

A Case Study of Excess/Access Media: Simultaneous Construction of Novel and
Museum in *The Museum of Innocence*

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A Case Study of Excess/Access Media: Simultaneous Construction of Novel and
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(*Masumiyet Müzesi*'nde Anlatı ve Müzenin Eşzamanlı İnşası)

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Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)

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- 2) Museum
- 3) Fiction
- 4) Postmodernism
- 5) Objects

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to analyze the foundational relationship between the novel and the museum, that lies beneath Orhan Pamuk's latest novel *The Museum of Innocence*. Questioning the necessity and function of one of the two media that constitute the project, automatically gives way to the questioning of the other. Therefore, in the context of *The Museum of Innocence* posing the question of *why is there a museum* brings up the question of *why is there a novel*. The structure that is responsible for this relationship between these questions, also situates the project within the tension between the real and the fictitious. By analyzing several central objects that appear in both the novel and the museum, this thesis aims to map out the ways in which the two media – the novel and the museum – collaborate with, construct, dictate, or restrict each other.

ÖZET

Bu tezde Orhan Pamuk'un son romanı *Masumiyet Müzesi*'nin temelini oluşturan roman – müze ilişkisi incelenecektir. *Masumiyet Müzesi* bağlamında bu mecralardan birinin gerekliliği ve işlevselliği sorgulandığında, bu soru diğer mecra için de aynı soruyu sordurmaktadır. Yani *neden bir müze var* sorusu sorulduğunda *neden bir roman var* sorusu ortaya çıkıyor. Bu mütakabiliyeti yaratan yapı, aynı zamanda projeyi gerçek ve kurgusal arasındaki gerilime de yerleştiriyor. Bu tez, romanda ve müzede karşımıza çıkan bazı objeleri inceleyerek bu iki mecranın ne şekilde beraber çalıştığını; birbirini ürettiğinin, dikte ettiğinin veya kısıtladığının bir haritasını çıkarmaya çalışacaktır.

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The underlying reason for writing is to bridge the gulf between one person and another. –W. H. Auden

For one need not scrutinize the concept of 'identification' very sharply to see, implied in it at every turn, its ironic counterpart: division. -Franco Moretti Signs taken for Wonders

Introduction

The Questions: Why and How?

In his seminal essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” Walter Benjamin ponders on questions of perception, organization and media as it pertains to works of art. These modes of producing, reproducing and, in turn, seeing, of course, are not restricted to the realm of art, but is deeply influenced by and connected to all aspects of life. “The mode of human sense perception” writes Benjamin, “changes with humanity’s entire mode of existence. The manner in which human sense perception is organized, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well” (222).

Andreas Huyssen touches upon a very similar strand of thought in conveying the forms memory takes, its paths and distortions: “Human memory” he writes in *Twilight Memories*, “may well be an anthropological given, but closely tied as it is to the ways a culture constructs and lives its temporality, the forms memory will take are invariably contingent and subject to change” (2).

The Museum of Innocence presents a novelty in its explorations of media in which the constitution of the work is closely related to historical circumstances and shaped by *the ways a culture constructs and lives its temporality*.

The question is basic: How does the existence of a hoard of real objects, a collection and the forethought of a museum shape a novel? The answer is elusive. Not only because it has never been done before, -and even this project hasn't yet been concluded- but also because the question turns in on itself to ask, how does a novel, a narrative shape a collection?

Certainly, many novels refer to recorded historical events, streets that exist, and products we use. Pamuk himself is known for his meticulous historical research into the material and historical culture of periods and locations he writes about. It is not the place to delve into his oeuvre, suffice to say that several novels –especially *Black Book* – in retrospect seem to be a path leading to this integration of the world of things into his literary endeavor.

In any case, up until Orhan Pamuk's great undertaking of *The Museum of Innocence*, a novel had never been simultaneously built, literally, along with a museum bearing its traces of reality. So, while it is customary, or perhaps even necessary, for a novel to have been shaped according to the world of things, the world of things had never been shaped according to the novel and in the shape of a museum. The specificity of the museum as the medium is an important factor here, as theater and movie sets are made to accommodate adaptations of novels, perhaps even truer to their text and in much more detail. However, the museum implies an anti-habitat, that is to say a setting in which the use value of any and every item is discarded. It is not to be lived in, but rather to be displayed, and looked at.

This unconventional leap, in turn, reflects back onto the way in which the world of things effects the narrative. Writing and collecting, for Benjamin, were two of the “few forms of cultural practice that can produce open-ended or dialectical images” (McIsaac, 20), by which he believed experiences could pass into memory in modernity. Fulfilling similar tasks in modernity, what has made these two practices and the two products that arise from these practices, complementary today? Why was it necessary for Pamuk to have both and not one or the other? What was Pamuk’s intention in overflowing his literary oeuvre into the world of things? How does this excess of media dictate, restrict, open up and perhaps even necessitate Pamuk’s novel as well as itself?

The Museum itself, though taking longer to finish and open to the public, had been part of Pamuk’s project all along. Therefore, in some sense, Pamuk’s novelistic endeavor dictates the existence of a museum. Not only that, but in fictional terms, Kemal’s collection is what dictates the narrative we read. Therefore, in another sense, the museum dictates the narrative precipitating in Orhan Pamuk’s fictional appearance in the novel, conflating even further, the realm of the real and the fictional; the world of things and narrative. This mutual dependency of the two media in the interwoven construction of Pamuk’s *The Museum of Innocence* then, brings forth fruitful ground to examine their relationship.¹

¹ However, there is one nuance that needs attention in order not to fall in the trap of confusing fact and fiction where it is not warranted. The aforementioned states of dependence occur on distinct yet not unrelated spheres. Orhan Pamuk’s appearance in his novel, while suggestive of a close bond between reality and fiction, should not lead us anywhere other than just that: a close bond. In parts following, this nuance will be deliberated on through fictions close bond with history by way of the narrative form. The intention in doing so, is by no means to obliterate their differences, but rather, to make a point of what their similarity implies.

A Review of the Media

The collaboration of the museum and narrative suggests a great affinity to, and even, in consequence, a subtle critique of the enlightenment era nationalist history projects. At a time when not only “imagined communities” were written, but also supported by artefacts from distant (colonial) lands and their mythology, art as well as material culture came to the fore. The influence of the evidentiary quality attributed to materiality as part and parcel of the advent of this secular, scientific period still carries on today.

The relationship of the museum and the novel is by no means new. “The realist novel” according to Bal, “flourished in the same age as the development of the great museums” (*Double Exposures*, 5). The historical contemporaneity of the birth of these two media gives important clues as to their *raison d’être*, design and function. However, the change and progress that these two forms/institutions have undergone since their inception is equally, if not more significant to our specific purpose of examining *The Museum of Innocence*.

This is also a point that Pamuk himself brings up in *The Naive and the Sentimental Novelist*:

“We could draw a loose analogy between the development of museums and the historical transition in literary genres: the process by which epics and romances about the adventures of kings and knights gave way to novels, which deal with the life of the middle classes” (129-30).

The correlation between the shift in form and content is also intertwined and closely related to the changes that history, as a discipline underwent. However, it is not necessarily their relationship to history per se, but rather the relationship that the

discipline of history and its evolution has engendered between these two institutions/forms that we will focus on for the purposes of this thesis.

In the following pages, some preliminary comments intend to establish some important relationships between these media with which this thesis will be concerned with.

The Museum

“The modern museum’ says J Mordaundt Crook, in his architectural study of the British Museum, ‘is a product of Renaissance humanism, eighteenth century enlightenment and nineteenth century democracy” (Alexander, *Museum in Motion*, 5).

The museum, a sign of wealth and accumulation of culture, evolved from the cabinets of curiosity in the sixteenth century to the wealth, accumulation and systematization of culture of the people with the taking over of the museums by the people during French revolution. This in essence and consequence was symptomatic of the wave of nationalism that has greatly influenced what we now know as the modern museum.

What was radically different in modern museums as opposed to cabinets of curiosity, it must be emphasized, was the aspect of categorization and signification. While certain objects from cabinets of curiosities did end up in some museums, the way in which they were framed was very different. In accord with the discourse in which the modern museum came to be, every object became part of a grand discourse of history. Therefore, whereas cabinets of curiosities were signified by their individual collector, modern museum collections were signified and significant in the context of; shaped, and

was in turn also shaped by, a systematic grid of history. In the case of *The Museum of Innocence*, we will come to see a collection signified by its individual collector, but under the great influence of a universal experience which he (Kemal) both shared and called upon in making sense of his own experience. Therefore, unlike cabinets of curiosities, the *Museum of Innocence* placed itself within that systematic grid of history despite its somewhat individualist constitution.

In his important study on the evolution of museums in the nineteenth century, *The Birth of The Museum* Tony Bennett quotes from *The Order of Things*: “Man, appears in his ambiguous position as an object of knowledge and as a subject that knows; enslaved sovereign, observed spectator.” (Foucault qtd. in Bennett, 7). As Foucault beautifully fits into one sentence, the dual position of human kind that crystallizes in the museum *as the object of knowledge and as a subject that knows*; is also the case in history, governance and the arts. Much like the Americans’ idea of government, the museum as we know it today, is supposedly *of the people, and for the people*. While both those tenets are highly questionable, the analogy serves very well in underscoring the component of ‘governance’ that the museum performs.

“The museum,” Bennett carries on, “constructs man in a relation of both subject and object to the knowledge it organizes” (7), at which point the role of the human being shifts slightly to its object component. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson defines the museum, along with the census and the map, as a sign of a way of thinking “which was a totalizing classificatory grid, which could be applied with endless flexibility to anything under the state’s real or contemplated control” (184). The museum, under the nineteenth century nationalist influence, while not detached from the human

being as subject, imposed objecthood more than it allowed subjectivity. Under this classificatory way of thinking, “the particular,” as Anderson would have it, “always stood as a provisional representative of a series and was to be handled in this light” (184).

The Novel

This dual position of the human being *as the object of knowledge and as a subject that knows* - is reiterated in Ranciere’s articulations on the narrative form that brings together history and fiction. In identifying the formal structures that govern both historical text and the story (conveniently both called *histoire* in French), Ranciere finds the opportunity to comment on exactly this:

“ [...] it is clear that a model for the fabrication of stories is linked to a certain idea of history as a common destiny, with an idea of those who ‘make history’, and that this interpenetration of the logic of facts and the logic of stories is specific to an age when anyone and everyone is considered to be participating in the task of history” (*Aesthetics and Politics*, 38-39).

Narrative then, much like the museum, is a media in which the human being is positioned both as subject and object of knowledge.

Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan’s view of narrative as it pertains to representation and subjectivity is that it is a mode of access. That is, narrative, whether it be history or fiction, “is the only access to what is otherwise inaccessible” (21). *The Museum of Innocence* in novelistic form provides this kind of access, but it also provides access to the museum and the objects that will be on display. Therefore, the relationship of the text is as much to another system of signs; that is the collection as to the (hi)story.

In *Double Exposures*, Mieke Bal brings this relationship between a set of signs to another set of signs exactly to what this thesis is concerned with: that of the relationship

between what is shown and what signifies it in text. Embarking on her study to investigate and draw from narrative modes in museum settings, Bal articulates on the terms exposition, exposé, exposure. Seeing as how these terms apply in great relevance to both the act of showing, displaying but also as the narrative gesture of showing, signifying. Drawing from this “notion that gestures of showing can be considered discursive acts, best considered as (or analogous to) specific speech acts,” Bal delineates the relationship between the artefact and the narrative. In doing so she too, refers to the subject/object dichotomy:

“Exposing an agent, or subject, puts ‘things’ on display, which creates a subject/object dichotomy. This dichotomy enables the subject to make a statement about the object. The object is there to substantiate the statement. It is put there within a frame that enables the statement to come across. There is an addressee for the statement: the visitor, viewer, or reader. The discourse surrounding the exposition, or, more precisely, the discourse that *is* the exposition, is ‘constative’: informative and affirmative. The discourse has truth value” (Bal, DE, 3).

The *truth value* in question derives from the collaboration of the two media that embody this dichotomy in terms of their affinity to the modernist museum and history practices. Despite their embodiment of this dichotomy of subject/object, both media, going way back to the era of positivism have a claim on showing and telling the truth.

On Themes and Method

This thesis will approach the collaboration between the novel and the museum by dealing with specific objects, revealing certain dynamics that they embody in analyzing how they appear in the novel and the museum.

The first chapter will begin to do so by tackling the theme of time, death and the fleeting nature of *the real* in its analysis of Füsün’s lost earring with the letter F and the

timepieces that are central objects in both the novel and the museum. The second chapter deals with the issue of light as it pertains to perception. The sunflower that appears in many forms in the novel is absent from the museum which leads me to suggest that it is an element that reveals the dynamics of presentation, such as the lighting in a museum.

The third chapter continues to concern itself with presentation, but more in the realm of the narrative. The ruler and the car which are the objects under scrutiny in this chapter are both suggestive of a certain authority in their symbolic significance as markers of measurement and distance. This element of authority is also present in the role of these objects in the context of Kemal's relationship with Füsün as both objects appear as instruments of Kemal's mastery (in terms of teaching) over Füsün. This chapter concludes with the introduction of the element of distance that is further articulated in the last chapter which delves into the dynamics of the local and universal concerns of the project.

In the analysis of these objects and themes I wish to reveal some dynamics that tie the content and the form of the *The Museum of Innocence*. In doing so, I believe this thesis will begin to answer the questions posed at the beginning of how the novel and the museum effect the way in which the other comes into being.

1

1.1 F.

1.1.1 The order of things

The happiest moment that marks the beginning of the novel corresponds to a single object: the single earring with the letter F. It is a single earring, even though the pair had been united at Kemal's first visit to Çukurcuma. One of the pair slips from Füsün's ear and goes unnoticed, upon discovery is taken home in Kemal's pocket where it remains lost until Kemal's father's death. After his death, having recovered the earring, Kemal attempts to recover his relationship with Füsün as well. Calling on Füsün's family home with intentions of proposing, he brings with him the promised tricycle along with the 'orphaned' (242) earring he leaves in the bathroom, after which it remains lost until the car accident.

