

# Palimpsest: A Powerful Tool for Analyzing Discourses Embedded in Istanbul: Memories and the City

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim of the Study:** The present study investigates the subjective and collective memories of the urban residents of Istanbul, with a specific emphasis on the insights offered by urban literature. The present study examines the propensity of urban areas to undergo transformation as a consequence of successive civilizations.

**Methodology:** The present study utilizes a qualitative-theory methodology and adopts De Quincey's concept of "Palimpsest" as the theoretical framework to accomplish its objectives. The primary research approach utilized is a methodology centred around the textual analysis. This methodology entails a thorough examination and interpretation of the intricate layers of individual and collective memories intertwined within the selected literary work.

**Findings:** The analysis of the selected work reveals that the portrayal of Istanbul reinforces the concept of a palimpsest, symbolizing the perpetual transformations occurring within the urban landscape. The narrative underscores the historical and cultural influences that are discernible in Istanbul, placing emphasis on the dynamic nature of its growth, which has been moulded by the interplay of various civilizations throughout the ages.

**Conclusion:** This research provides insight into the concept of Istanbul as a palimpsest, characterized by the ongoing transformation of its physical infrastructure and social fabric due to the successive influences of diverse civilizations. The identity of a place is shaped not only by its architectural and historical components, but also by the intricate interaction of social, cultural, economic, and traditional artefacts.

**Keywords:** City Literature, Palimpsests, Istanbul, Memories and the City, Orhan Pamuk, Layering.

## Introduction

The city is regarded as "a largely self-contained, integrated economic", and bounded entity (Davoudi, 2008). Cities, in reality, are socially diverse and uneven spaces. The way people see the city becomes natural over time because of the reinforcement that comes from writing and other forms of art. This helps the city stay together as a whole over time. The idea of the city being unquestionably a single space when

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in practice city is constantly changing, as pointed out by Alastair Pennycook and Emi Otsuji, “Cities and languages are in constant change” (Pennycook, 2017). This fluid nature of the city is a result of constant reproduction through acts of imagination grounded in material space and social practices. These practices are constantly being swapped, changed, and replaced, but the traces of old are still there, which makes the experience of a city palimpsestic as M Crang points out the city is “an accumulation of traces of past action” because what is there on the surface level is constituted by the history and culture of that city (1996). The unique character of a city is conveyed not only through its outward appearance but also through the spatial clues it provides. The city's changing landscape can be analysed through spatial clues, which in turn help learn about the city's economic and political structures. This constant erasure and re-inscription then merges the discourses from past and present to create this palimpsestic text. The discourse surrounding the city is further complicated by the advent of twentieth-century modernity. However, it is important to recognize that the city serves as a catalyst for historical transformation, as it not only documents but also shapes the course of history.

The city is the locus of enormous complications in which the subject, subjective imagination, and collective memories, are entangled. Its inner and outer scapes can be treated as an overall “...most significant sign of modernity...” (Findley, 2008). This modernity is marked by the palimpsestic nature of the city, which contains traces of the old and the new, and therefore, the key to understanding modern existence is to look at the city through palimpsest terms that will decode all that was once there and is now reduced to its traces and all that's new.

A city is composed of context-specific layers. This “layer after layer” affects the form of the original city by overlapping or even interweaving, “...always legible yet never completely erasing what was written before” (Gaňko, 2019). These multiple layers make it difficult to determine the city's constituent parts. To look closely is to perceive the city as a fabric that reveals fragments of the past that shape the current text. Thomas De Quincey coined the term “palimpsest,” and his introduction of the concept marked the beginning of the consistent use of palimpsest as a metaphor from the mid-19th century to the present day (“Thomas De Quincey Erindringens palimpsest”, 2011). Palimpsest can be used to understand complex structures that look stable, coherent, and fixed but are actually fluid, mixed, and connected. The palimpsest method involves layering. This is an “Involuted” layering process (“Thomas De Quincey Erindringens palimpsest”, 2011). Text is referred to as involuted when concrete objects and complex experiences are entangled and cannot be separated but can be analysed. Palimpsest can be utilized as a tool and argument to critique and comprehend historical-cultural identities in general. As Sara Dillon eloquently puts it, “logic of the palimpsest is crucial to these discourses’ rethinking of such key contemporary issues as the subject, time, history, culture...” (Dillon, 2005). Alarcon describes tradition and history as “involuted palimpsests” that are made up of many different discourses that influence and block each other (“Thomas De Quincey Erindringens palimpsest”, 2011). The history proposed by Palimpsest is not one of natural progression or advancement but of the violent eradication of culture.

