

TRUE LOVE OR FETISH: ABSTRACT AND MATERIALISTIV OBSESSIONS IN
NABOKOV'S *LOLITA* AND PAMUK'S *THE MUSEUM OF INNOCENCE*

by

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Abstract

My thesis project is a combination of a comparative analysis of the two novels, Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* and Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*, and a social-anthropological survey of the visitors of the Museum of Innocence located in Istanbul, which is constructed in tandem with the novel of the same name, about the agency of objects exhibited in the museum. My primary focus is the obsession of the two protagonists, Humbert Humbert and Kemal, towards their love interests, Lolita and Füsün, which is manifested in the forms of art that the protagonists create after losing their beloved ones. I apply psychoanalytical literary criticism, the theory that provides deeper insights into characters, themes, and symbolism, to analyze the protagonists' obsessions. In my psychoanalytical literary analysis, I rely on Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, and Irvin Yalom's theories and readings because they represent major eras in the history of psychoanalysis such as classical, structuralist, and existentialist psychoanalysis, respectively. Moreover, I provide an anthropological and historical overview of exhibiting collections in museums which is a true demonstration of the agency of things, the theory that I apply when I evaluate the answers that I acquired from the survey I conducted in Istanbul. I believe my work is important because it shows how the obsessions of the novels' protagonists can be viewed through the lens of three major psychoanalysts' theories and the theory of agency of objects.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Kamilya Khamitova. No part of this work has been previously published.

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Introduction

Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* is a novel written in 1955 that follows the tradition of confession in Western literature. Particularly, *Lolita* is narrated by a middle-aged white man named Humbert Humbert, who is writing his confession in prison before his death about his crime, repeated rape and abuse of the teenage Lolita (real name – Dolores Haze). Many critics have argued whether *Lolita* should be considered a love story, a gothic horror novel, or a confession novel and even though these debates are still present, I propose to view *Lolita* as a life story of a psychologically obsessed and delusional narrator Humbert, who displaces his unattained sexual desire for his dead beloved Annabel Leigh onto the girls of the same age as she was when she died. In my thesis project, I apply Freudian, Lacanian, and Yalom's concepts to analyze *Lolita* and the heated debate between Nabokovian scholars about whether Humbert views Lolita as a real child or she is just a figment of imagination to him to support my argument.

Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* is written in 2008 by a fictional character Orhan, a writer friend of the novel's protagonist Kemal, a middle-aged man who falls in love with his eighteen-year-old relative Füsün and asks Orhan to write a story of his love life with Füsün from his perspective. Similar to Humbert, Kemal becomes obsessed with a girl who is half his age, but fails to marry her due to, firstly, an engagement with Sibel and then the difference in their financial status and Füsün's later marriage. Even though, at first sight, Kemal's story in *The Museum of Innocence* can be considered an ordinary story about a broken-hearted man, who makes a wrong decision and thus suffers his whole life, in fact, it is an anthropological novel because Füsün's objects that Kemal obsessively collects and later exhibits in the Museum of Innocence embody the cultural history of Turkey between 1979

and 1983.¹ Most importantly, apart from demonstrating and embracing the rich history of Turkey, *The Museum of Innocence* is a psychoanalytically complicated story that provides an insight to Kemal's desire "to keep this moment of timeless happiness from slipping away, indirectly through fetishistic objects of meditation,"² which results in the foundation of the Museum of Innocence in Istanbul.

Motivated by a keen interest in psychoanalytical literary criticism, the intention was set to analyze the portrayal of obsession in Nabokov's *Lolita* and Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*. Psychoanalysis asserts that such obsession is shaped by the unconscious act of evading thoughts and feelings considered unacceptable. The protagonists, Humbert and Kemal, in Nabokov's *Lolita* and Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* obsess over the loss of their loved ones which gives rise to the creation of art such as a confessional novel and a museum, respectively. I believe that the representation of obsessive behavior and what it eventually results in in the two novels is a peculiar case study that demonstrates how persistent intrusive thoughts caused by distress can lead to the creation of eternal masterpieces. To study the object of obsession in the two novels, not only did I apply psychoanalytical literary criticism, but I also undertook an anthropological study of museums, applied the theory of the agency of objects, and conducted a survey in the Museum of Innocence in Istanbul to prove that objects play an important role in the formation of obsession. I propose the idea that the obsession can be analyzed through the point of view of psychoanalytical literary criticism and the theory of the agency of objects, which aims at incorporating abstract and materialistic representations of obsessions of the protagonists of the novels, Humbert Humbert and Kemal.

¹ Irmak Ertuna, "The Mystery of the Object and Anthropological Materialism: Orhan Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence* and André Breton's *Nadja*," *Journal of Modern Literature* 33, no. 3 (2010): 99.

² Frances L. Restuccia, "A Black Passion: Voiding Melancholic Obsession in Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence*," *American Imago* 73, no. 1 (2016): 71.

Chapter I: *Lolita* and *The Museum of Innocence*

1.1. Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*

Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* has been the subject of numerous scholarly debates since its publication in 1955. The novel's controversial subject matter - the sexual relationship between an adult man and a young girl - has been a major point of contention among critics. In this overview, I will explore some of the key debates surrounding the novel, including its depiction of sexuality, morality, and gender.

One of the most significant debates surrounding *Lolita* concerns its portrayal of sexuality. Critics such as the Nabokovian scholar Andrea Carosso have argued that the novel's treatment of sexuality is both subversive and problematic. On the one hand, the novel is seen as a critique of the repressive sexual norms of postwar America. Humbert's desire for Lolita is presented as a powerful and uncontrollable force, in contrast to the rigid sexual morality of the era. According to Carosso, "...upon its long-awaited U.S. release in 1958, *Lolita* was met by generalized prurience as well as widespread chastisement for its explicit treatment of deviant sexuality, but also for its disdainful accounts of American life,"³ which shows that the first reason why *Lolita* received criticism was that the novel's frank and explicit portrayal of sexual deviance. It was considered scandalous and provocative at the time and led to accusations of indecency and immorality. The second reason was that the novel's depiction of American life was seen as contemptuous and disrespectful, further fueling the negative reactions from critics and the public. Carosso further argues that *Lolita* was received with a combination of prurient interest and moral outrage, which reflected the cultural anxieties and values of the time period.⁴

³ Andrea Carosso, "Nabokov's Cold War Novels and the Containment of American Sexuality," *Comparative Studies in Modernism* 1, no. 7 (2015): 44.

⁴ Andrea Carosso, "Nabokov's Cold War Novels and the Containment of American Sexuality," 45.

At the same time, however, the novel has been criticized for its portrayal of Lolita's sexuality. Some critics have argued that Nabokov objectifies Lolita, reducing her to a sexualized object for male consumption.⁵ Others have countered that Nabokov's portrayal of Lolita's sexuality is complex, and that it challenges conventional stereotypes about female desire. As Gigi Durham puts it, "Nabokov's Lolita is a nuanced character whose sexuality is complex—like many preadolescent girls, she is sexually curious—but she has no control over her relationship with Humbert, which is abusive and manipulative,"⁶ which demonstrates that Lolita is a victim, but it also acknowledges that she has a curiosity for sex. Overall, the novel shows how a girl's desire and ability to engage in sexual acts can be complicated by the oppression she faces.

Apart from a vast body of psychoanalytical scholarship that is present on the theme of obsession in Nabokov's *Lolita*, there are numerous works that evaluate the extent to which Humbert's obsession with Lolita is determined by his poetic vision of her rather than the real her. Towards the end of the 20th century, scholars moved from viewing *Lolita* from a moral perspective that regards Humbert as a pedophile to examining Humbert's pedophilic inclinations as the result of the artistic pleasure that may have driven Humbert to seduce Lolita. Many critics have argued that the artistry of Humbert's obsession can explain his crime because, as Linda Kauffman puts it, "From beginning to end, she remains an enigma to him... Lolita does not exist for Humbert because he fails to imagine her except as a projection of his desires."⁷ In other words, Kauffman claims that the artistic bliss is what blinds Humbert and blocks his perception of Lolita as a true child.

⁵ Michele Meek, "Lolita Speaks: Disrupting Nabokov's 'Aesthetic Bliss,'" *Girlhood Studies* 10, no. 3 (2017): 162.

⁶ M. Gigi Durham, *The Lolita Effect: The Media Sexualization of Young Girls and What We Can Do About It*. (New York: Overlook Press, 2008): 25.

⁷ Linda Kauffman, "Framing *Lolita*: Is There a Woman in the Text?" In *Lolita*, edited by Harold Bloom, (New York: Chelsea House, 1993): 150-155.

On the other hand, in the beginning of the 21st century, scholars such as Quayle started to argue that Humbert was aware of the real Lolita, and that this was her real body that he was obsessed with rather than the pure image of her. Quayle argues that Humbert is not ignorant of the real Lolita and her body in Nabokov's *Lolita*, and to suggest otherwise obscures important aspects of the novel such as Humbert's moral culpability, the text's moral message on pedophilia, and the objectification of women.⁸ Interestingly, even though there are scholars that are of the diametrically opposite opinions when it comes to judging Humbert's intentions, there are such critics as Vladimir Alexandrov, Elisabeth Bronfen, and Michael Glynn who argue that "Humbert experiences an intermittent awareness of 'the' true Lolita, breaking through the haze of his false poetic vision of her,"⁹ which shows that, despite his confession that he was solely interested in the art and not sex when he was with Lolita, Humbert was aware of Lolita's realness and thus he should be considered a pedophile.

Another area of debate concerns the novel's treatment of morality. Critics have argued that the novel raises difficult questions about the nature of morality and the relationship between morality and art. Some have praised Nabokov's handling of ethical issues, arguing that he presents Humbert as a complex and morally ambiguous character, rather than a simple villain. According to Boyd,

Humbert is a triumph of the imagination... For all Humbert's vices, Nabokov refuses to make him a subhuman ogre and even selects him to express his own positives: the inordinate riches of consciousness, the intensity of passion, the tenderness of the senses, the mind's many-branched awareness within the moment,"¹⁰

which shows the fact that Humbert evokes both disgust and sympathy in the reader is evidence that Nabokov did not write the novel solely to demonstrate the amoral power of

⁸ Anika Susan Quayle, "Lolita Is Dolores Haze: The 'Real' Child and the 'Real' Body in *Lolita*," *Nabokov Online Journal* 3(2009): 20.

⁹ Anika Susan Quayle, "Lolita Is Dolores Haze: The 'Real' Child and the 'Real' Body in *Lolita*," 13.

¹⁰ Brian Boyd, *Nabokov: Novels, 1969-1974*, (New York: Penguin, 1996), 234.

artistic creation, but rather to create a sophisticated villain. Others, however, have criticized the novel for its apparent lack of moral judgment. Steven F. Walker argues that Humbert's actions of planning to rape Lolita while she is asleep are morally reprehensible and inappropriate,¹¹ especially given her young age and inability to comprehend the consequences of her relationship with Humbert. This indicates that Nabokov's portrayal of the subject matter lacks morality or even promotes immorality, as it fails to provide a coherent ethical structure for readers to follow.

Gender is another important area of debate in relation to *Lolita*. Some critics have argued that the novel is a critique of patriarchal power structures and male entitlement. Lawrence Ratna sees Humbert's desire for Lolita as a symptom of a broader cultural problem, in which men are encouraged to see women as sexual objects to be possessed and controlled.¹² Others, however, have countered that the novel reinforces patriarchal attitudes towards gender.¹³ Honeini argues that Humbert's patriarchal perspective distorts the reader's perception of Dolores, as her agency is erased by Humbert's rigid desires.¹⁴ This highlights the silencing of Dolores at the beginning of the story, with Humbert's gaze reinforcing traditional gender roles and leading to her oppression as a central theme in the narrative. Sheibeh and Deedari argue that patriarchal society exerts control over Dolores as a female character in *Lolita*,¹⁵ which is evidenced by the domination of forceful male characters like Humbert and Quilty. Their argument reveals the extent to which an individual's life is influenced by society, and how Dolores becomes a victim of this patriarchal system.

¹¹ Steven F. Walker, "Nabokov's *Lolita* and Goethe's *Faust*: The Ghost in the Novel," *Comparative Literature Studies* 46, no. 3 (2009): 513.

¹² Lawrence Ratna, "Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*: The Representation and the Reality Re-Examining *Lolita* in the Light of Research into Child Sexual Abuse," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* 25, no. 8 (2020): 25.

¹³ Ahmed Honeini, "'My Poor Little Girl': *Lolita* and Nabokov's *Faulkner*," *The Faulkner Journal* 33, no. 1 (2019): 68.

¹⁴ Ahmed Honeini, "'My Poor Little Girl': *Lolita* and Nabokov's *Faulkner*," 68.

¹⁵ Pegah Sheibeh and Reza Deedari, "Norman Fairclough's Textually Oriented Discourse Analysis in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*," *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature* 5, no. 2 (2016): 169.

One of the most significant debates surrounding *Lolita* concerns the question of whether the novel is art or pornography.¹⁶ This debate has been particularly contentious, with critics taking different positions on the issue. Alfred J. Appel, who is the editor of *The Annotated Lolita*, contends that "*Lolita* is not merely about sexual perversion, but rather about love and the search for ineffable beauty, and as such . . . ultimately 'about' its own creation."¹⁷ This suggests that *Lolita* should be regarded as a masterpiece deserving of scholarly analysis and critical appreciation. Alfred J. Appel sees Nabokov's handling of the subject matter as a testament to his artistic skill, and his ability to create complex and memorable characters.¹⁸ Others, however, have argued that the novel is little more than pornography, with no redeeming artistic qualities. Megerle writes that some may perceive the novel as a cheap exploitation of a taboo subject matter and criticize Nabokov for his apparent lack of moral judgment "... in part because the novel offers no authorial judgment of Humbert Humbert's actions, and in part because Part I is pornographic in effect. It teases our moral sense and our physical senses as well,"¹⁹ which goes to show how differently people may view *Lolita* depending on their moral judgements.

While the novel explores explicit and disturbing themes, it is essential to approach the discussion with nuance and consider the complexities of Nabokov's text. One of the central moral dilemmas that Nabokov sets up is the issue of empathy and identification with an immoral protagonist. Humbert Humbert, the novel's narrator and protagonist is an unrepentant pedophile who engages in a deeply disturbing relationship with the underage girl, Dolores "Lolita" Haze. Nabokov's writing style, characterized by exquisite prose and Humbert's charm, seduces the reader into a peculiar position where they find themselves

¹⁶ Brenda Megerle, "The Tantalization of *Lolita*," *Studies in the Novel* 11, no. 3 (1979): 338.

¹⁷ Alfred Appel, "*Lolita*: The Springboard of Parody," *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature* 8, no. 2 (1967): 209.

¹⁸ Alfred Appel, "*Lolita*: The Springboard of Parody," 211.

¹⁹ Brenda Megerle, "The Tantalization of *Lolita*," 340.

grappling with conflicting emotions.²⁰ The novel presents a challenge to traditional moral judgments, as readers may find themselves sympathizing or even empathizing with a character who engages in reprehensible actions.²¹ This complex response raises important questions about the nature of empathy, the limitations of moral judgment, and the role of literature in eliciting emotional and intellectual responses.

Furthermore, Nabokov's text invites readers to confront their own complicity in the act of reading and the moral implications of consuming a narrative that delves into taboo subjects.²² The author himself seems to acknowledge this dilemma, as he constructs the narrative as a confessional memoir written by Humbert. The act of writing becomes a means of self-reflection and self-examination for both the author and the reader.²³ Nabokov challenges the readers to question their own motives and ethical stance as they navigate the morally treacherous terrain of the story. This raises profound questions about the responsibility of the author in presenting morally ambiguous or controversial subjects and the agency of the reader in interpreting and engaging with such narratives.

Finally, some critics have argued that the controversy surrounding *Lolita* has overshadowed the novel's literary merits. According to Sweeney,

Humbert's doomed attempt to determine his legal culpability coincides with his equally problematic evaluation of his confession's literary merit. The novel's moral and aesthetic design depends, in fact, on the futility of Humbert's efforts to become his own criminal judge and his own critical reviewer,²⁴

²⁰ Leland De la Durantaye, *Style is matter: The moral art of Vladimir Nabokov*, (Cornell University Press, 2007): 50.

²¹ Jen Shelton, "'The Word is Incest': Sexual and Linguistic Coercion in *Lolita*," *Textual Practice* 13, no. 2 (1999): 273.

²² Jen Shelton, "'The Word is Incest': Sexual and Linguistic Coercion in *Lolita*," 275.

²³ *Ibid.*, 277.

²⁴ Susan Elizabeth Sweeney, "'Had I Come Before Myself': Illegitimate Judgments of *Lolita* and Despair," *Cycnos* 24, no. 1 (2003): 31.

which presents the novel as an innovative work of literature, deserving of critical attention for its formal and structural qualities. They suggest that the novel's depiction of time and memory, its use of language and wordplay, and its exploration of cultural and social issues are all worthy of analysis and discussion. Several scholars have discussed a possible error in Nabokov's *Lolita*,²⁵ where Humbert claims to have been in prison for 56 days by November 16, 1952, while also recounting events such as receiving a letter from Lolita on September 22 that would have taken more than 56 days. This issue has been debated by scholars, with some proposing that Nabokov made an error,²⁶ while others suggest that it reveals the falseness of Humbert's story.²⁷ This debate highlights the significance of time as a theme in *Lolita*, where the manipulation and distortion of time contribute to the complex narrative structure and the blurring of reality and fiction.

1.2. Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*

Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* is a novel that has been widely acclaimed for its innovative form and its exploration of themes such as love, obsession, and memory.²⁸ In this overview, I will examine some of the key themes and debates surrounding the novel, including its depiction of Istanbul, its representation of the middle class, and its use of objects as a means of exploring personal and collective memory.

One of the most striking features of *The Museum of Innocence* is its portrayal of Istanbul. The novel is set in the 1970s and 80s, and Pamuk uses the city as a backdrop for exploring the lives of his characters. Istanbul is depicted as a city in transition, caught between tradition and modernity, and struggling to come to terms with its own history.

²⁵ Julian W. Connolly, "'Nature's Reality' or Humbert's 'Fancy'?: Scenes of Reunion and Murder in *Lolita*," *Nabokov Studies*, 2 (1995): 42.