Although unnoticed at the time, this single earring: "the earring whose shape [Kemal] failed to notice" (73) becomes an artefact by which a moment is recreated within the collection as well as in the narrative. As such the earring signifies and is signified by these two media. This dual relationship in the construction of a collection that is turned into a museum and a narrative that is turned into a novel work together as much as they do separately.

That is to say, the text gives the earring, a subjective, symbolic significance. Then the question remains, what does the corresponding object in the *Museum of Innocence* do? And how do the two separate manifestations in different media interact with and support each other?

It is not only the earring, but the *happiest moment* too, that goes unnoticed at the time and acquires meaning in retrospect:

“It was the happiest moment of my life, though i didn’t know it. Had I known, had I cherished this gift, would everything have turned out differently? Yes, if I had recognized this instant of perfect happiness, I would have held it fast and never let it slip away. [...] her earring must have come free and, for all we knew, hovered in midair before falling of its own accord. Our bliss was so profound that we went on kissing, heedless of the fall of the earring, whose shape I had not even noticed” (3).

The sensation of the happiest moment that is lost in time is narrated by Kemal in the language of the world of objects, as if it were something he could have *held fast and never let slip away*. As such, the earring serves as both the physical and narrative counterpart of *the happiest moment that slips away*; a remnant of what is inevitably lost in time. The earring, by way of Kemal’s retrospective narrative and it’s corresponding object in the museum, turns a temporal sensation into a spatial, physical one; thus functioning on two planes of meaning.

Primarily, for Kemal it provides something [material, durable] to hold on to, which becomes a trace, a key perhaps, to access the memory of the *happiest moment* throughout his life. The language that accesses memories through objects, constitutes a crucial element in the way the museum and the novel interact and collaborate in the creation of each other. (It should also be pointed out, as it will be later, that while objects are durable in the sense that they are not mortal; yet they still do bear signs of wear and tear due to the passing of time).

In dealing with memories, the language of Kemal’s narrative anchors itself in the world of objects as we’ve seen in the very first paragraph. The objects serve as the raw

material through which the narrative constructs itself, in turn organizing, categorizing and framing them.

The fact that the museum is still being constructed as Orhan Pamuk, the writer in the novel, finalizes his account of Kemal's narrative stands in tribute to this as well. Though the idea of a novel had initially been, for Kemal, something that would be a catalogue of what already supposedly existed; it comes to mean more than that. In acting as a catalogue, the novel not only exerts Kemal's subjectivity onto these objects but plays a role in organizing Kemal's narrative as well.

Kemal's vision of his museum and its book also points us toward this dialectical construction between the two media:

“Whenever I was in Istanbul he would come to my attic once a week, always asking me why the objects and photographs I had recalled and organized in a row had to appear in the same order in the boxes and display cases of the museum and why each had to be mentioned in its particular chapters” (515).

1.1.2 Access

The museum alone would have brought together all material objects that Kemal could hold on to. However, it would not have told his story, his subjectivity. The objects would have been gathered in – as were other collectors' – *rubbish dens* (505) instead of a museum.

Telling his story in narrative form is paramount to establishing his collection as a meaningful and unfragmented entity, towards others, as well as himself.

“My story was important to me and I did not wish to see it reflected in other people's eyes, or to be seen as a broken wretch” (491).

The collection had become a big part of him, even defined him to some extent. However this was not properly available to the outside world, the display [to use a museological term] wasn't coded in a common language. Though the objects Kemal collected throughout the years were mostly mass produced and would therefore appeal to his local viewers to some extent; that would have not served his purpose which is to tell his story, a story to be proud of. Like national history, this proud *history* is directed towards the self as well as the outside.

The medium Kemal was privy to – as a means of showing the world his story – is through objects. His raw material, coupled with his intentions to open them to the public, therefore, easily suggest the form of the museum. However, we also know, that he wishes not only to display these objects, but to tell his story. The objective of telling his story is then, the process through which the objects are turned into a museum – curated into an organized, categorized, and unfragmented story.

“Objects” writes Baudrillard, “become mental precincts over which I hold sway, they become things of which I am the meaning, they become my property and my passion” (91). Objects and their organization, then, is the manifestation of Kemal's vocabulary and grammar.

While the objects are signified by Kemal, as soon as they enter his collection, their significances do not add up to a coherent story. The coherence that the narrative achieves, therefore, gives every object a significance that connects it with all the other objects. This coherence only becomes available to the viewer/reader through a narrative in language, that is the novel. And to a certain extent, if we consider how the museum is

curated, categorized and organized in collaboration with the novel, the novel becomes a medium through which Kemal accesses his own story as well.

In an insightful investigation into narration, representation and subjectivity, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan puts forth a very relevant argument: that “narration is the main mode of access in literature (and perhaps life)” (2). Simple as it may seem, in the face of disillusioned theories on language and representation, Rimmon-Kenan presents a nuanced, non-idealized approach to narrative. “On the one hand” she writes “it destabilizes representation and subjectivity; on the other, it opens a way to a modified and qualified rehabilitation” (2).

Read in this way, the collaboration between the museum and the novel works, first and foremost, to build a coherent story from disparate objects.

1.1.3 Catalog

Kemal’s first thought of having an *annotated catalog* is telling: “I realized” he narrates;

“that my museum would need an annotated catalog, relating in detail the stories of each and every object. There was no doubt that this would also constitute the story of my love for Füsün and my veneration. [...] I realized that just as the line joining together Aristotle’s moments was Time, so, too, the line joining together these objects would be a story. In other words, a writer might undertake to write the catalog in the same form as he might write a novel” (512).

The story, according to this, is the line – that is, the organization and the framework – *that joins together the objects*; hence builds the museum.

Kemal’s decision to open up his collection and tell his story naturally presupposes an audience. The novel, penned by a fictional Orhan Pamuk, bridges Kemal’s objects, his

story, his subjectivity with this audience. However, we find at some point, that the museum – which is Kemal’s medium of self expression, a medium in which he feels comfortable and able to communicate – is greatly influenced by the novel. This is perhaps why Kemal feels at unease when Mr. Pamuk tells him that he’s writing the story in the first person.²

The tension between fact and fiction is then projected onto the ambiguity of the narrator. On top of a fiction written in reference to what is culturally coded as ‘real’, Orhan Pamuk’s appearance in the novel as a character blurs the lines even further. But this is exactly what Pamuk has attempted to do.

1.1.4 Happiness

As Kemal finishes narrating his story to Mr. Pamuk he addresses the reader in the following words: “Let everyone know, I have lived a very happy life” (532). This final statement can be read from two angles. First is Kemal’s very humane urge to explain himself, put his life in context for others, avoid pity and be proud. It is the primary impulse behind the initial idea of turning his collection into a museum as well as its eventual narrative counterpart.

As he says to Mr. Pamuk during one of their chats: “if the objects that bring us shame are displayed in a museum, they are immediately transformed into possessions in which to take pride” (518). The interesting point that shouldn’t be overlooked here is that

² “Though I had no doubt that it would remain my story, and that he would treat it respectfully, the idea of his speaking in my voice was disturbing. It seemed a failure of courage, a sort of weakness on my part. While I thought it perfectly normal to tell the story to visitors myself, pointing out relevant objects along the way, for Orhan Bey to put himself in my place, for him to make his own voice heard in place of mine – this annoyed me” (516).

even though the project is aimed at presenting Kemal's story to the reader/viewer, it ends up providing Kemal himself with a sense of happiness that stems from the coherence he achieves. This is central in understanding why the collection is curated into a museum with a novel.

Reading into Kemal's claim that *objects become possessions in which to take pride as soon as they are displayed in a museum* we can infer that the context a museum display provides for the object is a story rather than a purely spatial site. The display, which entails the organization of a collection into a communicable museum is established through the narrative, hence bridging the two media.

The retrospective happiness of his life that we encounter on several occasions, also indicates a hopeless case of nostalgia in Kemal's character, fuelled and sustained by his attachment to objects. His obsession with objects of the past may be traced back to his longing for his childhood. The seamstress kit, the tricycle passed on to Füsün and many other references to Kemal's childhood, that are also part of the collection imply such nostalgia.

These objects are also related to why and how Kemal identifies with Füsün – as a young, distant relative. While Kemal's obsession transpires most significantly with a focus on Füsün, this seems to be one of the many manifestations of an overarching nostalgia. It is therefore possible to suggest that Füsün herself is a prop in a world that Kemal constructs for himself in response to this nostalgia.

We also encounter such a retrospective sense of happiness in his recollection of the time he spends in Fatih before his father's death: "as with so many chapters of my life,

I would realize only much later that my days at the Fatih Hotel, far from being painful, as I then imagined, were in fact full of happiness” (211). Here, Kemal anchors this experience of a contrasting geography and culture as an anachronistic memory based on the antique objects he bought from the streets.

The material remnants of Kemal’s life gain emotional depth only as the narrative builds the collection into a museum.³ This can be seen clearly in another instance of his knowingly distorted vision of what has passed: “Today,” he says, “I remember each and every evening I went to supper in Çukurcuma – even the most difficult, most hopeless, most humiliating evenings – as happiness” (289).

These instances of retrospective happiness suggest a pattern of distortion in how Kemal frames and displays his memories. The pattern of remembering the bad times as happiness reveals an intentional revision, which is both a motive behind and a result of the coherence that the narrative provides. As a motive, revision works for Kemal to present himself proudly; as a consequence Kemal is faced with a coherent story, an unfragmented reflection of himself.

Kemal’s urge to be surrounded by the objects he collects, his habit of getting into physical contact with them and his other individual endeavors had always fallen short of satisfying him. He keeps going back, building more memories as well as extending his collection - re-signifying each object as a new one is added. While he continues to collect

³ “now, all these years later, as I undertake to explain my love as sincerely as I can, explicating each object in turn...” (321)

“when we try to conjure up the line connecting these moments, or, as in our museum, the line connecting all the objects that carry those moments inside them, we are forced to remember that the line comes to an end, and to contemplate death” (288).

even after no new experiences with Füsün can ever correspond to these objects, something else changes. After the accident that leaves Füsün dead Kemal spends some time unable to speak because of the damage to his brain. As he recovers he realizes that “[...] slowly Füsün became a dream of the past, the stuff of memories” (490). It is at this moment of twilight⁴ that Kemal’s attempt to recapture these memories, take the form of a museum first, and in turn a narrative. “It was at this point – hovering between fact and remembrance, between the pain of loss and its meaning – when the idea of a museum first occurred to me” (490).

At this point, perhaps the two ways in which Kemal constructs his narrative come together. It is both to the other, the outsider that he appeals his story to, but it is also to himself. In his self-pitying mode after the accident Kemal comes to the conclusion that by telling his story to others he can heal: “If I could tell my story I could ease my pain. But to do so I would have to bring my entire collection out into the open” (490).

As such, another, no less important role of the collaboration between the objects, and Kemal’s subjective explications of them are, bridging the very individual, private and local experience to a more universal one. While we will revisit this subject of universality of experiencing through objects once again in the following chapters, it is worth lingering on for a bit, in the specificity of the earrings. Kemal’s definition of the earrings, at one point, entail an introduction to the cultural milieu of a certain time and geography: “In those days” he says, “it was the style for young people to wear bracelets, necklaces, and

⁴ Here, twilight is used in reference to the general concept and framework of Andreas Huyssen’s *Twilight Memories*.

rings bearing their names or initials but that afternoon I didn't notice if her earrings were of this kind" (29).

As one of many similar earrings, and as part of a fashion and/or culture of wearing them, the earring serves as more than just something that belongs to Füsün, or something Kemal holds on to for the sake of remembering her. It also represents a time, a cultural history and topography⁵ with its display in a museum setting.

Following this line of thought, treating the object as a cultural signifier, the one earring with the letter F also stands against the pair of pearl earrings passed down to Kemal by his father. Not only do these earrings stand for the deterministic recurrence of a pattern of relationship for the upper middle class man but they also come to represent an active imposition on Füsün's materiality and hence identity. Kemal's authoritative imposition on Füsün's identity by way of objects will be taken up in greater depth in the following chapters. Suffice to say for now, that these earrings stand in the very tension between identity and materiality as Füsün becomes part of a decor that Kemal constantly builds and rebuilds.

It seems worthwhile, then, foraying briefly into how other forms of narrative influence Pamuk's novel, if only to grasp the way in which the project stands on this tension between identity and materiality, how Kemal's subjectivity is central in their delineation and how the novel as a form of fiction works in collaboration with the museum –which is a media not strictly defined by or limited to scientific truth or fiction – in achieving this.

⁵ "Sometimes the objects on the table looked to me like mountains, valleys, hills, depressions and plateaus" (399).

While Pamuk refers consistently to anthropology as a discipline that Kemal embraces in making sense of his experiences, it would seem that Oral History, - a discipline that arose from the self-criticism of anthropology as well as history – poses a more fruitful way of approaching Kemal’s narrative. In doing so, perhaps the value of unearthing snippets of a universal experience in a personal account may be better recognized and Pamuk’s project better grasped.

“Oral history” according to Portelli, a leading theorist and practitioner of the discipline, in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*, “changes the writing of history much as the modern novel transformed the writing of literary fiction: the most important change is that the narrator is now pulled into the narrative and becomes a part of the story” (57).

When Orhan Pamuk (the narrator) steps in at the very end of the novel and talks about his visits to Kemal’s friends for consultation about his book, he concludes that “it was pointless speaking to other people: I did not want to tell Kemal’s story as others saw it; I wanted to write it the way he had told it to me” (529).

Pamuk’s approach to Kemal’s story is, then, comparable to Portelli’s definition of oral history. “The importance of oral testimony” says Portelli, “may lie not in its adherence to fact, but rather in its departure from it, as imagination, symbolism, and desire emerge” (51). The recognition of subjectivity, far from rendering the story unbelievable, then, creates fruitful ground for layers of meaning; merging as well as distinguishing the individual and the wider cultural history.

This stands in critical contrast to what may be thought of as the 19th century modernist understanding of both history as a discipline and museum as an institution – two very dominant and lasting postulates that still haven't ceased to inform our thought today.