The “multidimensional and ever-changing face” of palimpsests is central to the concept (Flint Ashery and Stadler, 2021). It looks at how the past becomes a part of the present. Text, as a palimpsest, has the ability to bring back fragments of memory. Physical places, things, rituals, etc. can all serve as gateways to the cues of such recollections. Examining the remnants of the past in the present can shed light on a city's progress. While progress is inevitable, it takes time, and the city's landscape still bears the marks of its past. This paper uses the theory of palimpsest to analyze the transformation of the city brought on by unchecked progress toward modernity in *Istanbul: memories and the city*. Pamuk raises questions about what it means to be Turkish by showing that the modern city of Istanbul is built on top of the remnants of the historical city of the Ottomans.

## **Research Objectives**

Considering this parameter, the research objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To investigate the city as a product of modernity that is still clinging to its past while dismissing its legacy.
2. To examine the layers of the city in which the partially erased historical record plays a larger role than the visible one.

## **Statement of the Problem**

National Bourgeoisie Stepping into the Shoes of So-Called Westerners—A Nation occupied by the quest to move past what can be called as old but stuck in the traces that the loss has left, thus creating a divide between the memory of the glorious past and the drive to erase it.

## **Research Questions**

This study will investigate the following research questions:

1. How does the city grapple with the loss that is collectively grieved by its inhabitants in *Istanbul: memories and the city* because of modernity?
2. Is the change that the city underwent responsible for the liminal state of its inhabitants, as represented in *Istanbul: memories and the City* by Orhan Pamuk?

## **Significance**

This research on Pamuk's memoir *Istanbul: Memories and the City* in palimpsest terms is significant because it dissects the author's memories, both subjective and collective, of the city and how spatial changes are caused in the city. The preliminary exploration of this research is significant for the understanding of how the city represented cannot maintain a certain form and how the present form is the result of layers of previous civilizations. In this sense, every building or city that the memoir reveals is constantly changing, and at the same time, its surrounding environment (including people) is also changing and is also grasping of traces of the old.

## **Literature Review**

This section discusses the literature pertinent to the topic under investigation. It highlights the gap that the current research will fill and the significance of studying the city as a complex entity in which subject, subjective, and collective memories are intertwined with the presence of the old in the present text. The following research has been conducted on the same memoir from a perspective different from that of this paper

In *The Remedy for Reception Aesthetics in Interpreting Istanbul: Memories and the City* Gao Jing (2017) approaches the memoir from the perspective of reception aesthetics derived from hermeneutic theories, focusing on the atonement of reading as it helped Chinese people establish a new vision and allowed them to have a correct understanding of the novel and the culture. Indicating the historical and contemporary conditions of the city as well as ideological factors that contribute to the hidden meaning of the text, the intertwined quality of the writing instructs Chinese readers on how to study social factors.

Tetiana Bovsunivska discusses the novel's pictures in the essay *Images Of Melancholy In The Novel Istanbul: Memories of a City by Orhan Pamuk* (2019). These photos included in the text "increase the motivation for this psychological condition of once magnificent city"(T Bovsunivska 2019). This article examines the novel's "psychological type of melancholy". This paper examines not just individual experience, but also "about a culture of sorrow, an atmosphere of sorrow in which there are millions of people" (T Bovsunivska 2019). The researcher asserts that the only way to eliminate grief is to eliminate all memories. However, "one who discards their own memories loses himself and the future" (T Bovsunivska 2019). So, it can't be ruled out that the people of Istanbul will leave a legacy of sadness. The

researcher finds that Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul Memories of a City* is an example of “a modern ekphrastic genre”(T Bovsunivska 2019). It combines the features of two types of art—photography and word art—to create a new genre that shows how nostalgic the people of Istanbul are.