²⁶ Brian Boyd, "Even Homais Nods": Nabokov's Fallibility, or, How to Revise *Lolita*," *Nabokov Studies*, 2 (1995): 64.

²⁷ Leona Toker, *Nabokov: The Mystery of Literary Structures*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1989): 65.

²⁸ Kevin Hannam and Edward Ryan "Time, Authenticity and Photographic Storytelling in *The Museum of Innocence*," *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 14, no. 5-6 (2019): 438.

Hannam and Ryan argue that "...the story of *The Museum of Innocence* as well as the actual museum help us to understand the complexity of authenticity as it is provoked through storytelling such that we may better understand the nature of temporalities in the construction of heritage tourism experiences."²⁹ This indicates that the novel alongside one of the most famous tourist attractions in Istanbul, the Museum of Innocence, translates Pamuk's descriptions of the city that are rich and detailed and evoke a sense of the city's complexity and diversity to the readers and visitors. Critics have praised the novel's depiction of Istanbul, arguing that it captures the city's unique character and reflects its position as a cultural crossroads.³⁰

Another key theme in the novel is the representation of the middle class, mainly because the novel's protagonist, Kemal, is a member of Istanbul's upper middle class and the novel depicts the events that he attends in a circle of his close friends, the representatives of the upper-middle class of Istanbul. Özbey argues that the intentional inclusion of various locations in Istanbul within the novel, where Kemal, the protagonist, went alone or with Füsün during the period of 1975 to 1984,³¹ can be interpreted as a documentation of the social life of Istanbul's middle-upper class during those years, including Pamuk himself. The presents a portrayal of Istanbul's changing social landscape, where traditional Turkish customs coexist with modern foreign influences. For example, in the novel, Kemal writes, "At seven that evening I ushered the first guests ... and like a good host, I offered them drinks. I remember occupying myself with the music for a time, and that I played *Sergeant Pepper*-I liked the cover-and *Simon and Garfunkel*,"³² where Kemal's remark on being a good host represents the value of traditions and foreign liquor names represent Western

²⁹ Kevin Hannam and Edward Ryan "Time, Authenticity and Photographic Storytelling in *The Museum of Innocence*," 438.

³⁰ Ibid., 438.

³¹ İmren Gece Özbey, "Making a Museum of the Past: Reading *A Mind at Peace* and *The Museum of Innocence* Through the Concepts of Museum and City," *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi* 62, no. 2 (2022): 363.

³² Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*, translated by Maureen Freely. (London: Faber & Faber, 2009): 214.

impact. Pamuk presents the upper-middle class as a group that is both privileged and vulnerable, struggling to maintain its status in a rapidly changing society.

The novel explores the tension between individual desire and social norms, as Kemal's obsession with his lover, Füsün, threatens to disrupt his carefully ordered life. Kemal is a wealthy and successful businessman who adheres to the strict social expectations of his upper-middle class Istanbul community. However, when he falls in love with Füsün, a beautiful and alluring young woman from a lower social class, he becomes obsessed with her and begins to break the social rules and norms that have governed his life thus far. Kemal's obsession with Füsün leads him to pursue a relationship with her outside of the traditional boundaries of Turkish society. He becomes involved in a scandalous affair with Füsün and ultimately abandons his engagement to his respectable fiancée in order to be with her. As Kemal becomes more and more consumed with his passion for Füsün, he risks losing everything that he has worked so hard to achieve, including his reputation, his family's honor, and his social standing. Pamuk highlights the conflict between Kemal's individual desires and the expectations of Turkish society, particularly the strict gender roles and class distinctions that govern interactions between men and women.

Despite the novel's critical success, some critics have raised concerns about its portrayal of gender.³³ McClure puts forward an idea that “Füsün is silent in the face of Kemal’s supplications, and she repeatedly sets the terms—that is, limitations—of their relationship. In this way, stereotypical and half-expected gender roles in the text are blurred.”³⁴ This suggests that the novel's female characters, particularly Füsün, are underdeveloped and passive. McClure furthers the argument and states that the novel reinforces patriarchal attitudes towards gender, presenting women as objects to be possessed

³³ Kevin R. McClure, "The Museum of Innocence," *Turkish Studies* 2, no. 11 (2010): 299.

³⁴ Kevin R. McClure, "The Museum of Innocence," 300.

and controlled by men,³⁵ which, in the novel, can be evidenced by Kemal's friends' discriminatory remarks about women. Kemal's friend Berrin says, "Men like him from the heart of Anatolia... Girls would rather marry him through a matchmaker because they know if they go gallivanting about town with him too much, a man like this will secretly begin to think of them as whores,"³⁶ highlighting the prevalence of gender stereotypes in Turkish society. Others have countered that the novel's portrayal of gender is more complex than it first appears, and that Pamuk's use of objects as a means of exploring memory and desire is itself a critique of patriarchal power structures.³⁷ Ertuna argues that the novel is a critique of the conventional gender issues prevalent in Turkish society by stating that "...the repressed female who resists objectification turns to a suicidal acting out. Füsün's tragic death reveals the gender dynamics of modern Turkish patriarchy. She shares the fate of most Turkish women who are unable to fulfill their own desires."³⁸

The next key theme in the novel is the role of objects as a means of exploring personal and collective memory. According to Sönmez, the memories that Kemal harbors in his mind are not just a personal account of his life, but they represent the collective imagery of Istanbul, including the streets, houses, neighborhoods, and objects of the city during the 1970s.³⁹ This indicates that the novel aims to show how the collective memory of Istanbul during that time period is woven into the personal story of its protagonist, Kemal, and the objects that he associates with Füsün. The novel takes its name from the museum that Kemal creates, which is filled with objects that remind him of his relationship with Füsün. The museum in the novel serves as a tool for Kemal to retain his memories and to reconcile with

³⁵ Ibid., 299.

³⁶ Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*, 141.

³⁷ Irmak Ertuna, "The Mystery of the Object and Anthropological Materialism: Orhan Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence* and André Breton's *Nadja*," 107.

³⁸ Ibid., 107.

³⁹ Lebriz Sönmez, "A Heterotopic and Glocal Place: *The Museum of Innocence*," *Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 21, no. 2 (2019): 1021

his history. The novel explores the relationship between objects and memory on a broader scale, suggesting that objects have the power to evoke collective memories and to shape our understanding of the past.

Critics have praised the novel for its innovative form, which combines elements of the novel, the museum exhibit, and the catalog.⁴⁰ The novel is structured around a series of numbered sections, each of which corresponds to an object in Kemal's museum, and it includes photographs, newspaper clippings, and other documents, blurring the boundary between fiction and reality. Some critics have argued that the novel's formal experimentation is a means of exploring the relationship between memory and representation, suggesting that the novel is as much about the act of remembering as it is about the characters and events it depicts.⁴¹ In his interview for Spiegel International, Pamuk observes that:

We are attached to objects because of the experiences, joys, or feelings of security, of happiness, of friendship, whatever we may enjoy in life, because we relate these emotions to corresponding objects. My protagonist is deeply in love, I would say infatuated, with Füsün; he had enjoyed immense happiness. Now, in order to preserve this, or relive this, he gets close to her and collects objects that remind him of those moments. I strongly believe that we collect objects because they make us remember our good moments.⁴²

It can be inferred that the overarching theme of memory is one of the novel's core motifs that resonates not only with Turkish but international readers and makes the novel a distinctive work of literature.

⁴⁰ Sabah Zaib, "Book Review: Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*," *ARIEL-An International Research Journal of English Language and Literature* 26 (2017): 125.

⁴¹ İmren Gece Özbey, "Making a Museum of the Past: Reading *A Mind at Peace* and *The Museum of Innocence* Through the Concepts of Museum and City," 355.

⁴² Orhan Pamuk, "Spiegel Interview with Orhan Pamuk," *Der Spiegel Online* (2008) <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0.1518.584586.00.html>, accessed 5 April 2023.

Kemal's perception of time leads to a discussion about the act of collecting objects related to his beloved Füsün. This act of collecting is akin to Walter Benjamin's concept of collecting, as discussed in "Unpacking my Library: A Talk About Book Collecting." Benjamin posits that collecting serves as a barrier against the flood of memories that collectors experience when they look at their possessions. According to Benjamin, "Every passion borders on the chaotic, but the collector's passion borders on the chaos of memories."⁴³ This begs the question of whether Kemal's collecting of Füsün's possessions also borders on the chaos of memories. Kemal attaches meaning and memories to even the most basic objects around him, and he seems to use these objects to locate himself and order his memories, especially as someone who is between Eastern and Western identities. Benjamin believes that a collector's passion stems from the item's period, region, craftsmanship, and former ownership, creating a magical encyclopedia whose quintessence is the object's fate.⁴⁴ Therefore, it is not wrong to claim that Kemal is using the objects to locate himself and his self-identity. Even before his affair with Füsün, Kemal had a habit of ascribing meaning to objects and remembering them by their associated memories, indicating that he had melancholic tendencies. The objects, therefore, help Kemal to feel closer to Füsün and order his memories, giving him a chance to find his location and self.

1.3. Vladimir Nabokov's Influence on Orhan Pamuk

Vladimir Nabokov's personal influence on Orhan Pamuk is a subject that has been discussed by literary scholars and critics. Brian Boyd, in particular, refers to Pamuk as a "passionate Nabokov fan,"⁴⁵ emphasizing the profound impact Nabokov's works have had on Pamuk's literary sensibilities. This recognition of Pamuk's admiration for Nabokov further

⁴³ Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1968): 61.

⁴⁴ Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library," 61.

⁴⁵ Neil J. Cornwell, "Secrets, Memories and Lives: Nabokov and Pamuk," in *Transitional Nabokov*, (New York: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers): 116.

enhances the understanding of their literary connection. Additionally, Tom LeClair goes as far as to describe Nabokov as "Pamuk's literary uncle,"⁴⁶ highlighting the depth of influence that Nabokov holds in Pamuk's creative development. This familial metaphor suggests a profound and personal connection, indicating that Nabokov's influence goes beyond mere admiration and permeates Pamuk's artistic DNA. Furthermore, Neil Cornwell's speculation about Nabokov landing in Constantinople on his way to Crimea in 1919 raises intriguing possibilities.⁴⁷ Considering Pamuk's deep connection to Istanbul, the city of Constantinople, Cornwell's conjecture provides an imaginative lens through which one can contemplate the potential impact such an encounter might have had on Pamuk's artistic development. While speculative, this idea invites reflection on the possible convergences between the two writers and the shared cultural and historical contexts that shaped their works.

Incorporating these perspectives, it becomes apparent that Nabokov's personal influence on Pamuk is multifaceted. Collectively, these insights shed light on the personal and intellectual kinship between Nabokov and Pamuk. Nabokov's influence resonates deeply with Pamuk, informing his artistic sensibilities and shaping his approach to literature. The recognition of Pamuk as a devoted fan and the notion of Nabokov as a literary relative contribute to a richer understanding of their relationship, revealing the profound impact of Nabokov's legacy on Pamuk's literary journey.

Orhan Pamuk himself in his essay collection "Other Colors," he expresses his deep admiration and love for Vladimir Nabokov and his novels, highlighting the personal influence Nabokov has had on his own literary journey. Pamuk's reverence for Nabokov is evident in his essays, where he discusses the impact of Nabokov's writing style, themes, and artistic vision on his own work. Pamuk writes, "Nabokov is another writer whom I read over

⁴⁶ Tom LeClair, "Nabokov in Anatolia," *Nation* 264, no. 13 (1997): 38.

⁴⁷ Neil J. Cornwell, "Secrets, Memories and Lives: Nabokov and Pamuk," 118.

and over, and I doubt I will ever be able to give him up. When I am going on a trip, preparing my suitcase for a summer holiday, or setting off for a hotel to write the last pages of my latest novel, when I pack my dog-eared copies of *Lolita*, *Pale Fire*, and *Speak, Memory* (which in my view shows Nabokov's prose at its finest), why do I feel as if I am packing a box of my medicines?"⁴⁸ This suggests that Pamuk's essay "Cruelty, Beauty, and Time: On Nabokov's *Ada* and *Lolita*" reveals his emotional connection to Nabokov's novels. He speaks of his love for Nabokov's works, particularly mentioning the profound impact that novels such as *Lolita* and *Pale Fire* have had on him as a reader and a writer. Pamuk's personal appreciation for Nabokov's novels extends beyond mere admiration; it demonstrates a deep emotional resonance and a sense of kinship with Nabokov's literary sensibilities. Moreover, Pamuk's love for Nabokov extends beyond the pages of his books. In interviews and public statements, Pamuk has spoken of the inspiration he draws from Nabokov's dedication to craftsmanship, his meticulous approach to writing, and his unwavering commitment to his artistic vision. Nabokov's artistic integrity and uncompromising pursuit of literary excellence serve as a guiding force for Pamuk, influencing his own approach to writing and storytelling.

Vladimir Nabokov's personal influence on Orhan Pamuk is evident not only in terms of literary inspiration but also in the way Pamuk contemplates the exchange of civilizations, nations, and languages, as expressed in his book *Istanbul*. Pamuk acknowledges the cherished and fashionable idea in literature of writers like Nabokov and Conrad who immersed themselves in foreign cultures and languages, a path he himself admits he has not fully explored. In *Istanbul*, Pamuk writes, "There are writers like Nabokov and Conrad who exchanged their civilization and nations, and even languages. It is very cherished and fashionable idea in literature and in a sense, I am embarrassed that I have done none of

⁴⁸ Orhan Pamuk, "Cruelty, Beauty, and Time: On Nabokov's *Ada* and *Lolita*," In *Other Colors: Essays and a Story*, (New York: Vintage, 2008): 205.

this.”⁴⁹ Pamuk's statement reflects his admiration for authors like Nabokov who ventured beyond the boundaries of their own civilizations and embraced new cultural experiences. Nabokov, renowned for his linguistic prowess and ability to write fluently in multiple languages, exemplifies this idea of transcending one's origins and embracing new literary horizons. Pamuk's appreciation for Nabokov's ability to exchange civilizations, nations, and languages demonstrates the profound impact Nabokov has had on his thinking about the possibilities and potential of literature.

At the same time, Pamuk's self-reflective admission that he has not fully engaged in this kind of exchange implies a sense of self-awareness and perhaps even a touch of embarrassment. By acknowledging that he has not followed in the footsteps of writers like Nabokov, Pamuk displays a modesty and a recognition of his own limitations as an author. It also highlights his desire to explore and expand his own literary boundaries, suggesting that he continues to be influenced by Nabokov's example and the notion of cultural exchange. In essence, Nabokov's personal influence on Pamuk goes beyond the realm of literary techniques and themes. It encompasses a broader perspective on the possibilities of literature and the role of cultural exchange in shaping a writer's worldview. Pamuk's acknowledgment of his own aspirations and the influence of writers like Nabokov reveals a continued admiration for those who have embraced the exchange of civilizations, nations, and languages as a means to enrich their literary creations.

1.4. Obsession in *Lolita* and *The Museum of Innocence*

The theme of obsession in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* has been extensively explored by scholars and critics, who have offered various interpretations of the novel's portrayal of this theme. One scholar who has written extensively on this topic is Michael Wood, who argues that Nabokov's depiction of obsession is both psychological and ethical, as he explores the

⁴⁹ Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul*, (New York: Vintage, 2006): 6.

ways in which Humbert's obsession with Lolita affects not only his own psyche but also the larger moral fabric of society. Wood contends that Humbert's obsession is a form of "transgression,"⁵⁰ as he violates social norms and moral codes in his pursuit of Lolita. This transgression is not only sexual but also linguistic and literary, as Humbert manipulates language and narrative to justify his actions and to create a "parallel universe"⁵¹ in which he can indulge his desires without consequences. Wood argues that Nabokov uses this linguistic manipulation to critique the moral relativism and nihilism of modern society, showing how obsession can erode the boundaries between reality and fiction and lead to a breakdown in moral order.⁵²

To foreground the gendered power dynamics of Humbert's obsession, some critics argue that reading *Lolita* can be equated with reading pornography. Julian W. Connolly remarks on the first reactions to *Lolita* in 1955 and writes that "To Graham Green's unadorned nomination of the novel as one of the best books of 1955, John Gordon responded with outrage: "Sheer unrestrained pornography"."⁵³ Recognizing *Lolita* as pornography raises questions about the relationship between gender and genre and the implications of such relations. For instance, Virginia Blum argues that pornography unites a male pornographer with a male viewer and empowers them through the victimization of a female body.⁵⁴ In the same way, Humbert seeks to trap and dominate Lolita while Nabokov subjugates the female reader by entrapping her in a sadistic interpretive rite that demonstrates her powerlessness to do anything but meekly obey his textual commands.⁵⁵ Moreover, it can be argued that

⁵⁰ Michael Wood, *The Magician's Doubts: Nabokov and the Risks of Fiction*, (Princeton University Press, 1998): 234.

⁵¹ Michael Wood, *The Magician's Doubts: Nabokov and the Risks of Fiction*, 110.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 125.

⁵³ Julian W. Connolly, *A Reader's Guide to Nabokov's Lolita*, (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2009): 141.

⁵⁴ Virginia Blum, *Hide and Seek: The Child Between Psychoanalysis and Fiction*, (Illinois: Illinois U. P., 1995): 125.

⁵⁵ Colleen Kennedy, "The White Man's Guest, or Why Aren't More Feminists Reading *Lolita*?" In *Narrative and Culture*, edited by Janice Carlisle and Daniel R. Schwartz, (Athens, GA, and London: University of Georgia Press, 1994): 49.

Nabokov uses Humbert's obsession to critique the patriarchal power structures that underpin society, showing how men use their positions of power to exploit and control women.

Humbert's obsession with Lolita is a form of domination and that his attempts to justify his actions through language and narrative are part of a larger pattern of male power and control. Nabokov's depiction of Lolita's agency is complex, as he shows her as both a victim of Humbert's obsession and a shrewd and resourceful young woman who is able to exert some control over her situation. This complexity is part of what makes the novel so powerful, as it forces readers to confront the ways in which gender, power, and agency are intertwined in human relationships.

