

16 How stories relate to places? Orhan Pamuk's Museum of Innocence as literary tourism¹

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Introduction

Literally implementing the title of the present volume – *Locating Imagination* – a sign at a busy intersection in Istanbul that reads “Pamuk, Kemal” points towards a museum created by Orhan Pamuk, the Turkish Nobel prize-winning author, and devoted to a novel whose hero, Kemal, is a product of Pamuk's imagination. There are many museums in the world that commemorate the life and work of real authors, and there are some fictional or legendary characters who inspired museums (Don Quixote, Sherlock Holmes, William Tell),² but Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence* is unique among literary museums and consequently as a target of literary tourism in that it does not fit into either category. It was not conceived as a collection of Pamuk memorabilia but as a companion piece to a novel of the same name, and, unlike the aforementioned characters, the hero of the novel is not a popular transfictional character who appears in many texts and media. In this chapter, I will discuss the museum in terms of its relation to the plot of novel, actual subject matter (for “innocence” is a subjective characterization of that which it is about), and type of experience that it offers to visitors. But before I address these questions, I will explore the foundations of literary tourism (Bulson, 2009; Reijnders, 2015) by asking how stories relate to space, what attracts fans of fictional stories to real-world locations, and how narrative theory can be made to account for such fan behaviour, which goes against much of the teachings of the schools of literary theory that dominated academia in the second half of the 20th century, from new criticism to deconstruction.

How stories relate to space(s) and place(s)

Locating imagination means tying stories to certain points in space, thereby turning these points into special places. The place-making potential of stories, duly noted by proponents of the space/place distinction (Tuan, 1997), can hinge on a variety of features. First and foremost among them are stories of personal memories. Our recollections from childhood or from happy moments spent in a certain location mark some coordinates as a place on the

map of our life. Second, certain locations are singled out in a culture because they are the setting of important historical events narrated by factual stories. People may want to visit Saint Helena, Omaha Beach, Auschwitz, or Ground Zero in New York City because of their historical significance.

Moving from the factual to the fictional, certain points in space can be turned into places through traditional tales. Of all the genres of folklore, legends are the most deeply anchored in space. They may tell how certain landscape features came into being or they may associate the deeds of saints and heroes with specific locations.

Last, but not least, real places can be singled out because they are the setting of famous narratives. Sometimes these places are independently well known, such as the Dublin of James Joyce (Bulson, 2009); other times, they are obscure places that a certain narrative puts on the cultural map under a pseudonym, such as the village of Illiers, which inspired the Combray of Marcel Proust and is now officially named Illiers-Combray.

To illustrate the power of narrative to create a sense of place, let me tell a personal anecdote. It concerns a novel by Alan Lightman titled *Einstein's Dreams* (2004). The text describes various conceptions of time that can be derived from Einstein's theory of relativity. Since Einstein's ground-breaking paper on relativity was written while he was living in Bern, Switzerland, working by day as a clerk in the patent office, all the examples are set in Bern or elsewhere in Switzerland. When I read the novel, I felt transported to Bern, a city I know fairly well. The book awakened memories and gave me a wonderful sense of place.

A few weeks after reading *Einstein's Dreams*, I attended a conference on physics and literature, and I met the author Alan Lightman. I told him how perfectly his book captures the unique essence of Bern, what the Romans would call the *genius loci*, or spirit of the place. He replied that he had never been to Bern, and had no intention of ever going there. Why not? Because Bern was a mythical place for him, something he had built in his imagination, and he did not want this idealized image to be compromised, or even destroyed, by reality. The book never really offered the kind of lengthy place descriptions that one finds in 19th-century fiction, for instance, in Dickens and Balzac. All it did was mention a few street names, a few landmarks, and my imagination did the rest.

Readers who have never been to Bern construct the setting in their mind rather than recalling it from memory, and for some people, this image is more vivid, more fulfilling than any direct sensorial experience, so that, like Alan Lightman, they will have no desire to go to Bern. But for other readers, merely imagined places cannot replace a lived experience, and for them, going to Bern and retracing Einstein's walk from his house to the patent office will complete the sense of place created by the book. It is this kind of readers who engage in literary tourism.

