimiting parameters" (p. 189). Seen from this perspective, the narrator keeps reminiscing his childhood and teenage memories again in the periphery of specific places:

> First, a few nightlike memories awaken, perhaps from the age of two or three… It was somewhere near the Obor train station, because that's where we lived then… (72).

> … when we walked together along our familiar routes on Pitar Moş Street, Ştefan cel Mare Boulevard, Cosmonaut Plaza… I remember only one event, when during spring break, we saw each other one more time. We were to meet at the Garden of Icons in the morning… We sat for a few moments staring absent-mindedly toward the posters of the Bulandra theater" (132-133).

Bucharest maintains its function as a "décor", in Manolescu's words. Memories find resonance via changing façades in the city and once again the streets with vivid details constitute a part of the narrator's nostalgia:

> I wrote her sixteen pages and dropped the letter myself in her apartment hallway's mailbox. I hadn't been in that hallway with its steps of white stone for a long time. Our route, Venera Street, where the leprous shops were being dismantled, Calea Moşilor, which was also under construction, then Eminescu Street, Calea Toamnei Viitor Street, on which I walked her home in winter and returned with my hands in my pockets, seemed to me a living zone of a psychic nature, different from the anonymous streets of Bucharest's spider web (139).

Although Cărtărescu does not dive further into the destructions and renovations taking place on those aforementioned streets, still they occupy a place in the narrator's memory, as a "ghost haunting the everyday life of the city" (Certeau, 1998, p. 133), when he talks about the destructions that occur in urban planning.

Same characteristics continue in "REM" as well. Svetlana continues to recall her childhood in the vivid description of Bucharest. Again places are connected with memories. As Casey (2000) says, "what is remembered is well grounded if it is remembered as being in a particular place" (p. 214):

> I will never forget when my father took me to Children's Town by the National Square ... The most important things in my life occurred there, at the outskirts of Bucharest … We would go out into the street's turmoil and walk slowly all the way to Obor … Obor was an enchanting place. I remember it with absolute precision even today; I can actually see it before my eyes. A simple intersection, not very large, but permeated by the Balkan air of shopkeepers and merchants you would never find anywhere today. If you came up Ştefan cel Mare, you were assailed by the assemblage of shop signs of all shapes, colors and dimensions, inscribed with beautiful calligraphy on

> glass or on wood or printed in the widest variety of characters … Across the street was the Little Red Riding Hood toy store… each time we went to Obor, I would drag my mother inside (181-184).

In "REM" Cărtărescu alludes to some historical facts as well without losing his magical touch. Here, through his narrator Svetlana's recollection of childhood memories he mentions pre-communist times after the World War I and destructions Romania had been through after the World War II. Emergence of such allusions occur via Svetlana's recollection of a period of time in her childhood, when she met someone named Marcel at her Aunt Aura's neighborhood. This Marcel character tells fairy tales embedded with some historical facts combined with Bucharest's own memory, to which Andrei Codrescu refers as "Bucharest Scherezade" (Codrescu, "Introduction" in Nostalgia, p. xiii). The first passage reflects Bucharest before communism, of Cărtărescu's parents and grandparents and the second passage refers to destructions during and after World War II. Bucharest's own memory along with the character's memory pours out:

> After the end of the war, he moved to Bucharest and got involved with gambling, champagne and French girls, the kind that put up single in luxury hotels… (209)

> My sister was born in '37, and I followed in '40. Because of the bombing raids during the war, we moved to the country till '45, where father died of diphtheria in the hospital where he worked as a male nurse. Returning from the country, from the district of Dudeşti, where we had stayed at an acquaintance of my mother's – my mother in mourning vestments, my sister and I dead tired and crammed in the back of a horse-drawn cart- passed by the

> shed that you may have seen, the one next to our watchtower, which was built, certainly later (211).

Separating these stories from each other may seem easy on the surface, since the very first lines describing this "Book" read as: a novel composed of five stories. However, as one dives into it, one gets entangled in the crossroads, unified in Bucharest. Mentioning of streets, specific places, plazas, museums is overwhelming. One feels like revolving around a circle while reading this Book, trying to find one's path in Cărtărescu's complex visual map achieved through literature. Aside from obvious recurring places such Ştefan cel Mare, Athénée Palace (both in "Mentardy" and "REM"), Dambovita mill (both in "Mentardy" and "The Architect"), Venera Street, Obor District etc, Cărtărescu also toys with the reader when he makes connection between two stories: The writer of the first story, "The Roulette Player", appears in "REM" as its writer, probably as his younger-self. Also same reference of "spider web" regarding the streets of Bucharest recur in both "The Twins" and "REM":

> Our route, Venera Street, where the leprous shops were being dismantled, Calea Moşilor, which was also under construction, then Eminescu Street, Calea Toamnei Viitor Street, on which I walked her home in winter and returned with my hands in my pockets, seemed to me a living zone of a psychic nature, different from the anonymous streets of Bucharest's spider web (139).

> Underneath, hundreds of meters below our feet, we saw Bucharest stretching out before us… as a labyrinth drowning in a vortex of dust. The tallest

> buildings- the Telephone Palace with its tangle of ashen metal crisscrossing the roof, the Fire Watchtower with its prismatic windows, the Victoria shopping complex, the old buildings on Magheru Boulevard… Bucharest like a spider web… (256).

As tried to shown in this part of the thesis, characters' nostalgia which are predominantly composed of idyllic memories of childhood and young adulthood, are in separable from Bucharest itself. The city with all the streets and places act as "reference points", in Benjamin's words, and prompt nostalgia. According to Călin Mihăilescu, Cărtărescu is a "cartographer of lost Bucharest" (qtd in: Pánková, 2012, p. 3). His explicit depictions of Bucharest, references to places by their name form a "spatial trajectory", thus supports Mihăilescu's claim. His use of Bucharest in the narrative, as it is the case with Pamuk, marks the distinguishing characteristic of his writing. Persistence of Bucharest in the narrative makes the city indispensable for the book. Apartment buildings, streets and stores of Bucharest are where these nostalgic memories unfold. As a writer from a former communist state, unlike Kundera, he refrains from political implications. Although Bucharest's political past is an important factor for the city's own story, his connection with the city is via a private nostalgia. Whereas Kundera strictly associates nostalgic evocations of this city with a political aspect.

3.2. Orhan Pamuk and *The Black Book*[19]

> To live in recollection is the most perfect imaginable; recollection is more richly satisfying than all actuality and has security no actuality possesses (Kierkegaard).[20]

> …Aren't we all attached to nostalgia inherently.
>
> (Tezer Özlü)[21]

3.2.1. Istanbul

Istanbul, before becoming Istanbul, had been Constantinople and Byzantium. These name changes imply a dense cultural history behind it. Istanbul has been one of the cradles of tourist attraction and is one of the prominent examples of Orientalist depictions made by many writers, (such as Flaubert, Mark Twain, André Gide etc.) in the 19th century. It has been a subject of literature and among the prominent names, that come to mind at first are Pierre Loti, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, Orhan Pamuk.