Finally, Morris Dickstein has written on the theme of obsession in *Lolita* and has focused on the novel's use of parody and satire to critique American culture. Dickstein argues that Nabokov's novel *Lolita* presents a satirical view of American culture, portraying it as “a cartoon of natural wonders, impoverished humanity, and purblind compulsion.”⁵⁶ The character of Humbert is depicted as being enslaved to his fantasies of American youth culture, which is both coarse and energetic.⁵⁷ According to Dickstein, this obsession is used by Nabokov to reveal the hypocrisy and moral corruption of American society. By depicting the pursuit of pleasure and desire as leading to a breakdown in social and moral order, Nabokov critiques the fetishization of youth and sexuality in American culture.⁵⁸

Overall, these scholarly works offer different but complementary perspectives on the theme of obsession in *Lolita*. Whether exploring the psychological, ethical, gendered, or cultural dimensions of the novel's portrayal of this theme, they all highlight the power and complexity of Nabokov's writing and the ways in which his work continues to provoke and challenge both readers and scholars. This dissertation seeks to provide a comprehensive view

⁵⁶ Morris Dickstein, *Leopards in the Temple: The Transformation of American Fiction, 1945-1970*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2002): 124.

⁵⁷ Morris Dickstein, *Leopards in the Temple: The Transformation of American Fiction*, 122.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 124.

of the theme of obsession in Nabokov's *Lolita* by examining the insights of three prominent psychoanalytic theorists—Freud, Lacan, and Yalom. By using the principles of psychoanalytic literary criticism, the focus will be on analyzing Humbert's intense preoccupation with *Lolita* within the context of scholarly discourse.

Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's influence on Orhan Pamuk is evident in the thematic exploration of obsession and societal disconnection found in their respective works, specifically in the characters of Mümtaz from Tanpınar's *A Mind at Peace* and Kemal from Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*. Mümtaz's obsession with his divorced wife Nuran and Kemal's infatuation with Füsün not only depict individual fixations but also serve as powerful symbols of societies grappling with a loss of meaning in their lives.⁵⁹ Tanpınar's influence on Pamuk can be seen in the shared themes and narrative approaches employed by both authors. Tanpınar, known for his profound reflections on Turkish culture and history, influenced Pamuk's own exploration of societal changes and the impact on personal identities.

In Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's *A Mind at Peace* and Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*, the characters of Mümtaz and Kemal exhibit striking similarities in their obsessive attachments to their love interests, Mümtaz's obsession with his divorced wife Nuran and Kemal's obsession with Füsün. Both characters extend beyond the realm of physical needs, serving as symbols of a society that has lost its sense of purpose and meaning in life. Mümtaz's character in *Inner Peace* epitomizes a man whose life has become consumed by his obsession with his divorced wife, Nuran. His fixation on Nuran goes beyond mere physical desire; it represents a deeper longing for connection, emotional fulfillment, and a restoration of his sense of self. Mümtaz's obsession with Nuran symbolizes a society grappling with a loss of identity, searching for meaning and completeness through idealized

⁵⁹ İmren Gece Özbey, "Making a Museum of the Past: Reading *A Mind at Peace* and *The Museum of Innocence* Through the Concepts of Museum and City," *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi* 62, no. 2 (2022): 353.

romantic relationships. Similarly, Kemal in *The Museum of Innocence* becomes completely enthralled by his infatuation with Füsün. His obsession with her transcends physical attraction, reflecting a societal yearning for significance and purpose in a rapidly changing world. Kemal's relentless pursuit of Füsün and his curation of the museum dedicated to their relationship highlight a larger societal need for meaning and validation in the face of societal transformations.

Both characters serve as symbols of individuals who have lost their sense of self and purpose within their respective societies. Their obsessions become vehicles through which Tanpınar and Pamuk explore the existential condition of a society that has become disconnected from its roots, traditions, and collective identity. Mumtaz and Kemal's obsessions reflect a yearning for emotional fulfillment, a desire to reclaim a sense of meaning and belonging in a world that appears fragmented and devoid of purpose. The narratives surrounding Mumtaz and Kemal not only examine individual psychological struggles but also offer a broader commentary on societal disillusionment. These characters represent the larger societal landscape, embodying the yearning of individuals to regain a sense of meaning and purpose amidst the disintegration of traditional values and cultural shifts.

In *The Museum of Innocence*, the names of the two main characters, Kemal and Füsün, carry symbolic meanings that are intricately linked to the theme of obsession explored throughout the novel. The names Kemal and Füsün not only represent the individual characters but also serve to convey deeper connotations that enhance the exploration of obsession in the story. The name Kemal, which means "maturity," "perfection," and "refinement" in Turkish, reflects the character's initial persona. At the beginning of the novel, Kemal is portrayed as a well-established and successful individual, embodying the qualities associated with his name. However, as the story progresses, his encounters with Füsün

awaken his obsessive tendencies, causing him to deviate from his initial state of maturity and refinement.

As Kemal's infatuation with Füsün intensifies, his pursuit of her consumes his thoughts and actions, gradually eroding the maturity and refinement he once possessed. The contrast between Kemal's name and his obsessive behavior serves as a poignant commentary on the destructive nature of obsession. It highlights how the pursuit of an all-consuming desire can lead an individual to abandon their previous sense of self and become engulfed in a world of obsession and emotional turmoil. On the other hand, the name Füsün, which means "witching" or "spell" in Turkish, adds another layer of significance to the theme of obsession in the novel. Füsün, with her enchanting presence and allure, captivates not only Kemal but also the readers. Her name foreshadows the bewitching effect she has on Kemal's life, drawing him deeper into the web of obsession and desire. Füsün's name implies a certain mystique and irresistible charm, suggesting that her influence over Kemal transcends mere physical attraction. It emphasizes the power she holds over him, enchanting him to the point of obsession. Füsün becomes a symbol of temptation and seduction, luring Kemal into a state of emotional entanglement that he struggles to escape.

Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* explores the theme of obsession in a variety of ways. Scholars and critics have offered various interpretations of the novel's portrayal of this theme, highlighting its complexity and multi-layered nature. In his article "Novel as Museum," Yin Xing defines the museum to be the manifestation of Kemal's obsession. He suggests that by embarking on the creation of the museum, Kemal aims to both forget and dream, which allows him to gain an outside perspective on his own obsession and develop a deeper comprehension of the objects he has gathered.⁶⁰ Xing suggests that the museum

⁶⁰ Yin Xing, "The Novel as Museum: Curating Memory in Orhan Pamuk's the Museum of Innocence," *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 54, no. 2 (2013): 205.

functions as a symbolic representation of the obsessive nature of love in the novel. Xing argues that the museum serves as a physical manifestation of the protagonist Kemal's obsession with his former lover Füsün, as he collects and displays objects that remind him of her in an attempt to preserve and prolong their relationship.⁶¹ According to Xing, the obsession with love in the novel is not only a personal one but also reflects the broader cultural norms and expectations surrounding love and relationships in Turkish society. The objects associated with Kemal's love story embody the shadowy cityscape of Istanbul, underscoring the extent to which the obsession is culturally grounded.⁶²

Hulya Yagcioglu researches the theme of obsession in *The Museum of Innocence*, as well, but focuses on the novel's critique of patriarchal power structures. Yagcioglu argues that Kemal's obsession with Füsün is a form of male domination and control, as he objectifies her in his attempts to preserve their relationship.⁶³ Lindsay Freeman builds upon Yagcioglu's argument and suggests that this could have a significant impact on how we view and handle the ending of romantic relationships, as it places individual struggles in a wider socio-political framework.⁶⁴ This demonstrates that the obsession reflects the larger gendered power dynamics that underpin Turkish society, showing how women are often treated as objects to be owned and controlled by men. Furthermore, Ertuna notes that the novel's portrayal of Füsün's agency is multi-layered, as she is shown as both a victim of Kemal's obsession and a strong and independent woman who is able to resist and challenge his control.⁶⁵ She argues that this complexity is part of what makes the novel so powerful, as it

⁶¹ Yin Xing, "The Novel as Museum: Curating Memory in Orhan Pamuk's the Museum of Innocence," 207.

⁶² Ibid., 199.

⁶³ Hulya Yagcioglu, "Reifying Innocence: Material Contexts of Love in *The Age of Innocence* and *The Museum of Innocence*," in *The Materiality of Love*, (London: Routledge, 2017): 121.

⁶⁴ Lindsey Freeman, "Museums of Experience: The Artist as Curator of Memory and Loss," in *The Art of Social Critique: Painting Mirrors of Social Life*, (Washington: Lexington Books, 2016): 513.

⁶⁵ Irmak Ertuna, "The Mystery of the Object and Anthropological Materialism: Orhan Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence* and André Breton's *Nadja*," 107.

forces readers to confront the ways in which gender, power, and agency are intertwined in human relationships.⁶⁶

Finally, Frances Restuccia researches the theme of obsession in *The Museum of Innocence* by focusing on the novel's use of sensory detail to convey the intensity of Kemal's obsession. In her article "A Black Passion: Voiding Melancholic Obsession in Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*," Restuccia explains that the expansion of Kemal's collection in the novel is directly proportional to the increase in the intensity of his love,⁶⁷ indicating that the novel's portrayal of objects and places is not only informative but also evocative and expressive, conveying the profound emotions and yearnings of Kemal. Restuccia argues that this use of sensory detail is part of what makes the novel so immersive and compelling, as it allows readers to experience the intensity of Kemal's obsession firsthand.⁶⁸

Overall, these scholarly works offer different but complementary perspectives on the theme of obsession in *The Museum of Innocence*. Whether exploring the metaphorical, cultural, gendered, or sensory dimensions of the novel's portrayal of this theme, they all demonstrate possible interpretations of Kemal's obsession over Füsün. As a contribution to these scholarly discussions on the theme of obsession in Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*, in my psychoanalytical literary analysis of the novel, I explain Kemal's reasoning behind his fixation on his distant relative by using ideas of three prominent psychoanalysts, Freud, Lacan, and Yalom.

1.5. Protagonists: Nabokov's Humbert and Pamuk's Kemal

Humbert Humbert in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* and Kemal in Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* are the protagonists whose unreliable first-person narration becomes the foundation of *Lolita* and *The Museum of Innocence*. Both Humbert and Kemal narrate the

⁶⁶ Ibid., 107.

⁶⁷ Frances L. Restuccia, "A Black Passion: Voiding Melancholic Obsession in Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence*," 76.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 76.

story of their obsession that transformed into the forms of art such as the confessional novel and the museum, respectively. They begin their stories with a description of their past that reveals the origins of their obsession by foreshadowing the way they start the relationship with their love interests: Humbert writes about his childhood love Annabel Leigh, who dies in her teenage years, resulting in an unprocessed trauma and emotions that leads him to search for and be interested only in teenager nymphets, one of whom is Dolores Haze (Lolita), and Kemal writes about his teenage love, a distant relative, Füsün and his childhood memories of her. Both protagonists narrate the story of obsession that ends tragically with death: in *Lolita*, Lolita dies during her giving birth to a stillborn girl, while in *The Museum of Innocence* Füsün dies in a car accident. Even though Humbert is a psychopath and a pedophile, and Kemal is an average middle-aged man, they share the same obsessive traits to their love interests, which shows how obsession can be transformed into a form of art.

Humbert is a complex and controversial character who has provoked various responses from both readers and scholars. One interpretation of Humbert is that he is a sympathetic character who is tormented by his desires and unable to control his impulses. As Jesse Kavadlo puts it, "It is through Humbert's combination of tragedy and comedy, victimizing and victimization, logos and pathos, as well as Nabokov's dangerous characterizations that we may understand the narrative, character, and moral resolve of these contemporary works."⁶⁹ This highlights the psychological complexity of the character and his inner conflict. He is portrayed as a lonely and isolated figure, who is unable to find love and companionship in his adult life. His obsession with Lolita is seen as a desperate attempt to find emotional fulfillment and intimacy.

⁶⁹ Jesse Kavadlo, "Blue Angels Meet Dying Animals: Textual and Sexual Subversion in the Clinton-Era Academic Novel," *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 37, no. 2 (2004): 11.

Another way of understanding Humbert is as a predator who targets vulnerable young girls which highlights the moral and ethical implications of his behavior. In this view, Humbert's supposed love for Lolita is nothing but an excuse to rationalize his unhealthy desires.⁷⁰ Sarah Kingston argues that Nabokov urges readers to stay alert while reading the text, as it reveals Humbert's true nature as a deceitful and delusional monster, rather than the "great sleepless artist"⁷¹ that Humbert tries to portray himself as. This emphasizes Humbert's manipulative and cunning behavior, which he uses to take advantage of others, and suggests that he is not to be trusted. Ellen Pifer, a Nabokovian scholar who subscribes to this interpretation, describes Humbert as a "malignant narcissist" who lacks empathy and treats others as objects for his own pleasure.⁷² Pifer argues that Humbert's treatment of Lolita constitutes psychological abuse and that his actions are unjustifiable from an ethical standpoint.⁷³

Moreover, some scholars interpret Humbert as that he is an unreliable narrator, whose account of the events in the novel cannot be trusted. This view emphasizes the narrative structure of the novel and the complexities of Humbert's perspective. Leona Toker, for instance, argues that "'crafty handling of dates . . . untells Humbert's tale . . . by exposing [his] cognitive unreliability,'"⁷⁴ which shows that his account of events and characters in the story cannot be fully trusted or believed. Anthony Moore furthers this idea and argues that Humbert deliberately distorts the truth in order to justify his actions and present himself in a more sympathetic light.⁷⁵ Humbert is seen as a master manipulator who uses his narrative

⁷⁰ Eric Goldman, "'Knowing' *Lolita*: Sexual Deviance and Normality in Nabokov's *Lolita*," *Nabokov Studies* 8, no. 1 (2004): 98.

⁷¹ Sarah Kingston, "'Great Sleepless Artists': Humbert Humbert's Insomnias in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*," *Journal of Modern Literature* 42, no. 2 (2019): 21.

⁷² Ellen Pifer, *Demon or Doll: Images of the Child in Contemporary Writing and Culture*, (Rutgers University Press, 2000): 165.

⁷³ Ellen Pifer, *Demon or Doll: Images of the Child in Contemporary Writing and Culture*, 178.

⁷⁴ Leona Toker, *Nabokov: The Mystery of Literary Structures*, 209.

⁷⁵ Anthony R. Moore, "How Unreliable is Humbert in *Lolita*?" *Journal of Modern Literature* 25, no. 1 (2001): 72.

voice to control the reader's perception of the events in the novel. One scholar who takes this view is Linda Hutcheon, who argues that the novel is a postmodern work that challenges the idea of a stable and objective truth.⁷⁶ She suggests that Humbert's narrative voice is intentionally deceptive, and that the novel invites the reader to question the reliability of his account.⁷⁷

Finally, some researchers of Nabokov view Humbert as a postmodern antihero, who challenges traditional notions of morality and ethics. This view emphasizes the novel's engagement with modernist and postmodernist literary techniques and its critique of conventional morality. According to this interpretation, Humbert embodies the idea that there are no absolute moral truths, and that everything is relative to the individual's perspective. He is seen as a product of the modern world, which is characterized by moral ambiguity, psychological fragmentation, and existential uncertainty. McHale suggests that Humbert is a product of the postmodern era, where cultural and moral values are not fixed and absolute, but rather are subject to interpretation and manipulation.⁷⁸ McHale also notes that Nabokov's use of literary techniques, such as irony, parody, and self-reflexivity, contribute to the postmodern character of Humbert.⁷⁹ For example, Humbert frequently uses irony to undercut his own claims of love for Lolita, exposing the contradictions and hypocrisy in his own character.⁸⁰ The use of parody highlights the absurdity of the romantic ideals of love and desire, while the self-reflexivity of the narrative invites readers to question the reliability and authority of the narrator.

Kemal Basmaci, the protagonist in Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*, is, as well as Humbert, a complex character with many layers to his personality. Initially, he seems

⁷⁶ Linda Hutcheon, "The Carnavalesque and Contemporary Narrative: Popular Culture and the Erotic," *University of Ottawa Quarterly* 53, no.1 (1983): 86.

⁷⁷ Linda Hutcheon, "The Carnavalesque and Contemporary Narrative: Popular Culture and the Erotic," 93.

⁷⁸ Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction*, (New-York: Routledge, 2003): 18.

⁷⁹ Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction*, 18.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 207.

to be a wealthy and successful businessman who appreciates life's finer things such as expensive drinks, fine dining experiences, and luxurious accommodations in Turkey. He attends high-end parties and social events, where he socializes with other wealthy and influential people. Furthermore, Kemal has a passion for collecting beautiful and rare objects, such as antique furniture and jewelry, which he prizes as symbols of his wealth and status. Despite his apparent enjoyment of these luxurious items, it becomes clear that Kemal's material possessions are insufficient to bring him true happiness and fulfillment. His obsession with his former lover, Füsün, reveals a deeper desire for love and connection, which he cannot find solely through his wealth and possessions.

Pamuk characterizes Kemal as a selfless figure who represents the societal dilemma of not belonging to either the East or West, highlighting the various facets of Kemal's melancholy. His melancholy stems from an unexpected affair that disrupts his life. Despite being wealthy and engaged to a beautiful woman, Kemal begins a relationship with an old acquaintance, Füsün, who works at a boutique in Nişantaşı. Their affair takes place in Kemal's mother's apartment at Merhamet Apartment, which serves as a sort of museum with old, unused family objects. Although Kemal and Füsün enjoy each other's company, the fear of their inevitable separation overshadows their relationship. Kemal's preoccupation with their impending separation reveals that he is grieving over something he has not yet lost.

Kemal's obsession with his ex-girlfriend, Füsün, is one of his distinct traits. Despite being engaged to Sibel, he cannot get Füsün out of his mind and becomes fixated on her to an unhealthy extent. Kemal collects numerous items that remind him of Füsün and establishes a museum dedicated to their relationship. While his obsession with Füsün is unhealthy, it also reveals his profound longing for love and attachment that he has been unable to find elsewhere. In the Museum of Innocence, the value of the objects is not based on their commodity worth. Instead, the protagonist, Kemal, "transvalues" them by relocating and

transforming them into aesthetic pieces, which is what Appadurai would call "the aesthetics of diversion."⁸¹ These objects hold value for Kemal as they remind him of his fictional lover, Füsün.