The whole idea of literary tourism rests on a paradox. On one hand, tourists are driven by their desire to see with their own eyes the real-world

counterparts of fictional places. They want to experience these places “as they really are”, in their unmediated presence. If people were satisfied with picturing in their mind the settings of stories, they would not go to the trouble of physically travelling to these locations. On the other hand, the tourist’s experience is heavily mediated by the text, so that what is being seen is less a place in itself than a place as seen by the author, who is credited with the ability to capture the essence of the place (or criticized for the inability to do so if the tourist is disappointed). The conflicting desires of seeing places in themselves and of seeing them through the author’s eyes are inextricably linked in the experience of the literary tourist.

When I first started studying literature, in the 60s and 70s, the idea of literary tourism would have been considered sacrilegious. The desire to visit the places mentioned in a novel would have been regarded as the mark of a naïve reader who fails to understand the essence of literary language. For a long time, beginning in the 50s, the study of literature was dominated by schools such as new criticism, structuralism, deconstruction, and poststructuralism, schools that I call “textualist”, because they regard the literary text as an autonomous, self-enclosed system that should not be studied in terms of its relations to the real world but in terms of the internal relations between its elements. Talk about content was considered illegitimate because it presupposes that meaning can be conceived independently of its linguistic representation. If content cannot be distinguished from form, this means that literary texts cannot be paraphrased (Brooks, 1947) and interpretation is necessarily a betrayal, because it says what the text means in different words.

In a purely textualist conception of literary meaning, when a fictional text uses the name of a place that exists in the real world, this place possesses only the properties that are mentioned in the text. According to Ruth Ronen (1994: 128), when Stendhal mentions Paris in his novel *Le Rouge et le noir*, this Paris loses its geography, because none of the iconic places of the real Paris are mentioned in the novel: the Seine, Notre Dame, and the Louvre do not feature in this Paris. So what does Paris represent in the novel? It has a social and political significance, it is a site of power, and above all, it is the place where people can realize their highest ambitions (cf. the expression *monter à Paris*). *Le Rouge et le noir* is indeed a story of social climbing but a climbing that ends in a spectacular fall for the hero Julien Sorel. If the Paris of *Le Rouge et le noir* is a purely political and social entity, it would make no sense for readers of Stendhal to travel to Paris to deepen their experience of the novel: our imaginary tourist would have no idea where to go within Paris. But there are other novels that do a much better job than Stendhal in bringing Paris to life. For instance, many of the episodes of Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* are located in Paris landmarks, such as the Champs Élysées or the Bois de Boulogne, and for the Proust lover, these places will be haunted by the characters of the novel.

For literary tourism to be justified, we need a theory of literary meaning that restores connections between narrative fiction and the real world but

without endorsing a narrowly mimetic view of fiction as representation of reality, for obviously, there are many fictional worlds that differ in important ways from the real world. In other words, we need a theory that accounts for both resemblance and difference between real locations and their fictional counterparts.

These conditions are fulfilled by a theory of fiction that relies on the concept of possible world (Pavel, 1986; Ryan, 1991; Doležel, 1998). The philosophical notion of a possible world rests on the idea that “things could have been different from what they are” (Lewis, 1986). In another possible world, you could have been a billionaire, and Hillary Clinton could have been elected US president in 2016. There exists an infinity of possible worlds, one of which is the actual world where we live, and the others are non-actualized possible worlds. These worlds are created by mental acts, such as imagining, dreaming, or writing fiction. When we read a text of narrative fiction, we relocate ourselves in imagination into its world, and, suspending our disbelief in its existence, we regard it as real, or actual, though an act of make-believe (Walton, 1990). This gesture of relocation, which I call recentring (Ryan, 1991), explains how we can get immersed in a fiction, be caught in suspense, and experience emotions for the characters, even though we know that they never existed.

Possible worlds are never totally identical to the actual world, but they can resemble it to variable degrees. For instance, the fictional worlds of fantasy or science fiction are very distant from the actual world, while the worlds of realistic novels are fairly close. They mostly differ from reality through the existence of fictional characters, but they may contain the same locations and the same historical individuals. When readers construct the worlds of fictional texts, they apply what I have called the *principle of minimal departure* (Ryan, 1991: 48–60): this means that when the fictional text refers to an entity or a kind of entity that also exists in the real world, readers can project upon this entity everything they know about it from their experience of the real world, except when the text contradicts this experience. Therefore, we can imagine the Dublin of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* as sharing the geography of the real-world Dublin, but it differs from it because it has citizens named Leopold Bloom and Stephen Daedalus who do not exist in reality. The possible worlds approach to fiction thus supports the idea of literary tourism by maintaining a connection between real-world locations and their fictional counterparts without insisting on an absolute identity between the two.