The one lost moment of happiness, marked with the lost earring and a hopeless quest to reclaim it pervades the whole novel. It can be said, in a way, that the unattainability of conserving a moment in general is bestowed upon this one central moment of what is defined to be the *happiest moment*. The earring, therefore stands at the very junction where object and memory are conflated; where the museum and the novel begin to communicate in making sense together. “To explain why we have chosen this moment over all others, it is also natural, and necessary, to retell our stories from the beginning, just as in a novel” (73).

It is this very moment Kemal designates the happiest moment in his life and simultaneously refers to the earring both the narrative and the collection start to take shape – turning into the novel and the museum. The earring, therefore, has been the initial point of departure to start thinking about how the museum and the novel of *The Museum of Innocence* interact, communicate and collaborate.

1.2 Time and Death

1.2.1 *La Petite Mort*

Conceptually, the *happiest moment* is perhaps best grasped by the French. The epithet by which the French name orgasm: *la petite mort* – translated literally as little death – acknowledges the fleeting nature of the happiest moment as it pertains to time; that as one becomes aware of its presence it has already passed. Therefore the designation of the happiest moment is, in fact, painful. Kemal, in exactly as many words, describes this as he sets out to weave the surrounding story of his happiest moment:

“But to designate this as my happiest moment is to acknowledge that it is far in the past, that it will never return, and that awareness, therefore of the very moment is painful” (73).

The fleeting nature of the *happiest moment*, however, holds true for any moment.

Therefore Kemal’s statement, while making a well known and appreciated point, also indicates that the main impeding force in ones quest to preserve the happiest moment, or any moment for that matter, is its medium: time.

In its place, as we’ve begun to uncover in the previous section, Kemal intends to substitute material, spatial components. This is perhaps the fundamental rationale behind his initial project taking the form of a museum. For Kemal, “real museums” after all, are “places where Time is transformed into Space” (510). In doing so, his intention is to display and preserve these objects as they correspond to the time of his story.⁶

⁶ It is perhaps necessary here, to delve into the nuances between Kemal’s collection and his museum; his habit of collecting and his project to build a museum. Though they may be easily conflated, the two are symptoms of different conditions and serve different purposes in different form. The fundamental

The evolution of what begins for Kemal as a museum, into a collaboration with its narrative counterpart in a novel is also precipitated by his relationship with time; it's fleeting nature and it's immediate counterpart: death. This association between time and death, may also be thought of in relation to the idea of *la petite mort*. Just as the happiest moment is fleeting, so too are people because they are mortal. What is left behind from time passed is marked by forgetting⁷ and decay in memories and objects.

Nonetheless, Kemal's dependence on the immortal artefacts is made clear just as he stresses how painful it is to designate his happiest moment. "We can bear the pain" he says, "only by possessing something that belongs to that instant. These mementos preserve the colors, textures, images, and delights as they were more faithfully, in fact, than can those who accompanied us through those moments" (73).

Thus, Kemal's project harbors at its core, a challenge to time: Time as the medium factor which takes away his happiest moment and renders him as well as those who he loves mortal; time that changes his surroundings, make him grow and part from his childhood. This challenge takes two forms, first as objects, then as narrative; both as artefacts intending to stand for, transfer, provide access to an experience of a passed time. Kemal's passed time, in particular, but also the more universal dynamics which surrounded it.

difference is that it is the museum that necessitates the novel and not the collection. This is important in delineating the collaboration between the museum and the novel.

⁷ "At this point another aspect of the Janus like character of past in the present is already visible, the fundamental dialectics of remembering and forgetting – which are after all two sides of the same coin: (human) identity" (Fehr, *Museums and Memory*, 46).

1.2.2 Kemal's Mortality

It may be fruitful, at this point, to distinguish between issues that arise from Time separately. To begin with, Kemal's own mortality and his realization of this is perhaps one of the major driving forces in the tight relationship between the conception of the museum and of the novel that Kemal narrates.

It is after Kemal visits Nesibe Hala and tells her about the Museum Berggruen where the owner of the collection Heinz Berggruen still resides that he feels there needs to be a catalogue of his museum. "While strolling through the museum" he recounts to Nesibe Hala, "visitors can walk into a room or climb the stairs and find themselves face-to-face with the person who created the collection, *until the day he dies*" (511, emphasis added).

In a way, Kemal's realization of his own mortality emphasizes his role as the *subject that knows* as well as his role as the *object of knowledge*⁸: It is only he who can tell the story of the objects of his collection, thus making them into a consistent whole. The latter role [of the *object of knowledge*] had surfaced earlier as he decided to tell his story by opening his collection. And although Kemal puts forth the museum as a space to commemorate and live with Füsün, it is strictly *his* story that he wants to tell.

His role as the *subject that knows*, however places him in the mercy of time and mortality. While he could possibly survive mortality as an object of knowledge, the subject remains mortal –and the only way to preserve and access this is through narrative.

⁸ "Man, appears in his ambiguous position as an object of knowledge and as a subject that knows; enslaved sovereign, observed spectator." (Foucault qtd. in Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 7)

This is one of the ways in which Kemal's museum necessitates the novel: simply as a guide, a path of access to Kemal's subjectivity. However, its role doesn't end there. The novel, in turn, exerts this subjectivity onto the collection; organized along to the chapters of the novel and thus turning it into the museum that it is [or, will eventually be].

1.2.3. Mortality of Others (Two Fathers and a Love / Two Subjects and an Object)

Besides and beyond his own mortality, however, death plays an important role in shaping Kemal's project and thus greatly influences the relationship between museum and novel. His own father's death, Füsün's father's death and Füsün's death pose important shifts in the storyline and the ways in which Kemal views objects.

Right before his father's death, having lost both Füsün and Sibel and living in a hotel in Fatih, Kemal is unable to make sense of his habit of collecting. However, it is his encounter with his brother, who has come to give him the news of their father's death, that triggers a sense of shame: "I would have never wanted him to come up to my room and see the strange objects I'd bought during my walks through the poor neighborhoods, from junk dealers, grocers, and stationers, all of them hoarded in my shamefully ramshackle room" (223-4).

Looking at his father's surroundings back home, Kemal feels "as if the center of [his] life had dissolved, as if the earth had swallowed up [his] past" (225). As he feels that the center of his life had dissolved with the loss of his father as a subject however, we see Kemal immediately inserting his own subjectivity into the picture:

“My fathers death had turned these familiar props of childhood into objects of immeasurable value, each one the vessel of a lost past. [...] With the death of my father, it wasn’t just the objects of everyday life that had changed; even the most ordinary street scenes had become irreplaceable mementos of a lost world whose every detail figured in the meaning of the whole. Because coming home now meant a return to the center of the world, there was a happiness I could not hide from myself, and my guilt was even deeper than that of a man whose father had just died” (226).

The way in which emotions of losing his father turn his surrounding objects into *vessels of a lost past* and ordinary street scenes into *mementos of a lost world whose every detail figured in the meaning of the whole* pins down Kemal’s tendency to exert his subjectivity in signifying, weaving stories, and assigning meaning to things in the absence of the fathers’ subjectivity.⁹

His emotions of grief for having lost [being away from] Füsün and having lost his Father merge at this point where he likens and links all pain to that of love: “For the hopelessly in love,” he declares, “the pain can be triggered by anything, whether as profound as the death of a father or as mundane as a piece of bad luck, like losing a key” (228).

The blunt and seemingly superficial equivalency that Kemal establishes speaks loudly to his long-standing infatuation with objects. His habit of substituting objects for time and what time takes away can be [and is, to an extent, within his own narrative as well] traced back to a somewhat early experience with Füsün [Kemal is 24, Füsün 12 years old]. Having been assigned to run errands of finding liquor on the day of the feast of the sacrifice Kemal takes along Füsün. That day, they encounter the sacrifice of a

⁹ We see this both in Füsün’s life and death, since she never becomes a subject in Kemal’s narrative – even when she drives herself to death this is not acknowledged openly by his account.

sheep and a car crash. The myth of sacrifice – that is explained by Kemal’s driver, - is therefore, somehow interwoven with the first car crash Kemal and Füsün encounter.

Weaved delicately and somewhat in a distorted way into Kemal’s narrative, what his driver had told them about the sacrifice of Isaac resurfaces in his visit to Uffizi after Füsün’s death. As he looks at Caravaggio’s *The Sacrifice of Isaac* and probably contemplates his museum, Kemal returns to this myth:

“then I saw in the painting that the unremarked lesson of Abraham’s sacrifice was that it is possible to substitute for one’s most cherished object another, and this is why I felt so attached to the things of Füsün’s that I had collected over the years” (501).

This is perhaps the point where Füsün’s mere position as an object; that is, not a subject is most candidly revealed. The only subject in Kemal’s story is himself. Furthermore, it hints that as a non-subject, Füsün herself may as well be, like the other objects, a memento by which Kemal attempts to preserve what has been lost in time. Though not a central issue for the purposes of this particular thesis, the fact that Kemal’s nostalgia reaches far beyond his longing and suffering for Füsün –but is nevertheless it’s dominant area of manifestation – will come up on several occasions.

Rather than affecting Kemal’s relationship with objects, Füsün’s father’s death changes the course of Kemal’s relationship with Füsün. After Tarık Bey’s death as a subject – whose voice we hadn’t heard often but whose presence ushered in certain principles to the conduct in their home – Kemal is finally able to be the man of the house on Çukurcuma¹⁰. Once again we see the shameful happiness Kemal feels in someone’s –

¹⁰ “This is why, after the first few years, he’d ceased to be the man of the house, just as I had ceased to be the guest: We had become partners in crime” (448).

particularly a father figure's death. "But as I grieved for Tarık Bey, there was also inside me a boundless will to live; as I considered the new life now awaiting me, I felt deeply happy, and on this account ashamed" (445).

Kemal shows no hint of this shameful happiness on occasion of Füsün's death. Her last – and only, as far as the reader is privy to – act as subject, that is, her crashing the car into the tree, determines her as the eternal non-subject. In a way, it is possible to say that she sacrifices her subjectivity in an act of exerting her subjectivity and escaping her metaphorically imprisoned and mute future. This is revealed for the first time right before Füsün takes the driver seat and confronts Kemal about not noticing her earring.

It is the pain he feels upon – this time eternally – losing Füsün that essentially triggers the crystallization of Kemal's project that necessitates and establishes the foundation of the collaboration between the museum and the novel. While he had been collecting for a long time, Füsün's death marks the point at which the collection ceases to be only for him, and becomes something to be made sense of for others to see: "I was gradually awakening to the pride of a collector [...] and began to dream of telling my story through objects" (496).

The *happiness* of it, perhaps comes at the very end: Finally, as there are no other 'subject's to intervene; Kemal is now able to give his fantasies it's final shape [distance also plays a role in his ability to give final shape to his experience, but this will be discussed in a later chapter]. As he makes sense of it all, organizes his memories in a coherent narrative and presents it to everyone to see, he can declare: "Let everyone know, I lived a very happy life" (532).

The role of the novel is therefore, perhaps, most clearly stated by this sentence. *The most important thing in life is to be happy* and it is the conclusion, the last full stop of the novel that brings this happiness to Kemal. Looking back at Kemal's previous statement about making sense of his life, the relationship between mortality and meaning may even be further articulated: "My life has taught me", he says in the chapter *Time*:

"that remembering Time – that line connecting all the moments that Aristotle called the present – is for most of us a rather painful business. When we try to conjure up the line connecting these moments, or, as in a museum, the line connecting all the objects that carry those moments inside them, we are forced to remember that the line comes to an end, and to contemplate death. As we get older and come to the painful realization that this line per se has no real meaning – a sense that comes to us cumulatively in intimations we struggle to ignore – we are brought to sorrow" (288).

Not only does the novel immortalize Kemal's subjectivity, but also acts as the medium through which he gives meaning to and makes sense with and of his collection. This, for him, is a dual achievement of immortality and totality. Totality, not in the sense of the [unattainable] representation of time or experience, but rather his subjective world of meaning.

In his article "The End of Temporality," Jameson discusses the idea of historicising the representations of temporality and contends that "[r]ather than a period style, it seems more desirable to stage the 'end of temporality' as a situation faced by postmodernity in general and to which its artists and *subjects* are obliged to respond in a variety of ways" (708, emphasis added). The collaboration between the museum and the novel can thus be posited as an experimentation in terms of a new way of responding to the times' problems and possibilities in representation – or access to what is wished to be represented.

Jameson goes on to quote Mallarmé, which also ties neatly to the influence of mortality on the completion and totality that Kemal achieves. “Destiny is to be sure something you can only perceive from the outside of a life, whence the idea, classically formulated by Mallarmé, that existence only becomes a life or destiny when it is ended or completed” (*EoT*, 708).

The completion of the novel, therefore, achieves a totality by which Kemal’s story is made accessible and his objects are curated into a coherent museum display. What was intended for the viewer/reader, ends up also providing him with an unfragmented, coherent self. In its availability to both himself and others, the totality Kemal achieves can be likened to the totality of his reflection in the mirror.

1.2.4 Timepieces

“The clock is to time as the mirror is to space. Just as the relationship to the reflected image institutes a closure and a kind of introjection of space, so the clock stands paradoxically for the permanence and introjection of time” (Baudrillard, 22).

It is, then, not surprising that the chapter *Time* is constructed around clocks. The manifestation of this in the curatorial decisions of the museum is also telling: the stairwell, surrounded by glass vitrines, in which all sorts of clocks are on display stand at the center of the building, and opposite all the other cases full of objects. Clocks, as mere objects whose primary function is to tell the current time, is thereby transformed into carriers of time passed.

While these clocks aren’t necessarily antiques per se, they are old and being in a museum they stand for a specific period of time. Therefore it seems worthwhile to ponder

on how Baudrillard situates antiques - as opposed to objects that are signified according to their primary functions - in order to make sense of their use:

“The antique object no longer has any practical application, its role being merely to *signify*. It is astructural it refuses structure, it is the extreme case of disavowal of the primary functions. Yet it is not afunctional, nor purely ‘decorative’, for it has a very specific function within the system, namely the *signifying of time*” (78).

As a result of Kemal’s habit of collecting, the timepieces are taken out of context and stripped of their primary function. This holds true not only of the timepieces, but everything else in the museum as well. It is an inevitable consequence for an object to lose its primary function and therefore its primary significance as soon as it enters a collection, and/or is shown in a museum.¹¹ Having lost their primary function and significance, the objects need to be defined again, assigned significance within the context and purpose of the museum.