Istanbul represents Ottoman culture, Islamic culture and a Westernized façade. Like Prague the city is one of the perfect examples of palimpsest and a vast container of cultural memory which creates its own nostalgia based on its own historical and cultural dynamics. What Azade Seyhan (2008) writes in her *Tales of Crossed*

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[19] All the quotes in this thesis are from: Orhan Pamuk, *The Black Book,* Trans. Güneli Gün, Faber and Faber, 1995. Only page numbers are indicated next to the quotes.

[20] As quoted in "Figurations of Nostalgia: From the Pre-Enlightenment to Romanticism and Beyond", Helmut Illbruk. Ph.D. Disseration, Yale University. December 2007, 32.

[21] *Herşeyin Sonundayım: Tezer Özlü-Ferit Edgü Mektuplaşmaları (I'm at the end of everything),* İstanbul:
Sel Yayıncılık, 2009, 63. My translation.

Destinies: The Modern Turkish Novel in a Comparative Context sums up the overall spirit of the city:

> Istanbul, Constantinople, Byzantium- this enduring object of poetic desire and curiosity is a sprawling memory archive of myriad civilizations, whose traces linger in the multiple idioms of the city. For its modern scribes, Istanbul has become the definitive trope of loss and melancholy, a monument of time that survives only in the faded splendor of its seraglios in archive and libraries and in the ruins of fortresses and walls that once protected the city (p. 135).

As stated above, Istanbul with its palimpsest nature exudes a spirit of the past and "seduce[s] nostalgia", in Certeau's (1998) words (p.133). Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, one of the prominent authors who is attached to Istanbul and whose writing is concerned with Ottoman-Turkish society's East-West dichtomy, depicts Istanbul's nostalgia and memory that resonate in Istanbul's palimpsest nature:

> For our generation, Istanbul is something very different from what it was for our grandfathers or even our fathers. It does not enter our imagination in the gold-embroidered caftans of the sultan, nor do we see it in a religious framework. The light that bursts out from this word [Istanbul] is for us the light of memories and yearnings shaped by our state of mind…the image of Istanbul that lives in us today is projected by this nostalgia[22] (qtd in: Seyhan, 2008, p. 136-137; Tanpınar, 2016, p. 118).

[22] This passage Azade Seyhan quotes in her book if from Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's book titled *Five Cities* [Beş Şehir]. Tanpınar's book is not translated in English, so aforementioned passage is Seyhan's translation. In the original book Tanpınar uses the word *dâüssıla*, which Seyhan translates as *nostalgia.* This Ottoman-Turkish word *dâüssıla* means "missing one's own homeland", which can be translated into "homesickness", which has been the initial interpretation of *nostalgia* since the 17th century. The subject of this thesis is not to examine nostalgia in a linguistic periphery however, in this case of translation I believe its worth mentioning the meaning of this Ottoman-Turkish word and how it seems fit to refer to it as *nostalgia* within the context of Tanpınar's writing.

As Tanpinar alludes above, Westernization and the dilemma of Western and Eastern identity resonate in Istanbul's image. Although the purpose of this thesis is not to examine Turkey's Westernization and modernization, it will be shortly explicated as it is relevant to Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* and Istanbul's nostalgia.

East-West dichotomy has been at the centre of Turkish history since the 19th century. When it officially started with the the declaration *Tanzimat (reform) Edict* in 1839. The need stemmed from the Ottoman Empire's increasing defeats on the battlefield. This edict acknowledges West's superiority and states that the Ottoman's will start embracing the scientific progress of the West. What was at first an attempt to catch up with scientific progress, gradually spread over the social and cultural life. There had been interactions with Europe, predominantly with France. French instructors came to teach military courses and French schools were established. With more and more people, statesmen and intellectuals taking trips to Paris, Westernization became a hot-topic in the 19th century Ottoman society. Traditions, customs and people's behavior started to change as they wanted to become more "European", or more specifically French which had been a prominent source of influence throughout this process. Writers and intellectuals of that time started to warn about the Westernization in their novels, usually depicting a wanna-be Westerner character's demise[23]. However, this intention was in vain, as the Western

[23] In her book on the 19th century Ottoman novel *Fathers and Sons: Epistemological Roots of Tanzimat Novel (Babalar ve Oğullar: Tanzimat Romanının Epistemeolojik Temelleri*. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012. This book is not available in English) Jale Parla states Islamic culture as the formative epistemological root of the Ottoman society. As this period of Westernization also coincided with Padishah Abdülmecid's reign who was 16 years-old at the time, a child himself, she says that writers and intellectuals had become the father figures of Ottoman society. She interprets that time as empire being in need of guidance through this transition and claims that the intellectuals stepped up to this role with their didactic novels, by warning readers about the consequences of Westernization. Initial intention of the Westernization process for the Ottomans was to adopt scientific progress of the West, not the its moral and social life style. For example, especially Ottoman intellectual Ahmet Mithat Efendi (1844-1912) had been a prolific writer on such issues and is considered as a guiding father

way of living started to spread gradually. Then after the Independence War, with the declaration of Republic of Turkey in 1923, this Westernization plan took a more systematic secular turn through Atatürk's reforms.

Thus, since the 19th century issues such as Westernization and Turkish identity have been one of the main topics dealt with in Turkish society, and literature offered fruitful works on this issue. Nobel prize winner Orhan Pamuk is among the prominent contemporary writers who has been keeping up with this particular issue in his novels. Ottoman-Turkish history is one his fortés as a subject matter. *The White Castle, My Name is Red, The Black Book, Cevdet Bey and His Sons, The Museum of Innocence, A Strangeness in my Mind* are among his prominent novels that deal with issues of Turkish identity rooted in the 19th century *Tanzimat* Era.

The Black Book inspires various interpretations. One of them is the nostalgic meditation on the city. As in Cărtărescu, this cryptic text contains the dichotomy of Turkish identity, and the westernization saga officially started in the 19th century Ottoman Empire. Jelal's columns, which surface and invade the novel as Galip's tools to find Rüya, are filled with Ottoman-Turkish culture and history. Once his columns are picked out and separated and put side by side with the contemporary Istanbul of Galip, then two scenes emerge: Istanbul as how it used to be and what had become of it throughout the Westernizations and in the post-republic era. Then, what has disappeared from the cultural Turkish identity surfaces. Scope of nostalgia interwoven in the novel is the one for Turkish identity, which is reflected through Istanbul. In this part of the thesis Pamuk's *The Black Book* will be discussed in the context of nostalgia with the Turkish identity, wrapped around the streets of Istanbul.

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during this transitory period. One of his novels is also translated to English: Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi: An Ottoman Novel. Trans. Melih Levi and Monica M. Ringer. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2016.