Stories can relate to space and place in three ways: true stories that take place in real geography, such as the narratives of historiography or personal memories; fictional stories that take place in (counterparts of) real-world settings, such as James Joyce’s *Ulysses* or Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*; and fictional stories that take place in imaginary geographies, such as *Lord of the Rings*, or in a split, partly real and partly imaginary geography, such as *Harry Potter*, which combines London with the fantastic world of the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. As shown in Figure 16.1,

	Real geography	Imaginary geography
	(1)	(4)
Story told as true	Normandy beaches; Auschwitz; Ground Zero in New York.	Holy Land Experience; Stations of the Cross.
	(2)	(3)
Story told as fiction	Joyce's Dublin; Dostoevsky's St Petersburg; Reichenbach Falls; sites of myths & legends.	New Zealand as <i>Lord of the Rings</i> ' Middle Earth; Universal's Islands of Adventure.

Figure 16.1 Real and imaginary geographies as targets of narrative tourism.

Source: Design by author.

each of these three categories inspires a form of narrative tourism (I write narrative rather than literary tourism because the stories that motivate people to visit their setting are not necessarily considered literature).

Square 1 is represented by the busloads of visitors who are taken to Auschwitz every day; by the numbers of American tourists who regard the Normandy beaches of World War II as a necessary stop on their tour of France; or, more spontaneously, by the people who travel to their family's place of origin, inspired by their elder's stories.³ Square 2 corresponds to the classical cases of literary tourism: retracing the itinerary of Joyce's Leopold Bloom in Dublin; taking an organized tour of Dostoevsky's Saint Petersburg; or visiting Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland, where Sherlock Holmes fell to his death (there is even a sign that commemorates the "event"). Square 3 is more problematic in terms of narrative tourism because there is no real place to visit, but fictional geographies can be reached through a simulation that makes real space pass as imaginary space. For instance, fans of *Lord of the Rings* may want to visit New Zealand because this is where the movies were shot. The real landscape becomes in their mind the fictional space of Middle-Earth. But the most important form of tourism inspired by narratives with a fantastic setting is the theme park (Waysdorf & Reijnders, 2016). Many theme parks are deliberately designed to recreate the settings of popular narratives. For instance, Universal's Islands of Adventure in Orlando, Florida, has sections representing the worlds of the Dr. Suess stories, *Harry Potter*, *Jurassic Park*, *TinyToons*, and Marvel superheroes comics. In these cases, we have a doubling of space: the real space of the theme park represents the imaginary landscape of a narrative, and the visitor's movement in that space simulates a visit to the fictional space. To quote computer game designer

Brenda Laurel (1993: 14), the virtual reality of theme parks allows visitors to “take their body with [them] into worlds of the imagination”.

In the cross-classification of the axes real/fictional story and real/imaginary geography that produces Figure 16.1, one possibility is missing: a true story that takes place in an imaginary geography. If the setting is fictional, so is the story. But there are forms of narrative tourism that come close to illustrating the paradoxical combination of Square 4. If a theme park can be devoted to a fictional story, why couldn't it represent a story that at least some visitors regard as true? Think of the Holy Land Experience in Florida (Holy Land Experience, n.d.). Or, as a predecessor of the designed experience of theme parks, think of the Stations of the Cross that one finds in the Alpine countries of Europe. They consist of little chapels on a steep trail that represent the episodes of the Crucifixion. Pilgrims are supposed to re-enact the passion of Christ by following the trail and stopping at each station to pray. For the pilgrims, the story is true; it is, in fact, more than true, it is the foundation of their faith. But the space where the re-enactment takes place is not the real setting, it is a simulated space – in contrast to the places in Jerusalem where the original events took place. Hence we can perhaps say that for believers, the ritual of the Stations of the Cross re-enacts a true story in a simulacrum of geography.