Kemal experiences time differently than others around him, and he is unable to keep pace with the city's time. Time for him is sequential, comprised of *nows*, which is similar to Aristotle's understanding of time.⁸² Kemal does not view his eight-year obsession with Füsün as pathological, but rather as a way of life. To justify his numerous visits to Keskin family, Kemal writes,

I would like to tell the reader, who is bemused by my visits to Füsün's (I can never say Keskins) for eight years and who is surprised how easily I can talk about this time span, this thousands of days, how misleading can time concept be and show that there is our time on the one hand and an 'official' time that we share with everybody on the other hand.⁸³

He describes his visits to Füsün's house as 1593 happy nights,⁸⁴ emphasizing that this melancholic state is deeply ingrained in his lifestyle. However, during this time, both Istanbul and Füsün change, and Kemal mourns for the old Istanbul and Füsün.

Lastly, an essential characteristic of Kemal's personality is his profound sense of isolation and disconnection. Despite his affluence and societal status, Kemal feels detached from the people around him and struggles to find purpose and meaning in his life. His loneliness is compounded by his belief that he is accountable for his brother's death, which has caused him immense guilt and shame. As the story progresses, Kemal begins to confront his emotions and navigate through his complex feelings that have shaped his life until now. In

⁸¹ Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 36.

⁸² Demet Karabulut, "Different Aspects of Melancholy in *The Museum of Innocence*," *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education Research* 2, no. 1 (2015): 89.

⁸³ Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*, 314.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 402.

all, Kemal is a character who is flawed and imperfect but also fundamentally human and relatable in his struggles to discover love, meaning, and connection in a complex and often harsh world.

1.6. Protagonists' Love Interests: Humbert's Lolita and Kemal's Füsün

In Nabokov's *Lolita*, Lolita is a young girl who is sexually exploited by Humbert Humbert. Her character can be seen as diverse and multifaceted. On one hand, she is a victim of Humbert's abuse and manipulation. She is forced into a sexual relationship with him and is often depicted as being helpless and vulnerable. At the same time, she is also portrayed as being cunning and manipulative herself. She is aware of Humbert's obsession with her and uses it to her advantage, manipulating him to get what she wants. Nabokov's portrayal of Lolita is often criticized for being overly sexualized and objectifying. However, it can also be argued that his depiction of her is meant to be a commentary on the sexualization of young girls in American culture. Through his portrayal of Lolita, Nabokov exposes the disturbing reality that young girls are often sexualized and objectified by men.

Füsün is the central character in Orhan Pamuk's novel *The Museum of Innocence*. She is the object of the protagonist Kemal's infatuation and obsession, and her character embodies many of the themes explored in the novel such as love, desire, memory, and loss. Füsün is initially introduced as a distant relative of Kemal's and works as a shopgirl. Despite being poor and from a lower social class than Kemal, she captures his attention with her beauty and vivacity. Kemal's attraction to Füsün quickly becomes an infatuation, and he begins to pursue her relentlessly, eventually leading to an affair. Throughout the novel, Füsün's character is portrayed as both innocent and seductive, which fuels Kemal's obsession with her. Like Lolita, she is also described as innocent and alluring, but Füsün's character is less developed than Lolita's. While Lolita is given a voice and a perspective in the novel, Füsün remains mostly a figure in Kemal's imagination, with little insight into her own thoughts and feelings.

While both Nabokov's character Lolita and Pamuk's character Füsün are young women who play significant roles in their respective novels, there are several notable differences between them.

Firstly, Lolita is a victim of sexual abuse and manipulation by the novel's protagonist, Humbert, while Füsün is not a victim of abuse but rather a woman with agency who engages in a consensual affair with Kemal, the protagonist of Pamuk's novel. The character of Lolita can be seen as a representation of the loss of innocence. The novel explores the idea that childhood is a fleeting and fragile state that can easily be destroyed by adult desires and actions. Through her relationship with Humbert, Lolita is forced to grow up quickly and confront the harsh realities of the adult world. Overall, the character of Lolita is a controversial figure in literature. While some argue that she is overly sexualized and objectified, others see her as a representation of the loss of innocence and a commentary on the sexualization of young girls in American culture. Regardless of one's interpretation, it is clear that Lolita is a significant and influential character in the history of literature.

Füsün's character is portrayed as manipulative and cunning, but this is not necessarily a negative portrayal as she is a developed character with her own motivations and desires. Füsün's character is her agency and independence. Despite being pursued by Kemal, she is not a passive character in their relationship. She is aware of her power over Kemal and uses it to her advantage, pushing him to do things he might not have otherwise done. Füsün is not simply an object of Kemal's desire, but a complex character with her own needs. Another important aspect of Füsün's character is her role in the creation of the Museum of Innocence. After Füsün marries another man, Kemal becomes consumed with his memories of her and begins to collect objects related to their relationship. However, it is Füsün who suggests the idea of creating a museum to house these objects, which ultimately becomes a physical manifestation of their relationship. Füsün's involvement in the creation of the museum

underscores the importance of memory and the role it plays in shaping our identities. Füsün's character embodies both the beauty and tragedy of love and serves as a reminder of the enduring power of memory.

Secondly, Lolita is presented as a sexually precocious and sexually active teenager, while Füsün is a more traditional and conservative young woman who adheres to social norms and expectations. In *Beardsley*, when Humbert and Lolita are together, Humbert starts to worry when he sees Lolita showing interest in boys her own age, thinking that she might be sexually active with them. In an odd way, Humbert starts to see Lolita as similar to his Parisian prostitute when he notices that Lolita has lipstick on her teeth, which triggers an eerie comparison in his mind. He compares the color of Lolita's cheeks to the "pommettes," or "little apples" in French, of the prostitute.⁸⁵ Goldman argues "By likening Lolita to a prostitute, Humbert furthers his own need to justify his exploitation of her by establishing her as a deviant. The beginning of this view, interestingly, is his consideration that Lolita may have become sexually active with those her own age."⁸⁶ On the other hand, even though Füsün lost her virginity to Kemal before marriage, which was considered unacceptable in Turkey in 1970s, her unavailability and the way she distanced herself from Kemal after his engagement presents her as an obedient to traditions and social norms character. In his *Innocence of Memories*, Pamuk writes,

Kemal told Füsün that she was modern and courageous to give him her virginity. I suppose he meant it as a compliment, but to her it would have meant that he would feel no special obligations to her just because she'd slept with him, and that if she was 'modern', she would not see sex with a man before marriage as a burden, and neither would she worry about being a virgin on her wedding day.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*. (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1989): 204.

⁸⁶ Eric Goldman, "'Knowing' *Lolita*: Sexual Deviance and Normality in Nabokov's *Lolita*," 91.

⁸⁷ Orhan Pamuk, *The Innocence of Memories*, translated by Ekin Oklap. (London: Faber & Faber, 2015): 35.

This passage reveals the complex social dynamics and expectations that exist around sex and relationships in the novel. It also raises questions about power dynamics, as Kemal's comment to Füsün suggests a lack of emotional investment on his part, and the narrator's commentary on the significance of virginity implies the ways in which women's sexuality was often controlled and commodified. In this sense, Lolita is a symbol of rebellion and sexual liberation, while Füsün represents conformity to societal expectations.

II. Methodology

2.1. Psychoanalytical Literary Criticism

Integrating psychoanalytical literary criticism into my thesis project provided a critical framework to investigate the origins of obsession in Nabokov's *Lolita* and Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*. Psychoanalytical literary criticism offers a new perspective on the relationship between psychoanalytic theory and the theories of literature that transformed the literary critical practice. Psychoanalysis of clinical cases and literary works agree on the idea that language influences consciousness and unconsciousness but differ from each other in a way that psychoanalytical literary criticism analyzes fictional characters, while psychoanalysis of clinical cases involves the investigation of real people's behavior. Nevertheless, psychoanalytical literary criticism enables close readers to rationalize fictional characters' desires and put them under the psychoanalytical scrutiny. Benjamin and Thomas Ogden explain that a text reflects the unconscious mind of the writer, just as dreams are a manifestation of the unconscious mind that is concealed.⁸⁸ This suggests that psychoanalytic literary criticism can uncover the unconscious desires that are reflected in a text.

First, in my analysis of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* and Orhan Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence*, before applying psychoanalytical literary analysis, I employed the method of character analysis and, as a result, I analyzed the protagonists Humbert and Kemal's motivations and reasons behind their obsession. I focused on their characteristics and traits that were representative of obsessive behavior. Next, I analyzed their love interests, Lolita and Füsün, which helped me understand the pattern of their unavailability that led Humbert and Kemal obsess over their incomplete relationships. Lastly, using the textual evidence that I have collected, I did a close reading of the texts to prove that both Humbert and Kemal's

⁸⁸ Benjamin H. Ogden and Thomas H. Ogden, *The Analyst's Ear and the Critic's Eye: Rethinking Psychoanalysis and Literature*, (London: Routledge, 2013): 8.

actions could be explained by Freudian idea of fetishism, artistic obsession, and transference
Lacanian objet petit a, and Yalom's existentialist psychoanalysis and concluded that
psychoanalytical literary criticism is essential in understanding the complexity of Humbert
and Kemal's actions.

III. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Vladimir Nabokov and Orhan Pamuk on Psychoanalysis

Both Vladimir Nabokov and Orhan Pamuk have exhibited distinct attitudes towards psychoanalysis, including the influential figure of Sigmund Freud. While Nabokov's stance leans towards skepticism and critique, Pamuk's engagement with psychoanalysis and Freudian concepts is more evident.

Vladimir Nabokov, known for his meticulous craftsmanship and attention to detail, approached psychoanalysis with a critical eye. In interviews and writings, he expressed reservations about Freud's theories and the interpretive nature of psychoanalysis. Nabokov often rejected the notion of a hidden or symbolic meaning behind his works, emphasizing the importance of the surface narrative and the reader's engagement with the text, and in his interview with Anne Guèrin told that "Psychoanalysis has something very Bolshevik about it—an inner policing ... symbols killing the individual dream, the thing itself."⁸⁹ His writing style, marked by intricate wordplay and complex narrative structures, aimed to challenge conventional interpretations, and resist psychoanalytic readings that seek to uncover latent meanings. Nabokov's dismissal of psychoanalysis can be seen as a rejection of deterministic frameworks and a commitment to preserving the autonomy of his artistic vision.

It is important to acknowledge the potential pitfalls of analyzing Humbert's obsession over *Lolita* through Freudian psychoanalysis, particularly when considering Vladimir Nabokov's own criticism of Freud and his portrayal of Freudian concepts in *Lolita*. Nabokov's disdain for Freud, which Geoffrey Green refers to as "the grandest and most extravagant contempt for psychoanalysis known in modern literature,"⁹⁰ and his penchant for mocking Freudian ideas present challenges when applying Freudian psychoanalysis to

⁸⁹ Vladimir Nabokov, "Interview with Anne Guèrin, *L'express* 26, (1961): 27.

⁹⁰ Geoffrey Green, *Freud and Nabokov*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1988): 1.

Humbert's character. One of the main pitfalls is the dissonance between Nabokov's perspective and Freudian theory. Nabokov was openly critical of Freud's theories and considered psychoanalysis to be a pseudoscience. In *Lolita*, Nabokov utilizes various literary techniques to undermine Freudian concepts and cast doubt on their validity. Humbert's mockery of Freud throughout the novel such as “An ordinary encyclopedia informed me who the peculiar looking “Phineas Quimby, Lebanon, NH” was; and any Freudian, with a German name and some interest in religious prostitution should recognize...”⁹¹ further highlights Nabokov's skepticism and suggests that analyzing Humbert's obsession solely through a Freudian lens may lead to a limited interpretation.

Another potential pitfall is the complexity of Humbert's character and Nabokov's deliberate manipulation of the narrative. Nabokov crafted Humbert as an unreliable narrator, making it challenging to discern his true motivations and psychological makeup. Humbert's constant shifting of perspectives and manipulation of events challenge the straightforward application of Freudian psychoanalysis. Relying solely on Freudian concepts to analyze Humbert's obsession risks oversimplifying his character and failing to appreciate the intricate narrative techniques employed by Nabokov. Furthermore, Freudian psychoanalysis heavily relies on the exploration of the unconscious mind and repressed desires.⁹² However, Nabokov's narrative style in *Lolita* emphasizes conscious awareness and deliberate actions. Humbert is acutely aware of his actions and motivations, which deviates from the Freudian concept of unconscious influences. Applying Freudian psychoanalysis to Humbert's obsession without considering Nabokov's intentional deviation from Freudian principles may result in a shallow analysis that overlooks the complexity of Humbert's conscious choices and rationalizations.

⁹¹ Nabokov, *Lolita*, 249.

⁹² Leland De La Durantaye, "Vladimir Nabokov and Sigmund Freud, or a Particular Problem," *American Imago* 62, no. 1 (2005): 61.

Lastly, Nabokov's portrayal of Lolita challenges the Freudian notion of the passive, helpless victim. Lolita is portrayed as a complex character who exhibits agency and engages in manipulation herself. Freudian psychoanalysis tends to position Lolita solely as an object of Humbert's desire and overlook her own agency and autonomy. Ignoring Nabokov's nuanced depiction of Lolita within the Freudian framework limits the understanding of her role in the narrative and the dynamics of Humbert's obsession.

On the other hand, Orhan Pamuk demonstrates a more receptive and engaged attitude towards psychoanalysis, particularly Freudian concepts. In his works, such as *The Museum of Innocence* and *Snow*, Pamuk incorporates psychoanalytic themes and symbolism, delving into the complexities of human psychology and desire. His characters often grapple with internal conflicts and unconscious motivations, reflecting the influence of Freud's ideas. Pamuk explores themes of memory, repression, and the unconscious mind, employing psychoanalytic concepts to provide insights into his characters' motivations and behaviors. While not a staunch adherent, Pamuk's integration of psychoanalytic elements indicates a willingness to engage with Freud's theories as a means of exploring the depths of human experience.

It is worth noting that both Nabokov and Pamuk approach psychoanalysis from a literary perspective rather than a purely academic one. Their engagement with Freudian concepts serves as a tool to deepen their narratives, adding psychological complexity to their characters and themes. While Nabokov tends to distance himself from psychoanalysis, Pamuk's work displays a greater affinity for exploring the intricacies of the human psyche through the lens of Freudian theory.

Overall, Nabokov and Pamuk present distinct attitudes towards psychoanalysis and Freud. Nabokov approaches it critically, resisting interpretive frameworks, while Pamuk demonstrates a more receptive engagement, incorporating psychoanalytic themes to deepen

his exploration of human psychology. Their differing stances reflect their individual artistic sensibilities and their respective approaches to storytelling and character development.

3.2. Psychoanalysis of Obsession

Obsession as a phenomenon has had a long history in literature, psychoanalysis, and cultural study. The term “monomania” was first introduced by Jean-Etienne Esquirol in the 1810s, which was preceded by Philippe Pinel’s term “partial insanity.”⁹³ As Davis explains it, “Monomania is defined as a disease in which monomaniacs are aware of the wrongness or inappropriateness of some aspect of their behavior, reasonably seeing that this action is awry.”⁹⁴ This implies that they were seen as rational beings who recognized their abnormal behavior. However, Freud would later dispute this view in the 20th century, arguing that obsessions were actually driven by unconscious desires. In 1856, an essay by a patient in the New York State Lunatic Asylum was published in the *American Journal of Insanity*, where “a young gentleman of talent and literary pursuits” wrote that his insomnia had two origins: the body and the mind. From then on, insanity was ascribed to the disease of the soul and in the late 19th century obsession started to be defined as a mental illness – hysteria, spleen, neurasthenia, mental breakdown.

In the 20th century, prior to Sigmund Freud’s significant works on the artistic obsession and unconsciousness, Richard von Krafft-Ebing had already written *Psychopathia Sexualis*, where he pointed out the idea that hysteria was conditioned by sexual dysfunction. Davis argues that by 1895, even regular doctors started to observe that their patients were preoccupied with sexuality, indicating that the medical field was becoming increasingly fixated on this topic. This is significant because it establishes the context in which Freud's research and theories on sexuality emerged.⁹⁵

⁹³ Lennard J. Davis, *Obsession: A History*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009): 67.

⁹⁴ Lennard J. Davis, *Obsession: A History*, 38.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 126.

3.3. Classical Psychoanalysis: Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud (1886-1939) put forward the idea of a relationship between sexual desire and obsession, concluding that obsession was derived from the suppressed emotions and sexual desire. Davis writes that it was through his patients that Freud proposed the initial central insights of psychoanalysis.⁹⁶ According to Freud, his study of the symptoms and anamnesis of his nervous patients suffering from phobias and obsessions led him to attempt an explanation of those symptoms, which later enabled him to successfully identify the origin of these symptoms in new and different cases.⁹⁷ This indicates that psychoanalysis began with Freud's analysis of his patients' symptoms and histories. Freud wrote such fundamental works on obsession as "Obsessions and Phobias: Their Physical Mechanism and Their Etiology," (1895) "Creative Writers and Daydreaming," (1908) and "The Dynamic of Transference" (1912). The central idea of these works is that human behavior, be it an obsessive or a hysterical one, is conditioned by unconscious desires and dreams that are linked to random objects, ideas, and images.⁹⁸

Freud first offered a conceptualization of a creative process focusing on drives, ego, and desires. Freud's interest in the origins of an artistic work let him come up with a term "pathography", which seeks to identify the nature of the artists' imagination, his perception, thoughts, and feelings. In his essay titled "Creative Writing and Daydreaming," Freud draws a parallel between children's play and fantasizing, arguing that both are driven by desires. While children do not have to hide their wishes, adults are expected to stop engaging in such activities, leading to feelings of shame and the suppression of unconscious desires, particularly among artists.⁹⁹ This shows how societal expectations can influence the way

⁹⁶ Ibid., 129.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 130.

⁹⁸ Elizabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice*, (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2002): 106.