3.2.2. *The Black Book*

> We are all children of a crisis of consciousness and identity (Ahmet Hamdi Tanpinar).[24]

Internationally acclaimed writer for English language readers, a controversial one for his native Turkey… One thing that remains constant in Pamuk's works is his loyalty and attachment to Istanbul. Except for *Snow*, *The New Life*, *The Silent House* it is a challenge to find one work of his that does not have Istanbul as a lead actor. In *The Black Book* Istanbul is on the frontlines in the narrative, it functions as another character so much that it can be argued that Istanbul brings the novel into existence. Pamuk views his novel as "a personal encyclopedia of Istanbul" and as a "history of many personal memories" of the city (qtd in Seyhan, 2008, p. 149).

The Black Book (1994), [*Kara Kitap*, 1990] is on the surface a detective novel is about a man searching for his wife. However, the novel is built upon many cultural and national veins. As Ian Almond (2007) says, "*The Black Book* constitutes an intensive examination of Turkish national identity" (p. 112).

The novel tells the story of a man, Galip, who is in search of his wife Rüya, (who is also his cousin) who one day leaves him without explanation. Galip embarks upon the search for his wife in the streets of Istanbul by using his cousin and Rüya's half-brother Jelal's column, who writes for a famous newspaper, as his clues. He is convinced that both of them are hiding together and that finding Jelal would lead him to Rüya. He re-reads all of Jelal's columns, believing they provide clues of their location. As he reads them, following their cue, he roams through the streets of

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[24] *Beş Şehir (Five Cities)*, Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2016. p. 206. My translation.

Istanbul in Beyoğlu, Nişantaşı, Karaköy, Galata which are the hallmark districts of the city. We can say that Galip's quest for Rüya through Jelal's columns are the tools via which Istanbul's nostalgia is reflected, making Istanbul another character of the novel. He "textualizes" the city, in Sibel Irzık's words (Irzık, 1992, p. 267) and builds the storyline around Ottoman-Turkish cultural history. He emphasizes the loss of cultural heritage and identity and buries this theme under a detective storyline. Constant emphasis of what-is-no-longer in the city, invites a nostalgic interpretation, since nostalgia basically stems from a loss.

Through Galip's search Pamuk dwells onto the Ottoman-Turkish history. He makes references to the transitions and transformations Ottoman-Turkish culture and identity had gone through. As mentioned earlier, *Tanzimat Era*'s Westernization program started in the 19th century. It took a more secular turn during the foundation years of Republic of Turkey after the Independence War in the early 20th century. Thus, wrapped around these multiple layers of historical and cultural references, the novel can pose a cryptic nature. Deciphering these codes relies on the reader. Claims of Erdağ Göknar (2006) and Güneli Gün (1992), who is the translator of the novel, allude to this aforementioned cryptic nature as well:

> Pamuk repeatedly returns to history as a leitmotif in his work, focusing on four major areas: Ottoman history in a European context, the transition from Ottoman Empire to modern Middle East, the early 20th century Kemalist cultural revolution and the legacy of all three on present day Turkey. Within this framework, his fiction reveals character, like the author himself, who are both orientalized and nationalized subjects with an inclination to question their (often imposed) identities (Göknar, p. 34).

> …the maze Pamuk creates is a labyrinthine quest through Istanbul which encompasses an encyclopedia of Turkish life, past and present, with its cultural delights as well as its public shames. (Gün, p. 59)

Significantly, Pamuk's memoir on Istanbul titled *Istanbul*[25] should at all times be used as a source in deciphering his relation to the city. He talks about Istanbul in the following words:

> I sometimes think myself unlucky to have been born in an aging and impoverished city buried under the ashes of a ruined empire. But a voice inside me always insists this was really a piece of luck… Mostly I am disclined to complain: I've accepted the city into which I was born. (7)

This state of mind resonates in *The Black Book*. There is a sense of both a commemoration and a sadness *(hüzün)*[26] which conveys the feeling of incompleteness or yearning for an unidentifiable something. As Svetlana Boym writes: "the city is an ideal crossroads between longing and estrangement, memory and freedom, nostalgia and modernity...The past of the city … suggests other dimensions of the lived experience and haunts the city like a ghost" (Boym, 2001, p. 76). The following passage in *The Black Book* reflects a nostalgic remembrance of Istanbul, which connotes that Istanbul has lost its former glory with the Westernization:

> He felt sorry that Galip had to back to Istanbul where all this disintegration had started. Istanbul was a touchstone: … even setting one foot in Istanbul was to surrender… Hopeless crowds, dilapidated cars…pictures of bottles and cigarettes, minarets devoid of calls to prayer. Nothing could be expected from such a wreckage (112).

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[25] Turkish publication: 2003, English publication: 2005.
[26] Explicated in chapter 2.

The Black Book encompasses a vast cultural history from Islamic mysticism to Ottoman's Westernization to the more secular Westernization through the reforms of modern Turkey, all of which are reflected in the background of Istanbul. Pamuk's nostalgia in his revival of the old Ottoman times, traditions and Islamic mysticisim heavily relies on his readings, not on empirical experiences. His attributions to old texts, to Sufism, to Ottoman-Islamic things can be considered as an attempt to keep alive forgotten or lost historical-traditional values in his writing. What Pamuk's says in his collection of essays entitled *Öteki Renkler [Other Colors: Essays and a Story]* (1999) can be interpreted around such a phenomenon:

> What I did in *The Black Book* was to find a narrative to the force, color and chaos of life in Istanbul. The long, whirling sentences of the novel appear to me arising from chaos, history and richness of the city. *The Black Book* was written with the excitement to say everything about Istanbul at once… In *The Black Book,* I did what I always wanted to do. I can say that it is a kind of collage [made with] pieces of history, future, present and stories that seem to be stranger to each other (p. 138-139)[27]

Pamuk's discussions of old Islamic mystic roots, critiques of Westernization and Turkish identity all of which can be united under the theme of loss connote nostalgia. Remembering, keeping what is not present denotes a nostalgic experience with the past. Nostalgia does not necessarily need to express a wish to return to a place, it can also be reflected in the form of keeping old values and past alive in contrast with the present time, as "nostalgic conceptions/perceptions [are]

[27] My translation.

irreconcilable gaps between a mythical past and [writer's] own world" (Meltzer, 2006, p. 1). The issues of Westernization, losing old traditional values and the whole transition is most emphatically described in Chapter 6 "Master Bedii's Children". It tells the story of a fictional character Master Bedii, the mannequin maker, who is depicted as having lived in the 19th century during Sultan Abdulhamit's reign:

> For centuries, our culture wasn't even aware of the art of mannequin making aside from some "folkloric" phenomena which smell of dung and villages, such as scarecrow. The first artisan to take it up, the patron saint of mannequin making was Master Bedii who created the necessary mannequins for the Naval Museum…When the contemporary narrow-minded Sheikh of Islam came face-to-face with these miraculous creatures, which had been executed with great artistic skill, he threw a fit: since imitating Allah's creatures perfectly was to engage in a kind of competition with Him, the mannequins were removed from the museum… Prohibition, [occurred] very frequently in our history of never-ending Westernization…Beyoğlu began to place mannequins in their store windows when, during the excitement of the initial wave of Westernization in the early years of Republic, gentlemen discarded their fezzes in favor of panama hats and ladies peeled off their veils and slipped on high-heeled shoes …The owners of the grand department stores…rejected him one by one. Apparently, the mannequins he made didn't look like the models from the West who taught us style… Turks nowadays didn't want to be Turks anymore than something else… What they really wanted to purchase was the dream of being like the "others" who wore the same outfit (52-54).

Here memory and space work for each other's deepening. The space of experience, where past, memory and present collide is Beyoğlu. The city's past, more specifically, the changes that occurred in Beyoğlu are inevitably connected with a collective memory: Westernization of Turks. As quoted in the previous chapter, "places people live in are like the presences of diverse absences" (Certeau, 1988, p. 104-108). This presence of absence can be interpreted as a loss of *something.* And this *something* in this case is cultural heritage, changing façades of city and its people.

In the novel there are two layers of remembering the past: One is represented by the Ottoman-Islamic tradition and the other by republic reforms. Republic reforms can be perceived as the continuation of the Westernization process. Ian Almond states that losing "one's national identity to the cultural and economic centres of North America and Europe" and "the melancholy [over] impossibility of ever having an authentic identity at all" partakes in the nostalgia of the novel and Islam plays a role within this context:

> [It] is implicated in this nostalgia for a 'true' or 'original' identity in two ways. First it helps to establish it… [and] supplies a general, all-purpose social glue to the project of Turkish identity… [It] works through *The Black Book* as a politically useful storehouse of images to supply the Turkish citizen with a carefully constructed series of heritages… (Almond, 2007, p. 119)

This crisis of identity, as mentioned in the previously, points to a loss which leads to a nostalgic experience with Ottoman-Turkish cultural heritage. Azade Seyhan (2008) refers to these as "metaphors of loss":

> Metaphors of loss- the loss of people, things, landscapes, languages, identities- and of mourning fill Pamuk's multiform accounts of Istanbul. In *The Black*

> *Book,* Pamuk tropes the trials of Turkish modernity as an allegory of loss and disappearance at the level of both individual life and collective culture. The novel demonstrates how a specific city, Istanbul, evokes its past and how the confluence of historical memory and current crisis can forge new identities to break the deadlock of destiny (p. 150).

The Black Book addresses these losses throughout its narrative:

> The man in the street began to lose his authenticity because of those damn movies that came in canisters from the West and played by the hour in the cinemas. Abandoning their own, our people began to adopt other people's gestures with an unaccountable speed... We suffered from memory loss… my father never lost hope that some day mankind would achieve the felicity of not having to imitate others (56-7).

> He insisted on his own true identity, thereby thwarting a thousand-year-old conspiracy by refusing to be someone other than himself (112).

> Although it was possible to perceive the city's old age, its misfortune, its lost splendor, its sorrow and pathos in the faces of the citizens, it was not the symptom of a specifically contrived secret but of a collective defeat, history and complicity (191-92).

As shown in these passages, the lost aura of the city, its changing scenery connote sadness, or more authentically *hüzün* (defined in the previous chapter), that longs for the city's old "splendor". As Certeau (1988) says "there is no place that is not haunted by many different spirits hidden there in silence" (p. 108).

As Martin Hägglund (2012) explains "writing is an inscription of memory, a trace of the past that spatializes time … writing, left for the future, temporalizes space" (p. 17-18). Pamuk embellishes his storyline with the centuries old Turkish identity issue. His hefty references to ingenious cultural historical aspects of Turkish history can be seen as "inscribed memories" and as a way to remind the contemporary reader of these aspects of Turkish identity. In a sense, the novel serves as a milieu to make such notions appear in the reader's memory in the present time. His narrative, framed by the question of Eastern vs. Western identity, traditions, Sufism and the whole Westernization saga of Ottoman-Turkish history can be interpreted as Pamuk's attempt to revive such aspects. As Hägglund (2012) states "writing is left for the future" and this view is potentially a mode of survival. Through writing, the old times survive in our contemporary times and, as Hägglund (2012) says, "if something survives it is never present in itself; it is already marked by the destruction of a past that is no longer while remaining for a future that is not yet." (p. 6). Departing from Hägglund's perception, we can associate nostalgia with a mode of survival, as nostalgic minds remember or construct memories of the past, a destructed time, and make it linger in the present time. This lingering takes a more concrete form in writing, or in the "inscription of memory" as Hägglund puts it.

The Black Book is full of history and memory that survives in the city of Istanbul. What Pamuk does in *The Black Book* is to use the collective memory of a nation and embed its historical and cultural qualities in the layers of his narrative, either in the form of Jelal's column or through Galip's wandering in the city. To quote Svetlana Boym (2001) once again:

> Urban identity is common memory and common past rooted in man-made place. City is ideal crossroads between longing and estrangement, memory and

> freedom, nostalgia and modernity. Past of the city suggests other dimensions of the lived experience and haunts the city like a ghost (p. 76).

Thus, Istanbul transgresses its status as a mere setting and partakes in Pamuk's narrative as another character. The city mirrors a "spatial story", to put it in Certeau's words. As explicated earlier, in spatial stories streets and places compose a trajectory. This trajectory, with city's history exude a past, a "phantom" and create a "geography of meaning". Istanbul, via its spatial stories forms an "urban identity". Considering the transitions of Ottoman-Turkish history Istanbul's identity can be considered "porous". As mentioned previously, Benjamin uses this word to describe Naples' ruins and renovations. This state of porosity reveals a spirit of the city. Regardless of its milieu, in the background of Istanbul's palimpsest nature and its canonic neighborhoods Pamuk, the Istanbul novelist par excellence, inscribes a nostalgia that exudes the lost "splendor" of Ottoman-Turkish cultural heritage. In fact, what Mihăilescu says, as mentioned in the previous part, about Cărtărescu can be rephrased for Pamuk by replacing Bucharest with Istanbul: Pamuk is a cartographer of the lost Istanbul.

3.3. Milan Kundera's *Ignorance*

3.3.1. Prague

> Prague exemplifies the modernist nostalgia for tradition yet is also the modernist city par excellence: a labyrinth where we seek the absolute truth of history only to discover its semi- obscured traces (Thomas, 2010, p. 6).

