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URBAN REFLECTIONS: AN ECOCRITICAL PERSPECTIVE on MAGICAL ISTANBUL THROUGH ORHAN PAMUK'S 'A STRANGENESS in MY MIND' NOVEL¹

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Abstract

The initial signs of environmental approaches to literary studies began to emerge in the United States during the 1970s. Natural elements were incorporated into literary texts for pastoral purposes. As ecocriticism evolved theoretically, these elements started to be integrated into methodological frameworks. Prominent literary figures contributed to the global expansion of ecocritical approaches. The extensive use of nature-related themes and motifs in traditional Turkish literature laid the groundwork for late modern and post-modern works. In modern Turkish literature, themes and motifs rooted in rural narratives transitioned into urban-focused forms in the 21st century. Literary works often address issues arising from rapid urbanization, distorted urban settlements, and the rapid exploitation of natural resources, occasionally taking the form of criticism and even rebellion. Orhan Pamuk, a Nobel Prize-winning author deeply appreciative of Istanbul's natural and historical richness, incorporates an ecocritical approach into his novels set in Istanbul. This paper explores the dimensions of Pamuk's ecocritical approach in "A Strangeness in My Mind" and discusses the influence and implications of this theory on the author's narrative.

Anahtar sözcükler: Orhan Pamuk, ecocritical perspective, A Strangeness in My Mind', Istanbul

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Kentsel Yansımalar:

Büyülü İstanbul'a Orhan Pamuk'un *Kafamda Bir Tuhaflık* Romanıyla

Ekoeleştirel Bir Bakış

Öz

Edebiyat çalışmalarına çevresel yaklaşımların ilk izleri 1970'lerde Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde ortaya çıkmaya başladı. Doğal unsurlar edebi metinlere pastoral amaçlarla dahil edildi. Ekokritik kuram geliştikçe, bu unsurlar yöntemsel çerçevelere entegre edilmeye başlandı. Önde gelen edebi figürler, ekokritik yaklaşımların küresel yayılmasına katkıda bulundu. Geleneksel Türk edebiyatında doğa ile ilişkilendirilen temalar ve motifler, geç modern ve post-modern eserlerin temelini oluşturdu. Modern Türk edebiyatında, kırsal hikâyelere kök salmış temalar ve motifler, 21. yüzyılda kentsel odaklı formlara dönüştü. Edebi eserler genellikle hızlı kentselleşme, bozulmuş şehir yerleşimleri ve doğal kaynakların hızlı sömürülmesinden kaynaklanan sorunları ele alırken bazen eleştiri ve hatta isyan biçimine dönüşür. İstanbul'un doğal ve tarihi zenginliğine derin bir saygı duyan Orhan Pamuk, bu megakentte geçen romanlarına ekokritik bir yaklaşımı dahil eder. Bu makale, Pamuk'un "Benim Adım Kırmızı" adlı eserindeki ekokritik yaklaşımının boyutlarını irdeler ve bu kuramın yazarın anlatısına olan etkilerini ve sonuçlarını tartışır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Orhan Pamuk, ekokritik eleştiri, 'Kafamda Bir Tuhaflık', İstanbul

Introduction

The first traces of environmental approaches to literary studies appeared in the United States in the 1970s. Data related to nature were initially used for pastoral purposes in literary texts. As ecocriticism developed theoretically, these data began to be employed in methodological terms. Ecocritical perspectives, elucidated by prominent literary figures, have progressively gained a global scope. The extensive use of natural themes and motifs in traditional Turkish literature laid the foundation for late modern and post-modern works. Themes and motifs based on rural narratives in modern Turkish literature have evolved into an urban-centered form as of the 21st century. Issues arising from rapid urbanization, disrupted settlements, and the rapid exploitation of natural resources manifest as critiques and occasionally as acts of rebellion in literary works. Orhan Pamuk, a Nobel-winning author and a fervent admirer of Istanbul's natural and historical treasures, incorporates an ecocritical approach in his novels set in Istanbul. This paper explores the dimensions of Pamuk's ecocritical approach in "A Strangeness in My Mind" and elucidates the impacts and reflections of this theory with regards to the author's storytelling.