Pamuk's Museum of Innocence

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Orhan Pamuk's Museum of Innocence is part of a triptych that includes a novel, an eponymous real-world museum that has become a significant Istanbul tourist attraction⁴ (shown in Figure 16.2), and a partly autobiographical text titled *The Innocence of Objects* (2012) that mediates between the novel and the museum and functions as catalogue. The novel narrates the creation of a fictional museum; the museum displays objects that bring to life the historical, geographical, and social setting of the novel; and the autobiographical text (henceforth referred to as the catalogue) describes the contents of the actual museum and how it came into being.

Set in Istanbul from 1975 to 1984, the novel tells the story of an unhappy love affair that turns into a fetishist obsession. The narrator, Kemal, belongs to the upper crust of Istanbul society, a class that tries to emulate European culture at all costs. He is engaged to Sibel, a heavily Westernized young woman. One day he walks into a store to return a gift that Sibel rejected because it is an imitation of a famous brand, rather than a genuine article, and he falls in love with Füsun, the salesgirl, a stunning beauty who is a distant relative of his. They engage for a short time in a passionate sexual relation, but after Kemal's formal engagement to Sibel, Füsun disappears and Kemal is heartbroken. His strange behaviour leads Sibel to break the engagement. When Füsun renews contact with Kemal a few months later, she is married to Feridun, a fat boy and aspiring screenwriter whom she married without love because by giving up her virginity, she has compromised her



Figure 16.2 The Museum of Innocence in Istanbul (the dark, narrow building on the left).

Source: Photo by author.

marriage prospects. For eight years, Kemal visits Füsün four times a week for supper in her parents' house, where she still lives with her husband, and he spends his evenings watching TV with the family. He also steals various objects from the house, because they bear the imprint of Füsün's presence. Finally Füsün gets a divorce from Feridun (who has become in the meantime a famous film writer and now has an affair with an actress) and she agrees to marry Kemal on the condition that he take her to Paris. During the trip, they renew their physical relation, but the next day, Füsün drives Kemal's car into a plane tree, killing herself and seriously wounding Kemal. The text is ambiguous as to whether it is an accident or a suicide. After Füsün's death, Kemal creates a museum with all the objects he has stolen from her house, and he asks his friend Orhan Pamuk to write his life story. Pamuk accepts, for he, too, was in love with Füsün, but rather than writing a regular biography of Kemal, he will write a novel told in the first person by Kemal. This future novel is the one we have just read, so that the text of *The Museum of Innocence* curls back upon itself, through an effect reminiscent of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*.

The museum comes in two versions: the fictional and the real one. The fictional museum is Kemal's creation, and it is described in the novel, while the real museum is Pamuk's creation, and it is described in the catalogue. But while the two museums exist in different worlds, there is a lot of overlap between them and a lot of interplay between the discourses that describe them. Many times in the novel Kemal mentions objects that play a role in the plot and then says: "I exhibit it here", referring to the fictional museum. This is (almost) true of the real-world museum, since one can see a similar object in one of the displays. The novel also contains a map locating the actual museum and a free ticket. On the other hand, the catalogue, which is as a whole a non-fictional account of how and why Pamuk created the museum, contains many passages lifted (rather than openly quoted) from the novel, it refers to Kemal and Füsün as if they actually existed, and it contains a literary map of Pamuk's Istanbul that shows the settings of events not just from *The Museum of Innocence* but from several of his other novels. The fiction contains true information about the real-life museum, and the catalogue contains fictional statements about the characters in the novel.

Kemal's decision to create a museum develops in three stages. It begins with an attempt to conjure Füsün's presence through the objects that have touched her body. He retreats regularly to the apartment where he used to make love to her, and he tries to pick up her scent in the sheets or the trace of her hand in the objects that she used to touch. This leads to the second stage of Kemal's obsession – stealing objects that belong to Füsün. During the eight years when he visits her four times a week at her parents' house, he steals her earrings, barrettes, and combs, including those that he gave her as presents, and he brings them back to the apartment, where he tries to reassemble her body through the things that belonged to her. His kleptomania soon expands to other kinds of objects found in Füsün's parents' house, such as glasses,

