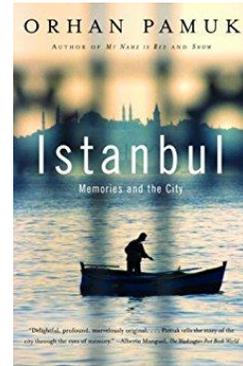


Spotlight

September 1, 2017

Orhan Pamuk has spent his entire life in Istanbul. It is the city in which he grew up, become one of Turkey's most prominent novelists, won the Nobel Prize in Literature, and had his work translated into over sixty-three languages. He has done this almost entirely from various units in the same building, Pamuk Apartments, owned by his family. Like his beloved city Pamuk is a contradiction. His mind and work travel far into the past and around the world while he remains loyally fixed to one spot - his home and his city. In *Istanbul: Memories and the City* Pamuk confronts his contradictions in a meandering and beautifully written memoir of both himself and the city of Istanbul to which he is so intimately tied. In the book, he traces the lives of famous Turkish authors and poets and weaves their stories with his own as he walks the same streets and has similar revelations.



Threaded throughout the narrative is the concept of *hüzün*. *Hüzün* is the Turkish word for melancholy but importantly, Pamuk notes, it does not mean an individual melancholy or sorrow but rather one that is shared by a collective. For Pamuk, this concept is the basis for understanding Istanbul and also himself. From this standpoint he explains not only the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the changing face of a city defined by both East and West but also his own conflicts with his family and struggles to become an artist. Along with Pamuk's words are black and white photographs both from his life and the history of the city. These grainy images enhance the feeling of melancholy and somber atmosphere created by the writing.

I came to read *Istanbul* in advance of a talk we had at the library as part of our Been There? Done That? travel series. Hearing the stories of Jessica's trip in combination with my new understanding and appreciation of the city through Pamuk's work made the talk even more enjoyable. If you share my wanderlust consider coming out for our upcoming travel talks. Tasha will be talking about a solo bicycle trip around Cuba on Wednesday September 6 at 7pm and Neomi will be sharing tips and tricks for travelling cheaply for a long time on Saturday September 16 at 2pm. Both talks will be an hour long and take place in the Library Meeting Room.

Megan Clark
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