Distorted settlements resulting from rapid population growth and a thirst for profit (or rent-seeking) in many developing countries have disrupted the balance of nature. This environmentalist approach, with roots dating back to 17th-century human-centered perspectives and actions, emerged in the 1960s as a response to this rapid disruption, leading to the development of methodological disciplines over time. Ecocriticism, a discipline that examines the portrayal of environmental issues in literary works, initially gained prominence in the United States before spreading to Europe and gaining worldwide recognition. Artists, who felt a sense of responsibility and concern for the future in the realm of literature, began addressing environmental issues and environmental protection in their works. The intersection between this literature and various scientific and artistic fields has thrust

ecology into the spotlight since the 20th century. Meanwhile, artists have increasingly incorporated environmental themes into their works, and critical approaches focusing on ecology and the environment have become popular among critics. Professor Cheryll Glotfelty, considered a pioneer in the field of "ecology and literature," authored the introduction to 'The Ecocriticism Reader' and was the first to emphasize concerns about the Earth's life support system, highlighting that issues related to race, gender, and class have become crucial topics in the 20th century (Glotfelty, 1996: 25-68).

In terms of the philosophical foundation of this approach, there has been a notable emphasis on preserving the balance of nature while striving to uphold the well-being of humanity and society, protect all forms of life, and prevent the disruption of the natural cycle. Many developing countries have witnessed the disregard for the Earth, humanity, and animal species, along with the ruthless exploitation of nature, often portrayed as 'modernity and development' in the colorful advertisements of the capitalist system. This occurs in tandem with the neglect of critical issues such as global warming, the depletion of water resources, seasonal imbalances, the depletion of natural energy resources, and environmental pollution resulting from unplanned industrialization (Coupe, 2000: 33-45-88). Following in the footsteps of Aldo Leopold, who pioneered a shift towards focusing on literary ecology and environmental ethics instead of the anthropocentric mechanical worldview, we can observe that European and American authors from the 19th century, such as Gilbert White, Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Mary Austin, and Edward Abbey, who are regarded as literary ecology trailblazers, progressed in alignment with both anthropocentric and environmentally-oriented ethics (Özdağ, 2005: 176).

It is widely accepted that the pioneering work in the field of ecological criticism in literature was William Ruckert's "Literature and Ecology" (Ruckert, 105-123). Following literary works and philosophical insights, the academic critique of ecology gained a more prominent role in American universities with the establishment of the Association for the Study of Literature & Environment (ASLE) in Nevada in 1992. Since then, ecocriticism has progressed through stages of critique that aim to increase environmental awareness, transmit environmental concerns to cultural and political arenas, and evaluate literary and cultural studies in light of new cultural values rooted in ecology (Özer, 2001: 61-62).

Environmental criticism employs an interdisciplinary approach to explore humanity's relationship with nature and aims to address environmental issues and sensitivities within literary criticism (Solak, 2012: 211-224). Debates surrounding the concept of 'nature,' which is among the most contentious topics in ecocritical discussions, have yet to reach definitive conclusions on the traditional nature-culture divide, a challenge posed by environmentalist critics (Garrard, 2012: 39). In the context of our study, we recognize 'nature' as encompassing exploited urban areas as cities transform into megalopolises, depleted natural resources, endangered species and wildlife, air pollution, and individuals who neglect their environmental responsibilities and lack environmental awareness in the face of these issues. This study aims to methodically analyze Orhan Pamuk's portrayal of Istanbul in his novels, adopting an ecocritical perspective. In addition to his novels, we consider memoirs, documentaries, interviews, comments, and critiques related to Pamuk's works.

Throughout history, humanity has consistently employed oral, musical, and mobile practices and artistic expressions to safeguard nature and its inhabitants through various rituals. Shamanistic culture, for instance, centers on averting calamities foreseen or sensed by shamans in nature, featuring stories, songs, and dances generated to protect the environment from an animistic perspective. Most mythological sources feature guardian spirits tasked with safeguarding trees, springs, fields, and hills (Berman, 2007: 45-61). Nonetheless, the animistic reverence for nature waned with Aristotle's declaration that "Nature, just like man, has a right to ownership and benefit." Scholars and thinkers who have delved into animistic cultures, such as Christopher Manes and Mircea Eliade, contend that nature encompasses more than just sentient beings and that plants and animals constitute the primary elements of this magnificent world (Eliade, 1971: 43-87).