bottles of cologne, salt shakers, and a quince grater. He often replaces the stolen objects with new ones, only to steal them again. In a third stage of his obsession with objects, the fetishist lover turns into a compulsive collector of objects of the same kind: he religiously picks up Füsün's cigarette stubs, and after eight years, he has collected 4,213 of them. He also manages to steal numerous examples of the China dogs that sit on top of the TV, creating a unique collection of a kind of item that symbolizes an important turning point in middle-class culture – the moment when television replaced radio and became the centre of domestic life. After Füsün's death, Kemal continues his gathering of mementos that represent Turkish everyday life in the 70s and 80s by getting objects from other obsessive collectors. To find room for his growing collection, he buys the family house of Füsün and sends her mother to live elsewhere. The museum that displays Kemal's mementos is much more than a mausoleum to Füsün (Kemal reminds us that mausoleum is the etymology of museum); it is also a tribute to the passion that led to the creation of many small, private museums around the world: the passion of collecting for its own sake. Compulsive hoarding is turned into a labour of love and into a work of art. To explain the displays of the museum, Kemal asks Orhan to write his life story, because individual objects can only represent isolated atoms of present moments, and it takes the line of a narrative plot to turn a series of moments into time. In the end, the museum plays the same role for Kemal as the writing of a novel does for the narrator of Proust: the museum gives meaning to Kemal's life, a life that most people consider wasted. To parody Proust, the museum recaptures the lost time.

Pamuk's museum is in many senses the opposite of Kemal's. It is a real museum that tells a fictional story, while Kemal's museum is a fictional museum that tells what is from Kemal's point of view a true story. In Kemal's museum, objects are in a sense de-realized, since they stand for Füsün and the memories they evoke, while in Pamuk's museum, they stand primarily for themselves, projecting a mute presence that combines strangeness and familiarity. While Kemal *first* falls in love with Füsün, *then* becomes an obsessive collector of objects connected to her and *ends up* with a museum, Pamuk *starts* as a passionate collector of objects and *ends* with the simultaneous creation of a museum that hosts the objects and of the fictional characters of Kemal and Füsün as the thread that connects the objects. In the catalogue, Pamuk tells us that starting in the 1990s, he began collecting objects from antique shops that represented daily life in Istanbul in the 70s and 80s, a time when a Westernized elite was trying to erase any trace of the Ottoman past, and also any trace of the Greek, Armenian, Jewish, and Kurdish minorities that left Istanbul in the 50s. Therefore, what one sees in the museum is not typical Turkish artefacts, the kind that tourists adore, but mass-produced objects similar to those found everywhere in the West.

Pamuk first thought of writing a novel in the form of a museum catalogue; he would show objects and then describe the memories that the objects evoke in the protagonist, but the novel eventually developed as a classic

self-standing narrative without illustrations. The catalogue is the bridge that connects the museum to the novel. The novel consists of 83 short chapters, and each of them is represented in the museum by a box that shows some of the objects mentioned in the chapter (see Figures 16.3 and 16.4).

There are four types of relations between the text of the novel and the objects shown in the museum. First, objects important to the story that are collected in the real world and shown in the museum. It was for instance easy for Pamuk to find 4,213 cigarette butts and to present them as having been smoked by Füsün. Second, objects that play an important role in the plot and are specially manufactured for the museum. Pamuk asked a craftsman to create the fake brand-name bag that Sibel rejects and that leads to the meeting of Kemal and Füsün. Third, objects found by Pamuk in antique shops around which he builds episodes or that he inserts into the text through casual mentions, not because they are important to the plot but because he was in love with them. For instance, there is a display that contains only one object, a quince grater, that Pamuk found in an antique shop. To insert it in the novel, he invents a rather convoluted episode where the police stop Kemal on his way home, search him, find the grater, and suspect it of being a weapon. And fourth, objects shown in the museum that could not be fitted in the novel, such as the belongings of Kemal's and

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Figure 16.3 General view of the Museum of Innocence. Each of the boxes corresponds to a chapter in the novel.

Source: Photo by author.



Figure 16.4 One of the displays of the Museum of Innocence. This one shows Füsün's dress and various belongings, with photos of families proudly posing with cars. It refers to a chapter titled "Füsün's driving licence." In the novel, Kemal teaches Füsün how to drive, then she is killed in a car crash. The furniture that holds the objects is strikingly similar to the 17th- and 18th-century *Wunderkammer*.

Source: Photo by author.