⁹⁹ Sigmund Freud, "Creative Writers and Daydreaming," in *Literature and Psychoanalysis*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983): 28.

adult artists perceive their fantasies and creative impulses. Kemler furthers Freud's claim that the creative process and provides an explanation for the origins of artistic obsession. He asserts that Freud believed that the root of artistic obsession lies in moral and neurotic anxieties.¹⁰⁰ If these anxieties are repressed by the conscious mind's defense mechanism, it leads to the initiation of the creative process.¹⁰¹

"Transference" is yet another important term coined by Sigmund Freud that helps further the understanding of the artistic obsession and the drive of unconsciousness. According to Peter Brooks, the concept of transference is complicated and involves a kind of simulation in which past events have an impact on the present, especially in the relationship between the patient and the analyst. In this way, the neurosis that is treated in therapy can become a transference-neurosis as a result of this dynamic.¹⁰² (1987, 341). Essentially, the notion of transference is concerned with the effects of past experiences on the present. The transference appears as a response to the unfulfilled trauma of the past, which creates a psychological, or neurotic behavioral pattern that repeats during the present-time experience. In literary criticism, the concept of transference is significant due to its function as a symbolic and fictional medium, where unconscious desires and patterns of behavior from the past are expressed in the present through communication during analysis. He suggests that these recurring patterns, stemming from negative past experiences, can be useful in analyzing the behavior of the patient.¹⁰³ In his essay, "The Dynamics of the Transference," Freud writes, "...transference is such a powerful instrument for success"¹⁰⁴ because it provides a new outlook on the repeating behavioral patterns that could not be explained before.

¹⁰⁰ David S. Kemler, "Psychoanalysis, Artistic Obsession, and Artistic Motivation: The Study of Pathography," *Perceptual & Motor Skills: Perception* 118, no. 1 (2014): 225.

¹⁰¹ David S. Kemler, "Psychoanalysis, Artistic Obsession, and Artistic Motivation: The Study of Pathography," 227.

¹⁰² Peter Brooks, "The Idea of a Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism," *Critical Inquiry* 13, no. 2 (1987): 341.

¹⁰³ Peter Brooks, "The Idea of a Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism," 342.

¹⁰⁴ Sigmund Freud, "The Dynamics of Transference," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XII (1911-1913): The Case of Schreber, Papers on Technique and Other Works*, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958): 97.

3.4. Structural Psychoanalysis: Jacques Lacan

Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) was a French psychoanalyst and psychiatrist, a follower of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Even though Lacan did not agree with all of Freud's propositions, he expanded on Freud's theory and offered a novel perspective on psychoanalysis through linguistic and social anthropology. Lacan's theory is an amalgam of Freud's theory about unconsciousness and Claude Levi-Strauss, Roman Jakobson, and Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theories. In his psychoanalytical literary criticism, Lacan relies on the idea that unconsciousness should be understood through the function of language. For example, Lacan argues that Freud's division of human psyche into consciousness and unconsciousness should be viewed through de Saussure's idea about the signifier and the signified. Gilbert D. Chaitin explains Lacan's idea behind integrating Freud and de Saussure into one argument by writing that

Lacan found it necessary to graft Freud onto de Saussure to guarantee the ideality of meaning by integrating phallogentrism and phonocentrism. The Saussurean theory of the sign supplies the self-presence of the voice via the phoneme, while the Freudian phallos furnishes the guarantee of wholeness, of integrity, as a remedy against the disintegration of castration.¹⁰⁵

Thus, according to Lacan, the relationship between the signifier and the signified creates meaning and shapes the connection between consciousness and unconsciousness. Further, Lacan argues that Freud's claim about displacement and transference can be explained by Roman Jakobson's theory about metaphors and metonymy. In linguistics, metonymy is a term that is used to define an instance when an object represents another object, where one stands for the whole. As a result, Lacan proclaims that "Metonymy corresponds to the displacement

¹⁰⁵ Gilbert D. Chaitin, *Rhetoric and Culture in Lacan*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1996): 58.

of desire that characterizes dream work.”¹⁰⁶ While for Freud, displacement was a part of a defense mechanism, for Lacan, it was evidence for the idea that the unconsciousness in the dream process was structured like a language.

However, Lacan’s main contribution to the study of obsessional psychoanalysis was not only the fact that he offered a structuralist view on classical psychoanalytic approach and used linguistic theories to explain Freud’s ideas, but also his view of the human psyche as three entities: the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary. To objectify the Other, Lacan introduced the term “objet petit a”, which was meant to embody the unattainable object of desire of a human being. In relation to Lacan's concept of "the Other," objet petit a refers to the sought-after object of desire that an individual tries to attain from the Other. The Other, which refers to the symbolic order or the societal network of language, norms, and culture that shape an individual's identity and relationships with others, is the center of meaning, authority, and recognition on which individuals rely to create their sense of self. However, the Other also generates alienation, separation, and conflict. The “objet petit a” represents the excess, surplus, or gap that exists within the Other that the subject seeks to fill or go beyond through their desire. But this desire is consistently frustrated or postponed because the objet petit a is an imaginary, symbolic, or phantasmatic object that is continually displaced or substituted, and that cannot offer complete satisfaction or fulfillment. Thus, the “objet petit a” serves as a crucial means of understanding an individual's unconscious, their psychological structure. Mary Jacobus describes the history of the origins of the term “objet petit a” by writing that “In Lacan’s seminars of the late 1950s and early 1960s, the evolving concept of *objet petit a* is viewed in the matheme of phantasy as the object of desire sought in the other... a deliberate departure from British Object Relations psychoanalysis.”¹⁰⁷ Thus,

¹⁰⁶ Bornali Nath. Dowerah, “Lacan’s Metonymic Displacement and Its Relevance to Post Structuralism,” in *The Criterion* 4, no. 4 (2013): 2.

¹⁰⁷ Mary Jacobus, *The Poetics of Psychoanalysis*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 26.

Lacan's "objet petit a" was a revolutionary approach to the understanding of the psychoanalysis of obsession, which is crucial in the analysis of obsessional love in Nabokov's *Lolita* and Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*.

3.5. Contemporary Psychoanalysis: Irvin Yalom

Irvin Yalom (1931) is an existentialist psychoanalyst and psychiatrist and his approach to obsession differs from both Freud and Lacan. Even though he writes about the relationship between consciousness and unconsciousness, Yalom focuses on the extent to which the fear of death plays a role in the human psyche. As Yalom argues, human beings are "meaning making beings who are both subjects of experience and subjects of self-reflection."¹⁰⁸ This perspective differs from Freud's notion that humans are driven by irrational sexual desires and Lacan's belief in the rationality of the human psyche and the structure of the unconscious. However, Yalom's perspective complements these views by emphasizing the importance of self-reflection and the role of meaning-making in human psychology. Moreover, Yalom as an existentialist psychotherapist avoids using preexisting theories that view human beings as an object rather than a subject of experience.

The definiteness of existence is what lies at the heart of Yalom's theory. The ultimate concerns of Yalom's argument are death, life, and freedom. The reason why death and fear of it are the central element of Yalom's theory is that "The terror of death is ubiquitous and of such magnitude that a considerable portion of one's life energy is consumed in the denial of it,"¹⁰⁹ which means the obsession can also derive from the fear of death. In both Nabokov's *Lolita* and in Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*, the main characters Humbert and Kemal encounter the death of their beloved at different stages of their lives – Humbert in his teenage years and Kemal in his adulthood – which makes them express their obsession in

¹⁰⁸ Irvin Yalom and Ruthellen Josselson, "Existential Psychotherapy," in *Current Psychotherapies*, (New York: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning, 2014): 266.

¹⁰⁹ Irvin Yalom, *Existential Psychotherapy*, (New York: Basic Books, 1980): 61.

various forms of art. It is worth mentioning that Yalom is not interested in identifying freedom in the political context, but instead he defines existential freedom as “the idea that we all live in a universe without inherent design in which we are the authors of our own lives,”¹¹⁰ which shifts the responsibility of committed actions to the human being and supports the critics such as Vladimir Alexandrov, Elisabeth Bronfen, and Michael Glynn that advocate for the idea that Humbert was aware of the realness of Lolita when committing his crime.

¹¹⁰ Irvin Yalom and Ruthellen Josselson, “Existential Psychotherapy,” 267.

IV. Psychoanalytical Literary Criticism

4.1. Freudian Reading of *Lolita* and *The Museum of Innocence*

In Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, fetishism refers to a sexual attraction or fixation on an object, body part, or non-human item. This fixation serves as a substitute for an unconscious desire that cannot be fully expressed. The analysis of Humbert's obsession over Lolita through the lens of fetishism can provide insights into his psychological motivations and the complex dynamics of their relationship. Humbert's fixation on Lolita is not simply a matter of physical attraction but rather a psychological one that stems from his traumatic childhood experiences. In this article, Freud writes about how a fixation on a fetish object can be linked to early childhood experiences and memories:

"From the psychological point of view, the fetish is a substitute for the woman's (the mother's) penis that the little boy once believed in and does not want to give up; it stands for that part of the body that he himself cannot do without, and that therefore he cannot tolerate having lost. The existence of the fetish is determined by an emotional experience in childhood, an experience of terror accompanied by an overwhelming need for protection; this need is met by taking as a love-object a portion of the body of someone else"¹¹¹

This passage highlights the idea that fetishism serves as a substitute for an unconscious desire that cannot be fully expressed, which is a key component of Freud's psychoanalytic theory of fetishism. In the case of Humbert, his fixation on Lolita could be seen as a way of attempting to recapture or substitute for a lost childhood love, Annabel Leigh. Annabel died when Humbert was a teenager, and he has never fully come to terms with her death. Instead, he projects his desire onto Lolita, who resembles Annabel in many ways. Humbert describes

¹¹¹ Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism," in *Standard Edition, Volume 12*, (London: Hogarth Press, 1928): 152.

Lolita's maddening mix of innocence and vulgarity and becomes fixated on her as a sexual object. In *Lolita*, Humbert writes,

My very photogenic mother died in a freak accident (picnic, lightning) when I was three, and, save for a pocket of warmth in the darkest past, nothing of her subsists within the hollows and dells of memory, over which, if you can still stand my style (I am writing under observation), the sun of my infancy had set: surely, you all know those redolent remnants of day suspended, with the midges, about some hedge in bloom or suddenly entered and traversed by a rambler, at the bottom of a hill, in the summer dusk; a furry warmth, golden midges... I am convinced, however, that in a certain magic and fateful way Lolita started with Annabel.¹¹²

This passage illustrates how Humbert's memories of the death of his mother transit to his remembrance of Annabel that is intertwined with his fixation on Lolita, whom he sees as a substitute for Annabel. The traumatic loss of his mother and his subsequent obsession with Annabel both contribute to his complex psychological relationship with Lolita. Humbert's fixation on Lolita can be seen as a form of fetishism, in which he transfers his desire for his lost childhood love, Annabel, onto Lolita. Humbert describes Lolita as his "Lolita" and notes her similarity to Annabel, despite their age difference and Lolita's lack of physical beauty. This suggests that Humbert is projecting his desire for Annabel onto Lolita, using her as a substitute object of desire.

Humbert's fetishistic fixation on Lolita is further evidenced by his preoccupation with her physical appearance. He describes her in great detail, focusing on her "nymphets" features, which include her slender figure, bright eyes, and small breasts. This is demonstrated in the following passage: "I was consumed by a hell furnace of localized lust

¹¹² Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, 8-10.

for every passing nymphet whom as a law-abiding poltroon I never dared approach,”¹¹³ which shows that Humbert's fixation on Lolita's body serves as a substitute for his deeper emotional needs, such as love and connection. He is unable to form a deeper emotional bond with Lolita and instead seeks fulfillment through her physical form. This is evidenced by his inability to see her as anything other than a sexual object, and his attempts to control and possess her.

Freud argued that fetishism serves as a defense mechanism against anxiety and guilt. In his essay “Fetishism,” Freud wrote, “Fetishism is a formation of the ego which serves to protect it from the effects of anxiety.”¹¹⁴ He argued that the fetish object, which is often a substitute for a desired but forbidden object, helps to alleviate the anxiety and guilt associated with the forbidden object. By focusing on the fetish object, the individual can avoid confronting the taboo desires or thoughts that would otherwise cause anxiety or guilt. In Humbert's case, his fixation on Lolita allows him to avoid confronting the moral and ethical implications of his relationship with her. Humbert says,

I would never do, would it, to have you fellows fall madly in love with my Lolita! Had I been a painter, had the management of The Enchanted Hunters lost its mind one summer day and commissioned me to redecorate their dining room with murals of my own making...¹¹⁵

This passage indicates that Humbert is describing a sexual fantasy involving Lolita, but he portrays it as if it were a work of art. By distancing himself from the reality of the situation and framing it as a form of artistic expression, Humbert is able to avoid confronting the moral and ethical implications of his desires. This passage demonstrates how Humbert uses his fetishistic fixation on Lolita's body to avoid acknowledging the harm he is causing her. He

¹¹³ Ibid., 16.

¹¹⁴ Sigmund Freud, “Fetishism,” 150.

¹¹⁵ Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, 131.

justifies his behavior by claiming that Lolita seduced him and that their relationship is consensual. However, it is clear that Lolita is a victim of Humbert's abuse and manipulation. By fetishizing her body and projecting his desires onto her, Humbert is able to avoid acknowledging the harm he is causing her.

In Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*, the protagonist Kemal's obsessive collecting of his love interest Füsün's possessions may also be analyzed through the lens of Freud's theory of fetishism. Kemal's collection of Füsün's belongings serves as a fetishistic substitute for his desire to possess her completely. Throughout the novel, Kemal collects a vast array of objects that belonged to Füsün, including her hairpins, cigarette butts, and even her used tissues. For example, in the novel, Kemal writes,

From the heap of discarded papers and rubbish in the corner, I extracted the arm of a baby doll that had once been Füsün's. I slipped that into my pocket, along with a large mica marble and a few hairpins that I had no doubt were hers. Imagining the comfort, I would eventually extract from these things in privacy, I relaxed.¹¹⁶

Kemal's relief and feeling of comfort after realizing he possesses a small hairpin that was on Füsün's head suggests because he "had no doubt was hers"¹¹⁷ shows not only that he is simply interested in any hairpin, but specifically one that is associated with Füsün. By stealing the hairpin, Kemal is able to possess a piece of Füsün and create a connection with her through this object. This desire for possession and connection with Füsün is likely related to Kemal's unconscious desires for her, which cannot be fully expressed in a socially acceptable manner. Kemal's writer friend Orhan notices that "[Kemal] had collected so many things that reminded him of Füsün that he had to rent a small apartment to keep them in"¹¹⁸ and, consequently, he creates a museum in honor of their relationship, which houses all of

¹¹⁶ Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*, 127.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 127.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 246.

these objects and is filled with the memories of their time together. Kemal's fixation on these objects serves as a way for him to hold onto Füsün and to avoid confronting the reality that their relationship is over.

Similar to the way in which Humbert in *Lolita* fetishizes Lolita's body, Kemal's fetishistic fixation on Füsün's belongings allows him to avoid acknowledging the reality of their relationship. He is unable to accept that their relationship has ended, and instead uses the objects he collects to construct a fantasy world where they are still together. According to Freud, fetishism is a defense mechanism used to disavow the castration anxiety that results from recognizing the lack of the phallus in the female body.¹¹⁹ In Kemal's case, his fetishistic fixation on Füsün's belongings may serve as a way to disavow his feelings of loss and inadequacy resulting from their failed relationship. By focusing on the objects that belonged to Füsün, Kemal is able to avoid confronting the reality of their separation and the pain that it causes him. In the novel, Kemal says, "I was creating a museum of happiness, a refuge for love",¹²⁰ which shows that Kemal is using his collection as a way to hold onto his memories of Füsün and their relationship, even though it has ended. The museum serves as a way for Kemal to construct a fantasy world where he and Füsün are still together, and where their love is preserved and protected.

Lastly, Freud argued that fetishism is often a defense mechanism against anxiety and guilt. In Kemal's case, his collection of Füsün's belongings serves as a way to cope with the guilt and shame he feels for betraying his fiancée with Füsün. Throughout the novel, Kemal experiences a great deal of guilt and shame for his affair with Füsün, particularly because he is engaged to be married to Sibel. Kemal's collection of Füsün's belongings serves as a way for him to cope with these feelings, as he convinces himself that their relationship was

¹¹⁹ Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism," 158.

¹²⁰ Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*, 78.

genuine and not just a fleeting affair. As exemplified by Kemal's thoughts on his collection of Füsün's cigarette ends in Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*, "the more I gathered them together, the more real they became. And the more real they became, the more real our relationship became."¹²¹ This implies that Kemal used the act of collecting to validate the significance of his connection with Füsün, even though it was founded on cheating and secrecy. Lastly, the exhibition itself acts as a manifestation of Kemal overcoming his shame and guilt because in Chapter 65, he writes,

Actually, I had no desire to share my collection with others, nor did anyone know I was hoarding things-I was ashamed of what I was doing. After having taken all those matchboxes, and Füsün's cigarette butts, and the saltshakers, the coffee cups, the hairpins, and the barrettes-things not difficult to pick up, because people rarely notice them missing-I began to set my sights on things like ashtrays, cups, and slippers, gradually beginning to replace them with new ones.¹²²

However, towards the end of the novel, Kemal is no longer ashamed of his collecting and has overcome his guilt because he writes, "No longer an oddball embarrassed by the things he had hoarded, I was gradually awakening to the pride of a collector."¹²³ The creation of the Museum of Innocence can be seen as a manifestation of this transformation, as Kemal has not only openly displayed his collection but has also used it to construct a narrative that gives meaning to his relationship with Füsün. The museum serves as a physical representation of Kemal's reconciliation with his past and his acceptance of his obsessive behavior.

Freud's concept of "artistic obsession" refers to the idea that artists use their creative work as a way to channel their unresolved emotions and desires. In *Lolita*, Nabokov portrays

¹²¹ Ibid., 223.

¹²² Ibid., 348.

¹²³ Ibid., 529.

his protagonist Humbert as an artistically obsessed individual whose obsession with Lolita serves as a way for him to channel his creative energies. Throughout the novel, Humbert's obsession with Lolita is intimately tied to his creative impulses. He views her as a source of inspiration for his writing, often describing her in aesthetic terms and imagining her as a muse. In the novel, he writes,

Lolita, when she chose, could be a most exasperating brat. I was not really quite prepared for her fits of disorganized boredom, intense and vehement griping, her sprawling, droopy, dopey-eyed style, and what is called goofing off -- a kind of diffused clowning which she thought was tough in a boyish hoodlum way.¹²⁴

This passage not only highlights Humbert's aesthetic appreciation of Lolita's physical attributes, but also his fascination with her as a complex and unpredictable individual. Through his obsession with Lolita, Humbert is able to channel his artistic inspiration and create a work of literature that is simultaneously disturbing and poetic.