Data: Environmentalist works and perceptions in Turkish literature

Anonymous folk poetry and folk narratives within Turkish literature have developed throughout history, drawing from a rich foundation in nature and retaining their flexibility within this context. The influence of nomadic culture, rooted in a nature-oriented way of life, has played a significant role in this development. In the shamanistic worldview of Turkic tribes, humanity is not seen as superior to nature. Instead, like all living beings, humans are subject to the rule of the spirits that exist in nature, encompassing the invisible universe (Bayat, 2006: 26). Professor Dr. Hikmet Birand, who published his work titled "Anadolu Manzaraları" (Anatolian Sceneries) in 1975, stands as one of the prominent figures in this field. When it comes to depictions of Istanbul in Turkish literature, the most notable names and pioneers are Yahya Kemal and his student and admirer, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (Demirkol, 2010: 80-125). Yahya Kemal and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, celebrated as the greatest poets and novelists of the 20th century in Turkish literature, embarked on journeys through the melancholic and desolate districts of the city, seeking to understand what they had lost (Pamuk, 2003: 138).

Another notable author who prominently featured nature as an essential element in his narratives was Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı, known by his pen name, Halikarnas Balıkcısı (The Fisherman of Halicarnassus). Even the titles of his works reflect his deep connection with nature. For instance, his stories with titles like 'Long Live the Sea' (Yaşasın Deniz), 'The Smiling Island' (Gülen Ada), 'From the Aegean Coasts' (Ege Kıyılarından), 'Hello Mediterranean' (Merhaba Akdeniz), and 'The Bottom of the Aegean' (Ege'nin Dibi), as well as his novels such as 'The Blue Exile' (Mavi Sürgün), 'Aganta Burina Burinita,' and 'Those Away at Sea' (Deniz Gurbetçileri), particularly explore themes of the sea's beauty and the preservation of its waters. Sait Faik Abasıyanık, regarded as one of the most prominent masters of modern Turkish literature, frequently utilizes Istanbul as a setting in his works."

His cultural observations about Istanbul are worth noting, and Abasıyanık frequently incorporates elements of nature into his stories. Raised in a family of nomads, Yaşar Kemal extensively portrays the richness of Cilician fauna in his novels and consistently explores the theme of love for nature and its preservation in almost all of his works. In Latife Tekin's 'Dear Shameless Death' (Sevgili Arsız Ölüm), a character named Dirmiş, one of the pioneering figures in Turkish literature using various narrative styles and techniques, adopts a lifestyle rooted in animistic beliefs following his forced detachment from nature. In her work 'Berji Kristin Tales from the Garbage Hills' (Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları), Tekin delves into the lives of peasants who have been alienated from nature and their natural surroundings, all while critiquing urban structures and staging a rebellion against the environmental pollution brought about by city life.

We will explore this topic further in the context of Orhan Pamuk's works, which also address the exploitation of nature in urban settings.

Methods: An ecocritical approach to Istanbul in Orhan Pamuk's Works

Ecocriticism not only examines the environmental conditions but also the alterations and distortions an author perceives within a particular environment. This approach extends beyond the realm of nature; it also encompasses environmental factors resulting from unplanned industrial activities in urban areas, as well as the adverse consequences of ecological imbalances. Similar to many global metropolises, Istanbul confronts various threats, including environmental pollution, the exploitation of natural resources, the haphazard consumption of these resources, and erosion brought about by significant migration and population growth, particularly over the past century.

Born and raised in Istanbul, Orhan Pamuk has had the unique opportunity to witness the changes and transformations that the city has undergone over the years. He is a genuine Istanbul enthusiast who has diligently and attentively followed both national and foreign works about Istanbul ever since he started his writing career. Many critics argue that Orhan Pamuk embodies the old-new, East-West dichotomies that define the city of Istanbul. Located at the intersection of Europe and Asia, Istanbul inherits a rich cultural legacy passed down from the Ottoman Empire, as documented in Byzantine sources. Critics note that Pamuk constructs his narratives with characters deeply intertwined with the city (Anadolu-Okur, 2009: 68).

