

Snapshot 4: ‘What is the most difficult part of your work?’. ‘*Tesettür* is a thin line. We have to be very careful about the kind of garments we present in our magazine. This is why the selection of garments always takes time and it is the most difficult and demanding part of the work we do here. There are not so many companies that produce these kinds of garments. We therefore look for garments from other companies too. They might present the scarf around the neck. We put it on the head. We take long skirts and combine them with other garments that are religiously appropriate’ (the editor of *Âlâ*, in conversation with the author).

Snapshot 5: A warning on an on-line shopping website: ‘Questions from our customers: Can we buy Armine scarves for less than 50 TL? How can we be sure that the products we are buying are original? Let me try answer to such questions... The best thing our customers can do is to buy from known and trusted sites. They should think twice before buying an Armine scarf for 50 TL (http://www.akavm.com/asp/menu_items.asp?ID=79).

Snapshot 6: An uncovered woman flips through an issue of *Âlâ* I happen to be carrying with me. She keeps murmuring to herself: ‘frills, ribbons, ruffles, more frills, ribbons and ruffles’. She finally concludes: ‘oh, dear, they really want to turn these women into cute dolls’. A covered woman flips through the same issue and tells me she does not like the sort of ensembles promoted by this magazine. They are overly decorated. Beauty and modesty can and should be achieved through means other than frills, ribbons and ruffles (conversations with the author).



Memento and exhibition: consuming city, consuming character in Orhan Pamuk’s *The Museum of Innocence*
Laura Helyer | University of Chichester

In the autumn of 2012 I will make a short research trip to Istanbul, supported by a study grant from the British Institute at Ankara. As part of a PhD in creative writing in which I am writing a novel, with a supporting thesis in literary studies, my proposed research in Turkey will form the basis for a chapter of my critical thesis. My research project considers how cultural heritage and a shared identity and history are produced through the example of Orhan Pamuk’s combined novel (2008) and museum (April 2012) project, *The Museum of Innocence*. My study trip to Istanbul will therefore provide an excellent opportunity for primary research at the museum and surrounding Çukurcuma neighbourhood (which Pamuk envisages as being part of the exhibition) for my critical thesis on the novel as archive/catalogue.

My thesis aims to set Pamuk’s work in a wider debate around the relationship between museums and novels, and narratives of the individual and the nation. As Pamuk argues in his recent museum manifesto, ‘the measure of a museum’s success should not be its ability to represent a state, nation or company, or a particular history. It should be its capacity to reveal the humanity of individuals ... The future of museums is inside our own homes’ (Orhan Pamuk, ‘State museums are so antiquated’, *The Guardian*, 20 April 2012). Thus, both creative manifestations aim to document: to capture the detail and celebrate the things of ordinary, everyday experience. The novel also demonstrates how the privileging of object description can displace the reality or subjectivity of a character in a narrative. My main objective is to examine how Pamuk uses the obsessive, collecting/cataloguing impulse and ‘consolation of objects’ as a narrative and structural device to depict characters, to observe the behaviour of secularist bourgeois families and to comment on the Westernisation of Istanbul. I will focus on how the novel is in dialogue with the museum, with how the protagonist, Kemal, addresses the imagined museum visitor throughout, in a retrospective accounting of himself and his collection: ‘having become – with the passage of time – the anthropologist of my own experience’ (Pamuk 2008).

This research will complement work on my PhD novel, which experiments with the form of the archive/inventory novel and is similarly concerned with the nature of memory and loss, and with the desire to possess one’s own experience. As Pamuk encourages, ‘do your museum, and you will have power’. Set in Nova Scotia in the early 20th century, my novel questions notions of truth and fiction through the activity of record-keeping, in which clinical files and museum/archive catalogues are set against the immediacy of the protagonist’s narrative account.

I am very excited about making my first trip to Istanbul and my intention is to develop this work beyond my PhD project, from 2013, as a post-doctoral project.