Moreover, in his essay "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," Freud argues that creative writing is a form of daydreaming, in which the author is able to create and manipulate their own reality in a way that is similar to a child's play.¹²⁵ This concept can be applied to Nabokov's portrayal of Humbert in *Lolita*, as his obsession with Lolita allows him to construct a fantasy world where he is able to exert control over his desires and emotions, and where he can manipulate the narrative of his own life.¹²⁶ When Humbert first meets Lolita and describes his immediate infatuation with her: "She was Lola in slacks. She was Lo, plain Lo, in the morning, standing four feet ten in one sock. She was Dolores on the dotted line. But in my arms, she was always Lolita."¹²⁷ This passage illustrates how Humbert is able to create a new identity for Lolita in his mind, one that is completely under his control and

¹²⁴ Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, 143.

¹²⁵ Sigmund Freud, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," 19.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹²⁷ Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, 5.

subject to his desires. By calling her "Lolita" in his arms, he is able to construct a world where he has power over her and can mold her into the object of his fantasies.

Similarly, Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* can be seen as a manifestation of the Freudian concept of artistic obsession. In *The Museum of Innocence*, Kemal creates a museum dedicated to the objects associated with the love affair between him and his lover Füsün. Objects in the museum are used to construct a narrative that reflects Kemal's own memories and desires. Freud argues that "The writer's day-dream is a substitute for the repressed infantile wish, and as such it is subject to all the vicissitudes which characterize the fate of a repressed instinctual impulse in general,"¹²⁸ which can be observed in *The Museum of Innocence* because through the act of collecting, Kemal is able to channel his obsessive desire for Füsün and create something tangible that represents their relationship. This is in line with Freud's concept of sublimation, where a person transforms their desires into socially acceptable forms of behavior, such as art.

Moreover, the museum becomes a space where Kemal can create a new reality for himself, one that is shaped by his memories of Füsün and his desire to recapture their relationship. Freud writes, "The creative writer does the same as the child at play. He creates a world of phantasy which he takes very seriously – that is which he invests with large amounts of emotions – while separating it sharply from reality."¹²⁹ The museum is a shrine to Kemal's memories and emotions, rather than a reflection of the reality of his relationship with Füsün. In this way, the Museum of Innocence can be seen as a manifestation of the creative writer's ability to invest a world of phantasy with emotion while sharply separating it from reality. It is an example of the power of the imagination to create something new and meaningful out of the memories and emotions of the past. Specifically, Kemal writes, "I kept

¹²⁸ Sigmund Freud, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," 23.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 19.

coming back to the idea that there could be a museum of a love affair, that all our secret moments and our feelings could be preserved and indeed would have to be preserved because otherwise we would forget them”¹³⁰ and “The museum was both my love letter to Füsün and my way of coping with our separation”¹³¹ which shows Kemal is able to construct a new reality for himself, one that is shaped by his memories of Füsün and his desire to recapture their relationship. In a way, the museum becomes an extension of Kemal's own psyche, where he can create a world that is entirely his own.

Freud's concept of “transference” refers to the process by which a person unconsciously transfers their feelings and desires onto another person or object, often in the context of a therapeutic relationship. In the case of *Lolita*, it can be seen that Humbert's obsessive desire for Lolita is a form of transference, as he projects his own unresolved feelings and traumas onto her. The theory of “transference” is important in the analysis of Humbert's obsession over Lolita because it explains why Humbert is fascinated by teenage girls, nymphets, like Lolita. Humbert's pubescent love for Annabel Leigh and her death at the age of fourteen made Humbert transfer his unattained sexual desires for a teenage Annabel Leigh to other girls of her age. According to Virginia L. Blum, “Humbert's fatal error is represented as his refusal to see Lolita as nothing more than an image”¹³² of his beloved Annabel Leigh, which results in his delusional relationship to Lolita. Not only does Humbert transfer his suppressed emotions to Lolita, but he also displaces time and space because he is entrapped in his unreachable dreams. Humbert writes, “It will be marked that I substitute time terms for spatial ones. In fact, I would have the reader see ‘nine’ and fourteen’ as boundaries – the mirror beaches and rosy rocks – of an enchanted island haunted by nymphets.”¹³³ (Nabokov

¹³⁰ Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*, 26.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 502.

¹³² Virginia Blum, *Hide and Seek: The Child Between Psychoanalysis and Fiction*, 235.

¹³³ Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, 13.

1989, 13) For Humbert, the reality is distorted in terms of temporal and spatial dimensions that support the idea that Humbert is delusional and unrealistic.

Moreover, throughout the novel, Humbert portrays himself as the victim of circumstances, blaming his own obsessions and desires on his traumatic childhood experiences and the death of his first love, Annabel. However, he also places a great deal of emphasis on Lolita's own desires and behaviors, often attributing his own fantasies to her seductive powers. By writing that "I was a child, and she was a child, in this kingdom by the sea; but we loved with a love that was more than love – I and my Annabel Lee; with a love that the winged seraphs of heaven coveted her and me"¹³⁴ and "I am convinced however that in a certain magic and fateful way Lolita began with Annabel,"¹³⁵ Humbert often attributes his obsessions and desires to outside circumstances such as his traumatic childhood experiences and his relationship with Annabel, rather than taking full responsibility for his actions. This tendency to shift blame and see himself as a victim is a common defense mechanism and may be indicative of deeper psychological issues. In this way, he is able to externalize his own guilt and avoid taking responsibility for his actions.

The concept of transference in psychoanalysis refers to the redirection of an individual's feelings and desires from one person to another. Transference is a complex process that involves the repetition and fixation of past emotional experiences onto present ones, often within the context of a therapeutic relationship and, as Freud puts it,

The unconscious feelings strive to avoid the recognition which the cure demands; they seek instead for reproduction, with all the power of hallucination and the in appreciation of time characteristic of the unconscious. The patient ascribes, just as in dreams, currency, and reality to what results from the awakening of his

¹³⁴ Ibid., 28.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 10.

unconscious feelings; he seeks to discharge his emotions, regardless of the reality of the situation.¹³⁶

Alongside Nabokov's *Lolita*, Kemal's collection of objects related to Füsün can also be seen as a form of transference, as well. Kemal directs his intense feelings for Füsün onto the physical objects that she touched, wore, or used. Particularly, Kemal writes, "Sitting shirtless on the edge of the bed where I had made love to Füsün forty-four times and surrounded by all those memory-laden things (three of which I display herewith), I spent a happy hour caressing them lovingly."¹³⁷ Through his collection, Kemal is attempting to hold onto Füsün and the feelings he associates with her. In this way, his collection serves as a physical representation of his transference.

Kemal's love for Füsün was intense and all-consuming. Through the objects he had been collecting for years, Kemal was able to transfer his love for Füsün to the items he had stolen, essentially imbuing them with the same emotional intensity that he felt for her. Kemal's creation of the museum, therefore, itself can be seen as a form of transference.

Kemal writes,

During the month of September, I went three times to the Merhamet Apartments, hiding each visit from Sibel and, in a way, from myself, each time lying on the bed and touching things Füsün had touched, enacting the consolatory rituals already known to my readers. I could not forget her,¹³⁸

which shows that he channels his love and desire for Füsün into creating the museum, which becomes a space to preserve their memories and relationship. Moreover, as Kemal says, "Unmentioned was that my therapy had consisted of going to the Merhamet Apartments and lying down on that bed, and fondling something she had touched,"¹³⁹ which demonstrates

¹³⁶ Sigmund Freud, "The Dynamics of Transference," 99.

¹³⁷ Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*, 163.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 169.

that by creating this physical space, Kemal is able to transfer his feelings and desires onto the museum, rather than Füsün herself. By creating a physical space, the Museum of Innocence, in which to display these objects, Kemal was able to not only honor Füsün's memory but also to create a tangible representation of their relationship. Through his act of collecting and the creation of the museum, Kemal is able to transfer his love for Füsün onto these objects and in a way, preserve their relationship. The museum becomes a way for him to hold onto Füsün, to keep her memory alive, and to find solace in the physical presence of the objects he collected that were associated with her. In this way, the museum serves as a form of transference and a means of working through Kemal's unresolved feelings and desires.

4.2. Lacanian Reading of *Lolita* and *The Museum of Innocence*

Jacques Lacan's concept of "objet petit a" refers to an object of desire that is unattainable and represents the subject's lack or incompleteness. In both Nabokov's *Lolita* and Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*, the main characters' obsession with their respective objects of desire can be seen through the lens of "objet petit a." Both novels demonstrate the power of "objet petit a" in driving characters to obsessive behavior in pursuit of their unattainable objects of desire: Humbert lost his childhood love Annabel Leigh and having never married to the love of his life, Kemal lost Füsün. They both illustrate how these objects can represent a subject's lack or incompleteness and become a source of both pleasure and pain.

In *Lolita*, Dolores Haze becomes Humbert's "objet petit a" due to his unattained desire for his teenage love Annabel Leigh, which can be observed in the parallels that he makes when he encounters Lolita. Annabel Leigh is the key to Humbert's desire for Lolita because in Humbert's memories of Annabel, her childish beauty and unachieved sexual intimacy left an essential mark on Humbert's understanding of nymphets. When Humbert

was thirteen years old, he met Annabel who was “a lovely child a few months [his] junior”¹⁴⁰ with “honey-colored skin” and “big bright mouth,”¹⁴¹ which not only demonstrates the fact that Humbert recognized that she was a child but, nevertheless, invokes sexual subtext to their relationship. Humbert writes, “All at once we were madly, clumsily, shamelessly, agonizingly in love with each other; hopelessly, I should add,”¹⁴² which shows insanely in love Humbert was with Annabel that resulted in his obsession over her, which then due to Annabel’s death translated to Lolita. Annabel was Humbert’s soulmate; they shared similar background because they were both of mixed parentage and had similar childish ambitions to work in an exotic setting: Annabel wanted to be “a nurse in some famished Asiatic country”¹⁴³ and Humbert wanted to be a spy. This moment symbolizes the intense connection between Humbert and Annabel and their shared similar goals in life. After Annabel's death, Humbert tries to recapture that same sense of secret beauty and obsession with Lolita, whom he sees as a replacement for Annabel. This ultimately leads him down a dangerous path of manipulation and abuse. The quote highlights the intense and all-consuming nature of Humbert's love for Annabel, which ultimately shapes his obsession with Lolita.

The last summer holidays Humbert and Annabel shared together shaped Humbert’s image of a “nymphet” that he will refer to girl-children and specifically to Dolores Haze throughout the novel. Interestingly, the word “nymphet” that Humbert coined to refer to a girl-child “[b]etween the age limits of nine and fourteen there occur maidens who, to certain bewitched travelers, twice or many times older than they, reveal their true nature, which is not human, but nymphic (that is, demoniac).”¹⁴⁴ Even though the term “nymphet” had not been used in world literature before it was introduced in Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita*, it is

¹⁴⁰ Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, 8.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

worth noting that the word “nymphet” derived from the word “nymph” used in ancient Greek folklore that referred to “a minor female nature deity that are generally regarded as personifications of nature and are typically tied to a specific place or landform,”¹⁴⁵ which is representative of Annabel who Humbert was deprived of having sex with on the beach. Thus, beach and the sea, which also refer to the “princedom by the sea” in Edgar Allan Poe’s “Annabel Lee,” become symbols that connect Humbert to Annabel, which he admits recognizing as a place where he could not unite with his dead bride.

Moreover, Humbert's desire for Lolita is unattainable because of the social taboo against pedophilia and because Lolita is constantly changing and growing, making her an ever-elusive object. Humbert writes that “...the sensualist in me (a great and insane monster) had no objection to some depravity in his prey. But somewhere behind the raging bliss, bewildered shadows conferred...”¹⁴⁶ and “I am not a criminal sexual psychopath taking indecent liberties with a child!”¹⁴⁷ which demonstrates Humbert is aware of the social taboo against pedophilia and tries to justify his actions as an emotional outburst or a cruel whim rather than a premeditated seduction. He also denies being a rapist or criminal, suggesting that he does not fully understand the gravity of his actions. Humbert's pursuit of Lolita becomes an obsession, and he becomes fixated on possessing her, even to the point of violence.

In *The Museum of Innocence*, Kemal's object of desire is Füsün, with whom he has a passionate love affair. Kemal's desire for Füsün is unattainable because she is no longer with him, and he can only grasp at the physical objects that once belonged to her. The objects in the museum become Kemal's “objet petit a,” representing his incompleteness without Füsün. Kemal writes,

¹⁴⁵ Carlos Parada, *Genealogical Guide to Greek Mythology*.

¹⁴⁶ Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, 121.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 145.

I had occasion to remember that in small museum houses the past is preserved within objects as souls are kept in their earthen bodies, and in that awareness, I found a consoling beauty that bound me to life. But still I wonder if I could ever have learned to appreciate my own collection in the Merhamet Apartments, let alone nurtured any hope of showing it proudly to others?"¹⁴⁸

This illustrates how Kemal views the objects in the museum as a way to possess Füsün's spirit and keep his love alive, which is reminiscent of the concept of "objet petit a" in Lacanian psychoanalysis. The objects represent his incompleteness without her, and without them, he is unable to fully come to terms with their relationship and move on.

Moreover, Lacan's term "objet petit a" that he used to determine the unattainable object of desire can be applied to Kemal's obsession with Füsün because he starts obsessively collect objects that she used to finally be together with her physically even after her death in the car accident. In the novel, Kemal says,

For a week, I had been aware that in the ashtray now resting there was the butt of a cigarette Füsün had stubbed out. At one moment I picked it up, breathing in its scent of smoke and ash, and placing it between my lips. I was about to light it... but I realized that if I did so there would be nothing left of the relic. Instead, I picked it up and rubbed the end that had once touched her lips against my cheeks, my forehead, my neck, and the recesses under my eyes, as gently and kindly as a nurse salving a wound.¹⁴⁹

This reflects the concept of "objet petit a" in Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory. Kemal's intense desire and obsession with Füsün are projected onto the objects that she has touched, used, or worn. These objects become the objects of his desire, his objet petit a, which

¹⁴⁸ Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*, 487.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 125.

represents his desire for completeness and wholeness with Füsün. Kemal's desire for Füsün is unattainable because she is no longer alive, and his attempts to possess her through the objects in the museum are ultimately futile. However, his desire for her persists and is transferred onto these objects, which take on a special meaning and significance for him. The objects become a physical representation of his transference and the embodiment of his longing for Füsün. Lacan's "objet petit a" offers a novel perspective on Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* because it enables the understanding of Kemal's obsessive collecting. "Objet petit a" embodies an object of obsession that the subject, or the obsessed, was unable to attain in the past. Just after the engagement party of Kemal and Sibel, Füsün "thereafter becomes alienated and inaccessible,"¹⁵⁰ which urges Kemal to fall in love and obsess over her even more. Thus, he ends his relationship with Sibel and breaks off their engagement, which acts as a start of his never-ending journey to charm Füsün and convince her to marry him.

4.3. Yalom's Reading of *Lolita* and *The Museum of Innocence*

Applying Yalom's concepts on *Lolita* and *The Museum of Innocence* provides a unique perspective on the reasons behind the protagonist's, Humbert and Kemal's, artistic obsession, and inspiration to create. I argue that applying Yalom's existentialist theory shows that Humbert and Kemal's witnessing of death prior to their obsessions with *Lolita* and Füsün made them rethink the fragility of life and desire to immortalize their memories of their loved ones.

The protagonists of *Lolita* and *The Museum of Innocence*, Nabokov's Humbert, and Pamuk's Kemal, encounter the death of their beloved at different stages of their lives – Humbert in his teenage years and Kemal in his adulthood – which causes them to express their obsession in various forms of art. Moreover, even before the death of their beloved ones,

¹⁵⁰ Frances L. Restuccia, "A Black Passion: Voiding Melancholic Obsession in Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence*," 71.

Humbert and Kemal witness the death of their relatives, Humbert witnesses his mother's death and Kemal attends the funeral of his own father, which acts as a powerful reminder of the fragility of life. This realization is transformative for both Humbert and Kemal, which prompts them to re-evaluate their priorities and desire to leave an eternal art that would communicate their sorrow for the loss of their beloved ones to the spectators. The finiteness of existence, the central idea of Yalom's theory, is what drives both protagonists to want to immortalize the memory of their beloved ones in the form of art: Humbert writes a confessional novel, while Kemal exhibits the objects that he stole from Füsün in her parents' house and turns it into a museum dedicated to her.

In Nabokov's *Lolita*, Humbert witnesses death of his beloved nymphets twice: the first time when his first childhood love Annabel Leigh dies and the second time when a seventeen-year-old Lolita dies giving birth to her dead daughter, which prompts Humbert's awakening and supposedly makes him create art in a form of a confessional novel. In the first chapter of the novel, Humbert suggests that his love for a young girl named Annabel is what ultimately led to the existence of Lolita. Humbert writes, "...there might have been no Lolita at all, had I not loved one summer a certain initial girl-child... in a principality by the sea,"¹⁵¹ which shows that Humbert's strong affection to Annabel and her sudden death made Humbert create an idea of her that he sought and found in Dolores Haze, who he identified as Lolita. As the narrator of the story, Humbert has full authority over the language used to portray Lolita as a flawless but soulless replica of a deceased person. This becomes evident when Humbert comes across Lolita sunbathing in the Haze's garden and describes her as "...there was my Riviera love peering at me over her dark glasses."¹⁵² This highlights that the

¹⁵¹ Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, 9.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 39.

resemblance to Annabel, however, is not based on physical appearance alone but is primarily established by Humbert's language that associates Lolita with death.

Humbert's encounter with Annabel's death at the age of thirteen makes him want to immortalize Lolita through art and he does so through the use of intertextual allusions. Humbert writes, "I am thinking of aurochs and angels, the secret of durable pigments, prophetic sonnets, the refuge of art. And this is the only immortality you and I may share, my Lolita,"¹⁵³ which shows that Humbert believes Lolita is an angel, a deathless creature, that he wants to capture in a picture or a statue and share it with the spectator. Phillip Schweighauser argues that Humbert's desire to immortalize Lolita is a tribute to the traditional notion that art immortalizes not only the artist but also the subjects that are portrayed.¹⁵⁴ Schweighauser's view is that while some readers might see Lolita as a work of art that represents Humbert's fictional love for Lolita, Humbert himself intends to transform Lolita into a work of art. He achieves this through intertextuality using references to other fictional characters such as Annabel Lee, Carmen, Miranda, Lilith, and Lesbia in his descriptions of Lolita. Humbert uses different names and allusions to reference famous cultural icons while describing Lolita. For instance, he refers to "Lola"¹⁵⁵ which is a nod to Marlene Dietrich's character in the *Blue Angel*. Additionally, he calls Lolita "Lilith,"¹⁵⁶ alluding to the Jewish legend of Adam's first wife. When Humbert likens himself to "poor Catullus,"¹⁵⁷ Lolita turns into "Lesbia."¹⁵⁸ By doing so, Humbert appropriates Lolita's body and molds into a collection of cultural references that she is unaware of. In doing so, he not only denies her to normal life of a twelve-year-old, but also erases her identity to suit his own desires.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 307.