However, Orhan Pamuk primarily delves into the cultural dimensions of the material world, avoiding explicit references to the substance-essence conflict commonly present in many Turkish novels dealing with the East vs. West binary opposition (Uğurlu, 2003: 43). Aware that a journey through time is impossible, Pamuk rejects the unilateral dominance of modernity and its role as a representative force. He even infuses his works with ironic reflections and sharp humor. Rather than endorsing orientalist expectations, he writes with the intention of challenging them, embracing and even desiring the ongoing Western perspective (Doğan, 2014: 37).

Pamuk believes that sorrow (*hüzün*) is the primary characteristic of the city and identifies two reasons for it: Istanbul has experienced the fall of a global empire, yet it has also succeeded in preserving its natural beauty. According to Pamuk, Istanbul is imbued with an atmosphere of *hüzün*. The Turkish word has become a part of the vocabulary for foreign readers who have been captivated by Istanbul's allure (Tillinghast, 2016).

Pamuk studied architecture for three years, and he approaches the city from the perspective of its architectural structure, highlighting the interplay of stones, soil, clay, tiles, and glazed tiles with human history. Examining the relationship between space and individuals, Bachelard emphasizes that the unconscious is rooted in space and underscores the importance of identifying spaces related to private life in order to understand the inner lives of individuals (Bachelard, 1996: 37). In addition to exploring the distortions and disruptions within cities, Orhan Pamuk delves into the various dimensions of individuals' private lives in his novels, which are primarily set in Istanbul.

Orhan Pamuk's 2014 book, 'A Strangeness in My Mind,' presents the enduring tale of Istanbul's transformation over the past 50-60 years, a theme that is also evident in earlier works by the author. The book revolves around the adventures of Mevlut, a countryman who sells the traditional Ottoman drink 'boza' in the old streets of Istanbul. The narrative of this book is interwoven with elements of intersexuality and postmodernity.

'A Strangeness in My Mind,' serves as a textual representation of solid and abstract cultural values, such as 'boza,' which define the cultural memory and continuity of humble and considerate individuals (Kule, 2016: 31).

While issues like irregular industrialization and unplanned urban expansion, resulting from capitalistic practices, have long been addressed as sociological concerns, they often fail to find resonance within society itself, remaining confined to academic circles. This gap has been filled by literary works. Orhan Pamuk, born into a bourgeois family in Nişantaşı, a high-society district of Istanbul, has been 'observing Istanbul' since his childhood and has employed social scientific data in his works. For instance, while writing 'A Strangeness in My Mind,' he actively engaged with commoners, met people from the backstreets, conducted interviews with workers, mussel-sellers, property developers, and ice-cream vendors, thereby delving deep into their culture.

Pamuk, through his portrayal of laborers struggling to survive in this metropolis, crafts a personal approach that can be viewed as a sociological protest. 'A Strangeness in My Mind' can be seen as a work addressing environmental issues in the context of urban transformation, love, and time. The novel's protagonist, the boza peddler Mevlut, embodies a tragicomic 'flâneur' who sells 'boza' to the masses, who swiftly abandon tradition in the face of modernism and prosperity. 'Orhan Pamuk's postmodern narrative places the peddler at the heart of the city as a flâneur' (Korkmaz, 2015).

The novel delves into the corrupt system in Istanbul, which began fifty years ago but accelerated in the 2000s, depicting the dark patterns of ethical degradation brought about by this corruption. 'A Strangeness in My Mind' weaves together narratives with different narrators, flashbacks, tragicomic reflections, and grotesque treatments, creating its own holistic storytelling. Encouraged by his father, Mevlut leaves Anatolia in pursuit of wealth in Istanbul, a city he believes is paved with gold. However, Mevlut's initial impressions of the city are eventually tinged with melancholy. His observations on the changing environment hint at the upcoming transformation: 'When he first arrived in the city, most of the streets were paved with cobblestones, but now they were all asphalt. The three-story buildings, each with its own garden, which once defined much of the city, had been demolished and replaced with taller apartment blocks. Those living on the upper floors could no longer hear the calls of street vendors below' (Pamuk, 2014: 28/29).