Since Turkey has experienced a significant shift as an emerging economy, Verena Laschinger's essay, *Flaneuring into the Creative Economy: Orhan Pamuk's Istanbul: Memories of a City* is pertinent. As the flaneur-narrator walks around Istanbul, he sees “the city’s creative forces rising and growing into what would become today’s creative economy” as Verena Laschinger says (Laschinger 2009). The flaneur, in these cityscapes, is a symbol of the evident change taking place in the urban environment. The home burnings in Pamuk's narrative are seen as “a symptom of modernization” (Laschinger 2009). The study's author draws the conclusion that Istanbul is a good venue to see the "economic shift from industrial to creative economy" because of the autobiography written by its most famous author, Orhan Pamuk. Accordingly, it has all the makings of a thriving hub for the arts and culture sector (Laschinger 2009). This study examines the city's economic transformation through the eyes of a flaneur. It has been determined that Istanbul is a culturally diverse, technologically advanced, and modern city. This article discusses the modernization process and places a great deal of emphasis on the productive significance that innovation has created, shaped, and redesigned. This work focuses on the positive effects of modernization and provides a useful overview of the factors that have influenced the modernization process over the past 150 years. My study is different from what has already been done because I want to look at how people feel about change over time as well as any traces of the text's history that are still in the current version.

Another analysis of the text is *Vision and Representation* (2011) in which Z. Esra Mirza Santesso recognises the significance of using black-and-white photographs in the narrative to highlight aspects of the country that are unfamiliar to Westerners. These photographs, according to the researcher, can also be interpreted as the writer's subjective account of the city. As outlined previously, the previous researches focus on the memoir *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, which illustrates the emancipation of the city from the old culture and can be considered a microcosm of modernity, melancholy, intertextual effects, and character analysis. The current study, however, differs from these previous studies in that it uses palimpsest theory as a metaphor to explore the city from multiple dimensions by identifying the traces of the past and comprehending the complex relationships between time, city, and memory.

### **Research Gap**

The novel has been subject to extensive scholarly analysis, with a particular focus on themes related to class stratification, patriarchal structures, and capitalism. Nevertheless, an area that remains relatively unexplored is the application of the palimpsest concept. The objective of this study is to employ the theoretical framework of palimpsest theory as a metaphorical lens to examine the text from multiple perspectives. The main aim of this study is to uncover the lasting imprints of past events and comprehend the intricate interplay between time, the urban environment, and memory within the urban setting. Hence, the present study sets itself apart from previous investigations by employing palimpsest analysis as a robust methodology to unveil the multifaceted discourse inherent in the literary work and unravel the intricate interconnections among historical layers, urban surroundings, and collective memory.

### **Research Methodology**

The research methodology is based on the use of qualitative data collection methods, which involve gathering textual evidence from the memoir entitled "Istanbul: Memories and the City" (2003). The sources mentioned above serve as the primary foundation for analysis, providing valuable insights into the subjective and collective memories that contribute to the city's formation as a palimpsest. The research is grounded in the theoretical framework of the palimpsest, a concept originally introduced by Thomas De Quincey (2011). The aforementioned concept provides a valuable framework for the analysis of the historical, cultural, and societal influences that are prevalent in Istanbul. The research utilizes the notion of palimpsest as a means to establish a theoretical framework for the interpretation and

understanding of the ever-changing characteristics of urban environments. The sampling frame of the research project is centred on the specific literary work entitled "Istanbul: Memories and the City," authored by Orhan Pamuk (2005). The utilization of this memoir as the principal source of information facilitates a focused analysis of the urban identity, as interpreted by the central character, Pamuk, through his personal encounters and recollections. The methodology utilized in this research entails a thorough examination of the life of the primary protagonist, Pamuk, as depicted in the selected memoir.