Füsün's fathers, both of whom die during the narrative. The museum shows complete collections of all the objects that they used during their daily lives, as if these collections captured the essence of the living person.

Even when the objects in the museum correspond to objects mentioned in the novel, they are much more than illustrations. About a frame that shows junk crammed under the metal frame of a bed, Pamuk (2012: 83) writes in the catalogue: "As they gradually found their place in the museum, the objects began to talk among themselves, singing a different tune and moving beyond what was described in the novel". And also: "I was trying to make a sort of painting with the objects, but they were telling me something different" (ibid). What they tell Pamuk in their stubborn resistance to being turned into a painting is that their meaning resides in their pure presence, not in their relations to Kemal and Füsün. If objects are declared innocent, it is because of their insistence in being themselves and in telling their own story.

The creation of the displays that correspond to the various chapters was an opportunity for Pamuk to reconnect with an early vocation as a visual artist that he later abandoned to become a writer. The museum consists of a series of frames, or boxes, reminiscent of the work of the artist Joseph Cornell, who pioneered the practice of arranging objects in a box in an aesthetic and meaningful way. In these boxes, the objects truly talk among themselves, and the whole is more than the sum of its parts. While Pamuk does not mention Cornell as influence in the catalogue, he acknowledges another important source of inspiration: the so-called cabinets of curiosities, or *Wunderkammer*, that displayed disparate collections of exotic objects in the 17th and 18th centuries. The *Wunderkammer* treads a thin line between a disciplined collecting of objects representing specific categories and indiscriminate hoarding. Similarly, the Museum of Innocence is part highly selective display of mementos from a certain period in Istanbul's history and part random collection of objects that happened to strike a chord in Pamuk's imagination.

An important difference between Kemal's and Pamuk's museums is the importance of Füsün. While Kemal conceives his museum as a mausoleum to Füsün, she is only represented in the real Museum of Innocence through her earrings, one of her dresses, her shoes, socks, panties, combs and barrettes, and her cigarette butts. It would have been easy to include photos of her (or rather photos of a woman posing as her), but this would have turned the museum into some kind of cheap photo novel, and it would have detracted attention from the objects. The museum is not really a memorial to the fictional character of Füsün; it is a tribute to that which she represents, namely the city of Istanbul. The love of Kemal for Füsün is an opportunity for the novel to explore Istanbul in its diversity, from Nişantaşı, the rich neighbourhood where Kemal's family lives, to Çukurcuma, the ethnically diverse, occasionally run-down, but vibrant neighbourhood where Füsün's family lives and where the actual museum is located. To quote a favourite cliché of literary critics, Istanbul is truly the main character in the novel. After

Füsun's death, "Istanbul [becomes] a very different city" (Pamuk, 2009: 492), a city of paved streets and concrete buildings rather than the sensory feast of noises, sights, and smells that it was before.

Let's now turn to what the museum has to offer to tourists and to literary tourists in particular. The catalogue is in a sense more informative than the museum, because it shows all the displays (minus a few that were not finished at the time of publication), it comments upon them either with original text or with text from the novel, it presents many enlargements of the details of the frames, and, most importantly, it lets users read and watch at their own pace. But the catalogue does not entirely replace the museum, first because the museum contains data that cannot be reproduced in a book (such as sounds and videos) and second because the space has been carefully arranged to give meaning to the visitors' itinerary. The museum is housed in a very narrow building that occupies three stories. When visitors climb the stairs in a spiral movement to the top story and look down at the other stories, they will see all the displays simultaneously (or rather, the tops of the boxes), together with a large spiral drawn on the bottom floor (Figure 16.5). This spiral symbolizes the Aristotelian conception of Time, which links all the moments together, just as a story links isolated objects and characters into a meaningful sequence of events (Pamuk, 2012: 253). When the visitor reaches the top and contemplates the collection below, the elusive experience of time is turned into visible space, and the whole is truly more than the sum of its parts.



Figure 16.5 The spiral, symbol of the unity of (narrative) time, on the ground floor, that people see from the third floor at the end of their visit.

Source: Photo by author.