Mevlut, an outsider, silently envies wealth and luxury while observing the environmental changes with fear and puzzlement: 'In the last decade or so, the demon of change had cast its spell over the neighborhood, just as it had over the entire city. The fabric of the past had been torn asunder, prompting residents to leave. Ottoman and European-style Turkish and continental music clubs, where people once gathered, had shut down. Noisy new establishments serving Adana and Shish Kebabs cooked over an open grill, washed down with raki, had taken their place' (Pamuk, 29).

As the conservative-religious government and its followers gained power, implementing new capital structures and enveloping the city and country in a social transformation, liberals were disenchanted with the military guardianship of the past, while Kemalists, leftists, and many others struggled to find their place amidst the chaos. Mevlut observed these events like an Anatolian sage and constantly experienced a 'strangeness in his mind.' It's surprising to the reader that he doesn't descend into chaos but rather fails to fully grasp what is happening (Çelik, 2015: 4). This 'strangeness' doesn't necessarily spotlight the corruption and resistance to fraud he witnesses; it highlights submission, surrender, and resignation, akin to a form of fatalism. Taking a share and not protesting is the natural objective of a poor man who left the rural areas for the city, knowing plunder is part of the process. An example of environmental degradation is the transformation of a creek known as 'Buzludere,' meaning 'Icy Creek' in its old Ottoman name, into 'Bokludere,' meaning 'Dung Creek' (Pamuk, 55). The once magnificent silhouette of Istanbul has undergone significant change due to the 'conquests' of migrants on every hill and substantial environmental pollution. Istanbul, once known as the 'city on the seven hills,' is now threatened with the loss of its natural beauty due to environmental problems and the proliferation of factories, small and large, auto body shops, workshops, depots, medicine and lightbulb factories, skyscrapers, tall buildings, and minarets, casting a ghostly shadow over the city."

The city itself and its neighborhoods, where Mevlut and his father sold yogurt in the mornings and boza in the evenings, and where Mevlut went to school, were only mysterious smudges on the horizon (55). Mevlut's father, an older-generation migrant, sincerely shared his feelings and observations about the exploitation and invasion of nature. The father describes how the green hills were quickly occupied six years ago when they first arrived, saying, 'I explained that for the poor souls who'd come here from far away, the priority was to find a job and settle down in the city. In order to get to the city ahead of everyone else in the mornings, they all tried to build their homes as close as possible to the roads at the foot of the hills, so that you could almost see the neighborhoods growing from the bottom of each hill towards the top' (56).

Those hills usually had a view of the Bosphorus, and the first shanty houses there looked like they were about to collapse at any time. These one-roomed shacks were usually occupied by six or seven single males who had neither a job nor property, gradually creating the unregistered suburban areas of Istanbul and later giving rise to the city's slum culture. Mevlut and his father had constructed their house in Kültepe with their own hands, using hollow bricks, cement, mud, and tins (60).

The shameful tools of politics played a significant role in the environmental exploitation of Istanbul. Concessions were made for political benefits, leading to a lack of respect for nature and the formation of gangs, resulting in the exploitation of natural resources and an acceleration of environmental problems in the city:

Pollution in the city caused by the military coup of March 12, 1971, is vividly portrayed in the novel: The army whitewashed all of Istanbul's pavements, anything that seemed dirty or untidy (the whole city pretty much qualified), the trunks of huge plane trees, and walls dating back to the Ottoman era, turning the whole place into an army cantonment (78). The Turkish invasion of Cyprus on July 20, 1974 (100) and the Alevi-Sunni conflict and massacres (142) in Maraş, located in southeast Turkey, in December 1979 significantly increased the migration rate to Istanbul and deeply affected life in the city. The natural paradise of the Bosphorus hills gave way to concrete and steel, and the pastoral wealth reflected in this landscape succumbed to fervent destruction.