### ***Research Method***

The present study is structured as a narrative research endeavour, with a particular focus on examining the depiction of Istanbul's identity in Orhan Pamuk's memoir "Istanbul: Memories and the City" (2005). The primary objective of this study is to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the urban development of the city over the course of its historical evolution. To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the text and its implication, the primary research approach utilized is a methodology centred around the textual analysis. This study utilizes historical research methodologies and qualitative data collection techniques to uncover the diverse subjective and collective memories that contribute to its intricate and multi-faceted character, resembling a palimpsest.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

A city is constructed of context-specific layers. These layers impact the shape of the original city by overlapping or even intertwining. These numerous levels make it difficult to determine the city's constituent parts. To look attentively is to see the city as a fabric that reveals fragments of the past that influence the current text. Thomas De Quincey originated the word "palimpsest," and his introduction of the concept marked the beginning of the consistent use of palimpsest as a metaphor from the mid-19th century to the present day (2011). Palimpsest may be used to comprehend the present text so that the underlying text layers can be examined, as well as to comprehend the complex structures that seem stable, cohesive, and fixed on the surface but are really fluid, mixed, and interconnected. The palimpsest method includes layering. This process of layering is involuntary. Text is said to be involuntary when tangible items and complicated experiences are intertwined and cannot be separated but may be studied. Palimpsest will be used as a method and an argument to look at and understand historical-cultural identities in which different discourses overlap and limit each other. It is essential to social and political endeavours, as well as literature, to understand culture and history. The purported history of palimpsest is not one of natural evolution or advancement but of the violent eradication of civilisation. De Quincey defends his concept of palimpsest, arguing that the human brain is likewise a palimpsest since any imprint made on it is always there and thus cannot be erased, because the brain is incapable of erasing any impression and its remnants, as he explains, "are not dead but sleeping" ("Thomas De Quincey Erindringens palimpsest", 2011). The idea of a palimpsest is multi-dimensional. It proposes a reading of the city by examining the processes of communal memory, writing, location, people, history, and the progression of the city (new). It examines how the past is perceived in contemporary behaviour, how it becomes continuous, and how it generates a sense of time. Palimpsest is capable of evoking the recall of memory traces. These memories may be evoked by tangible environments, artefacts, and behaviours, among other things. Using this lens, advancement or progress in a specific city may be analysed by highlighting the remnants of the old in the so-called new. However, development is a lengthy process, and the past may be read in the cityscape.

### ***Result and Analysis***

Examining *Istanbul: Memory and the city* (2003) through the palimpsest point of view offers a more extensive comprehension of the city as the present text which includes the traces of the past text and it is still open for the further inscription of the future text. By tracing the history of the Turkish novel, inclusive of the situations surrounding its creation in the post-Ottoman era, this research will determine that the Turkish memoir is the mouthpiece of the present-day Turkish identity and the past- an indigenous Ottoman-Islamic cultural legacy. It additionally explores the metropolis as the integration of Western

tradition and the nostalgia of the lost empire which characterizes the history of Turkey. This attempt to hold on to and at the same time discard the old self creates a liminal identity of the inhabitants.

In order to comprehend the concept of palimpsest, this study investigates the hybrid discourse embedded in urban texts. As the memoir follows the history of the late Ottoman Empire from beginning to end, it is possible to view the cities and their inhabitants as being in a liminal state due to their desire to cling to Western culture and their inability to move on from their ancient, long-gone legacy. Palimpsest will be used here as a metaphor for space and cities, enabling us to comprehend these cities in multiple dimensions. These multiple dimensions suggest reading the text in order to identify traces of the past entwined with the present, which can be found in characters, buildings, memories, history, and time.