Pamuk denies having created the museum for the readers of the novel exclusively. In the catalogue, he writes: “And yet just as the novel is entirely comprehensible without a visit to the museum, so the museum is a place that can be visited and experienced on its own. The museum is not an illustration of the novel, and the novel is not an explanation of the museum” (Pamuk, 2012: 18). So what kind of people will visit the museum, and what will they get from it? First one must consider the possibility that nobody will ever visit it. Pamuk tells us that he would not be upset. “When I set up a museum in one of these shabby neighbourhoods, displaying the objects that had characterized daily life in Istanbul, I would not mind the absence of visitors but would be comforted by the poetic aura that the empty museum would bring to the environs” (Pamuk, 2012: 28). In other words, the outside of the museum contributes to the *genius loci* of Çukurcuma as much as the *genius loci* of Istanbul contributes to the inside of the museum. If there are any visitors, they will have to walk through the same streets as the characters in the novel in order to reach the museum, and even if they have not read the text, they will imbibe the atmosphere that inspired it.

Many people will treat the museum as an art museum devoted to the artistic creations of Orhan Pamuk. These visitors will typically spend 20 to 30 minutes in the museum. Those interested in what drove Pamuk to create the museum can listen to an audiotape, in either Turkish or English, in which Pamuk comments on the displays and links them to the novel. In contrast to the audio guides of most museums, Pamuk’s commentaries are so extensive, and they slow down the walk-through so much, that it would take several visits to listen to all of them.

What kind of experience will the museum provide to those people who have read the novel? Will they feel a special emotion, as Kemal would, by seeing a sneaker or a dress and thinking “this is Füsün’s shoe”, “this dress once enveloped her body”? I doubt it. One may be filled with awe when one sees the relics of saints or the dresses of Marilyn Monroe, but Füsün is an imaginary character, and visitors are aware of it: the museum does not break the ontological divide between fiction and reality. Moreover, Pamuk doubts that visitors will be able to connect the objects in the displays to specific details in the novel: “From watching visitors to the museum who had also read the book, I realized that readers remember no more than six pages of descriptive detail in the six-hundred pages of the novel. Readers who look at the displays were more likely to remember the emotions they’d felt while reading the novel than the objects in it” (Pamuk, 2012: 121).

Are the objects in the displays really able to evoke the affective reactions we experience while reading the novel? Judging by the responses on Amazon, the reader’s emotions are mainly directed at the characters. They consist of irritation or even contempt for Kemal, a rather self-deluding, unreliable narrator who does not see the harm he does to Füsün, who wanted to be an actress, but Kemal does nothing to help her realize her dream, even though he has enough money to produce a film in which she could star. Readers

also feel pity or puzzlement for Füsün, whose true feelings toward Kemal are impenetrable. While the emotions of the readers of the novel are directed at the characters, the emotions of museum visitors are mainly object oriented. The objects in the displays speak of Istanbul much more than they speak of Kemal and Füsün, and even more importantly, they speak to the visitor of a past that is perceived at the same time as very remote and very close. Very remote, because technology steadily accelerates the rate of change of the world, and the world of our youth seem to be centuries away. But also very close, because some of us can actually remember using the kind of objects displayed in the boxes. This is why a museum like Pamuk's creates much more personal emotions than, say, a museum devoted to medieval artefacts or to objects from antiquity. This emotion has a name: it is called nostalgia. It makes us cherish any object that evokes personal memories, even though we may have been indifferent to these objects when the past was the present.⁵

If Pamuk is right about the limitations of memory, about the fact that what readers remember from the 600 pages of the novel can be held in 6 pages, the best way to experience the relation between the book and the museum is not during a visit to the physical museum but by revisiting the museum through the catalogue and by re-reading the novel at the same time. As they look at the photos of the frames and then read the corresponding chapters, readers will become aware of many details that they had not noticed during their first reading. Their second reading will be like an Easter egg hunt for the objects that Pamuk inserted in the novel not because they are important to the plot but because he felt mysteriously attracted to them when he found them in a junk store.