Illegal powers, successors to the gangs that seized property and goods belonging to Greeks deported from the country overnight in 1964, continued to loot Istanbul relentlessly and jauntily: 'The mafia here is stronger and more vicious than the gangs who run Duttepe. In the last five years, this whole place has been overrun by drifters and castaways, with so many poor rural migrants, Kurds, Gypsies, and foreigners settling in these streets that the neighborhood is worse than Duttepe was fifteen years ago' (217). As they drove uphill on a dusty dirt road, 'the world seemed to grow older with every house, chimney, and tree that passed. Single-story houses that hadn't even been finished but already looked old, pitifully empty lots, walls built out of hollow bricks, scrap metal, and bits of wood (227), were the general characteristics of these new living areas. These sites, which had no sewage system or regular water supply, were the source of natural and environmental problems, contributing to serious pollution affecting both individuals and society as a whole.

References to environmental issues appear in the novel, such as the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Russia and the wind that carried cancer clouds to Istanbul (257), as well as the destruction of the old bridge in Mostar by bombing (301). 'Nobody wanted to remember or recall that Tarlabası had actually been a Greek-Armenian-Jewish-Syrian neighborhood since the 1920s, an old district with a unique culture (258). However, the infamous Capital Levy of 1942 marked the first strike against these minority groups, and the same government continued to oppress minorities under the Nazi influence of the Second World War. After a crowd of people holding sticks and flags looted churches and shops, women were abused, and priests were chased. Most Greeks fled to Greece, and those who stayed had to leave their homes and lands within twenty-four hours due to a government-issued legal decision in 1964 (259).

In his twentieth year in Istanbul, Mevlut, the street vendor, becomes depressed as he witnesses environmental problems grow daily and experiences the intensity of 'a strangeness in his mind. He was fond of old things that reflected the nostalgic atmosphere of the city, such as 'the old cemeteries, the sight

of a mosque wall covered in moss, and the unintelligible Ottoman writing on a broken fountain with its brass taps long dried up' (261).

Mevlut felt sorrowful about the fact that a hundred-year-old wooden building called Gloria Theater (Şan Sineması), owned by an Armenian charity trust, had gone up in flames on a cold winter night in 1987 because the theatre had staged a performance that mocked Islamists and thus fell victim to arson (275). Another environmental problem highlighted in the novel is the November 14, 1991, incident in which a Lebanese merchant vessel collided with another vessel on the stretch of Bosphorus and caused 20,000 sheep to fall into the sea. Some of the poor animals made it to the shore, but the sea and the land suffered grave pollution due to the carcasses of drowned sheep. The incident was later recalled as an urban legend that stated that the sheep returned and attacked people as ghosts. Mevlut asked himself unanswerable questions: The plight of the sheep reminded him of Jonah in the belly of the whale. What sins had the sheep committed to have ended up in that dark place? Was it more like heaven or hell in there? The Almighty God had sent Abraham a sheep to spare him from sacrificing his own son. Why had he sent twenty thousand sheep to Istanbul? (299).

There were protests from the Greek landlords, whose lawyers took the government to court over the property seizures, and from the architects' union and a handful of university students battling to save these historic buildings, but their voices went largely unheard (259). Mevlut and his family watched the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in New York on September 11, 2001, with awe (299), and they observed the destruction of Istanbul around these broken old fountains, derelict bathhouses, and dusty, filthy, ghost- and spider-ridden religious retreats built by bearded and be-turbaned Ottoman leaders (403). As the historical heritage is destroyed with the demolition of ancient buildings and structures, the archaeological wealth of Istanbul, which is discovered in every excavation, is also treated as rubbish: 'The hotel in Astray was a new building. While excavating the foundation, the contractor had found the remains of a small Byzantine church, and since such a discovery would normally have put a stop to the building works, he'd had to pay out some hefty bribes across the municipality to make sure no one noticed the ruins. To compensate himself for the cost, he'd dug an extra basement floor' (404).

