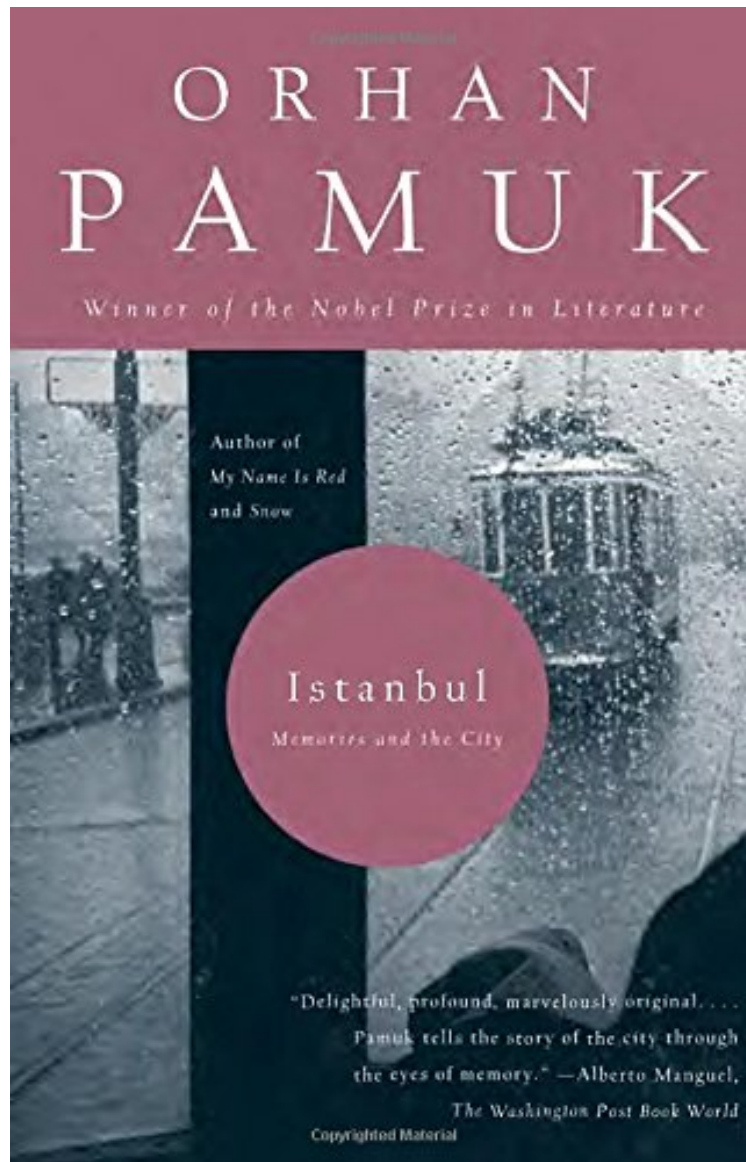


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Istanbul: Memories and the City

Orhan Pamuk

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#95214 in Books Orhan Pamuk 2006-07-11 2006-07-11 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .80 x 5.20l, .83 #File Name: 1400033888400 pages Istanbul Memories and the City | File size: 38.Mb

Orhan Pamuk : Istanbul: Memories and the City before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Istanbul: Memories and the City:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. mehBy Jeffrey HartOrhan Pamuk decided to write an autobiographical account of his decision to be a writer disguised as a book about a city. Growing up in Istanbul, with a formerly wealthy family that had to move several times as their fortunes waned, Pamuk was initially inclined to be a painter. He starts by describing the city through the eyes of other painters and writers, starting with the Europeans