¹⁵⁴ Philipp Schweighauser, "Discursive Killings: Intertextuality, Aestheticization, and Death in Nabokov's *Lolita*," *American Studies* (1999): 261.

¹⁵⁵ Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, 9.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 20.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 66.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 22.

Although *Lolita* is already a fictional construct, Humbert's use of intertextuality makes her a site of multiple references, further "aestheticizing" her and placing her in the realm of art.¹⁵⁹ Humbert's allusions to art extends beyond literary works and includes references to visual art, particularly Sandro Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus." Humbert's frequent allusions to Botticelli during his final encounter with Lolita seems contradictory to the prevailing themes of decay and death in the chapter. Humbert himself recognizes this disparity, noting that "Curious although actually her looks had faded, I definitely realized, so hopelessly late in the day, how much she looked – had always looked – like Botticelli's russet Venus – the same soft nose, the same blurred beauty,"¹⁶⁰ which shows that even though, in Humbert's opinion, Lolita's beauty has faded, she still resembles Botticelli's Italian inspiration Venus. The comparison between Lolita's "hopelessly worn at seventeen"¹⁶¹ body and at the same time "hollow-cheeked"¹⁶² and Botticelli's emblem of youth and beauty seems to clash with Humbert's dark intentions, as he reminds the reader, "In my pocket my finger gently let go and repacked a little at the tip, within the handkerchief it was nested in, my unused weapon."¹⁶³ This shows us that in *Lolita* the essence of art is always intertwined with the death, which reminds Humbert of the fragility of life and leads him to create the confessional novel.

In *The Museum of Innocence*, Kemal's experience of trauma following the loss of Füsün, the love of his life, can be analyzed through the lens of Yalom's existentialist psychoanalysis. Yalom's perspective emphasizes the individual's struggle with existential themes such as death, meaninglessness, and the search for purpose.¹⁶⁴ In Kemal's case, the

¹⁵⁹ Philipp Schweighauser, "Discursive Killings: Intertextuality, Aestheticization, and Death in Nabokov's *Lolita*," 269.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. 270.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 277.

¹⁶² Ibid., 277.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 270.

¹⁶⁴ Irvin Yalom, *Existential Psychotherapy*, 15.

traumatic event of Füsün's death triggers profound existential questions and psychological distress. The concept of establishing the museum originates from Kemal, who comes up with the idea after the tragic loss of his beloved Füsün in a car accident which shows how the experience of death influences Kemal to create an immortal form of art – the exhibition in a museum. Kemal's desire to create the museum is rooted in his existential search for meaning and purpose in life. He is aware of his own mortality and wants to create something that will outlast him and serve as a monument to his love for Füsün. In this way, the museum serves as a reflection of his own existence and search for meaning.

The loss of Füsün in a car accident shatters Kemal's world and throws him into a state of profound grief and despair. Yalom's existentialist approach suggests that individuals facing such traumatic events are confronted with the reality of their mortality and the fragility of human existence. Kemal's trauma represents a profound confrontation with the finitude and uncertainty of life, evoking feelings of emptiness, isolation, and a loss of meaning. In response to his trauma, Kemal establishes the museum as an eternal shrine of obsession dedicated to Füsün's memory. Applying Yalom's concept of existentialism suggests that Kemal's creation of the museum serves as an existential coping mechanism. The museum becomes a tangible manifestation of his grief, a way to preserve Füsün's memory and maintain a sense of connection to her. Through the act of curating the museum and obsessively collecting objects associated with their relationship, Kemal finds a way to cope with his loss and maintain a sense of purpose.

From Yalom's perspective, Kemal's creation of the museum represents an existential response to the trauma of loss. The museum serves as a physical and psychological refuge where Kemal can confront his pain, explore his memories, and find solace in the preservation of their shared history. It allows him to transcend his personal suffering and engage in a meaningful endeavor that honors his relationship with Füsün. The museum becomes a

testament to the enduring power of obsession and a means for Kemal to navigate the existential challenges posed by grief, mortality, and the search for significance. Yalom argues that individuals must confront their own mortality and recognize the limitations of their existence in order to create meaning in their lives. Kemal's creation of the museum can be seen as a way for him to confront his own mortality and create something that will give his life a sense of purpose and meaning beyond his own existence. In the novel, Kemal writes,

Some fill their dwellings with objects and, by the time their lives are coming to an end, turn their houses into museums. But I, having turned another family's house into a museum, was now-by the presence of my bed, my room, my very self-trying to turn it back into a house. What could be more beautiful than to spend one's nights surrounded by objects connecting one to his deepest sentimental attachments and memories!¹⁶⁵

This passage suggests that Kemal views the museum as more than just a collection of objects, but rather as a work of art that will outlive him and give his life a sense of purpose and meaning beyond his own mortality. This can be seen as an existentialist pursuit, as it involves creating something that transcends the individual's own existence and gives them a sense of significance in the face of their own mortality.

Additionally, Yalom emphasizes the importance of relationships in creating meaning in life. Kemal's relationship with Füsün is the driving force behind his desire to create the museum. He wants to preserve the memories of their relationship and the objects associated with it in order to keep Füsün's presence with him forever. When Kemal first talks about Füsün to his writer friend Orhan, he says,

¹⁶⁵ Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*, 582.

I once loved a woman so much that I, too, hid away locks of her hair, and her handkerchiefs, and her barrettes, and everything she ever owned, and for many years I found consolation in them, Orhan Bey. May I in all sincerity tell you my story?¹⁶⁶

In this passage, Kemal's desire to create a museum can be seen as a way for him to confront his own mortality and create something that will give his life a sense of purpose and meaning beyond his own existence, which is a central idea in Irvin Yalom's concept of existentialism. Kemal acknowledges that his love for Füsün is fleeting and that the world around him is constantly changing, but by preserving the memories and objects associated with their relationship, he hopes to create a sense of permanence and continuity that will outlast him. In this way, the museum serves not only as a reflection of Kemal's own existence but also as a testament to the importance of relationships and the impact they can have on one's life.

Lastly, applying Irvin Yalom's concept to analyze *The Museum of Innocence* interprets Kemal's obsession over Füsün's objects and his desire to open a museum as a shrine dedicated to her from the perspective of an extreme fear of death. Existentialist psychotherapists such as Irvin Yalom regard fear of death as a driving force of human desire and death as "...a primordial source of an anxiety and as the primary fount of psychopathology,"¹⁶⁷ which shows the fundamentality of death in psychoanalysis. In the case of Kemal and Füsün, at the end of the novel, they get into a car accident, which leads to Füsün's death and Kemal's survival. For a moment, Kemal sees Füsün begging for mercy, wishing to stay alive. Thus, the fact that Kemal witnesses a death of his beloved leads him to exhibit the objects that he obsessively has been collecting for eight years in the shrine of his memories of Füsün.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 582.

¹⁶⁷ Irvin Yalom, *Existential Psychotherapy*, 29.

Chapter V: The Anthropology of the Museum

5.1. The Theory of Agency of Things

The theory of the agency of things revolves around the object-centered approach to art and even everyday life, which is primarily addressed in anthropological and archaeological studies, but it has also proved to be an innovative approach to historical and literary research. It occurred as a result of the shift from textualism towards narrativism and postculturalism by Western humanities in the 1970s.¹⁶⁸ The followers of narrativism and postculturalism wanted to replace textualists' approach to equate the world with text by stressing the role of "active, embodied actors shaping the reality."¹⁶⁹ In other words, they emphasized the extent to which human beings can shape the surrounding material reality and how material objects can alter people's perception of the world. The role of the material world and its influence on human beings is most apparent in the actor-network theory which states that both humans and objects are equal participants in shaping the society because they similarly forge new relations between entities.¹⁷⁰ This can be explained by the idea that the actor-network theory does not propose a definite hierarchy between human and nonhuman actors, which implies that the creator and the object have equal influence on the meaning that the art objects convey to the spectators. Consequently, nonhuman agents become independent mediators and not merely tools in the human creator's hands.

Even though in the history of art major attention has usually been dedicated to people involved in the creation of art objects such as artists, painters, and sculptors, questions regarding the relationship between the function of an image and its artistic medium have built

¹⁶⁸ Grażyna Jurkowlaniec, Ika Matyjaskiewicz, and Zuzanna Sarnecka. "Art History Empowering Medieval and Early Modern Things," in *The Agency of Things in Medieval and Early Modern Art: Materials, Power, and Manipulation*, edited by Grażyna Jurkowlaniec, Ika Matyjaskiewicz, and Zuzanna Sarnecka, (New York: Routledge, 2018): 4.

¹⁶⁹ Grażyna Jurkowlaniec, Ika Matyjaskiewicz, and Zuzanna Sarnecka. "Art History Empowering Medieval and Early Modern Things," 4.

¹⁷⁰ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 53.

the importance of perceiving objects as agents. In his essay “The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology,” Gell formulated the core principle of the theory of the agency of things, stating that art objects should be viewed as items and not as “a vehicle for extraneous social and symbolic message,”¹⁷¹ shifting the perspective from the creators who endow the objects with meaning to objects themselves. Gell stressed the idea that objects, too, should be regarded as primary agents, “endowed with the capacity to initiate actions/events through will or intention”¹⁷² because they can communicate ideas that are different from what the creator intended to denote or change over time. Gell’s work is important mainly because it acts as a challenge to the traditional approaches to art history that accentuate the functional aspects of objects that can only be perceived through human agents. Thus, it can be argued that Gell’s proposed theory of agency of objects enables one to view an artwork through a different perspective because it shifts the focus from the creators and their intentions to art objects as independent agents able to convey meanings to those who interact with them. The theory of agency of things allows to structure the relationship between the objects and the viewer leaving the creator aside and, as a result, creating a new dimension to the understanding of art.

Considering the influence that objects can have on their spectators, who often generate meanings that diverge from the creator's original intent, it is vital to explore the third, implicit actor: the spectator. This inquiry can prove intriguing as it highlights the significant role that individual interpretation plays in the construction of meaning. People, who were not involved in the creation of objects, extend themselves through different objects embodying them with meaning for various personal reasons such as keeping memories, expressing obsession, and even worshipping. As Freedberg writes,

¹⁷¹ Alfred Gell, “The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology,” in *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*, edited by Jeremy Coote and Anthony Shelton, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 43.

¹⁷² Alfred Gell, “The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology,” 36.

People are sexually aroused by pictures and sculptures; they break pictures and sculptures; they mutilate them, kiss them, cry before them, and go on journeys to them; they are calmed by them, stirred by them, and incited to revolt. They give thanks by means of them, are moved to the highest levels of empathy by them.¹⁷³

This shows the interconnectedness between both objects and spectators and the necessity of their relationship for any meaning to occur. Specifically, unlike the followers of the traditionalist approach to art, who believe in the superiority of the artist, and those who advocate for the actor-network theory who state that objects alongside their creators equally influence the conveyed meaning of objects, the theory of object agency and the extended object place an emphasis on the spectator that in the former theories oftentimes is not observed enough.

The theory of object agency stresses the importance of the spectator in the construction of meaning, and this insight can inform the interpretation of the survey results that I conducted in the Museum of Innocence in Istanbul. The survey aimed to investigate how readers reacted to objects placed in the Museum of Innocence, and the theory of object agency highlights the significance of individual interpretation in this context. The survey results could be analyzed through this lens, as the participants' responses would be seen as a reflection of their personal experiences and perspectives. Moreover, the theory of object agency challenges the traditional approach to art that emphasizes the importance of the artist's intention and highlights the agency of objects themselves. This suggests that the meaning of the objects in the Museum of Innocence may go beyond what the creator intended, as the objects may take on new meanings in the eyes of the spectators. The theory of object agency,

¹⁷³ David Freedberg, *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989): 1.

therefore, offers a useful perspective for interpreting the survey results and sheds light on the complex relationship between objects and spectators in the creation of meaning.

5.2.The Anthropology of Collecting and Museums

Collecting objects in a structured way and assembling them into exhibitions in museums or private collections is one of the ways of recognizing the agency of things. Collectors and the act of collecting have been widely researched because the history of collecting dates back to ancient times. Collecting often has been linked to religious practices because ancient religions collected sacred objects “imbued with magical powers to negotiate the hazards of this world and the next.”¹⁷⁴ During the Renaissance era, when art became secular, wealthy people of higher social status began collecting paintings and sculptures to publicly display their refined and sophisticated taste. However, as modern societies began expanding and translating their tastes massively, private collections started to be diverse and include not only objects that display a high culture such as great arts, books, and porcelain, but odd and ephemeral objects such as toys, private belongings, and even children’s toys. Collectors and their collections force us to reconsider our relationship with objects and see them through a completely different perspective. Moist and Banash argue that “...collectors’ passion, scope, practices, and care cast into dramatic relief the role of objects in our lives.”¹⁷⁵ Orhan Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence* in Istanbul serves as an example of this concept, where the author portrays the immense love of the protagonist Kemal through his collection of mundane everyday objects that we often disregard. Pamuk's work highlights how such objects can hold great sentimental value and convey emotions similar to other artistic mediums such as love poems, songs, and paintings.

¹⁷⁴ Kevin M. Moist and David Banash, *Contemporary Collecting: Objects, Practices, and the Fate of Things*, (Scarecrow Press, 2013): ix.

¹⁷⁵ Kevin M. Moist and David Banash, *Contemporary Collecting: Objects, Practices, and the Fate of Things*, xi.

One of the pioneers of the study of the art of collecting is Walter Benjamin. Even though the majority of his works such as *Moscow Diary* and *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* touches upon his experience of collecting, his main works on collecting and the collectors are his essays “Unpacking My Library” (1931) and “Convolute H: The Collector” (1927). These essays present an insight into a collector’s mind and demonstrate the process of collecting from within which I believe is crucial for an understanding of Kemal’s motivation in Orhan Pamuk’s *The Museum of Innocence* because the essays show how collectors think and decide to start their own private collections. As stated by Benjamin, “Every passion borders on the chaotic, but the collector’s passion borders on the chaos of memories,”¹⁷⁶ which is exemplified in Kemal's creation of a shrine of memories for Füsün in her parents' apartment following her death. Kemal's act of constructing this shrine can be seen as an attempt to organize and make sense of the chaos of memories he has of his beloved. In his writing, Benjamin contends that collectors possess a unique emotional attachment to the objects they hold dear, which enables them to peer into the past and reminisce about distant memories. As he puts it, "One has to watch a collector handle the objects in his glass case. As he holds them in his hands, he seems to be seeing through them into their distant past as though inspired."¹⁷⁷ This idea demonstrates how collectors' obsession with certain objects can evoke strong emotions and allow them to relive important memories.

As is mentioned, exhibiting collections in museums is not only a true demonstration of the agency of things, but a representation of emotional obsession of the collector whose collection is being exhibited. The collections in exhibitions are aspatial and atemporal because most of the collected objects in museum exhibitions can last for a long time, people

¹⁷⁶ Walter Benjamin, “Unpacking My Library,” 60.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

from different generations can observe collections in exhibitions. This idea shows that exhibitions can create a bridge between the creators and the viewers of their works, fostering a sense of connection and understanding between them. Observers, on the other hand, are free to translate their own understanding of the meaning behind the objects creating a new unexplored dimension of art experience. The artistry of Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* extends beyond the pages of the book and into a physical space, the Museum of Innocence in Istanbul, where visitors can immerse themselves in the world of Kemal and Füsün. By bringing the collection of objects to life in a real-life museum, Pamuk allows the audience to not only read about Kemal's obsession with collecting Füsün's belongings but also witness and experience it firsthand. The tangible display of the objects provides a deeper connection to the story and a personal way of engaging with the narrative, as the visitors can see, touch, and feel the items that were once so significant to the characters in the novel. Thus, Pamuk has created a new way of experiencing a novel, one that blurs the line between fiction and reality, and allows us to enter into the realm of the story in a more intimate way.

5.3. Museum as a Shrine of Obsession

A museum is often seen as a shrine of obsession,¹⁷⁸ a place where individuals and communities preserve and showcase their deep-rooted passions and interests. Museums house a vast array of artifacts and works of art that the diverse obsessions of humanity. For many, museums are not simply places to store and exhibit historical or cultural relics, but also places to delve into the world of obsession.¹⁷⁹ The obsession can manifest in a variety of forms – be it a fascination with ancient civilizations, a love for modern art, or an interest in natural history. In some cases, such as the Museum of Innocence, may even be dedicated to preserving the relics of a single individual, Füsün Keskin. In many ways, museums are an

¹⁷⁸ Crispin Paine, "Beyond Museums: Religion in Other Visitor Attractions," *ICOFOM Study Series 47*, no. 2 (2019): 159.

¹⁷⁹ Crispin Paine, "Beyond Museums: Religion in Other Visitor Attractions," 160.

extension of the human impulse to collect and preserve. They represent the culmination of a lifetime's worth of curiosity and obsession and provide a window into the minds of the collectors who have dedicated themselves to their particular area of interest.

I propose the idea that the museum in *The Museum of Innocence* should be considered as a shrine to Kemal's memories of Füsün. Collecting is one of the major themes in Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*, which demonstrates Kemal's obsession with Füsün through the exhibition of her owned objects that Kemal carefully has been stealing for eight years from the apartment she lived in with her parents. Kemal becomes passionate about Füsün during his long-term relationship with Sibel, who he proposes to not long after their first interaction with Füsün, his distant relative. He develops tender feelings towards Füsün but fails to marry her due to their unequal social positions and his engagement with Sibel. Unrequited love and Füsün's unavailability drives Kemal crazy that he develops depression, breaks up with Sibel, and for eight long years comes home to Füsün, her husband, and her parents to have an awkward dinner and steal her belongings. This background story to Kemal's obsession with Füsün demonstrates how stalking, a term that is used to describe an act of persecuting someone obsessively and stealing, led Kemal to construct a literal shrine to Füsün and memories of her. In *The Museum of Innocence*, the museum and shrine merge into one entity, presenting a memorial of Kemal's love for Füsün. The Museum of Innocence can be regarded as "...a 'sacred place,' which reminds us of the analogy between the 'sacred' as the term used in a religious context, and the way in which museums treat their objects as special,"¹⁸⁰ which shows the extent to which the Museum of Innocence seals the line between exhibiting art objects and worshipping a human being.