Uneducated, laborer masses from the rural areas serve as the foundation of the happiness of 'White Turks,' who are the holders of exploitation and wealth. The new settlements, in contrast, maintain their existence in the gloomy panoramas of Istanbul's identity, which has survived despite the inevitable negativity of the era, with historical aesthetics and lyricism: "Scenes showing the situation of the looted countryside are gruesome: Istanbul has of late been a bullet train of urbanization, surging from 2 million people to 15 million in just over four decades. As in so many rising cities around the world, those shaping its future at hyper-speed seem less concerned about creating a nice place to live than fueling an economic locomotive" (Lepeska, 4).

The novel also mentions that those 'six or seven storey-high, hideous gecekondu (shanty) homes' (443) are at risk of collapse in the anticipated Istanbul earthquake, which is estimated to be of a great magnitude, and that horrible tragedies may occur as an outcome of serious environmental problems

related to the 'inadequate sewage system that cannot absorb all the water coming down the neighborhood's steep slopes' (444). The shiny and sparkling past and the destructive modernity, which has failed to make a healthy connection with history, have left their mark on the city (Doğan, 293). Having observed the gradual destruction of Istanbul over the years, Mevlut grieves for his shanty house when it is being demolished by bulldozers:

When the time came for his own one-room house, Mevlut felt his heart breaking. He observed his whole childhood, the food he'd eaten, the homework he'd done, the way things had smelled, the sound of his father grunting in his sleep, hundreds of thousands of memories all smashed to pieces in a single swipe of the bulldozer shovel (445). Orhan Pamuk quotes Baudelaire at this point: "The form of a city, changes faster, alas! than the human heart" (446).

Conclusion

One of the objectives of contemporary global intellectualism is to contribute to studies that aim to prevent environmental problems with global initiatives and artistic/cultural productions. Global environmental problems have reached a level that threatens our future. As a Nobel Prize-winning novelist, Orhan Pamuk has become a reputable author in world literature with his masterfully written novels that address the environmental problems of Istanbul, a global city that connects two continents. Pamuk has also successfully depicted the societal problems caused by these issues in his novels and portrayed the related corruption and degeneration in society.

The Ottoman culture observed in Istanbul is depicted in Pamuk's "The Black Book." The conflict of generations in the Early Republican period of Turkey and its reflections in the city within the framework of civilization and East-West binary oppositions are portrayed in his "Mr. Cevdet and His Sons." Urban sprawl and unplanned industrialization in the nature-sea setting around Tuzla and its surrounding districts are explored in "The Silent House," whereas "My Name is Red" addresses the portraits in the mysterious corridors of the palace in the capital city of the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul. Orhan Pamuk designed "A Strangeness in My Mind" as an extension of the topic of Istanbul, which he has addressed since he was 22. He has portrayed the city with all of its transformations and exploitations under the guise of development. Pamuk has revealed how the texture of the city has been damaged by environmental devastation and has fictionalized how Istanbul has assumed a hybrid culture and spirit with an ironic, mostly realist and sometimes protesting tone based on environmental awareness. The novel addresses the story of a street vendor, Mevlut, who arrived in Istanbul as a migrant from the rural areas at an early age. He had children and grew old there during Turkey's difficult period from the 1960s to the 2010s, when the country experienced conflicts of civilization. Another interesting aspect of the narrative is that, for the first time, a global perspective outside of Turkey regarding environmental problems was included in a literary work.

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Araştırma ve yayın etiği beyanı: Bu makale tamamıyla özgün bir araştırma olarak planlanmış, yürütülmüş ve sonuçları ile raporlaştırıldıktan sonra ilgili dergiye gönderilmiştir. Araştırma herhangi bir sempozyum, kongre vb. sunulmamış ya da başka bir dergiye değerlendirilmek üzere gönderilmemiştir.

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The first file of my work was mistakenly sent to a foreign website for editing, and due to an email error, it fell into the hands of a predatory journal called the Journal of Liberal Arts and Humanities (JLAH). Moreover, even though I rejected their publication request and later they published it without my consent. I am now re-publishing that work with modifications, as it had no DOI record. I apologize to those who have read it previously, and I especially remind our young academics to be very cautious in such matters.

M. Karadağ



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