Historical capital of Bohemia, or for French surrealist André Breton "the magical capital of Old Europe" (Thomas, 2010, p. 14), Prague is one of the most discussed cities in history and literature. Its history has been marked by tumultuous incidents and it has been a home of art and of many artists. Although it survived destructions of World War II, its own individual history bears crucial destructionsx and reconstructions throughout the 20th century. The establishment of first republic in 1918, the "communist coup d'état" in 1948 (ibid, p.10), bilingual history (German and Czech), the 1968 Prague Spring and mass immigrations are significant events which contour its turbulent modern era. The city has been the centre of 1968 Prague Spring and Russian tanks, two major events engraved in the memory of the 20th century. Frequent changes in political regimes, establishment and destruction of German places, the erection of communist and post-communist monuments; all make for an undulating act of remembering and forgetting throughout the city's cultural memory. As Alfred Thomas (2010) puts it "Prague has functioned as a site of collective memory" (p. 8).

Prague's landscape and architecture contained the nation's history and political transactions. Before the 20th century turbulences, residues of 17th century Czech history, when Catholic Emperor Ferdinand II's imposition to educate the public in the Catholic faith resulted in Baroque cathedrals are engraved in the city's landscape and memory. Its Jewish population and Jewish quartier, which Hitler wanted to keep in tact so that it can reflect this "extinguished race" was in the late 19th century demolished and rebuilt in a Parisian style. Furthermore, before the World War II there had been a significant portion of German population to the extent that the city had gained a bilingual quality. However, during the First Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 German language presence gradually disappeared to be replaced by Czech names, which then during WWII resulted in the gradual disappearance of the German population. Later on in 1968, during the Communist years, the Warsaw Pact tanks rolled into the city to end the rebellion known as "Prague Spring". In 1989 with the fall of Communism another new period started both for the country and Prague. To sum it all up, all these transitions left their trace with monuments, architecture, graveyards which comprise city's palimpsest spirit, permanent reminders of tumultuous historical times (Thomas, 2010, p. 1-9). As Angelo Maria Ripellino (1994) says Prague is an "[a]ncient folio of stone parchments, city-book in whose pages there is still so much to be read, to dream, to understand, [a] city of three peoples (Czechs, Germans and Jews) and… [m]ost of all Prague is a breeding ground for phantoms" (p. 6).

Alfred Thomas (2010) argues that while most cities have been imagined by novelists that made them their own (i.e. London by Dickens, Paris by Balzac), Prague has resisted such an appropriation by one single author and that it has been rarely made a subject like the way London or Paris has (p. 7). It has its own "spirit" that

brings about "phantoms" (in Certeau's words) in the everyday life which flows in the city. Remembering and forgetting seem to be city's own nature, which makes it one of the most appropriate examples for a palimpsest analogy. As a city full of cultural landmarks and memories, with residues of recent history of the 20th century, it serves as an ideal milieu to contain nostalgic memories. In literature Prague is associated with many iconic figures. One of the first examples is Franz Kafka and for contemporary literature Milan Kundera. Although Kundera in his self-imposed exile does not consider himself representative for Czechoslovakian literature, he can certainly be listed as a Prague author. The city is a recurring character in his works, most famously in *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1978), *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984) and *Ignorance* (2000).

In this study his novel *Ignorance* (2002), (originally written in French and published in 2000), will be examined in the context of city and nostalgia.

3.3.2. *Ignorance*[28]

> Prague doesn't let go. Either of us. This old crone has claws. One has to yield, or else. We would have to set fire to it on two sides, at Vysehrad and the Castle; only then would it be possible for us to get away…"[29]
> (Qtd in: Ripellino, 1994, p. 5-6)

Milan Kundera is one of the prominent names in Central European literature. Carlos Fuentes claims, for Central European narratives modern readers automatically think of Milan Kundera (qtd in: Adams, 2003, p. 133). He has been living in exile in

[28] In this study all the quotes are from 2002 Faber and Faber edition. Only page numbers are indicated next to the quotes from this novel.
[29] Kafka wrote in a letter to Oskar Pollack on 20 December 1902.

France since 1975 as a result of his satirical novel *The Joke* (1967) which criticizes Communist Czechoslovakia and which was banned in his own country. Nostalgia, Czech history, Communism and Prague can be listed as keywords to his works. References to history and collective memory of Czechoslovakia invade a large portion of Kundera's works. He is "mainly concerned with man's relationship to the past, to history" (Adams, 2003, p. 134). In *Ignorance* the depiction of this kind of relationship to the past and history reveals a nostalgia for the pre-communist Bohemia. Tasha Marie Buttler (2012)refers to Kundera's nostalgia as a "politicized nostalgia" in her dissertation. She defines this type of nostalgia as "a way of internalizing cultural propaganda for one's memories, such that one relies on cultural values and symbols to suggest a possibility of return to a time and place of coherence" (p. 4). Buttler's claim for Kundera's work is also valid for *Ignorance,* since Kundera's nostalgic evocations are marked by historical and political events, which in return find resonance in personal nostalgia as well (ibid, 31). As it will be shown in this part of the study, the novel contains frequent references to Czech culture and history.

Ignorance tells the story of two émigrés named Irena and Josef, who left Prague after the crush of the 1968 Prague Spring and now are going back to Prague, to their homeland after the fall of communism in 1989. Irena immigrated to Paris and Josef to Denmark. Both of them had a sour taste when they left and never intended to go back. These two also had a brief encounter in Prague many years ago before they left the city and now they run into each other again. Irena immigrated to Paris with her husband Martin when she was pregnant. Her husband dies after they settle in Paris. Then she meets with Gustaf, whose business decides to open an office in Prague after the fall of communism. Unwillingly, Irena goes to Prague with him and tries to relocate her memories of the city. Josef is a veterinarian who voluntarily

immigrates to Denmark when Russian tanks invade Prague. After the fall of communism, he comes back to visit his family who lives in the suburbs of Prague. Josef's memories focus more on a personal aspect whereas Irena reconnects with her nostalgic memories with the aid of the city she loves. Therefore, the focus of nostalgia will be on Irena's experiences for the scope of this study.

The nostalgia of characters is connected with the 20th century Czech history. They do not yearn for the Prague in general, in fact they detest the 20-year-communist period. What they yearn for is the Prague before Communism. References to figures in Czech culture and pre-communism are scattered in the novel. In the beginning of the novel Kundera provides a short history of the turbulent 20th century, with an emphasis on how on top of its main devastations, there are also individual dates and events that are exclusive to different countries and societies:

> …important dates cut deep gashes into Europe's 20th century. The first World War in 1924; the second; then the third-the longest one, known as "the Cold"-ending in 1989 with the disappearance of Communism. Beyond these important dates that apply to Europe as a whole, dates of secondary importance define the fates of particular nations… The history of the Czechs in the 20th century is graces with a remarkable mathematical beauty owing to the triple repetition of the number twenty. In 1918… they achieved their independence and in 1938 they lost it. In 1948 the Communist revolution, imported from Moscow… [it] ended in 1968 when enraged by the country's insolent self-emancipation, the Russians invaded with half a million soldiers… Our century is the only one in which historic dates have taken such a voracious grip on every single person's life (10).

The passage above also reflects the spirit of nostalgia that is examined in this thesis: Each nation has its own memories, making the perception of nostalgia unique to the corresponding society. As much as nostalgia is a global emotion, it also differs and gains particularity depending on different cultures and histories.

Immigration issues play an important role in the narrative, which are also an important aspect for Prague's collective memory. In the passage below Irena reflects on the immigration status in Paris:

> …Every morning they would talk about the horror of that return to their native land… Irena realized that all émigrés had those dreams, everyone, without exception; at first she was moved by that nighttime fraternity of people unknown to one another, then somewhat irritated: how could the very private experience of a dream be a collective event? (15).

Her identity as an émigré plays a role in her nostalgia with her own Prague, which reveals the Prague before communism. Thus, Irena's nostalgia is for a Prague that ceased to exist due to subsequent devastations in its recent history. This reflection can be interpreted as an irrecoverable ideal:

> The emigration dream: one of the strangest phenomena of the second half of the 20th century. These dream-nightmares seemed to her all the more mysterious in that she was afflicted simultaneously with an uncontrollable nostalgia and another, completely opposite, experience: landscapes from her country kept appearing to her by day.…this was not daydreaming…it was something else…: visions of landscapes would blink on in her head unexpectedly… and go out instantly. Prague neighborhood would rise up

> before her a split second. All day long these fleeting images would visit her to assuage the longing for her lost Bohemia (16)

From the very beginning the novel's nostalgia theme is explicitly stated. Kundera devotes a chapter to nostalgia, explaining the notion and embellishes the novel with frequent references to Homer's *Odysseus*. In the beginning Kundera refers to émigrés return as the Great Return, as in Odyssey's Great Return to his homeland Ithaca. Nonetheless, this apparent nostalgia of the novel would not have surfaced unless the characters went to Prague. Both Josef and Irena live in their chosen homes contently without being haunted by their homeland's memory. It is when they come back to Prague that they start to recall their experiences during the communist rule. Prague's palimpsest nature exudes in the novel. Moreover, combined with characters' personal relationship with the city, Prague becomes a unique "space of experience" for each of them. As Merleau-Ponty (2002) says "there is present a latent significance, diffused throughout the landscape or the city" (p. 328). On top of characters' own memory and nostalgia, because they are all tied with Prague's history, the novel also becomes the nostalgia of the city itself, as if Prague is one of the actors in the storyline. Not specific places but the whole landscape of the city is a memorative sign, a bearer of nostalgia for the old time.

In *Ignorance* collective memories collide with personal memories, especially in the case of Irena. Collective memory of Prague gives way to personal memories. The memories and nostalgia would be non-existent without Prague. Once Irena left Prague and settled in Paris, she started considering Paris as her "home". She seems detached from her actual homeland Prague, due to its oppressive political situation. Thus, Communist Prague has left a sour taste for her. However, when one day as she

was walking in the streets of Prague, the city she missed and loved comes back to her. In this long passage, Irena reflects her nostalgia for her own Prague, the one before communism:

> Seen from where she is strolling, Prague is a broad green swath of peaceable neighborhoods with narrow tree-lined streets. This is the Prague she loves, not the sumptuous one downtown*;* the Prague born at the turn of the previous century, the Prague of Czech lower middle class, the Prague of her childhood, where in wintertime she would ski up and down the hilly little lanes, the Prague where at dusk the encircling forests would steal into town to spread their fragrance. Dreamily she walks on; for a few seconds she catches a glimpse of Paris, which for the first time she feels has something hostile about it: chilly geometry of the avenues; pridefulness of the Champs-Elysées; steen countenances of the giant stone women representing Equality or Fraternity: and nowhere, nowhere a single touch of this kindly intimacy, a single whiff of this idyll she inhales here. In fact, throughout all her years as an émigré, this is the picture she has harbored as the emblem of the lost country: little houses in gardens stretching away out of sight over the rolling land. She felt happy in Paris, happier than here, but only Prague held her by a secret bond of beauty. She suddenly understands how much she loves this city and how painful her departure from it must have been (133-134).

As depicted in the paragraph above, during her stroll in the streets of Prague she recalls the city's own story by making references to its history; such as "the Prague born at the turn of the previous century, the Prague of Czech lower middle class, the Prague of her childhood". Prague's spirit with a turbulent history marked by invasion

of Russian tanks, bilingual incorporation of signs, renovated and destroyed monuments etc., draws attention to for what she longs, which is, as she emphatically says "the Prague born at the turn of the previous century… of her childhood". In other words, Prague before communism. What stimulates her nostalgia is her experience for the city. The stroll she takes -or to put it in Certeau's words- her "spatial practice" reveals a "geography of meaning" as Certeau says. The revealed meaning points to her own experience with Prague which reveals her nostalgia with the city.

As she continues her wanderings in the city she further recalls Prague's and Czech's own cultural memory in relation with her personal attachment:

> By now she has been walking for a good two or three hours in those leafy neighborhoods. She reaches a parapet at the end of a little park above Prague: the view from here is the rear of Hradcany Castle, the secret side; this is a Prague whose existence Gustaf doesn't suspect… names coming to Irina from Czech culture: Macha, the poet, Jan Neruda, the storyteller of ordinary Czech folk; the songs of Voskovec and Werich from the 1930s, so loved by her father, who died when she was a child; Hrabal and Skvorecky, the novelists of her adolescence… She moves on and she reflects that today she is carrying out the farewell walk she failed to take last time; she is finally saying her Great Farewells to the city she loves more than any other… (135-138).

Her nostalgia for her Prague, awakens her cultural memory of Czech culture as she remembers her favorite writers from her childhood. Her romance with her past in and with Prague as depicted above can be seen as a cathartic moment. It is the first time since her arrival in Prague that she feels idyllically at home.

Carlos Fuentes calls Kundera's notion of idyll "'a Communist offering to forget the past, a false remembering'. His characters are desperately looking back (into pre-history?) through the memory of 'old signs' to find themselves" (qtd in: Adams, 2003, p. 141). When Irena first arrived in Prague she felt out of place among her local friends. It is when she takes a stroll in the city that her nostalgic memories of Prague come back to her.

The landscape of Prague as quoted above provides a "space of experience" where past is "assimilated" in the present, as Boym puts it. Prague as a space of experience represents what is absent; thus, "the past of the city… suggests other dimensions of the lived experience and haunts the city like a ghost" (Boym, 2001, p. 76).

Nostalgia in the novel connotes a negative feeling as it emphasizes the devastations of Communist rule. More specifically for Josef for whom coming back to Prague excites memories in a pejorative sense. For him Prague seems to have lost its meaning. In contrast to Irena spending time in Prague and with his family only triggers his will to forget his past life in Prague, a state of mind that spreads to his time spent with Irena years ago in Prague. It seems that coming to Prague and remembering all the turbulences during communist invasion and his immigration process to Denmark only incite his will to efface any nostalgia for pre-communist Prague he might experience. The narrator of the novel says that he would diagnose him with nostalgic insufficiency (74). Josef's encounter in the city acts as a tool to strengthen his detachment from his past memories:

> To his mind the nostalgic insufficiency proves the paltry value of his former life …love is the glorification of the present. His attachment to the present drove off his recollections, shielded him against their intrusion; his memory

> did not become less malevolent but, disregarded and kept at a distance, it lost its power over him (74-76).
>
> When Irina saw Josef at the airport, she remembered every detail of their long-ago adventure; Josef remembered nothing. From the very first moment their encounter was based on an unjust and revolting inequality (126).

These selected passages sum up his relationship with Prague and nostalgia. Even during his encounter with his family he remembers the circumstances that led him to escape from the city, thus strengthening his estrangement from Prague and nostalgia for his former homeland.

The novel reflects the status of nostalgia for two émigrés: For Irena her nostalgia with Prague means the old Bohemia capital, the one before communism, whereas for Josef Prague reminds him all the ordeals he had been through during communism and which only motivates him towards forgetfulness. In sum, it can be argued that nostalgia in Prague surfaces in its negative aspect. The relationship with the city is given in a political frame with references to destructions of the 20th century and in the frame of characters' displacement in their hometown. Both Irena and Josef's nostalgia reveal a loss and this nostalgic experience is revealed upon their "Great Return" to Prague. Once again, city acts as an active memorative sign for nostalgia. Unlike Cărtărescu, Kundera as a writer from a formerly communist state does not refrain from political connotation in the conveyance of nostalgia.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

> The city is a discourse and this discourse is truly a language: the city speaks to its inhabitants, we speak our city, the city where we are, simply by living in it, by wandering through it, by looking at it (Barthes, Semiology and the Urban, 1997, p. 160)

Nostalgia is a ubiquitous notion full of ambiguities. The feeling is well-known by everyone and yet it can be difficult to describe. Its early definitions from the 17th until the 20th century treated the notion as a medical ailment treatable with correct prescriptions. However, towards the 20th century, it turned out to be an incurable condition and disappeared from the medical field. As humanity progressed, it also accumulated destructions and wars. Accompanying history at large, on an international level, there has always been a different, more intimate layer, the inner history of each and every nation. Every event left its mark in various shapes. One of the obvious milieus such residues can be traced in is the city. History and progress accumulated memories, destructions and reconstructions. Such turbulences left marks in the vast canvas of a city which made cities bearer of national memories. However, aside from political and historical connotations of collective memory, personal memories can also be tied with the city. In some cases it can be a combination of both: a personal past embedded in a historical turbulent time.

The novels examined in this thesis had the life of cities at their narrative core. Nostalgia in the storylines is interwoven in a location. Cărtărescu's *Nostalgia* places emphasis on Bucharest, Pamuk's *The Black Book* on Istanbul and Kundera's

Ignorance on Prague. As it has been previously explicated, nostalgia embodies several components such as memory, memory stimulant and space. It inevitably emerges with a sense of locality and this locality gains specificity depending on the memories. Even if nostalgic memory is about a time (i.e. childhood), the nostalgee's remembrance of that certain time and memory evokes a presence of space. This space can be in the form of a house, a rural place, a vacation spot, a city etc. Possibilities in the spatial evocations are endless and this study focused on city and its relationship with nostalgia. Cities as container of places, streets, neighborhoods, quartiers, monuments, buildings etc. exude an aura. In the chosen works of this thesis cities weigh heavily in the nostalgic narratives of the novels.

Cărtărescu's city Bucharest is heavy with political and historical past. Although he depicts the times of a communist era, his narrative is largely devoid of any political context. Detailed description of the city, references to pre-communist and communist times can also evoke a politicized memory for a native reader. However, his emphasis on Bucharest in *Nostalgia* appears as a personal and romanticized relationship with the city. In the novel an intrinsic relationship between nostalgia and the city itself dominates the book. With "The Roulette Player", Cărtărescu's novel starts in pre-communist Bucharest, continues through communist Bucharest and ends with the demise of the communist rule (or at least towards the end of it). In all these stories Bucharest acts as a memorative sign that stimulates nostalgic memory of the characters with its distinct places. Each of these places gains meaning in accordance with the characters' experiences in those places. When the characters recall their nostalgic memoires they do it with the help stimulants in the shape of specific neighbourhoods and streets of Bucharest.

In contrast to Cărtărescu, Kundera underlies the presence of the communist state and emphasizes political history of Prague. Kundera, being a writer from a former Communist country, weaves the city and the nostalgic theme into Prague's Communist past. His narrative bears political connotations, emphatically expressing discontent with the Communist Prague and a yearning for the old pre-Communist Prague. The city's own communist history defines characters' nostalgia. For Kundera this city is a mixture of both painful and happy memories that correspond respectively to communist and pre-communist Prague. In *Ignorance* the landscape of Prague acts as a memory stimulant, it reminds the characters of both a painful past and idyllic times. The nostalgia Kundera evokes comes along with a remembrance of troubled times; hence, this connection with sadness makes nostalgia not a celebrated notion. It reminds the characters of irrecoverable times. In Cărtărescu's narrative, due to its depoliticized nature, nostalgia is celebrated and Bucharest is a milieu for personal and childhood memories; an idyllic state. As Bucharest's history is heavy with political and historical events, the author's voluntary refrain from building on them, is an absence whose implications are worth noting.

Orhan Pamuk reflects on nostalgia for Ottoman-Turkish identity through Istanbul. He refers to Turkey's centuries old Westernization saga, traditional Ottoman-Turkish values and cultural past. Istanbul's aura and "how-it-had-been-back-then" exudes throughout the narrative, thus emphasizing a loss of a cultural heritage. Pamuk fills the novel with references to Ottoman-Turkish history. Furthermore, the novel is abundant with depictions of Istanbul neighborhoods and streets. Like Cărtărescu he inscribes a map of the city through Galip's search for his wife and through Jelal's columns. Both Pamuk and Kundera refer to the history of their nations

but unlike Kundera, Pamuk does it without posing an explicit sadness and criticism. In this aspect, it is up to the reader to excavate the losses Pamuk refers to in the novel.

Nostalgia and *The Black Book*, through the detailed descriptions of the city, "open up mental maps" (Boym, 2001, p. 50). Thus, both Cărtărescu and Pamuk can be considered as authentic voices of the cities that saw their coming of age and continued being their everyday canvas. In *Ignorance* Prague functions as a tool to depict the devastations of Czech history and reflect on how it affected the lives of people. Kundera does not give a detailed account of city streets and places, but inscribes his narrative in a general landscape of Prague. From this point of view, Kundera's nostalgia gains a political aspect.