How does Pamuk's project fit within the table displayed in Figure 16.1? As already noted, by locating the museum in Çukurcuma, where the house of Füsün's family is located in the novel, Pamuk invites visitors to experience the vanishing *genius loci* of Istanbul: steep and narrow streets where children play football (a recurrent theme in the novel), some traditional wooden houses still standing, and numerous antique stores where many of the museum's objects must have been purchased. The trip to the museum provides the sense of place that literary tourists seek out, and it fits within Square 2. But once people have reached the museum, they find a space that no longer corresponds to the setting of the novel. The itinerary of the visitor through the narrow three floors of the museum does not reproduce the movement of the plot through Istanbul; rather it reproduces the chronological sequence of the narrated events, since it follows the novel chapter by chapter. It is a movement that corresponds to narrative time rather than to narrative space, though at many of the stops in this journey – this is to say, at many of the displays – narrative space is evoked through photos of Istanbul. Many museums are organized in such a temporal way, especially history museums. As Azaryahu writes,

In recent years storytelling has become increasingly important in the design of these museums. . . . Museum planners and designers arrange

text and stories along circulation paths that direct the movement of visitors and invest museum space with a sense of sequential, narrative order. Indeed, some contemporary museum buildings have been designed around the stories they are designed to tell.

(2016: 181)

Narratively organized museums normally represent true stories,⁶ but there is no reason why they could not tell fictional stories.

Getting back to the table, the museum does not fit into Squares 1 and 4 because it tells a fictional, not a true, story. It does not fit into Square 2 because the space of the museum is not literally the space of the narrative. The closest fit is Square 3, which is exemplified by theme parks, because just as visitors move through the simulated space of theme parks to experience imaginary stories, so does the visitor who has read the novel move through the Museum of Innocence, connecting each box to a chapter and aided in this task by the audio track. The main difference between theme parks and Pamuk's project is that the real space of most theme parks suggests a fictional story that takes place in a fictional geography, while in Pamuk's museum, the visitor who walks through the display travels in imagination through a fictional story that takes place in real geography. The Museum of Innocence does not consequently fit comfortably into any of the squares that make up the table in Figure 16.1. Yet insofar as the table prompts us ask what prevents an easy classification it its categories, it fulfils a heuristic function that reveals fined-grained distinctions in how stories relate to space and places.

Whether people stumble upon the Museum of Innocence or deliberately seek it, whether they are fans of this particular novel or haven't read it, whether they are looking for evidence of Pamuk's artistic talent or for a nostalgic collection of kitschy objects, Pamuk's combination of novel and museum represents a unique literary experiment and a new form of literary tourism. While most examples of literary tourism are developed bottom up, in response to the success of a certain work (preferably of popular culture) and are not planned by the author, the actual Museum of Innocence was conceived top down by Pamuk, in the sense that the ideas of the museum and of the novel were inextricably entwined in his mind, and the museum is not a commercial exploitation of the success of the novel. Like most works of art, the museum fulfils an obscure personal desire, and it is in order to understand this desire that Pamuk wrote the story of Kemal and Füsun.

Notes

- 1 A modified version of section 2 of this article was presented at the 7th conference on Narrative and Language Studies, Karadeniz University, Trabzon, Turkey, in May 2018. It appeared under the title "On the Eloquence and Silence of Objects: Orhan Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence*" in NALANS, the journal of the association. www.nalans.com/index.php/nalans.

- 2 For Don Quixote, see www.spain.info/en_US/que-quieres/arte/museos/ciudad_real/museo_del_quijote.html; for Sherlock Holmes, www.sherlock-holmes.co.uk/; for William Tell (whose actual existence is doubted by historians), www.tellmuseum.ch/?lang=en.
- 3 It could be argued that people visit these places because of the events that took place there, not because of stories, but it is through stories that they are aware of the events.
- 4 A detailed description of the museum can be found in the Lonely Planet's guide-book *Turkey* (Bainbridge et al., 2015: 96–97).
- 5 A museum that cultivates the nostalgia created by everyday objects is the Museum der Dinge (Museum of Things) in Berlin, which Pamuk quotes as a source of inspiration. The museum captures the passing of time by collecting objects from the 20th century, such as cooking ranges, TV sets, dolls, or Nivea boxes, and showing the changes that their design undergoes over the years. These objects elicit emotional responses by making the visitor think: “I had one like that” or “this is the kind of thing that my grandmother used”.
- 6 Examples of narratively organized museums that tell a true story are the German Historical Museum in Berlin and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. An example of a museum specifically designed around the story to be told is the Berlin Museum of Jewish History, designed by Daniel Libeskind (Azaryahu, 2016: 199–202).

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