In the context of the memoir, the bourgeois of the state (Turkey) was led to believe that for a nation to develop, it must conform to the universal standards of world civilization, which were established by the West. People portrayed in the memoir equate the West with modernity, which impacted the modernization process in Turkey. Based on this belief, the Turks developed a strong sense of national identity, replacing their previous identity and attachment to religious groups. One group, specifically the bourgeois, turned a blind eye to their indigenous culture, practises, and traditions, while the other group, the proletariat, maintained contact with the old ways. Despite their differences, both groups shared a sense of loss as a direct consequence of their unwavering desire to become so-called Modern.

Pamuk discusses his childhood in Istanbul, as well as the life of the city before and during his time, and how the city and culture of Turkey functioned in the context of the Ottoman Empire in the past and Westernization in the present, and how frequently they clash. As he states in his memoir, "Great as the desire to westernize and modernize may have been, the more desperate wish was probably to be rid of all the bitter memories of the fallen empire" (Pamuk, 2003). As a Turkish author, Pamuk comes from a wealthy family, but he also sheds light on the lifestyles of other social classes. While presenting the city from a subjective perspective, the presentation of the city's physicality can be seen as evidence of its urbanity through the author's description of different characters and their lives. It is a recollection of the origins of the fundamental events of its community, as they are based on the experience of violent places, places that have suffered physical damage, and historical recollections. It embodies the memory consciousness formed by the major events of the early and middle 20th century, even as it is reshaped throughout the narrative. This text by Pamuk depicts a country struggling with the spectral presence of a long-vanished empire and the constraints of a newly established secular state. Pamuk's account of Istanbul's memory is a conundrum. It consists of a small portion of personal memories and the remainder of collective memories, which overlap.

The narrative begins when he was a child; consequently, the text describes his feelings and how his perspective on various cities has evolved over time. It shows, as time goes by, memories get erased to make room for new ones. Because of this unique connection between writer and space, Istanbul is able to show not only the emotions of writers but also the emotions of society as a whole.

Pamuk's recollections of Istanbul reveal the writer's transition from childhood to adulthood. The author becomes the embodiment of the body palimpsest. This transition from childhood to adulthood can be viewed as a palimpsest. The author states, "Because – for people like me, at least – that second life is none other than the book in your hand. So pay close attention, dear reader. Let me be straight with you, and in return let me ask for your compassion" (Pamuk, 2003). As a child and adolescent, the author's primary mode of self-expression was painting, but as he matured, he shifted to writing about the city. This transformation is not what makes the author one of "palimpsest bodies"; rather, it is the manner in which he incorporates all the images and paintings into this narrative that makes him a palimpsest (Noriega, 2020). The author is a palimpsest, due to the author's use of both codes to depict a story with multiple layers.

Pamuk's earliest memories revolve around a residential structure where his immediate family and a significant portion of his extended family resided in distinct residential units. This well-known and

minuscule domain is linked to the Republican faction and symbolizes the inherent paradoxes that the entire nation is currently grappling with due to the collective recollection of the Ottoman Empire. The passage highlights the importance of establishing a secular state by utilizing the living room as a metaphorical museum. This is exemplified by the notion that "Sitting room were not meant to be places where you could hope to sit comfortably; they were little museums designed to demonstrate to a hypothetical visitor that the householders were Westernised" (Pamuk, 2003). The narrative depicts the sitting area as a text that was receptive to new writing but still contained remnants of the old. As the once-comfortable sitting area was transformed into a museum, the family kept the turban shelves despite the fact that no one wore turbans because they were considered obsolete. Pamuk's statement that "...the turban shelves on which there were no turbans" demonstrates that the tradition had taken on a new form, but the turban on the shelf was a remnant of the old tradition (Pamuk, 2003). This blending of old and new resulted in liminality.