As such, the way Kemal situates the timepieces within the narrative, specifically in the chapter entitled *Time*, establishes an interesting role for them within the context of the house on Çukurcuma, even before they enter the collection or are part of the museum display. It seems that the clocks in the house have never necessarily been perceived in terms of their primary function.

In the house they stand for other markers of culture, of westernization, of science and enlightenment. In the daily activity of the Keskin family and Kemal they stand as *a reminder to the whole family of time’s continuity* rather than measuring time; a signifier of sameness rather than change as it were. But most significantly, they stand for the

¹¹ Art, of course, is defined by these institutions and occupies an anomalous position in this respect. This may be relevant in the paintings that Kemal has made for his collection, or the ones Füsün makes.

uneasy relationship between the timeless interior of the house and the time that bound them to others, their surroundings; the external time that ran amok.

“Even without our being aware of it, the clock always ticked in the same way, and when we sat at the table, eating our supper, it brought us the peace of knowing we hadn’t changed, that all would stay the same with us. That the clock served to make us forget the time, even as it continually brought us back to the present, reminding us of our relations with others...” (285)

The clocks –as well as calendars –, then, are placed in this intermediary position as markers of Time that places the characters within a certain context in history among other people and events. “Clocks and calendars” Kemal narrates, “do not exist to remind us of the Time we’ve forgotten but to regulate our relations with others and indeed all of society, and this is how we use them” (287). This, of course, becomes of greater importance once Kemal decides to *tell his story* to others.

The collaboration between the museum and the novel, therefore, sets out to compose a balance between time and timelessness. While Kemal’s introduction to the timepieces in the house entail a cultural, historical background¹², already imbuing these objects with wider contextual significance, he simultaneously lifts them out of context to impose his sensation of timelessness on them:

“As I would slowly come to understand over the eight years, it was not merely to see Füsün that I went to the Keskin house but to live for a time in the world whose air she breathed. This realm’s defining property was its timelessness” (286).

The timelessness that surrounds the time Kemal spends in the house on Çukurcuma appears in his first remarks on time distinguishes between a time that is *his own* and an *official time*:

¹² “Wall clocks first came into fashion in Istanbul at the end of the nineteenth century, when Westernized pashas and wealthy non-Muslims began to furnish their homes with large wall clocks much more ornate than these, with weights and pendulums and winders” (283).

“the illusion that is time, as there is one sort of time we can call our own, and another –shall we call it ‘official’ time? – that we share with all others. It is important to elaborate this distinction, first to gain the respect of those readers who might think me a strange, obsessed, and even frightening person, on account of my having spent eight love-lorn years trudging in and out of Füsun’s house, but also to describe what life was like in that household” (282).

This explanation serves both as a justification of the time he spent at the house on Çukurcuma, but more importantly as a mark of the element of time within the atmosphere of the house. Like the museums he later visits and feels “as if [he] had entered a separate realm that coexisted with the city’s crowded streets but was not of them; and in the eerie timelessness of this other universe, [he] would find solace” (495), the house on Çukurcuma too is imbued with a sense of timelessness that exists among the rest of the world from the get-go.

This timelessness is defined by Kemal to be a source of happiness¹³, for it meant that there was no change. And while Kemal’s position during the eight years he visited the house on Çukurcuma was not his ideal, no change meant that at least he had the opportunity to live the *happiness that means being close to the one you love*.¹⁴

The wristwatch Füsun checks or adjusts everyday at seven o’clock, like the wall clock in their house, is “not there to remind us of the time, or to warn us that things were changing; it was there to persuade us that nothing whatsoever had changed” (284).

Baudrillard, however, puts forth the wrist watch as a prime example for his contention that “habits imply discontinuity and repetition – not continuity, as common usage suggests”. “By breaking up time,” he continues,

¹³ “Happiness is an insufficient word to describe this. I will try to describe the poetry I experienced, the fulfilment those few minutes in the back room: It was as if Time had stopped and everything would remain as it were forever. Alongside this feeling were those of protection, continuity and the joy of being at home” (MM 394, my translation)

¹⁴ Title of Ch.51

“our ‘habitual’ patterns dispel the anxiety-provoking aspect of the temporal continuum and of the absolute singularity of events. Similarly it is thanks to their discontinuous integration into series that we put objects at our sole disposition, that we own them. This is the discourse of subjectivity itself, and objects are a privileged register of that discourse. Between the world’s irreversible evolution and ourselves, objects interpose a discontinuous, classifiable, reversible screen which can be reconstituted at will, a segment of the world which belongs to us, responding to our hands and minds and delivering us from anxiety. Objects do not merely help us to master the world by virtue of their integration into instrumental series, they also help us, *by virtue of their integration into mental series*, to master time, rendering it discontinuous and classifying it, after the fashion of habits, and subjecting it to the same associational constraints as those which govern the arrangement of things in space” (101).

This rather long but important quotation from Baudrillard is important to place the timepieces among the other objects that surrounded Füsun, and Kemal’s experience at the house on Çukurcuma as well understanding the unique significance of Füsun’s habit of checking and adjusting her wrist-watch.

“Füsun did not adjust her watch because life as she lived it called for a clock that was accurate to the second, so that she could be punctual for work or some meetings; like her father, the retired civil servant, she did so as a way of acceding to a directive signaled to her straight from Ankara and the state, or so it seemed to me” (287).

2. Sunflower

2.1 Light

The previous chapter defined the objects of Kemal's collection as bearers of time, following Baudrillard's signification of the antique, as objects that have lost their primary functions but nonetheless have "a very specific function within the system, namely the signifying of time" (78). The novel, on the other hand, provides this set of disparate objects with a story that organizes and signifies them in relation to each other.

The collaboration, therefore in its most basic form, consists of the objects acting as an access to the sense of time passed; and the narrative provides access to the story of the time passed through these objects. This direct relationship is established by two media referencing each other. The coding of meaning and significance between memory and objects; narrative and artefacts create a space in which a subjectivity is made available to an audience.

The collaboration between the museum and the novel, however also reveals its own anatomy. Mieke Bal, in her analysis of the American Museum of Natural History, formulates this structural exploration as an examination of "how the museum as an expository agent shows its hand in showing others" (DE, 18). The delineation of this task as "focus[ing] on the display as a sign system working in the realm between the visual and the verbal" (18), however, will be reversed: so as to focus on the narrative as a sign system working in the realm between the verbal and the visual.

This system, I will argue, reveals itself in the evolution of the sunflower throughout the novel. To do so, this chapter will focus on the sunflower that appears in

the novel in different forms and significance. Neither merely a vision, nor necessarily an object that has a material counterpart in the collection; the sunflower is the element in the novel that eludes and brings into question representation. As obscure a thread as it may be, once pinned down¹⁵ the sunflower presents fruitful ground to explore what lies at the core of Kemal's project and what the impetus of the collaboration between the museum and the novel is. In following this thread, literary tools such as symbolism and focalization will be brought to bear on the way in which the novel shapes and is shaped by its material counterparts.

2.2 Sunflower: Symbol

The thread that is woven between sunflower fields and the bottled Batanay sunflower oil follows a path of what Baudrillard would claim to be a *subjugation of nature with technical objects*. This, he finds to be of the same significance as the *domestication of cultures with antiques*, an idea which, as pointed out in the previous chapter, is central to Kemal's relationship with objects:

“Fundamentally, the imperialism that subjugates nature with technical objects and the one that domesticates cultures with antiques are one and the same. This same private imperialism is the organizing principle of a functionally domesticated environment made up of domesticated signs of the past – of ancestral objects, sacred in essence but desacralized, which are called upon to exude the sacredness (or historicalness) into a history-less domesticity” (Baudrillard, 90).

The sunflower is important on a symbolic level in itself, as well as in the transformation it undergoes in form and significance. The shift in the feeling the sunflower triggers or accompanies -from innocence, joy, fear, an object of daily life and death - throughout the novel is coupled with change in form -from an image invoked by a feeling, a dream that

¹⁵ Which I would argue is only possible in retrospect [not while reading, but only after the fact]-

invokes a feeling, a mass produced and consumed product, to a sunflower field with a sunflower oil factory in it.

The first invocation of the image of a sunflower comes from Kemal as he watches Füsün, a girl who's supposedly making love for the first time in her life. "At the moment when we were closest" he describes her torso trembling like "sunflowers quivering in a faint breeze" (29). It is also what Kemal claims Füsün says she sees as they make love: "Ten days later, as she was embracing with her eyes closed, I asked her what film she might be watching in her mind. 'I was watching a field of sunflowers,' she told me" (30).

On the day of Kemal's engagement party Füsün comes to Merhamet Apartmanı to tell Kemal her conditions for him not losing her. After they make love and briefly dose off, she dreams of a sunflower field. The sunflowers quiver in the breeze, and she finds this scary. She later describes this as such: "I dreamt I was in a field of sunflowers," said Füsün. 'And the sunflowers were swaying strangely in the breeze. For some reason they scared me. I wanted to scream, but I couldn't' (102).

The way she describes the sunflowers quivering in the breeze is exactly how Kemal had previously described her torso as they made love for the first time. This overlapping imagery in their imaginations surely arises from the fact that Kemal is the focalizer of the narrative. However, it is also a symptom of Kemal's strong identification with Füsün. The image of the sunflower is only one case of Kemal's constant inclination to impose his vision onto her being. In fact, it may very well be argued that the reappearance of the sunflower in Kemal's narrative depends solely on the vision he associates with the loss of Füsün.

“Beyond the tree amid a field of sunflowers was a house – a small factory, actually that produced Batanay sunflower oil, the very brand the Keskins used for cooking, as we had both noted when speeding along the road, just before the accident” (487).

This last appearance of the sunflower is at the very end of Füsün’s life as she drives into a tree. For the first time, the sunflower appears in its real form along with the factory of its commercial counterpart. The sunflower fields, which had only appeared as visions before face Kemal and Füsün in its real form; along with the Batanay factory, the bottled sunflower oil brand that Kemal remembers seeing in Füsün’s house.

Reading the novel in view of this last appearance it may be argued that the moment of loss has become a vision that pervades Kemal’s retelling of the story. Just as the happiest moment acquires meaning as Kemal narrates, the sunflower field that appears at Kemal’s moment of loss, too, may have become significant in retrospect. In that case, the appearances of the sunflower image and the attention paid to the Batanay sunflower oil would suggest an interesting motif of projection, repetition, and collage.

It may also be the case that Füsün, for the first time throughout the relationship *takes the wheel of the car* in her own hands only to drive both herself and Kemal into the field of the real (the sunflower field) and the factory of what is a mere product of the real. This explanation would have to assume that Füsün was as aware of the previous appearances of the sunflower as much as Kemal was.

In light of the first explanation – which doesn’t necessarily exclude the latter – Füsün’s death is a second central node in Kemal’s narrative (the first being the happiest moment). The projection of the sunflower from setting of Füsün’s death is, therefore, demonstrative of the conceptual framework by which Kemal interprets and narrates the

past, and signifies objects. Just as the earring was definitive of Kemal's habits of stealing, replacing, collecting and signifying, the sunflower is indicative of Kemal's narrative patterns of projecting, repeating and collageing.

2.3 *In light of*: Display, Subjectivity and Perception

The symbolic weight of the sunflower, independent of what the narrative and the ways in which it appears in the narrative imposes, is also of significance. The sunflower, is named after its movement that follows the sun during the day. It is therefore defined by its dependence on sunlight.¹⁶

Another thing that is dependent on sunlight is the way humans think about time. The twelve months that compose a year, after all, is the time it takes for the earth to orbit the sun, as each day is the time it takes for the earth to revolve around itself around the sun. Our days and daily activities also depend on sunlight that marks day and night. Therefore, the sunflower is also a natural marker/indicator of 'universal time'.¹⁷

The sunflowers embodiment of a movement that is dependent on light also translate into the realm of perception. Its movement is, after all, a response to its perception of light. The idiom *in light of* indicates considerations under which something is viewed, perceived – which in turn determines the response to it. Light, as a trope of subjectivity, is therefore central to the purpose, function and the formation of the novel.

¹⁶ In Turkish, it is named after the moon instead of the sun, which is of further significance and will be the focus of the next part.

¹⁷ In Turkish, it oddly appears as 'ayçiçeği', which for some reason substitutes the moon in the place of the sun. Another name for it is 'günebakan', [which can be translated directly as, that which looks at the day] which is used less commonly, and not used at all in the original text by Pamuk.

The metaphor of light comes to life in the museum, as lighting becomes a central concern of curation and display to the extent that it is dictated by the novel.

“Everything” according to Spalding, “has the potential to become an object of wonder. It just depends on how you look at it.” (Spalding, 72). The way you look at it, of course, depends on how it is presented. Talking about the Ruskin Gallery, dedicated to the Victorian art critic and social commentator, Spalding points out that even when accompanied by quotes, the displays that contained “things that had a broadly symbolic and often deeply personal significance for Ruskin” fell short of taking “the visitors into the inner recesses of Ruskin’s thinking” (69). He then, rightly poses the question: “Can the subtle thoughts behind such sights ever be conveyed in a museum?” (69).

“Collections” Spalding begins the chapter entitled *Looking at Things*, “can only regain their significance in museums if the actual process of looking can become interesting again” (65). Interesting is a wide term, but even read simply to mean something *of interest*, the novel *is* what makes the museum and the objects in it *of interest*. The novel which is intended as a catalogue of the stories of each and every object in the museum shrinks the space for infinite possibilities of interpretation by placing it within a coherent narrative, a context of meaning. This gives Kemal, as well as the viewer a focus in looking at the objects, perhaps intensifying the experience of looking at them. Therefore, the novel intervenes to the reception of the museum as much as it dictates the constitution of it.

The light, the framing, the curation, and the narrative sequence of objects are all strategies toward achieving this: for the objects to convey the subtle thoughts behind

what is looked at. These, coupled with Kemal's narrative strategies make up a big part of the display. Such factors that viewers may take for granted, are actually a big part of their viewing experience.