Objects that are displayed in the museum the narrator of the novel embodies with an emotional meaning to the protagonist Kemal and narrates every story and explains every

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 161.

reason behind the choice of a particular object to display in the museum. The first objects to be chosen to be displayed and “are on the entrance to the museum”¹⁸¹ were Füsün’s earrings (see Appendix 2) that Kemal saved but did not steal on purpose because they reminded him of “The Happiest Moment of [His] Life” (Chapter 1), when their “bliss was so profound... heedless of the fall of the earring,”¹⁸² which shows that Kemal’s choice of objects to steal and display corresponded to his experience of intense yet happiest moments in his life. Next, Füsün’s hair clips (see Appendix 3) that Kemal exhibited “evoked the room’s heavy, draining, crushing atmosphere at that moment... and should remind us that the stories she told had happened to a child,”¹⁸³ after which Kemal proceeds to tell multiple stories of harassment that Füsün had to face as a teenage girl. This shows that objects were not chosen randomly, but they serve a purpose to describe the complex character of Füsün and her difficult and tragic life. Lastly, Kemal used to take objects when he experienced not only happiest moments but the most miserable and saddest moments in his life. When Kemal finds out Füsün was married, he takes Füsün’s hairpin (see Appendix 4) and writes, “I lived through one of my life’s most profoundly spiritual moments standing in front of the bathroom mirror... and Füsün’s hairpin (which I thankfully noticed and dropped into my pocket.”¹⁸⁴ This shows that carefully stealing Füsün’s belongings was a way for Kemal to lock his core memories and assure the objects would forever remind him of those moments.

5.4. Readership Research Method

Pamuk stands out among his contemporaries for creating complex connections between his stories and their real-world counterparts, particularly by inventing a museum and using a novel to recount the lives of the fictional characters it showcases. In *The Museum of Innocence*, “fiction takes form in the material world—and the success that Pamuk achieves in

¹⁸¹ Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*, 11.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 297.

the process enables his representations to claim precedence over their referents in the global imagination.”¹⁸⁵ Ironically, by urging non-Turkish readers to remember a distinctly Turkish past, he introduces new historical knowledge to the global literary sphere and encourages a false recollection of unfamiliar experiences. As Gloria Fisk puts it, “While Turkish visitors encounter in the Museum of Innocence the signifiers of a past that they remember, Anglophone readers witness the evocation of memory from the outside to perceive an attenuated nostalgia for a past we haven’t had,”¹⁸⁶ creating a shared experience of remembering *The Museum of Innocence* through the representation of a past that only exists in fiction. The interplay between the imagined and the real is emphasized, along with the contrast between the familiar and the foreign, both of which are integral to the reading experience. The novel and the museum collaborate to explore the intertwined relationship between translation and imitation, while also recognizing the limitations of world literature, which struggles to accurately convey meaning across linguistic systems and can only blur the lines between the imaginary and the real if it acknowledges the necessary distinctions between them.

To analyze the role of the spectators in the formation of meanings and the role of the readers that engage with a literary work and provide affective responses that result from this engagement, I conducted a survey in the Museum of Innocence created by Orhan Pamuk as a companion to his novel *The Museum of Innocence*. The major reason why I decided to conduct this survey as a part of my thesis project is that I wanted to analyze visitors’ reactions to the act of obsessive collecting and their ideas about the agency of objects and explore how viewing the objects that were described in the novel, in real life can influence the readership experience. After having completed the survey, I believe I was able to capture

¹⁸⁵ Gloria Fisk, *Orhan Pamuk and the Good of World Literature*, (Columbia University Press, 2018): 75.

¹⁸⁶ Gloria Fisk, *Orhan Pamuk and the Good of World Literature*, 75.

a comprehensive picture of obsessive collecting and its impact on the readers and their experience in the museum. The visitors' responses demonstrated that seeing the objects described in the novel in real life added a new dimension to their understanding of the story and the characters. Moreover, the act of collecting and preserving objects was perceived not only as a personal obsession but also as a way to preserve memories and emotions. The survey also revealed that the visitors felt a strong emotional connection to the objects and their story, and the act of viewing them in a museum setting intensified this connection. Overall, the survey results confirmed that the museum experience can enhance and enrich the readership response, and that the agency of objects and their role in preserving memory and emotion is a powerful force that can transcend time and space.

The Museum of Innocence is located in Istanbul, Çukurcuma neighborhood of the Beyoglu district, that was designed to accompany the novel, offering artifacts of the love story of Kemal and Füsun. In the novel, Kemal is collecting Füsun's objects for eight years of their incomplete relationship and after her unfortunate death exhibits them in the house of her parents on Teshvikiye prospect. The actual museum, on the other hand, is situated on the corner of Çukurcuma and Dalgiç streets and consists of 83 series of displays that correspond to 83 chapters in the book. An audio guide is available both for the visitors who are familiar with the novel and for those who are not, and which explains the reasoning behind Orhan Pamuk's choice of objects he put on display to accompany a particular chapter. The audio guide both narrates the significant parts of chapters and presents Pamuk's narration of the history behind his search for most objects in his collection. This creates a peculiar bond between the visitors of the museum and the author himself, as if the visitor accompanied Pamuk in his journey of founding a museum of memories.

The Museum of Innocence is apart from being a companion to the original novel, a representation of a life of an imaginary character Füsun expressed in the objects she allegedly

owned, is an independent piece of art that can be appreciated in its own right, providing an immersive experience for visitors. The physical space of the museum, meticulously designed and curated by Orhan Pamuk himself, brings the fictional world of the novel to life, allowing visitors to explore and interact with the objects that were so important to the characters. The museum stands as a testament to the power of obsessive collecting, and the ways in which objects can hold deep emotional significance and tell stories about the lives of those who cherish them. In *The Innocence of Memories*, Pamuk explains the choice of founding such a museum as that

I wrote the novel while thinking of the museum and created the museum while thinking of the novel. The museum was not just some idea I chanced upon after the success of the book, nor was it a case of the success of the museum begetting the novel, like the book version of some blockbuster film... Back in the mid-nineties, when I first embarked on this artistic and literary project, my dream was to open the museum on the same day the novel was published. I would arrange the chapters in meticulous order, producing a museum catalogue that could be read as a novel – a postmodern sort of novel. But I finished the book before the museum, recasting it into the form of a traditional novel, without images or annotations, and published it in 2008.¹⁸⁷

The passage highlights the close relationship between the physical museum and the novel, and how they were conceived of as part of the same artistic and literary project. Pamuk's original vision for the museum was to present the objects described in the novel in a carefully curated and arranged manner. The museum would be a three-dimensional embodiment of the novel, where visitors could explore the story through objects and spaces that were physically present. In this way, the museum catalogue would be read as a "postmodern sort of novel,"¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Orhan Pamuk, *The Innocence of Memories*, 1.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

where the narrative would unfold through the objects and their arrangement. Overall, Pamuk emphasizes the importance of the physical museum in the overall reading and viewing experience, as it allows readers to engage with the objects and settings of the novel in a tangible way.

5.5. Survey Method

I conducted the survey using descriptive qualitative analysis and prior to conducting it I obtained Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC) approval. Using a descriptive qualitative analysis, I gathered research data in the form of qualitative data from the participants' responses in the form of statements, words, and phrases. The survey was conducted anonymously, with no sensitive or private information collected. The questionnaire consisted of six questions, which were provided in both English and Turkish to accommodate local people and foreign tourists. The questions were “Are you familiar with Orhan Pamuk? If yes, have you read any of his works?”, “Have you read *Museum of Innocence*?”, “What do you think about Kemal collecting things possessed by Füsün? (E.g., her cigarettes, her dress, her earring, etc.)”, “Are material objects important to you? If yes, then why?”, “Do you tend to endow objects with meaning in your daily life? For example, if they remind you of loved ones.”, “Do you keep objects that remind you of your family or friends? If yes, then why?” The questions were designed to understand visitors' perceptions of obsessive collecting and its impact on their reading experience, and included queries such as their familiarity with Orhan Pamuk, their opinion on Kemal's collection of Füsün's belongings, and their personal attachment to material objects.

The survey took eight days to accomplish it. The research subjects involved 23 participants of various backgrounds. Even though during eight days of my research I approached a total of 78 people, only less than a third of them decided to answer my questions. They all were of different nationalities, gender, and age because the survey did not

presuppose a specific selection of candidates personality-wise (the only requirement was familiarity with the novel), which enabled me to form a comprehensive unbiased opinion on the topic of obsession. It was easy to discern those who had read the novels from those who did not because the former carried a copy of the book with them since every copy of *The Museum of Innocence* in any language has a free ticket to the museum in the last chapter thoughtfully designed by Orhan Pamuk. Primary data in this study was collected in three steps. The first step was to approach a random visitor of the Museum of Innocence and introduce myself, my study, and objectives of my research. The second step was to ask them if they agree to participate in my survey using oral consent wording that can be found in Appendix 1. The third and final step was to ask the questions and write down the answers.

5.6. Findings and Description

Provided that I searched for people with the copy of *The Museum of Innocence* in their hands, 100% of the respondents were familiar with both Orhan Pamuk and his novel, which made it easier to do the examination of readers' responses to the real-life obsessive collecting. 78% (18 people) were familiar with more than three of Orhan Pamuk's novels, including *The Museum of Innocence*, and 22% (5 people) only read *The Museum of Innocence* alone. Prior to conducting the survey, I thought that visitors would be anxious to witness obsessive collecting in real life, given that reading about it does not feel real enough to be scared by the idea that Kemal has been obsessively stealing his beloved's belongings. I expected that at least a half of the respondents would feel disdain towards Kemal's obsession because nowadays stalking is legally prosecuted and socially disapproved. However, I was surprised that respondents' answers did not meet my expectations but, on the contrary, they were the opposite to what I initially expected to observe. Based on the acquired data, 70% (16 people) of the respondents said the alleged collection of the character Füsün's belongings was amazing. Interestingly, "amazing" was the most repeated word used to describe Kemal's

supposed collection. 22% (5 people) said it was their dream to visit the Museum of Innocence after having read it because they knew the museum was listed as the best European museum in 2014. 8% (2 people) said they visited the museum because it was the third must-visit place in Istanbul according to Google Maps.

Regarding the second part of the survey, which consisted of rather personal questions such as “Are material objects important to you? If yes, then why?”, it can be observed that the majority of people, 74% (17 people) of all respondents, regarded objects to be important in preserving memories of their loved ones and remembering key moments of their lives. On the other hand, 22% (5 people) were neutral towards objects and even 4% (1 person) said that objects do not hold any value and are “a byproduct of a capitalist society”. I was surprised to hear such answers because I expected the majority of the respondents to have a negative attitude towards worshipping material objects due to a rising common consciousness about drastic environmental disasters caused by excessive consumerism and production of objects. I believed that people would think of collecting objects as an outdated form of obsession because everything has become more digitized, so it is unnecessary to collect anymore. However, the most staggering answer was that 8% (2 people) out of 74% (17 people), who believed that objects were an important part of their lives, ascribed religious meanings to them, arguing that the souls of their perished loved ones were embodied in objects, which proves the theory of agency of things that states that objects are as independent transmitters of meanings as are human beings.

Based on the survey findings, it seems that the readers of Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* had a positive response towards the idea of obsessive collecting. The survey also revealed that the majority of respondents believed that material objects were important in preserving memories and key moments of their lives. This finding indicates that collecting objects may be a way for individuals to hold onto important memories and experiences. It is

noteworthy that some respondents ascribed religious meanings to their objects, suggesting that objects can hold significant personal and spiritual value for some individuals. However, it is important to acknowledge that the survey results may not be representative of the broader population, as the respondents were self-selected and may have had a particular interest in the novel and its themes. Additionally, the survey was conducted on a small sample size, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Nonetheless, the results offer valuable insights into readers' attitudes towards collecting and material objects.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the works of Freud, Lacan, and Yalom provide a rich framework for analyzing the themes of obsession in Nabokov's *Lolita* and Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*. Through the lens of Freud's concept of transference, we see the ways in which Humbert and Kemal transfer their desires onto unattainable objects, Lolita and Füsün, respectively. The analysis of Humbert and Kemal's obsessions reveals the deep-seated psychological conflicts and desires that underlie their behaviors. Humbert's desire for Lolita reflects his unresolved emotional traumas and his attempts to regain the lost object of his childhood. Kemal's obsession with Füsün can be seen as an attempt to fill a sense of incompleteness and inadequacy, as well as to create a sense of immortality through the preservation of his memories with her. The Lacanian concept of objet petit a is especially relevant to understanding the protagonists' obsessions as they seek to attain an unattainable object of desire. The study has shown that the objects associated with Füsün, and Lolita serve as the objet petit a, representing the protagonists' desire for something that is always just beyond their reach. The analysis of Yalom's existentialist concepts has also revealed how Humbert and Kemal's obsessions reflect their attempts to confront their own mortality and find meaning in their lives. Humbert's desire for immortality through his relationship with Lolita and Kemal's desire to create an immortal form of art through the museum reflect their attempts to transcend their finite existence.

This study is only a starting point for further research on the topic of obsession in literature. There are several areas that could be explored in greater depth. First, the analysis of the Lacanian objet petit a could be extended to other literary works to explore how it functions as a central motif in representations of desire and obsession. Second, the study could be expanded to include other works by Freud, Lacan, and Yalom to provide a more comprehensive understanding of their theories and their applications to literary analysis.

Third, the study could be extended to explore how obsession is represented in other cultural contexts and genres, such as film, music, and art. Finally, the study could be extended to explore the ethical and moral implications of obsession, particularly in relation to the representation of taboo subjects such as pedophilia in literature.

Overall, this research has highlighted the depth and intricacy of literary portrayals of obsession in Nabokov's *Lolita* and Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*, and the valuable perspectives that can be derived from applying psychoanalytic and existentialist theories to literary analysis. Through examining how literary characters are compelled by their obsessions, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of human psychology and the driving forces that govern our actions. By examining the ethical and moral consequences of these portrayals of obsession, we can gain insight into the societal and cultural factors that impact our beliefs and attitudes towards these themes. Further research in this area could explore the portrayal of obsession in other literary works, as well as expand the analysis to include other theoretical frameworks and interdisciplinary perspectives.

Regarding the survey findings and analysis of the literature, it is evident that the agency of things has a significant impact on human behavior and the way in which we view the world around us. The case study of *The Museum of Innocence* serves as a prime example of how objects can hold immense value for individuals, and how museums can act as a shrine of obsession for collectors. Through a thorough examination of the anthropology of museums and the history of collecting, it is clear that museums have evolved significantly over time. From private collections to public institutions, museums have played a crucial role in preserving history, culture, and art. However, the survey results indicate that museums have a deeper impact on individuals than simply preserving cultural artifacts. They serve as a means of preserving memories and emotions through the objects on display, creating a profound emotional connection between the individual and the object. Moreover, the survey results

demonstrate that readers of Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* had a positive response towards the idea of obsessive collecting, and the majority of respondents believed that material objects were important in preserving memories and key moments of their lives. This finding suggests that collecting objects may be a way for individuals to hold onto important memories and experiences, and museums can serve as a means of exhibiting and preserving these objects for future generations.

Future research could focus on expanding the sample size and including a broader range of participants to increase the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, further exploration of the agency of things could be conducted to understand the ways in which objects can shape human behavior and relationships. Overall, the study offers valuable insights into the complex relationship between individuals and objects, emphasizing the importance of understanding the agency of things and its impact on human experience.

Appendix 1. Oral Consent Script

True Love or Fetish: Abstract and Materialistic Obsessions in Nabokov's *Lolita* and Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence*

Researcher: Kamilya Khamitova

Oral Consent Script

Introduction:

Hello. I'm *Kamilya Khamitova*. I am conducting surveys/interviews about the theme of obsession in Orhan Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence*. I'm conducting this as part of research for the Master's Thesis at Nazarbayev University's MAES program.

Study procedures:

I'm inviting you to do a survey that will take about 10-15 minutes. The survey will ask you questions about theme of obsession in Orhan Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence* such as

1. Are you familiar with Orhan Pamuk? If yes, have you read any of his works?
2. Have you read *Museum of Innocence*?
3. What do you think about Kemal collecting things possessed by Fusün?
4. Are material objects important to you? If yes, then why?
5. Do you tend to endow objects with meaning in your daily life? For example, if they remind you of beloved ones.
6. Do you keep objects that remind you of your family or friends? If yes, then why?

Risks:

There are no risks in the survey or the study, but you do not need to answer questions that you do not want to answer or that make you feel uncomfortable.... And you can withdraw (stop taking part) at any time. I describe below the steps I am taking to protect your privacy.

Benefits:

It is unlikely that there will be direct benefits to you, however, by better understanding theme of obsession in Orhan Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence* for researchers and others may be able to open new horizons for the interpretation of the novel.

I will keep the information you tell me during the interview confidential. Information I put in my report that could identify you will not be published or shared beyond the research team unless we have your permission. Any data from this research which will be shared or published will be the combined data of all participants. That means it will be reported for the whole group not for individual persons.

Voluntary participation:

- Your participation in this study is voluntary.
- You can decide to stop at any time, even part-way through the questionnaire for whatever reason.
- If you decide to stop participating, there will be no consequences to you.
- If you decide to stop we will ask you how you would like us to handle the data collected up to that point.
- This could include returning it to you, destroying it or using the data collected up to that point.
- If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still be in the study.
- If you have any questions about this study or would like more information you can call or email kamilya.khamitova@nu.edu.kz.

This study has been reviewed and cleared by the Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, you may contact:

Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee

E-mail: resethics@nu.edu.kz

Consent questions:

- Do you have any questions or would like any additional details?
- Do you agree to participate in this study knowing that you can withdraw at any point with no consequences to you?

Appendix 2. Füsun's Earrings.



Appendix 3. Füsun's Childhood.



Appendix 4. Füsun's Hairpins.



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