Pamuk argued that the Turks must demonstrate their Westernisation by describing what was meant to be an intimate and comfortable division of a family's home. This concept has special significance when referring to the city's macroscopically altering space. Modernity separated the entire nation into two distinct groups. The bourgeois sought to transform their nation into a secular state because, in their view, religion signified something archaic and the only path to progress was to eradicate everything deemed old. The Western Republican mentality "reduced religion to a strange and occasionally amusing set of rules upon which the lower classes relied" (Pamuk, 2003). According to Pamuk, these two factors exacerbated the "spiritual emptiness" of the wealthy because "we equated piety with poverty, but never in a loud voice" (Pamuk, 2003). As evidenced by the memoir, the Pamuk family never fasted during the holy month, but every evening they prepared a meal as if they had been fasting all day. Later, whenever Pamuk heard that siren from a mosque or radio, he was transported back to a time when his family shared a variety of foods. Still, the sound of the siren brought water to his mouth. Despite the efforts of the wealthy to leave the obsolete in the past, remnants of the past could be found everywhere in the present text. Early memories are always "obscured by accumulations of later knowledge," so that the past can be viewed as a palimpsest (Pamuk, 2003). Pamuk experienced a similar situation when his maid took him to a mosque, where he keenly observed everything that altered his perception of religion and religious people. In his memoir, he writes, "Religion may have been the province of the poor, but now I saw that religious people were harmless, contrary to the caricatures in newspapers and my republican household" (Pamuk, 2003). He erases his perception of religious people, which was based on the media's portrayal of them and the prejudice held against them for sticking to their roots. He made room for the inscription of new text resulting from the "accumulation of later knowledge" (Pamuk, 2003). This layered sense of memory makes him body palimpsest.

Religion and traditional values were categorised as low-class, creating a cultural divide between the ruling elite and the poor Turkish citizen. The poor citizens were severely affected by a new tradition and new standards of what is acceptable and what is not, which affected not only their culture and religion but also their social standing and means of livelihood. According to the narrator, "...These shops went out of fashion and closed one by one to make way for a string of other, more modern enterprises..." (Pamuk, 2003). This removal of old stores to make room for new stores was also the result of a shift in the collective mindset.

The development and standards of what a city should look like affected material spaces, as Pamuk notes: "the thing that for me defines the city- has descended... today concrete apartments have come to crowd out the old wooden houses..." (Pamuk, 2003). This alteration of the space led to the erasure of the familiar through the inscription of the new text. Freud correctly observed that spatial layers in cities and their interrelationships, like "unconscious and conscious memories in the human mind, are dynamic and constantly changing" (Pamuk, 2003). Thus as the city's materiality was taking a new shape, so were the memories of the people.

When the author was a child, he looked forward to the family dinners in which everyone would participate. Now that he has grown up and things around him have changed so drastically, he no longer feels at home at the place which once brought him happiness, joy, and contentment. As he examines a family photograph, he reflects on the fact that these once-familiar feasts are now foreign to him. As he states, "I felt the security of belonging to a large and happy family and basked in the delusion that we were placed on earth to enjoy it" (Pamuk, 2003). Here, he recalls the past events and gatherings that contributed to his sense of security and stability. These factors are currently making him feel insecure and evoking a sense of loss. This feeling of loss could be thought of as a national feeling because the country as a whole was feeling like it didn't have a place. This nostalgic sense of place comes from remembering past feelings connected to a place that makes you angry and confused. This lack of clarity and strangeness could be seen as a sign that the mass no longer belonged to a certain place or culture. They were caught between modernization and a lost heritage, with no traditions that were entirely their own.

The mass had a criterion for what is modern and what is out of date; this affected tradition thoroughly, as the mass no longer valued native media and its content. As the old methods of advertising were replaced, the "new minibuses" introduced in Istanbul were adorned with the "Logos" of various companies and products (Pamuk, 2003). The film industry also faced the music of modernity. Everything was compared to Western standards, and all Turkish films and dramas were reminiscing their former glory because "those old black-and-white films are still shown on television" (Pamuk, 2003) despite the fact that the audience had outgrown these films and made room for something new and modern. The upper class was not prepared to view these "Old mansions and apartments" because they reflected the old customs and conditions of the poor, who were still clinging to outmoded fashions (Pamuk, 2003).