2.4 Sunflower: Ayçiçeği

The sunflower in Turkish is named after the moon rather than the sun. While the metaphor of light that surrounds the sunflower still holds, there is a certain inconsistency that arises from the translation. The English translation of the word suggests that the metaphor of light would revolve around the sun which doesn't directly appear again. Whereas the Turkish text has a more coherent symbolic structure in that the metaphor of light that the sunflower implies is based on moonlight.

Kemal's epiphany to have a text written for his collection comes to him under the influence of a certain light – moonlight to be precise:

“In the middle of one moonlit night passed at the house in Çukurcuma, I awoke in my little curtainless attic room, bathed in a sweet glow, and gazed down at the empty space of the museum below. The silvery moonlight pouring through the windows into my museum, which sometimes seemed as if it might never be completed, gave the building and its empty center a frighteningly vacant aspect, as if it were continuous with infinite space. My entire collection of thirty years stood nestled in the shadows on the lower floors, encroaching like the gallery of a theater upon this emptiness. I could see it all [...] and like a shaman who can see the souls of things I could feel their stories flickering inside me.

That was the night I realized that my museum would need an annotated catalog, relating in detail the stories of each and every object” (512).

This passage is revealing in several ways. That the moonlight gives *the building and its empty center a vacant aspect as if it were continuous with infinite space* points at the fact that without the narrative component the collection is, as yet indistinct and boundless.

The feeling of vacancy this triggers arises from the fleeting nature of the meaning of this

as yet indistinct collection. With no organization, no story to bring them together and communicate to its intended audience, the collection lacks meaning to anyone but Kemal.

It is also telling that the idea that “a writer might undertake to write the catalog in the same form as he might write a novel” (512) occurs to him while he himself looks at his collection under the moonlight. The analogy Kemal produces between moments and objects; and their connecting lines, time and a story – respectively – reiterates what we’ve pinned down in the previous chapter to be an attempt to replace moments with objects.

“In the light of the moon, each and every thing tucked into the shadows, as if part of the empty space, seemed to point to an indivisible moment, akin to Aristotle’s indivisible atoms. I realized then that just as the line joining together Aristotle’s moments was Time, so, too, the like joining together these objects would be a story ” (512).

This analogy further suggests an attempt to bring together disparate things to form a totality that grants each and every object meaning within that context which is also on par with curatorial practice.

Kemal’s subjectivity is reflected in the museum not only through organization and signification of the objects but also in the technical decisions concerning presentation such as framing, lighting and assembling. These technical decisions come at the very end where we now know that there is another focalizer (Orhan Pamuk) between Kemal and ourselves. It is at this point, where the reader is made aware of a possible filter through which Kemal’s subjectivity is read, that the novel dictates the materialization of the museum. Despite Kemal’s declarations to Orhan Pamuk that “the guards must impress upon the incredulous that everything as represented is true” (525), there is now reason to suspect that even reading the novel and the museum as a representation of Kemal may be credulous itself.

The suspicion that may arise from this, is attempted to be compensated with the conversational tone that ensues during the transformation of the first voice. This allows for Kemal to dictate certain ground rules, structural details and such for the museum. “Please finish the book now,” he tells Orhan Pamuk, “and also write that each and every object in the museum must be lit softly from within the display cases in a way that conveys my close and devoted attention” (525). This is an interesting direction among many others ranging from what the people working in the museum should wear and do, to a number imposed on how many people can be in the museum at one time. Such directions are indicative of the role of the text as the blueprint, the organizational guideline for the museum. This, of course, goes hand in hand with its stated purpose of being an *annotated catalog*.

2.5 Representation vs. Advertisement

The way in which the Museum of Innocence comes to invoke Kemal’s experience is comparable to the way in which a bottle of Batanay sunflower oil can invoke *endless sunflower fields*. After Kemal’s death, Orhan Pamuk visits Sibel and Zaim as well as several other people who had been close to him in his youth. Upon Zaim’s question as to whether there will really be a museum where all the possessions of Füsün would be displayed Orhan Pamuk responds: “Yes,” I said. ‘And with this book, I shall be the museum’s chief promoter” (529).

The term promoter, which is translated from the Turkish word *reklamcı* that pertains more strictly to advertising, brings into question the capacity of the final literary product. The ways in which the novel organizes, signifies and imposes certain guidelines

for the display of the collection, place it closer to a museum catalogue which is what Kemal intended for it to be. However, the way in which Kemal relates to objects, which is central to the narrative also suggests an affinity to what Baudrillard would define as the system of *objects-cum-advertising*. “The whole philosophy of idealized consumption” Baudrillard writes, “is based on the replacement of live, conflictual human relationships by a ‘personalized’ relationship to objects” (204).

Despite the novel’s role as a catalog (guide/access) to Kemal’s experience through the organization and signifying of the objects in his collection, it also points at an emptiness, something that cannot be clearly represented in either realm – such as the sunflower. The existence of the museum therefore points to a lack and an impossibility as much as it refers to the real that is now inextricably tied to its material counterparts.

3. The Space Between

This chapter will deal with two objects that embody the *authority* of Kemal over the narrative as well as over Füsün. The ruler and the car are first and foremost artefacts of the master – pupil dynamic in Kemal’s and Füsün’s relationship. The ruler, which Kemal gives to Füsün as her math tutor, is his first gift to her as well as the first object he steals back from her home in Kuyulu Bostan Street. It embodies Kemal’s identification with Füsün as well as his first failed attempt at *mastering* her. It is also illustrative of the way in which Kemal identifies with and constructs Füsün’s identity, both in experience and narrative, through objects.

The car is also a tool that embodies Kemal’s position as a master in the relationship. The driving lessons that take them out of the house on Çukurcuma alone after years of faux-family life also provide ground for a battle of authority. Besides this, the car as a vehicle of motion has an extensive role throughout the narrative that reaches from being part of and witness to Kemal’s autobiography; his nostalgia for his childhood, a lost cultural milieu; to his relationship with his father and so forth.

The symbolic weight of the way in which the car is said to appear in the museum, as a wreck, brings forth the imagery of the car-crashes witnessed. There is close bond between the car with the myth of the sacrifice as well as other moments of Kemal and Füsün’s personal mythology that involve car crashes. The car will therefore also be a pathway into looking at the element of myth that the collection bears and the novel underlines.

Let us approach these two items one by one and in depth in order to reveal some further trends that pervade Kemal's relationship to objects. Once again, we will see that these trends are then constitutive elements of the collaboration between the novel and the museum

3.1 The 30 cm. Ruler

3.1.1 Similarity and identification

On their first encounter after years, at Şanzelize Butik Kemal feels an uncanny affinity toward Füsun:

“As much as I wanted to dismiss the feeling as ordinary, I could not deny the startling truth that when looking at Füsun, I saw someone familiar, someone I felt I knew intimately. She resembled me. That same sort of hair that grew curly and dark in childhood only to straighten as I grew older. [...] I felt I could easily put myself in her place, could understand her deeply” (15).

The empathy based on knowing and understanding quickly heightens into an identification, based on a faux-genealogy (they aren't really blood related), and corporeality.

“For a moment, - and perhaps because I knew we were related, however slightly – her body, with its long limbs, fine bones, and fragile shoulders, reminded me of my own. Had I been a girl, had I been twelve years younger, this is what my body would be like.” (17).

The control that this identification entails is recognized by Füsun's declaration “My whole life depends on you now” (85) as she leaves Merhamet Apartmanı for the last time right before Kemal's engagement. The way in which this utterance becomes a self fulfilling prophecy is primarily through Kemal's absolute *authority* (as the supposed narrator) over the Füsun the reader gets to know.

However, this *authority*, while discernible to a great degree in the narrative, is in fact first manifested within the realm of objects. Kemal's constant giving and taking of objects from Füsün's surroundings is an earlier manifestation of his exertion of authority over her. Therefore objects are the initial system of signs that Kemal uses to define Füsün. The ruler is the first of many objects that Kemal gives to, and takes from Füsün. Beyond being the first, the ruler is also significant in Kemal's own history:

“I had used such a ruler as a child, which perhaps explains why I had given Füsün this standard lycée ruler, so it is hardly surprising that it should have become one of the first significant pieces in our collection” (163).

As a commonly used childhood item, the ruler is a bearer of the aforementioned identification in the realm of objects.

3.1.2 Mastery, Possession, Jealousy

The excuse for Kemal's present in the first place was that he was helping Füsün with her math. Therefore the object casts the roles of master and pupil. The leitmotif of mastery runs throughout the novel, first appearing at a feast of the sacrifice where Kemal tries to explain to Füsün the mythology of the event. The ruler is a second moment when mastery is still a form of teaching. This moment, however also overlaps with another form of mastery: that of possessing. This dual meaning that the word mastery yields to in this sense is crucial in understanding the dynamics that the ruler embodies.

Even before the objects come into play, however, there is another instance of give and take between Kemal and Füsün. As Kemal later describes for the “later generations” the significance of a woman's virginity, this too is described in the language of objects: “virginity” Kemal explains, “ was still regarded as a *treasure* that young girls should

protect until the day they married” (61). Therefore it is perhaps necessary to place this as Kemal’s first major intrusion and exertion of authority over Füsün.

The first intrusion is the most severe and directly physical in the sense that it invades the body. The first time they make love Kemal cannot decide whether or not Füsün was actually a virgin until he sees the blood stained sheets. Here too, Kemal strongly empathises with Füsün:

“At the moment when we were closest I felt the fragility of her trembling so deeply (think of sunflowers quivering in a faint breeze) it was as if her pain became mine” (29).

This empathy is superficial nonetheless, and in no way acknowledges the severity nor the consequences of the transition to womanhood for Füsün.

This inflated sense of empathy and identification Kemal feels towards Füsün is mostly based on a familiarity of shared memories and objects. Füsün and Kemal’s first conversations revolve around old memories and objects they had once shared; the sacrificed goat, the car accident, a tricycle. It is after Kemal gets to know more of Füsün’s past that doesn’t include him that he becomes more jealous and possessive. Kemal is particularly jealous of Turgay Bey who drives a Mustang, and with whom he runs in the same circles and does business with.¹⁸

¹⁸ The material surrounding is the poison and the remedy (pharmakon)* of the love story thus taking the story to a level of wider consequence in terms of culture (everyday life).

Which suggests a feeling of loss of originality, he becomes aware of the banality of his relationship. But banality and the commonplace pervade his whole narrative, which is one path into an idea that the love story itself is a symptom of its time: “Years later, as I struggled to understand why she was so dear to me, I would try to evoke not just our lovemaking but the room in which we made love, and our surroundings, and ordinary objects” (53). The ordinary setting of their affair defined and enabled its substance for Kemal, while at the same time rendering it banal and unoriginal.

As a consequence of Kemal's confrontation with the fact that Füsün is an individual with her own set of experiences, the act of making love, becomes less empathetic and more possessive:

“But when we made love that day, rather than tumbling into the usual childish bliss, in which playful curiosity mingled with exuberance, I found myself in the grip of what the newspapers call the urge to ‘master her,’ and making my desires plain with ever harsher force, I was surprised by my own behaviour” (72).

Jealousy, then, becomes a central factor in Kemal's relationship with Füsün. In having experience of her own Füsün becomes, perhaps for the first time, unfamiliar in Kemal's eye, and therefore something to be taken possession of. Füsün's unfamiliarity, for Kemal, poses a loss and turns her into an object of desire, a part of himself to be reclaimed.

Baudrillard's definition of the role jealousy plays in the psyche of the collector suggests yet another layer of such an identification: “According to the logic of jealousy”

Baudrillard writes, objects that range from a fountain pen to your wife,

“are narcissistic equivalents of the ego: to lose them, or for them to be damaged, means castration. [...] What the jealous owner sequesters and cleaves to is his own libido, in the shape of an object, which he is striving to exorcize by means of confinement – the same system, in fact by virtue of which collecting dispels anxiety about death” (106).

Kemal's identification with Füsün is, therefore, not simply one of an extreme case of empathetic association. His mastery over her, is also an attempt at self-mastery. The ruler is also significant in its role in the master – student dynamic that their relationship is disguised under.

This intense association with Füsün lies at the core of Kemal's symptoms that respond to loss, whether it be the loss of a time passed or the loss of his father. His remarks on love and loss after his father's death point to the fact that any kind of loss can

trigger his pain: “For the hopelessly in love, the pain can be triggered by anything, whether as profound as the death of a father or as mundane as a piece of bad luck, like losing a key”(253). The blunt and seemingly superficial equivalency that Kemal establishes is by no means coincidental or random. Once again, especially when loss is a factor, a relationship with an inanimate object is likened to a relationship with a live loved one.

The growing awareness of Füsün’s unfamiliarity –both in the sense of her subjectivity and physicality- produces in Kemal a sense of unattainability, a feeling that he can never *be* or have her absolutely. This feeling is further aggravated with the physical absence of Füsün after Kemal’s engagement.

At the point where Füsün no longer comes to Merhamet Apartmanı, Kemal’s relationship to objects start to change as well. He starts speaking about his pain in a more physical manner, with charts and medical references – as seen in the chapter *An Anatomical Chart of Love Pains* and the corresponding Paradison advertisement in the museum on which Kemal has marked his pains. He also starts to physically interact with the objects in Merhamet Apartmanı that surrounded Kemal and Füsün during their affair. The physical interaction Kemal engages in with the ruler is a good example of this:

“I put the end marked ’30 centimeters’ into my mouth, keeping it there for the longest time, despite the bitter aftertaste. For two hours I lay in bed, playing around with the ruler, trying to recast the hours it had spent in her hands, which introduced a relief, a happiness almost akin to seeing her” (163).

The void created by Füsün's absence becomes physical, which he then tries to fill with objects such as the ruler. It is at this point that he starts adding to the objects that were already in Merhamet Apartmanı mainly by stealing from Füsün's family home.¹⁹

The ruler is the first object Kemal steals from the Keskins' home on Kuyulu Bostan Sokak – also described as one of the first real items of his collection.

“I had used such a ruler as a child, which perhaps explains why I had given Füsün this standard lycée ruler, so it is hardly surprising that it should have become one of the first significant pieces in our collection” (163).

This confession-like description of the ruler brings together several things. Firstly and most obviously Kemal's identification with Füsün, as well as his urge to reinforce this identification by providing her with the material components of his own surroundings.