As previously mentioned, in the post-communist era, Eastern and Central European writers are mainly expected by the West to depict a certain nation model determined by the past history. This past means the times of the Iron Curtain. Such a perspective poses an orientalist expectation from the Eastern and Central European narratives.[30] From this point of view, Kundera's nostalgia theme in *Ignorance,* with his frequent and critical depictions of communist Prague fulfills this expectation of a postcommunist narrative. By contrast, Cărtărescu's lack of interest in the political and persistence in personal evocations of Bucharest augments the imaginative perception of the city. He stays away from the anticipated post-communist narrative. Therefore, within the periphery of nostalgia and post-communist narratives, Cărtărescu embraces nostalgia through his attachment to Bucharest which for him is devoid of political implications. Kundera embeds his city, Prague, in its communist past and yearns for the pre-communist Prague. Arguably, Kundera does not celebrate Prague unconditionally.

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[30] Istanbul also had its fair share of orientalism especially in the 19th century writings of Nerval, Flaubert, etc.

As it has been previously explicated, cities bear their own history and memory. Furthermore, every individual has his own experience in the city. In this respect urban experiences also have a private dimension as well. In the case of the cities of this study, national past has the potential to collide with personal memories. All three novels reveal different uses of cities for the workings of nostalgia. In Cărtărescu it has a stimulant function, like Proust's madeleine. In Pamuk, it reflects a national identity dilemma and yearns for an Ottoman-Turkish heritage that no longer exists; in Kundera Prague also represents a homeland, that no longer exists, which is the pre-communist Prague.

In conclusion, cities provide a vast canvas for memories and a space of experience for every individual. Particular places in a city (such as monuments, streets, stores) can act as a memorative sign, stimulating nostalgic memories in the background of the city. In this case, each city can possess a distinct meaning. "Phantoms" of a city's past prompt nostalgic remembrance of the past either in the shape of a private recollection or as a national identity. In the case of the novels in this study, spaces that prompt nostalgia for Cărtărescu are the streets and neighborhoods of Bucharest, predominantly the Ştefan cel Mare Boulevard; for Pamuk it is Istanbul, in particular Beyoğlu, Nişantaşı and Karaköy; for Kundera it is Prague with its general landscape. These cities, as "container of memories" with their historicity, streets and places also act as memorative signs that exude nostalgia in different forms. Thus, each of these cities partake an active role in the evocation of nostalgia in the novels.

Although the subject of urban practices, the literature on nostalgia is not a new one; for centuries now it has been an ongoing focus in Western European and American narratives. With the canon in mind, as a background that fostered the

inspiration for this study, the present thesis aimed to point to other works and cities. Although they may fall outside the Western canon, since their scope and framework are the special emphasis on the metropolis and its multi-layered connections to nostalgia, they have the potential to constitute the beginning of a new and fruitful area of research.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

copuroglubusra@gmail.com
January 14, 1988 / Ankara, Turkey

Education

2012 B.A. İstanbul University, French Language and Literature
2017 M.A. Yeditepe University, Comparative Literature

2013 New York Film Academy, 8-Week Screenwriting Workshop

Membership: Rotary Youth Exchange Program of Rotary Club Istanbul, District 2420, Rotex
2005-2006 Foreign Exchange Student: Spent a year as a senior in high school in McAllen, Texas and attended BETA (Business, Education and Technology Academy).

Languages

Turkish (native), English (very good), French (good), Ottoman Turkish (basic reading skills of printed material), Spanish (Beginner), German (Beginner)

Proceedings Presented in National Conferences

(Invited presenter):"Other Worlds and Designs in Literature Conference", *Comparative Literature Days* Dokuz Eylul University, Izmir, 2017.

"André Gide's Use of Mythology", *Meetings at Literature VII: Mythology in Literature*, Yeditepe University, Istanbul, May 2016.

"The Women of Fatma Aliye", *Conference on the History of Women Writers in Turkish Literature IV: The Works of Fatma Aliye*, Istanbul Sehir University, Istanbul, December 2015.

"Misery in Turkish Literature: Bunaltı (Anguish) in the 1950 Generation", *Meetings at Literature VI: Ennui in Literature*, Yeditepe University, Istanbul, May 2015.

Proceedings Presented in International Conferences

"So Close Yet So Far Away: Mutual and Textual Spaces of the 1950 Generation", Politics and Poetics of Friendship Conference, Jagiellonian University in Kraków, 27-29 October 2016.

"Two Indias in One, A Century Apart: A Comparative Approach to Postcolonial India", *Postcolonial Theory and Practice in The Twenty-First Century*, University of Rzeszów, Rzeszów, April 2016.

Published Article in Peer-Reviewed Journal

"Misery in Turkish Literature: Bunaltı (An Anguish) in the 1950 Generation" in *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı Araştırmaları/Modern Turkish Literature Researches,* 2015, pp.195-207. ISBN:1308-8203

"So Close Yet So Far Away: Mutual and Textual Spaces of the 1950 Generation in Turkish Literature" in *Topographies of (post)modernity* issued by the Jagiellonian University Press. (Forthcoming, 2017).

Conference Moderations

Meetings at Literature VI: Ennui in Literature, Yeditepe University, 2015.

Meetings at Literature VII: Mythology in Literature, Yeditepe University, 2016.

Comparative Literature Colloquiums II: Gürsel Korat, "Philosophy and Literature", Yeditepe University, 2016.

Work Experience

Yeditepe University, Literature Club, Part-Time Lecturer
2015 - 2016
12-Week Certificate program in Film Theory and Screenwriting.

Yeditepe University, Comparative Literature Colloquium Assistant
2015-2016
Departmental organization of monthly colloquiums.

Soysal Danışmanlık (Consulting Firm for Retailers)
2013 November-2014 February: "Retail Days", Assistant content editor.
Research of relevant speakers for the retail conference series.

2009-2011 Freelance Contributor/Interviewer for various art magazines:
Artist magazine (Istanbul) : 2009, June and September issues

Art Unlimited (Istanbul)magazine :2009-2011 (bimonthly, formerly known as Galerist)

Art Actuel (France, bimonthly) : 2010, January/February issue "Istanbul Zoom Sur L'Art Actuel Turc"

Eyemazing (Amsterdam, trimonthly) : 2010, Fall issue, "Nazif Topçuoğlu: Girls Grown Wild" (http://www.gagallery.com/press/eyemazing/artists)

2009-2010 : Art-core.tv web site editor

Representation of artists and organization of their exhibitions in Istanbul:

-Ardan Özmenoğlu: "It's either Istanbul conquers me or I conquer Istanbul" solo exhibition, (PlayStudio, 2008)

"Dekolte", solo exhibition, (İlayda Art Gallery, 2009)

-Yağmur Kızılok: Contemporary Istanbul art fair, Gallery Baraz representation (2008)

"I Want to Ride My Bicycle" solo exhibition, (PlayStudio, 2009)

2006-2008

Assistant at Piramid Art Gallery and Publishing Company

-Organization of art exhibitions, book and catalogue productions and translations of articles and executive assistant of the artist who is also the founder of the gallery, Bedri Baykam.

2005 (May-August)

Figür Tourism and Organization Company, Istanbul (Part-time employee)