The city of Bosphorus was considered an old fishing village where the poor used to fish. As the affluent began to visit this place on weekends and the magnificent waterside mansions became the new trend, the perception of this old village changed drastically. When a country follows Western trends without question, it becomes very hard to keep any style or trend going. As with the city itself, fashion is constantly in a state of flux. This transformation of the city is described by Natasha Tretheway as a palimpsest: "The site was a palimpsest, as was the entire city, written, erased, and rewritten" (Shields, 2017). So, the city, like all other styles, can be seen as something that is always being erased and rewritten. In the 20th century, mansions were seen as relics of a culture that no longer existed.

The term "Perverse Palimpsest" is used by Bhabha to emphasise "the will involved." That erasure is not always the accidental replacement of one line with another, but rather a deliberate "unwriting or rewriting" ("Homi Bhabha remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the colonial condition," 2015). The reference to these historical mansions and apartments serves as a reminder that deliberate efforts were made to eliminate any remnants of the Ottoman influence from the urban landscape. The demolition of the pasha's mansions stands as one of several factors that have contributed to the prevailing sense of sadness experienced by the city's residents. Melancholy is merely a pretext for Pamuk to explore the manipulation of memory. This intentional erasure can also be found as the author states:

*..They take stones from the city walls and add them to modern materials to make new buildings, or they go about restoring old buildings with concrete. But it catches up with them: By neglecting the past and severing their connection with it, the huzun they feel in their mean and hollow sorts is all the greater. Huzun rises out of the pain they feel for everything that has been lost, but it is also what compels them to invent new defeats and new ways to express their impoverishment (Pamuk, 2003).*

This passage depicts the violent destruction of places that occurred in the name of progress to erase the old text, resulting in the loss of everything familiar and the creation of liminal space for people. This destruction of the environment has far-reaching effects that extend beyond the built environment; it has also resulted in a disorienting exile from the memories that these places once evoked. As the novel quotes Ahmet Rasim, one of Istanbul's columnists and writers, "the splendour of a panorama is living in its



despair," Istanbul became a place of despair (Pamuk, 2003). The aforementioned melancholy is multifaceted and serves as the focal point for the people's individual and collective grief. It must be taken into account that all of these effects were the result of the republic's policies.

The apartment in Cihangir is where the author spent his entire childhood. As he grew up, his family moved frequently due to financial and family issues. Despite this, he had a happy childhood in that building, where he lived in both the real and fictional worlds. By the time he returned to the old house, his mother, mindful of his interest in painting, had arranged everything as it was when he was a child. As a child, turning on the gas stove made him happy, but now that he was back, turning on the gas stove did not bring him the same joy or happiness that it did before because so much has changed around him. "When I entered the Cihangir apartment my mother had arranged for me to use as a studio, I would huff and puff until the gas stove was lit. When I was eleven years old and living in this same apartment with my family, I was a pyromaniac, lighting fires wherever I could. It wasn't until now that I realized this joy had left me without a farewell" (Pamuk, 2003).

This excerpt from the novel demonstrates that Pamuk was in a continuous and unbroken dialogue with the past and that he admired and yearned for his happy childhood memories. But instead of comforting him, these memories of the past agitated him because of all the pain that the change has brought. It's as if everything that used to fascinate him no longer does.