(mostly French) who visited the city from the eighteenth century on. Later he turns to the writings of Turkish authors, mostly journalists, who document the decline of the city after the end of the Ottoman Empire. A key uniting concept for these authors is *huzun* (Turkish for a particular type of melancholy). Another is the difficulty of reconciling the westernizing thrust of the government policies initiated under Atatürk and the nostalgia for doing things the old way. There are also many black and white photographs of the city interspersed through the text, some by the author and mainly of the city in the 1950s and 1960s when the author was still a boy. That city was beautiful when seen from the shores of the Bosphorus but some of its neighborhoods had rotted or burnt out wooden buildings and packs of wild dogs roaming the streets. The young Pamuk grows to love these neighborhoods and spends a lot of time painting them. I read this book after returning from a trip to Turkey. It helped me to understand better the city that I experienced for a short time as a tourist. The writing here is a bit long-winded and self-indulgent but I persisted and in the end I had a good opinion of the book and its writer. My friends who read this before me said I should have started with *My Name is Red*. Oh well.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I was recommended this book by the city of Istanbul (Spoilers) By David Holmes I visited Istanbul briefly recently without knowing what to expect. I was stunned by its beauty, history and allure. I came home wanting to know more. I could not have picked a better book than this one. Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk's beautiful book, "Istanbul, Memories and the City", combines a bracing and poignant memoir of family and childhood with a fascinating, selective but quirky history of Istanbul. Known for his novels that speak to the tensions and opportunities of East meets West stories, that theme pervades this book also. I especially liked the chapters about Nerval, Gautier, and Flaubert's experiences in Istanbul in the 19th century. As a teenager Pamuk decided to paint and by the end of the book he has dropped out of college to "become an artist". In the last chapter his mother lectures him about the need to finish school and become an architect and the misery he will endure as an artist. He leaves the apartment angrily to walk the city's streets at night as he often does. In the last line of the book he decides not to become an artist but to become a writer! Can anyone relate? Beautifully illustrated with black and white photographs and drawings and with a wonderfully produced Audiobook narrated by John Lee (which I listened to as I read the Kindlebook). Read/listen to this book and go to Istanbul to see for yourself. I know I plan to return.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Evocative and informative essays on Istanbul but an underwhelming portrait of Pamuk's adolescence By Ethan Cooper There are many excellent chapters in *ISTANBUL: MEMORIES AND THE CITY*. These include:

- o Melling's Bosphorus Landscapes: This discusses landscapes of Ottoman Istanbul that published in Europe in 1819 and that "...give us a sense of the city's golden age with a fidelity to architectural, topographical, and everyday detail that other western artists, influenced by western ideas of presentation, never achieved... and so it is, as I leaf through... that I begin to think of Istanbul as centerless and infinite and feel myself inside one of the tales I loved so much as a boy."
- o Huzun: This chapter examines a communal melancholy that stems from the experience of living in the ruins of the great Ottoman past. "...in Istanbul," Pamuk observes, "the remains of a glorious past civilization are everywhere visible. No matter how ill-kept, [these] inflict heartache on all who live among them... Huzun does not just paralyze the inhabitants of Istanbul; it also gives them poetic license to be paralyzed."
- o Ahmet Rasim and Other City Columnists: In Istanbul, it has been historically "... imprudent to criticize the sultan, the police, the military..." and so "...literary elites had only one possible target for their scorn, and that was the helpless, faceless crowds, the little people... Everything we know about those unfortunate Istanbulers... we know thanks to...the ever censorious columnists." These "...made the city their subject."
- o Don't Walk down the Street with Your Mouth Open: This chapter presents "... a random sampling of some of the ...advice, warnings, pearls of wisdom, and invective... from Istanbul columnists... over the past 130 years." Here's one example, which was printed in 1974: "When you see a beautiful woman in the street, don't look at her hatefully as if you're about to kill her and don't exhibit excessive longing either; just give her a little smile..."