Secondly, the ruler has symbolic significance as a phallic object and as an object of measurement and science. That the first object to be given to and reclaimed from Füsün is this ruler – besides introducing the element of mastery – also supports the idea of Kemal's *authority*, as the arbiter of 'scientific' truth. As the voice we think we hear in the first person throughout most of the novel, being the arbiter of truth works in a dual dynamic that, once again, is suggestive of the evolution of the discipline of history from being scientific to subject-oriented. Furthermore, the phallic connotations of the ruler, thought in light of Baudrillard's suggestion about jealousy suggests that the collection begins as a project to reclaim Kemal's own libido.

¹⁹ Except for the Jenny Colon bag, which he buys in the panic and feeling of being deserted caused by Füsün being late to their rendez-vous.

Still following Baudrillard's quote, fear of death – as a factor that has been argued above to be a factor in the initiation of the novel – is also hinted at, though perhaps unconsciously. Here, the fear of death is more toward loss of time and of Füsün rather than an awareness of his own mortality. Though his own mortality is a basic element of his symptom of collecting throughout; it becomes more consciously in play at the point in which he has already lost Füsün. Therefore, fear of death is an unconscious factor in the habit of collecting and a more conscious factor in his decision to have it coded into language.

3.1.3 Authority/Mastery: Narrative and Material

Kemal's authority over Füsün lies not only in his narrative authority but also in his active meddling of her material surroundings. The pattern, that begins in the house Kuyulu Bostan Sokak with the ruler; of placing items into Füsün's life and environment and later reclaiming them as a bearer of her memory and as a part of her – reoccurs throughout the Çukurcuma phase of their relationship.

The sense of unattainability and desire is further exacerbated when Kemal is made aware of Füsün's marriage to Feridun. Simultaneously, Kemal's relationship with Füsün undergoes a territorial change, whereby he now visits her in her family home, instead of her visiting him in his bachelor-pad. This shift from Nişantaşı to Çukurcuma; Kemal's bachelor-pad to Füsün's family home changes the surrounding decor of their relationship. Kemal's mother's discarded junk with no use value leave their place to Keskin's everyday objects such as Batanay olive oil. This further strips him of a sense of possession and prompts his quest for the ownership of objects.

“I may not have ‘won’ the woman I loved so obsessively, but it cheered me to have broken off a piece of her, however small.

To speak of ‘breaking-off’ a piece of someone is of course to imply that the piece is part of the worshipped beloved’s body. But three years on, every object and person in that house in Çukurcuma – her mother, her father, the dining table, the stove, the coal carrier, the china dogs on the television, the bottles of cologne, the cigarettes, the *rakı* glasses, the sweets bowls – had merged with my mental image of Füsün” (372).

As the surrounding inanimate objects become part of Füsün in Kemal’s perception, his act of constantly stealing them is coupled by his bringing in new items into this decor. The circulation of objects created by his buying presents and stealing keeps feeding the double intrusion on Füsün’s character – forming as well as hollowing it at the same time.

His collection, as well as what the reader is privy to as Füsün, therefore tells us much more about Kemal. Baudrillard maintains in *The System of Objects* that:

“As symbol of the inscription of value in a closed circle and in a perfect time, mythological objects constitute a discourse no longer addressed to others but solely to oneself. Islands of legend, such objects carry human beings back beyond time to their childhood or perhaps even farther still, back to a pre-birth reality where pure subjectivity was free to conflate itself metaphorically with its surroundings, so that those surroundings became simply the perfect discourse directed by human beings to themselves” (84).

The collection is therefore, actually a pathway into Kemal rather than Füsün. This stems mainly because of the active authority he is able to exert on both the collection and the narrative. For a collection and every single object in it depends on its collector’s subjectivity. A basic premise for every object in a collection and/or a museum is that they are no longer useful in their initial sense, a quince grater is no longer used to grate quince and a glass is no longer used to drink out of. Instead they “become mental precincts over which [the collector] hold sway, they become things of which [the collector is] the meaning, they become [his] property and [his] passion” (Baudrillard, 91).

3.2 The Chevy

3.2.1 Car Narrative

The 56 Chevy that appears on the cover of the novel is also one of the central objects in the narrative. The car, that is only one year younger than Kemal himself, is part of the museum display – according to the novel – as a wreck, from the accident that kills Füsün. It’s evolution, from a rich American car into a common taxi-car²⁰ and a wreck that makes its way from a junkyard to a museum follows an interesting parallel to Kemal’s narrative.

One cannot necessarily place *The Museum of Innocence* in the subgenre that Jale Parla tagged as Car Narratives in Turkish literature. However, some elements of her analysis will be helpful in making sense of the prominence of the car. Parla’s general framework of how the trope of the car takes shape within Turkish literature lays out almost all aspects of the role of the 56 Chevy in Kemal’s narrative. “As the car stories are plotted in different periods of the Turkish novel by different novelists” Parla writes:

“these stories, which begin with the seemingly innocent acquisition of cars, grow into enigmatic narratives of possession and dispossession, empowerment and loss of power, function and dysfunction, maturation and infantilism, narcissism and fetishism, fragmentation and self-destruction, not to mention a whole century of estrangement and a feeling of inferiority inspired by the contact with the West” (535-6).

Though the acquisition of the 56 Chevy is not directly part of the novel, the reader is given a detailed biography of the machine. The relationship between Kemal and the Chevy is multi-faceted and complex. First and foremost the Chevy is part of the family,

²⁰ Parla, Jale, ‘Car Narratives: A Subgenre in Turkish Novel Writing’ *The South Atlantic Quarterly* - Volume 102, Number 2/3, Spring/Summer 2003, pp. 535-550

along with its driver Çetin Bey. It is also significant in that it is bequeathed to him by his father just as he tells him about his affair with another woman besides his mother.

Furthermore the car is the vehicle that accompanies Kemal to and from everywhere and everything almost every day. The distance covered by the duo can be thought of in a physical way as well as in a sense that would invoke time and history. After all the car is almost as old as Kemal, and has therefore ‘witnessed’ his history perhaps more than any single person. This close relationship between the car and Kemal entails yet another sort of identification, between Kemal himself and the car. This refers to a dual dynamic, whereby Kemal is defined by an object as much as the object becoming a tool in the manifestation of subjectivity – which is defined by Kemal throughout the rest of the novel.

Füsün’s last act, read in light of such a proposition suggests that by taking the wheel of the car, Füsün is, for the first time a subject with the *authority* to steer her own destiny. The Chevy is also a second trope (the first being the ruler) of Kemal’s role as master in the master – student dynamic in his relationship with Füsün. And finally, the Chevy is both a partner in crime, a witness and a victim in the accident that leaves Füsün dead. That her ability to take the wheel, exert her subjectivity and determine her fate was enabled by Kemal’s mastery, and that this was only possible in death, of course also relates back to the idea that was introduced in the first chapter: that the collection only becomes a novel in light of death and the prospect of death. Or as Frederic Jameson would have it:

“Destiny is to be sure something you can only perceive from the outside of a life, whence the idea, classically formulated by Mallarmé, that existence only becomes a life or destiny when it is ended or completed” (Jameson, *EoT*, 708)

After the accident, the car wreck and Füsün’s distraught body melds into each other:

“Füsün died of injuries sustained when the car crumpled like a tin can and the steering column pierced her chest” (488). But, Kemal adds: “her soul, which had always drawn me to her – remained intact” (489).

This reference to soul brings to mind another reference that Kemal makes about constructing his narrative. As he looks at the objects and his collection stacked in the house on Çukurcuma under the moonlight, and contemplates sharing their stories for the first time he feels: “like a shaman, who can see the souls of things” (512). “I could feel their stories flickering inside me” he continues, which suggests that there is a sense of completeness that innate objects of the past bear which is akin to the sense of completeness of the stories of the dead.

3.2.2 The myth of the Automobile deaths and the myth of the sacrifice

The master role of Kemal reemerges when he starts teaching Füsün how to drive upon her admiration for Grace Kelly’s ability to drive in the movie *To Catch a Thief*:

“Do you know what, Kemal? Grace Kelly was bad at mathematics, too. And she got into acting by working as a model first. But the only thing I really envy her is that she could drive a car” (424).

The similarity (identification?) that Füsün points out between herself and Grace Kelly doesn’t however, end at that. As Ekrem Bey informs them before the movie Kelly had died in a car accident that year. The re-enactment of Kelly’s fate in Füsün’s death is only one of the foreshadowing-like instances of death by car-accident in the novel.

Throughout, Kemal and Füsün encounter many accidents, all of which have female victims. The first of these instances occur years before they meet again at the Şanzelize Boutique during a feast of the sacrifice. Later, when they start meeting at Merhamet Apartmanı this is one of the first common memories that they recount.

Having been assigned to finding liqueur on the day of the feast of the sacrifice Kemal takes Füsün along. That day, they encounter a sheep being sacrificed as they leave the house as well as an accident with a female victim on their way back home.

The recounting of the memory weaves into Kemal's narrative, what his driver had told them about the sacrifice of Isaac. The myth of the sacrifice later resurfaces in his visit to Uffizi after Füsün's death. Looking at Caravaggio's *The Sacrifice of Isaac* Kemal reaffirms his relationship to objects:

“then I saw in the painting that the unremarked lesson of Abraham's sacrifice was that it is possible to substitute for one's most cherished object another, and this is why I felt so attached to the things of Füsün's that I had collected over the years” (501).

This is perhaps the point at which Füsün's mere position as an object – that is, not a subject – is most candidly revealed. The only subject in Kemal's story is himself. Furthermore, I propose that as a non-subject, Füsün herself may as well be, like the other objects, a memento by which Kemal attempts to preserve what has been lost in time. Kemal's nostalgia, as shown on several occasions, reaches far beyond his longing and suffering for Füsün – which is nevertheless it's dominant area of manifestation.

The second instance of Kemal and Füsün's encounter with a car-crash coincides with the day of what Kemal describes as his happiest moment. When Füsün is late for their meeting that day, instead of waiting at Merhamet Apartmanı, Kemal goes out to

look for Füsün. Having entered Şanzelize Boutique, he then has to buy the Jenny Colon bag that had initially brought them together, so as not to make the owner Şenay Hanım suspicious. Later, as Füsün emerges from behind a water tanker and they are walking together, they see that the same water-tanker “had swerved into the left lane [...] and crushed a *dolmuş*” (70). Trapped in the front seat, Kemal recognizes a woman named Belkıs who was a girl from a poor family and had a reputation for sleeping around with rich men.

Upon this encounter Füsün somewhat positions herself with respect to the idea of Belkıs first declaring her love for Kemal: “I’ve fallen in love with you. I’m head over heels in love with you!” (71) and later telling him “Don’t worry [...] I won’t ever sleep with anyone else for the rest of my life” (75). Her consecutive statements constitute a resemblance and a difference between herself and Belkıs; a distortion which is also reflected in the way their fate resemble with and differ from each other.

The last car-crash Kemal and Füsün encounter, is their own. After many lessons with Kemal at Yıldız Park and several failed attempts at passing her road test she finally succeeds in getting a drivers license. The lessons at Yıldız Park take them out of the confines of the house on Çukurcuma and given them some privacy. In that privacy, the dynamic of Kemal and Füsün’s relationship once again shifts. Though Kemal was once again the master and Füsün the student, this time Füsün withholds from physical contact

with Kemal politely pushing him away when he tried to touch or kiss her in the fogged over car.²¹

Two months after Füsün gets her drivers licence her father dies, relieving her, as well as Kemal from the senior authority figure of the house on Çukurcuma. It is at this point that the relationship between Kemal and Füsün change most drastically, in being acknowledged for the first time by both their mothers.

Jale Parla maintains in her delineation of the role of the car in the Turkish novel places the car as a space between the private and the public.

“For Turkish women and men reluctant to leave the private space of their homes to confront the demands of the public space, such as individuation, anonymity, efficiency, self-reliance, and self-discipline, the car provided the semiprivate space with its blurred boundary between the home and the street” (Parla, SAQ, 548).

In case of it's role in Kemal and Füsün's relationship, the car also as a space of transition from being confined in the house of the father, to becoming public after *the death of the father*.

As the couple set out towards a new dynamic in their relationship upon this acknowledgement, it is planned that they will take the Chevrolet to cover more distance. This, of course, follows the metaphor of distance that stands for experience. Their destination is Europe: “There is one more thing I want”, Füsün tells Kemal as they plan their future;

²¹ “The windows would sometimes fog over, and once or twice I tried to use that opportunity to touch her, or kiss her, but like any honorable girl disinclined to any sort of physical intimacy before marriage, she politely pushed me away. Yet even having done so, she lost none of her chirpy good humor – and what a joy it was to see that she wasn't angry at me. There was, I think something in my glad response at being rebuffed that called to mind a provincial suitor discovering that the girl he is thinking of marrying is ‘principled’”(428)

“Actually, this was not my idea – it was yours. I want us all to go to Europe together in your car. [...] We can go to the museums and see all the pictures. Before we marry, I also want to buy things there that I can take to our house, as my trousseau” (457).

The car is once again an object that is closely bonded with experience: in this case it is the vehicle by which to experience an encounter with the West, it’s art and selection of objects to bring to a new home. Encountering the West, however, is not merely through objects. Movies also provide an encounter with the West. It is especially telling that during the first summer of Kemal’s visits to Çukurcuma, they had always seen Turkish movies. It is a foreign movie, however, that gives Füsün and Kemal the motive to get out of the house on Çukurcuma and be alone in a car, returning to their master – pupil relationship. A dynamic that is initiated by an the image of Grace Kelly driving a car, sets into motion a series of changes that leads to Füsün’s death (suicide) to which she also sets out in the same posture.

In his seminal essay on Postmodernism²², Jameson gives the example of the works of Andy Warhol in making his case that, like Campbell Soup cans, Marilyn Monroe, too is turned into her own image, hence stripped of its depth, left as a surface. The image of Grace Kelly, too, is easily adapted to Füsün’s destiny. Kemal describes the scene right before the accident, as Füsün takes the drivers’ seat with reference to this particular movie:

“She slid into the drivers seat. Starting the engine as carefully as she had done during our first lessons in Yıldız Park and deftly releasing the handbrake, she crawled out into the road, propping her left arm on the open window, just like Grace Kelly in *To Catch a Thief*” (487).

²² “Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” as first published in *New Left Review*.

Warhol's obsession with death overlapped with his obsession with objects and the cultural milieux they represented. His portraits of Monroe – which Jameson points out lack any depth, and reduce their subject into their own image – were part of a series he made in reference to the tragic deaths/suicides of figures of admiration of the times. In the same period he had also made similar works from images from tragic front page news stories showing car crashes. The simultaneity of these two series with each other as well as Warhol's other objects perhaps foreshadow what is now achieved in *The Museum of Innocence*: a simultaneous construction and effacement of a character.

3.2.3 Distance and Perspective

After many ritual and bureaucratic procedures Kemal and Füsün set out towards Europe in the Chevrolet. In the car which Parla describes to be a space between the private and the public; and on the way between East and West (which also translates into many other dualities such as tradition and freedom of it; the familiarity of home and the unknown abroad etc.) there is a moment of clarity:

“Once the car crossed the limits of Istanbul, all the suffering I'd endured for the love of Füsün was suddenly reduced to a sweet story that could be told in one breath” (469).

This sense of clarity, the momentary utterability of the past as one totality – an image rather than a long time-consuming text is like the surface of one of Warhol's Monroe's. The coherence of experience Kemal feels, looking back, is defined by two main things: the exit from Istanbul (distance) and *happiness*.

This sort of coherence is achieved once again when Kemal leaves Istanbul for Paris after the accident:

“But as soon as I had boarded the plane, I realized that I had set out on this voyage both to forget and to dream [...] The moment we were airborne, I noticed that outside İstanbul, I was able to think about Füsun and our story more profoundly. In İstanbul I’d always seen Füsun through the prism of my obsession; but in the plane I could see my obsession, and Füsun, from the outside” (495).

Kemal’s ability to convey his story, therefore, depends critically on the element of distance. This distance is two-fold: both in terms of actual, physical distance; and in terms of time. While this will be further articulated in the coming chapter, it is also now relevant in terms of looking at the Chevrolet.

In this context, the car turns from the vehicle by which distance is traversed to that which is organized. As Kemal reunites with his long-time companion after the accident having found it “in an empty lot behind the garage” he is struck by the unfamiliar elements that surrounded it:

“The trunk was open, with chickens from the adjacent coop wandering through the wreck, and around it children were playing” (502).

After buying back the car, he tells Çetin Efendi, the driver that he “wants to spend the rest of [his] life under the same roof with this car” (503). His travels around the world, visiting museums – that had been initiated with his encounter with the lost earring – had given him a belief that he could achieve the coherence he had felt in his happiness, but he had yet to find a way of expressing it:

“I had an intimation that I would be able to say what it was that gave life meaning, and offered me the greatest solace, but as with the first blush of love, I couldn’t at first express what bound me to such places” (500).

The wrecked car had already lost its primary function as well as its definitive structure having been stripped of all its resellable parts.²³ It is functionless, shapeless, and meaningless to anyone but Kemal. The strange elements that occupy and surround the wreck can be seen as the mess Kemal's collection is in before he starts narrating his story to Orhan Pamuk. Before he does so, he grapples with the idea of bringing disparate items together, and making sense of them in poetry:

“One could gather up anything and everything, with wit and acumen, out of a positive need to collect all objects connecting us to our most beloved, every aspect of their being, and even in the absence of a house, a proper museum, the poetry of our collection would be home enough for its objects” (501)

The narration too is done from a distance, Orhan Pamuk visits Kemal intermittently when he's in Istanbul. At other times he continues covering more distance, visiting more museums and shaping his story. In a way, Kemal's forays into others' lives in other cities, and into other histories in museums makes him as much a reader/viewer/interpreter of his experiences as its narrator. It is therefore, also possible to speak of a distance from himself.²⁴

The revelation of Orhan Pamuk as the real narrator at the very end, is therefore also an element of distance that overlaps with Kemal's looking at his story from the outside. The element of distance is therefore also replicated in the collaboration between Orhan Pamuk and Kemal.

²³ “According to Şevket Usta, some parts had been salvageable, among them the gas cap, the gearbox, and the handle of the rear window, all sold to owners of other '56 Chevrolet's, a sizeable market as most of the city's taxis were now the same model” (502).

²⁴ This, he already mentions as the first plane he boards is airborne “but in the plane I could see my obsession, and Füsün, from the outside” (495).

4. The Model Man and The China Dogs

Museums, while instrumental in building a mythology of local heritage and history, always also act as windows into the larger worlds. The modern museum most clearly exemplifies this in its focus on colonial artefacts. The novel too, helps bridge the local and the universal: in this particular case, on the one hand bringing together and organizing the particular stories Kemal associates with specific objects while on the other hand placing the collection into familiar, universal myths in *language*. The novel therefore appear as a convenient resolution to another aspect of Kemal's initial motivation in building the museum:

“Eventually I thought about how I might describe what Füsün meant to me to someone who knew nothing about Istanbul, Nişantaşı, or Çukurcuma. I was coming to see myself as someone who had traveled to distant countries and remained there for many years: say, an anthropologist who had fallen in love with a native girl while living among the indigenous folk of New Zealand, to study and catalog their habits and rituals, how they worked and relaxed, and had fun (and chatted away even while watching television, I must hasten to add). My observations and the love I had lived had become intertwined” (496).

Many post-colonial theorists have argued that the novel is the “celebrated artifice of the nationalist imagination in which the community is made to live and love in ‘homogenous time’”. But it is also an artifice of the universality of language. Although nations or peoples may speak different languages, language is still the basis on which translatability – though not without distortion – lies.

Kemal's references to the discipline of anthropology is once again telling in the sense that *he* is the one who needs to wear both hats; of a local and an outsider, at the same time. The problematic that lies at the core of the anthropological practice is the impossibility of occupying this position without being either a faux-native or a faux-outsider or both. The perception and representation of the authentic, like *the real*,

therefore is the impossible quest that yet another one of Pamuk's characters strives to achieve.

What ensues at the end of the day is art, which encircles the real, rather than *the real* itself. Not unlike *The White Castle*, a novel that mimics a manuscript, which emerges from a historians quest to dig up the truth about the past in *Sessiz Ev* (untranslated); *The Museum of Innocence* is the victory of art in the impossibility of representing *the real* and the failure of 'science' to grasp it.

In an interview Orhan Pamuk gave to *The Art Newspaper* in 2010 he reaffirms that "this is not simply a story of lovers, but of the entire realm of Istanbul" (Harris). One could also say that beyond being a story of lovers and the entire realm of Istanbul, the novel is symptomatic of a certain universal experience (namely of a postmodern condition). The element of distance that concluded the previous chapter is also a relevant factor in the collaboration between the museum and the novel as it pertains to the dialectical relationship between the local and the universal. This duality, I believe, lies at the core of the whole project.

An important quality of the objects that make up Kemal's collection is their being mass-produced, unoriginal items that *migrated to every part of the world*²⁵. Without the narrative that gives these objects a story in which they regain an aura of originality; beyond being a junkyard of disparate objects, they stand as tropes of a universal experience of a historical period and consumer culture. They are, at the same time particular and universal.

²⁵ Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*, P.509

In this final chapter the objects that will guide the analysis of the dynamics between the objects and the narrative; the museum and the novel; the universal and the particular are replicas of body parts and living things. The item in focus for replicas of body parts are the false teeth that appear on the bedside of the two father figures in the novel. As invisible subjects in Kemal's narrative, the father figure stood at the center of the dynamics of the home: Kemal cannot go back home after he breaks his engagement with Sibel because of his father. In case of Füsün's father, his presence in the Keskin home makes it all right for Kemal to be there his undefined role. The china dogs on the television set at the house on Çukurcuma and the ones Kemal later encounters on television sets around the world epitomize a universal experience that arises from a certain relationship with objects.

These objects will provide a fine illustration of the way in which the novel places the museum in a position that not only recounts Kemal and Füsün's story but places it into the context of a universal experience with and of objects.

4.1 The Model Man

4.1.1 Turkish Mannequins, Turkish Stories

In a previous Orhan Pamuk novel, *The Black Book* (1990, trans. 1994) Galip, the main character goes to a mannequin-shop where the grandson of the master explains the particularity of what he's about to see:

“When my grandfather created his first works of art, he had no other concept in his head aside from this simple thought [...]: the mannequins displayed in store windows ought to represent our own people” (163)

A similar concern of representing the local experience and appealing to the local community (nation to be specific) also exists in Kemal's project. As he speaks of the deeper significance of his museum for people beside himself, he tells Orhan Pamuk:

“What Turks should be viewing in their own museums are not bad imitations of Western art but their own lives. Instead of displaying the Occidental fantasies of our rich, our museums should show our own lives” (524-5).

In both instances the motivation of representing the authentic local arises as a reaction to what is seen as a reproduction of something that is not *real*. Mannequins, which are reproductions of human figures, the novel and the museum – all ‘Western’ forms – then become an impossible battle ground to grasp or convey ‘the real’.

The delusion in the dynamic that defines Kemal's relationship to objects - which is, that he can substitute something solid for something fleeting, such as objects for time – therefore reflects onto the form of the narrative. The illusive correlation between the real and its reproduction or representation is therefore present in all aspects of the project.

4.1.2 False Teeth: Authenticity, Superego, Mortality

Like finger-prints, teeth, too, are unique. False teeth are reproductions that are custom made to fit its owner, to perform the function of their missing teeth. Teeth are an essential part of the human body that take active part in what gets in the body, as the first part of the digestive system; as well as what comes out as part of the vocal system through which we *speak our minds*. Teeth are therefore, an essential part of both our constitution and our presentation to the outside, embodying the foremost structure that link 'the real' and representation. False teeth appear twice, both in instances of the death of a father: first Kemal's and then Füsün's. They appear along with other personal items that are representative of their characters and biographies.

Kemal, who returns home from Fatih upon his father's death, at first feels disoriented: "It was as if the center of my life had dissolved, as if the earth had swallowed up my past." (225). Kemal's father hadn't been made aware of the broken engagement, which was partly the reason Kemal had remained in Fatih until his death. In doing so the father who had previously told Kemal of his own indiscretions is given the role of *the father*, the superego that acts as the social judge. This is also why Kemal feels as if *his past had been swallowed up*, because the *authority* that had shaped his life until that point had now shifted and the story had to be rewritten.

"On my father's bedside table were medicines, crossword puzzles, folded newspapers, a much loved photograph from his army days, taken when he'd been drinking *raki* with the officers, his reading glasses, and also his false teeth, in a glass. The false teeth I took from the glass, wrapping them in my handkerchief, and put them in my pocket" (225).

It is telling that the false teeth should appear at this point where Kemal has to re-signify, reorganize, and retell his past. Kemal takes away the teeth that is no longer of use, what

remains is the symbolic value. In taking the false teeth Kemal returns home, finds Füsün's lost earring and along with the earrings that his father handed down to him from his own indiscretion, heads over to his long lost Füsün. Assuming authority therefore, frees from and binds Kemal to the superego at the same time. Though he may have freed himself from his father, he takes on the symbolic torch – that is the false teeth – and comes one step closer to being the *author*. (Eventually he never does become the author, surrendering the position to Orhan Pamuk, whose fictional character and real counterparts present to the reader yet another confrontation between fiction and reality).

Having claimed his freedom and authority Kemal finds Füsün, only to arrive at yet another family home where this time Tarık Bey, Füsün's father is the silent father figure. Kemal's authority is once again overshadowed by Tarık Bey, an older male who appears to be a fundamental yet somewhat invisible force of discipline in the house. This is seen most clearly in Tarık Bey's sneaky involvement in setting the clocks in the house and the unexpected but profound intervention in placing the two dogs on the television set:

Kemal's long description of Tarık Bey and Aunt Nesibe's fights over the issue of the winding of the clock in the house deserve a long analysis which is covered in part at the end of the first chapter of this thesis. However, in the context of Tarık Bey's involvement with the clocks the segment – which is simply too long to quote at length here – suggests both that he keeps winding the clocks to synchronize them with the official time but also that he, like Kemal, feels that this is more to forget about time, rather than to remember it.

“Don’t fret so, and, anyway, if you forget the time you will feel better,’ Tarik Bey would say. Here he was using ‘time’ to mean ‘the modern world’ or ‘the age in which we live.’ This ‘time’ was an ever-changing thing, and with the help of the clock’s perpetual ticking we tried to keep it at bay” (285-6).

Tarik Bey’s uneasy relationship to this ‘official time’ which is at the same time the constant change of ‘the times’ pins down the symptoms of his role as the *authority* and his ties to the more stable sense of tradition.

The china dogs that sit atop the television set, almost like watch dogs, will be the subject of the following part of this chapter, however Tarik Bey’s involvement with the placement of the two dogs are already of great relevance. As will be argued shortly, the china dogs are suggestive of a guarding, somewhat voyeuristic control over the family in their placement on top of the television which also provide the clocks in the house with a check every night at seven.

“The one on the left should face us, and the one on the right should face his friend’ Tarik Bey said suddenly.

Sometimes at the strangest moment in a conversation, when we all thought he wasn’t even listening, Tarik Bey would suddenly make a *judicious* comment that showed how he grasped the details even better than we did.

‘If we do it like that, the dogs can be friends, and they won’t get bored, but they’ll also keep an eye on us, and be part of the family,’ he continued” (378).

Tarik Bey’s intervention to the way these dogs are placed also imply a certain *authority*, both in the sense that he dictates the decor but also in that this decor is suggestive of the dynamics that appear in Kemal’s narrative.

Upon his death, Kemal once again surveys the bedside:

“The top of the bedside table and its half-open drawer also brought back strange memories of my father. [...] Above the drawer I saw a water glass containing his false teeth and a book by his beloved Reşat Ekrem Koçu²⁶” (448).

Here too, the false teeth appear among the characters personal belongings as part of his remnants, the *museum* of things that would guide someone else in retracing his story.

Once again, the false teeth that are no longer of use, pass on the *authority* of their previous owner and retreat into the realm of the museum-mausoleum²⁷.

Once again, the death of the father leads to the breaking of another supposedly social norm and Füsün gets a divorce. Upon Tarık Bey’s death, as Kemal once again takes on *authority*, he rewrites their roles: “after the first few years, he’d ceased to be the man of the house, just as I had ceased to be the guest: We had become partners in crime” (448).

4.1.3 The Bust and the Hand: Different Experiences

Other instances of body parts appearing in the novel hint at several important things. Rahmi Efendi’s artificial hand, like false teeth is a functional ‘accessory’ that defines more than it’s function. As the false teeth now stand for the absence of the *authority* and subjectivity that the two father figures once possessed, the hand stands for Rahmi Efendi’s subjectivity, which is that of the worker. The artificial hand, unlike false teeth, isn’t custom made and also pointing at a loss of individuality for its bearer.

²⁶ Reşat Ekrem Koçu is the author of the Istanbul Encyclopedia, which Orhan Pamuk defines to be “more and more about Koçu’s own obsessions and interests, presenting the imaginary traveler a unsystematic stroll in the past and present of the city” (154, my translation) in his memoir *Istanbul*.

²⁷ Remembering Adorno’s famous statement that “Museum and mausoleum are connected by more than phonetic association. Museums are like the family sepulchers of works of art” (*Prisms*, 175).

The bust of Kemal's father on the other hand, is not functional. Yet in opposition to Rahmi Efendi's artificial hand, it is a marker of class and a subjectivity that is linked to the mind.

In Vahit Tuna's 2011 exhibition at Depo, Istanbul, he had placed a bust of himself in the open space right outside the two buildings of the exhibition. For most viewers, including myself, this was, at first sight, a very familiar thing, an Atatürk bust that almost all schools and public institutions have outside of their buildings. On closer inspection, however, we came to see that the bust was actually not of Atatürk, but of Vahit Tuna himself. The artist had exaggerated the blurred contours of a bust and depended on the viewers tendency to perceive according to what is familiar. In doing so he underlined both his difference from the subject of Atatürk, and the comfort of the instant reaction to the familiar. Familiarity also appears as a common thread in the way Kemal constructs his museum, in the way he depends on the mass produced everyday objects. As such, the strategy that the collaboration of the novel and the museum present achieve a similar outcome to that of Vahit Tuna's bust.

The description of Kemal's father's bust also refers to Atatürk in that the maker was named by him:

“Here I display the plaster bust by Somtaş Yontunç (it was Atatürk himself who had given him his name, which means ‘Solid-Stone Sculptor’) created ten years earlier, when, thanks to booming textile exports, and our soaring fortunes, my father had, on the advice of a friend, agreed to pose for this sculptor, who was connected to the Academy. I added the plastic moustache out of contempt for the academician, who rendered my fathers whiskers far thinner than they really were, so that he would look more Western” (88).

The bust therefore also stands for the embodiment of a certain tradition, which itself aspires towards to being *more Western*. Together with the moustache that Kemal adds,

the bust captures many cultural dynamics and tensions within the psyche of the land between the East and the West.

4.2 The Dogs, *The Dog*

Unlike the false teeth, the china dogs are mass produced objects that have no function in the first place. Be that as it may, they seem to be a must-have item in the house on Çukurcuma as well as in others around the world. Baudrillard's *System of Objects* refers to this condition to be a fundamental truth that emerges from the present system: "Objects" he writes, "now, are by no means meant to be owned and used but solely to be produced and bought. In other words, they are structured as a function neither of needs nor of a more rational organization of the world, but instead constitute a system determined entirely by an ideological regime of production and social integration" (176). This argument carries objects of everyday into the realm of a museum where they are no longer defined by their use. This had been the case all along in Merhamet Apartmanı where Kemal's mother would retire the things that were no longer of use, or that were no longer in fashion. This space was contrasted with the Keskins' home where many things, the stove, the table, the Batanay sunflower oil were still part of their daily life in a useful way. The dogs on the television however, are described as objects that "brought us peace by their mere presence, much as the clock ticking on the wall did" (375).

4.2.1 China Dogs on TV Sets

Like many other objects of the Keskin home, the china dogs are constantly taken away and replaced by Kemal. As discussed before at length in the previous chapters parts concerning the ruler, the act of this interference that gives to and takes from Füsün's

material surroundings work to construct as well as to hollow Füsün's character as we, the audience is privy to it.

After a while, the normalization of the disappearance and replacement of these objects make them a temporary decor. They are no longer necessarily owned by the Keskin family.

“Little was said about these dogs; if the Keskins began to remark on the comings and goings of these dogs, it was because my interest in their belongings was now evident to them. By the time the dogs sitting on the television set began to change with regularity, Aunt Nesibe and Füsün had either guessed or knew for a fact that I was taking them away, as I did so much else” (374).

The dogs sit atop the television through which the Keskin family, like many others, looks out into the world. As the medium that connects the family to the outside world the television also acts as a mechanism of self control and self regulation – like the timepieces, and like a museum. This is seen most clearly when Aunt Nesibe confronts Kemal about one of the missing dogs:

“Aunt Nesibe's insistence that she noticed the disappearance immediately, it had taken them an astonishing eleven months to see that the dog was gone; it seemed to me that it had happened now only because of the coup, and the prevailing sentiment that we should all put our houses in order” (377).

The place of these dogs, then is closely tied with the outside world, acting as tropes of social integration not only in their uselessness as Baudrillard suggests, but also in the significance of their placement. Before the television, Kemal explains, the dogs would have sat on the radio, also the amplifier of social norms – especially during the times that only one national channel broadcasted in Turkey:

“As I would come to know later, the china dog that I noticed upon first walking into the family's apartment on Kuyulu Bostan Street in Nişantaşı had, before television came to Turkey, sat atop the radio around which the family gathered

every evening. As in so many houses I saw [...] at the Keskin's house, the dog was set on a handmade lace doily." (374).

Meltem Ahıska's detailed study of the radio in relation to Orientalism and political subjectivity reveals an interesting distinction between the radio and television.

"Television," she writes, "appeals to the visual senses which modern society primarily connects to reality with. This evidentiary quality of visuality gives the television a different level of certainty and 'transparency'" (26). Though Ahıska goes on to mention the ways in which this *transparency* can be used in creating new meanings with images taken out of their context, what is important to note is the reality effect that the television helps create. This reality effect, perhaps, is somewhat parallel to the reality effect that the objects and the museum intends to create for *The Museum of Innocence*.

The two things that is definitive of the dogs, therefore, is their uselessness and their placement. As such, even at the home, they stand as objects in a museum – stripped of any use and symbolically important in terms of its placement. The handmade lace doily, too suggests a reference to tradition, perhaps even a more *authentic* tradition that is placed in the middle of this installation. These curated spaces in the house, already suggests a great affinity to a museum.

As he travels the world Kemal comes to notice that china dogs appear on television sets all across the globe. Though the dogs in other homes in other countries may not be sitting atop a lace doily, each have a distinct story that fits into Kemal's more general perception of this universal phenomenon:

"Peering through curtains and open windows in Lima, Calcutta, Hamburg, Cairo and so many others, I would see families joking and laughing as they watched television and ate the evening meal; I would invent all sorts of excuses to step into these houses, and even to have my picture taken with the occupants. This is how I

came to notice that in most of the world's homes there was a china dog sitting on top of the television set. Why was it that millions of families all the over [sic.] world had felt the same need" (373).

Why was it that millions of families all over the world had felt the need to have china dogs sitting atop their television sets? *Why* had Kemal noticed and pursued this so adamantly, inserting himself into the many other settings and stories in which these china dogs appeared; and in turn inserting them into his own story?

In order to make sense of what he had lived, and with dedication to organize the objects that remained from that life in a meaningful way Kemal turns to other stories, other museums, other objects and other lives. The more distance, both in terms of time and space that Kemal places between himself and his life and the objects the more clarity he achieves.

His placing himself into these other homes in which families dine across a television with a china dog sitting on top of it, places his story among others, just as placing his objects in a museum would make them part of something to be taken pride in.

"Yes, that is the crux of it, Orhan Bey – pride. With my museum I want to teach not just the Turkish people but all the people of the world to take pride in the lives they live. I've travelled all over, and I've seen it with my own eyes: While the West takes pride in itself, most of the rest of the world lives in shame. But if the objects that bring us shame are displayed in a museum, they are immediately transformed into possessions in which to take pride" (518).

4.2.2 Reality Strikes: The Dog, *Sunflower Fields Forever*

Like the sunflower, the china dog appears in its flesh and bone at the moment of loss. The dog that had appeared first as Çetin Efendi slowed down in front of the Grand Semiramis Hotel is also the dog that plays a part in the 'accident'. Kemal describes their

first encounter with the dog as if it were a foreshadowing of trouble to come: “we heard the dog’s *woof, woof, woof* warning us off” (470).

On their first stopover, Kemal, Füsün, Nesibe Hala and Çetin Efendi have dinner and watch television in a hotel restaurant where they are among others such as a young foreign couple and the owner of the hotel and his wife who was wearing a headscarf and his two grown daughters – whose heads were not covered. The shared space of the hotel restaurant had already brought together and bound different stories in a similar experience of watching television together. Like newspaper was for high modernism and the nation state – not necessarily in sharing the experience of what is reported but rather in sharing the experience of reading it – the television too provides a common experience of staring into it.

Füsün notices the dog in front of the hotel the morning after they make love at the Büyük Semiramis Hotel. Kemal explains: “yesterday as we were coming in, he barked at us three times”. He continues to make the connection with the china dogs on top of the television set: “ ‘Did you notice? There was once a china dog just like him on top of your television’ ” (483). The confrontation that this leads to is broken once again when the real dog nestles up to Füsün and Kemal digresses from the tension by restating the similarity of the dog and the china dog: “It’s the splitting image of that china dog. Especially those ears, half black, half wheaten – they’re identical” (484).

As a result of the growing tension of this fight, which can very well be viewed as the clash of reality and representation, Füsün walks away. When Kemal goes after her to take her back she slides back into the drivers seat *a-la* Grace Kelly and drives into her

death. It is at this point that the key element that had been the initial point of the dissociation between reality and fiction reappears. The lost earring is dangling from Füsün's ear, but Kemal has failed to notice it once again. It is at this point that the dog, in flesh and bone, re-enters the picture to play perhaps a minor role in the 'accident'.

“In the far distance, her friend the dog seemed to have recognized Füsün and was coming out into the middle of the road to meet the car. I was hoping he would take note of the speed and get out of the way, but he didn't.

Now going even faster, ever faster, Füsün honked the horn to warn the dog.

We jerked to the right, and then to the left, the dog still far ahead of us” (489).

The more important role of the dog, lies in the logic of the sunflower. It is the real counterparts of what Kemal had imagined that Füsün drives into: Füsün wearing the earring, the dog, the sunflower field. In doing so, Füsün stands up to the imaginary world that Kemal has created; of his perception of her, the china dogs and the Batanay sunflower oil.

4.2.3 The Comfort of Objects

As the possibility of the real is constantly passing him by, Kemal finds comfort in objects. When Füsün had asked Kemal what he had done with all the things he stole from their home he tells her: “I took comfort from them” (484). Objects that were bearers of time and memories for Kemal, after the accident cease to fulfil the same function, since “suffering for [Füsün] no longer took the form of desiring her” (490). The objects then become tropes of the similar rather than of pure comfort.

This emphasis on similarity, unlike Kemal's substitutions of seemingly random objects with time underlines a different dynamic that ties objects to each other rather than

to the storyline. The dynamics in remembering, therefore involve a categorization based on similarity, whereas the collecting prior to Füsün's death had not had this element of resemblance in their representative capacities.

As opposed to the somewhat unique nature of the false-teeth, -despite it being, well, false, inauthentic – the china dogs are even less authentic. They are in fact, significant in their inauthenticity. Baudrillard presents the distinction in these words:

“By comparison with the model the series does not stand merely for a loss of uniqueness of style, of nuances, and of authenticity: it stands also for the loss of the real dimension of time – for it belongs to a kind of empty sector of everyday life, a negative realm automatically filled up with senescent models. For only models change; series merely follow upon one another in the wake of a model with which they can never catch up. That is where their true unreality lies.” (164).

Like these china dogs, many of the other objects – some of them which had been of use at some point, such as the saltshaker – in Kemal's collection are identical to, or resemble others of their kind around the world.

“All these objects – the saltshakers, china dogs, thimbles, pencils, barrettes, ashtrays – had a way of migrating, like the flocks of storks that flew silently over İstanbul twice a year to every part of the world. In the flea markets of Athens and Rome I had seen lighters identical to one I had bought for Füsün – and there were others almost exactly like it in Paris and Beirut. This saltshaker, made in a small Istanbul factory, which sat on the Keskin table for two years, was to be seen in restaurants in the poorer parts of Istanbul, but I also noticed it in a Halal restaurant in New Delhi, in a soup-kitchen in an old quarter of Cairo, among the wares the peddlers set out on the canvases they spread on the sidewalks of Barcelona every Sunday, and in an unremarkable kitchen supply store in Rome. What is certain: Someone somewhere had produced the first of these saltshakers, and then others made molds from them for mass production in many other countries, so that over the years, millions of copies had spread out from the southern Mediterranean and the Balkans, to enter the daily lives of untold families. To contemplate how this saltshaker had spread to the farthest reaches of the globe suggested a great mystery, as great as the way migratory birds communicate among themselves, always taking the same routes every year. Another wave of saltshakers would always arrive, the old ones replaced with the new, as surely as a south wind deposits its debris on the shore, and each time people would forget the objects

with which they had lived so intimately, never even acknowledging their emotional attachment to them” (509-10).

This very long quotation from the novel situates the way in which Kemal makes sense of his story only within the context of this very universal experience, both in terms of its similarity and its difference. While the objects may be commonplace, Kemal distinguishes his experience in having turned it into a museum in which his relationship with these objects becomes of importance, something to be proud of.

In this space of the museum “where Time is transformed into Space” (510) the loss of the *real dimension of time* that these objects perpetuate also arise from the loss of a real dimension of geography as uniformity ensues from the ever far reaching distribution of these identical, or similar objects. The space that *The Museum of Innocence* creates in the two media, therefore, stand at the balance of being bound by time and timelessness as well as speaking in the language of both the local and the universal.

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