This urbanisation was used as a way to change its residents thinking by changing cities. This transformation inevitably depends on the use of collective power in the process of urbanisation. The construction and transformation of cities are typically delegated to those in authority who favour development according to Western standards. After banning all ancient traditions, they tried to transform the city and into something that met Western modernity standards. Their indigenous culture was rejected resulting in the liminal state of people "the banishing of the sultan, the closing of the harem and the dervish lodges, the tearing down of the wooden houses and other tourist attractions, and the replacement of the Ottoman Empire with the little imitative Republic of Turkey" (Pamuk, 2003). The memories were reshaped by reshaping the country. When the stray animals were removed from the city, the slum areas were ignored. The entire process affects the poor, disadvantaged, and marginalised people, and their perceptions could not be altered by the transformation of the city. Because those in authority were too busy removing traces from the designated areas. Thus, "the poor neighbourhoods of the old city" represented the ruins of an ancient legacy (Pamuk, 2003). The entire process affects the poor, disadvantaged, and marginalised, and this group's perception could not be altered by the city's transformation. Because those in authority were too busy removing traces from the designated areas. Thus, "the poor neighbourhoods of the old city" represented the ruins of an ancient legacy (Pamuk, 2003). The writer's melancholy is reflected in his use of black and white to depict the city's soul. This fact emphasises the symbolic significance he has brought to the city. The color white, in this context, can be interpreted from a historical perspective, representing the architectural remnants of an empire that have lost their significance on a global scale. The eyes of the bourgeois view these traces as "an incurable disease" (Pamuk, 2003). For Turks, this architecture and architecture is still significant; it reminds them of the past, which has both a soothing and depressing effect. The calming effect is created by the memories of glory and happiness associated with these buildings, but they also serve as a constant reminder of what once existed there. Thus, when the wealthy of the country believed they could obliterate the local cultures, they attempted to do so through the body of law, their recordings, and the renaming of places; however, remnants or traces of the older understanding of places remain as part of the present text. In terms of these old buildings and architecture, the memoir contains remnants of the past. The author elucidates the concept of an ambiguous sense of identity by engaging in a discourse on the decline of the empire and the enduring remnants of loss evident in the urban environment and the emotional experiences of its inhabitants. The city and its inhabitants are in a liminal state in which they must witness the past traces of culture and history that are embedded in the present and have the desire to erase or forget. Istanbul is replete with remnants of civilization and the city's glorious past. Regardless of how badly they

are deserted by concrete monstrosities. They are in no way comparable to the remnants of a great empire that may be displayed with pride. The ruin served as a reminder to the majority of the city's inhabitants that their

city was poor and that, as a nation, they could no longer aspire to reach the pinnacles of wealth, power, and culture. They no longer had pride in it. Mud, dust, and dirt are mixed with the surrounding environment in these abandoned homes. Rather than expressing admiration for the aesthetically pleasing vintage wooden houses, as he did during his childhood, the author presently perceives them as a perpetual symbol of the cherished aspects of his hometown.

Istanbul is also a palimpsest, as it was once the capital of a great empire, the Ottoman Empire, but is now nothing more than a shadow of its former self. Adhering to whatever the new city inherited from its predecessor. On a historical level, the concept of palimpsest can be contextualised in Istanbul, where the nation's desire to westernise was satisfied by erasing the culture and memories of the past, as Pamuk states: "All the bitter memories of the fallen empire" (Pamuk, 2003). In spite of the presence of Ottoman architectural structures, fountains, mosques, and monuments within the city, Istanbul, with its inclination towards, "Westward-looking Istanbul had begun to reject, suppress, deride, and suspect anything associated with the Ottoman past" (Pamuk, 2003). This systematic effort to alter the city's foreground failed to eradicate traces of the past, making the city a palimpsest. The diminished lives of wealthy pre-Western Ottoman Empire citizens resulted from their inability and reluctance to invest in capitalist businesses. Their inability to accept that they are no longer the ruling class and to work as a mere shareholder anywhere was novel to them, as they had a notion of power associated with their family name that was difficult to let go of.

## **Conclusion**

Pamuk envisions Istanbul as a palimpsest, existing simultaneously in the past and the present. He presents a city in which he reconstructs the Ottoman city using traces left behind in modern-day Istanbul inferring hypothetically from them, and then palimpsesting it. A cultural analysis of such a city reveals that its residents are in a liminal state in which the current city of Istanbul is written over by the reimagined city of Ottoman Istanbul, so that traces of one can be discovered in the other depending on the angle with which one looks. The residents are primarily concerned with the endeavor to transcend what may be referred to as the antiquated but immobilized remnants of grief, resulting in a division between the recollection of a splendid history and the determination to eradicate it.

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