In these and other chapters, Pamuk develops a deep and loving portrait of Istanbul, its history, and his own nuclear family. This enables the reader to understand the influences that shape Pamuk's sensibility and his consistently elegant writing. Nonetheless, several of the concluding chapters of *ISTANBUL* are tedious to the max. These focus on Pamuk's adolescence and convey little more than the usual dilemmas and angst of a talented upper middleclass boy whose path to adulthood is uncertain. In this case, adolescent quandaries lead to this memoir's concluding sentences when Pamuk, then a university student, declares to his mother: "I don't want to be an artist. I'm going to be a writer." Still, his adolescence is not particularly interesting, especially in contrast to Pamuk's rich and quirky history of an ancient city and people, which is the great subject of this book. I was skimming near the end and round up to four stars.

A shimmering evocation, by turns intimate and panoramic, of one of the world's great cities, by its foremost writer. Orhan Pamuk was born in Istanbul and still lives in the family apartment building where his mother first held him in her arms. His portrait of his city is thus also a self-portrait, refracted by memory and the melancholy or *hzn* that all Istanbulers share: the sadness that comes of living amid the ruins of a lost empire. With cinematic fluidity, Pamuk moves from his glamorous, unhappy parents to the gorgeous, decrepit mansions overlooking the Bosphorus; from the dawning of his self-consciousness to the writers and painters both Turkish and foreign who would shape his consciousness of his city. Like Joyce's Dublin and Borges's Buenos Aires, Pamuk's Istanbul is a triumphant encounter of

place and sensibility, beautifully written and immensely moving.

From Publishers Weekly Turkish novelist Pamuk (Snow) presents a breathtaking portrait of a city, an elegy for a dead civilization and a meditation on life's complicated intimacies. The author, born in 1952 into a rapidly fading bourgeois family in Istanbul, spins a masterful tale, moving from his fractured extended family, all living in a communal apartment building, out into the city and encompassing the entire Ottoman Empire. Pamuk sees the slow collapse of the once powerful empire hanging like a pall over the city and its citizens. Central to many Istanbul residents' character is the concept of hzn (melancholy). Istanbul's hzn, Pamuk writes, "is a way of looking at life that... is ultimately as life affirming as it is negating." His world apparently in permanent decline, Pamuk revels in the darkness and decay manifest around him. He minutely describes horrific accidents on the Bosphorus Strait and his own recurring fantasies of murder and mayhem. Throughout, Pamuk details the breakdown of his family: elders die, his parents fight and grow apart, and he must find his way in the world. This is a powerful, sometimes disturbing literary journey through the soul of a great city told by one of its great writers. 206 photos. (June 10) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Bookmarks Magazine Reminiscent of works by Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel Garcia Mrquez, Pamuks novels, mostly set in his native Turkey, have racked up an International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, New York Times Notable Books of the Year, and profiles on NPR (see Snow, ***1/2 Nov/Dec 2004). Marcel Proust comes to many critics minds when describing Istanbul, an introspective account that transcends the memoir, as it also describes a city losing its identity. More than a city or guide book, Istanbul is "the most haunting, heartbreaking, gorgeous book ever about a city," says The San Diego Union-Tribune. Although Pamuks memoir concludes with his adolescence, it rings true to the universal coming-of-age experience. Copyright 2004 Phillips Nelson Media, Inc. From Booklist In chapter 10, Pamuk explains the ambiguities of huzun, the Turkish term for melancholy. This single word provides a fascinating window into the culture and history of Istanbul, and even more so, into the author's memories of growing up amid the ruined glory of the Ottoman Empire. Pamuk (Snow, 2004) is blessed with the ability to recall not only the events of his childhood with clarity but also images and feelings; and the interplay of then-Orhan's naivete with now-Orhan's nuancing is truly remarkable. If readers are inclined to be suspicious of a fiction writer's memories--as well they should be--more than 200 photos and prints provide arresting physical evidence for Pamuk's metaphysical reality. Short, lyrical chapters span his early childhood through young adulthood, focusing always on his relationship with the city and its history. In a shrinking world full of rootless wanderers, it's surprisingly rare to read of someone who feels compelled to stay "in the same city, on the same street, in the same house, gazing at the same view"--and instructive to see how much can be learned thereby. Keir Graff Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved