

**Urban space in transformation: Reading social change in
Vladislavić's Johannesburg, Pamuk's Istanbul, and Dalrymple's
Delhi.**

by

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Abstract:

Our cultural values and socio-political perspectives are perhaps most clearly reflected in our material environment. When this environment is subjected to drastic change, the effects on these values and perspectives are likely to be profound. This dissertation considers the wide-ranging socio-cultural effects of material change through a close reading of three literary texts, each of which presents a portrait of a particular city in transition. The three texts which form the basis of this study are Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, William Dalrymple's *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi*, and Ivan Vladislavić's *Portrait with Keys: The City of Johannesburg Unlocked*. In my reading of the effects of material change as depicted in these texts, I draw on architectural theorist Fred Scott's three possible approaches to existing material and cultural infrastructure, namely demolition, preservation and re-appropriation. Using this framework, and extending it in several ways, I discuss the ways in which processes of demolition/destruction, preservation, and adaptation/re-appropriation are inscribed in these texts. In Pamuk's *Istanbul*, the founding of the modern nation state of Turkey is shown to have stimulated two opposing responses, namely Mustafa Kemal's discourse of Turkification, concerned with development and modernity, and a reactionary melancholy yearning for the past, called *hüzün*. Dalrymple's *City of Djinns* highlights the various forms of socio-cultural destruction which accompanied Partition while also documenting the many examples of accidental preservation within the rapidly modernising city; also important in *City of Djinns* are descriptions of material and cultural re-appropriation, highlighted in depictions of urban resilience and the formation of new heterogeneous communities capable of transcending former divisions. Vladislavić's Johannesburg is also concerned with three possible responses to change in the urban environment after the abolition of apartheid: the urge to demolish and emigrate, the contrary need to preserve and fortify, as well as the compromise offered by the decision to re-appropriate and adapt.

Key terms:

Cities in literature; Literary representations of social change; Literary representations of material change; Urban space in transformation; Orhan Pamuk; William Dalrymple; Ivan Vladislavić; Demolition; Preservation; Re-appropriation.

Chapter 1

Introduction – Cities in Transformation: Demolition, Preservation and Re-appropriation

This dissertation explores the literary depiction of several city spaces in transition. In a close reading of Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2006), William Dalrymple's *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi* (2005), and Ivan Vladislavić's *Portrait with Keys: The City of Johannesburg Unlocked* (2007), I consider the ways in which the cities of Istanbul, Delhi and Johannesburg, respectively, are imagined and inscribed, paying particular attention to the literary representations of the impact of profound socio-political change. In this dissertation, the city is conceptualised as both a spatial entity and a social construct – as both a physically embodied spatio-temporal location and as the sum of the subjective experiences of its inhabitants. Each of the cities under discussion experienced its own distinct transformation: under Mustafa Kemal's domineering influence, Istanbul changed irrevocably in 1923 when Turkey rejected a centuries-old empire in favour of a modern nation state; in 1947, Delhi's heterogeneous social and material infrastructure was torn asunder with the partitioning of the Indian subcontinent; and, finally, with the abolition of apartheid in South Africa in 1994, Johannesburg opened up and experienced a fascinating array of material re-appropriations and social adaptations. I explore the impact of these transformations and the everyday interactions of ordinary inhabitants of the city through the lens of three literary texts.

Although the social sciences and urban studies in general offer considerable insight into the collective experience of urban communities, literature is uniquely situated to give credence to the individual perspective: “[e]xploring the interplay of urban environments and human behaviour” is, according to McNamara (2014: 5), “one of the things that city literature does best”. He substantiates this claim with quotes from sociologist Robert Park who acknowledges his field’s indebtedness to literature “for our more intimate knowledge of urban life”, as well as from geographer David Harvey who praises Honoré de Balzac’s Parisian novels for “mak[ing] the city legible” (McNamara, 2014: 5). It is also often only

through literary and artistic expressions that “the weaving of suppressed or otherwise lost stories into ‘official’ historiographic metafictions” (McNamara, 2014: 6-7) is achieved, as in the case of Partition where such expressions aid in reducing the “wide chasm between the historians’ apprehension of 1947 and what we might call a more popular, survivors’ account of it” (Pandey, 2001: 6-7). Therefore, while the socio-political events depicted in each of the three primary texts are all of the necessary magnitude and nature to effect a spatial and social transformation in each respective city collectively, approaching these contexts from a literary perspective enables me to focus on the experience of the individual, privileging the ‘smaller’ stories instead of the nationalist meta-narratives often associated with the contexts at hand.

Focusing on the cities of Istanbul, Delhi and Johannesburg, this dissertation will consider the representation of social change in three works of fiction/non-fiction whose authors’ respective oeuvres reveal three very different preoccupations with, and responses to, the urban environment in transformation. Nobel laureate, Orhan Pamuk’s memoir, *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2006) details the young Orhan’s coming of age in a city still pining for the glory of its past as the capital of the Ottoman Empire; the Scottish travel-writer William Dalrymple’s depiction of post-Partition Delhi, *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi* (2005), delves into the ancient city’s history as the author recounts his amusing and enlightening experiences during a year-long stay in the Indian capital; while the urban chronicle, *Portrait with Keys: The City of Johannesburg Unlocked* (2007), written by Ivan Vladislavić, an author well known for his postmodern short stories set in Johannesburg, is a poignant culmination of a lifelong preoccupation with the contested city that sheds its apartheid heritage in interesting and unusual ways.

Postmodern bricolage plays an important role in both Pamuk’s and Vladislavić’s texts, both of which often blur the lines between fact and fiction. While these two texts playfully interweave (non-) fictional narrative and historical narrative, Dalrymple’s *City of Djinns* tends to preserve and emphasise the distinction between these two modes of writing. In keeping with this more conventional approach, *City of Djinns* also works to obscure rather than highlight processes of literary construction and creation. By contrast, *Istanbul* and *Portrait* are much more self-reflexive, giving emphasis to and, at times, explicitly referring to

the processes of construction that mark the text – the transformation of experience (whether the narrator's own or not) into inscription, the shifting and constructing of perspective, and the cobbling together of disparate fragments into a collage of some coherence. In keeping with the postmodern awareness that characterises both these texts, I assign different names to the authors and narrators of/in *Istanbul* and *Portrait*, respectively, using the terms 'Orhan' and 'Vlad' to denote the narrative personae as distinct from the authors of each of these texts whom I refer to as Pamuk and Vladislavić, respectively. I make no such distinction in my discussion of Dalrymple's text, however, as *City of Djinns* presents its narrative almost entirely as reported non-fiction with none of the emphasis on fictionalising that is evident in Pamuk's and Vladislavić's depictions of Orhan's and Vlad's encounters. In fact, Dalrymple's approach foregrounds a process of searching for individuals, their stories, and historical evidence, all of which is presented as factual, much as a reporter would proceed, with comparatively little incorporation of figurative language. Vladislavić's writing, on the other hand, is playful, frequently engaging in humorous word-play, creative and whimsical presentation of narrative snippets, making no attempt to construct a linear or teleological narrative. In fact, a list of 'itineraries' included as an appendix invites readers to freely choose their own route in navigating the collection of vignettes that constitute this text. Pamuk's approach lies somewhere in the middle: his writing also combines personal experience (in this case, through the mode of memoir) and historical recounting, much like Dalrymple, but here the reader is much more aware of the imaginative reconstruction of events which are often filtered through a child's understanding. Pamuk's writing is comparable to collecting, carefully preserving each memory, epiphany, photograph and excerpt, until each fragment can be woven into a text that reveals much about the author and his city.

In each of the three texts, fictional and non-fictional writing work together to create a particular construction of each imagined city¹. As a memoir, Pamuk's *Istanbul* is written from a much more personal perspective, making the sense of loss arising from the transformation he describes significantly more pronounced than in either of the other two texts. Orhan is increasingly solitary and often encounters the city second-hand, through the

¹ Throughout the dissertation, I use the term 'imagined cities' to refer to the fictionalised versions of these three cities as they are inscribed in the primary texts as distinct from the actual Istanbul/Delhi/Johannesburg.

work of other writers and artists. Since he is as much a product of those discourses that shaped his imagined city – in a way that Dalrymple cannot be and Vlad appears less bound by – Orhan’s choice of sources from which to construct his imagined city also reveals an uneasy dependence on the perspective of westerners. Unlike Orhan who is unwilling to “spend years in the labyrinthine Ottoman archives” (Pamuk, 2006: 217) to discover the history of his city as told by its inhabitants, Dalrymple, as a historian, includes extensive reference to the process of uncovering the history of Delhi. As a travelogue written by a foreigner, *City of Djinns* is also more detached from the unfortunate realities of the events depicted than either of the other two texts are and manages to present a much more optimistic perspective than, for example, the melancholy *Istanbul*. Like Orhan, Dalrymple constructs Delhi as a profusion of narratives, and so as an explicitly textual construct, although here the city is constructed out of narratives told by ordinary and often marginalised voices, not influential writers and artists. Both Dalrymple and Vlad devote meticulous care and interest to the memories and legacies of the other inhabitants of these transient cities; although, unlike Dalrymple who collects the recounted memories of others in the form of first-person narratives, Vlad chronicles stories and memories captured in objects. *Portrait* can therefore be read as a catalogue of these objects and the imagined and fictionalised stories Vlad attributes to them. In fact, Vladislavić’s text occupies an intriguing position somewhere between fiction and memoir: it does not particularly conform to either genre, being neither wholly fictional nor concerned with personal history. I have found ‘urban chronicle’ to be the most suitable description for the text and refer to it as such throughout this dissertation.

While each narrator-consciousness presents a particular construction of each city, all three texts offer theories of change in dealing with issues of loss, transformation and, ultimately, possibility. The cities that emerge from Dalrymple’s and Vladislavić’s texts are characterised by their resilience and adaptability, while Pamuk’s Istanbul is considerably more stagnant than either of the other cities which are eager to shed oppressive regimes. The city Pamuk inscribes is characterised by paralysis and remains past-orientated, still nursing an injury sustained half a century earlier when it lost an empire that had at that time already been in rapid decline for a considerable period. I will consider these distinctions, and the implications thereof, in more detail in the concluding chapter, which will compare each

city's response to change – as well as issues of socio-spatial heritage – in relation to the theoretical framework set out in my introduction.

These three primary texts would easily appear far too disparate for a coherent comparative study, and the three cities they inscribe arguably have very little in common. I am, however, specifically concerned with how the urban environment is depicted and the ways in which social change is imagined. I will therefore consider what kinds of experiences are foregrounded as individuals respond to sudden change and how the particular social history and cultural heritage of each city (after each respective 'zero hour' ushers in a new era) are inscribed in each text. In this respect, the particular nature of each individual city and the style and the genre of each text need not be obviously analogous, provided that each text affords a particular focus on an urban environment as it changes as the result of a specific socio-political event, while offering a rich variety of individual responses.

My discussion will therefore focus on each text's depiction of the material and built environment in transformation (comprising urban space, both public and private, architectural structures, and material possessions), and how this transformation influences its narrative inscription of social and cultural change (and vice versa). I will consider three distinct socio-political events that each played a significant role in shaping one of the three cities, events that form a central concern in each primary text. These are as follows: the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul (as it is depicted in Pamuk's *Istanbul*), the Partition of India in Delhi (as represented in Dalrymple's *City of Djinns*), and the abolition of apartheid in Johannesburg (as per Vladislavić's *Portrait*). Each of the three chapters that comprises the body of this dissertation will therefore be focused on *a city* in transformation as a result of *a particular socio-political* event as it is depicted in *one particular text*. My argument will be informed by an analysis of each author-narrator's personal recollections and encounters as presented in each of the primary texts, which serve as a literary mapping of each city's transformation. This dissertation will also be augmented by the inclusion of some aspects of architectural and urban theory in a broader discussion of space and society in the urban context which will be read in relation to (and at times against) the perspective provided by the texts.

My exploration of the literary inscriptions of social change in each of the three primary texts will draw on a wide conceptual-theoretical base, including the fields of urban design (including architectural theory), literary theory and spatial theory. For my theoretical framework I will draw from three distinct (although at times overlapping) theoretical fields. Although my theoretical approach to the primary texts will be influenced by urban theory, I also situate my discussion within the fields of literary theory and spatial theory, respectively, with some emphasis on the work that has been done on the literary representation of the city. A particular strength of this dissertation, as I see it, is the way in which it works at the boundaries of several distinct disciplines, thus bringing a unique perspective to bear. My approach is to engage with the theory from the perspective of the literary text (rather than the other way around). For these purposes, I adopt the methods of close reading and historical contextualisation and work from an understanding of the text as a form of literary inscription rather than mimesis.

I refer to a number of literary theorists and philosophers throughout my discussion, including Said, Freud, Lyotard, Nietzsche and Sartre, in considering issues of identity, mourning and loss, memory, and representation relating to each of the three imagined cities. I also situate this study within the fields of spatial, urban and architectural theory. Although the influences of Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre on these fields of study are substantial, both these theorists have already enjoyed considerable scholarship; I briefly refer to de Certeau and Lefebvre on occasion but do no focus on either. Instead, I draw on the work of a number of (comparatively) lesser-known urban and architectural theorists who specifically work within and write about each of the cities in question, including Esra Akcan (concerning the geo-politics of Istanbul's architecture), William Glover (whose research on Sikh gurdwaras I use to discuss issues of heritage and preservation), as well as Lindsay Bremner (whose work on the socio-spatial post-apartheid urban landscape was instrumental in my analysis of Vladislavić's Johannesburg). In addition to research produced by architectural theorists, I also draw from social anthropologist Cressida Jervis Read, the fields of sociology and geography (through the work of Gyanendra Pandey and Jennifer Robinson), and urban political theory (including the work of Achille Mbembe, Anna Secor and Henri Lefebvre), while Rem Koolhaas's work on preservation, and Wendy Shaw's on attitudes towards material heritage have also been tremendously valuable.

According to Diana Festa-McCormick (1979: 9), ever since “the last quarter of the twentieth century, man seems to [have become] obsessed, in fascination or in horrified contemplation, with the theme of the city”. Scholarly work on the city in literature forms an established and multi-faceted field of study with a focus ranging from the influence of an individual writer on our understanding of a particular city (such as Ross Chambers’s work on “Baudelaire’s Paris” and Tony Tanner’s *Venice Desired*), a specific geographic area (such as Jini Watson’s *The New Asian City*), or the inscription of a particular urban experience (such as Rachel Bowlby’s work on consumer culture in literature or Ian Haywood’s *Working Class Fiction*). In works of literature, the city has been presented as a site of opportunity and possibility by writers such as Virginia Woolf, and as a nightmarish scene devoid of morality by poets such as T.S. Eliot. It has been read as both utopia (Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis*) and dystopia (Thomas Disch’s *334*). Such works have engaged with both ‘real’ (Alfred Döblin’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*) and ‘imagined’ cities (Italo Calvino’s *Invisible Cities*), which have been observed from the perspective of the poor, the marginalised, the tourist, the immigrant, the male or female gaze. The city has also been of particular interest to a number of literary movements, none the least postcolonial literature, modernism and postmodernism. However, academic scholarship on the city in particular, still remains focused on “Western cultural conventions and psychological patterns” and therefore on literary representations of Western cities, such as in Burton Pike’s *The Image of the City in Modern Literature*, while comparatively little has been written about cities outside of Northern America and Europe. However, as the centre from which discussions about the urban environment originate slowly shifts away from cities such as London, Paris and New York, new nodes further east are drawing increasing attention, to such an extent that Ananya Roy (quoted in Bunnell, Goh, Lai and Pow 2012: 2786) warns against cities like Shanghai and Mumbai becoming the new privileged metropolitan centres, which still leaves many others entirely “off the map” of academic study.

I initially intended to limit this study to either postcolonial cities or cities from the Global South, in a response to urban theorist Ananya Roy’s call (amongst many others) to “rethink the list of ‘great cities’ in which urban theory production has been concentrated” and to counter and destabilise “universalizing urban theory produced in Europe and America” by

instead endeavouring to “theorize the urban from the Global South” (Roy, 2009, quoted in Mills, 2014: 693). Yet suitable primary texts that engage with transforming urban space in cities adhering to either of these categories proved scarce. This undoubtedly further proves the validity of concerns such as Roy’s, as well as supporting Bunnell et al.’s call (2012: 2786) for the breaking of a “Euro-American monopoly on putatively great cities”. Instead, I have settled on an undeniably anomalous combination of cities that fail to adhere satisfactorily to any single category: while Johannesburg and Delhi were both colonial cities in the former British Empire, Istanbul was, for centuries, the capital of one of the most prolific empires, one that held territory across three continents. Whereas Delhi and Istanbul are both ancient cities, with origins dating back millennia, as well as being classified as ‘megacities’ (cities with a population with more than ten million inhabitants), Johannesburg only dates back to the late nineteenth century and is home to around five million inhabitants. Finally, while both Delhi and Johannesburg are major cities in countries that form part of the BRICS association of emerging, newly industrialised, national economies, and while the experience of both Partition and apartheid can be understood as a conflict amongst fellow citizens, Istanbul adheres to neither of these categories.

Yet this rather incongruous combination of global cities maintains a unique advantage in that such a comparative study makes the formation of a problematically homogeneous urban model unlikely. Indeed, it is precisely the difference and variety included here, through the incorporation of distinct categories that might ordinarily be held apart, that constitutes such a rich contextual framework. The combination of these disparate cities together subverts reductivist categories such as North/South, empire/colony, and developed/developing that are increasingly proving “limited in their ability to ‘locate’ all cities” in the global imaginaries (Mills, 2014: 693). In addition, their comparatively peripheral status, situated “off the map” of global urban knowledge production here also holds potential to contribute to the fostering of “new geographies of theory in urban studies” (Roy, quoted in Bunnell et al., 2012: 2785) by “bringing the beliefs, actions and histories of people in ‘other’ places into conversation with scholarly literature on urban transformation”. Furthermore, situating my contribution to this collective endeavour within the field of literary studies enables me to focus on the unique insights provided by literature in particular. In this sense I make a contributing effort to the general endeavour of theorists

such as Amy Mills (2014: 693) who aim to “relocate the places from which scholarly urban theory is generated” and so “resituate scholarly knowledge of the city” away from the urban knowledge production nuclei of Northern America and Europe.

In addition, I also specifically filter my perspective on each imagined city through the gaze of the outsider. While most literary texts on the urban environment attend in some way to the manner in which “residents’ subjective beliefs, emotions, memories, suspicions or imaginations” function to “cohere things, sites and practices into urban assemblages” (Mills, 2014: 692), it is often specifically the perspective of the outsider which affords the most detail and insight. If anything, one aspect shared by all three author-narrators of the primary texts I discuss is their outsider status. Dalrymple is clearly the furthest removed from the urban socio-cultural reality he depicts as a foreigner on a year-long immersive visit to a city he had only encountered once before in his youth. Vladislavić is a second-generation South African of Croatian descent who moved, in his youth, to the city that becomes such an intrinsic aspect of his oeuvre and who, like Dalrymple, maintains a characteristically bemused and slightly detached perspective throughout his observations of daily life in Johannesburg. Pamuk’s literary identity, on the other hand, is inextricably intertwined with, and reinforced by, the city of his birth that he has never left. He would not appear an outsider; yet he, more so than either Dalrymple or Vladislavić, consciously and actively cultivates his status as a ‘stranger’ in Istanbul, seeking out those parts of the city that his family have inhabited for many generations that are foreign to him, and discovering within the city “various other Orhans, as well as various other Istanbuls” (Gurses, 2010: 4), further contesting and distancing his relation to the city by degrees. He frequently agonises about maintaining the perspective of a stranger, worrying that his “attachment to this place will ossify [his] brain, that isolation might kill the desire in [his] gaze” (p. 225). As he suggests, in order to savour the picturesque beauty of Istanbul’s poverty-stricken back-streets, “you must, first and foremost, be a ‘stranger’ to them” as “none of these things look beautiful to the people who live amongst them”, but “speak instead of squalor, helpless, hopeless neglect” (p. 229-231). The importance of the outsider’s perspective is acknowledged by Walter Benjamin who, in *The Return of the Flaneur* (1929), “introduces Franz Hessel’s Berlin Walks by saying that ‘if we were to divide all the existing descriptions of cities into two groups according to the birthplace of the authors, we would certainly find that those written

by natives of the cities concerned are greatly in the minority” (p. 225). Perhaps this phenomenon is best accounted for by Salman Rushdie who, in *The Moor’s Last Sigh* (1995: 382) posits that “places only yield up their secrets, their most profound mysteries, to those who are just passing through”.

In addition to being delivered by narrators who are, ‘strangers’, ‘outsiders’ or “just passing through”, the three primary texts also share a fragmentary structure composed of a series of vignettes that often constitute a very fluid, achronological ordering (especially in *Portrait*) and consist of a collage of multiple dispersed voices and sources (especially in *Istanbul*, and to some extent *City of Djinns*). This allows for the subjective construction of the imagined city from a string of competing memories, experiences and perceptions, offering heterogeneous representations of an urban environment that “resolutely refuses to offer itself” to readers neatly and “in its totality”, which ultimately results in an expanding of “the reader’s fields of vision and vicarious experience” while offering “a more complex accounting of the city” (McNamara, 2014: 11).

Yet despite the atomistic or fragmentary nature of these various portraits of the city, a distinct pattern is nevertheless discernible: in their varied and idiosyncratic ways, each text tells a similar story of communities and individuals attempting to make sense of a past that was suddenly and jarringly dislocated, raising questions about the treatment of social and material heritage within the context of a rapidly changing environment of an urban metropolis. According to Nuttall and Mbembe (2008: 5), the existing material structure of such an environment can either be “[c]orrupted, reinvented, or maintained”. Echoing this view, architectural theorist Fred Scott (2010:1) posits that “[a]ll buildings, once handed over by the builders to the client” or, for the sake of this study, the inhabitants of the city in general, “have three possible fates, namely to remain unchanged, to be altered or to be demolished.” In this study, I extrapolate these architectural categories to the larger domain of the city space, thus drawing on Scott’s work in the field of architecture to explore the possible fortunes of the three literary cities in transition inscribed in my three primary texts.

Writing as an interior architect (that is to say, someone working within the field of architecture that specialises in alterations to existing structures), Scott is well aware of the

intimate relationship between the structure and its inhabitants, as well as the reciprocal influence the one has on the other. He states that “[t]he purest architecture appears always from seismic shifts in the human psyche [and is] set up to propagate a deep collective conviction” (Scott, 2010: 6), emphasising the relationship between the lives we lead and the spaces we inhabit. As an interior architect, Scott argues against what he terms the “rabid policy of demolition” which has become the usual practice in the built environment, criticising “the present building boom in the City of London” as being “bereft of association with any idea of social progress” due to the unavoidable dislocation from any historical context such practices promote (Scott, 2010: 11). I take up this concern regarding demolition in the built environment and expand it to explore similar instances of material destruction and erasure as depicted in my three primary texts. The focus on erasure includes the demolition of buildings and objects alike, as well as, for example, the destruction of buildings by fire, decay, violent riots, and the loss of material possessions due to theft.

Although he is most adamantly opposed to demolition as a destructive practice when carelessly executed, Scott also cautions against the potential pitfalls of preservation. Using the famous Schröder house in Utrecht as an example, he discusses how this rigidly stylised space, which cannot adapt to alterations in daily rituals and modes of occupancy, “promote[s] the farce of repeated history, behaviour without conviction”, until inevitably resulting in a complete loss of occupation as a direct cause of its exaggerated preservation (Scott, 2010: 10). He goes on to state that “buildings chosen for preservation are memorials to failed collective architectural endeavours” and that those spaces and objects that are preserved are “unavoidably instilled with the qualities of [a] fetish” through their unnaturally frozen status (Scott, 2010: 11). I invoke these concerns in my treatment of the concept of material preservation as it is presented in the primary texts by looking at similarly frozen spaces and objects that have, either accidentally or intentionally, been removed from the natural order of development or decay that would otherwise befall them, and the problems that result from being immersed in such a stagnant environment.

In contrast to both demolition and preservation, Scott promotes alteration² as the most viable and appropriate response to change. He lists a number of advantages of this particular response, including the fact that material alteration is “collective”, working “across generations” (Scott, 2010: xiv) and that it functions as “the mediation between preservation or demolition” (Scott, 2010: 17). Most significantly, he argues that alteration has the ability to “make a concord between the new and the existing, or even a discord” since, unlike either of the two other possible responses he discusses, alteration is “about an art of response” (Scott, 2010: xvii) and “an act of transition or translation, from the past into the present” which ultimately “keep[s] the existing occupied and significant” (Scott, 2010: 11). In other words, whether it opposes past ideals or builds on them, alteration sets up a dialogue between the past and the present. In each of the three imagined cities in transformation, I consider the extent to which the dynamic of re-appropriation can be seen to inform the logic of social change. In particular, I draw on this idea as a means of exploring how narrators and characters make use of existing aspects of the built environment as a means of fashioning positive change.

As suggested above, Scott’s architectural categories provide a central framework for understanding and exploring the literary depiction of city spaces in transition – how social change is imagined and what kinds of relationships between individuals and their material heritage and history are described. Accordingly, I divide the narration of spatial change in each text into the categories ‘Demolition’, ‘Preservation’ and ‘Re-appropriation’ and assign each category its own section of each of the three chapters on Istanbul, Delhi and Johannesburg, respectively. Also of significance for the conceptualisation of social change in this dissertation is Scott’s argument about the interconnections between materiality and the socio-cultural. According to Scott (2010: 8), one cannot separate material change from the socio-cultural environment that dictates the values we want to see reflected in our material environment: “in a building, the most potent chemistry is the interaction between the built form and its inhabitants”. Taking my cue from this argument, I extend Scott’s categories to include their counterparts in the socio-cultural sphere. Accordingly, in order to

² Throughout *On Altering Architecture* (2010), Scott uses the term ‘alteration’ to designate the third possible approach to existing architecture as it is the term most commonly used within the field of interior architecture. However, in constructing a framework to approach the imagined cities dealt with in this dissertation, I found the slightly more descriptive term ‘re-appropriation’ to be more appropriate.

investigate how individual characters interact with their transforming city on a spatial level, as well as their response to their fellow citizens on an interpersonal level, I pair his three architectural categories with corresponding social responses to the changing status quo as presented in each of the primary texts. Plainly stated, each chapter is divided into three sections that each uses demolition/preservation/re-appropriation as a starting point to investigate both material and social responses to change in that particular city. Along with demolition, therefore, I explore the psycho-social responses of Turkification (in *Istanbul*), Partition (in *City of Djinns*), and emigration (in *Portrait with Keys*). Likewise, along with preservation, I explore the psycho-social responses of *hüzün*, living in hidden and forgotten areas of the city, as well as fortifying one's immediate environment to hold any transformation at bay. Although instances of re-appropriation are conspicuously absent in *Istanbul* (a matter I go on to address in Chapter 2), both Dalrymple's and Vladislavić's texts abound with descriptions of material re-appropriation, ultimately inscribing an environment that is capable of accommodating change. Therefore, the last section of each of the chapters on Delhi and Johannesburg discusses material re-appropriation along with the relevant psycho-social responses, resilience and adaptation, respectively.

Istanbul

Much of the story that Pamuk tells about the changing city of Istanbul focuses on the manner in which the city and its inhabitants respond to the loss of the Ottoman Empire, a significant influence in the city's construction of identity. In my discussion of Pamuk's Istanbul, I analyse his depiction of the city and its inhabitants from the 1950s to 1970s, almost half a century after Turkey's first president, Mustafa Kemal, forcefully converted the former empire to a modern nation state in 1923. Equal parts self-portrait and a portrayal of the melancholy city, *Istanbul* looks back on how both the author and his city come to terms with loss and disillusionment. Pamuk's memoir incorporates numerous perspectives on the city, ranging from autobiographical recounting to Ara Güler's photographs of the city and the author's musings on the work of a number of writers, "juxtapos[ing] his autobiography as a child with the biography of Istanbul" (Ackan, 2006:39) as the two become increasingly intertwined. Part *künstlerroman*, the collage of sources mirrors the fragmented city, "offering the reader a non-linear journey with various diverging points along the streets of

Istanbul” which refuses to cohere into a unified whole (Gurses, 2010: 1). The fluidity of the narrative “invites the reader to experience the city the way Orhan does, getting lost along the streets without necessarily following a predetermined itinerary” (Gurses, 2010: 1). Istanbul has often been inscribed as a site of plurality and liminality in the collective imagination, straddling two continents and occupying an important position in the ancient world, as well as coming into its own as a centre for political and economic development within Turkey and Europe in recent decades. For the last 2, 000 years, it “has been a world city”, consecutively serving as the capital for first the Roman, then Byzantine, and finally the Ottoman Empire due to its strategic position on the Bosphorus Strait (Tekeli, 2010: 34). It remains the country’s largest city and one of the largest cities in the world, although it is no longer the capital of Turkey since, under Mustafa Kemal’s rule, the capital was shifted to Ankara, away from any association with the Ottoman Empire and its failure.

The rejection of the ancient city at the moment when Turkey transformed from the seat of a forgotten and rapidly degenerating empire into a modern nation state has destabilised its identity ever since, while rendering the Ottoman heritage that had shaped it taboo. This heritage was branded as reactionary by Kemal who sought to pursue a more Westernised³ identity for Turkey. The new secular identity imposed by Kemal complicated the city’s relationship with its cultural and material heritage as he enforced a collective severing of ties with the past in a determined pursuit of modernity. In addition, the monolithic nationalist identity promoted by his regime failed to accommodate Istanbul’s ethnic diversity and excluded a large number of minorities. These ideals were often enforced with the aid of extensive social, political and cultural reforms that dictated conduct and even revolutionised the Turkish language with the introduction of a new alphabet. The incredibly rigid status quo imposed with characteristic military force during Kemal’s presidency cost Istanbul much of its heterogeneity, heritage and diversity, yet the relentless driving force which he applied to the modernising endeavour resuscitated a dying state and (with tremendous sacrifice and determination) laid the groundwork for what would become once again a significant world power.

³ Although the West/East binary construction is problematic here, it is one that Orhan, in *Istanbul*, often invokes and which influences his relationship with the city a great deal.

Demolition – Turkification

Pamuk's narrative of Istanbul pays close attention to the ways in which the socio-political environment created by the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the founding of the modern nation state, and the reforms that accompanied it influenced the Istanbullus⁴ relationship with their city. In the 'Demolition' section of the chapter on Pamuk's Istanbul, I explore the social and political ramifications of Kemal's nationalist discourse, or 'Turkification', as an instance of cultural erasure which can be likened to the process of material demolition. This interpretation is based on the memoir's portrayal of the Istanbullus being cut off from their material and cultural heritage as a result of the sudden rendering of the Ottoman past as taboo by Kemal's Turkification. Pamuk's depiction of the founding of the republic and its aftereffects also focuses on how the urban environment is shaped by this particular context and how that, in turn, influences social and cultural infrastructure, ultimately taking a critical stance on the new republic's rejection of the past. This narrative inscription also underscores the extent of these changes and the speed with which they were enforced, ultimately suggesting that this process constituted a harsh severing of a significant and cherished influence that has long shaped Istanbul's identity and the identities of its inhabitants.

Aside from the above, I also consider the theoretical complications, suggested in *Istanbul*, of the new republic's uncritical acceptance of Western modernity as the only means to progress and the extent to which this inadvertently enforced a West/East binary that delineated the East as passive and weak. While Pamuk's text cannot take an unequivocally negative view of the establishing of modern Turkey as a process of social rupture, since much was gained in the process, it does illuminate the damaging socio-cultural and psychological consequences thereof. Through its portrayal of the Istanbullus' struggles to construct a modern urban identity independent of the West's cues and influences, Pamuk's text can be read as entering into a dialogue with the position articulated by Said in *Orientalism* (1978). I consequently invoke Said's theory of Orientalism to discuss how Pamuk's depiction of the new republic's emulation of Western constructs reveals it to have

⁴ Although there is some dispute over the plural of 'Istanbullu', I will use 'Istanbullus' throughout this dissertation (as it is used by Maureen Freely in the translation of *Istanbul* I use as a primary source), instead of 'Istanbullular'.

effectively agreed to one of the basic tenets of Orientalism: that the Orient is inferior and requires external impetus in order to change and develop. I refer to Ashcroft and Ahluwalia's work (2001) on the influence of Orientalism as a discourse once it has been sufficiently internalised by the 'Oriental' Other when discussing the extent to which Pamuk's *Istanbul* becomes an Orientalist textual construct as well as the extent of the author-narrator's reliance on Western concepts to construct his city and situate himself in relation to it. This internalisation of Western chauvinism deters the development of an authentic modern identity for Pamuk's city and its inhabitants, therefore extending the destruction and erasure that accompanied the founding of the republic into the socio-cultural sphere. Finally, I reflect on how, instead of engaging with the discourse of Orientalism and "writing back" as Esra Akcan (2006) encourages, the characters in Pamuk's memoir merely deflect this discourse of the inferior Orient further 'East', constructing their own Orientalised Others in those minorities ideologically excluded from the city space.

Preservation - *Hüzün*

Many of Pamuk's characters choose to fully embrace the city's newly modernised and Westernised identity; however, the text also suggests that the transformation proved to be traumatic for many, and certainly for the city itself. Although the focus of large parts of the text is on the material demolition and cultural decay that resulted from Kemal's Turkification, a contrary impulse, one that is closely aligned with material preservation, also emerges. The 'Preservation' section of this chapter considers Pamuk's representation of the reactionary yearning for the past and subsequent alienation from the present that resulted from the uncompromising nature of the new republic's break with its Ottoman history. This unrequited yearning manifests as a dark mood that colours the Istanbul of Orhan's childhood and arguably becomes its most distinguishing feature. I go on to argue that this melancholic yearning, or *hüzün*, constitutes a socio-cultural counter-narrative to Kemal's Turkification and has its own influence on the city's material infrastructure, not only in instances of preservation, but also in the drive to hoard and collect, which is also present in Pamuk's approach to writing. Drawing from Freud's *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917), I discuss the pathological nature of Istanbul's *hüzün* as it is represented in Pamuk's text and the extent to which the post-revolutionary historical disenfranchisement ushered in by the

new republic rendered this reaction an inevitable consequence. Despite the self-impoverishment that Istanbul's inability to withdraw from the empire as a lost-object conceivably results in, I argue that the formulation of this state of collective melancholy enables a rewriting of the city and its identity that is, unlike Kemal's Turkification, inclusive and authentic.

In summary, Pamuk's text describes two conflicting responses to the city in transformation, Turkification and *hüzün*, as the social counterparts to similar approaches to the built environment (demolition and preservation, respectively). It is significant to note that the Istanbul of Pamuk's memoir has almost no materialisation of the third of Scott's three categories – re-appropriation – either materially or socially: the Istanbulus Pamuk depicts are polarised according to either of these two approaches – one rejecting and one reactionary – when it comes to their cultural and material heritage. The inability to reconcile the two or find a means of compromising induces a kind of paralysis in the city now incapable of translating its past into the present through adaptation and re-appropriation.

Delhi

Dalrymple has contributed much to the genre of travel writing and popular history, with a body of work that includes texts set throughout the Middle East and Central Asia. He does, however, seem most consistently enamoured with India, where the majority of his texts are set, and the city of Delhi in particular, where he currently lives for most of the year. His second book, *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi* is the product of a year's living in the Indian capital along with his wife, Olivia Fraser, in the late eighties. *City of Djinns* describes the narrator's numerous excursions into the labyrinth of the Old City and surrounds as he befriends a host of colourful and unusual characters, ranging from secretive clans of eunuchs and old Delhi-wallahs such as Dr Jaffery who teaches at the Zakir Hussein College, to a number of Punjabi immigrants who constitute the up-and-coming classes of the post-Partition city. The inscribing of these encounters is interspersed with an investigative framework of the unfolding of the city's complex and lengthy history, starting with the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and searching for its ancient origins. The reader quickly comes to the

realisation, however, that the imagined city that emerges from Dalrymple's text is a city shaped by Partition and its after-effects.

As the Indian subcontinent was divided between Hindu and Sikh-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan at the onset of Independence from the British Raj in 1947, Delhi was one of the cities that were the most severely impacted. The north-western region of what is today India, the Punjab province, was particularly difficult to divide when the partition was decided upon on account of the ample natural and cultural resources in the area, as well as the even spread of Muslim, Hindu and Sikh populations (as these statistics constituted the main determining factor in deciding whether a particular town, village or city would 'belong' to India or Pakistan). Once it became apparent that the city would no longer be safe for its Muslim inhabitants (many of whose Delhi ancestry went back centuries) as a result of increasingly violent riots, 329,000 Muslims left the capital while 495,000 Sikh and Hindu refugees fleeing similar prosecution in the western Punjab (now part of Pakistan) flooded the city (Dupont, 2004: 160). In under two years nearly half of Delhi's population changed as an influx of Punjabi immigrants replaced most of the Muslims of Moghul descent whose culture had shaped the city since the thirteenth century, transforming the city into what Gyanendra Pandey (2001: 124) refers to as "a 'refugee-istan' and a 'Partition' city", not only demographically, but also socially and politically. Ghandi (quoted in Pandey, 2001: 134) compares the loss of the city's Muslim population to an erasure of history. When some of the city's Muslims attempted to return to their homes after the violence had died down, expecting to return to their old lives, they found that "there were no houses left for them" as "[t]he streets and the markets had been captured by refugee Hindus and Sikhs" (Pandey, 2001: 182). Feeling out of place, many went back to Pakistan, while in Delhi the resilience and adaptability of the Punjabi refugees enabled them to become a "directing force in the life of the city" (Datta, 1986: 458), reshaping and regenerating it after the attempted destruction and erasure of Partition.

The demographic and socio-political shift that the city experienced after Partition is merely the most recent largescale transformation Delhi has encountered: since its inception over three thousand years ago, the city has seen the fall of many empires, been conquered by countless invaders and has itself been completely destroyed and regenerated multiple

times. Of the seven cities that have stood, one after the other, on this same site, only two exist today: Shahahanabad (built in the seventeenth century by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan and often referred to as the ‘Old City’) and New Delhi (or ‘Lutyens’ Delhi’, constructed next to the Old City in the twentieth century as the capital of the British Raj and designed by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker), each city encompassing the remains of former cities and former civilisations.

The last major fissure that shaped the city, the Partition of British India, was based on “the two nation theory” which, according to Mohammad Mujeeb (1994: 413), is “the final form of the sentiments and taboos which had always kept the Hindus and Muslims apart from each other”; although, as Pandey (2001: 2) rightly states, surely more than a century of colonial politics “had something to do with this denouement”. Based on the notion that the subcontinent’s Muslims needed their own state and territory, and the counterargument that, “if that was the case, the Muslims should have no place in what remained as India”, the former British Raj was to be divided “completely and unambiguously” (Pandey, 2001: 121).

Although historical details such as the fact that the formal constitutional division was only officially decided upon a mere ten weeks before the event suggest that even the representative parties that had initially called for the partition were dragging their feet in dismay, it appears as if, by this stage, the culmination of tension and political development was unstoppable. And, as the British rapidly withdrew, fearing a tarnished reputation as a result of the impending bloodbath, large parts of the subcontinent erupted into chaos. When the border dividing India and Pakistan was finally announced, two days after Independence in order to avoid “disappointment” before the celebration (Pandey, 1969: 205), large sections of the population (Sikhs and Hindus in Pakistan, and Muslims in India) became refugees. Many of these people who had suddenly and paradoxically been located in the ‘wrong’ country without moving, due to something as abstract as a line drawn on a map, faced a difficult decision: abandon home, or face the possibility of appalling violence at the hands of former friends and neighbours. As roughly twelve million people made the migration across the new border, the genocidal violence that ensued, as distinct parts of the

population attempted to wipe each other out, was “unprecedented, both in scale and method” (Pandey, 2001: 2).

Demolition - Partition

Dalrymple’s *City of Djinns* foregrounds the moment of rupture that marked the end of a colonial regime and the founding of two new nation states, focusing on how it functioned to obliterate the cultural and material infrastructure within the imagined city, most notably in the tearing asunder of co-existing heterogeneous communities. In the ‘Demolition’ section of the chapter on Dalrymple’s Delhi, I go on to discuss the abovementioned consequences of Partition as instances of material demolition and socio-cultural destruction. This treatment of the city in change accords with Partha Ghosh’s (2015: 43) theorising on the creation of a “post-conflict culture”, and what Ananya Kabir (2005: 179) refers to as an instance of “cultural trauma”, both occurring as a result of the loss of cultural identity and the destruction of Delhi’s social fabric, issues that are stressed in Dalrymple’s text. In this section I also refer to Reece Jones’s (2014: 285) discussion of what he terms the “false premise of partition” to investigate how this event *created* (instead of merely mapping) discrete identity groups while denying the existence of inherent socio-cultural heterogeneity. I consider how Dalrymple’s text deals with these socio-political issues as well as how Partition’s reductive rewriting of cultural identity leads to the increasing possibility of normalised exclusion and intolerance. My intention is to demonstrate how Partition’s rewriting of cultural identity can then be read as a form of social and cultural destruction. *City of Djinns* further imagines an environment shaped by the established trend of exclusion and separation, describing other attempts to remove whole communities such as the forced relocation and sterilisation of squatters during the 1970s Emergency. It is also worth noting that while Partition is easy to classify as an instance of destructive and violent socio-cultural erasure and material demolition, the text also touches on at least one valuable implication thereof: the rapid material and cultural erasure of the period enabled the city to rapidly discard its colonial heritage in the process, a period which Dalrymple consequently describes as being as distant to the Delhiites as the Roman conquest of Britain is to the English.

Preservation – Hidden

In addition, Dalrymple's text also emphasises the contrary reaction to the resulting destruction of Partition, namely the ability to endure and preserve. In the 'Preservation' section of the Delhi chapter, I look at the way in which the ethos of preservation is located within peripheral sites of Dalrymple's imagined city. *City of Djinns'* narrative of the encounters between the city space and its inhabitants suggests that perhaps the most assured way for material and cultural infrastructure to survive in the rapidly transforming city is to be forgotten, to be 'underground' and 'hidden'. Within the travelogue, a number of instances of accidental preservation – where the relentless growth of the urban space inadvertently creates little pockets of preservation, fragile islands of ancient culture and lifestyle, and secretive micro-communities such as the Old City's eunuchs – suggest a sense of stability and protection in a city which is presented as elusive and opaque. While at times the preservation of some of the city's strata of material heritage occurs accidentally in the text, the travelogue also points to instances of conscious preservation and restoration. In these examples, fragments of the past are meticulously and artificially recreated, often in distant locations – such as the city of Karachi in Pakistan – by inhabitants who are no longer able to access the city of Delhi itself. The frozen state of nostalgia that besets communities consumed with such acts of artificial preservation reveals a failure to adapt after a sudden socio-spatial dislocation from home and heritage. The subsequent focus on the past as a consoling space causes it to artificially supplant the present, limiting the community's ability to adapt even further. The resulting state of "postmemory" (Kabir, 2005) that unfolds in communities in the text that experienced collective cultural trauma dominates and displaces the emerging narratives of identity-formation amongst those of the new generation, as memories of the past persistently intrude upon the present. Based on the experience of a number of characters in Dalrymple's narrative, I discuss the consequences of such trauma remaining unresolved largely due to the failure to localise the violence of Partition within collective narratives. I do so with reference to Derrida's (1994) theorising on the need to localise trauma, and the unsettling effects and uncertainties arising from the inability to do so. The text's description of such experiences is arguably reflective of the absence of communal memorial sites such as museums in India (where, shockingly, there are none specifically dedicated to Partition). Yet, as Lyotard (1990) warns us about the selective

memory instigated by commemorative memorials, the creation of an official Partition museum would inevitably be problematically aligned with a particular (inevitably state-sanctioned and so likely also nationalist) discourse and so to some extent promote the erasure and discrediting of certain perspectives and the privileging of others, a concern I go on to discuss.

Re-appropriation - Resilience

In contrast to the ethos of accidental preservation, a dynamic of re-appropriation and resilience is also at work in Dalrymple's text. Of particular importance in the depiction of Delhi in *City of Djinns* is the capacity of the imagined city to regenerate in the aftermath of a crisis, which I liken to material re-appropriation. In this section, I focus on the resilience of the Delhiites portrayed in the text, as they engage in processes of social and material re-appropriation. Dalrymple describes a city whose different ages lie suspended side-by-side as a result of inevitable slippage and incompleteness in the process of its numerous reincarnations, where an unusual juxtaposition results between its ancient origins and a population that has not inhabited the city for more than a generation or two. As both the newer population of Punjabi immigrants and what remains of the 'original' inhabitants learn to adapt to the changing city, they have to negotiate between the necessary adaptation this situation calls for and maintaining an established identity and 'authenticity'. Dalrymple's Delhi reveals a strong sense of agency in the inhabitants of the city, one which is revealed through the rewriting and re-appropriating of established customs and historiographies. Such instances of rewriting and re-appropriating form part of processes of meaning-making which do not obliterate the old, or result in the nostalgic stagnation that can accompany preservation. I argue that, instead of Ghosh's paranoid post-conflict culture, Dalrymple's post-Partition Delhi foregrounds a culture of resilience and independence despite, or perhaps, *because of* the experience of prosecution and hardship during Partition. The self-made society that Dalrymple constructs displays a remarkable lack of bitterness and an impressive capacity for reconciliation. Based on Secor's (2004) theorising of the construction of citizenship as a strategy for negotiating the urban environment and Lefebvre's (1968) writing on the right to the city, I consider how the Delhiites in Dalrymple's travelogue

manage to actively engage in the creation of their own urban environment and lay claim to their citizenship.

Johannesburg

My discussion of the various responses to the transformation of Johannesburg – from a racially segregated city to an urban space that offers a myriad of new possible means of occupation, empowerment, agency and interaction – will be grounded in Vladislavić's collaged text which playfully portrays the fragmented nature of the city through a series of ephemeral vignettes, giving brief glimpses into the lives of its inhabitants through Vlad's memories and everyday encounters. Vlad's inner-city perambulations and recollections reveal a keen interest in how people use and adapt objects and spaces in new and innovative ways and so actively contribute to the shaping of their urban context. In addition, due to it not being narrative-driven, *Portrait* invites the reader to take on a similarly active role in his or her interaction with the urban chronicle of the city.

The city of Johannesburg is no stranger to physical and spatial alteration, having been built up and torn down almost entirely on multiple occasions since it first appeared on the Highveld in 1886. And ever since its humble beginnings as a mining camp, it has developed rapidly and rabidly to become “one of the critical nodes of Southern Hemispheric capitalism and globalization” shaped, as elsewhere in the global South, “in the crucible of colonialism and by the labour of race” (Mbembe, 2008: 42). Colonialism constructed a hierarchical urban space, rigidly defined by the binaries of centre/margins and privilege/underprivileged which were exploited and reinforced during the apartheid era in which black people were largely confined to the peripheries of the city. During this period “race directly gave rise to the space Johannesburg would become, its peculiarities, contours, and form” and “[s]pace became both a social and a racial relationship” (Mbembe, 2008: 42).

Chapter 4 is concerned with *Portrait*'s representation of the transformation experienced by Johannesburg's urban space and material environment when the primary shaping influence of legalised racial distinction and segregation ceased to exist. It will examine the nature of the new, possible city, the social and physical factors that serve to shape and define it and

the manner in which it manifested in the wake of the racial city's collapse. The discussion of the city's transformation within Vladislavić's text will focus largely on its response to instances of ideologically saturated urban space and architecture that constructed the spatial logic of segregation, as these are explored in the text.

Demolition - Emigration

Central to Vladislavić's rendering of post-apartheid Johannesburg is the ethos of demolition and its corresponding social counterpart, emigration. Emigration figures in this text as a rejection of social and spatial change in the city of Johannesburg, and is therefore set up as a parallel to demolition. This section examines the value of demolition in the post-apartheid material environment from the perspective provided by Vladislavić's text. In addition, it will consider *Portrait*'s portrayal of the social and historical influences that stimulate and contribute to the prevalence of demolition and emigration as well as the effect and limitations of these two responses as an attempt to reject and erase a controversial socio-political past. I draw on architectural and social theories, such as Mbembe's (2008), to construct an argument about *Portrait*'s depiction of these issues. The chronicle suggests that unchecked demolition has the potential to be socially and psychologically destructive in its wilful dislocation of a temporal development that would normally manifest palimpsestically in the urban environment, and that attempts at socio-cultural erasure are generally of a limited success in such a densely layered environment.

Preservation - Fortification

Portrait's foregrounding of instances of preservation and its social counterpart, fortification, will be investigated in the second section of this chapter and explicitly contrasted with the various responses dealt with in the discussion on demolition. In this context, fortification can be understood as an endeavour to enclose oneself in a secure enclave that allows one to ignore the transformation experienced by the city in favour of a risk-free and controlled state of occupancy that need not respond to change. This section analyses certain misconceptions surrounding notions of architectural preservation and restoration, as they are encountered in Vladislavić's text, specifically those pertaining to the construction of museums and the erection of monuments. It also investigates the extent to which nostalgic

architecture aids in assembling material support structures for the continuation of apartheid's ideological premises. Ultimately, the focus of this section is on the physical retreat from the city, preferred by certain characters in the text, and the subsequent socio-cultural isolation that the fortification of space enables. Based on my analysis of fortification at work in the text, drawn largely from Lindsay Bremner's (1998) work on the subject, I argue that this particular response to the city in change has the ability to dangerously impede any tangible realisation of the spatial and ideological transformation taking place in Johannesburg. I therefore conclude that attempts at social preservation, as represented in Vladislavić's text, have the potential be as destructive as demolition.

Re-appropriation – Adaptation

The final section of the chapter on Vladislavić's Johannesburg will consider the third possibility suggested by the text, namely material re-appropriation and its social counterpart, adaptation, in response to a changing status quo, as an alternative to the generally problematic and potentially futile approaches discussed in the two previous sections. I investigate the manner in which the inhabitation of Vladislavić's city has changed with particular reference to the role petty crime plays in the reconstruction of the city, and analyse the revealing representation of acts of criminal repossession and spatial infiltration in *Portrait*. Based on the chronicle's concern with the issue of citizenship and inhabitancy in relation to characters' spatial interaction with the city, I argue that spatial re-appropriation can be considered a necessary aspect of the transformation of a city and that this particular response to change has the potential to provide new and alternative means to power, which are accessible on an individual level and so available to both the previously advantaged and disadvantaged alike. My analysis extends to a discussion of the formal narrative techniques used in *Portrait* and how these encourage the reader to take on an active role in negotiating the text, much as Vlad keenly interacts with the city.

As suggested above, I aim to compare and contrast the various responses to social change which are elucidated in each text, drawing on Scott's architectural categories of demolition, preservation and re-appropriation in order to conceptualise not only the changes which occur in the built environment but also to describe their counterparts in the socio-cultural

sphere. I investigate which factors stimulate and promote certain kinds of reaction and consider the potentially problematic and empowering results that ensue when these responses are enacted socially and spatially. I will argue that, while some choose to erase or preserve the past through their response to the urban environment, the changing times offer an opportunity for others to re-appropriate existing structures of order and privilege as they encounter the city space around them in new ways. This new form of occupation leads to a form of power and agency that is inaccessible to those inhabitants who attempt to preserve their past lifestyles, and is misused by those inhabitants who, in turn, attempt to obliterate the past in a rash severing of ties. An argument will be made in favour of re-appropriation as it enables the marginalised to empower themselves by actively occupying their environment as well as providing an opportunity for the privileged to adapt to their rapidly changing city.

The three chapters that form the body of this dissertation will each consider one imagined city during, or after, the relevant event that ushered in the particular socio-spatial transformation in question, as depicted by one of the three primary texts. These chapters will be organised chronologically, according to the event in question, starting with Pamuk's memoir and its exploration of the effect of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire (1923) on Istanbul, continuing on to Dalrymple's investigation of the impact of Partition (1947) on Delhi in *City of Djinns*, and finally ending with Vladislavić's urban chronicle which catalogues the opening up of Johannesburg after the abolition of apartheid (1994). As indicated above, each chapter will be structured according to Scott's three categories of possible spatial and architectural response to transformation, paired with its relevant social counterpart as presented by the relevant primary text.

The second chapter, on Pamuk's *Istanbul*, will therefore first consider instances of architectural demolition along with the socio-culturally destructive influence of Kemal's Turkification, and then move on to consider instances of material preservation along with the collective melancholic yearning for the past, *hüzün*, as these are presented in the text. The third chapter, on Dalrymple's *City of Djinns*, will first explore examples of architectural demolition that occurred as a result of the influence of socio-cultural erasure attempted by the Partition of the Indian subcontinent. It will then move on to consider instances of

accidental material and cultural preservation and will conclude with a discussion of the transformative influence of mass spatial re-appropriation and social resilience resulting from the suffering that came with Partition. The fourth chapter, on Vladislavić's *Portrait* will first consider occurrences of attempted erasure of the past through architectural demolition and its social counterpart, emigration, before moving on to analyse spatial and material preservation along with fortification in the city. The final section of this chapter will consider Vladislavić's depiction of spatial and material re-appropriation and social adaptation as these are presented in the text. The final chapter, a brief conclusion, will draw a comparison between the three texts and the three imagined cities in transformation and will argue for re-appropriation and its possible social counterparts as the response that most embodies an authentic existential approach to the changing city, making new modes of agency and occupation available that are otherwise denied by demolition and preservation.

Chapter 2

Istanbul – Pamuk’s *Istanbul: Memories and the City*

On 29 October 1923, peasant-born army officer Mustafa Kemal (later Mustafa Kemal Atatürk) founded the Republic of Turkey as its first president and subsequently abolished the Sultanate, drawing the once-great Ottoman Empire (1299 - 1923) to its final conclusion after 150 years of gradual decline and corruption. He set to work transforming the former empire (now much reduced in territory after numerous wars and defeats) into a modern and secular nation-state, implementing extensive economic, political and cultural reforms that were ruthlessly enforced in order to rid the new republic of what he considered to be a backward and reactionary legacy, ill-fitted to a modern nation. He forced the Turks “to emerge from the crumbling ruins of the Ottoman Empire and to become a nation, at a time when many European and Asiatic peoples were lapsing into demoralization and despair amidst the wreckage of ancient empires” (Lewis, 1965: 111), but he did so at the expense of a centuries-old cultural legacy.

In its attempt to sever all ties with the past, the new republic rendered the Ottoman heritage taboo and promoted the association of the Ottoman past with underdevelopment and Islamic autocracy. Accordingly, the centuries-old city of Istanbul was, for the first time since Mehmed II’s conquest in 1453, rejected as the capital (and with it, the Ottoman cultural and architectural heritage that had shaped the city for the previous 500 years) in favour of Ankara, in Central Anatolia. This debatable move from a city that, for centuries, has stood as a symbol of imperial power and been the epicentre of the Empire’s rich and diverse culture to a comparatively underdeveloped steppe town reveals the new nationalist government’s desperation to make “a clean break with the Ottoman past” and establish a new nation state “unencumbered by European, Arab or African provinces” (Lewis, 1965: 78). As a result, with the focus on the creation of a new cultural identity, significant features of Istanbul’s material heritage, especially those directly associated with the Ottoman elite such as the *yalis* (traditional nineteenth century mansions) along the Bosphorus, were considered

“models of an obsolete identity and architecture” and left to decay, “mere shadows of this ruined and destroyed culture” (p. 41).⁵

The new Turkish cultural identity promoted by Kemal and the nationalist movement rejected the rich cultural heritage that shaped it, and was rigidly and monolithically demarcated to the exclusion of a large population of ‘minorities’, especially in Istanbul, such as the Kurds, Circassians, Laz, Arabs, Roma and Jews who were not deemed true Turks and were therefore ideologically excluded from the creation of Turkey’s new identity. Unlike the Ottomans who, despite being a conquering Empire, rarely imposed their religious and cultural beliefs (for example, not forcing the growing population to convert to Islam), the new republic was prescriptive, introduced language and cultural reforms, and ruthlessly attacked a large number of religious rites and modes of conduct. The alienating new regime resulted, for example, in more Greeks leaving the city of Istanbul in the 50 years following the forming of the republic than in the 50 years following the conquest of Constantinople, and created a socio-political climate conducive to the state-supported riots and attacks on Greek citizens in 1956 that Orhan describes in *Istanbul* (p. 158).

Even Hagia Sophia, having once been a Greek Orthodox basilica and perhaps the most renowned building in Turkey, was too cosmopolitan a symbol for nationalist Turkey as the state became increasingly inward-looking. In fact, *kozmopolit* (cosmopolitan), which became a “favourite Nationalist epithet for Istanbul”, took on pejorative connotations during the early years of the republic, such as “a place or person with ‘no national and local colour’” and therefore “dangerous” to the nation (Lewis, 1965: 78) which became increasingly suspicious of the outside. In his memoir, Pamuk recognises that the republic’s creation of a new national identity came at the expense of, not only the Ottoman Empire’s rich cultural heritage, but also its heterogeneity:

When the Empire fell, the new republic while certain of its purpose was unsure of its identity; the only way forward, its founders thought was to foster a new concept of Turkishness, and this meant a certain *cordon sanitaire* from the rest of the world. It was an end of the grand polyglot, multicultural Istanbul of the imperial age; the city stagnated, emptied itself out, and became a monotonous, monolingual town in black and white. (p. 227)

⁵ All references to the primary text of this particular chapter are to Orhan Pamuk’s *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, published in 2006 by Faber.

The vigour and passion with which the nationalist movement embarked on the cultural revolution that accompanied the founding of the republic was met with limited enthusiasm from the general public, the vast majority of whom were peasants who were worn down after bearing the brunt of war and foreign invasion for decades. Change was not wholeheartedly embraced and had to be implemented forcefully, often with legal decrees. In addition to having to comply with the reforms dictating appropriate behaviour and dress, the people had to learn to foster a more acute and nuanced awareness of their national identity in accordance with the grand narrative of nationalism. In *Istanbul* Orhan, for example, notes the nationalist movement's promotion of the celebration of the 'Conquest of Istanbul' (rather than 'the Fall of Constantinople' as Westerners are more prone to call these events of 29 May 1453) and remembers that "the view amongst the city's more vocal nationalists was that anyone who so much as used the word 'Constantinople' was an undesirable alien who dreamt of the Greeks returning to the city and turning the Turks into 'second-class' citizens" (p. 156). Throughout the text, Orhan lists a number of similar instances, ultimately resulting in a disenchanted portrayal of the nationalist spirit which he blames for "the cosmopolitan Istanbul [he] knew as a child [having] disappeared by the time [he] reached adulthood" (p. 215). Yet it is also worth noting that such propaganda as Orhan calls "Conquest fever", along with most of Turkish nationalism's attempts to Westernise the nation, had little impact on the daily lives of ordinary Turks, many of whom were at that stage, very much like Orhan's grandmother:

If anyone asked, she would say she was in favour of Atatürk's Westernising project, but in fact — and in this she was like everyone else in the city — neither the East nor the West interested her...This despite the fact that she'd studied to be a history teacher. (p. 105)

A similar scepticism is recorded in Harold Armstrong's (1937: 253) account which states that, ultimately, Kemal did not realise that

laws are not constructed in a study by a few clever men; but must evolve through years of effort out of the soul of a people. He did not know that culture follows commodities, that a people living in Eastern squalor and poverty could not adopt European ideas and methods, until they had the wealth and the desire to raise their standards of living. The Turks had not responded to his bounding enthusiasm. He could not even lead them. He had to drive them every inch along the road of progress that he had chosen.

It was this apparent need to be the driving force of progress, laboriously working to enforce the revolution inch-by-inch, which led Kemal to become an obsessively controlling leader: he even took it upon himself to personally teach the new alphabet (implemented in 1928) to people across the country, going from town to town with his own blackboard.

During the early years of the republic, Mustafa Kemal, who felt that even the Ottomans had exploited the ‘real Turks’ for centuries, would not risk accepting any outside help, stating that: “the Turks must save themselves or be destroyed” and that “[t]he Turks can look after themselves; let others do the same” (Armstrong, 1937: 99, 183). He would not allow external forces to ideologically exploit Turkey as “the champion of the East against the West, of Islam against Christianity, of subject races against their masters” but would stand resolute on one principle: “to see all problems through Turkish eyes and to guard Turkish interests” (Armstrong, 1937: 183), not realising that the troubling evolution of ‘Turkishness’ promoted the construction of the limiting binary categories he sought to overcome.

Ironically, as much of the historical account suggests, instead of creating Turkey ‘for the real Turks’ (the labouring classes exploited by the sultanate and its wars), the new republic very quickly succeeded in creating a far more class-structured society than the Ottoman Empire which, with the exception of the sultanate, had no hereditary aristocracy. The narrator of *Istanbul*, Orhan, acknowledges this, and his subsequent position of privilege, a number of times in Pamuk’s memoir as when he claims, for example, that: “[t]he vestiges of the vanishing Ottoman culture, however mournful, did not cripple us: we belonged, after all, to the nouveau riche of the Republican era” (p. 53). While as a postmodern writer he aims to undercut the grand narrative of Kemal’s Turkification, it is this position of privilege that empowers and enables Pamuk to speak and be heard due to the fact that he is able to so readily access the ‘Westernised’, modernised Turkish identity created by, and promoted through, the meta-narrative of the republic. And while his oeuvre “challenges myths about stable forms of personal and cultural identity” (Bayrakceken & Randall, 2005: 201) and aims to introduce “multiplicity to a rigid, universal, Eurocentric hierarchy of progress and development” (Göknar, 2006: 35), *Istanbul* barely mentions those minorities who have been marginalised by these myths and meta-narratives and is, instead, told almost exclusively

from the position of the “nouveau riche of the Republican era” that Orhan so proudly lays claim to without making any significant attempt to reconcile the city’s multi-cultural plurality. This limitation is partially justified by the fact that *Istanbul* is a memoir of Pamuk’s coming-of-age within the city’s Westernised bourgeoisie, but the text is as much a recollection of the city’s transformation as Pamuk’s, as the title, *Istanbul: Memories and the City* clearly suggests. It is also worth noting that Dalrymple and Vladislavić write from similar positions of privilege: Dalrymple is a British tourist in a former colony, able to comment on a situation he has no stake in, and Vladislavić is a white male born in apartheid South Africa, able to observe the city’s shedding of its segregatory past from a relatively comfortable position.

As can be inferred from Pamuk’s text, the new national identity Kemal’s Turkification sought to create was ultimately both ethnically and temporally exclusive. It not only excluded ethnic minorities from the construction of this new identity, but also rejected the Ottoman cultural heritage that had shaped the nation and its people for centuries. While there is still much to be said about the former category, this dissertation focuses on the latter: the memoir’s exploration of the culturally destructive effect of the concept of Turkification that accompanied the founding of the republic and its consequences for Istanbul and its people.

Demolition – Turkification

Istanbul’s focus is, in part, on the destruction and disintegration of large parts of the city’s material and cultural heritage in the republican era, the decades that follow the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. In terms of the city’s architecture, this destruction is often presented as a result of the rampant fires that the text describes in emotive detail. The Istanbullus’ confused and ambivalent reaction toward the recurrent fires is revealed in Orhan’s recollections of the “curious, even joyous, crowd of people in pyjamas” that would form at night to watch neighbouring houses burn to the ground, and the festive atmosphere that would ensue, complete with food vendors and music blasted from car radios (p. 187); yet on other occasions he remembers neighbours “weeping and clutching each other” as their houses “vanish[ed] into smoke” (p. 188) and the feeling that there was “something in the air that suggested the Day of Judgement had arrived” (p. 189). He describes the

experience of watching a house or neighbourhood burn as “heartbreaking, and yet enlightening” (p. 188) and confesses that “like so many other Istanbullus, [he] came almost to wish for disasters, and that wish made [him] feel even guiltier when the next disaster occurred” (p. 188). Although Orhan agrees with the renowned Turkish writer Ahmet Hamdi Tapınar that it “is, in the end, the people themselves who, through ignorance and despair, end up severing their every link with the past” (p. 189), he cannot dissociate himself from what he sees as the ambivalence and paralysis that beset the Istanbullus as their city transforms around (and often despite) them. Masochistically, he relishes the “guilt, loss and jealousy [they] feel at the sudden destruction of the last traces of a great culture and a great civilisation” as a form of communal punishment because he feels that they were “unfit or unprepared to inherit [it] in [their] frenzy to turn Istanbul into a pale, poor, second-class imitation of a Western city” (p. 191). As I go on to demonstrate in the next chapter, such guilt and nostalgia are almost completely absent in *City of Djinns*, but perhaps Dalrymple’s Delhiites, depicted as they are in the midst of this frenzy to modernise, have yet to realise their loss, something that Pamuk’s characters, shown almost fifty years after the great revolutionary moment of the founding of the republic, are keenly aware of.

According to Orhan’s frequent and detailed recollections of the burning down of numerous Ottoman mansions and *yalıs* during his childhood, it is the feeling of being jilted by the empire and its failure that causes the observers of these tragedies to respond so ambivalently, as they view their Ottoman heritage as a bitter memory. He compares this destruction of the city’s architectural heritage to “a spurned lover [who] throws away his lost beloved’s clothes, possessions, and photographs” (p. 27). In an article on Pamuk’s memoir, Verena Laschinger (2009: 103) refers to the burning down of these structures as “rites of passage” and claims that the characters intentionally destroy the city through these “violent acts of incineration” that are “a symptom of modernization”, as are the “soulless concrete buildings” that replace the once magnificent mansions. Yet at no point does Orhan suggest that the fires he comes to associate with the city and its decline are ever caused by intentional acts of arson. Instead, they are represented as inevitable misfortunes that befall the weakened city and its forgotten inhabitants and are far more likely to be the result of the neglect, decay and despair that colour the Istanbul of Orhan’s childhood. Pamuk depicts these neighbours and spectators standing passively by and “maintain[ing] a stony

equanimity” (p. 26) in the face of such destruction, waiting for accidental fires to take their toll on the city and its bitter memories. This passivity is much more disheartening than any intentional destruction would be and reveals the passive acceptance and lack of agency in their city’s transformation of the Istanbullus of Pamuk’s memoir. While a similar transformation is described in Dalrymple’s account of Delhi, with soulless concrete office blocks and housing estates crowding out centuries old Mughal architecture, at least *City of Djinns*’s Delhiites seize upon the new developments with an optimistic fervour that enables them to take an active role in shaping their environment, instead of standing passively by like many of Pamuk’s Istanbullus.

As the narrative suggests, the destruction of large parts of their city by fire served to ‘confirm’ to the Istanbullus of Pamuk’s memoir (a narrative construct distinct from the ‘real’ Istanbullus) what they already knew, namely, that their city was weak and irrevocably in decline:

Even if the Ottoman Empire had not fallen, the fires that ripped through the city during the early years of the twentieth century — destroying thousands of houses, entire neighbourhoods, vast stretches of the city, leaving tens of thousands of people homeless, helpless and penniless — would have sapped its strength and left little to remind us of past glories. (p. 190)

Instead of resisting the decay that swept through the city in the 1950s and trying to prevent the fires that ravaged it, the Istanbullus eventually follow suit and demolish and dismantle many of those Ottoman mansions that had survived relatively intact for centuries. Orhan remembers how both the schools he had attended as a young boy, housed in old Pasha Mansions, were demolished “even as [he] played football in the gardens” (p. 24). He remembers the dilapidated shells of these and other Ottoman mansions with great sadness as a child but, once most of these had either been demolished or destroyed by fire, the memoir records that most Istanbullus resolutely renounced their Ottoman past and tried to construct a new city and cultural identity:

As we in Nişantaşı [an affluent neighbourhood largely inhabited by the republican-era secular bourgeoisie] saw it, the Republic had done away with the pashas, princes and high officials and so the empty mansions they had left behind were only decrepit anomalies. (p. 26)

Many western travel writers such as André Gide and Gustave Flaubert have lingered lovingly over the cultural idiosyncrasies of the Ottoman Empire, producing renditions of the city which became the source of (often exaggerated) descriptions of Istanbul's 'exoticism'. Yet, as the memoir suggests, it is these very idiosyncrasies which were most likely to be swiftly disposed of by the Kemalists' great Westernising drive. Orhan describes this relationship between the travel writers and the Kemalists as "a brutal symbiosis", explaining that:

Western observers love to identify the things that make Istanbul exotic, non-Western, whereas the Westernisers amongst us register all the same things as obstacles to be erased from the face of the city as fast as possible. (p. 225)

He lists, among others, the Janissaries, the slave market, traditional Ottoman clothing and the dervish lodges, as well as the harem and hamals (p. 225). Once they had drawn the attention of Western writers, such cultural markers were discarded in an attempt to avoid the city being patronisingly perceived as 'exotic', 'amusing', 'quaint' or as 'a tourist attraction'. In contrast to such thin-skinned hyper-awareness of the foreign gaze, Dalrymple's *City of Djinns* describes a similarly 'exotic' Delhi bazaar scene from quite a different perspective. Even though Dalrymple describes it with some disenchantment for its bizarre intermingling of the ancient and traditional with the mundane (selling posters of Lord Shiva, kittens, and Charlie Chaplin), at least the Delhi bazaar suggests a culture that happily adapts through incorporating external influences, instead of shying away in fear.

The 'de-exotification' of Istanbul is achieved to such an extent that Orhan perceives the (relatively untouched) Golden Horn village of Eyup as unreal: uncertain in his encounter with traditional Turkish culture that has somehow escaped Kemal's Westernising veneer, he describes it as "a sort of Turkish Eastern Muslim Disneyland planted on the edge of the city" and is as awe-struck and confused by this "image of the inward-looking, mysterious, religious, picturesque and mystical 'East'" (p. 319) as one might expect a foreign traveller to be. He also describes it using the vocabulary of a tourist: "Disneyland", "mysterious", "mystical". Significantly, he questions whether its peculiarity is not due to Eyup being located "outside the old city walls, and therefore [lacking] the Byzantine influence or the many-layered confusions you saw elsewhere in the city" (p. 320). What is suggested here is that the eventual simulated and fraudulent two-dimensionality that might result from

selective erasure of undesired “layers” of history and cultural influence in the dense palimpsest of urban environments is a fate that threatens the rest of Istanbul as well. In fact, each of the three texts discussed in this dissertation describes similar instances where, in an isolated pocket of the city, the influence of time and its layering effect in the urban environment’s material infrastructure have been artificially halted, and where certain ‘undesired’ temporal and cultural processes that are influencing the rest of the city have been held at bay. The Karachi ‘exiles’ in Dalrymple’s travelogue and those characters in *Portrait* who shut out the transforming city behind fortified enclosures are able to effectively bring the temporal development of their immediate environments to a standstill, although, as with Eyup, this comes at the expense of the development of these characters themselves.

According to historians such as Lewis (1965), the new nationalist party’s destruction, rejection, and demolition of Turkey’s Ottoman heritage was not limited to physical destruction and neglect of material heritage. It also took on a far more pervasive and insidious capacity in the form of “Atatürk’s Reforms” (although many feel that “revolution” more aptly describes the extent of these changes). These socio-cultural and legal changes were rapidly implemented after the establishment of the republic in the drive to convert Turkey into a secular nation state after the Western (French) model, which Kemal felt was the only path to modernity. The reforms sought (often very suddenly and forcefully) to alter modes of conduct, cultural rites and rituals, and forms of expression that had developed organically over centuries and had become some of the defining features of many Turkish citizens’ cultural identities.

Kemal openly declared a kind of personal war against the influence of Islam in Turkey in particular, something he had always held in contempt during his rise to power, and an intention he had kept hidden until he was certain of his position, since he was well aware of the opposition it would arouse (Armstrong, 1937: 204). He considered religion of any form a direct impediment to the modernisation of the nation state, suggesting that it had been merely a tool used by the Ottoman rulers to enslave and control the ignorant masses. He referred to Islam as “a dead thing” and the “theology of an immoral Arab”, and was adamant that “a ruler who needs religion to help him rule is a weakling [and that] no

weakling should rule" (Armstrong, 1937:205). This notion was very quickly put into action when Kemal's regime effectively forced Mehmed VI Vahdettin, the last sultan and embodiment of the Ottoman Empire and its sovereignty, to flee in fear for his life in 1922. In 1924, he abolished the Ottoman Caliphate and in so doing shifted the governance of Turkey from religious to secular hands completely.

The reforms not only altered Turkey on a political and religious level, but had a severe impact on people's day-to-day lives, perhaps most significantly through the so-called "Alphabet Revolution" in which the Persio-Arabic script that had been used for over a thousand years was rejected in favour of the Latin alphabet. The new 29-letter Turkish alphabet was much more phonetically suited to Turkish, although it also rendered the entire country suddenly illiterate. It is yet another testament to the unyielding and rapid drive of Kemal's revolution that, instead of the five year transition period recommended by the linguists responsible for creating the new alphabet, he allowed only three months. The new alphabet exacerbated the growing gap between the older Ottoman generation and the younger Westernised generation and intentionally cut the younger generation off from their Ottoman past (and, according to Kemal, the 'East') since they were no longer able to read historical texts (Lewis, 1965: 98). Pamuk takes up this question in his exploration of the problematically homogenising effect of these reforms. Orhan, for example, remembers the "state imposed sanctions on minorities" during his childhood as "measures that some might describe as the final stage of the city's 'conquest' and others as ethnic cleansing" and the resulting disappearance of so many languages in the once-multilingual Istanbul: "whenever anyone spoke Greek or Armenian too loudly in the street...someone would cry out, 'Citizens, please speak Turkish!'" (p. 226).

In keeping with the above, Pamuk's memoir as a whole suggests that the "violent rise of Turkification" (p. 227) resulted in a socio-political environment that no longer accommodated plurality and difference. This narrative of loss is echoed in the accounts of historians such as Armstrong (1937: 24), who argue that Kemal had applied military force to issues of identity, culture and nationhood, fundamentally revealing himself as "a revolutionary with no respect for God, man or institution", someone for whom nothing was sacred. He was a man of careful, calculated consideration on the battlefield, but was

absolutely reckless with his people's cultural heritage; his rejection of the past had both broader cultural and personal implications. On a number of occasions he publically lashed out at what he considered to be the backwardness of established Muslim modes of conduct, such as the apparently "exaggerated veneration paid to the tombs (*turbe*) of holy men, [stating that] 'It is disgraceful for a civilized society to seek help from the dead'" (Lewis, 1965: 93). Any consideration and consultation of one's history, whether communal or personal, was frowned upon. *Istanbul* works against this dominant perspective in the attention it gives to the remnants of the past, describing how the graves and cemeteries that had once formed an integrated part of the city and its communities were removed "from the gardens and squares of [the inhabitants'] everyday lives to terrifying, high-walled lots, bereft of cypress or view" (p. 227). Both the memoir and historical accounts such as Armstrong's and Lewis's suggest that a clear distinction between the past and the present was made, and that influence and integration were no longer possible.

A definite break with the Ottoman past was arguably entirely necessary and the only solution that could save Anatolia from the slow and gradual decline it had slipped into since the end of Sultan Sulyman the Magnificent's reign (1520-1566). As Armstrong suggests (1937: 9), "[w]ithin three hundred years of the greatness of Sulyman the Magnificent the Ottoman Empire lay bankrupt, decrepit and rotting"; the once honourable and powerful Ottoman Empire was no more, and the vastly reduced territory that managed to survive under the corruption and greed of the last sultans was indeed a poor imitation of the once glorious empire. Feroz Ahmad (1993: 23) states that the collapse of the empire "was more closely related to anachronistic political and socio-economic structures which burdened the Ottomans in their dealings with aggressive rivals in Europe who were constantly forging ahead," rather than corrupt and talentless leaders, and that drastic change, however difficult, was essential. He continues to argue that, had the Ottoman heritage "been permitted any role, however formal, [in the formation of the new republic, it] would have threatened the entire enterprise of creating a new Turkey" due to the consequences of what he calls its "charisma", which leads him to conclude that: "perhaps this complete rejection of the Ottoman legacy was necessary" (Ahmad, 1993: 15).

Perhaps it may be argued that the decision to wholly reject the Ottoman legacy and its influence was, ultimately, necessary and successful. Yet, as the memoir suggests, the “charisma” of the Ottoman heritage, the lost object that Turkification did not allow the people to grieve over, did have a profound impact on the first generation of the new republic (including Orhan’s parents), the first generation to have been intentionally cut off from their Ottoman past. In this regard, Orhan describes the adults of his childhood memories as “too clumsy, too heavy, and too realistic” and suspects that they might once have “known something of a hidden second world, but [that] they seemed to have lost their capacity for amazement and forgotten how to dream” (p. 23). His family (who are representative of the secular bourgeoisie, emulating Kemal’s discourse of Turkification) are described as “positivist men who loved mathematics and crossword puzzles” and lived in a “gloomy, cluttered house that rejected...any suggestion of spirituality, love, art, literature or even mythology” (p. 21). At times, the Pamuks’ neighbours and distant acquaintances became so disconnected with the city of Istanbul and its muted legacy that they would

sell everything and move to a nondescript London flat, from which they’d stare either at their neighbours’ walls across the way or the inscrutable English television, which they never quite understood, but for reasons they could never quite explain they still felt this to be an improvement over the uncertain comforts of an apartment in Istanbul with a Bosphorus view (p. 173).

Ironically, in Pamuk’s memoir, even the republican elite, who benefit most from the new status quo, feel alienated and unsure of their position in this city divorced from its past.

While the nationalist movement was politically successful in constructing a stable and sovereign nation state, many commentators agree that Kemal’s drive to culturally Westernise Turkey was fundamentally destructive, and arguably a failure. By defining modernisation as inherently “Western”, and by assuming that the only way to reach it is through direct, unadapted imitation of European socio-cultural constructs, Kemal ultimately set an ideal that was, by definition, unattainable for a nation and a culture that was deemed ‘non-Western’. According to Akcan (2006: 42),

[a]s long as the historical process of modernization is defined as a ‘Western’ ideal—namely, as a process whose torch is carried by the ‘West’—this inscribed ideal becomes an unattainable lost ideal for the subject who is categorized as the ‘non-Western’ in the first place.

The ‘non-Western’ subject is therefore excluded from, and denied the right to, actively shape his or her own history, but instead sees no choice but to adhere to and reinforce its imposed position as the marginalised and passive ‘East’, the “West’s inferior follower” (Akcan, 2006: 42).

It is due to this non-reciprocal and unrequited relationship with Europe and “the West” that “Istanbul’s 20th-century history has a postcolonial quality that brings it, conceptually, into a relationship with other ‘non-European’ cities” (Mills, 2014: 694) like Delhi and Johannesburg, despite being a former imperial power. One can certainly detect overtones of Ngũgĩ wa Thiongo'o's “colonised mind” and something akin to the colonial cringe inferiority complex in many of Orhan's comparisons of Istanbul to Europe and America:

Happy people in Europe and America could lead lives as beautiful and as meaningful as the ones I'd just seen in a Hollywood film; as for the rest of the world, myself included, we were condemned to live out our time in places that were shabby, broken-down, featureless, badly painted, dilapidated and cheap; we were doomed to unimportant, second-class, neglected existences, never to do anything that anyone in the outside world might think worthy of notice. (p. 279)

The fact that he believes that the lives of “[h]appy people in Europe and America” are like those portrayals seen in Hollywood films reveals the extent of the indoctrination of the West’s self-proclaimed superiority and cultural chauvinism. Yet, ironically, he is not uncritical of the Istanbulus' imitation of this (artificially constructed) Western ideal, claiming that it can only be achieved by the rich, and then only at the cost of “unbearable soullessness and artificiality” (p. 279).

The Istanbul that emerges from Pamuk’s memoir is one that never “adequately” modernised to make up for the immense loss that came from the culturally reductive and stunting rejection of the city’s Ottoman legacy. What came about instead was “the little, imitative Republic of Turkey” (p. 214), unsatisfied with and uncertain of its own identity. In this rendition of the city in transformation, “Western” modernity is an unattainable ideal. Since the Ottoman legacy has been rendered taboo, Istanbul finds itself in a self-imposed cultural limbo, incapable of fully integrating with the rest of Europe and unwilling to regenerate culturally from locally constructed origins. Nothing came “to fill the void”: “the

past was never completely disposed of”; the present could not “grow into a self-sufficient identity” (Tekdemir, 2008: 207).

Pamuk has often promoted the heterogeneous, “intermediate” position of Istanbul in interviews and some of his novels, referring to Turkey as having “two souls”, and insisting that it is not “an Eastern nation losing its soul to mistaken West-focused aspiration and identification” (Bayrakceken & Randall, 2005: 202). He also claims that “Istanbul’s greatest virtue is its people’s ability to see the city through both Western and Eastern eyes” (p. 234). Despite this optimistic outlook, the Istanbul of Orhan’s childhood is stagnant and ‘caught’ in an in-between state: the mixture, difference and plurality that have always shaped the city ought to have given rise to a creative and stimulating socio-cultural environment, yet this stimulating creativity is largely absent in the newly-formed nation of Pamuk’s memoir. Uncertain of the future and constantly reprimanded whenever they engage with the past, they are unable to work towards the creation of their *own* Istanbul, something that Dalrymple’s characters, despite surviving a much more viscerally abhorrent socio-cultural dislocation, appear to have considerably less trouble with in their re-shaping of the city-space after Partition.

Orhan describes the atrophying state of the city as being in “that twilit place between East and West” as a result of “an irreversible journey” of a city moving Westwards (p. 154): it is “not changing as fast as it talks”, and yet it can no longer “honour the traditions implied by its mosques, its minarets, calls to prayer, its history” (p. 286). Much like Darvinoğlu who, in Pamuk’s *The White Castle* (1985), has to shuffle between two desks in two separate rooms as he attempts to translate from Ottoman-Arabic script into the new Turkish-Latin alphabet, operating in “the ‘gap’ between “texts”, the Istanbul that Orhan inhabits is caught in the gap between two meta-narratives in the wake of “the elision and erasure of the Kemalist cultural revolution” (Göknar, 2006: 36). *Istanbul* criticises the city’s “too hasty, often insufficiently critical move toward westernization” (Bayrakceken & Randall, 2005: 202), particularly the homogenised “Occidentalist” version of the West and Europe it attempts to emulate yet fails to understand. The resulting urban space is moribund and inert, where, according to Orhan, everything “is half-formed, shoddy and soiled” (p. 208).

In the in-between space of the Istanbul of Pamuk's memoir no one feels completely at home. As a child, Orhan copes with the unshakable lack of coherence and completion he feels in relation to the city by constructing the "other Orhan", a kind of imaginary parallel self who lives contentedly and fulfilled somewhere in the city and does not, unlike the withdrawn narrator, feel "ashamed, afraid, terrorised, and terrified of being marked as alien" (p. 278) when complying with society's accepted mores. It is only when he is older that he realises that "Istanbul is a place where, for the past hundred and fifty years, no one has been able to feel completely at home" (p. 104), and that "Istanbul's own residents felt like outsiders half the time" (p. 234). This is to be expected, since "[a]bout 60% of Istanbul's citizens were born elsewhere" (Secor, 2004: 353) and are often entirely excluded by the nationalists' highly problematic promotion of a monolithic 'Turkish' identity. Yet the fact that Orhan, a member of the republican secular bourgeoisie, and others like him find the city alienating is perhaps the most notable indictment of the state's failure to construct 'Turkey for the Turks' (or Istanbul for the Istanbullus).

Perhaps the absurd results of, and ambivalent reaction to, the new socio-cultural environment created by the formation of the republic and its accompanying reforms can best be illustrated through Kemal's banning of the fez (the wearing of which became a punishable offense) and the secular bourgeoisie's adaptation of *Kurban Bayramı* (the Feast of Sacrifice). The reform regarding headgear in particular stands out due to the unexpected resistance it roused. A bemused Lewis (1965: 94) remarks that:

[i]t is one of the ironies of history that although the Muslims of Turkey scarcely lifted a finger to preserve the Caliphate, an institution venerated by Muslims for 1,300 years, many of them fought like tigers to keep the head-dress whose introduction had outraged their ancestors' susceptibilities a century before.

Despite this adamant opposition, the reforms continued to be enforced with merciless efficiency until each citizen was in possession of a hat. This was not an easy task for the villagers, some of whom had to resort to wearing "women's summer hats...[with] feathers, ribbons and all,...anything with a peak to save them from the prison, the bastinado, and the hangman's noose" (Armstrong, 1937: 248). Kemal's reform was passed and complied with: along with a begrudging abandonment of traditional clothing, the male citizens all wore

brimmed hats – although one doubts that this would necessarily have had the outcome of instilling the dignified and civilised demeanour he had hoped for.

Istanbul describes the Pamuk family engaging in a similar act of complying with the technicalities of a rule or ritual, at the expense of its intended outcome, in their unique observation of the Feast of the Sacrifice. Each year they would buy a lamb and have it ritually slaughtered, according to traditional custom, but then they would have “a great family feast at which [they] drank the beer [their] religion forbade” and would feast on “meat from the butcher, because the fresh meat of [their] sacrifice had too powerful an odour” (p. 168). Instead of providing the absolution the ritual is supposed to inspire, it only led to feelings of guilt. As this incident suggests, the new socio-cultural environment – shaped by Kemal’s reforms and influenced by his vehement rejection of the ancient and the spiritual – inspired confusion and contradiction, creating great uncertainty for those who attempted to navigate it. As I will go on to explore, *City of Djinns*, on the other hand, describes a number of much more fruitfully adapted rituals, such as Mrs Puri’s personal rewriting of Diwali to suit her own aspirations, setting up such transformations as useful and beneficial, instead of traumatic and debilitating as they are described in *Istanbul*.

Orhan’s Istanbul of the 1970s is a city that struggles to reconcile with its past. He remembers “the diminished lives” of those who still yearn for the past, the subdued remnants of the last Ottoman generation who, in their inability to adapt to the new status quo, have “troubled relations with the outside world” and who eventually become violent, difficult and eccentric, “or (if they weren’t locked up in a Swiss asylum) commit suicide” (p. 175). He also gives attention to those at the other end of the spectrum who had “their eyes so firmly pinned on the West [and, by extension, on progress and the future] that they couldn’t even see their own city” (p. 319). Both options are presented as difficult, even untenable: Orhan himself also struggles to reconcile his own need to engage with the past, while still adapting along with the rapidly changing times, saying that as an adolescent “part of [him] longed, like a radical Westerniser, for the city to become entirely Western...while another part of [him] yearned to belong to the Istanbul [he] had grown to love by instinct, by habit and by memory” (p. 292), the Istanbul of the past that was rapidly being erased by Kemal’s regime. He appears to find the notion that both of these needs could exist and be

satisfied simultaneously childish and inherently contradictory, comparing it to a child who “has no qualms about dreaming in the same moment of becoming a vagabond and a great scientist” and noting that “as time wore on, this ability faded” (p. 292). Through repeated attempts to reconcile the city’s past and its Ottoman legacy with the new “imitative” republican society, Orhan eventually concludes that “[h]istory becomes a word with no meaning” (p. 95) and that the (decidedly ‘Western’) future is out of reach. That this fraught relationship to the past still continues in contemporary Istanbul is attested to by the *Turkey at the Threshold* issue of *Architectural Design*, which focuses largely on issues of integration. In her editorial, Helen Castle (2010: 9) describes the city as “highly heterogeneous” and “outrightly contradictory”, also noting that “[t]he tug of modernisation and the West seems to be constantly vying with cultural hegemony and tradition”.

After suffering the reductive and stunting effect of Turkification (and Kemal’s reforms) on their own cultural legacy, many Istanbullus saw few other options than to directly imitate what they understood to be ‘Western’ culture. Such behaviour was, of course, promoted by Kemal, in numerous public speeches, as he did his utmost to drive his people “along the road to Western civilization, which...he came close to deifying” (Lewis, 1965: 112). Drawing from Said, theorists such as Akcan and Edhem Eldem write about the influence of the ideologies of Eurocentrism during the early years of the republic and how “the process of modernization caused the idea of the ‘Western’...to be perceived as the ‘ideal’ norm for humanity” (Akcan, 2006: 41), until the republic had internalised these ideas to such an extent that it “had brought Ottoman Orientalism to its extreme and unthinkable limit”, that of dreaming to “become modern, secular, homogeneous, united and — white” (Eldem, 2010: 28). A similar reading of the valorisation of the West is evident in Pamuk’s account. Orhan remembers how, in Istanbul, in the decades following the forming of the republic, “[s]ocial hierarchy was established more in relation to one’s proximity to a Western lifestyle than one’s wealth” (p. 166), which allowed his family (and the rest of the Westernised bourgeoisie) to treat acquaintances that were more affluent but less Westernised with disdain. It was only once the republic had “matured” somewhat that the influx of “rich provincials [who] began flocking to Istanbul to present themselves to ‘society’” caused the Pamuks to experience “the indignity of being outclassed by people who had no taste for secularism or understanding of Western culture” (p. 166). Like so many other societies in

similar circumstances throughout history, the Turks of Istanbul considered themselves defeated; they internalised propaganda that claimed their culture and civilization were weak, and sided with the (in this case, cultural) conqueror against their own people. In doing so, they were effectively passing the buck of Orientalism further east, and further down the social hierarchy: *they* were not barbaric, backwards and superstitious – it was the Kurds, the peasants, the Arabs and the nomads.

Pamuk's rendition of Istanbul records the way in which the mimicry of the West infiltrates even the private sphere where alterations are made to accommodate new cultural norms in order to show one's allegiance to them: Orhan remembers the evolution of the sitting room in houses and apartments occupied by the Westernising bourgeoisie, explaining that they "were not meant to be places where you could hope to sit comfortably; they were little museums designed to demonstrate to a hypothetical visitor that the householders were Westernised" (p. 30). He describes these rooms as being filled with "glass cupboards and dead pianos" (p. 30), sombre, mute objects that echo his earlier complaint that homes such as these rejected "any suggestion of spirituality, love, art, literature or even mythology" (p. 21) in their desperate attempt to adhere to rigid and foreign notions of 'rationality' and 'enlightenment'. The reference to these rooms as "museums" also reveals how static and affected these spaces that traditionally served to encourage lively familial interaction had become, as well as highlighting the extent of the stifling effect of Western cultural chauvinism in the lives of the Istanbullus: even while at home they had to construct an exhibition and put on a show. As Asu Aksoy (2012: 102) notes, the imitation of the West could take spectacular architectural form in the public realm too, as when developers transformed an entire street in Beyoğlu into a pseudo-French themed street in an attempt to replicate a section of Montmartre in Paris, in much the same way as Montecasino in Johannesburg invokes a region in Italy.

In Pamuk's text, some of the loudest voices urging the public to Westernise, and rebuking them when they fail, came from the newspaper columnists who write about the city and its people during this period of rapid transformation. The memoir takes an openly critical view of these "ever censorious columnists" who would, for example, ride atop horse-drawn carriages like "[t]he celebrated French author Victor Hugo" (p. 130) in order to get a bird's-

eye view of the city's inhabitants as they criticised them for not being as educated, genteel, and Westernised as they considered themselves to be. From this lofty perch, they would chide the laity and their surroundings, for example, claiming that "not from poverty but from laziness and ignorance — everyone in the city is very badly dressed" (p. 130) and criticising the "watered-down pseudo-Frankish 'modern' buildings" (p. 132) that have become quite prevalent. Quite tellingly, however, it is not the inauthenticity of these buildings that provokes their scorn, but the awareness that such architecture is "so heartily hated by all the most vigorous and large-hearted Frankish artists" (p. 132), again taking socio-cultural cues from the West.

It is only when he is older, and struggling to create a style unique to himself as an artist, that Orhan accepts the paradox (or merely attempts to soothe his own insecurities) "that we only acquire our own identity by imitating others" (p. 244). True to this maxim, Pamuk relies heavily on Western constructs and concepts: he embodies Baudelaire's (and later Benjamin's) flâneur in his lonesome night-time strolls through the city, and the city that emerges in this memoir is one that closely resembles the portraits of Istanbul constructed by Western artists and travellers such as Gérard du Nerval and Théophile Gautier. Orhan often describes Istanbul as "a city in black and white" (p. 39). At first, the image appears to suggest a city that is sullen and subdued in comparison to the vivid and flamboyant Ottoman era. However, a later comment reveals a different interpretation: according to Orhan, if the Istanbullus "see [their] city in black and white, it's partly because [they] know it from the engravings left to [them] by Western artists" since "the glorious colours of its past were never painted by local hands" (p. 39). The allusion to western engravings points to the influence of Western travel writers on the ways in which 'Istanbul' has been constructed and perceived, even by Istanbullus themselves. As Orhan explains, this is "an image of Istanbul that owes much to the exoticism first contrived by Nerval" (p. 199) because, according to him, "Istanbullus themselves wrote very little about their city" (p. 215) to counter or interact with the accounts penned by foreigners. While Dalrymple's narrator in *City of Djinns* and *Portrait*'s narrator, Vlad, also construct their respective cities from a collage of references, their sources tend to be local and they rely on the perspective of ordinary characters much more than Orhan, who tends to favour renowned artists and writers. Dalrymple, for example, frequently describes the laborious task of digging through

archives, tracking down individuals and recording their stories, going to great lengths to present the narrative in *City of Djinns*'s as an objective historical recounting augmented by a reporting of first-person accounts.

Pamuk's Istanbul apparently struggles to find a voice of its own and seems, for the time being at least, content with this arrangement. Even Orhan (and, to some extent, Pamuk) is not prepared to "spend years in the labyrinthine Ottoman archives" (p. 217) in order to uncover and engage with the history of the city, as it was written by his own people; instead, he "sometimes read Westerners' accounts not at arm's length, as someone else's exotic dreams, but drawn close by, as if they were [his] own memories" (p. 217). In fact, Pamuk's *Istanbul* is a decidedly intertextual text, drawing extensively from a long list of local and foreign writers and artists who have been instrumental in shaping the author's consciousness of his city. Of these, it is the foreign (mostly French) writers and artists who appear to contribute the most to Orhan's and other Istanbullus' understanding of Istanbul. In keeping with this emphasis on the value of Western inscription, whole chapters of Pamuk's text are dedicated to Nerval, Gautier, Gustave Flaubert, and Antoine Melling, the artist who "saw the city like an Istanbullu, but painted it like a clear-eyed Westerner" (p. 67). Pamuk also includes references to a number of the city's foremost writers – such as "the memoirist Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar, the poet Yahya Kemal, the novelist Ahmet Hamdi Tapınar, and the journalist-historian Reşat Ekrem Koçu" (p. 103). Yet the four melancholy Turkish writers whose images have shaped his and other Istanbullus' understanding of the city are squeezed into a single chapter. Furthermore, the chapter describes how they, in turn, were influenced by the French literary tradition and followed in the footsteps of Western travellers. In its willingness to accept the accounts of Westerners and even to adapt them, the city Orhan weaves together from these sources often becomes passively receptive to meta-narratives of Western cultural chauvinism, instead of resisting limiting discourses such as Ottoman Orientalism, instead of engaging in a dialogue with the West. Consequently, one could argue that the Istanbul Orhan interacts with is very much an Orientalist textual construct of the city, rather than the 'real' Istanbul: instead of engaging directly with the city as its subject, at times this very intertextual presentation relies on "a dense palimpsest of writings which purport to engage directly with their subject but which [are] in fact [through]

the discourse of Orientalism] responding to, and building upon, writings that had gone before" (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 2001: 62).

At times Orhan becomes utterly dependant on, not only the influence of Western writers and artists who have known Istanbul, but particularly the Western gaze. He takes comfort in this because, without the influence of the Western gaze he has adopted, he would be unable to maintain the distance necessary to experience the beauty of the squalor and the ruin of mid-twentieth century Istanbul (Gurses, 2015: 5). Such is his dependence on the Western gaze that "whenever [he senses] the absence of Western eyes, [he becomes his] own Westerner" (p. 260) which enables him to plunge "into the thick of life, counting, weighing, categorising, judging" (p. 261) from a lofty, rational perspective. The cultural dissociation he experiences is far-reaching enough to allow him the patronising luxury "of enjoying [Istanbul's] own past as 'exotic', of relishing the picturesque" (p. 217). This is not a unique experience. According to Orhan, the concern with the West and its gaze is a communal experience that is shared by the Istanbullus:

There is, in each of our heads, a half legible, half secret text that makes sense of what we've done in life. And for each of us in Istanbul, a large section of this text is given over to what Western observers have said about us. (p. 260)

Ugur Tanyeli (2010: 100) describes the Westernising reforms and cultural integration that Turkey experienced during Kemal's presidency as a *traumatic* event, one that still affects the city of Istanbul and its inhabitants today. When Turkey was "confronted by the partly imaginary (and predominantly real) cultural hegemony of the West" (Tanyeli, 2010: 100) after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the unequal relationship that resulted caused a great sense of inferiority, desperation and self-loathing, which is very much in evidence in the Istanbul of Orhan's childhood. In embracing Western modernity, and complying with its discourses, as the only way to save Turkey and its people from the 150 year decline it had experienced since the reign of Sulyman the Magnificent, Kemal "had implicitly agreed to one of the most basic tenets of Orientalism: that the East was essentially different from the West, that it was essentially stagnant and lacked the capacity to change without an exogenous stimulus" (Eldem, 2010: 27). By rejecting the centuries-old Ottoman legacy in favour of a Westernised cultural identity, Kemal, at least to some extent, acknowledged and internalised the West's construction of the Orient as inferior. In adopting

the normative values and practices of Western modernity, Turkey also adopted Western hegemonic ideas regarding the ‘Orient’ which started to inform the way in which its citizens came to see and understand themselves. Worse still, through this process, Turkey and its people were temporarily rendered silent, allowing the cultural hegemony of the West to speak for them through the discourse of Orientalism with little resistance.

Drawing from Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), Akcan considers what happens when the discourse of Orientalism travels outside of the West, when it is uncritically taken up by, for example, the Istanbullus in Orhan’s childhood as a means of knowing themselves and of constructing their own identities. She suggests that, when this happens, “the paranoia of the subject of Orientalism constructs the melancholy of the object of Orientalism” (Akcan, 2006: 42), in this case, the *hüzün*, or communal melancholy that Orhan considers such a defining characteristic of Istanbul and its inhabitants. This paralysing and silencing melancholy and inferiority that besets the Istanbullus who have internalised the West’s construction of them as weak is revealed in Orhan’s, and various other characters’, apparent inability to criticize or actively oppose anything written by a Westerner about them and their city. We are told, for example, that “[w]hen *Marche Turque* was first published [by André Gide in 1914], Yahya Kemal, then the foremost Turkish poet, was deeply offended, but instead of publishing a response in the popular press as a writer might do today, he and other Turkish intellectuals hid their injury like a guilty secret and grieved in private” (p. 212). Orhan also claims that when “Western observers rubbish the city, [he finds himself] in agreement, taking...pleasure in their cold-blooded candour” (p. 213).

The feeble excuse Orhan offers for his and others’ acceptance of the European travel writers’ Orientalist construction of the city is that “in the end no harm [is] done to Istanbul” (p. 218) because Turkey was never a Western colony, which allows Western travellers to make use of “[his] past and [his] history in their construction of the exotic” (p. 261) and to “embroider Istanbul with illusions, fantasies about the East” (p. 218), apparently without any resistance. As a result, Orientalist discourse, through Western writers, was effectively able to

instruct (for its own benefit) [Turkey as the] Orient in the ways of the modern West...to formulate the Orient, to give it shape, identity, definition [and]...to

make out of every observable detail a generalization and out of every generalization an immutable law about the Oriental nature, temperament, mentality, custom or type (Said, 1978: 80).

Therefore, European knowledge, “by relentlessly constructing its subject within the discourse of Orientalism, was able to maintain hegemonic power over it” (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 2001: 53), often unopposed by local intellectuals. Said writes about resisting the cultural hegemony of Orientalism by “reversing” the western gaze, by “writing back” to the Orientalists and, in doing so, “to know the Orient outside the discourse of Orientalism” (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 2001: 68). Instead of “writing back” to the West and resisting the existing power imbalance, the nationalist agenda was to deflect the European disdain and contempt the ‘real Turks’ experienced onto other ‘culturally inferior’ groups, in this case, “the savage Bedouin, the uncouth Turkish peasant or the unruly Kurd” (Eldem, 2010: 28); consequently, “most members of the elite made peace with an ideology that had been originally designed against them”. As Eldem (2010: 28) continues, “the Kemalist establishment agreed with every point of Western Orientalism, as long as it concerned the Arabs, the Kurds, the Ottomans; in short, anybody but the Turks”. In doing so, the Kemalists had created an Orientalised Other further ‘East’, while they themselves were the subject of Orientalism imposed from the West. This was the result of their desperate emulation of Western modernity and its cultural ideologies, revealing that the distinction between the Orient and the Occident is “less a fact of nature than it is a fact of human production (Said, 1985: 2). Unfortunately, despite Pamuk’s mentioning Said and calling *Orientalism* “brilliant” (p. 263), the textual reality of Orhan’s Istanbul is still one that is largely constructed by European writers such as Nerval and Gautier, as chapter titles such as ‘Nerval in Istanbul: Beyoğlu Walks’ and ‘Gautier’s Melancholic Strolls through the City’s poor Neighbourhoods’ attest. Pamuk’s text therefore colludes in the Orientalising of Istanbul by uncritically taking up the West’s construction of it which, in turn, perpetuates hegemonic power of European knowledge and, to some extent, squanders an opportunity to construct and to know the ‘Orient’ outside the discourse of Orientalism.

Preservation – *Hüzün*

Throughout *Istanbul*, Orhan frequently depicts Istanbullus engaged in acts of collecting and hoarding personally sentimental trinkets and objects in the domestic sphere as the city

around them rapidly and irrevocably transforms. He remembers how people started “to furnish their houses like museums” (p. 27) as a frantic response to the great uncertainty regarding the future and development of “Turkish” culture caused by Kemal’s reforms. Even Reşat Ekrem Koçu, the encyclopaedist and one of the four melancholic writers Pamuk draws from extensively in *Istanbul*, is described as a “collector of...strange facts” (p. 147). Like Koçu, many of the Ottoman elite, and others who could not assimilate into the radically different socio-cultural environment of the new Turkish Republic, “withdrew from the world to live amongst objects” (p. 147), as if in response to having experienced a personal trauma. Wendy Shaw (2014: 57) notes that “with its rapid and accelerating pace of change, the modern era has been uniquely concerned with preserving rather than recycling elements of the past”, a problematic trend, since preservation does not allow for interaction with, or adaptation to, the new status quo. The past is safe, comprehensible; its physical manifestation is kept enshrined and intact to console the collector who struggles to come to terms with the status quo, turning his back on it and making no attempt to forge a dialogue, or connection between past and present through the re-appropriation, recycling or adapting of material culture. Instead, the preserved material objects act only as votive of a past now lost.

The prevalence of this sort of behaviour in the memoir’s depiction of republican-era Istanbul reveals the hasty revolution to have been a traumatic event, one whose effects are still ongoing. This is attested to by the predominance of the restoration of existing Ottoman architecture (as opposed to the adaptation of Ottoman architecture, or the restoration of buildings from the republican era) in response to Istanbul being named the 2010 Cultural Capital of Europe (Ertas, 2010: 73). It is interesting to note that, out of all three transformations dealt with in this dissertation, Pamuk’s rendering of the founding of the Turkish Republic is by far the most preoccupied with the trauma of change.

While collected and preserved objects and architecture may function as “vehicles of recalling and reassembling the past” (Pickering & Keightley, 2007: 275), the framed photos and displayed trinkets in the Pamuks’ and others’ houses are temporally suspended, “isolated fragments from the past, quotations cited out of context” (Pickering & Keightley, 2007:276). Orhan often studies the photographs of his family members, noting the

“powerful influence these framed scenes exerted over [the Pamuks] as [they] went about [their] daily lives” (p. 13). He concludes that his grandmother must have “framed and frozen these memories so that [they] could weave them into the present” (p. 13). Although, by describing them as “frozen” memories, we are made aware (even if Orhan is not) of the limitations of these and other forms of preserved material cultural artefacts as a means of engaging with and informing the turbulent present of republican-era Istanbul.

This is because, while such objects as the Pamuks’ framed photographs and collections housed in locked glass cabinets are capable of inducing a fleeting and rapturous reliving of past experiences, these moments captured outside of time’s perceived linear trajectory are unable to reach “beyond their own spatial and temporal configurations” and “they cannot have reference to the long passages and sequences that exist beyond them” (Pickering & Keightley, 2007: 276). Instead such an illusory experience dangerously “obscures the ways that memory itself is mutable, changing as our lives change, moving and shifting along with the cultures in which [it is] indissolubly bound up” (Pickering & Keightley, 2007: 276), allowing for further rejection of the present in favour of stolen glimpses of the past. Paradoxically, instead of capturing perhaps a happier, steadier past, such collections cannot but serve as reminders of what has been lost, what can no longer be experienced, and so signify loss and transience, in the manner of *memento mori* (object reminders of the inevitability of death). This is perhaps why Orhan muses, “[t]o my childish mind, these rooms were furnished not for the living but for the dead” (p. 10).

Pamuk’s own impulse to collect is revealed in both the manner in which he writes, as well as his subject matter: *Istanbul* is as much a collection of texts on the city, ranging from those written by Joseph Brodsky to those written by Hisar, as it is a memoir of the author’s childhood in Nişantaşı. In addition to the collection of photographs in *Istanbul*, Pamuk’s impulse to accumulate and attempt to exclude no item can be seen in the prevalence of lists in *Istanbul*, at times stretching over five pages and consisting of a single compulsive sentence. Much as popular historian Resat Ekrem Koçu collected strange facts (compiled for *The Istanbul Encyclopaedia*, to which the memoir dedicates a whole chapter), Pamuk collects, for example, moments and experiences through which the city reveals its own melancholy state, or *hüzün*, and inspires melancholy in its inhabitants (p. 84-89). He also

turns collector and exhibitor in the architecturally and literally intertwined project, *The Museum of Innocence* (2008), both a novel and a corresponding museum in Beyoğlu which is inspired by the novel.

The forming of the republic and the cultural revolution that followed it can be considered a traumatic event for both the city of Istanbul and its people due to the uncompromising nature of Kemal's reforms, the naïve alacrity with which they were implemented and the repressive nature of the republican Turkification meta-narrative that wholly rejected the Ottoman cultural legacy that had shaped Istanbul's cultural infrastructure for centuries. In this regard, Kemal sought to conceptualise the urban environment (in both Istanbul and Ankara) as a political object, "a tool for the articulation of political concepts" (Ertas, 2010:73). The city of Ankara benefited from the large-scale urban development occasioned by its re-positioning as the nation's capital, having been comparatively underdeveloped before. Istanbul, by contrast, was problematic in that its cultural and material infrastructure were, in many ways, manifestations of the narratives of legacy and plurality that Kemal's Turkification sought to suppress: these had to be neutralised before its new, artificially constructed legacy could be grafted on to it. Described by Armstrong (1937: 283) as "an anachronism, a throw-back to the Tartars of the Steppes" and "a fierce elemental force of a man", Kemal had no scruples over instigating the city's historical disenfranchisement; he also appeared to lack all manner of sentimentality and nostalgia. Through his reforms and the re-appropriation of the discourse of modernity-through-Westernisation, he convinced Istanbul and its people to stand mutely by as the Ottoman city disintegrated, apparently a fair trade for modernity.

As many scholars have suggested, the treatment of material heritage reveals much about the relationship between the past and its inheritors. Wendy Shaw (2014: 56) proposes that the idea that we are not the owners, but rather the stewards, of our heritage whose "value is subject to the flux of the values of its inheritors". She also discusses the paradox of heritage which must be maintained, or kept the same, but also, in order for it to have current value, must enter into a relationship with the present and so, by definition, change. This paradox explains why merely preserving, restoring, collecting and displaying are insufficient approaches when interacting with one's heritage (whether tangible or

immaterial): “the formulation of heritage involves more than preservationism: it is a relationship between the past and its inheritors” (Shaw, 2014: 61). In Pamuk’s text, the treatment of material heritage is revealed as particularly fraught. Rather than being the active stewards Shaw calls upon, the Istanbullus of Orhan’s childhood memories struggle to live up to this particular responsibility due to the fact that their cultural values experienced a great deal of flux and insecurity as a result of the stress of the republican cultural revolution. This makes their relationship with the past strained and uncertain. It is the gravestones (or *turbe*) in Istanbul that so poignantly reveal this insecurity: once freely integrated into the sphere of daily life and cared for, their position and significance become threatened after Kemal berates the veneration paid to them and heaps scorn and contempt upon those who “seek help from the dead” (Lewis, 1965: 93). When Orhan remarks that “these gravestones one saw all over the city were, like the slowly vanishing memories of the dead themselves, slowly sinking into the earth as they aged, soon to vanish without a trace”, he invokes a sense of irretrievable loss (p. 264).

As a number of cultural and architectural theorists have argued, the recognition of, and interaction with, cultural heritage is not an obstacle in the quest for modernity, despite Turkification’s limiting and repressive view on the matter. Shaw (2004), Rem Koolhaas (2004), and Huseyin Zekai Pasha (quoted in Shaw, 2004) all write about the correlation and relationship between preservation and modernity. According to Zekai (quoted in Shaw, 2004:63), it is not the mere *existence* of rich and varied material heritage that signifies civilization and modernity, but a *concern* for heritage and the preservation thereof. Shaw (2004: 56) goes on to promote the notion of heritage as a modern concept, explaining that “surviving objects [have] acquired value, not for what they represented of the *past*, but for what they represent in the *present*”, and that this distinction is therefore dependent on modern notions of the historic. Echoing Shaw’s promotion of preservation as a distinctly modern concern, Koolhaas (2004:2) discusses the manner in which preservation has changed in the last two centuries, suggesting that “preservation is not the enemy of modernity but actually one of its inventions...because clearly the whole idea of modernization raises either latently or overtly the issue of what to keep”. When considering these theories about the relationship between heritage and preservation, Kemal’s rejection of Istanbul’s Ottoman heritage, and the subsequent construction of ‘heritage’ and

'modernity' as binary opposites rather than mutually dependant and intertwined objectives, takes on a cruel irony.

Frequently, throughout Pamuk's memoir, one gets the impression that the Istanbullus experience great heartache at the collective abandonment of the city's material Ottoman heritage in accordance with Kemal's discourse of Westernised modernity which renders these objects and their preservation as taboo and reactionary. Having been reprimanded for everything from their dress to their use of language, the Istanbullus resolutely set their sight on achieving modernity, as the Ottoman city around them collapses and decays in their peripheral vision. When considering the relationship the Istanbullus have with the abundance of material heritage they encounter daily, Orhan realises that the Ottoman ruins "are nothing like the remains of great empires to be seen in Western cities, preserved like museums of history and proudly displayed"; instead, the people of Istanbul simply "carry on with their lives amongst the ruins" (p. 91), trying their best to ignore them. In contrast, Dalrymple's Delhiites actively destroy large parts of their material infrastructure that no longer conform to their new socio-spatial sensibility, and Vladislavić's characters frequently re-appropriate aspects of their material infrastructure to adapt to their changing sensibility. Pamuk's description, on the other hand, gives one a sense of great crowds of Istanbullus stepping gingerly over and around the decaying remains of their glorious history, determined not to betray any interest or any form of emotional response lest they reveal themselves as backward-looking, or impede the ceaseless drive towards modernity.

In addition to their determination to maintain "a stony equanimity" (p. 26), in accordance with Kemal's Turkification, the Istanbullus of Orhan's childhood face additional difficulties in their encounters with the city in the decades following the fall of the Empire. Unlike those Western cities that preserve and display their material history with pride, the Istanbullus' primary response to the Ottoman ruins is a pronounced feeling of heartache. In contrast to other ancient European cities such as Athens and Rome, Pamuk's memoir gives one the impression that twentieth-century Istanbul's comparison with its former self is not a positive one and that the remains of its former glories merely serve to inspire a profound sense of loss. Orhan cannot avoid repeatedly making the depressing comparison between modern and Ottoman Istanbul, noting that "[t]he city into which [he] was born was poorer,

shabbier, and more isolated than it had ever been in its two-thousand-year history” (p. 6) and that “once upon a time, people very much like [them] had led a life extravagantly different from [their] own — leaving [those] who followed them feeling poorer, weaker and more provincial” (p. 49).

In Pamuk’s memoir, the remains of the once-great Ottoman city bear witness to Istanbul’s ruin and inspire despair and discouragement in its inhabitants, leading Orhan to conclude that the “present city is so poor and confused that it can never again dream of rising to the same heights of wealth, power and culture” (p. 91). All around them there are littered hints and suggestions of the past that they yearn for, but which remains forever out of reach, mere traces of sumptuous Ottoman grandeur and a “mesmerising state of ruin” (p. 34). These stark remains enable the dispirited Istanbullus to “conjure old Istanbul out of its ruins” (p. 103), and act as a constant reminder of a glorious past and civilisation that are lost to the city. This “end-of-empire melancholy” (p. 6) seeps into Orhan, breeding a sense of abject death-in-life and leading him to conclude that “like the city, I belong to the living dead, I am corpse that still breathes, a wretch condemned to walk the streets and pavements that can only remind me of my filth and my defeat” (p. 286). Along with an inability to escape the comparison with the past’s opulence which leaves them feeling poor and defeated, the Istanbullus are faced with the political and physical destruction of an empire that ruled for over six centuries, which brings home an unsettling awareness of the transience of great civilizations and those who form a part of them. Orhan remembers the confused fear he experienced as a child upon sighting the incongruity of cracks and fissures somehow devastating the seemingly indestructible Byzantine walls that circled the old city, a sentiment echoed by Gautier, whose explorations of the poor neighbourhood around Istanbul’s periphery the memoir often refers to (p. 208). Throughout, Pamuk’s memoir makes reference to many writers and travellers who have visited the city’s ruins, inscribing a city that is keenly aware of its past. In *City of Djinns*, on the other hand, Dalrymple describes even those who live in the immediate surroundings of famous ruins as sometimes being entirely unaware of their existence because the past appears to hold little value for them.

Gautier is not the only writer in Pamuk’s text to be confronted with the impermanence of even the seemingly indestructible when contemplating Istanbul: as he mourns for his

vanishing culture in *Bosphorus Civilisation*, Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar remarks that “[a]ll civilisations are as transitory as the people now in cemeteries. And just as we must die, so too must we accept that there is no return to a civilisation whose time has come and gone” (quoted in Pamuk, 2006: 102). Similarly, what draws Orhan to Melling’s paintings of Ottoman Istanbul is the “sad knowledge that what they depict no longer exists” (p. 55). As Istanbul was abandoned for Ankara as the new capital of Turkey, its inhabitants were faced with the painful realisation and acknowledgement of the transitory nature of civilizations and, consequently, were confronted with their own mortality. Orhan remembers the pain of discovering that the place where he lives was not “the world’s beacon”, and recalls how discovering “the fragility of [his] place in the world” made him feel “lonelier and weaker than ever before” (p. 272). He eventually learns to reconcile the keen awareness of the ephemerality of beauty with the spectral presence of past grandeur in the city that triggers this awareness, stating:

[w]ith time, life — like music, art and stories — would rise and fall, eventually to end, but even years later those lives are with us still in the city views that flow before our eyes, like memories plucked from dreams. (p. 285)

Pamuk’s text deals with many difficulties experienced by the Istanbullus during, and after, the transformation of the Ottoman Empire into the secular nation, including the trauma of the transformation, the repressive and exclusive nature of the new meta-narrative of Turkification, the heartache of constant reminders of past grandeur, and the unsettling reminder of the transience of civilizations. Yet the most significant consequence of these difficulties, which the text foregrounds as a central concern in Pamuk’s rendering of the city, is the stimulation of a collective melancholy, or *hüzün*, shared by all who inhabit the changing city. Pamuk’s inscription of Istanbul registers the city’s preoccupation with questions surrounding the response to a tainted heritage as being inextricably bound with a pensive concern with *hüzün*. Orhan describes this shared state of melancholy as “the emotion that a child might feel while looking through a steamy window” (p. 83). Istanbul’s *hüzün* can be attributed to both the visceral loss experienced due to the collapse of the Empire and the consequent abandonment of a centuries-old cultural identity, as well as the disappointment and shame experienced by the inhabitants of a former empire at being excluded from the ideal of Western modernity. Pamuk’s memoir ascribes a great deal of

significance to this experience of unrequitedness and loss, committing a whole chapter to its development as well as explaining it metaphorically, listing a staggering amount of *hüzün*-inducing experiences common to Istanbullus and unique to Istanbul.

Hüzün, the defining characteristic of Orhan's Istanbul, is the loneliness, emptiness, and state of being forgotten evoked by sights of ferries "moored to deserted stations in the middle of winter" (p. 84) and the "empty boathouses of the old Bosphorus villas" (p. 85), as well as seeing a lone fisherman heading out to sea when everyone else is still sleeping (p. 85). It is also the weariness one sees in "the patient pimps striding up and down the city's greatest square on summer evenings in search of one last drunken tourist" (p. 85) and the downtrodden vendors and beggars occupying the same spot, "uttering the same appeal" day after day (p. 85). It is the failure felt upon seeing the ruins of a once-great empire that decay unhindered all around the city (p. 85), the defeat of "broken seesaws in empty parks" (p. 85) and "of everything being broken, worn-out, past its prime" (p. 89). It is the disappointment felt by women queuing for busses that never arrive (p. 85), waiting up for husbands who never fail to come home late (p. 85) and the deep sense of loss felt by all who experience the city cemeteries as "gateways to a second world" (p. 87), one that used to be freely accessible, but that they can no longer seem to enter. *Hüzün* is experienced through the cheapening of what once was sacred such as the mosques that display "holy messages spelt out in lights between [their] minarets...that are missing letters where the bulbs have burned out" (p. 86), whose "lead plates and rain gutters are forever being stolen" (p. 87) and whose domes are slowly caving in (p. 87). It is the devaluing of what was once significant, such as the old cinemas, "once glittering affairs with gilded ceilings, now porn cinemas frequented by shamefaced men" (p. 86) and "marble ruins that were for centuries glorious street fountains but now stand dry, their taps stolen" (p. 88).

This "end-of-empire melancholy" that permeates Pamuk's rendition of the city manifests as a result of "a pained submission to the diminishing European gaze and to an ancient poverty that must be endured like incurable disease", but it is also a "resignation that nourishes Istanbul's inward-looking soul" (p. 38). Paradoxically, the burden of carrying this melancholy, as all Istanbullus seem to, eventually becomes a matter of honour and of pride, a possible foundation from which to build a new cultural identity, much as, from the horror

and destruction of Partition, Dalrymple's characters gain a remarkable sense of resilience that becomes characteristic of the city he inscribes. Significantly, the new, possible, cultural identity that comes about as a result of Istanbul's melancholy is (unlike Kemal's Turkification) decidedly of its time and place, and unique to republican-era Istanbul.

Before discussing Istanbul's *hüzün* as a new source from which to construct a new cultural identity, it is important to consider the nature of this communal melancholy, and the manner in which it came about as a reaction to, and resistance against, the discourse of Kemal's Turkification. According to Freud's *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917), unlike mourning, which is the appropriate response to the loss of a person, object or abstraction, melancholia is produced by the same influences, but is regarded as a "pathological disposition" (Freud, 1917: 243). While mourning occurs over a period and is then overcome once the lost object is acknowledged as irretrievable but replaceable, melancholia, a far more enduring state (like Pamuk's *hüzün*), occurs when, instead of over time withdrawing the libidinal attachment from the lost object to be displaced onto another, the free libido is "withdrawn into the ego" (Freud, 1917: 249) at the cost of tremendous self-impoverishment.

In addition to the length discrepancy, Freud lists a number of other features that distinguishes melancholia from mourning, including an "extraordinary diminution in [the subject's] self-regard" (Freud, 1917: 246), as well as "self-reproaches and self-revilings, and...a delusional expectation of punishment" (Freud, 1917: 244). These too are to be found in Orhan's perception of himself and his city when, for example, he expresses "a perverted happiness at belonging to such a sorrowful, dirty and impoverished place" (p. 328). He also expresses an expectation of personal punishment, stating that, "it was a long time coming, arriving by a circuitous route, but the cloud of gloom and loss that the fall of the Ottoman Empire had spread over Istanbul finally claimed my family, too" (p. 16). While Orhan frequently describes the melancholy experienced by all who interact with the city as something inherent to Istanbul and its material infrastructure, it becomes clear over time that *hüzün* is instead an emotional state projected onto the urban space, as the following statement by Orhan attests: "[b]ut here we have come full circle, for anything we say about

the city's essence, says more about our own lives and our own states of mind [since the] city has no centre other than ourselves" (p. 218).

The stimulation of *hüzün* – experienced “as something in between physical pain and grief” (p. 93) – by the urban environment, is a constant, even as the physical environment itself changes. When discussing a photograph by Ara Güler, that “perfectly captures the lonely back streets of [his] childhood”, Orhan makes note of the bitter-sweet melancholy it inspires, concluding that “[t]hough today concrete apartments have come to crowd out the old wooden houses, the feeling is the same” (p. 32). He also mentions the apparent shifting and adjusting of the urban space according to his mood:

I remember how troubled I was the first time I looked at this same view from the same angle, and notice how different the view looks now. It's not my memory that's false — the view looked troubled then because I myself was troubled. I poured my soul in the city's streets and there it still resides. (p. 320)

Hüzün, the melancholic yearning that Orhan experiences so frequently during his solitary walks around the city, and which foreign visitors to the city appear immune to, is evidently a by-product of the Istanbulus' failure to withdraw from the lost ideal, the grandeur and the influence of their fallen empire. Interestingly, this failure to withdraw from the lost ideal of pre-Partition Delhi is absent in Dalrymple's characters in general, except for a few exceptions whose pathological state immediately marginalises them in a city with no interest in a past-orientated disposition. The situation is more complex in Vladislavić's rendering of post-apartheid Johannesburg, largely because the regime that was lost can hardly be described as an ideal, and possibly also because its idealisation was rendered taboo to an even greater extent than even the Ottoman heritage was under Kemal's discourse.

Doubtlessly, the reaction to the lost ideal taking on a pathological state of melancholia, rather than the healthier and temporary experience of mourning is, as the memoir suggests, at least partially a result of the intolerant and uncompromising speed of Kemal's Turkifying revolution. Freud repeatedly highlights the unavoidable and lengthy duration of the process of withdrawing the libidinous attachment to the love-object bit-by-bit, noting the “great expense of time and cathectic energy” (Freud, 1917: 245) required for this progress which

“is long-drawn-out and gradual” (Freud, 1917: 255), and stating that “interference with it [is] useless or even harmful” (Freud, 1917: 243). He reminds the reader that:

[i]f the object does not possess this great significance for the ego—a significance reinforced by a thousand links—then, too, its loss will not be of a kind to cause either mourning or melancholia. (Freud, 1917: 256)

Instead of allowing the gradual retraction of the “thousand links” that secured the new republic’s attachment to the fallen love-object, the Turkification of Istanbul cruelly severed all these links simultaneously and forcefully introduced a new love-object ideal – the pursuit of Western modernity. Unfortunately, as previously discussed, this ideal proved to be unattainable for the non-Western Other, and Istanbul experienced a double loss: the death of the empire of which it was the capital, and the apparent rejection by the West, an erasure of the past and a failed attempt at constructing a viable future.

Twice jilted, the city of Pamuk’s text and the people it depicts assume a period of grieving. Injured, and unwilling to continue along the “path strewn with historical accidents,” the city languished, inert, its “soul” only to be found “in its ruins” (p. 231). It is this city, the city “in black and white”, that Orhan encounters as a child who “had no sense of living in a great world capital but rather in a poor provincial city” (p. 222). He describes the Istanbullus of his childhood collectively assuming a state of grieving, noting the “same pale, drab, shadowy clothes” worn by all and concluding that “[t]his is how you dress in a black-and-white city...this is how you grieve for a city that has been in decline for a hundred and fifty years” (p. 39). There is certainly a quiet honour, devotion and endurance to be found in the *hüzün* of Istanbul, the type of response also described by Slavoj Žižek, who praises the melancholic subject for “remain[ing] faithful to the lost object, [and] refusing to renounce his or her attachment to it”, as opposed to the more temporary state of mourning which he describes as “a kind of betrayal, the ‘second killing’ of the (lost) object” (Žižek, 2001: 141). Although a case can be made for *hüzün* (as I go on to do later in this chapter), one must remember that Pamuk’s memoir spans roughly two decades, up to the early 1970s, indeed almost fifty years since the empire was dissolved, giving perhaps more weight to Freud’s “pathological disposition” than to Žižek’s devotion.

As much as it resists categorisation according to Freud's theories, Pamuk's *hüzün* also transcends both its Koranic and Sufi origins. While it starts off as "a by-product of the city's metamorphosis" (Santesso, 2011:158), or a "product of the conflicts between opposing forces" (Gurses, 2010:2), it develops into a form of resistance against Kemal's Turkification meta-narrative and enables the formation of a new, authentic, and inclusive identity for republican-era Istanbul. Against Turkification and its Westernising ideals, which were ultimately forms of erasure and a rejection of the past, *hüzün* preserves through memory, yearning and melancholy. *Istanbul* extols the value and potential of *hüzün* through its ambivalent celebration of this phenomenon by elevating it from a mere disposition or humour to a "cultural concept" (p. 82) that is set up as the defining feature of Orhan's Istanbul. Most significantly, Orhan experiences *hüzün* as unifying to all who identify themselves as Istanbullus, irrespective of social standing, explaining that in the city's *hüzün* "[they] see [them]selves reflected" and that this *hüzün* is then "absorb[ed] with pride and share[d] as a community" (p. 84). In addition, he describes this feeling as being "unique to Istanbul" (p. 83) and one that "newly arrived Westerners are at a loss to understand" (p. 89). In a depiction of Istanbul that is otherwise fraught with experiences of isolation and perceptions of cultural inferiority and inauthenticity, Pamuk's *hüzün* stands out as a stimulating foundation for the construction of an identity that is accessible to all Istanbullus as well as being temporally and spatially authentic in that it is true to its time and place. As a result, this new philosophy which is deeply rooted in the city and its history "binds its people together" (p. 83) and is "embraced...with pride" (p. 93), ultimately succeeding where Turkification and its exclusive and unattainable ideals failed.

According to Norbert Bugeja (2015: 17), *hüzün* initially "unfolds as an archaeological exercise that delves beneath the spectacle of cultural consumption that modern Istanbul has become", in that it searches to uncover and preserve the taboo past, the lost object that republican Istanbul was not allowed to mourn, resulting in its subsequent cultural stagnation. Via writers like Tapınar, the suppressed melancholy of the early twentieth century was transformed into "an *indigenous hüzün* through which to apprehend a *local* landscape [my emphasis]" (p. 224), a communal experience through which the inhabitants of Istanbul could finally feel a genuine sense of ownership and connection. For a people previously bereft of a sanctified relationship with their heritage, *hüzün* takes on "quasi-

religion-like proportions [and] a deeply personal spirituality" (Bugeja, 2015: 18) and enables a communal reclaiming of the city while instilling a sense of agency and ownership, allowing for a re-writing of the city. In its re-establishing of the Istanbullus' dialogue with their urban environment and the history inscribed in it, *hüzün* becomes the first counter-narrative to communally resist and oppose Kemal's republican discourse. What emerges is "an intriguing alternative both to the city's historical endorsement of Islam and to the republic's highly authoritarian form of secularism"; *hüzün* thus becomes a "counter-emblem" of the city's conceptualisation as a political object (Bugeja, 2015: 18).

Hüzün is described throughout the memoir as a "black mood" (p. 81) that conveys "worldly failure, listlessness and spiritual suffering" (p. 82), "an ache" (p. 91), a manner of resignation and paralysis, and an embracing of "failure, indecision, defeat and poverty" (p. 93). That said, Orhan legitimates this abstruse state of mind as "ultimately [being] as life affirming as it is negating" (p. 82). While it may confine the Istanbullus in Pamuk's memoir to a state of passive resignation, *hüzün* is simultaneously "an ache that finally saves [their] souls and also gives them depth" (p. 91); it

gives their resignation an air of dignity, [and] it also explains why it is their *choice* to embrace failure, indecision, defeat and poverty so philosophically and with such pride...*hüzün* does not just paralyse the inhabitants of Istanbul, it also gives them *poetic licence* to be paralysed [my emphasis] (p. 93).

The pervasiveness of the city's melancholic condition articulates an accessible relationship with the past. *Hüzün* becomes a valued state in republican-era Istanbul, its virtues extolled by Orhan as he learns how to come to terms with the city's ambivalent identity, and to interact with his past through the medium of the city. In addition to "teach[ing] endurance in times of poverty and deprivation", *hüzün* honours "the virtues of harmony, uniformity [and] humility", and "allows the people of Istanbul to think of defeat and poverty not as a historical end point but as an honourable beginning" (p. 94). He eventually realises that he loves Istanbul, not despite its ruins, but "for its ruins, for its *hüzün*, for the glories once possessed and later lost" [my emphasis] (p. 320) as he yet again escapes to the consoling presence of the ruins to work through the disappointments and upheavals of his life in the modern suburbs around Nişantaşı.

Not unlike the Romantic poets escaping the corruption of society by fleeing to the countryside, Orhan escapes the ever-pressing demands and expectations of his family and social life to explore the Byzantine and Ottoman ruins in the poor neighbourhoods around the city's periphery. He also adopts the language of the Romantics as he becomes increasingly enthralled by the spectacle of history that slowly decays unchecked in the old parts of the city, describing "the very thought that this lost haven has bequeathed to [him] even a few of the landscapes and houses" he has got to know through old photographs and paintings, as producing "a kind of rapture" (p. 61) and exclaiming, "[h]ow I longed to be part of this poetic confusion!" (p. 318). Interacting with his cultural heritage and the issues it includes by exploring the material infrastructure of the ruins, and so feeling and accepting the resultant loss and melancholy, enables Orhan to work through the trauma of the rapid transformation of the previous decades. He concludes, with a hopeful tone, "[h]ere among the old stones and the old wooden houses, history made peace with its ruins; ruins nourished life, and gave new life to history" (p. 318).

Through the construction of *hüzün*, an affinity is forged between the taboo past and what Bugeja (2015: 17) refers to as the "memorializing present", enabling the city to search for, and establish, a new identity that succeeds its status as the abandoned capital of "the little, imitative Republic of Turkey". On more than one occasion, Orhan describes the process of "battling with this melancholy", until eventually submitting to it, and "making it [his] own". Similarly, writers like Yahya Kemal, Tapınar and Abdülhak Şinasi, to whom the memoir dedicates a whole chapter, come to realise that "[i]f they gave themselves to melancholic poems about loss and destruction, they would, they discovered, find a voice all their own" (p. 101). The acceptance and integration of the city's melancholic legacy, actively encountering it and making it their own, enables the Istanbulites to regain their voice and take ownership of their heritage; the *hüzün* it inspires "is not a feeling that belongs to the outside observer" (p. 93) but their own.

Gradually the subject of the decline of the empire they inherited is re-established not as a cause for shame, but as a marker of authenticity and distinction: In *Living in Istanbul*, for example, Kenize Mourad (1994: 7) reassigned Istanbul's "wounded and endangered" status as a signifier of "a nostalgic charm", stating that "this ephemeral fragility is more moving than

the majesty of its past glories". Similarly, upon contemplating the dilapidated wooden mansions in some of Ara Güler's photographs, Orhan notes that it is "only in Istanbul [that he has] seen this texture, this shading" (p. 31) which inspires this uniquely overwhelming feeling of melancholy. He continues to say that Istanbul's "soul" is only to be found in its ruins, in its connection to its past. By accessing the city's past, Orhan gains a sense of belonging, and a "sense of sitting...in the heart of the city" (p. 314). He finds solace in the ruins, feeling part of "an older, broader, weightier time...when Istanbul was more nearly in harmony with its melancholy" (p. 314). This "weightier time" anchors him, to the extent that he never leaves the city, instead dedicating himself to interrogating the city as an "embodiment of an inherited unrequited consciousness" (Bugeja 2015: 17) and adopting its fate as his own, stating: "Istanbul's fate is my fate: I am attached to this city because it has made me who I am" (p. 6).

By learning to embrace the *hüzün* of Istanbul, Orhan is able to find an enduring beauty in the ruins and decay of the city's poor neighbourhoods. He appropriates John Ruskin's concept of the picturesque as he attempts to comprehend this unexpected splendour (as perceived from his middle-class perspective). Ruskin's theory perhaps offers an important insight into the puzzling absence of large-scale preservation in Pamuk's Istanbul during the years following the founding of the republic: in his seminal *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) Ruskin explains that a building "only becomes picturesque after history has endowed it with accidental beauty and granted us a fortuitous new perspective" (quoted in Pamuk, 2006: 229). As he goes on to suggest, "because it is accidental, the picturesque can never be preserved...[since] what makes the scene beautiful is not the architect's intention but its ruin" (quoted in Pamuk, 2006: 229). The picturesque forges a connection between the past as lost object and the present by revealing, like a time-lapse video, the transformation over a period of time and allowing for a collaboration with time and ruin; restoration, by contrast, fraudulently returns architecture to a lost past, without acknowledging the period of time that has passed since, and alienates the present and those temporally bound to it as a result. For a community so ambivalently defined by their past, the old parts of the city which have fallen into "picturesque beauty" serve as some of the few sites where some manner of interaction with the past can take place in an effort to come to terms with the trauma of the attempt to temporally sever Istanbul from its history. Understandably, then,

“many Istanbullus do not like seeing old wooden mansions restored: when the blackened, rotten wood disappears under bright paint...their lovely degenerative connection with the past is severed” (p. 236).

Throughout his development of this idea, Orhan frequently articulates *hüzün* as a unifying state that includes the entire Istanbul community (unlike Kemal’s Turkification), irrespective of ethnicity, status or beliefs. Similarly, Dalrymple depicts a version of Delhi which is accessible to almost anyone with sufficient resilience and determination, and Vladislavić’s Johannesburg accommodates a wide range of characters that are, in turn, characterised by their thrift, adaptability and tolerance. Even as a markedly solitary person, Orhan acknowledges the potential of Istanbul’s *hüzün* to transcend the individual to include the entire citizenry. This unifying melancholy “suggests nothing of an individual standing against society” (p. 92); rather, it is “a way of life that implicates [them] all” (p. 82) and “something the entire city feels together and affirms as one” (p. 96). This relatively uncommon collective nature of *hüzün*, as it is explored in Pamuk’s text, has a profound effect on the durability of the experience.

Usually our recollections (often stimulated by a particular scent, music, or a photograph) are deeply personal and solitary experiences. The intensity and significance of the experience is nearly impossible to convey, making it difficult to share, to the extent that “a feeling of alienation and of being alone in [one’s] evocation of the past” is experienced which ultimately “limits its transactional value” (Pickering & Keightley, 2007: 280). This is not the case with *hüzün*: the past experience that *hüzün* yearns for is far less distinct than the specific personal recollections that are usually responsible for momentarily transporting us to the past; in fact, it is not necessarily a past that “belongs” to any of the melancholic Istanbullus of Orhan’s childhood in that they never knew the Ottoman grandeur they yearn for. These ‘memories’ are, instead, mediations inflected by historical texts, images and accounts, and from the architectural remains throughout the city. As a result, the feeling of alienation from the present, due to the incommunicable nature of the experience, does not inevitably terminate the experience. Because *hüzün* is a shared experience, a “black mood shared by millions of people together” (p. 83), the connection forged with the past is more sustainable. The interrupted “sense of situated temporality” (Pickering & Keightley, 2007:

280) and the necessary absence in consciousness from the present that recollections inspire are also extended, at times rendering Orhan's Istanbul problematically past-orientated.

In addition to his emphasis on the past, Orhan constructs an Istanbul with a predilection for hiding, remaining wrapped up, and burying itself away from preying eyes and outsiders' curiosity. Instead of relishing the bright sunshine of summer and enjoying "the sun-drenched postcard views of Istanbul that tourists so loved" (p. 329), Orhan describes a secretive city through countless images of hiding, being buried, covered and shrouded. As a child, he loves the feeling of momentarily being "wrapped in a black veil" (p. 254) by the smoke from ferries' funnels, and imagines people walking home as night falls to be "dragging long shadows behind them...[and, in so doing,] pulling the blanket of night over the entire city" (p. 32). He describes Istanbul as a city "buried under the ashes of a ruined empire" (p. 7) and anxiously awaits the winter snowfall that will "cover up the mud, the filth, the ruins and the neglect" (p. 37) and "cut [the city] off from the world" (p. 38).

As with *hüzün*, the Istanbullus' experience of being cloaked or shrouded in the secretive city is portrayed as comforting and unifying:

When I watch the black-and-white crowds rushing through the darkening streets on a winter's evening, I feel a deep sense of fellowship, almost as if the night has cloaked our lives, our streets, our every belonging in a blanket of darkness, as if once we're safe in our houses, our bedrooms, our beds, we can return to dreams of our long-gone riches, our legendary past. And likewise, as I watch dusk descend like a poem in the pale light of the street-lamps to engulf the city's poor neighbourhoods, it comforts me to know that for the night at least we are safe from Western eyes, that the shameful poverty of our city is cloaked from foreign view. (p. 32)

Secrecy as a defining feature of the city is a pervasive idea, to be found even in glossy coffee-table books. In *Living in Istanbul*, for example, Tim Hindle (1994: 216) reminds the (presumably foreign) reader that "Istanbul is not an easy city to discover" and substantiates this claim by adding that Istanbullus "like to meet in places which are half-hidden from the public eye", and noting that the city does not have "a broad boulevard where the locals strut and promenade and where the traveller can sit and soak up the atmosphere". Istanbul's "atmosphere", it seems, is not so readily available for "soaking up." Orhan comes

to a similar conclusion when he realises that *hüzün* does not offer clarity, but “veil[s] reality instead”, protecting the city and its inhabitants of outsiders’ gaze (p. 80).

Although we assume that *hüzün* as a form of resistance to the republican discourse of Turkification eventually enables the Istanbullus in Pamuk’s memoir to come to terms with the loss of the Ottoman Empire as an ideal and to return their attention to the present in order to move forward, the Istanbul of Orhan’s childhood is still very much presented as being in a state of paralysis. The city is acted upon by two opposing forces: *hüzün* as a memorialising and preserving force, and Kemal’s Turkification, restlessly urging the state to modernise and Westernise. Both of these otherwise opposing forces betoken loss to the Istanbullus – the opulence of an Empire that only throws their comparative poverty into relief, and the Western ideal they are excluded from. This awkward position situates Istanbul at the “conjoinment of the post-imperial world and the postcolonized third world, belonging to neither of them but displaying characteristics of both” (Tekdemir, 2008:210), thus further accentuating its marginalised and peripheral status.

In a city that is socially and legally (through Kemal’s reforms) compelled to move ever onwards, but which is still largely defined, and held captive, by the victories and failures of the past, there is little propensity to reconcile old and new, to integrate and re-appropriate the past into a coherent present. Upon contemplating the meticulously immortalised photographs in his grandmother’s apartment, Orhan struggles to understand their position and value in the Pamuks’ daily lives: “if you plucked a special moment from life and framed it, were you defying death, decay and the passage of time, or were you submitting to them?” (p. 13). He eventually concludes that, like himself, his grandmother “was pulled in two directions, wanting to get on with life but also longing to capture the moment of perfection” (p. 13), unable to dispose of the past, but also incapable of meaningfully incorporating it.

This inability to mediate between the former Ottoman city and the present, modern city is symptomatic of Pamuk’s Istanbul as a whole, which rarely effects instances of meaningful material and spatial re-appropriation. Converting old Ottoman mansions into schools and other facilities appears to be a temporary solution before most of these structures have to

yield to neglect and demolition, like the Bosphorus *yalis*. One of the only instances of informal re-appropriation, the use of Mehmet the Conqueror's canons along the Bosphorus by homeless people as temporary shelter, is perhaps too symbolically indicative of the extent to which the once mighty city has deteriorated. Upon seeing that these canons that were once used to lay siege to the city are "filled with faeces and broken glass, smashed tin cans and cigarette butts", Orhan "could not help but feel that [their] 'magnificent heritage' was...enigmatic beyond comprehension" (p. 51). The same inability to reconcile and integrate the traditional and the modern easily develops into intolerance as in Mourad's (1994: 15) revealing statement in the foreword to *Living in Istanbul*: "[y]ou have to have a filtering eye capable of shutting out the intrusions of modern life if you want to enjoy the city's innumerable pleasures".

Ultimately, Pamuk's rendition of Istanbul foregrounds the contending forces of demolition and preservation, both of which exert a compelling force in the imagined city space. The two contending socio-cultural responses – Kemal's Turkification and the communal experience of *hüzün* – are shown to have a profound psychological effect on the inhabitants of Orhan's Istanbul which, in turn, influences their relationship with the city's fraught history, either leading to a complete rejection of the Ottoman past or a melancholic yearning for its grandeur. In contrast to the opposing forces of demolition and preservation, re-appropriation as a spatial and architectural strategy is remarkably absent in Orhan's transforming Istanbul. This absence is also reflected in many characters' inability to reconcile the past they yearn for with the future development they try to achieve, persistently being tripped up by their conviction that these two stances are inherently in opposition. As a result, the Istanbul of Pamuk's memoir is characterised by a kind of socio-cultural paralysis due to the dissonance of these two drives. The city Orhan inhabits shows little sign of overcoming this state of paralysis. However, the authentic and inclusive identity that becomes accessible through the collective experience of *hüzün* is one which, the text suggests, could potentially oppose Turkification's limiting and prescriptive discourse. In this sense, *hüzün* becomes a means of reclaiming the lost city and restoring its inhabitants' relationship with their rejected Ottoman heritage.

Chapter 3

Delhi – Dalrymple’s *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi*

In an article in *The New York Review of Books*, Dalrymple (2005) describes the contest over India’s rival historical narratives as “something approaching a full-scale war [that] has been declared over the ownership of the past”. His discussion further reveals the relationship between this contest and its manifestation (in, for example, school history text books in India which appear to have presented one form of nationalist propaganda or another since Independence) and the “election rallies and mob riots” with which such concerns have become inextricably bound (Dalrymple, 2005). Dalrymple’s historical travelogue, *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi*, tackles the contested history of the Indian capital from the anti-Sikh riots in 1984, working backwards in search of the city’s ancient origins through a combination of narrated encounters with a wide array of eccentric characters, and a narrative recounting of those events he considers to be instrumental in the shaping of modern Delhi. What the text achieves is the construction of a kind of patchwork of memories, arguments, rhetorical gestures, and encounters, often sourced from the periphery of the city and its established meta-narratives, which opposes state-sanctioned nationalist discourses of such events as Partition and the 1970s Emergency in their heterogeneity, in much the same way as Pamuk’s *hüzün* opposes Kemalist Turkification.

If Dalrymple were of Indian heritage one might call this an attempt to reclaim one’s history. But Dalrymple is Scottish, and only encountered the Indian capital as a tourist in his early twenties: his interest in its history and urban identity are motivated by a combination of academic interest and personal curiosity. As a result, I consider *City of Djinns* as inscribing an excavation of memory, with a narrator determinedly in search of specific individual perspectives offered by an impressively wide spectrum of Delhiites on a number of the city’s many spatial and social transformations. Dalrymple’s text therefore deals with issues of identity and transformation by means of a creative remembrance by proxy in which events are described through the memories of others, an approach also at times employed by Pamuk. The city that emerges from this curatorship of surrogate memory is most notably characterised by its resilience, as evinced by its rapid regeneration after such culturally and

materially destructive events such as Partition, and the predominant willingness to adapt to vastly different circumstances displayed by many of the text's characters.

In 1947, what is now India, Pakistan and Bangladesh experienced a devastating event that, over a period of several months, drastically altered the socio-spatial environment of the Indian sub-continent and whose lingering effect is still present many decades later. The decision to partition Hindu and Sikh majority India from a newly formed Muslim majority Pakistan (later to be split yet again when Bangladesh became an independent nation state in 1971) caused one of the greatest mass migrations of the modern world during which twelve million Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan and Muslims in India suddenly, and paradoxically, found themselves (and the village or city that their families may have inhabited for generations) on the 'wrong' side of the border. The confusion, resentment and suspicion that had by this time been brewing for months, as the leaders deliberated, the British gradually withdrew their troops and Cyril Radcliff 'drew' the border, finally erupted in unprecedented violence. In the escalating riots that were largely unimpeded by the diminishing, and increasingly partisan, law enforcement (Pandey, 2001: 137), roughly a million people lost their lives (Gopal, 2009: 69) while thousands were raped, "forcibly converted", or committed suicide in an attempt to preserve the honour of their communities (Pandey, 2001: 24). Never before had such an undertaking been achieved "within such a short period and with so much bloodshed" (Pandey, 1969: 202).

Despite these atrocious figures, no tribunals were held; to date, neither India nor Pakistan has any official museum or memorial commemorating Partition, while general history museums, such as the Parliament Museum, as well as school text books, provide only the most cursory reference to these events that had such a significant impact in shaping these two nations: "[a] million people may have died but they have no monuments" (Greenberg, 2005: 96). While the external colonial force of the British Raj was undeniably a major influence in creating the socio-political environment that led to the Partition of India and the subsequent riots, the reality that these riots constitute a kind of civil⁶ war, or indeed a

⁶Pandey (2001: 15) justifies this term, in fact calls for the use thereof, stating that we should recognise the fact that "there were well organised local forces on both sides and a concerted attempt to wipe out entire populations as enemies."

fratricide, is an uncomfortable bit of history that has proven difficult to deal with for both India and Pakistan (Pandey, 2001: 14). The death toll, socio-economic upheaval and cultural and physical destruction associated with Partition are all comparable to a war between nation-states but here the boundaries between ally and enemy are less distinct.

William Dalrymple's travelogue, *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi* (2005) details the author's experiences interacting with the locals, listening to their stories, and researching various periods of the city's history and the accompanying myths during a year-long stay in Delhi in the late 1980s. During this period, he and his wife live in a small top-floor lean-to flat, rented to them by Mr and Mrs Puri, Punjabi Sikhs who, like so many of the current inhabitants of Delhi, fled to the city from their ancestral villages elsewhere in the Punjab and swiftly made the transition from refugees to settled Delhiites.

Dalrymple's account of the city of Dehli gives central importance to the impact of Partition: "the events of 1947 were the key to understanding modern Delhi" (p. 44)⁷, particularly as so many other Delhiites share experiences similar to those of the Puris. Delhi was one of the cities most severely affected by Partition as the Punjab was one of the most difficult regions to divide, with relatively equal amounts of Hindu/Sikh and Muslim populations per city. *City of Djinns* functions as a painstaking recovery of micro-narratives told by individual voices that constitutes a resistance against the silencing by nationalist discourses within the "war" over India's history. Unlike *Portrait with Keys* (which is told almost entirely from the narrator's perspective) and *Istanbul* (which, although it includes elements of collage, only makes reference to other artists and writers' work), *City of Djinns* is composed of a large number of voices of ordinary characters, each getting the opportunity to recount their own experience. I therefore read Dalrymple's text, which can be described as a kind of remembering by proxy, against accounts written by historians; his text constructs an imagined Delhi faced with the burden and possibility of coming to terms with the aftermath of an immense socio-spatial dislocation that fundamentally transformed the city.

Demolition – Partition

⁷ All references to the primary text of this particular chapter are to William Dalrymple's *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi*, published in 2005 by Harper Press.

Dalrymple's travelogue foregrounds the impact of Partition, describing how, over a period of less than a year (roughly March 1947 to January 1948) Delhi experienced a remarkable shift in demographics, accompanied by a rapid cultural transformation that saw "nearly half of its ancient Muslim population...pack[ing] their bags and head[ing] off to a new country" (p. 36). Suddenly, "[o]f the two peoples who had ruled Delhi during the previous thousand years, the British disappeared completely while the Indian Muslims were reduced to an impoverished minority" (p. 36) as the city changed from the ancient capital of the Moghul elite to a "Punjabi-speaking metropolis half the size of London" (p. 36). Dalrymple suggests that, "in the space of a few months, the face of the city was probably changed more radically than at any other time since the Muslims first came to India, a millennium before" (p. 36), a remarkable feat, considering the circumstances.

Yet Dalrymple's account of this transformation is acutely aware of the loss involved and also sets up Partition as an instance of material demolition and socio-cultural erasure. The city that emerges comes only after a "great conflagration" (p. 36), a shockingly rapid and widespread destruction of life, community bonds and cultural and material infrastructure. In addition to whole neighbourhoods that were gutted by the consuming riots, the Delhi Muslims that did remain often faced the worst kind of violence at the hands of their own communities who turned on them, destroying their homes and shops. Dalrymple's narrative of these events re-imagines confusing and nightmarish scenes in which the everyday and the horrific intermingle. He imagines, for example, a particularly disturbing incident where, after witnessing large mobs burning and looting Muslim shops, "passers-by [would step] over the murdered shopkeepers and [help] themselves to the unguarded stocks of lipstick, handbags and bottles of face cream" with chilling nonchalance (p. 43). Dalrymple draws out the psychological impact of these events by also including verbatim recollections of those who lived through them. For example, Dr Yunus Jaffery, Dalrymple's friend who teaches Persian at the Zakir Hussein College on the edge of the Old City, and an "archetypal Old Delhi-wallah" (p. 185), remembers how, after a fortnight of being sheltered by their Hindu friends and neighbours, his parents were betrayed. Bitterly, he explains: "We learned later that the traitor was a neighbour of my father's", adding, "[m]y father had helped him financially [and this] was how the man repaid him" (p. 190). Dr Jaffery concludes by saying that "[i]n this city...culture and civilization have always been very thin dresses...[and that it]

does not take much for that dress to be torn off and for what lies beneath to be revealed” (p. 190). His bitter lack of faith in his city and its people relegates him to its periphery, both geographically and socially, as he and many like him no longer wish to interact with the ‘true’ Delhi they think Partition momentarily exposed, a Delhi that can so easily be revealed again.

Dalrymple’s recounting of Delhi’s history is indeed punctuated by “flashes of terrible, orgiastic violence”, both from the numerous invaders who have laid siege to the city, as well as from the Delhiites themselves who could, when provoked, “rise up and commit acts of extreme brutality” within their own communities (p. 36). Dalrymple is confused when, after hearing a number of personal accounts of Partition and other riots, he is forced to conclude that “the same people who would invite you to share their last plate of food could, with equal spontaneity, lose control and run amok”, committing terrible acts of violence against members of their own communities, their friends and neighbours, and then, “with equal ease”, return to their daily lives “and carry on as if nothing had happened” (p. 36). In Dalrymple’s account, Delhi emerges as a volatile urban space which has the ubiquitous potential for a sudden and devastating flaring up of violence which he likens to “an unstable lump of phosphorus, [that] could quite suddenly burst into flames” (p. 25), as during the anti-Sikh riots following Indira Ghandi’s assassination in 1984 or even during “bazaar disputes such as the eighteenth-century Shoe Sellers’ Riot” which had a death toll of tens of thousands (p. 36). In addition to highlighting such instances of interpersonal violence, Dalrymple also foregrounds a history of tremendous acts of deliberate destruction, such as when, following very minor resistance to his tyrannical rule, Turkic Sultan Tughluk “decided to destroy Delhi” in “a fit of fury”, evacuating the entire population to Daulatabad, and afterwards burning the city to the ground (p. 293), as well as the large-scale anarchy and ransacking that followed the 1857 Indian Mutiny. Throughout large parts of the text, Dalrymple characterises Delhi as a volatile, demolition-prone city, specifically choosing instances of collective violence to frame his investigation of its history and highlighting the manner in which these riots, rebellions and acts of destruction have shaped modern Delhi. While Istanbul and Johannesburg has each had its fair share of violence in recent history, neither Pamuk nor Vladislavić emphasises this aspect to as great an extent as Dalrymple does: if Dalrymple’s Delhi is a volatile city shaped by violence and destruction, Pamuk’s

Istanbul is a city in paralysis, defined by mute passivity. Vladislavić's Johannesburg, by contrast, transforms in bits and pieces in resourceful and often 'unauthorised' ways as new modes of occupation take root in a city of possibility.

Dalrymple's memory of the city is closely aligned to more conventional historical accounts in its foregrounding of instances of violence as a means to transformation. As Jonathan Greenberg (2005: 100) argues, Delhi has known much violence, but it is Partition that stands out in its modern history as the most notable "zero hour", or "historical rupture". Dalrymple also refers to this particular outbreak of violence as "the key to understanding modern Delhi" (p. 44), setting it up as the main socio-historical factor that has shaped the city he inscribes. This experience of Partition's historical rupture has, according to Priyamvada Gopal (2009: 82), "created a particular subcontinental sensibility, a fear that comes of the knowledge that normalcy is utterly contingent, that the spaces that surround one, the streets that one inhabits, can become suddenly and without warning, as hostile as a desert in a flash flood". This awareness is highlighted in *City of Djinns* by characters like Dr Jaffery, whose cynicism about the apparently inevitable tearing of the "dress" of civilization, reveals him to have been deeply influenced by the violence of Partition.

In order to understand how this traumatic event has influenced the modern city, how it has led to Gopal's "particular subcontinental sensibility" and the positioning of Dalrymple's text in relation to these issues, it is first necessary to understand the nature of Partition's resulting trauma. Kabir (2005: 179), for example, defines Partition as an instance of cultural trauma whose psychological repercussions are "registered within the space where the personal meets the cultural". It is the personal element of such instances of "cultural trauma", the individual experience of collective suffering and transformation, which accounts such as Dalrymple's foreground. The forced and hasty escape from home, in all its material and cultural significance, that so many of Dalrymple's characters recount, led to a "division of the self and the world according to a logic that made the self radically fugitive and the world radically fragmented" (Kabir, 2005: 179). In *City of Djinns*'s depiction of this radically fragmented post-Partition world, the loss of cultural identity and meaning, the "tear in the social fabric" (Kabir, 2005: 180) and the presence of destruction and uncertainty

where there was once cohesion and security results in a lasting and widespread traumatic experience, even for those characters who manage to escape any physical violence.

It is difficult to understand how the circumstances conducive to such a horrific set of events could have been intentionally orchestrated by the leaders of the various participant groups, and how the victory of Independence could have come at the cost of such largescale destruction, not as part of a liberation war, but a civil one. Jones (2014) is concerned with what he refers to as the “false premise of Partition”, the assumption upon which such an event is based, namely that “identity groups exist that can be located, named and categorized, and these categories are attached to distinct territories” (Jones, 2014: 285). Instead of such categories (in this case, “Muslim”, “Hindu” and “Sikh”) constituting inherent, fundamental truths, he argues that these categories are instigated by events and narratives and that “the perception of sharp boundaries between what are termed ‘territorial groups of meaning’ is the result of these events and narratives, not the cause of them” (Jones, 2014: 285). He further states that “[c]ensuses and maps can be normative, creating a world of groups and territories rather than simply representing one that already exists” (Jones, 2014: 293). In *City of Djinns*, the most vehemently outspoken voices against such monolithic constructions of ‘distinct’ cultural groups come from those characters that have been excluded from the city as a result of the mobilisation of these narratives which relegated them to the ‘Muslim homeland’ that all Muslims apparently desired.

The creation of the simplified identity categories that Partition is based on, and the subsequent fear-based homogenised group formation, entails a rapid assimilation and reductive rewriting of cultural identity. In *City of Djinns* this is explored in the stories of a number of characters that are excluded from the process of imaginative identity formation while also being removed from certain spaces, people and customs that would otherwise prioritise heterogeneity and accommodate difference. Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus “were all redefined by the process of Partition: as butchers, or as devious others; as untrustworthy and anti-national; but perhaps most fundamentally, as Sikhs and Muslims and Hindus alone” (Pandey, 2001: 16). Despite sharing little other cultural signifiers and infinitely varied linguistic, cultural and occupational heterogeneity, those involved were “seen in terms of little but their Sikh-ness, their Muslim-ness or their Hindu-ness” (Pandey, 2001: 16), markers

which they had to laboriously overcome or amend, through active identity re-construction, after the subsiding of the violence and the completion of possible migrations.

In addition to the problematic construction of homogeneous identity groups, “the urgent and pervasive process” in which postcolonial states normally “strove to assimilate diverse populations into each multicultural nation” was amplified during Partition in order to “enhance the legitimacy of state power and action” (Greenberg, 2005: 93). Previously established conceptions of self and “traditional affiliations based on kinship, regional, linguistic, religious, customary, and other ‘primordial’ attachments” were replaced with a new nationalised identity (Greenberg, 2005: 94). As a result, new citizens’ expression of an unwavering patriotic devotion to either India’s or Pakistan’s superiority became paramount as proof of their loyalty and willingness to adopt a newly forged nationalised identity.

Under these circumstances, citizenship works as a strategy, enabling the bearer of the title agency, freedom and peace of mind. This inevitably promotes assimilation with the dominant subject positions that is occupied by ‘the citizen’, (such as identification with the titular cultural group). The identities of ‘citizen’ and ‘stranger’ therefore “become markers, staking out positions in the contests over rights” and providing, or denying, access to a “space of belonging delimited against an exteriority” (Secor, 2004: 352). With such “spaces of belonging” at stake, the city space itself becomes complicit in the reinforcement of these identity positions as, according to Lefebvre (1996: 195), “[t]o exclude the urban from groups, classes, individuals, is also to exclude them from civilization, if not from society itself.”

That the discourse of citizenship is translated unequally across different socio-cultural groups in post-Partition Delhi is evinced by the general state of fear and uneasiness in which the remaining Muslims lived. As Pandey (2001: 150) argues, due to the homogenising rewriting of the ‘citizen’ category, “Muslims were considered anti-national, which is to say, anti-Indian”. In a desperate attempt to adhere to the dominant subject position set out in the new nation state, and to somehow attain citizenship by shedding their ‘Muslimness’, “some — especially younger men had shaved off their beards” (Pandey, 2001: 150). Dalrymple’s account explores the psychological dimensions of this experience,

foregrounding the desperation that can result from such a biased discourse of citizenship which is capable of easily excluding entire sections of the population based on the actions of a few. In doing so, he describes how his Sikh driver, Balvinder Singh, and his brothers employ the same strategy as Pandey's "anti-national" Muslims four decades later and also shave their beards. This time it is the Sikhs who suffer yet another sudden flaring up of violence when the assassination of Indira Ghandi by her Sikh bodyguards and Partition's legacy of homogenised cultural groups rendered all the city's Sikhs vulnerable to retaliation (p. 30).

Once "difference is privileged as the basis for nationhood, there open up endless possibilities for fissure" (Gopal, 2009: 81), such as the later splitting of Bangladesh from Pakistan, as well as increasing possibilities for normalised exclusion and intolerance. Dalrymple's account pays particular attention to the kinds of social fractures and "fissures" which have resulted from this process. He goes to great lengths, for example, to locate a number of communities in Delhi that have become marginalised as a result of Partition's homogenising Hindu and Sikh/Muslim model that explicitly delineated the qualifications of citizenship to the exclusion of much of the population. He, for example, interviews a number of Anglo-Indians, who, in the dying days of the Raj and the years following Partition, increasingly suffered "the worst racial prejudices of both Indians and British" as neither society appeared tolerant of their particular plurality (p. 131). The cruel irony of their inability to belong to either society is revealed by the perplexed Fowlers, a married couple of Anglo-Indian descent who, after the British left India, lost a considerable amount of status in India. Marion Fowler describes a visit to England as a foreign tourist, saying, "But to be honest with you we were a bit surprised to see so many Indians there. After we had our visas refused twice" (p. 136). *City of Djinns* is then, in part, an attempt to recover the histories and experiences of such liminal and ultimately excluded and forgotten communities that nationalist meta-narratives of the city and its past will not accommodate. In similar fashion, Pamuk's *Istanbul* can be read as an attempt to construct a coherent and accessible identity after the confusion and scorn created by the exclusive nationalist discourse that shaped this city during the early years of the Republic.

A comparable experience to the Fowlers' of being stuck in a socio-cultural limbo as a result of limiting nationalist meta-narratives is represented in the story of the 'exiled' Moghul Delhi-wallahs in Karachi. Dalrymple travels to Pakistan to interview the exceedingly bitter author of *Twilight in Delhi*, Ahmed Ali, who is resentful at having been cut off and excluded from the city he associates with the symbiotic mingling of Islam and Hinduism and having been reduced to a 'Muslim' and 'Pakistani' by "[t]he bloody swine of Hindus [who] wouldn't let [him] go back home" (p. 62). Far too proud ever to return to India as a 'foreigner' or a 'tourist' (the only categories available to him), Ali insists that he "was always against Jinnah" (the leader of the All-India Muslim League and 'founder' of Pakistan) and "[n]ever had any interest in Pakistan" (p. 62). As a result, he and his peers remain in a curiously artificial and nostalgic stasis in a city where, despite its evident emulation of Delhi, his masterpiece, *Twilight in Delhi*, is banned for depicting the "foreign" and "subversive" culture of that "forbidden city across the border" (p. 63). According to Pandey (2001: 182), those Muslims who did start to return to Delhi by mid-1948 after the riots had ceased, expecting a restoration of the pre-Partition city, both culturally and spatially, found "there were no houses left for them" because "the streets and the markets had been captured by refugee Hindus and Sikhs; and a Muslim seemed out of place even in the act of withdrawing money from a bank" (Pandey, 2001: 182). *City of Djinns'* depiction of the Karachi 'exiles' therefore describes a community that is unable or unwilling to reconcile and adapt to the changing city of their birth and subsequently *chooses* to reject it (unlike the Anglo-Indians for whom this choice is not often available). In each of the three texts I discuss, there are similar casualties of the urban space's transformation, characters who retreat from the city centre and, if possible, remain confined to isolated enclaves where time appears to have stopped, and with it the socio-spatial development. Here they remain, telling stories of places and customs that no longer exist and pining for a lifestyle that they can only construct a poor imitation of.

Quite apart from the immediate effects of physical brutality and a violent dislocation from a socio-cultural space of belonging, the lingering effects of the horror and trauma of Partition have created a "post-conflict" culture (Ghosh, 2015: 43) in the subcontinent. Such a "post-conflict" culture is evident in the generally antagonistic foreign policy between India and Pakistan where "the memory of 1947 and its atrocities" is manipulated in support of a

“subliminal mission statement [that seeks] revenge from ‘the other” (Greenberg, 2005: 93). Dalrymple’s account, at times, engages with Delhi and its post-conflict culture by re-imagining the effects of the hostile agendas that Greenberg describes. This hostility and intolerance can be seen, for example, in the banning of Ali’s book in Pakistan and in the conversion to fanatical nationalism by characters like Mr Puri. In Dalrymple’s depiction of a post-Partition environment increasingly divided along cultural and ethnic lines, the unaddressed festering psychological effects of such trauma are presented as leading to increased communalism, fundamentalism and chauvinism. The lingering effect of Delhi’s post-conflict culture is also suggested in the text, for example, in the “anti-Sikh riots” in the wake of Indira Ghandi’s assassination, which killed over 2000 Sikhs (p. 31), and in fundamentalist political parties, such as the Bharatiya Janata Party, that are growing in strength (p. 45).

Unsurprisingly, these reactions have had significant effects on the city that is depicted in Dalrymple’s text. Unlike the generally peaceful co-existence of an intricate web of vastly different cultural and belief systems in India at the end of the Second World War (Khan, 2008: 701) – and despite the apparent intention to ‘Divide to Unite’ (the Muslim League’s paradoxical battle cry) – the post-Partition cultural environment is predictably polarised. Dalrymple’s construction of post-Partition Delhi affirms the prevalence of lingering divisions on the collective scale⁸ that established historical accounts tend to promote. In the city that emerges from his account, “[t]he cultural chasm that Partition created still remains” where Mughal Old Delhi and Punjabi New Delhi constitute two entirely separate worlds that “mix but rarely” (p. 45). Even in the event of festivals such as Dusshera, celebrated by the city’s Hindus and Muslims alike, entirely distinct ceremonies are held simultaneously, one around the Red Fort and the other in the residential colonies south of New Delhi, for the Old Delhi-wallah and the Punjabi immigrant, respectively (p. 45).

In fact, in Dalrymple’s Delhi a “subtle hardening seem[s] to have taken place” (p. 25) as intolerance is normalised by the precedent set during Partition. Instead of the “great Hindu

⁸ This chapter’s section on re-appropriation and socio-cultural resilience deals with instances where such divisions are overcome and heterogeneous communities are reclaimed, although these tend to function on an individual scale.

qualities of assimilation and acceptance”, a “mild form of fascism [is] in fashion” and so educated people would, for example, tell one that “it was about time those bloody Muslims were disciplined...that they were filthy and fanatical, [and] that they bred like rabbits” (p. 25). This perspective highlights the unfortunate result of the construction and promotion of exaggeratedly simplified discrete identity groups by an event like Partition, and the subsequent adherence to the fear-based discourse it is rooted in. So too, as a result of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and his being forced to risk his own life to defend his family against an angry mob, does Mr Puri become a “fervent Sikh nationalist”:

‘Everyone should have their own home,’ he would snort. ‘The Muslims have Pakistan. The Hindus have Hindustan. The Punjab is our home. If I was a young man I would join Bhindranwale and fight these Hindu dogs’. (p. 13)

The trend of removing and rejecting whole communities when integration becomes difficult continues after it is established during Partition, most notably during the ‘slum clearance’ and gentrification of the 1975 Emergency. This is highlighted in a visit Dalrymple pays to Trilokpuri, “the dumping ground for Delhi’s poor” (p. 30). During this visit, he meets Sandhu’s family who had been forcibly removed from their pukka house in Shastri Nagar to this piece of waste land (then) outside of the city limits. Yet in a further cruel twist of irony, and indicative of the incredibly opaque bureaucracy of the city, the land from which they had been evicted and where their homes had been demolished to make way for new electrical infrastructure still remains vacant more than two decades later (p. 32). To further deny those that had been deemed unsuitable to reside inside the city proper any future agency and legacy, the Trilokpuri plots of land were often only granted at the presentation of a “sterilisation certificate” by either the mother or father of a family, further ensuring their eventual erasure from the city (Read, 2012: 96).

Rejection and separation each plays a significant role in shaping Dalrymple’s city. *City of Djinns* sets up a number of binary constructions within the city of Delhi and in relation to it, where ‘others’ are excluded on grounds of fear or intolerance, such as during the aggressive gentrification campaign of 1975 that forcefully relocated the city’s poor to Delhi’s periphery. Although this campaign was named ‘Garibi hatao’ (meaning ‘Remove poverty’), it ultimately only attempted to remove *the poor* through relocation and attempts at mass sterilization. In this sense the 1975 gentrification bears an important similarity to Partition: in both

instances, instead of addressing tensions that *result from* socio-cultural differences, the city attempted to remove the differences themselves by rejecting whole communities. Dalrymple's Delhi, therefore, at times appears fated to function as one half of a polarised binary, constructed by intolerance: in addition to Partition's India/Pakistan, Delhi itself is constituted of 'Old Delhi' (Shahjahanabad) and Lutyens's New Delhi, an intentional juxtaposition (in fact, opposition) that still lingers long after Independence. Alternatively, Delhi can be read as the opposition to Trilokpuri, a "Metropolis of the Poor", "a sort of counter-Delhi" which the rest of the city "seemed almost purpose-built to hide" (p. 31).

City of Djinns shows how the construction of such discrete binaries, and especially the forced transferral from one to the other (as with Partition and the Emergency gentrification) creates "a particular logic of space and time" whereby resettled inhabitants "feel connected neither to the city nor to the villages from which they migrated", but instead experience a "spatiotemporal disruption", where their futures within the city "remain stalled and fixed in uncertainty, ultimately influencing notions of belonging and urban governance" (Ramakrishnan, 2014: 755). This experience of a "spatiotemporal disruption" can be seen in a number of characters, including Sandhu's family and the pitiful scattering of Moghul aristocracy whose decision to remain in the city of their birth – although in vastly different neighbourhoods, entirely surrounded by a community that is foreign to them – makes them appear tragically paralysed by their circumstances and alienated by their environment. Thus, the memoir makes clear how the post-Partition socio-cultural environment employs the discourse of citizenship (and specifically the categories of 'stranger' and 'citizen') as a hegemonic strategy that operates as a socio-spatial exclusionary process; this process "asserts particular definitions of belonging, identity, and rights", working to "define these groups or localities, to fix the power differentials between them, and then to naturalize these operations" (Secor, 2004: 355).

What has followed after the normalised and widespread erasure, removal and separation has been a persistent and perhaps far more effective mode of rejection, the urge to forget, collectively, which directly contrasts with Pamuk's collective *hüzün*. *City of Djinns*, however, opposes the collectively institutionalised "amnesia" (Greenberg, 2005: 94) that followed Partition. This collective amnesia came as a result of the need for untarnished nationalist

allegiance and identity in order to further the nation-building endeavour, in which new citizens are cast “in pioneering roles in the forging of a nation” (Greenberg, 2005: 94). Greenberg (2005: 94) further gives an analytical description of the process through which this collective amnesia is effected, listing first the effort to suppress any memory of the traumatic past in order to establish a new nationalist community and, secondly, the “collective endeavour to reconstruct the past”, locating “new myths” within “a people’s history”. Together, these two processes work to inspire “the arduous work and sacrifice of nation building” and to construct “a ‘useable’ history for ideological cohesion going forward” by which acts of retribution and division are theoretically reduced (Greenberg, 2005: 94). By imagining the voices and experiences of those who were deeply affected by the traumatic past that such nationalist meta-narratives aim to suppress, Dalrymple writes against the new state’s “collective amnesia” and its endeavour to construct a “usable history” which skirts around much of the conflict which shaped Delhi and its identity.

This agenda of constructing a version of historical ‘truth’ that evades much of the uncomfortable and incomprehensible reality of Partition is further reflected in the “gaping hole, the absence of even a mention of [it] from a museum [The Parliament Museum] that purports to narrate the history of India over the last 2500 years”, as well as the complete absence of any official Partition memorial, and the generally evasive manner with which the issue is treated by other institutions of nation building such as schools and history textbooks (Raychaudhuri, 2012: 178). This, according to Anindya Raychadhuri (2012: 179), is due to an unwillingness to acknowledge any “contemporary presence of Hindu-Muslim conflict” which would, in turn, threaten the modern Indian state’s “secular credentials” in much the same way Kemal appeared to think that the influence of Islam threatened Turkey’s. Interestingly, Dalrymple’s account manages to include a number of candid, first-person accounts of events such as the riots that accompanied Partition while simultaneously giving comparatively little credence to the existence of “Hindu-Muslim conflict” in the affected Delhiites’ daily lives. Instead of making a similar allowance for the expression and subsequent acknowledgement of such experiences, Partition has been isolated as an illegitimate and freak eruption of violence by the writers of history, which further allows for the ideological circumvention of responsibility thereof since it is “someone else’s history — or even, not history at all” (Pandey, 2001: 14). In his inclusive recounting of the controversial events that shaped the

ancient city, Dalrymple takes part in the “war” over India’s history, reclaiming those aspects that have been rejected and covered up and, instead, reworking them into a new version of events that posits these appalling conflicts and divisions as an array of starting points that usher in new incarnations of the undefeatable city, celebrating its resilience instead. Delhi has experienced many socio-cultural conflicts but, as *City of Djinns* suggests, circumventing these instances also denies one the opportunity to contextualise the city’s development, not from a colony to a modern and independent nation state, but from a divided space to one of unity and peacefully co-existing heterogeneity.

Unfortunately, narrative and storytelling, which potentially function as a means to come to terms with traumatic events, have been conspicuously silent not only about Partition itself, but the astounding level of violence that accompanied it. Even up until its fiftieth anniversary, “an uncomfortable silence [has] shrouded dialogue about the Partition” (Yusin, 2011: 24), which has seemingly included all manner of artistic expression which could otherwise have been a means to heal collective social and psychological wounds that now remain unhealed. Interestingly, in *Istanbul*, the Ottoman past which, unlike Partition, is a period which would more easily inspire pride, is treated similarly, the wounds obtained from its loss remaining similarly unhealed. In post-Partition India, writers appear to have retreated into “a stunned silence, as though unable to bear witness to the unimaginable”; it took close to twenty years before Fair Ahmad Faiz’s famous poem, or any other longer narrative forms, would address the topic directly (Gopal, 2009: 70). Yet here personal, subjective accounts are incredibly important to counter nationalist historiographies that have made an “all too facile separation between ‘Partition’ and ‘violence’” (Pandey, 2001: 7) and to reconcile the “wide chasm between the historians’ apprehension of 1947 and what we might call a more popular, survivors’ account of it — between history and memory, as it were” (Pandey, 2001: 6). Dalrymple writes against this institutionalised silence, dredging up survivors’ accounts, stitching together memories in a subversive recounting of events history gives little credence to by amplifying the voices from the periphery of historical narratives and those hidden in the cracks and forgotten hollows of this dense urban environment.

Yet, as *City of Djinns* goes on to suggest, the suppression of memory and the discrediting of experience were not the only forms of erasure that came along with Partition. The Old City, or Shahjahanabad, which had been built “at the very apex of Delhi’s fortunes” may arguably have been “in slow decline virtually from the moment of its completion”, but “[t]he final and most dramatic wrecking of its fortunes had, however, taken place in 1947” (p. 50). In the city which still resists facing up to the incomprehensible horror of its own recent history, the future takes precedence while cultural and material heritage often remain neglected. As Mr Prashad (who now occupies an old Residency-era house, converted to offices for the Northern Railways Board) explained to Dalrymple: “You see actually in India today no one is thinking too much about these old historical places; [since] India is a developing country, [our] people are looking to the future only” (p. 126).

If Pamuk’s memoir is a study of how Istanbul’s pathologically past-orientated perspective ultimately paralyses the city, Dalrymple’s text, on the other hand, reveals how the almost monomaniacal obsession with modernity is responsible for a great deal of destruction and neglect in Delhi. In the city Dalrymple describes satellite dishes that have grown to “outnumber the domes of mosques”, “huge Legoland blocks” and other “unsympathetic” high-rise towers crowd the city to obscure the sky above (p. 23). As a “damburst of western goods and ideas”, complete with “condom advertisements” infiltrates the city, the culture that has developed over the centuries along with the “old Urdu-speaking Delhi elite” dies out, unheeded (p. 23-24). In fact, within the densely palimpsestic city that emerges from Dalrymple’s account, the “fabulous city which hypnotized the world travellers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the home of the great poets,...of nautch girls and courtesans” only survives by becoming “a ghetto, a poor relation embarrassingly tacked on to the metropolis to its south”, functioning mainly as an “enormous storehouse for North India’s wholesale goods” (p. 50).

That which does remain, at least structurally, intact from Shahjahanabad’s peak around the Sita Ram bazaar “serves as a depressing reminder” only, empty shells and “hollow fanfares announcing nothing” (p. 55). These structures that were once elaborate courtyard mansions (or *havelis*) now merely emphasise the contrast between “the slum [and what] was once a city of palaces” (p. 55). The *sheesh mahals* (or glass palaces) are unrecognizable,

“partitioned up into small factories and workshops; metal shutters turn zenana screens into locked store rooms; the gardens have disappeared under concrete” (p. 55). When you pass through an arched doorway of a shabby façade, you find yourself in “a rubble-filled car-park”, a “rubble dump” or a small informal factory (p. 55). Even the Haksar Haveli where Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister, married his wife, is not immune to the decay and desolation that has swept over the old city; only the gatehouse “survives still as a witness to [its former] grandeur” (p. 56). Through a locked grille you can see the baffling, although not at all uncommon, sight of a lone cook frying his samosas while the space around him overflows with kitchen refuse and old potato peelings in the “gutted ruin” of this *haveli* that was once was “famed for its size and magnificence” (p. 56). “No one seems to care”, concludes Dalrymple (p. 56). Much as Mr Prashad said, “[i]t is as if the people of Delhi had washed their hands of the fine old mansions of the Old City in their enthusiasm to move into the concrete bunkers of the New” (p. 56). *City of Djinns* depicts such neglected remnants and their faded glory in painstaking detail as it foregrounds the city’s experience of loss as an unavoidable consequence of the rapidity of its transformation. Try as they might, the Istanbullus of Pamuk’s memoir are not able to treat a similar loss of ancient material infrastructure with such nonchalance. For all Orhan’s scorn at their being “unfit” to inherit Istanbul due to their “frenzy to turn [it] into a pale, poor, second-class imitation of a Western city” (Pamuk, 2005: 191), the Istanbullus clearly mourn the disintegration of their once-fabulous city.

Unfortunately, it is not just the material heritage of Delhi that is in disrepair after the physical and ideological conflagration of Partition. Along with the damage to the “tissue of [the] community” (Kabir, 2005: 180), it resulted in an inevitable decay of an ancient culture that had shaped the city for over 400 years. *City of Djinns* laments this loss that occurred due to the expulsion of the vast majority of the old Delhi-wallahs, while also focussing on those who remain and face the rapid decline of their language, skills, trade, status, customs and courtesies.

Upon visiting the Old City, Dalrymple finds it impossible to reconcile “the earthly paradise praised by the poets with the melancholy slum that today squatted within the crumbling Mughal walls” (p. 53). At Chandni Chowk, “once the finest [bazaar] in all Islam”, instead of

“shops full of jasper and sardonyx”, “mother-of-pearl inlay”, “strings of Bactrian camels from Kashgar”, “logs of cinnamon from Madagascar”, “merchants from Ferghana, and Khmer girl concubines”, he is confronted by a “sad vista of collapsing shop fronts and broken balustrades, tatty warehouses roofed with corrugated iron and patched with rusting duckboards” (p. 54). Here, amid “rickshaw fumes and the ammonia-stink of the municipal urinals”, a vendor grabs him and stage-whispers: “‘Sahib, you want carpets hashish smack brown sugar change money blue film sexy ladies no problem!’” (p. 54). Another “joins the scrum, his arms full of posters: ‘Whatyouwant? I have everything! Guru Gobind Singh, Alpine meadow scene. Arnold Swarznegger, two little kittens, Saddam Hussein, Lord Shiva, Charlie Chaplin’” (p. 54).

Dalrymple’s rendering of Delhi in the decades following 1947 shows the culture of the Old City decaying while that belonging to the new Punjabi immigrants flourishes, emphasizing the state of ambiguity and loss experienced by those who ‘got left behind’ during Partition but still associate with the old Urdu-speaking Mughal elite, much like the last remnants of the former Ottoman aristocracy depicted in *Istanbul*. Many of these characters whose stories are presented in *City of Djinns* feel at odds with their surroundings; so much around them has changed, but their values, identity and they themselves cannot. Dalrymple meets a number of these individuals, suddenly marginalised and strangers in the city where they used to have so much influence, such as Shamim the calligrapher, Begum Hamida Sultan, Pakeezah Sultan Begum the Crown Princess turned librarian, and Dr Jaffery, a scholar at Zakir Hussein College. Dalrymple detects a “thin patina of bitterness” overlaying the gentle wisdom of Dr Jaffery’s aphorisms. When asked directly, he states that

‘Today Old Delhi is nothing but a dustbin...[t]hose who can, have houses outside the walled city. Only the poor man who has no shelter comes to live here. Today there are no longer any educated men in the old city. I am a stranger in my own home.’ He shook his head. ‘All the learning, all the manners have gone. Everything is so crude now...Here everyone has forgotten the old courtesies’ (p. 188).

Dr Jaffery’s pessimism is warranted in the case of Shamim, another character, who, with the loss of most of his clients, is essentially reduced from a calligrapher doing highly respected specialised work, to a clerk drawing up marriage certificates on a typewriter. Although he continues his family’s craft vested in a particular cultural heritage he holds

dear, he feels that the conversion from Urdu to Hindi has come with a “loss of prestige” and knows that the family craft will die with him – neither of his sons is interested in learning it. Having to share a space with his brother Ali’s “shady photography studio” causes further shame and heartache (p. 51). Despite his brother’s evident love for the Old City and its cultural values, Ali is disdainful of it, describing it as dirty and conservative. Echoing Dr Jaffery, he asks, “Why should I stay in a place like this?”, concluding, “One day I will leave and go to Bombay [because] Delhi is finished” (p. 53).

In addition, as the travelogue makes clear, the rapidity and absurdity of Partition has left some of the remaining royal and aristocratic Mughal characters completely dislocated from their transforming urban environment within the imagined city. Begum Hamida Sultan, for example, laments the degeneration of Urdu from the language of the poets, to “Karkhana, [or] factory Urdu”. Too unyielding in her “defiant pride of her Mughal blood”, she refuses to ask for help and so lives out her days in obscurity in one of the last *havelis* still traditionally occupied, hoping to be forgotten (p. 57-58). Pakeezah Sultan Begum, stripped of her royal status and living in a small corner of a partitioned *haveli*, remembers having to throw the last of her family’s heirlooms, a number of daggers, down their well in case the police arrested them “for possessing offensive weapons” (p. 243). While Pakeezah Sultan Begum’s mother stubbornly remains in the seedy neighbourhood around the Red Fort that would have been her home, her sister eventually opts to emigrate to England instead of remaining in Delhi and visiting the disintegrating Fort as a tourist. She now lives in Wembley “where her husband work[s] in a biscuit factory making shortbread” (p. 244). These two possibilities, presented by Pakeezah Sultan Begum’s mother and sister, reveal a disheartening state with little potential for belonging, regardless of the decision to leave or stay, faced by these characters expelled by the transforming city and incapable of negotiating a new meaningful position for themselves within it. Each of the depictions of a city in transformation dealt with in this dissertation includes characters in a similar predicament to Pakeezah Sultan Begum’s family: in *Istanbul*, Orhan pities both the characters who abandon the city of their birth for “a nondescript London flat” (Pamuk, 2005: 173) and those who retreat into their homes, furnished like museums, to live a life amongst objects.

The preoccupation in *City of Djinns* with dislocation and loss is perhaps most poignantly revealed in its depiction of the Karachi ‘exiles’, and Ahmed Ali in particular. The relative lack of recognition afforded to his novel, *Twilight in Delhi*, in both post-Partition Delhi and Karachi reflects the extent to which the Shahjahanabad of Hamida Sultan — of the city that was destroyed in 1947 — has been obliterated and forgotten. The same could be said of its author, living in obscurity in self-imposed exile: Dalrymple seeks him out specifically because he cannot understand “why anyone who so obviously loved Delhi with a passion [would] opt to leave it [a]nd why he [had] not gone on to write other even better books” (p. 59). When pressed, Ali echoes Begum Hamida Sultan and Pakeezah Sultan Begum’s perspective on the cultural decay in Delhi after 1947:

‘The civilization I belong to — the civilization of Delhi — came into being through the mingling of two different cultures, Hindu and Muslim. That civilization flourished for one thousand years undisturbed until certain people came along and denied that that great mingling had taken place’. (p. 63)

He too has become detached from the cultural values and heterogeneity he so laments. Instead of the “champion of Delhi’s culture, a bulwark of eastern civilization against the seepage of western influence”, as he was once known, Ahmed Ali cuts “an unexpectedly English figure” who “could have passed off successfully as a clubland character from a Noel Coward play” (p. 62). His friend, Shanulhaq, agrees with Ali’s bitter sentiments, referring to a recent visit to Delhi where he came to realise that the new hotel he was staying in “had been built on top of a graveyard where several of [his] friends were buried”, that he was a stranger in his mohalla, and that his *haveli* “was split into ten pans and occupied by Punjabis” (p. 63). He concludes that the city of his birth is now “a carcass without a soul” (p. 64). What is suggested most predominantly by the Karachi ‘exiles’ is the stunting effect of being ‘excluded’ from the cultural epicentre, the rich and diverse urban environment that has shaped their identity for generations up until the rupture of Partition, as well as the socio-cultural stagnation that occurs when a community refuses to adapt, and becomes terminally past-orientated in its nostalgia.

What is perhaps most redeeming about the rapidity with which Dalrymple’s Delhi discarded its ancient Moghul culture is that the same nonchalant haste was applied to the shedding of the remains of its colonial rule. British residents and visitors to the Raj often expressed

bigoted notions of British immutability in the region. The Scottish Lord, Lovat Frazer (quoted in Kaul, 1985: 414) imagined that events such as the 1903 Durbar (the coronation assemblage of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra) would solidify “the sense of the real permanence of British rule in India” and cause the Indians to “finally divest themselves of the idea that the British are mere birds of passage”. Yet the old Persian prophecy, “whoever builds a new city in Delhi will lose it” (p. 79) turns out to be more accurate. Dalrymple too admits to expecting a civilization obsessed with Imperial Britain because of the “enthusiasm at home for all things Imperial Indian” (p. 71). Instead, upon visiting the subcontinent “less than forty years after the last sahib set sail back to Britain”, he is astonished to find little remaining of two centuries of colonial rule (p. 71). The state of abandoned desolation of such sites as Coronation Park, where the three Delhi Durbars, the very “ceremonial climaxes of the entire Imperial pageant” that Fraser associated with such unyielding endurance, were held, leads Dalrymple to conclude that “the Empire was ancient history” for the modern Delhi-wallah (p. 71). In fact, in conversation with the Delhiites, “the British Empire was referred to in much the same way as [the British] referred to the Roman Empire” (p. 71). Ultimately, Dalrymple constructs Delhi as a city as much empowered by its losses and transformations as it is marred by them, through its collective and consistent capacity for rebirth and its focus on the future rather than the past. This particular focus does, however, at times result in a dismissive attitude to a number aspects regarding the city’s rich material heritage. Yet the city that emerges from Dalrymple’s text is also one that is at times characterised by its ability to preserve, although often accidentally, customs and spaces that remain unchanged for centuries.

Preservation - Hidden

Dalrymple’s Delhi is a modern city which also manages to sustain preserved strata of material heritage, despite the widespread cultural and material obliteration of events such as Partition. Throughout the text, Dalrymple foregrounds the dynamic of preservation which tempers the city’s drive to modernise and, at times, opposes the inevitable material and cultural destruction that accompanies this process. Based on his interviews with a variety of Delhiites, the city that emerges is one that “possesse[s] a bottomless seam of stories: tales receding far beyond history, deep into the cavernous chambers of myth and legend –

seemingly endless layers of myth and history intertwined to excavate” (p. 8). Dalrymple therefore formulates Delhi as a profusion of narratives, and so as an explicitly textual construct, made up of layers of preserved stories, customs and experiences. In this sense *City of Djinns* is similar to Pamuk’s *Istanbul*, although here the city is formulated out of narratives told by ordinary, and often marginalised, voices.

These preserved “layers” of myth and history are also physically manifested in the city space itself and the multiple former cities – a total of eight, if you count New Delhi as distinct from Shahjehanabad – that once existed in succession on the same site and which are all incorporated in some manner into the modern city. As he drives through the city on his way to visit its most ancient mythic origins (the Nigambodh Ghat where it is said the sacred texts that Brahma, the Creator, had forgotten were washed up by the Jumna river), Dalrymple imagines that he is driving “through millennia of Delhi’s history, the detritus of city after city spaced out on the old river [Yamuna] bank” (p. 334). Throughout his exploration of Delhi, Dalrymple also records a number of instances where the layers of cultural and material heritage of the palimpsestic city are preserved and observable in a single discrete location, including the Sufi enclave in Nizamuddin and William Fraser’s *tykhana* (an underground cool room) and subterranean tunnel system.

The Sufi enclave resides in the centre of a “warren of ever-narrowing lanes and alleys, past crumbling tombs and collapsing mosques”, passing which one penetrates “deeper and deeper into the past” (p. 277). Accompanied by Dr Jaffery, Dalrymple traverses the fantastic “vortex of vaulted passageways”, leaving the twentieth city behind, passing through what remains of the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries, until, emerging into the central enclosure, they are “back in the Middle Ages” with “the legacy of the Tughluk period lying all around [them]” (p. 277). Similarly, upon gaining access to Fraser’s *tykhana*, Dalrymple and Mr Prashad penetrate deeper and deeper into the past, as the tunnels’ brickwork changes from “[t]he large and solid British bricks which indicated the Residency-period” to “the smaller and more delicate bricks favoured by Mughal builders”, until finally reaching construction from Shah Jehan’s period (p. 124). As my discussion so far has suggested, encounters with remnants of the past are common for each of the three narrators dealt with in this study. However, such instances where the narrator is described as being

completely surrounded by material and cultural infrastructure of a different era, as if having left the present behind completely, are unique to *City with Djinns*, which describes an urban environment where comparatively large areas have remained unchanged.

What is important to note about both the inscription of Fraser's *tykhana* and Dalrymple's description of the Sufi enclave – indeed about most spaces and cultures that manage to survive in the drastically changing imagined city – is that they are hidden or forgotten, figuratively (and in the *tykhana*'s case, also literally) 'underground'. Dalrymple's accounts of the elusive and paradoxical city, with its ancient origins and most modern aspirations, "full of riches and horrors" (p. 7), repeatedly give the impression that the most assured way (or perhaps the only way) for material or cultural heritage to survive is to be forgotten. The text therefore suggests that it is only in areas where the city is most opaque and elusive in its incomprehensibility, most often within the walls of the Old City, that stable, enduring cultural practices remain relatively intact, sometimes for centuries, such as the occult ability to "capture a djinn", which cannot be passed on to anyone but another master dervish, according to Sadr-ud-Din (p. 289). The distinctive account that Dalrymple provides, and his particular rendering of the ancient city, is specifically concerned with patterns of preservation and destruction, paying detailed attention to which traditional practices endure and which disintegrate. The title's reference to Delhi as a "city of djinns", and the inclusion of the dialogue with Sadr-ud-Din about the enduring role of these mythical characters in the maintaining and shaping of the city, reveals a preoccupation with the city's origins which is ultimately what drives the narrative, backwards through history. Within the city that emerges from Dalrymple's text, a number of ancient rites and places work to anchor the rapidly transforming city, preventing its fervid drive to modernise from spinning out of control and becoming self-destructive.

It does appear, however, as if the imagined city's best defence against material and cultural deterioration as a result of its own drive to develop, to modernise, and ultimately survive, is to hide (in enclaves, labyrinthine urban frameworks and old, forgotten parts of the city) that which is culturally meaningful. Accounts from Kaul's Delhi anthology (1985) by Western travellers and British residents during the Raj give a similar perspective on elaborate riches and customs hidden and preserved within the inner-most realms of the Old City. Writing in

the early twentieth century, both Hamilton and Landon (quoted in Kaul, 1985: 9; 153) refer to “half the riches of India” being concealed behind meagre, dirty shopfronts in Silver Street. *City of Djinns* dwells on a number of spaces that have remained intact, enduring for centuries, despite the city’s perpetual transformation and rebirth because they are (accidentally or by design) hidden and elusive.

One of the text’s most steadfast examples of forgotten and preserved environments is the village enclaves within the city. The relentless growth and feverish, haphazard development of the city described in Dalrymple’s account has created hemmed-in, hidden little islands of village life that continue quite independently of the surrounding urban environment as a kind of side effect of unhindered and ill-planned development. A patient, enduring quality enables these microcosms to continue steadily, apparently not bothered or noticeably influenced by the city that encloses it. Begumpur, for example, is “a small enclave of mud-walled, flat-roofed village life besieged by a ring of high-rise apartments” that constitute the new colonies around Mehrauli, and is seldom marked on maps of modern Delhi (p. 256). Jahanpanah is another ancient settlement highlighted by Dalrymple’s account. Consisting of a number of districts that comprised Delhi during Tughluk’s rule, enclosed by a single stretch of wall and home to around half a million inhabitants, it is described as “a series of fragile mediaeval islands standing out amid the sea of modern sprawl” (p. 260). Somehow, these village enclaves, although sharing many of the same characteristics, are presented in a very different light from the fortified enclaves of Vladislavić’s Johannesburg. Instead of satirising the inhabitants of Delhi’s village enclaves, as Vladislavić does in his descriptions of Johannesburg’s security enclaves, Dalrymple seems to suggest that it is not due to intolerance or fear that these Delhites reject the transforming urban environment that surrounds their “fragile island”, but because they are unaware of it. Such is the extent of the fragmentation of Dalrymple’s Delhi, a dense mosaic of discrete communities and socio-cultural microcosms, that one could be utterly unaware of its neighbour.

Along with the village enclaves dotted around the city, another trope of endurance and accidental preservation in spite of the rapidly transforming city is the presence of a number of hidden, half-forgotten walled gardens throughout the city and its surroundings. One such garden, the garden of Shalimar, “still survives today...although [perhaps because] few Delhi-

wallahs know of its existence" (p. 234). Here, in the "very atmospheric...overgrown and forgotten" garden that is described as being "heavily haunted by djinns", old customs and pursuits are engaged in, unhindered and unbeknownst to the rapidly modernising city (p. 234). Dalrymple's reading of these spaces is that it is "[p]erhaps partly because of the decay, [that] the garden had retained the atmosphere of enclosure and secrecy [and] that feeling of shutting out the world beyond" and that other more renowned sites such as Roshanara Bagh and the Red Fort are impoverished by their comparative lack of "this conspiratorial atmosphere" that can be found in the city's forgotten gardens (p. 236). Significantly, the account suggests that these isolated pockets of natural endurance and preservation do not come about *despite* the rest of the city's drive to modernise and transform itself, almost entirely, in perpetual cycles of rebirth, but as *a direct result thereof*. Dalrymple's juxtapositioning of the rapidly transforming city and such examples of cultural and material preservation as exist within the village enclaves and forgotten gardens suggests that preservation is not in opposition to transformation and development but can be instigated as a direct result of it. It is arguably the very lack of this understanding in the construction of Kemal's meta-narrative for the modernising of Turkey that caused so much heartache and confusion for the grieving Istanbullus in Pamuk's narrative.

Both Nizamuddin, a Muslim village enclave close to the Puris' house, and Begumpur retain within themselves additional spheres of secret or hidden existence, further extending a pervasive concern in the travelogue with the protection of elusiveness and that which has been forgotten. In Begumpur, puzzlingly few villagers can direct Dalrymple to the ruins of Tughluk's colossal palace the *Hazar Ustan* (Thousand Pillared Palace), "almost Romanesque in its massiveness", *because they are entirely unaware of its existence* (p. 256). As a result, Dalrymple is free to explore the centuries-old residence of one of the city's most memorable rulers unhindered and without the trappings that usually accompany officially memorialised sites and museums. Dalrymple's account draws attention to the fact that no attempt has been made to officially preserve or restore such a historically significant space, suggesting an attitude of neglect in relation to cultural heritage which the memoir itself seeks to undo. Again, one cannot help but wonder, however, whether the survival of this structure has been as a direct consequence of not being officially memorialised, not despite it. Instead of an instance of material heritage that has been manipulated, censored, adapted and

exploited to adhere to certain norms and promote dominant discourses of the modern era through the intentions and processes of the officialising of history, Dalrymple presents the reader with a space that has been influenced by little more than the (comparatively honest and objective) passage of time.

Further examples of the memoir's preoccupations with preservation and the city's relationship with its cultural heritage are evident in the attention it gives to mystic and religious rites and customs that appear to have remained unchanged by the influence of the modernising city, more so than many other forms of cultural heritage. For example, Dalrymple is intrigued by the masses of Muslims, "[t]wenty or thirty thousand people" all praying in unison as Ramadan ends, a spectacle which "would have presented itself, completely unchanged" as long as four hundred years ago (p. 252). Yet it is in Nizamuddin specifically, within its "warren of mediaeval shrines, mosques, mausoleums and dervish monasteries", in the tomb of Shaykh Nizam-ud-Din Auliya, "the greatest of all Indian Sufis" (p. 275), where Dalrymple gives the most revealing perspective on the enduring power of the sacred. At the tomb of this celebrated Sufi saint, even death itself appears subverted through the enduring legacy and influence of Nizam-ud-Din. Compared to a great litany of officially memorialised 'dead' saints the world over, the memoir suggests that Nizam-ud-Din's legacy extends remarkably far and penetrates the present with unusual palpability because it becomes part of ordinary life. Upon entering the enclave among a multitude of devotees, from pilgrims and dervishes to opium addicts and petty thieves, Dalrymple soon realises that "the great majority of the pilgrims to the shrine regarded Nizam-ud-Din not as a long dead saint, but as a living Shaykh, whose help and advice could still be readily consulted" (p. 284). This perspective is confirmed by Dr Jaffery who explains that "the saints do not die...they merely disappear behind a veil" (p. 284). Reverence for Nizam-ud-Din does seem to have been particularly enduring, as his legacy outlasts even the original city within which he lived, while the acclaim of this "cenotaph of a poor man who died penniless" surpasses even the magnificent tombs of two emperors and a princess nearby, which are only frequented by ice cream-eating tourists who forget to remove their shoes, according to Dr Jaffery (p. 285). Through this vignette of the Sufi saint, and other similar instances such as Tughluk's palace, Dalrymple poses an interesting question about legacy, suggesting that what endures most steadfastly is not necessarily that which is officially

memorialised. *City of Djinns* suggests that the contrary is often true, as the emperors' tombs with the ice cream-eating tourists, which is clearly a space with little reverence, suggests.

Dalrymple's rendering of the Sufi enclave illustrates the text's preoccupation with issues of cultural heritage and the manifestation of the past in the present. Here the fantastic mingles with the ordinary as ancient myths maintain their currency by transforming into something resembling day-to-day gossip within the community of mystics. As such, "the most extraordinary supernatural incidents were everyday, almost mundane", and the dervishes would describe, in tones in which one "might have listed the bus schedule to Lucknow", the most fascinating and bizarre events, such as Shah Jalal's daily flight "from eastern India to Mecca on a flying camel in order to say his morning namaz" before breakfast (p. 286). As the "boundary between truth and fiction, never strong in India," loses its clarity, these myths are woven into the ordinary, and so into the present (p. 282).

In Dalrymple's Delhi, the village enclaves and the forgotten walled gardens come to exemplify spaces that have survived, unaltered by the modernising city, due to their overlooked status. In like fashion, the eunuchs of the Old City come to represent a community that has endured for similar reasons. Ostracised by their families and unheeded by their neighbours, the eunuchs form an intensely secretive micro-community of their own. They are cut off from the city around them and denied access to its transformation, because, in Lefebvrian terms, they are not granted the "right" to the city and therefore are unable to construct it, as an oeuvre, for themselves. Subsequently, as the narrative suggests, they are forced to retreat to the past, living in an artificially constructed, temporally dislocated microcosm that is as resistant to intrusion from outsiders as the rest of the city is to them. It takes Dalrymple ten days of persistent searching before he manages to gain access to the large *haveli* occupied by the *hijras* (eunuchs) around Turkman Gate, and another two months of regular visits before he is on familiar terms with them. This is not unusual: even among Delhiites, "very little is actually known about the Indian eunuchs" who are "fiercely secretive" and deliberately "inhabit a dim world of ambiguity and half-truths"; they "trust no one and hate being questioned about their lives" (p. 170). The text describes the eunuchs as one of the only remainders of a people who "were once common over the width of Eurasia" (p. 169), and held prominent positions in various societies, from

early references in the “ancient Assyrian and Babylonian stelae” to castrato singers in the Vatican Sistene choir in the nineteenth century (p. 170). To Dalrymple they are unique in representing the “bawdiness” of Safdar Jung’s Mughal court; they still dance for a living, as in the ancient *Mahabharata*, and “retain many of the characteristics of their courtly forebears” (p. 173). Other characters – like the Karachi ‘exiles’, Pamuk’s *hüzün*-drenched souls who furnish their homes like museums, and Vladislavić’s characters who isolate themselves in fortified enclosures – are shown to be in a similarly anachronistic position. Unlike the eunuchs, however, these characters choose their marginality willingly.

Such concerns with the experiences of other marginalised communities following Partition are evident in Dalrymple’s conscious inclusion of the stories of those excluded by the new urban environments that come about through sudden regime changes. It is significant to note that some of the text’s most noteworthy examples of preserved Delhi culture and communities are found outside of the city as a result of the effects of those individuals or whole communities who feel rejected by the city but would rather occupy a synthetic reproduction of it than embrace their new surroundings. Upon visiting Iris Portal, a friend of his grandmother’s, who had spent her youth in colonial Delhi, Dalrymple finds “a small fragment of another world [that] had been faithfully recreated” (p. 75) in her small flat in Cambridge filled with Imperial classics, Indian art and maps of Delhi. A similar effect is experienced in Karachi, albeit on a much larger scale. During his brief visit to the Pakistani city, Dalrymple encounters a paradoxical, ‘preserved’ replica of pre-Partition Delhi where the ‘exiled’ former Delhi-wallahs cling to the old ways of the city they were forced to leave behind once, and could no longer identify with when they were eventually able to return. In this city, were the streets are lined with the shops that once occupied Delhi and where even the street names read “like a Delhi Dictionary of Biography” (p. 62), characters are reluctant to change as the past holds more meaning and a greater sense of belonging for them. In conversation with the community of ‘exiles’ everyone “talked about the old city [Delhi] as if it remained unchanged since the day they had departed” while forty-year-old tales of Partition “flowed from everyone’s lips like new gossip” (p. 61). As I will go on to discuss in Chapter 4, the undeniable lure of home is also considered in *Portrait*, such as, for example, when Vlad, the narrator, and his partner return to Johannesburg only a year after attempting to emigrate. Although slightly begrudging, there is a clear note of nostalgia in

Vlad's description of the characteristic features of the South Africans "lounging against one another like seals" at the airport terminal that immediately enables the two would-be expats to recognise them as "[their]kind" and "slip back into the brown water of South African speech" with relief (Vladislavić, 2007: 109).

City of Djinns emphasises the nostalgia of Karachi, where many aspects of pre-Partition Delhi culture have been meticulously recreated from a certain idiosyncratic idiom or "the distinctive cut of kurta pyjamas unique to such and such an area of Delhi" (p. 63). One of the 'exiles', a judge, proudly explains to Dalrymple that "Karachi Urdu is really pure Delhi Urdu", except that it is not, since after all the dialects in India have been "Sanskritized", meaning that, unlike the language spoken by the 'exiles' Karachi, Delhi Urdu has evolved (p. 60). Similarly, the *havelis* in Gulli Churiwallan that are described by some of the 'exiles' as "the most magnificent in all Delhi" are now "a dirty ghetto full of decaying warehouses" (p. 61). Unbeknownst to 'exiles' like the judge, the centre that Karachi emulates is shifting and adapting, while the Pakistani city itself remains frozen, 'mirroring' a culture and environment that no longer exists. The nostalgic city Dalrymple depicts, therefore, no longer emulates the existing but instead seeks instead to subvert the present in favour of a past it cannot let go of.

Dalrymple's depiction of Karachi presents an interesting example of the dangers of unchecked nostalgia and sentiment, similar to Pamuk's *hüzün*. Greenberg (2005: 96) warns of the sentimental inauthenticity of the "mythologized and frozen" narratives of the pre-Partition world that collectively cast it as pure and idyllic, such as in Karachi, where each former Delhiite "treasured his childhood memories like a title-deed" (p. 61). It is certainly with an exaggerated sense of nostalgia that Ahmed Ali describes a world in which "even the milk-wallahs could quote Mir and Dagh" and "[t]he prostitutes would sing Persian songs and recite Hafiz" (p. 64). Such nostalgia "distorts the past by idealizing it", preserving it in a state of "sealed-away sweetness" (Greenberg, 2005: 97) that cannot inform its legacy in the present to any significant extent.

Perhaps, however, we should not judge characters such as the Karachi exiles too harshly: later in the text Dalrymple describes a very similar experiment in nostalgic replication that

was enacted in the construction of Daulatabad in the Deccani hills after Sultan Tughluk had ordered the entire populace to evacuate Delhi and create a new city in the Deccan Plateau; the empty ruins of this city still bear testament to “the extent to which the homesick exiles had tried to rebuild here the Delhi that they lost” (p. 297). The sudden socio-spatial rupture that comes as a result of a abrupt, forced migration and the dislocation from one’s cultural heritage and environment leaves the subject at odds with his/her surroundings and uncertain of his/her history. *City of Djinns* repeatedly reveals how such conservative recreations of a space associated with a happier past console the uprooted community, but ultimately impede their ability to adapt and shape their own urban environment in accordance with their experience.

In Dalrymple’s inscription of the city, Delhi constitutes a fairly unusual socio-spatial environment with regard to its material and cultural heritage: on the one hand, elusiveness and forgotten-ness almost appear prerequisites for the preservation of more recent heritage, while, on the other, the distant past and its products are seemingly far more readily integrated into daily life than one would expect. At times it is difficult to acknowledge material and cultural infrastructure a couple of generations old as ‘heritage’ and therefore as something that ought to be preserved, re-appropriated or in some way consciously responded to in the same way we might acknowledge, almost automatically, something that is patently ‘from a different era’. In reference to the *Mahabharata* epic, for example, “the greatest piece of literature ever to have come out of the Indian subcontinent”, Dalrymple experiences ancient Delhi as being suddenly, “dramatically spotlit” on the “very edge of the dark abyss of prehistory” (p. 321). What is so remarkable about the *Mahabharata* is that, despite its considerable length and age (it consists of roughly 100, 000 stanzas and is dated at around 400BCE), its story is still, according to Dalrymple, “the common property of every Hindu in the subcontinent, from the highly educated Brahmin scientist down to the untouchable roadside shoe-black”, while “its equivalents in the west — the *Odyssey*, *Beowulf* or the *Nibelungenlied* — have died out and are only remembered now by the most bookish of scholars” (p. 321). In fact, when a 93-episode adaptation was shown on Indian television in the 1980s “viewing figures never sank beneath 75 per cent and rose to a peak of 95 per cent, to an audience of some 600 million people” (p. 321). The Delhiites’ intimate familiarity with their ancient literary heritage

throws the predicament of Pamuk's *Istanbullus*, many of whom cannot read texts a couple of decades old, due to the alphabet revolution, into stark relief.

Similarly, through the story of the Nigambodh Ghat and the founding of Indraprastha (Delhi's first, semi-mythical incarnation) "the oldest legend in Delhi" still survives; "Shiva, the oldest living God in the world, was still worshipped; Sanskrit — a language which predates any other living tongue by millennia — was still read, still spoken" (p. 338). Evidently, some of the characters' oversimplified perspectives of post-Partition Delhi as merely a nouveau riche Punjabi metropolis are not entirely accurate — some of the city's most significant cultural markers and narratives have survived for a remarkable period of time. This is precisely why the absence of any communal Partition memorial, and the general attempted erasure of this particular (and comparatively contemporary) narrative from the city's historiography is so noteworthy.

Dalrymple's text describes a shared remembrance that still influences cultural and collective "acts of...identification and projection" up to a generation after the formation of two distinct nation states, therefore situating this depiction of post-Partition Delhi (and India and Pakistan as a whole) in "a state of postmemory" (Kabir, 2005: 181). According to Hirsch (1997, quoted in Raychaudhuri, 2012:184), "postmemory" constitutes "memories and affective connections [that] often span generations" where the connection to a past object or event (in the case Partition) "is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation". Dalrymple's text depicts a social environment where past traumas are often not dealt with, or collectively localised within a narrative, or a narrative space such as a memorial or museum. In such situations the previous generation's narratives are at risk of dominating the identity-formation and memory-construction of the children and grandchildren of trauma survivors whose "own belated stories are displaced by the stories of the previous generation, shaped by traumatic events that they can neither understand nor create" (Kabir, 2005: 181).

In fact, apart from experiencing the lack of agency in shaping their own socio-political environment as a result of the displacement of their own identity-forming narratives, the characters that survived Partition at a great personal loss are depicted as physically rooted,

unable to move on, both psychologically and physically. In *Spectres of Marx* (1994: 4), Derrida describes the act of mourning as consisting of “attempting to ontologize remains, to make them present”, to localise them, stating that “[n]othing could be worse, for the work of mourning, than confusion or doubt”. Perhaps the resistance to any form of relocation by some of the Partition survivors Dalrymple encounters is an attempt to reconcile the jarring uncertainty and lack of closure regarding their deceased relatives amidst the chaos and uncertainty of Partition and other violent riots: the dead may not be sufficiently “localised”, so the living remain fixed. Mrs Sandhu, from Trilokpuri, for example, refuses to leave the area where her sons were murdered, despite her husband’s wishes to do so:

‘I feel they are still here,’ [she says]. ‘They built this house with their hands. They fitted the bricks and the mud...[s]ince they died not for one day have I left this place. I will die here’. (p. 35)

Pakeezah Sultan Begum is similarly resistant to her brother’s attempts to move to Pakistan because her “sixth sense told [her] to stay” (p. 243). “Delhi is our home”, she explains, “[f]or all its faults we love this city”; after a pause, she adds: “after all, we built it” (p. 244).

Dalrymple’s account therefore raises the question of how one goes about constructing a space for collective memorialisation and acknowledgement of the trauma that accompanied Independence for India and Pakistan in such a complex and inherently contradictory cultural and material environment, especially when it comes to the selective preservation of heritage. In the decades that follow an instance of largescale cultural and collective trauma like Partition, the rehabilitating ability of storytelling is invaluable in creating an opportunity for “narrative integration of traumatic memory” (Kabir, 2005: 178) through which the traumatic event is located in a specific time with a ‘before’ and an ‘after’. Storytelling and the construction of narrative memory prevent the formation of “traumatic (non)memory” whereby the memory of the traumatic event persistently intrudes upon the present conscious experience while also resisting “the discourses that surround the event of partition with silence” (Kabir, 2005:183). Yet the silencing power of nationalist discourses which focus on the celebration of Independence and “social codes of honor and shame, which demand silence” from the victims of traumatic events, instead of “therapeutic narrativizing” (Kabir, 2005: 183), is evident in the comparatively few novels published on the subject of Partition almost seventy years later. Goodreads (2011), for example, lists only 77

books on Partition; in contrast, it lists almost 600 books on the Holocaust (Goodreads, 2009).

Yet despite its capacity for individual rehabilitation, strictly narrative storytelling (characteristically constituting only one voice) is perhaps not the best aid in facilitating collective mourning and reconciliation. Kabir (2005: 190) suggests that, rather than “the linear teleologies of [traditional] narrative, we need nonnarrative forms” of commemorating Partition which constitutes “a void that ultimately remains beyond the capacities of narrative to replenish.” In response to Partition’s “untranslatability into narrative”, Cathy Caruth (1996: 24) argues the need for a Partition Museum where visitors can heal through the shared realization that “history, like trauma, is never simply one’s own, [and] history is precisely the ways we are implicated in each other’s trauma.” While admirable, this kind of sentiment also illustrates at least one of the distinct characteristics of this particular traumatic event that would make the design of any collective and public memorial forum so tricky: due to the relatively vague distinction between victim and victimiser and the persistent overlap between perpetrator and victim of violence, between destruction and preservation, such a museum would be required to “bear witness to a composite and compromised subjectivity” (Kabir, 2005: 184). In the case of Partition, the “implicat[ion] in each other’s trauma” is often more than just a shared sense of empathy, an uncomfortable aspect of the event that makes state-sanctioned memorials unlikely.

In addition to negotiating the “compromised subjectivity” of those involved in the riots that transpired in 1947, such a museum would also have to avoid instigating “a way of remembering that is rigid, if not ossified” through the distortion of nostalgia which creates a “sentimentalized, glorified past that no longer exists” (Greenberg, 2005: 96), much as is seen in Dalrymple’s Karachi and parts of Pamuk’s Istanbul. A Partition Museum *could* be an antidote to the type of “jingoism and nationalist fervour, bordering on hysteria” (Raychaudhuri, 2012: 174) that often flourishes in the absence of a collective and multi-perspectival remembering that such sites as a dedicated museum might foster. Although, any museum or official memorial would inevitably be aligned with a particular discourse, a particular perspective on the past, and in so doing risk obliterating or discrediting a range of other perspectives that are at odds with it, perhaps even instigating the “jingoism” it aims to

resist. Any Partition museum would therefore face the complications of the inevitably limited and exclusive memory-narrative it creates and the implications of the version of the past it constructs. Pamuk's *Istanbullus*' memory-narrative, for example, constructs a version of the city's Ottoman past so full of noble triumph and glory that it renders the contemporary city they occupy so dull and disappointing in comparison that many characters reject active engagement with the present city in favour of being mesmerised by the far more alluring spectre of its past.

Jean-Francois Lyotard (1990: 7) argues against commemorative memorials, stating that "this memory of the memorial is intensely selective; it requires the forgetting of that which may question the community and its legitimacy" – in Istanbul's case, the 150 years of corruption and decreasing territory that led up to the founding of the Republic. Because of the nature of Partition, the uncomfortable truths that the acknowledgement of Muslim-Hindu violence reveals and the difficulty in distinguishing between victim and victimiser in the ensuing, unpoliced and relatively undocumented chaos, such a museum would never be able to acknowledge all aspects of the event and so, "far from preserving the memory of Partition, would actively assist in the destruction of it" (Raychaudhuri, 2012: 183). Perhaps Lyotard's (1990: 26) hypothesis on the paradoxical effect of memorial sites holds particularly true for post-Partition India: he argues that, instead of acting as "a good defence against forgetting", "[o]nly that which has been inscribed can...be forgotten, because it could be effaced", can be manipulated.

Re-appropriation – Resilience

Yet the most remarkable aspect of post-Partition Delhi is not what it has managed to preserve unchanged, but what has managed to survive by *adapting*. The city's characteristic resilience is evident in the extent to which the city itself has evolved over millennia, recreating itself anew a staggering seven times (some claim that the former cities total fifteen, if the minor settlements and fortifications are taken into account) after a complete, or near complete destruction without any significant pause in between distinct cities.

Johannesburg, for example, has been reconstructed only five times since its inception as a mining camp in the nineteenth century, while Istanbul has expanded additively, without a complete recreation of the city space as a whole at any stage in its history, and still includes the old Byzantine city walls that date back to the fifth century. According to Professor Lal, an archaeologist researching Delhi's ancient origins whom Dalrymple seeks out,

'[i]n most sites you would expect at least brief periods when people moved away from a place. But Delhi was always occupied. There was never, ever a break' (p. 330).

Furthermore, despite accounts from British settlers in the early twentieth century that many of the "earlier Delhis" such as Firozabad have been reduced to "a little heap of stones" (Hamilton, quoted in Kaul, 1985: 17), Dalrymple's descriptions of the urban space reveal the integration of fragments of these "earlier Delhis" and, in fact, the symbiotic co-existence of the material and cultural heritage of different eras in the city. This then ultimately forms the major thematic concern of *City of Djinns*: "a portrait of a city disjointed in time, a city whose different ages lay suspended side by side as in aspic, a city of djinns" (p. 9). Dalrymple explains the influence of the djinns and his subsequent titular association of the city with them as being the result of a conversation with the Sufi, Pir Sadr-ud-Din, who explains to him that the djinns are "the secret that kept the city returning to new life".

Although

it had been burned by invaders time and time again, millennium after millennium, still the city was rebuilt; each time it rose like a phoenix from the fire. Just as the Hindus believe that a body will be reincarnated over and over again until it becomes perfect, so it seemed Delhi was destined to appear in a new incarnation century after century. The reason for this, said Sadr-ud-Din, was that the djinns loved Delhi so much they could never bear to see it empty or deserted (p. 9).

As the title suggests, Dalrymple's main concern in *City of Djinns* is this reincarnatory quality of the city and the effect of the inevitable slippage and incompleteness of this process – what happens with the parts of the city that get left behind with each regeneration and what their interaction with the modern city is like. He is fascinated by the ruins of the city, stating that, "[h]owever hard the planners tried to create new colonies of gleaming concrete, crumbling tomb towers, old mosques or ancient Islamic colleges — *medresses* — would intrude" and that even New Delhi "was not new at all [as its] broad

avenues encompassed a groaning necropolis, a graveyard of dynasties” (p. 8). Dalrymple’s text is concerned with the tension within Delhi between its history still evidenced in material forms and its seemingly inherent desire to keep evolving; it appears as though, no matter how driven the city’s transformation is by modern aspirations, its past cannot be shut out. The tenacity of the city’s past is perhaps even more evident in Pamuk’s depiction of Istanbul: despite Kemal’s vehement rejection of anything he considered an enemy of modernity, old modes of conduct keep encroaching on the modern nation state. This quality is less evident in Vladislavić’s text, although this could arguably be attributed to the comparatively short temporal difference between this particular ‘zero hour’ and the text’s setting. Since *Portrait* does not have a linear narrative, precise dates are difficult to establish. However, the narrative likely does not extend much further than the early 2000s, a mere ten years after the abolition of apartheid in 1994, while *Istanbul* and *City of Djinns* are both set decades after their respective ‘zero hours’. Perhaps once the initial shock has worn off, one could imagine some of Vladislavić’s characters falling back on old habits to a greater extent, as instances such as the increasing fortification described in the text start to hint at.

When considering the city Dalrymple inscribes, it is not only its material heritage which represents such a remarkable collection of epochs; Dalrymple notes that “[a]ll the different ages of man were represented in the people of the city”, that, in addition to the architectural ruins, “scattered all around the city, there were human ruins too” (p. 8). He lists the different centuries and even millennia represented by different communities in different areas of Delhi, from the Punjabi immigrants, “a touchstone to the present day” and enamoured with all things new to the “old majors...strolling in the Lodhi Gardens [who] were pickled perhaps half a century earlier”, the eunuchs who “might not have looked so out of place under the dais of the Great Mogul” to the sadhus at Nigambodh Ghat whom he “imagined as stranded citizens of Indraprastha” (p. 9). The terms he uses to describe some of these “strata” of “human ruins”, such as “pickled” and “stranded”, as well as the incredibly marginalised position of some of these communities, such as the eunuchs, suggests that these characters are alienated, isolated and in a pitiable anachronistic state, dislocated from their temporal environment yet also incapable of adapting to the modern city.

In this socio-spatial environment “[s]ome of the materials of earlier cities were often used to build a succeeding one” (Kaul, 1985: xiv). In like fashion, the city that emerges in Dalrymple’s account is one in which material and architectural re-appropriation form a significant contributing factor to the city’s character, much as in Vladislavić’s Johannesburg. The Qu’watt-ul-Islam, for example, the first mosque in India, “was raised from the shattered masonry of Delhi’s sixty-seven Hindu temples” (p. 321). In this sense the text references a current debate about how to approach the treatment of material heritage, especially in age-old cities such as Delhi where the ancient and modern are intertwined. Glover (2012: 34), for example, questions whether practices such as architectural repurposing lead to the destruction of historical infrastructure (as is often deplored by academically trained preservationists) while historicists such as Kaul (1985: xiv) lament many of the city’s most significant features that have “perished with the passage of time”.

In the case of Sikh *gurdwaras* (temples), this debate becomes particularly apparent as a result of the frequent and largescale renovations undertaken by the *kar seva* (volunteers from the Sikh community who aid in the construction and upkeep of *gurdwaras*) which has left almost ninety percent of Sikh heritage monuments “destroyed” (Glover, 2012). Many theorists, such as Rai (quoted in Glover, 2012: 36), decry this cultural practice as something akin to “vandalism from within [the community]”, stating that the past “has to be conserved not reinvented, [and that] it cannot be deconstructed to reflect today’s insensitive attitudes”, as well as rejecting the construction of sacred monuments in materials such as marble and other ostentatious materials as being bizarre and tasteless.

Yet, instead of such actions constituting an insensitive rejection of one’s own cultural heritage, Glover (2012: 37) argues that, since in most cases there is usually “some core feature of the original [structure] preserved in the new [gudwara]”, a reverence for the past and the tangible presence of such communities’ history are not diminished. On the contrary, they are translated into the present, as explained by Murphy (quoted Glover, 2012: 31), who argues that “these developments helped produce a distinctive sense of historicity within the Sikh community that entailed a kind of doubling” where the past adheres both to places and things that are very old, as well as having an “ever-present quality whose locus is

the community itself". Such practices, although sometimes responsible for the demolition of magnificent, historically significant structures in favour of glitzy new buildings to accommodate modern tastes and a growing population, circumvent the otherwise often unavoidable "pickled" or "stranded" status of cultures and communities that fail to adapt along with the modernising city, such as those described by Dalrymple as the "human ruins" that mirror architectural ruins.

The Sikh *gurdwaras'* integration of the past into present-day spaces and practices is mirrored in some of Dalrymple's encounters with a culture in Delhi that does, in very specific instances, appear willingly engaged in a dialogue with its own recent history. Within the city he describes, there is very little artificial barrier between the daily lives of the living and the resting place of the dead. When he visits the old British cemetery behind the old British Residency, he expects to find it in a state of disrepair, after having encountered a number of other neglected and forgotten relics from the colonial era. Instead he finds an unusual community. Here a number of Delhiite Christians with "clipped Anglo-Indian accent[s]" have turned part of the cemetery into "a rather smart housing estate", apparently because "[t]hese Hindus don't like Christian monuments" so they have to guard it themselves (p. 118). These are not poor street hawkers either, but professionals (that ironically include an "amazingly chic" estate agent) who comfortably occupy the mausoleums they will one day be laid to rest in, complete with a vegetable garden, chickens, washing "strung up between obelisks" and television aerials "attached to the higher crosses" (p. 118). A great deal of care is given to the general up-keep of this unusual estate: apart from being "spotlessly clean", some of the chamber tombs had been meticulously restored. When the deplorable state of the old British Residency compound nearby is brought up, one of the inhabitants, Mr Andrew, chastises "these people" for having "no sense of history" (p. 118).

Nor is the British cemetery "housing estate" the only instance of re-appropriation of a cemetery in the city Dalrymple inscribes: Balvinder proudly takes him along to a traditional local event, one Saturday morning, the partridge fights held in a Muslim cemetery in the Old City every week (p. 164). Despite the building excitement and revelry of the event, as more fights are set up, all in attendance willingly vacate the cemetery quite suddenly when

another group of people come to bury someone. *City of Djinns* presents an urban environment where such re-appropriation is not intolerant of other users of the same space, and where even vastly different communities such as the partridge enthusiasts and a grieving Muslim family easily co-exist in overlapping spheres. When comparing the two scenes in which cemetery spaces are readily integrated into daily life in Dalrymple's text to the gradual removal of *turbe* and other burial sites from shared public spaces in Istanbul to exclusive and "terrifying, high-walled lots, bereft of cypress or view" (Pamuk, 2005: 227), the bewilderment of the Istanbullus is all the more poignant.

Dalrymple's representation of the characteristic tolerance and inclusion of the socio-cultural practices of others often focuses on a distinctly resourceful approach to the built environment in a number of characters, including the current Delhiites and their predecessors, even first British Resident to the Mughal court, David Ochterlony. Dalrymple is intrigued to find that the Residency mansion turns out to be an altered Mughal pavilion of pink Agra sandstone from the period of Shah Jehan with a classical façade erected around it, and concludes that "[i]t was just like Ochterlony: in public establishing the British presence; but inside, in private, living the life of a Nawab" (p. 111).

In constructing Delhi as a city of resourcefulness and adaptability, Dalrymple's text focuses on a number of instances of architectural re-appropriation. One such example, the tomb of the eighteenth century Vizier Safdarjung, was constructed from a similar mélange of materials as Ochterlony's mansion, although in this case the architectural thrift was as a result of desperate builders cut off from Delhi's stone quarries near Agra by hostile Jats midway through construction. Instead of abandoning the project, they stripped other tombs in the city for material, although even then "[h]alf-way through the construction, the marble appears to have run out", which resulted in "awkward patches of pink sandstone intrud[ing] into the glistening white of the dome" (p. 158). Despite the fact that he repeatedly disparages the tomb as "tawdry, almost ridiculous", "like a courtier in a tatty second-hand livery", or like "some elderly courtesan [trying] to mask [her] imperfections beneath thick layers of make-up", with "excesses of ornament...worn like over-applied rouge" (p. 158), even Dalrymple cannot help but admiring the pluck and vivacity of this structure and the period it encapsulates.

In Safdarjung's lifetime Delhi degenerated from "the richest, most magnificent and most populous city between Istanbul and Edo" to "a city of gutted ruins" (p. 156). During "the cataclysmic half-century that linked the Mughal high noon at the close of the seventeenth century with the decay and disintegration of the Twilight fifty years later", the shrinking empire, far from becoming despondent, instead succumbed to sensual and bacchanalian pleasures, a temperament which is reflected in the tomb itself. Despite its "sad little economies" Safdarjung's tomb

exudes the flavour of an age not so much decaying miserably into impoverished anonymity as one whoring and drinking itself into extinction. The building tells a story of drunken laughter as the pillars of empire collapsed in a cloud of dust and masonry; and afterwards, of dancing in the ruins (p. 158).

The city that emerges from Dalrymple's account is therefore characterised by its ability to embrace change and to recover by rapidly and willingly adapting to a new status quo.

It is perhaps this same readiness to embrace rapid (and even destructive) change, which subsequently allows for a recovery free of bitterness and resentment, which can be observed in the post-Partition city. The Delhiites repeatedly prove themselves to be a community that encapsulates Nietzsche's celebration of adversity and suffering in *The Gay Science* ([1882] 1974) as a means to great joy and enduring strength. Surely the Delhiites depicted in *City of Djinns* who dance among the ruins of their once-great capital cannot be counted among those whom Nietzsche reprimands for their "religion" of pity and of comfort and who know so little of human happiness because their "twin sisters" of happiness and unhappiness, instead of "grow[ing] up together", "remain[ed] small together" (Nietzsche, 1974: 338).

Of all Delhi's innumerable architectural adaptations, material and spatial re-appropriations and instances of adaptive re-use, the almost instantaneous, city-wide transformation of its urban tissue and character after 1947 is certainly also the most remarkable. Dalrymple describes a "steady stream of Punjabis" that infiltrated the city during and after Partition and "managed to swell the capital's population from 918,000 in 1941 to 1,800,000 in 1951" (p. 43), despite the mass exodus of the city's Muslims. In the decade that surrounds this

massive relocation, the city's population density "grew from 3,470 in 1941 to 7,169 in 1951", while the city space expanded by more than ten times between 1901 and 1971 (Datta, 1986: 443).

City of Djinns presents a rapidly growing city with a large subsection of the population's lineage as Delhiites only stretching back a generation or two, creating an unusual juxtaposition against the city's established Mughal historical culture, which dates back many centuries. *Portrait with Keys* deals with a similar instance of the urban space opening up to accommodate new inhabitants, although in this case the 'new' inhabitants are generally relocating from the city's periphery, and therefore the spatial re-appropriation tends to be more tentative. Dalrymple compares the inherent socio-historical contradiction in post-Partition Delhi to the "grandest of grand old aristocratic dowagers" behaving like "a nouveau-riche heiress: all show and vulgarity and conspicuous consumption" which "jarred with everything one knew about her sophistication and culture" in a most unbecoming fashion (p. 44). This "jarring" transformation is of course largely due to the socio-cultural influence of the influx of Punjabi immigrants, a people vastly different from the courtly and aristocratic Mughal Delhi-wallahs. Even though he disparagingly describes them as "Essex M[e]n of the East" (p. 17), and compares the effect of their emigration to Delhi to "a deluge of mud-booted Yorkshire farmers" descending on Bloomsbury (p. 45), Dalrymple does acknowledge and commend the Punjabi immigrants' remarkable work ethic and resilience. V.N. Datta (1986: 442) also appears to be in two minds in his opinion of the Punjabis whom he credits with having "made a world of difference to the development of Delhi", although he simultaneously describes them much like a swarm of locusts, "[d]escending upon [the city] in blind rage". He finally concludes that the Punjabi's Delhi is "a society based on individual achievement", created from very little (Datta, 1986: 458). With their access to past selves and spaces forever disrupted by the effects of Partition, they have adopted an "attitude which enables them to meet new situations boldly and not to fear the future" (Datta, 1986: 458).

Although their sudden appearance did come with the disintegration and decay of some centuries-old Mughal material and cultural heritage, the Punjabi immigrants Dalrymple describes have generated a new life for the aging city that they appear to have taken to with

collective tenacity and adaptability, much as the new inhabitants of Vladislavić's Johannesburg appear to have done. Evidence of their resilience and willingness to adapt to a new urban environment frequently punctuates Dalrymple's recounting. The Puris, from whom he and his wife rent a shabby little lean-to flat, are the first Partition refugees he encounters. They left their large town house and most of their possessions in Lahore after the city had been declared part of Pakistan, expecting mistakenly to return presently after the rioting had died down. Upon their arrival in Delhi, they find an abandoned house in the Old City that had belonged to a Muslim family who had fled under similar circumstances and so the Puris "simply installed a new door and moved in" (p. 42), tenaciously creating a home in a vastly different city, within a completely different community.

Dalrymple's driver Balvinder Singh's family had a similar experience that led to their permanent relocation to Delhi. Originally from a small Sikh village that stood within the ruins of an old fort in the Lyallpur District, surrounded by Muslim landowners, they were unperturbed when it was announced that their village would form part of Pakistan (p. 40). However, less than a month later some of the surrounding Muslim community with whom the Sikhs "lived like brothers" laid siege to their fort (p. 39). After two days the villagers were liberated by the British army; with only one small bag each, the entire community was uprooted. The Singhs ended up in Delhi where Punjab Singh, Balvinder's father, readily made the transition from farmer to taxi-wallah, based solely on the premise that "[a]ll the Mahomedan tonga-wallahs had gone to Pakistan" (p. 41). His family have run the International Backside Taxi Stand (located *behind* the India International Centre) ever since.

Balvinder has adapted to the family's new life in Delhi with relish, although not entirely without an established sense of the cultural identity from the Singh's Lyallpuri ancestors: "Mr Singh is a *Kshatriya* by caste, a warrior," explains Dalrymple in reference to Balvinder's aggressive driving (p. 16). Not at all put off by the new context within which he finds himself, or any regulations that might apply to it, Balvinder, like his ancestors, is "keen to show that he is afraid of nothing"; he disdains "such cowardly acts as looking in wing mirrors or using his indicators" and likes "playing 'chicken' with the other taxis" (p. 16). Although Dalrymple certainly provides a very humorous (and somewhat patronising) portrait, Balvinder the *Kshatriya*'s adaptation to his position as a taxi-wallah, without losing some

sense of his former socio-cultural identity and authenticity is significant: even in the bustling traffic of Delhi, “Balvinder Singh is a Raja of the Road”, with “his Ambassador [as] his chariot, [and] his klaxon [as] his sword” (p. 16).

Even Mr Seth, the Puri’s neighbour and a retired Indian Railways official, a “polite, timid and anonymous...safari-suited civil servant” (p. 42), turns out to have a gripping tale of his own experience during Partition when he suddenly finds himself “on the wrong side of the border” as a Hindu in Sheikhpura near Lahore. After being shot at by his grief-stricken Muslim station master whose wife has been killed by a stray bullet, Mr Seth decides to flee Pakistan. He runs to the closest Indian station, repeatedly ambushed by Muslim mobs along the tracks, and arrives at Amritsar station at midnight, nearly naked, “barefoot [and] having only a knicker” (p. 43). Despite this ordeal, which included “escap[ing] death four times”, he simply receives his new uniform from the station master and promptly reports for duty “at nine am exactly” the next day (p. 43).

Such experiences of prosecution, terror, and the resulting determination they breed are not uncommon in the post-Partition city, experiences that *City of Djinns* renders in sensitive detail. Dalrymple as memoirist-historian, for example, is stunned at the sheer number of Partition refugees in the city as well as all the horrific stories to be told by “[e]ven the most well established Delhi figures” of “childhoods broken in two, of long journeys on foot over the Punjab plains, of houses left behind, of sisters kidnapped or raped” (p. 42). Even the most innocuous Delhiites had astonishing tales to tell: “chartered accountants could tell tales of singlehandedly fighting off baying mobs; men from grey government ministries would emerge as the heroes of bloody street battles” (p. 42). What Dalrymple’s account makes clear is that everything the refugees have achieved since 1947, everything they possess and the new identities they have forged for themselves, originate from immense suffering and insecurity, and not despite it. The emphasis placed on resilience in *City of Djinns* suggests that Ghosh’s “post-conflict” culture should be reconsidered as a culture of resilience and independence, rather than a culture of paranoia and retribution. The collective strength of the citizens of post-Partition Delhi has come about “through the long fight with essentially constant unfavorable conditions”, the resulting discipline of which, according to Nietzsche (1886: 262), has “created all enhancements of man so far”. Instead

of more commonly-held beliefs that “what is called good preserves the species, while what is called evil harms the species” (Nietzsche, 1889: 8), he argues that each of these attributes works towards the development of a community, adding that “[t]he poison of which weaker natures perish strengthens the strong—nor do they call it poison” (Nietzsche, 1974: 19).

Dalrymple’s representation of the post-Partition Delhiites pays particular attention to the rewriting and re-appropriation of established customs and historiographies as forms of agency in a self-made society. Ever-thrifty Mrs Puri, for example, completely rejects the centuries-old significance of Diwali as a celebration of the return of Ram and Sita after vanquishing Ravanna as being “for poor people only” (p. 93). Instead, she adheres to a personal rewriting of the festival in which Laxmi, the Goddess of Wealth, manifests as a kind of “divine auditor” who will “come into [their] house and count all [their] moneys” (p. 93), provided that the door is left open and candles are lit.

As the memoir suggests, some of the most valuable instances of cultural and historical rewriting and re-appropriating are adapted from the colonial era. The Delhi Mutiny Memorial is one of the few surviving memorials commemorating the 1857 ‘mutiny’ (during which rebels against the East India Company laid siege to Delhi) from the perspective of the British. While the original inscription (presumably celebrating the victory of the colonial forces while condemning the ‘mutineers’) is not defaced, it has, since Independence, been complemented by another inscription “which intends to set the record right”, stating that “THE ‘ENEMY’ OF THE INSCRIPTIONS ON THIS MONUMENT WERE THOSE WHO ROSE AGAINST COLONIAL RULE AND FOUGHT BRAVELY FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION” and that they ought to be remembered as “IMMORTAL MARTYRS FOR INDIAN FREEDOM” (p. 149). Even comparatively insignificant translations reveal a culture that can adapt and make new meaning from existing customs and histories. Dalrymple, for example, describes the Delhiites’ adaptation of the British’s marriage advertisements once popular during the Raj (p. 205), and refers to a number of linguistic adaptations such as the *mali*’s (the gardener’s) re-appropriation of simple English words (p. 208) into what at first appear to be Hindi or Urdu (salary became “shah-al-arhee”). These and other instances reveal the Delhiites’ knack for incorporating borrowed customs into their own cultural corpus, without losing their authenticity and identity in the process.

It has to be noted, however, that the new inhabitants are certainly not the only Delhiites with the necessary mettle and adaptability to weather the rapidly changing urban environment. The story of Pakeezah Begum Hamida Sultan's transformation from Crown Princess to librarian with the dawn of Independence attests to a similar resilience as is often praised in the Punjabi immigrants. Her mother, "the senior-most descendant of Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Babur and Shah Jehan", resigns herself to living in the seedy neighbourhood around the Red Fort she would have occupied in a different time and, making the most of the situation, accepts "her bedstead [as] her throne" (p. 242).

Yet perhaps the most striking instance in Dalrymple's account of a readiness to accept an adverse situation and adapt for the sake of survival can be found in the Old City's eunuchs. After spending months with them, Dalrymple is "struck by the eunuchs' lack of bitterness" (p. 183), their ability to create a life with which they can be content, on their own terms, within a society that has marginalised them as "something half-way between a talisman and an object of ridicule" (p. 183). Although certainly extremely limited, the account suggests that they have negotiated a certain measure of power and influence: though they are often heckled in the streets, their absence at "a poor family's most crucial and most public celebrations, at a marriage or the birth of a male child,...would almost invalidate the whole ceremony" (p. 172).

Sacred and religious rites and practices too must adapt in the modernising city or face extinction, and they do – in the most unusual ways. Upon visiting the faith-healing surgery of Pir Syed Mohammed Sarmadi, a Sufi dervish, Dalrymple encounters a fascinating example of one such adaptation where devotees can receive the blessing of Sarmadi's great-grandfather who had been martyred by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (p. 283). Although no explanation is given as to how such a ritual would function in a more remote setting, clearly here the limitations placed upon such practices by the densely populated urban environment have been dealt with most efficiently. Evidently personally washing, touching or anointing the martyr's body in the shrine would not be feasible for all the visitors to the shrine, as many as two hundred a day. Instead, Sarmadi has built himself a small lean-to attached to the martyr's tomb, next to the drain that runs beneath it. After consulting with

the dervish, visitors may pay a fee of twenty rupees for the privilege of having a small quantity of water poured directly into the drain on their behalf, apparently of the same merit as washing the body themselves (p. 284). This scenario can, of course, be read as a scam that preys on the faithful and the desperate, and so be comparable to the cheapening of sacred rites and spaces that Orhan mourns in *Istanbul*. Yet Dalrymple does not present the ingenious adaptation of the anointing ritual as seedy or exploitative; *City of Djinns* generally takes a more optimistic view of adaptation than the much more melancholy *Istanbul*. Instead, Dalrymple's text celebrates this unusual ritual as yet another manifestation of the Delhiites' determination to adapt and usher in the new, without ever completely rejecting what has shaped their socio-spatial environment for millennia.

While the employment of modern plumbing in the mass marketing of ancient rites is perhaps the text's most amusing example of the manner in which even such normally unyielding practices adapt to survive in the urban environment, it is by no means the only mentioned. Dalrymple describes how Sikh priests who are invited to a thanksgiving ceremony held by the Puris "reverently buil[d] a small shrine for the book [the *Guru Granth Sahib*] in one of Mrs Puri's flowerbeds" in order to commence with their prayers (p. 201). In addition, he encounters a *sadhu*, a Hindu holy man, along the dirty banks of the Jumna river, now a "black swathe of suspended mud as heavy and sluggish as crude oil", worshipping the same god as his ancestors for millennia, although in the polluted, overpopulated modern city, the goddess manifests as contaminated black ooze (p. 335). Again, when comparing these descriptions to one of the only instances of a sacred rite being amended in *Istanbul* (the Pamuks' decision to replace their ritualistically slaughtered meat with meat from the butcher during *Kurban Bayram* which causes them to experience so much guilt), one cannot help but once again admire such Delhiites' ability to find a workable compromise in the rapidly modernising, ancient city.

Each of these instances of adaptation and resilience, whether effected by characters that are native Delhiites or former refugees, speaks of an ability (in fact, a determination) to create and negotiate their own urban environment and their own identity as citizens – as Delhiites actively occupying and shaping their city – in relation to it. Even when they have been positioned as 'strangers' or 'outsiders', whether because of their refugee status or

their sudden marginalisation as Muslims in the ‘wrong’ country, many of the characters Dalrymple encounters during his stay in Delhi succeed in subverting and disrupting some of the limiting “dominant meanings and practices of space and identity in the city” (Secor, 2004: 353); they “re-inscribe their own presence within discourses and practices of citizenship” and also “reconfigure the meanings and uses of urban spaces” to further their own cause (Secor, 2004: 356). *City of Djinns* is concerned with the extent to which Delhi’s citizens, both old and new, are actively involved in the transformation of the city, which determines the extent to which they can create the city for themselves and actively inhabit it as citizens. Secor (2004: 365) draws on Henri Lefebvre whose theorising on “the right to the city” refers “not only to rights to urban services, such as housing, work, and education, but also to the right to participate in making ‘the urban’, the right to inhabit and transform urban space and thus to become a creator of the city as oeuvre”. In other words, a critical element of urban citizenship struggles that the text foregrounds is “the assertion of the right to become a producer of the city, of urban space, and of citizenship itself” (Secor, 2004: 365).

Dalrymple’s travelogue gives close attention to a range of processes of ‘city making’ and habitation. These include depictions of the last direct heirs of some of the city’s first Mughal conquerors choosing to inhabit the neighbourhoods around their ancestral palace rather than abandon the palace completely, Sufi dervishes negotiating the urban environment by adapting ancient spiritual rituals, the construction of flowerbed shrines for the *Guru Granth Sahib* by Sikh priests, and the additions to colonial-era monuments. These and many others can be seen as spatial practices through which the city’s inhabitants engage in producing and narrating their city. In doing so, these characters “create spaces to live in and speak from” (Khan, 2008: 87) and so establish a means to agency and belonging that is denied those who remain held captive by the past, and rejected by those who opt to leave the city instead.

Perhaps there is something inherently resilient about the imagined city itself, as characters like Pir Sadr-ud-Din (who attribute it to the influence of the djinns) seem to sense. After all, the Old City, Shahjehanabad, was built by Emperor Shah Jehan after the death of “his beloved Queen Taj Mahal” (p. 195). At age forty-seven, having just lost his wife, his children

grown up, he decided to move his court from Agra to Delhi. The construction of a new city “was the middle-aged Emperor’s bid for immortality” (p. 195), and a fairly successful one at that.

In Dalrymple’s rendition, the city indeed occupies a strange, liminal place on the periphery of endurance and destruction, birth and death, stability and uncertainty. Ahmed Ali’s famous novel, *Twilight in Delhi* (1940) describes the city in a similar fashion:

[Delhi] was built after the great battle of Mahabharat by Raia Yudhishtta [sic] in 1453 B.C., and has been the cause of many a great and historic battle. Destruction is in its foundations and blood is in its soil. It has seen the fall of many a glorious kingdom, and listened to the groans of birth. It is the symbol of Life and Death, and revenge is in its nature. (Pandey, 2001: 135)

It certainly has a most violent history: Kaul (1985: xxviii) lists sacking and plundering by not only the Persians and Afghans, but also “the Marathas, Jats, Sikhs and Rohillas”. In the light of Frederick Treves’s (quoted in Kaul, 1985, 16-17) description of the city’s surroundings in 1904, as a “desolate plain covered with the ruin and wreckage of many cities”, and a “country of things-that-were” which has “been swept by a hundred armies”, Delhi’s survival is even more patently remarkable. It has long since had a reputation for “being cursed”, and for instability; even Herbert Baker who, along with Edwin Lutyens designed the city’s most recent manifestation – New Delhi – in the 1920s and 1930s, mentions “the evil prophecies of the unluckiness of Delhi” (quoted in Kaul, 1985: 52).

Other accounts of the city also pay attention to large-scale epochal change. As described in Kaul’s (1985: 246) anthology, great courts and civilizations have come and gone in this city: the last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, for example, was reduced to a figurehead before eventually being exiled to Rangoon by the British forces, while, according to the Brahman tradition, the Qutb Minar (which was erected by Qutb al-Din Aibak, in 1200) is what lent the name “Dhilli (unstable)” to the city and is associated with the decline of Hindu rule in the city. Writing in 1884, Gordon Cummings (quoted in Kaul, 1985: 246) describes a Brahman myth which effectively highlights the paradoxical space occupied by the city, of endurance and ephemerality concurrently, describing the pillar that

went so deep that it pierced the head of the serpent god Schesnag, who supports the earth. The priests told the Rajah that thus his kingdom should

endure for ever. But, like a child gardening, he could not be satisfied till he dug it up again, just to see if it were so, and sure enough the end was covered with blood. Then the priests told him that his dynasty would soon pass away. He planted the pillar again, but the serpent eluded his touch, and the pillar was thenceforth unsteady. So the priests called the name of the place Dhilli (unstable) and prophesied all manner of evil concerning the Rajah, who shortly afterwards was killed, and his kingdom seized by the Mohammedans, and since then, no Hindoo has ever reigned in Delhi.

Yet Cummings, in 1884, attests that “the pillar is now firm as a rock, and has even resisted the cannon of Nadir Shah, who purposely fired against it” (quoted in Kaul, 1985: 246). Adding to this monument’s paradoxical status, its existence (which is the origin of the city’s association with instability and ephemerality) is also a symbolic testament to endurance and resilience: according to Cummings, “[t]he Hindoos believe that so long as this column stands, the kingdom has not finally departed from them” (quoted in Kaul, 1985: 246), a belief which did come to pass in 1947, after centuries of Mughal and colonial rule.

The modern Delhi that Dalrymple inscribes is not an easy city to inhabit, an intrinsic characteristic vividly reflected by its opaque and unobliging bureaucracy. This nightmarish system of Orwellian complexity is so intolerable that even Dalrymple (despite the characteristic bemused detachment, privilege and influence he usually enjoys as a foreign spectator) experiences it as “an empire [of] bureaucratic obfuscation” dedicated to “the perpetration of difficulty, the collection of bribes and...the spinning of great glistening cocoons of red tape”, complete with an “asylum full of supplicants”, excruciatingly ironic posters of Gandhi’s value of the customer and apparently “decorative” computers (p. 19-20). Yet all who wish to be acknowledged in their occupancy of the city, to be granted state-sanctioned rights and agency, need to negotiate their way through Delhi’s obtuse bureaucracy as a rite of passage and a test of will before being granted access to the city’s infrastructure.

The fortitude and capacity for regeneration of the Delhiites is made apparent even in some of Dalrymple’s discussions of the city’s “satellite” manifestations, such as Daulatabad, the “New Delhi in the Deccan” (p. 296). Here the small fraction of the population that survived the seven-hundred-mile “forced march” to relocate on the tyrant Tughluk’s orders

succeeded in the remarkable feat of rebuilding their lives and their former city by their own labour within a natural fortress in the eerie and desolate Deccani hills, a feat that Dalrymple compares to the Partition refugees' transformation of Delhi six hundred years later (p. 297).

As *City of Djinns* suggests, the people who survive in this severe, and at times unwelcoming, urban environment are tough; whether middle class or destitute, former refugees, "bits of stranded flotsam" (p. 118) from the colonial era, or native Muslim Delhiites who fought for their right to the city against the rioters *and* their own army during Partition, they develop strength and resilience as a direct consequence of the hardships the city requires them to endure. Hard work is a much-valued principle and characters from the up and coming working classes, like Balvinder, struggle to understand the city's beggars who do not work despite having "two arms and two legs" and therefore not being "handicrafted" (p. 17). Characters like Mrs Puri, therefore, make "the transition from refugee pauper to Punjabi princess" (p. 11) in fewer than forty years, transforming herself through nothing but her own determination from a displaced victim to a kind of Punjabi baroness with substantial influence and means.

Another resolute Delhi survivor that the text presents, although from a vastly different socio-cultural sphere, is Dalrymple's British friend Norah, "an old lady with white hair and narrow wrists", a "sort of living fossil of the Twilight" who had fallen on hard times "in quite a spectacular manner" in her old age (p. 114-115). After being thrown out of her government lodgings due to "some bureaucratic tangle" in 1960, she ended up in a self-constructed shack behind the Old Secretariat that she "had such a lovely time putting together" after her friends helped her acquire the necessary materials (p. 115). Here she remains stubbornly and happily, rarely finding much to complain about, and fiercely clinging to her independence despite the difficulties of yearly monsoons and the intrusion of all manner of animals that have amassed around her in an informal sort of menagerie. "It would be nice if the roof was a bit stronger," she says pleasantly to Dalrymple, "then the peacocks wouldn't keep falling through. I don't mind during the day, but I hate waking up at night to find a peacock in bed with me" (p. 115).

A similar vignette of uncomplaining fortitude is presented in the account of the Sandhu family who were forcefully relocated to Trilokpuri settlement along with a large section of the city's impoverished masses during the Emergency of 1975 and who also faced extraordinary violence in the anti-Sikh riots leading to the death of two sons and permanent brain damage for the third. In the light of such considerable personal tragedy, Sohan Singh Sandhu's description of Trilokpuri as "not a bad area" that is "a little out of the way, but quite tolerable" with neighbours who "had always been friendly" is remarkably magnanimous and echoes Norah's strength of character. Upon Dalrymple's asking whether he is afraid of anything like the anti-Sikh riots happening again, Sandhu explains that they are not worried, that "[t]hese wounds are healed now", and that the Sikhs and Hindus in the area again co-exist peacefully, with him giving *langoor* (food) to the underprivileged Hindus, while the affluent Hindus give offerings at the Sikh *gurdwara* (p. 35). Sandhu, and others like him who refuse to be reduced and defined by past adversity, understand that "[a] loss is a loss for barely on hour; somehow it also brings us some gift from heaven—new strength, for example, or at least a new *opportunity* for strength" (Nietzsche, 1974: 326 – my emphasis). By forging new community bonds despite past antagonism, Sandhu brings meaning to the suffering his family has endured as a seized opportunity for strength and reconciliation. Thus, characters such as Sandhu can achieve in ten years what many of Pamuk's Istanbullus, for example, have yet to realise is a necessary prerequisite for a productive life within the transforming city, namely the refusal to be defined by past injustices and losses.

Dalrymple repeatedly depicts instances of the type of symbiotic interaction Sandhu describes, such as the sharing of religious holidays and festivals like Diwali. He also describes a curious ritual conducted by two Sikh gentlemen adorning the grave of a great Sufi with Hindu-style marigold garlands (p. 93). Some of the city's wedding celebrations have also morphed into a curious mixture of various cultural traditions, such as the "Muslim wedding in Hindu ambulance" that Dalrymple attends, which is described by another guest as a Muslim wedding which has a "feeling of Hinduism", expressed by the incorporation of elements such as henna painting (p. 210). At Mr Puri's *Antim Ardas* (the final service of farewell that concludes seven days' mourning for the deceased), the varied congregation faithfully adheres to Sikh religious rituals, "prostrat[ing] themselves almost flat before the picture of Guru Nanak" (p. 319), irrespective of their own faith. Such tolerance, forgiveness

and capacity for reconciliation leads Dalrymple to conclude that, despite the instances of “terrible, orgiastic violence” that punctuate the city’s history, Delhi is not an inherently violent city, and that the “Delhi-wallahs, particularly the poor, [are] remarkable for their gentleness and elaborate courtesy” (p. 35).

After the sudden disruption and destruction of Partition, the travelogue suggests, the city and its inhabitants return to a state, not even so much of tolerance, as of symbiotic intermingling and merging between cultural and belief systems that were never disparate to begin with. While there are certainly a number of characters who continue to promote the destruction, intolerance and ‘collective amnesia’ that Partition inspired, the overall socio-cultural environment described in Dalrymple’s text is not ultimately defined by such practices, but instead shown to be capable of regenerating at a remarkable speed. As a result, Dalrymple’s Delhi is marked by an almost reckless drive to modernise spatially and materially, with little regard for material heritage and almost no noticeable intention to preserve or officially memorialise. Yet, paradoxically, it is the incredible haste with which this transformation is achieved that at times leads to forgotten pockets of the urban space that remain virtually unchanged and which effortlessly sustain ancient lifestyles, left behind by the rest of the rapidly developing city. Ultimately, despite the cynicism of characters like Dr Jafferey and the debilitating nostalgia of many other Moghul Delhi wallahs, Dalrymple’s travelogue describes a city still capable of remarkable reincarnation, regenerating itself, as it always has, after a devastating loss. The speed and nonchalance of the particular reincarnation *City of Djinns* foregrounds – the transformation of a “Partition city” into a “Punjabi metropolis” – shows a city marked by resilience, capable of drawing strength from hardship and adapting with much enthusiasm.

Chapter 4

Johannesburg – Vladislavić’s *Portrait with Keys: The City of Johannesburg Unlocked*

In 1994, after decades of a racially segregating regime, South Africa abolished apartheid, a discourse and material practice that had, up until that point, functioned as one of the primary influences shaping the nation state, both spatially and ideologically. As one of the most contested and embattled spaces in the preceding decades, Johannesburg transformed rapidly, and often unpredictably, as the city space opened up as a site where communities which were previously held apart could come together. *Portrait with Keys*, Ivan Vladislavić’s unconventional text, part memoir, part portrait of a city, poignantly “charts the small, devastating changes along the post-apartheid streets” (Vladislavić, 2016) as everyday life gets caught up in the transformation process of a city tentatively reinventing itself. Through 138 meticulously detailed and suggestive vignettes, Vladislavić’s urban chronicle presents a series of encounters between the city and its inhabitants as they cobble together new imaginative identities and new spatial realities during this period of transition. As *Portrait’s* exploration of this transformation is so explicitly grounded in descriptions of material infrastructure (from skyscrapers and museums to lapel badges and plastic lucky-packet fish), Scott’s categories for possible material responses to change are particularly valuable in providing an analytical framework for approaching this text. While demolition and preservation both contribute extensively to the shaping of the city that emerges from Vladislavić’s urban chronicle, material re-appropriation and adaptability, as its social parallel, emerge as the primary influences that enable characters to reconstruct their urban environment according to new sensibilities while exploring new modes of occupancy, citizenship and identity.

Demolition – Emigration

When considering possible spatial and architectural responses to Johannesburg's apartheid legacy in the midst of its transformation, demolition would appear to be a particularly appropriate and valuable approach, one with which this city is certainly familiar. Along with

similar responses such as abandonment, unhindered decay, and instances of socio-cultural erasure and artifice, *Portrait* sets up demolition as a contributor to the unravelling of what Mbembe (2008: 61) calls “the racial city” and its material infrastructure. There are a number of vignettes describing instances in which demolition (and materially similar responses) threaten Vlad and other characters’ connection to the city, ranging from the closing down of the Carlton Hotel to the loss of sentimentally valued trinkets through theft, from the demolition of childhood homes to covering up a mural on a garden wall. The decay and demolition of their material environment is unsettling for many characters in the text but, as Scott suggests, “[a]rchitecture sets out...to construct Utopia”; therefore, “the accompanying act of widespread demolition may be legitimised as ridding the world of a heresy” (Scott, 2010:6). In this sense, demolition can be understood as the first step in facilitating the new, possible city Vladislavić inscribes. In his work that focuses mainly on Kinshasa, Filip de Boeck (quoted in Nuttall & Mbembe, 2008: 7) also defines the “effervescent push and pull of destruction and regeneration” as an inherent characteristic of the African city and goes on to describe the breakdown of the urban environment as “a stunning material geography of failing infrastructure, a spectacular architecture of decay that constitutes the physical life of crisis”. Subsequently, this process “create[s], define[s], and transform[s] new sites of transportation, new configurations of entangled spatialities, new public spaces of work and relaxation, new itineraries and clusters of relations” (Nuttall & Mbembe, 2008: 7) as a necessary part of development, in fact, of survival.

Both de Boeck and Scott make compelling arguments for the value and necessity of demolition and other acts of destruction, ultimately presenting such acts in a far more forgiving light than either Pamuk or Dalrymple in *Istanbul* and *City of Djinns*. Yet *Portrait* repeatedly suggests that an unquestioning acquiescence to destruction, decay and demolition in the built environment might be a little precarious, as well as naive, in the case of the post-apartheid city that Vlad describes. In *Portrait*’s ‘author’s note’, Vladislavić describes “a Johannesburg concealed within the place familiar to [him] come[ing] to the surface, like one of Calvino’s invisible cities” during a guided tour of the city in his youth (p. 201). Marco Polo, the main character in Italo Calvino’s *Invisible Cities*, observes that “different cities [sometimes] follow one another on the same site and under the same name, born and dying without knowing one another, without communication among

themselves" (quoted in Mda, 1998: 201). *Portrait* describes instances of merciless destruction of aspects of the built environment that still carry past ideologies and memories in an attempt to hasten the arrival of a new order, a practice which can result in Calvino's multiple reincarnations of the same city that exist without ever knowing or learning from their predecessors. Due to this lamentable failure of communication with the past through the testimonials of preserved material infrastructure, the past becomes elusive for many of Vladislavić's characters as a result of the disintegration and deterioration of its topographical markers in the built environment.

According to Achmat Dangor (1998: 360), apartheid "involved the slow destruction of Johannesburg as a city of communities"; it can therefore be read as a more gradual and sustained version of the socio-spatial destruction caused by Partition in Delhi. A repetition of this same fate increasingly threatens present-day inhabitants in the city Vladislavić inscribes, limited by the ephemeral nature of their urban environment, their tentative grip on a sense of belonging and citizenship, and a lack of tangible reminders of the damage wrought by apartheid as a result of widespread demolition. Without the ability to observe the instructive demonstration of the past, Johannesburg might be positioned to repeat the same social errors again, as is currently attested to by the development of a society that appears to increasingly encourage voluntary segregation.

While the widespread demolition that punctuates Vladislavić's chronicle reveals a desire to obliterate material reminders of a controversial socio-political past, emigration, seeks to terminate characters' citizenship to a politically marred nation state and therefore functions as demolition's social counterpart. Multiple theories have been offered regarding the perpetual transition effected by Johannesburg's inhabitants, whether between neighbourhoods or the eventual departure from the city or country. Writing about the South African context in particular, Dangor (1998: 361) feels that it results from a lack of ownership and belonging in the working class black community who are forced to occupy places "in perpetual transition [where] you move in because you have to [and] you move out as quickly as you can". This "perpetual transition" results in the increasing state of lawlessness and disrepair that gradually overwhelms inner-city suburbs such as Hillbrow, a process that forms one of *Portrait*'s main concerns. In response to these social issues,

“[r]esidents of the traditionally white middle-class suburbs and property owners in the inner city [who] regard crime as the prime threat to confidence in the new South Africa...respond to crime either by leaving the country or by doing everything possible to insulate themselves from it” (Bremner, 1998: 56). Yet, ironically, as will be discussed in this chapter, *Portrait* seems to suggest that (mostly petty) crime forms an intrinsic and inevitable part of the actualisation of processes such as redistribution, re-population and re-appropriation, essential to the construction of ‘the new South Africa’, rather than threatening it.

Ever since its origins as a mining camp in 1886, the city of Johannesburg and its inhabitants have possessed a pronounced sense of transience and nomadism. Torn down and re-built no fewer than five times as the itinerant city moved on in search of the shifting gold seams, the willingness to abandon home and move on still appears to be an inherent quality in Johannesburg, especially in the inner city where “roughly 90 percent of [its] residents were not living there ten years ago” (Simone, 2008: 72). In this respect, Vladislavić’s Johannesburg bears an important similarity to Pamuk’s Istanbul and Dalrymple’s Delhi: each city accommodates a large population of new inhabitants; in fact, in each of the three cities the new inhabitants outnumber those whose lineage in that particular region dates back more than a generation, which is perhaps why they also share a response to issues of heritage that is at times confused and conflicting, while collective preservation initiatives remain tentative. In his discussion of Johannesburg as an “instant city”, John Matshikiza (2008: 222) notes that

[i]t is a wealthy city indeed that can simply abandon its tallest buildings and move onward when the imminent arrival of the barbarians is announced. It is also a mark of a culture that accepts that its very existence is purely temporary and that a day will always come when it is time for the tribe to move on.

It is perhaps this acceptance of the ephemerality of one’s urban environment – and the elusive nature of one’s position in it – that causes Vlad and other characters to experience this city as a “fiction that unravels even as [they] grasp it” (p. 54)⁹.

⁹ All references to the primary text of this particular chapter are to Ivan Vladislavić’s *Portrait with Keys: The City of Johannesburg Unlocked*, published in 2007 by Portobello.

Clearly these notions of ephemerality, transience and nomadism are an inherent and well integrated aspect of the city in which demolition and abandonment are symptomatic of the ever-changing socio-political context that shapes Johannesburg's built environment. In Vladislavić's *Portrait*, for example, Vlad charts the "life and death" of the Carlton Centre, a hotel and shopping mall complex constructed during the height of apartheid and representative of white prosperity. As the great exodus of the white middle classes from the city centre to the northern suburbs due to socio-political anxiety leaves the once magnificent site increasingly abandoned, the Carlton Centre's parkade "beg[ins] to shrink", as the "demand for parking [falls], level by level, like a barometer of change in the city centre" (p. 32). Eventually Vlad finds a chain across the main entrance and is directed to a remote basement "where the cars were all huddled like refugees" (p. 32) and a "HOTEL CLOSED" label is slung across the entrance. This setting reminds him of a crime scene, suggesting the visceral shock that inhabitants might experience upon the discovery that some aspect of the city that formed part of their own material history has been demolished or abandoned. One might imagine the native Delhiites in Dalrymple's text experiencing a similar sense of shock when encountering the rapid and completely unhindered decay of the Old City from a prominent and influential nucleus of culture and society to "a ghetto, a poor relation embarrassingly tacked on to the metropolis to its south" (Dalrymple, 2005: 50). In instances like the closing of the Carlton Hotel, a dismissive attitude to the past, shared by responses such as demolition and abandonment alike, is revealed, which posits the past as devoid of value and easy to reject.

Not surprisingly, emigration features as a significant concern in *Portrait*, frequently discussed by the characters and opted for by a fair number of them while many other characters merely resort to moving to a new neighbourhood or city. Vlad's brother, Branko, is the most pervasive voice for departure throughout the chronicle. He moves to the northern suburbs and tries, on numerous occasions, to persuade his brother to join him, rejecting the inner city by claiming that it is "too dangerous...and unpleasant anyway, what with empty shops and echoing corridors and the smell of piss in the doorways" (p. 32). Eventually even Vlad and his partner, Minky, attempt to move abroad for an indefinite period of time, but return to Johannesburg a year later.

The stories of emigration in *Portrait* suggest that, despite the commonly held belief that a better lifestyle waits outside the borders of the neighbourhood, city or country, the willing surrender of one's place in the city and one's home has the potential to severely disempower anybody, as similar instances in *City of Djinns* attest. This is illustrated in a number of vignettes describing Vlad's neighbour, Eddie, and his eventual move to Germiston. When we are first introduced to Eddie, he adamantly holds on to his status as a resident of Troyeville. In this inner city suburb his past is tangible in the house all his children were born in but he eventually allows "these same children, now scattered across the Reef...to persuade him to move" (p. 40). Concerned about their elderly father, they say that "he shouldn't be living on his own, what with the area going to the dogs, and [that] he needed taking care of" (p. 40). Surrounded by his own material history and an environment he actively occupies, Eddie has remarkable agency for someone of his age while still living in Blenheim Street, and he loses some of this when he allows his children to persuade him to leave. When we later encounter him, he is bewildered, having "lost his place in the world" (p. 67). He paces fretfully up and down the street he used to live in, wanting to see his former house but unable to face it, in a manner that is reminiscent of the Karachi 'exiles' interaction with their former homes in *City of Djinns*. As with Vlad and Minky's failed attempt at emigration, Eddie's experience provides confirmation of one's dependency on a tangible personal material history for the construction of a coherent imaginative identity that is not dislocated from one's social and spatial environment. This very socio-spatial dislocation that has such an unsettling effect on Eddie is presented on a much larger scale in *Istanbul* and *City of Djinns*, whose characters are commonly excluded from their own personal material history, either by the institutional rejection thereof or by a hasty relocation from home.

Another one of Vladislavić's vignettes that deals with the affiliation between identity and occupancy describes a group of friends sharing a Sunday on a stoep in Good Hope Street:

We speak the same language. This is our climate. We have grown up in this air, this light, and we grasp it on the skin, where it grasps us. We know this earth, this grass, this polished red stone with the soles of our feet. We will never be ourselves anywhere else. Happier, perhaps, healthier, less burdened, more secure. But we will never be closer to who we are than this. (p. 98)

The accompanying scene is full of lazy satisfaction, friendship, saturation, ease and joy that assure the reader of the natural state of belonging achieved through such an awareness of the self-identifying quality of one's home. However, such scenes are rare and fleeting in the disordered Johannesburg portrayed in *Portrait* and, at some point, most characters experience a profound sense of alienation in the city of their birth. This feeling of estrangement is perhaps most evidently embodied by Branko, who lacks his brother's even-tempered tolerance for the, at times unsettling, changes the city space experiences and who struggles to achieve the elusive satisfaction of a sense of belonging apparently experienced by the characters in the stoep scene. Branko is therefore most comparable to all the Istanbullus Orhan experiences as never feeling quite at home, and even bears some resemblance to the insecure and ill-at-ease Orhan himself. Throughout the chronicle, minor social and material transformations unnerve him and Vlad frequently puts forward the notion that Branko responds begrudgingly to change, even accusing Branko of not being able to "cope with the slightest change" (p. 157). It appears that an almost paradoxical balance between a certain reverence for one's material history and a tolerance for its alteration in the material environment of the city is a necessary character trait for citizens who choose to inhabit the far more palimpsestically dense inner city and surroundings, rather than to cut their losses and flee to the north. Both Branko and Orhan are too set in their desire for stability and continuity – something the transforming city cannot provide – and suffer as a result.

Vlad's recurring concern throughout the chronicle with certain aspects of the city which anchor and define him and his friends reveals material history, spaces of belonging and ownership of objects as essential to one's sense of place and identity. When he and Minky consider moving, the fear of what might happen to the pagoda tree in their garden makes them hesitate, remembering that when a friend of theirs, Glynis, "sold her house in Johannes Street, the new owner chopped down the trees" and that "[s]he cannot bring herself to go there again" (p. 166). When they do eventually leave the country, he and Minky put their possessions into self-storage, not knowing if they will return, but wanting to keep the material structure of their existence in Johannesburg. When they return after a year, "[i]t is a relief to see the familiar tables and chairs, it assures [them] that [they] are home" (p. 109). If tables and chairs bear such significance for Vladislavić's characters after

only a year's absence, one cannot help but marvel at the resilience of those new Delhiites who Dalrymple portrays adapting to a radically new material environment with gusto, after being forced out of their own homes.

Many characters face the loosening or severing of their connection to their neighbourhoods and city due to a significant material loss. For Minky's brother, Alan, it is the demolition of each of the four houses he has inhabited in his fifty years in Johannesburg, including the house on Scott street their father built himself, sparing no cost out of a desire to "leave something behind" (p. 70). Alan used to jog, ritualistically, past the landmarks of various periods of his life in the city, retracing "his passage from child, to teenager, to young married man, and return[ing] to the present, in Victoria Street" (p. 70). However, this exploration of personal history and trajectory is defeated when, one after the other, the houses are demolished. This makes Alan feel paranoid, stating: "[i]t's as if someone is trying to erase me from the record; I half expect to come home from work one day and find my house knocked down" (p. 70).

Vlad suffers a similar loss when the house he and a previous lover rented was sold to the Apostoliese Geloofssending. Before they had vacated the property, the landlady "brought in her salvagers to cart away the details [they] could do without" such as door handles and dado rails and, eventually, the fireplaces and the pressed-steel ceilings; "within the week, the new owners knocked the walls flat and paved the plot for a parking area, as if the lives [they] lived there had no more substance than a pop song" (p. 87). When he is older, Vlad's only material inheritance from his grandfather, a collection of lapel badges, is stolen by two boys begging for food who smash the wooden box containing the badges to splinters. The loss of these mementoes, the "signs of [his grandfather's] belonging in the world" that "make him come to life" (p. 79) erodes Vlad's history in the city and his own sense of belonging in it. Throughout the great drive to modernise Turkey, the Istanbullus in Pamuk's memoir experience a similarly disheartening loss of personal material culture, although they are often presented as being forced to partake in the destruction themselves and rarely have the luxury of openly mourning their loss.

Confronted with an ever-changing context and the fugitive and marginal casualties it leaves behind, Vlad “begins confronting objects which have been emptied of meaning and value [and gradually] fills them with language, with imaginative, often richly metaphoric, life” (Nuttall, 2011:331). One of these objects is an enigmatic pole discovered one day on a sidewalk he regularly crosses during his frequent walks through the neighbourhood. After curiously measuring this object that “resists reduction”, he carries the dimensions, “two dense figures, compact as seeds”, home to nurse until “a year later, one of the seeds germinates” and grows into a “tomason”, a term used to describe an object devoid of purpose, detached from its original intention, much like Dalrymple’s “human ruins” who somehow become stranded in the transforming city when they fail to match the pace at which it changes. Vladislavić’s tomasons abound in the city that is “constantly being remade and redesigned for other purposes, where the function of a thing that was useful and necessary may be swept away in a tide of change or washed off like a label” (p. 164).

Demolition and emigration seek to destroy material history or one’s relationship with it, while unexpected material loss can disintegrate these connections in an unsolicited manner. Yet another particularly popular mode of socio-cultural erasure that has long since taken root in the city of Johannesburg takes the form of simulation in the built environment through artificial fabrication in the mode of postmodernist pastiche, such as Montecasino and Melrose Arch. The theatricality and artifice of such spaces, cobbled together as they are from a motley collection of borrowed parts, fictional imagery and illusions “becomes a vehicle for denying the violent context of the city and creating the image of a preferred lifestyle” (Bremner, 1998: 61), which bears no relation to the urban context in which it is lodged. Lindsay Bremner (1998: 61) posits the inhabitation of such fictionalised spaces as an alternative to emigration and goes on to suggest that the city “is becoming a giant theme park, an assemblage of fortified and styled enclaves, residential, commercial, retail or leisure, to which access is guarded and selectively granted” (Bremner, 1998: 61). These artificial environments, which are becoming increasingly normative in the design of residential estates in the wealthier suburbs, do seem to allow a manner of rejection of the city in much the same way as physical departure would, by offering “safe havens, worlds which one can enter into in order to escape the cruel, dangerous city” (Putter, 2012:63).

Yet it is important to remember that even the inner city which currently functions as the epitome of authentic Johannesburg was originally designed in the styles of other places and paradigms, but its illusions have broken down and now those styles and allusions have been assimilated into the palimpsestic material history of whatever we may have come to recognise as authentically representative of Johannesburg. Presumably the nouveau riche veneer superimposed by the Punjabi immigrants in Dalrymple's account would eventually be similarly incorporated into a holistic understanding of Delhi. In *Portrait*, Vlad appears to quite readily accept the rampant artifice of Johannesburg as an inescapable part of the city that possesses a rare absence of distinctive natural features, such as a shore, river or mountain for a city of such magnitude. He admits that, in Johannesburg, "the backdrop is always a man-made one", appropriate for a population that "do[es] not wait for time and the elements to weather [them], [but] change the scenery [themselves], to suit [their] moods" and who feel that "[n]ature is for other people, in other places" (p. 90). Although a little sardonic, there is possibly a hint of pride in his description of the citizens of Johannesburg's supreme agency when it comes to the construction and control of their environment, (something which Pamuk's characters lack almost entirely). Yet the ensuing descriptions of characters "taking in the air on the Randburg Waterfront, with its pasteboard wharves and masts, watching the plastic ducks bob in the stream at Montecasino, or eating [their] surf 'n turf on Cleopatra's Barge in the middle of Caesar's" (p. 90) rather suggest these people's sense of dejected detachment from the reality of their land-locked, lack-lustre African urban environment. Perhaps Vlad, with his frequent reference to "a European literary inheritance [consisting of] Elias Canetti, Michel de Certeau and Dickens" (Gasser, 2014: 140) is himself too dependent on external cultural influence, much like these characters who are satirically portrayed as caught between a bathetic African urban environment and a litany of kitsch simulations suggestive of children's amusement parks.

Theorists such as Mbembe (2008: 61) are concerned with what "this apparently endless play of citations and allusions has to say about the memory of the racial city", especially in the light of the conscientious attention paid to the responsibilities of memory stressed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Anne Putter (2012: 64) further discusses how "post-apartheid commercial architecture can be viewed as a mode of erasure of the past" and that

"this erasure emphasizes the failure of the racial city to assimilate the passage of time and that the structures of such architecture are themselves symbols of forgetting." Based on these theorists' analyses, and Calvino's warning about the lack of communication between successive cities that are born and die on the same spot, the need to protect the material inheritance of apartheid that still remains in the city, as well as the evidence of an uneasy transformation, becomes apparent. Although, significantly, in multiple vignettes, *Portrait* appears to contend that such attempts at erasure are futile in any event and that the city will always exist as a palimpsest, "a layered space constituted and constructed in terms of its past, present and future, which are all superimposed upon each other" (Putter, 2012: 59).

Instances of failed or imperfect erasure abound as the city changes sporadically and, at times resentfully, around Vlad and the other characters. Even attempts to daub over the distant past are only temporary measures. During one of his walks through the inner city, Vlad comes across cracks in the tarred road, "long, ragged creases" that mimic the gold reefs upon which this city has been built and that reveal the "tramlines, tarred over in the early sixties [which are] coming back to the surface"; they serve to remind him that the inhabitants of the city "are all still prospectors, with a digger's claim on the earth beneath [their] feet" (p. 60). Despite morphological and cosmetic change, underlying structures and features of the city remain constant while their social and psychological connotations are only temporarily obscured. Rather than erasing the past, the chronicle suggests, such attempted cover-ups aid in the construction of the palimpsestic city.

At times merely the knowledge and memory of what lies beneath a new coat of paint or the memory of what used to occupy a certain city square serve to thwart any attempts at erasure, demolition or removal. At No. 10 Blenheim Street, the "bravely optimistic" Ndebele mural that, to Vlad, "suited the early nineties perfectly" in the manner in which it resembled supposedly traditional, indigenous culture infiltrating the suburbs and proudly leaving its mark, is eventually covered up by new owners (p. 28). Although he eventually concedes that the painter is merely doing his job, Vlad at first considers the act of painting over the mural to be nothing short of an act of vandalism. Yet he is still able to evoke the original "African geometry developing, like a Polaroid image, as the paint dried" (p. 61). He describes Sophie

Calle's exhibition, *The Detachment/Die Entfernung* at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in Joubert Park, which approaches instances where symbols or monuments of the former East Germany have been effaced in a similar fashion. Calle photographs the absence of these symbols and monuments and then replaces the void with memories and recollections of passers-by (p. 32). The artist's interest in such previously occupied spaces and the active survival of the now obliterated monuments suggest that, as in the case with the Ndebele mural, there remains meaning even in absence. Although there is frequent mention of absence in Pamuk's *Istanbul*, few characters are able to acknowledge its worth, while in the post-Partition manifestation of Delhi that Dalrymple depicts, absence is not tolerated – all must be filled, completed, occupied or converted.

Throughout his urban chronicle, “Vladislavić’s aesthetic of ‘imperfect erasure’ registers both the ways in which history is expunged in Johannesburg, and the disquieting traces that remain behind” (Jones, 2011: 380), a concern which is expressed not only spatially, but also socially, as in the case of Vlad and Minky’s attempted emigration. As they leave their home behind in an ascending aircraft, imagery of escape and relief (being “lift[ed] out” of the “huge and scintillating city”, which becomes “comfortably explicable” as “personal connections dissolve” in the “velvet oblivion”) appears to empower them “like one of De Certeau’s impervious voyeur-gods” (p. 103). Yet the same vignette contains contrasting imagery of connectedness and recognition: despite a deep desire for “everything familiar [to have] been forgiven”, forgotten and left behind, Vlad still experiences the poignant assurance that “someone, inevitably, is looking back” at him from “one of these millions of windows, on one of those thousands of stoeps and street corners, [that] someone must be standing, looking up at the plane, at the small, rising light...tracing [his] trajectory, following [his] flight path” (p. 103). This dependency on others, specifically his own fellow citizens of the “huge and scintillating city” as a source of recognition and a means of self-definition anticipates the failure to leave his home and dissolve all personal and material connections that manifests in the couple’s return a year later. As *Istanbul* also reminds us, the attempted erasure of a past that was deemed a liability and the dissolution of people’s ties to this heritage can prove futile when the resistance of collective melancholy secures the city’s relationship with its heritage.

It is therefore apparent that, in certain instances, demolition might succeed in hastening the arrival of socio-political development by allowing for new sites of spatial configurations. As *Portrait* suggests, however, unchecked and reckless demolition as an attempted erasure of the past can yield undesirable results. Especially in the context of the post-apartheid city, where many architectural entities, and indeed the very urban and regional layout, still bear witness to a troubled and controversial history, the urge to wipe clean the slate of the public realm should be resisted in order to preserve some reminder of past mistakes, lest they be repeated. Yet in Vladislavić's imagined city, the presence of an imposed amnesia, achieved through hasty and escapist transformation and development, is all too evident. The city that is inscribed in this text is one which increasingly fails to resemble its own socio-political history and reality in favour of theatricality and artifice. While attempts at material erasure, such as demolition, and socio-cultural denunciation, such as emigration, appeal to numerous characters in *Portrait*, these responses are neither as empowering nor as successful in dismissing the past as many seem to hope for. What appears evident, therefore, is that one's sense of identity and belonging depends greatly on the maintenance of personal material history and even a city that has effectively been rebuilt multiple times should resemble its ontological reality and develop palimpsestically, integrating the past instead of rejecting it.

Preservation – Fortification

If demolition is destructive, problematic and, eventually, futile, could the contrary reaction, preservation, perhaps generate a more fertile and beneficial relationship between the occupants of Vladislavić's Johannesburg and their material infrastructure? Attempts at preservation in the built environment frequently manifest in the construction of monuments and museums. These become representations of particular moments in history and "provide useful indices for processes of remembering and forgetting that accompany 'regime change'" (Kossew, 2010: 571) and therefore address one of the main drawbacks of demolition, the loss of materially articulated memory. Yet, as my discussion of *Portrait*, augmented by references to selected urban theorists, suggests, problems arise in this approach to the transforming city and its relationship with the past as well.

Theorists such as David Bunn and Sue Kossew write at length about the vulnerabilities and dangers of monuments, warning against the naïveté of assuming that these structures steeped in ideology are capable of offering accounts of the past that are either accurate or collective. Instead, the recollections sanctioned and stimulated by museums and monuments are selective, functioning to reconstruct and revise memory, rather than to offer an impartial, democratic or informed account. R. B. Phillips (quoted in Kossew, 2010: 571) goes so far to accuse them of the “orchestration of memory and forgetting”. The ‘authorised’ versions of history told by so many monuments “[shape] national and official versions of historical memory” to the extent that they are effectively engaging in a “recasting of the past” (Kossew, 2010: 576). Alternatively, much as in the eventual failure of practices of physical demolition and social detachment, preservations of idealised or particular versions of the past could also be usurped by the active and transforming relationship of such memories and histories of the past with the influential present. Monuments, therefore, are not necessarily “just static things, fixed in their functions, but are mutable, offering an interplay of elements that can take on new and conflicting roles and meanings according to the relationships of those with interests in them” (Bell, quoted in Kossew, 2010: 572).

Interestingly, the fictionalising and manufacturing of history can create a relationship with aspects of the past that can still be meaningful, something to bear in mind when considering the issue of a lack of official memorials dedicated to Partition in India and Pakistan. In Vladislavić’s short story, ‘The WHITES ONLY Bench’, a fake “whites only” bench usurps the role of a genuine museum piece on exhibit because it occupies a position outside the museum and so is capable of influencing the behaviour of passers-by who can interact with this bench, and its sign proclaiming it to be for whites only, far more successfully than they are allowed to with the genuine article which, being a museum piece, has a sign indiscriminately commanding to all: ‘PLEASE DO NOT SIT ON THIS BENCH’. According to Kossew (2010:577) “[t]his ‘entirely non-racial’ prohibition thus destabilises its effectiveness as a symbol of apartheid injustice”. Her interpretation provides further evidence of how mutable and vulnerable to revision and reinterpretation material artefacts are and how their value as a testament to a certain history is perhaps determined by their success in catalysing memory and interaction, rather than by their authenticity.

In his discussion of “the architecture of hysteria” in contemporary South Africa, Mbembe touches on another potential problem presented by the discipline of preservation: its ability to aid in a rejection of the present in favour of the “hallucinat[ion] [of] the presence of what has been irretrievably lost” (Mbembe, 2008: 62). This mode of architecture that allows for a dangerous severing between the inhabitant and his material surroundings is

the result of a painful, shocking encounter with a radical alterity set loose by the collapse of the racial city. Faced with the sudden estrangement from the familiar resulting from the collapse of the racial city, this architecture aims to return to the ‘archaic’ as a way of freezing rapid changes in the temporal and political structures of the surrounding world. It is an architecture characterized by the attachment to a lost object that used to provide comfort (Mbembe, 2008: 62).

For some, the alternative reality presented by architecture that aims to conjure up the past, or aims to prolong its influence, will always be preferable to the turbid and unstable reality one must otherwise face in times of change. As noted earlier, characters such as Branko’s, and Dalrymple’s Karachi ‘exiles’ struggle to accept the influence of socio-political change in their immediate material environment and eventually reject the transforming city in favour of living on its margins and preserving a lifestyle as similar as possible to the one they had before.

Preserving a by-gone lifestyle depends on preserving and restoring the material infrastructure that facilitates it or, alternatively, on reconstructing elements of the built environment in a manner or style that is at odds with the context it is to be found in, as is the case in Dalrymple’s depiction of Karachi. In this respect, preservation is as much an act of rejection as demolition is, although here the rejection is temporal rather than spatial. John Ruskin considered the restoration of socially or historically significant buildings to be nothing short of “the most total destruction which a building can suffer” and “a lie from beginning to end”, concluding that “it is impossible, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture” (quoted in Scott, 2010:45). As an act of historical fabrication and the destruction of the material identity of the present, restoration effectively destabilises the different layers of historical and architectural strata that construct the palimpsestic city for the sake of conjuration and suppression.

While it never condemns preservation with Ruskin's vigour, *Portrait* is concerned with the pretence of preservation, both in a material and social dimension. Vlad ponders the authenticity of Genpei Akasegawa's sculpture, *A Collection of End Bits of lead from a Mechanical Pencil*, uncertain whether the delicate collection of pencil stubs that have been worn down by a mechanical sharpener until they are too short to be gripped by the mechanism are, in fact, "evidence of an actual process" (p. 116). It is presented as "the accumulated labour of years, but it may have been manufactured in ten minutes, which is all you would need to snap ten cases of unused pencil leads into fragments" (p. 116). As a preserver of his own history and citizenship, Vlad is also aware of the occasional necessity of pretence and fictionalisation as a means to cling to one's occupancy in the contested city and to cope with rapid changes in the social context.

This acceptance and willingness to play along and pretend is marvellously illustrated in a vignette where Vlad returns home after buying groceries and interrupts a break-in. Caught in the act, the would-be thief ironically decides to play the part of a concerned neighbour who enters Vlad's yard in order to prevent a burglary from occurring, even reverting back to servile use of the Afrikaans language to explain, "'Daar was 'n dief, baas' ['There was a thief, boss'] (p. 132). Perfectly aware that the man pretending to be a concerned neighbour is, in fact, the thief himself, Vlad plays along because they "need to keep up this pretence [since, if they] can go on lying to one another, and more importantly, believing one another, everything will be fine [and] [n]either of [them] will have to do what the situation demands of him" (p. 132) and play the far more unpleasant role of criminal/victim. The ridiculousness of the situation reaches unexpected proportions when the pair, each satisfied that the other will remain in their respective role and therefore not endanger one another, carry on walking at a relaxed pace down the garden path, casually chatting about crime in general. Here Vlad maintains his relative safety due to his ability to adapt, to embody the necessary pretence that serves to preserve a kind of parody of days gone by when crime was less of a daily reality, neighbourliness was more prevalent amongst fellow citizens of the city and a clear social hierarchy existed (revealed by the servile language of the intruder). While he inevitably plays the role of the privileged white home-owner to the thief's ever-willing black servant, the very fact that Vlad agrees to engage in this little pantomime on the criminal's

terms, as equals, suggests a willingness to relinquish power or, at the very least, the ability to recognise when power has been transferred.

The necessity of pretence in relation to crime and safety is not limited to the vignette of performer-thief, but crops up repeatedly in *Portrait*. In one particular instance, local electrical suppliers attempt to ward off graffiti artists by painting their building charcoal grey. When this fails to deter the artists from continuing to abuse the property, the company resorts to putting up a sign to warn of 24-hour surveillance, accompanied by a security camera. While the graffiti artists are effectively deceived by the camera, Vlad is less certain and refers to it as a security company scarecrow. A friend of Vlad is forced to employ scarecrows of her own when a neighbour alerts her that she overheard someone plotting to burgle her house. Without enough time to install proper security measures, Vlad's friend has to settle for the signage of a patrol company and hope for the best. In both these instances, pretence becomes a necessary and effective means for protection.

In a city of rapid and seemingly unpredictable change, the urge to preserve aspects and qualities of daily life in response to incessant transformation would be inevitable. This is perhaps why fortification, the social response that parallels preservation in the built environment, has become increasingly prevalent in the city of Johannesburg in the last two decades. As the racial city along with its social structures collapse, inhabitants can either actively engage in a struggle for territory and agency as the new city takes shape, or they can adopt what Lindsay Bremner (1998: 60) calls a "laager mentality" and isolate themselves in secure enclaves that ignore the chaotic reality of the public realm and attempt to preserve a semblance of peace and security no longer characteristic of the city in general. The increasing presence of security cameras and gates, electrified fencing and razor wire, as well as the employment of security personnel in residential contexts promotes "the militarization of space" (Bremner, 1998: 57). In addition, new rules of segregation and elimination, based on private property rights that allow for the removal of entire streets or neighbourhoods from the public network, contribute to "an increasing privatization of the public realm" (Bremner, 1998: 60).

These instances of fortification form part of the “enormous resources of repression [that white South Africans have] at their disposal” (Robinson, 1998: 168). Fortification is symptomatic of an emerging social structure which seeks to prevent change, a situation which is significantly more problematic than the social counterpart of demolition, namely emigration, which merely rejects change. The confusing entanglement of areas and communities that embrace the city’s transformation (whether willingly or because they lack the means to reject it), and others that resist it, is frequently referred to in *Portrait* through discussions of suburbs like Fairview and New Doornfontein that “have evolved into black areas” while others, such as Kensington, “still hold on to [their] white identity” (p. 65). Here it is perhaps not the racial classification of these two conflicting types of suburbs that is revealing with regards to the inhabitants’ response to change, but the verbs used here to describe them: “have evolved” versus “still holds on to”. The disharmonious intermingling of such perceptibly incompatible spaces is again evoked in a contrasting comparison between signage that metonymically represents “the white city”, which is “made of steel and glass, illuminated from within...printed on aluminium hoardings and Perspex sheeting...bolted down, recessed double-sided and laminated” and signage representative of “the township” which is described and punctuated as follows:

The township is made of cardboard and hardboard, buckling in the sunlight. It is handpainted on unprimed plaster, scribbled on the undersides of things, on the blank reverses, unjustified, in alphabets with an African sense of personal space, smudged. Tied to a fence with string. leaning against a yield sign. propped up by a brick. secured with a twist of wire. nailed to a tree trunk. (p. 65)

Despite all the efficiency, precaution and material superiority of “the white city”, it is “the township” and its willingness to compromise, its tenacity and its creativity in eking out an existence that is imbued with a survivor’s sense of longevity. A similar contrast is set up between the Old City and New Delhi in *City of Djinns*, and here too it is the adaptability and resilience of New Delhi that allows it to flourish as it transforms, while the Old City stagnates and eventually starts to disintegrate.

True to a city preoccupied with questions of belonging and ownership, “one can read Vladislavić’s *Portrait with Keys* as an obsessive journal of security” (Penfold, 2012: 1000). From the first vignette, describing the influence of security measures, such as alarms, on the daily rituals of home-coming and departure, one can detect a note of bitter resolve in the

acceptance that with preserving one's own safety and possessions comes the unfortunate reality of living in a house that is "explosive", that "emits a whine that sends the occupants rushing out" when it is "armed" (p. 15). Such a house does not allow for "leisurely departures" or "soured homecomings" and swathes its occupants in "a luminous, clinical green" at night, as if for "a child who's afraid of the dark" (p. 15). The carceral existence of the characters in *Portrait* is further emphasised through frequent reference to keys; Vlad has dozens of keys that "shame him" when a Swedish journalist is surprised and entertained by the quantity of locks that form part of his daily activities, revealed by the keys "lying there like the keys to [his] psyche, a feeler gauge for every insecurity" (p. 115). The comparison between the characters' houses and enclosures is further elaborated on by a satirical description of the cage occupied by Max the Gorilla that "has the blatant charm of a garden in Meyerton" and parodies a suburban property so successfully with all its security features that "[a]ll he needs is a gazebo and a pool, and any one of the spectators would trade places with him" (p. 123). In fact, the patrons of the zoo identify so strongly with the enclosed primate that, after an incident with a run-away burglar, they donate funds to burglar-proof his cage so that it resembles their own homes more completely.

An interesting comparison can be made regarding the extent of the resistance that needs to be put up by the different characters in each of the three texts who insist on preserving a former life-style. Based on the number of social and physical barriers that need to be put in place between *Portrait*'s characters and the transforming city around them to enable their preferred lifestyle, it appears as if Vladislavić's Johannesburg is particularly resistant to such preservation and the inevitable stasis it enforces. In Dalrymple's Delhi, on the other hand, modes of conduct that favour ancient values and traditions occur freely and often entirely unhindered by their modernising counterparts, suggesting an urban environment that is much less perturbed by difference, despite a recent history which sought to prioritise exactly that. Although there are exceptions in each of these texts, both Pamuk's and Vladislavić's accounts generally aim to prioritise the opposition to the preservation of the past, instead of presenting a particular perspective on the urban environment where even the distant past and present peacefully coincide side-by-side, as Dalrymple does.

Portrait repeatedly makes reference to Vlad's aversion to the voluntary segregation and isolation promoted by the increasing fortification and privatisation of the city's public space. When his friend Jeff playfully considers building a wall which is constructed out of sentimental objects that are encased in resin, Vlad wants to build "something useful", because "half the city has already vanished behind walls" (p. 49). He also remembers with great fondness an instance where Takis Xenopoulos, who opened the city's first 24-hour bakery and take-away, throws his keys into the crowd at the opening of the first Fontana Foods as "a public statement of faith in his idea" (p. 151). According to Vlad, "[i]t was one of the grandest gestures ever made by a Joburger [that] seems even grander now in this barred and gated city"; he feels that "[s]omewhere, on a street free of sentry boxes and booms, we should raise a statue for Mr Xenopoulos lobbing his keys into the blue" (p. 151). Based on Vlad's discontent with "this barred and gated city", it appears as if the attempt to preserve a lifestyle and means of occupation so incompatible with the volatile city of today does not succeed in keeping the old manner of existence alive. Rather, the means with which this failed endeavour is attempted – the walls, gates and barricades of contemporary Johannesburg – serve themselves as monuments that oppose the fabrication of a mid-apartheid utopia in the white middle-class suburbs and attest to its futility. The mere presence of these security mechanisms inadvertently declares the presence of a transformation that cannot be ignored continually and can only be held at bay at the cost of incarcerating oneself.

Yet more issues arise as a result of wide-spread fortification in the city. The increase of compartmentalisation and isolation produce conditions that promote violent and anonymous crimes rather than deter them; what were once "signs of privilege have become conditions of extreme vulnerability as apartheid's barriers are torn down" (Bremner, 1998: 56). Ironic observations in *Portrait*, such as the comment that the frequency of hijacking is "directly related to the efficacy of vehicle security systems" (p. 73) support this claim. Much as "[t]he increasing application of alarms, electronic immobilizers and steering and gearlocks" (p. 73) has made it almost impossible to steal an unoccupied, stationary car, "[e]xpressions of order have the paradoxical effect of generating disorders that are not only more frequent, but also inflict greater violence" (Jones, 2011: 382).

Apart from possessing the possibility of ironically leaving paranoid occupants more vulnerable than they were before, the organisation of security measures to guard against infiltrations from the outside inevitably comes at the cost of increasing levels of immobility. This results in a city that, unlike Dickens' London, does not offer "miles upon miles of streets in which to be lonely", with "warm company at every turn" but would rather give a stranger arriving at night the impression "that it had been struck by some calamity, that every last person has fled" as the citizens hide out in their "houses [that] are ticking like bombs" (p. 54). In this hostile environment where space is apparently seldom shared, there is "a price to pay for the suppression of difference and that price is stasis, as those who own the houses and cars are literally trapped inside the very possessions they seek to protect" (Jones, 2011: 386). In Pamuk's depiction of post-Kemalist Istanbul, the suppression of difference has been achieved to a much greater extent than Vladislavić's characters, despite some of their best efforts, manage to accomplish; although, this results in a great loss for the former Ottoman capital, as Pamuk's description of it as "a monotonous, monolingual town in black and white" (Pamuk, 2006: 227) reveals. The incredibly volatile nature of such a situation of desperate suppression and denial is hinted at by descriptions in *Portrait* of houses in Johannesburg functioning as "ticking like bombs" and in another vignette describing the "unnatural state" of boxes collapsed and flattened in a warehouse selling packing supplies. In something of an exaggerated parody of the closed off, compartmentalised suburbs, there are "[s]o many cubic meters of space collapsed into square ones, so many roomfuls of compressed air in every corner" of the warehouse (p. 75). Vlad describes the collapsed boxes as "[s]pace in captivity" and further comments that it "seems as full of explosive potential as a fireworks factory" (p. 75).

According to Bremner (1998: 61), "[o]ne of the most devastating and ineradicable traces of apartheid will be its planning of the city". The unchecked fortification and compartmentalization running rampant in large parts of Johannesburg are effectively preserving apartheid urban planning and, in doing so, assembling material support structures for the continuation of its ideological premises. Instead of creating inviting and inclusive public spaces where community interaction is encouraged, alienating environments proliferate "in which the possibilities for alternative spatialities are repressed" (Robinson, 1998: 165), while large-scale development of security estates

eliminate public space from the urban realm. These qualities in the built environment lead to “an increasingly disparate, separated city” in which “[t]he gaps between the worlds of the township, the inner city and the suburb are widening” (Bremner, 1998: 60). Too much of apartheid’s spatial heritage remains influential, and with it comes the preservation of problematic social structures and hierarchies that the nature of our urban environment creates. As a result, “[t]he chances that the people of this city will develop a sense of shared space, of shared destiny grow slimmer” (Bremner, 1998: 60), and the impact of our troubled socio-political past grows ever more entrenched. According to Harvey (quoted in Graham, 2008: 333), “[c]ities that cannot accommodate to difference, to migratory movements, to new lifestyles and to economic, political [and] religious [transformations]”, cities that cannot “value heterogeneity, will die either through ossification and stagnation or because they will fall apart in violent conflict”. If this warning is valid, we have a lot to lose from indiscriminate preservation of urban material infrastructure and the accompanying lifestyle it promotes. Harvey’s theory holds true for both Pamuk’s inscription of Istanbul, which is largely defined by ossification and stagnation, and Dalrymple’s Delhi, which has experienced a great deal of violent conflict, as a direct consequence of each of these cities’ unwillingness to accommodate difference at some point in their recent history.

Yet one cannot help but sympathise with Vlad, an aging middle-class white man who becomes increasingly exposed to the notion that his epoch in the transient city has passed, and that he will only be increasingly marginalised by the fervent transformation the city is swept up in, until he is reduced to a mere spectator, devoid of all but reactionary agency. This is perhaps a familiar sensation for the writer who describes that, as children growing up in Pretoria, he and his siblings “felt like people who had been left behind, who were not fast enough” (p. 157) to keep up with the progressive drive of Johannesburg. His memoir of the changing city, presented as a richly detailed and intensely personal urban chronicle, is therefore imbued with a strong sense of nostalgia and, by turns, a restless anxiety and a sentimental attachment to notions of legacy and the establishment thereof. These effects are achieved through Vlad’s preoccupation with the past, resulting in a sense of “wistfulness tinged with the realization that such a past is irrecoverably lost” (Goodman, 2009: 223). In each of the three texts, at some stage near the end of the narrative, the narrators are to some extent expelled by the fervidly transforming city, despite their considerable

determination to study, interact with, and adapt along with the urban environment: Orhan becomes increasingly isolated and solipsistic throughout the course of *Istanbul*, retreating further and further into the back alleys of the city, while Dalrymple flees the oppressive heat of Delhi's summer to cavort with other dignitaries in Simla, a mountain retreat reminiscent of the days of the Raj, shortly after which he returns to Scotland after only a year in the Indian capital. Maintaining a stable sense of identity in such an unstable and ephemeral environment as a city in transformation is challenging, even for those with the best intentions.

It is in an elegiac tone that Vlad so frequently recalls the passing of time and the formation and destruction of many personal epochs, pausing here and there to recover individual memories and instil in them a tentative sense of longevity through his reminiscing. This gentle nostalgia also enables him to devote painstaking care and interest to the memories and legacies of other inhabitants of his transient city. Unlike Dalrymple, who collects the recounted memories of others in the form of first-person narratives, Vlad frequently chronicles stories and memories captured in objects. As he strips down his bedroom door, the layers of paint reveal a history of personal preference and style in a collection of strata he attempts to read “the way a forester reads the rings of a felled tree, deciphering the lean seasons, the years of plenty, the catastrophes, the triumphs” (p. 87). He construes a previous occupant of his house, a robust “DIY man, fond of wood” based on his handiwork throughout the house, such as “built-in cupboards so high [Minky] can hardly reach” and “door handles [that] were made for a heavyweight’s fist” (p. 58). He treats with great reverence the most treasured memento of a friend, “[a] lucky-packet fish with a breath of her childhood in its belly” (p. 81) and displays an uneasy accountability for Louis Fehler’s unfinished biography that he diligently carts around with his own possessions whenever he moves house. Faced with the unnerving reality of “a city that has been turned upside down, inside out, [and] which has become opaque to its inhabitants as their capacities for cognitive mapping are dislocated by its vertiginous transformations” (West-Pavlov, 2014: 11), Vlad’s chronicle of treasured individual memories presents a retaining of personal history that anchors him as he attempts to reconcile the changing city and his place in it.

While there are undoubtedly many inhabitants of Johannesburg who would agree with Lucy Gasser (2014:139) that “a city in transformation, in transience, in fragmentedness, is a very problematic space in which to form an imaginative identity”, Vlad is able to construct a strong sense of self in relation to the city space he inhabits through his struggle to reconcile personal history and legacy with the knowledge that any agency in the increasingly impersonal present demands a keen sense of presence and awareness. Pamuk’s memoir could be read as depicting the very beginning of this same process for the Istanbulus, who, through the collective experience of the city’s melancholy, start to construct an awareness of the process of imaginative identity formation in relation to the urban space which is reclaimed from the limiting discourse of Turkification in the process. *Portrait*’s epigraph, “Haunted places are the only ones people can live in” (p. 14) might aim to suggest a more concrete connection between memory and habitation through the notion of “built forms made habitable by the traces of human interaction” (Poyner, 2011:316), something Lionel Abrahams describes as the “topsoil of memory” that forms in places with a strong sense of personal association (p. 176). Throughout his chronicle, Vlad allows memory to achieve an increasingly tangible influence, contemplating that it “might yet carve out or fill a space in the material world” (p. 176).

It is therefore fitting that ghosts and other traces of individuals remain long after their departure in numerous vignettes. These range from olfactory traces that remain months after Ben, a handyman, has installed a new ceiling in Vlad’s house, making “the house smell of this specific history of labour” (p. 114), to the reassuring presence of the late Herman Charles Bosman Vlad frequently encounters all over town. Again, it is irrelevant whether we, like writers who “are able to invent their memories and pass them on between the covers of a book” (p. 175), fabricate the details of our existence and our personal legacy. Inevitably “we allow parts of ourselves to take root and assume a separate life” to leave marks in “places where our thoughts and feelings have brushed against the world...leaving secret signs for those who come after us” (p. 176). *Portrait* explores the resulting “double address” between the city and the self, “in the echo chambers of the head and the street” (p. 176), that gives meaning and definition to both. This particular sentiment is shared by Orhan, who states, “Istanbul’s fate is my fate: I am attached to this city because it has made me who I am” (Pamuk, 2006: 6); Orhan’s “parts of [him]self” that “take root and assume a

separate life” also take on a more tangible aspect through his construction of the “other Orhan” whom he imagines roaming the streets of Istanbul, a “secret sign”, or cypher, that enables Orhan to construct and extend his own imaginative identity within the city.

In the end, both the attempt at a new start or a continuation of existing paradigms comes at a price in the nuanced and complex social context of the post-apartheid city. An endeavour to maintain a stable sense of self and belonging in the turbid environment that Vladislavić’s chronicle depicts is essential, and characters who fail to actively construct a home and an identity with the fragments of history and possibility offered by the city struggle to achieve an active sense of citizenship and often seek to rectify this through a restless nomadism and eventual emigration. Yet such envisioned constructions of self and space cannot be static and greatly depend on inhabitants’ ability to adapt, yield and compromise, lest they inspire fictionalising and fortified subjectivities. The importance of preservation and identity is increasingly articulated throughout *Portrait*. Yet, as with demolition, this equally volatile spatial reaction has the potential for destruction and repression if indiscriminately applied to the vulnerable city in transformation.

Re-appropriation – Adaptation

While the spatial logic of apartheid’s legacy and its influence on social structures will remain for some time – and in some instances be actively preserved – a “new city is emerging, in which...other, largely illicit ways of controlling, managing and using urban space challenge [these] rules” (Bremner, 1998: 61). However, it should be noted that the movements and influences that have made possible the production of new figural and material forms have emerged from less normative rationalities, those of necessity and crime. These new subversive influences shape the city, often in desperate and lawless ways, and do so by a new means to change: re-appropriation. In the context of the transformation of the racial city, re-appropriation of space is advantageous because it neither obliterates nor enshrines the material history of a troubled past. Instead, it allows opportunity for new sources of agency and power, available on an individual level, through new possibilities of active engagement with one’s material environment.

The full title of *Portrait with Keys: The City of Johannesburg Unlocked* suggests the understanding that Johannesburg is moving towards a state of increased involvement, awareness, agency and possibility, a trend which is clearly also seen in *City of Djinns* but which is lacking in *Istanbul*. *Portrait*'s sense of optimism and opportunity is picked up on by James Graham (2008: 333) who proposes that “[t]o read Vladislavić's 'portrait' is to imagine the city as a space that might be written, read and experienced differently – to imagine it as a *possible city*.”

The absolute necessity of re-appropriation and alteration in the urban context on a scale that influences the ordinary life of ordinary people is elaborated on by Lefebvre (quoted in Robinson, 1998: 169):

A revolution that does not produce a new space has not realized its full potential; indeed it has failed in that it has not changed life itself, but has merely changed ideological superstructures, institutions or political apparatuses. A social transformation, to be truly revolutionary in character, must manifest a creative capacity in its effects on daily life, on language and on space.

An absence of tangible alteration in the spatial fabric of the city would mean that no significant change has been achieved. Debate concerning the existence of real and meaningful change in South Africa is still prevalent as the abolition of apartheid was achieved through a relatively peaceful surrender of power, rather than the kind of violent revolution Frantz Fanon advocates in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963). Yet an in-depth analysis of the material infrastructure of the city does reveal the presence of meaningful alterations, re-appropriations and infiltrations achieved, not under the guidance and authority of government officials, but due to the engagement of the city's inhabitants on an individual level. It is, therefore, in the minor, tentative, creative and sporadic alterations effected by a multitude of (previously) marginalized inhabitants that the social and spatial transformation can be observed.

The collapse of the racial city raises new questions regarding the inhabitation of the city; especially for those who had largely been excluded, finding a space to make oneself feel at home in takes on a particular urgency. As urban theorists such as Bremner have argued, necessity and tenacity have driven the marginalised to reinvent the city and so openly

challenge and disrupt the very order and structure of apartheid urban planning through the application of informal re-appropriation and infiltration of the inner city, leading to new forms of spatial imagination: “[p]eople live in the cracks, cook on the streets, bed down on the pavements; shops appear on street corners; warehouses shelter families; office blocks become factories; houses turn into shops; chickens, goats, mealies appear on inner city kerbs; Taiwanese watches are displayed next to Nigerian bags, next to local tomatoes” (Bremner, 1998: 61). Governance of development is no longer in the hands of the city’s bureaucrats and administrators but is seized upon by entrepreneurs, opportunists, hustlers, criminals, illegal immigrants, the creative and the desperate alike, allowing these marginalised groups to actively engage in the shaping of their city and to take ownership of it. Everywhere informal development “is taking up the slack, working through invisible networks of associations in the spaces between what was and what is still to be defined” (Bremner, 1998: 52). Mbembe vividly evokes the labour that is applied to the space inherited from the apartheid city in order to transform it into a city of new spatial possibilities and “interrupt[ing] or saturat[ing]” the links that form the city as a whole, fragmenting the old, “forcing the city to open up” and haphazardly cobbling together a new urban reality which sets into motion a “process of deframing and enframing [that] has set different repertoires of spatial imaginations and practices into collision” (Mbembe, 2008: 59).

As a personal recollection of a city in transformation, *Portrait* is filled with instances of collision between different spatial practices, interruption of established modes of occupation and habitation, and an opening up of the city in order to alter and engage with it; in short, it is filled with instances of re-appropriation. Informal development comes to Troyeville when the tenants of a house on Kitchener Avenue start a shop in one of the rooms of their house. While it is announced by a characteristically hand-painted sign listing “COCA-COLA, BREAD, MILK, [i]t is unclear where the shop is, exactly, but through an oval window, feint-ruled by venetian blinds, one can make out what seems to be a hairdressing salon” (p. 41). Informal development is shown to impact negatively on certain aspects of the neighbourhood, such as the closing down of the Marymount Nursing Home due to doctors and patients moving further north, “no longer believ[ing] that a decent person would want to be born on this side of town” (p. 18). However, alternative appropriations of the space

quickly step in to fill the vacancies. The Vroue Federasie converts the nursing home into an old-age home, and the grand old bioscope cinemas of Johannesburg that were driven out of business by the multiplexes and the gradual abandonment of the inner city in the eighties are adopted by junk shop owners who “take the names of the old establishments, as if it is important to preserve the association” (p. 63).

Throughout the chronicle, the repeated phrase, “[i]t’s starting to look like a township around here” (p. 64), is voiced by no one in particular but rather functions as a general statement, a concern shared by all the inhabitants of the ‘white city’. For those, like Branko, who cannot reconcile or tolerate the influx of radically different forms of occupancy that take root in their neighbourhoods, and are at odds with their ordered and rigid perception of what these neighbourhoods should be, departure seems to be the only available option. Yet others imaginatively imbue the ramshackle development around them with a sense of fantasy and possibility. Vlad, for example, describes the structure set up by a hawker on Eleanor Street as having a fine touch of “magic carpet laid down across the pavement” that allows “walls [to] rise from [its] frayed edge”, making you forget for a moment that you are surrounded by a collection of planks and tins (p. 154). In *City of Djinns*, the established Moghul community in Delhi reacts similarly to the arrival of Punjabi immigrants after Partition. Unnerved by the sudden socio-spatial change wrought by the new inhabitants in the ancient city that was, for centuries, shaped mainly by Moghul sensibilities, some of the old Delhi-wallahs who were willing and able to fight to maintain their right to the city become marginalised by a new status quo which they struggle to reconcile with their own understanding of the city.

As existing spatial and social institutions collapse under the weight of the transformation that completely overpowers certain parts of Johannesburg, or are rather torn to pieces in order to reconstruct new realities and new spatialities, a period of overwhelming uncertainty and possibility sets in. Mbembe (2008: 60) describes a state of “disorderly convulsions and apparent formlessness” in a “fragmented and kaleidoscopic” metropolis that functions “not as an art form but as a compositional process that is...marked by polyphonic dissonances”. West-Pavlov (2014: 11) is concerned with the sudden fluidity of the social landscape and the emergence of “messy intersections and overlapping realities”

that result from a city speedily unravelling. For Abdou Maliq Simone (2004: 68) it is a city “characterized by incessantly flexible, mobile, and provisional intersections of residents”. In addition, Bremner (quoted in West-Pavlov, 2014: 11) hypothesises that “Johannesburg no longer operates in section” with a clearly delineated interior and exterior, but has evolved to represent “a thick surface of tangled trajectories, muddied hierarchies and latent opportunities”. These concepts of plasticity and conditionality frequently appear in *Portrait*’s depictions of Johannesburg, a city where “[t]he boundaries...are drifting away, sliding over pristine ridges and valleys, lodging in tenuous places, slipping again” (p. 6), allowing for alternative readings and interactions. Terms and phrases such as “disorderly convulsions”, “formlessness”, “fragmented”, “messy intersections”, “tangled trajectories” and “muddied hierarchies” construct an image of pronounced incoherence, unrest and chaos that is certainly reflected in many of the informal spatial appropriations that appear during this period. Yet these material alterations are valuable and informative in that they (unlike the pseudo-European constructs, like Montecasino) are representative of their social and temporal environment.

In its vivid and detailed depiction of spatial re-appropriation in the city, *Portrait* reveals a significant awareness of potential practices of social transformation in post-apartheid South Africa that includes both identifying and envisioning the emergence of new structures of social and spatial organisation. Vladislavić’s concern for “the informal, the throw away, the peculiar, the minutiae of human interaction” in *Portrait* “gesturally rehumanises Johannesburg” and so “resist[s] the blank spaces created by apartheid and perpetuated as its legacy” (Poyner, 2011:311). As Vlad’s chronicle unfolds, the reader develops an increasing suspicion that there are hidden worlds and invisible realities existing in overlooked niches, around disregarded corners and beneath the city’s streets. A particularly memorable instance of the re-appropriation of ‘invisible’ space is the use of the cavities below the covers of water mains by the homeless of the city to store a meagre collection of sentimental and functional valuables. Vlad’s friend is amused by the idea “that such utilitarian spaces should have been appropriated and domesticated, transformed into repositories of privacy for those compelled to live their lives in public”, prompting an originally dismissive Vlad (p. 50) to consider the cupboards of the people of the street:

[a]ny iron cover you passed in the street might conceal someone's personal effects. There was a maze of mysterious spaces underfoot, known only to those who could see it. And this special knowledge turned them into the privileged ones, made them party to something in which we, who lived in houses with wardrobes and chests of drawers, and ate three square meals a day, could not participate. Blind and numb, we passed over these secret places, did not even sense them beneath the soles of our shoes. How much more might we be missing?

Here the act of re-appropriation, of actively claiming space and making it your own, empowers the agent of the alteration. In various instances in the text, this process happens covertly, with the aid of a surreptitious knowledge accessed only by the marginalised. The ability to operate underfoot, successfully eking out an existence despite the lack of aid or the awareness of traditionally more privileged groups, is due to a "special knowledge" that "turn[s] them into the privileged ones", while the homeowners and "official" citizens of the city remain "[b]lind and numb" and effectively excluded. It is also worth noting that this new material reality, which complicates the traditional binary of marginalised and privileged, creates new social structures, although they can, temporarily and with some effort, be accessed by the otherwise "blind and numb" inhabitants as each of the three narrators' exploration of their respective city's secrets reveals.

After Vlad and his friend's argument regarding the nature of the mysterious storage spaces, Vlad wants to lift one of the covers and take a peak, but is reprimanded by his friend who feels that it would be inappropriate to go prying and solemnly claims that even the meter-readers who often have to invade these personal depositories respect the contents they come across inside as well as their owners because "[t]hey have an understanding" (p. 50). She is right about the relationship of mutual respect that exists between the meter readers and the owners of the stored objects, as Vlad discovers ten years later when he lifts the water mains cover to replace a tap washer: in the space beneath he finds various articles of clothing, food, containers and magazines, all painstakingly arranged to allow easy access to the water meter and all evidently undisturbed. Such mutually respectful co-existence is also frequently foregrounded by Dalrymple's account through descriptions of, for example, the sharing of the Old City's cemetery grounds by both the partridge enthusiasts and the bereaved.

Yet a resourceful and creative re-appropriation of space is not limited to the poor, the marginalised and the invisible, transient inhabitants of the city. “Johannesburg”, Vlad informs us, “is a frontier city, a place of contested boundaries [where] territory must be secured and defended or it will be lost” (p. 173). In the midst of this fierce contest, defences multiply. Therefore, in areas where residents cannot afford to demolish their existing walls and build new, taller ones, “the walls tend to grow by increments [by which] a stone wall is heightened with prefab panels, a prefab wall is heightened with steel palisades, the palisades are topped with razor wire” to create “piggyback walls” (p. 173). Similarly, garden paths that lead to solid walls instead of gates become a common feature, along with “vanished gateways” that can be found on any street, indicated by “a panel in a wall where the bricks are a different colour or the courses poorly aligned” to fill in the gap (p. 174). These “tomason[s] of access” reveal how drastically notions of mobility and admittance have changed over the years, to the extent that features such as waist-high walls and low-security gateways, or their remains, are being reclassified as “tomasons”, objects whose original purpose has ceased entirely or become detached (p. 174).

Alterations in the public sphere that are informed by the futile drive to “secure” and “defend” territory that will otherwise be “lost” are often presented in a satirical light in *Portrait*. Because “[t]he well-heeled — who naturally are also the well-wheeled — should be able to reach point B without setting foot in the street”, new buildings are designed with sufficient parking space attached directly to the building, but older buildings have to adapt to the new requirements. The Johannesburg Art Gallery, for example, “has turned its back on the public space it was designed for; instead of strolling in through Joubert Park, visitors leave their cars next to the railway line and hurry in through the back door”, and at the Public Library “the black schoolchildren who are now the main users of the facility stroll arm-in-arm up the broad staircase from the library gardens or gather in the grand lobby to giggle and whisper, [while] the few white suburbanites who still venture here park underground and slip in up the back stairs” (p. 155). Such social reversals promote previously excluded groups, such as black children, to ‘proper’ citizens with agency and a strong sense of belonging, while the white middle class is reduced to skulking up back stairs, trying to be as inconspicuous as possible in public spaces they boldly occupied thirty years ago.

As has been discussed in the section on preservation, crime plays a significant role in shaping the new city in transformation by adding new dimensions to it and “weav[ing] through the soft underside of the emerging landscape” (Bremner, 1998: 63) to create new sites of power and vulnerability. The influence of the emerging landscape of crime creates “[n]ew divisions between victim and criminal, fear and bravado, vulnerability and immunity [that] are criss-crossing the old ones of race, class and gender in the creation of Johannesburg’s new economic, social and spatial order” (Bremner, 1998: 54). While crime certainly acts as a catalyst for the fortification of space that is increasingly becoming a characteristic feature of the city, in *Portrait* a substantial amount of the re-appropriation of space and material infrastructure is criminal as well. In fact, the chronicle is surprisingly tolerant of, and nonchalant about, the frequent instances of criminal repossession that feature in Vlad’s recollections. Indeed, in each of the three texts documented in this dissertation, criminal repossession plays at least a minor role in shaping the city, although neither *Istanbul* nor *City of Djinns* focuses on this means of re-appropriation to the extent that *Portrait* does. *Istanbul*, for example, describes the theft of objects such as mosques’ decorative features in order to highlight the city slowly losing its reverence for Islam as a consequence of modernising.

Vladislavić’s urban chronicle focuses mostly on instances of petty, non-violent crime. While more horrific crimes are a concern for many of the characters and therefore influence their behaviour, these crimes are unrealised, shadowy threats that remain on the periphery and are not encountered directly in the chronicle. Even home invasions with the potential for violence, such as Vlad’s encounter with the criminal-actor, are imbued with a tinge of comedy and a sense of a familiarity that manipulate the reader into empathising with the criminals and so normalising their actions. In another vignette that recalls a break-in at Chas’s house (p. 130), these features are again displayed when the burglar pauses as he makes his retreat over the garden wall to ask Chas for the time, and is answered in a perfectly ordinary fashion that is comically at odds with the situation. A different recollection describes Branko’s encounter with what he assumes to be a door-to-door salesman, wearing a suit and burdened with a heavy suitcase that reduces him to an amusing, bird-like figure, “his free arm sticking out like a wing, pigeon-toed with effort” as

he tries “to give the heavy case an extra little shove with his calf at each step” (p. 66). It is only when Branko farcically nearly falls into a hole in the pavement where the iron cover that conceals the connection to the water mains ought to be, that he realises that the well-dressed man with a heavy suitcase that he ironically pitied was, in fact, a “white-collar criminal” who had just stolen the water mains cover for scrap metal.

Apart from many of these amusing descriptions of scenes of petty crimes, there are multiple descriptions of criminals in the chronicle that encourage a sense of sympathy or admiration in the reader. During the afore-mentioned break-in, Chas is “reminded of a Soviet poster depicting the rise of the proletariat” (p. 129) as he gazes up at the dramatically backlit figure of the burglar silhouetted against the sunroom windowpanes. Individuals who steal public infrastructure are often referred to as “poachers”, even described as “romantic figure[s]” who “must survive somehow by preying on those who have more” and who “may be admired for [their] ingenuity and daring” in the prowess displayed when successfully “scavenging a meal from under the nose of the gamekeeper” (p. 128). In this bizarre context where criminal scavengers are “poachers” nonchalantly engaged in the everyday activity of “lopping heads and legs [off animal sculptures] with blowtorches and hacksaws” and law-enforcers become “gamekeepers”, civic sculptures and monuments become “venison in bronze”, a type of “wild-life” that Johannesburg has an abundance of, complete with an “open season” that manifests in the period of lawless instability and reconfiguration between the collapse of the racial city and the reconstruction of a new, coherent urban environment (p. 127) .

In yet another vignette, Vlad comes across a man sitting on the kerb, taking off his old broken boots and putting on a pair of brand new running shoes. Later, as he walks on, Vlad notices that the window display at Seedat’s Outfitters in Kitchener Avenue has been stolen, although it remains relatively unclear whether or not the man on the kerb stole his shoes from the outfitters. The man is described in generous detail, “walk[ing] quickly away with a spring in his step, leaving the old boots side by side in the gutter”, with the added comment from Vlad that “[t]he whole episode seemed like a parable about the dignity of labour, the moving congruence of hard work rewarded by simple but intense pleasures” (p. 52) *before* the insinuation of theft. Because we are influenced by the optimism of these descriptions,

and because the connection to the theft is never explicitly stated, the reader is again prompted to respond favourably and forgivingly to the potential criminal.

The chronicle appears to suggest that petty crime and mild transgressions form a necessary, or at least inevitable, part of the re-appropriation of urban space and material infrastructure in the shaping of a new city. Most of the characters who manage to adapt socially to their changing environment, Vlad included, appear to have adopted a defeated sense of acceptance and tolerant amusement, as has been illustrated in the above-mentioned vignettes. This willing tolerance is also extended from specific individual characters to a much more communal attitude in instances where, for example, Vlad is told by a hardware salesman that the sales for plastic house numbers are escalating as more and more customers are robbed of their brass ones, and when the city council begins to replace the stolen iron water mains covers with plastic ones in a rather defeated manner that “tell[s] the scrap-metal thieves to go ahead and help themselves as the authorities have given up on protecting their resources” (p. 129). Yet there is an important distinction to be made between the tolerance portrayed in Vladislavić’s account and the numb defeat presented by many Istanbullus in Pamuk’s text, who allow a discourse that few of them identify with to shape their environment while they stand by passively.

Despite its focus on the changing material environment, *Portrait* is also concerned with the issue of citizenship and inhabitancy, what it means to be a citizen of Johannesburg, a “metropolis [that] is neither a finite nor a static form” and which “reveals itself first and foremost through its discontinuities, its provisionality and fugitiveness, its superfluousness” (Mbembe, 2008: 64). In such a state of profound uncertainty and instability, inhabitants’ sense of belonging depends significantly on their ability to create meaning while simultaneously functioning without clearly defined notions of how the city is to be used and interacted with.

Vladislavić’s Johannesburg is therefore also a city that resists the type of passive occupation that, as I argued in Chapter 2, is favoured by many of Pamuk’s characters, and instead requires a new set of skills to be learnt by those who seek neither to reject the possible city and emigrate, nor turn their backs on the transformation taking place around them and

enclose themselves in fortified homes and neighbourhoods. In their introduction to *Johannesburg*, Nuttall and Mbembe (2008: 1) list “the capacity to generate one’s own cultural forms, institutions, and lifeways” as well as “the ability to foreground, translate, fragment, and disrupt realities and imaginaries originating elsewhere, and in the process place these forms and processes in the service of one’s own making” as increasingly necessary skills for those who wish to actively inhabit the city and not be side-lined or marginalised. And, in support of such notions of active engagement with one’s urban environment, Shelley Butler (1999: 203) states:

[w]e need a sense of place that emerges from continuous practice as we re-engage our cities in a new set of conversations about their identities, structures, forms, functions, conflicts, poverties and potentials. We will have to replace the certainties of policy and strategy with the uncertainties of dialogue and interaction.

Portrait presents the reader with a number of characters who grapple with their sense of belonging in a changing environment and are eventually forced to accept that “[h]ome is an appropriated space [which] does not exist objectively in reality” but that the “notion of ‘home’ is a fiction we create out of a need to belong” (Mofokeng, 1998: 72). They are therefore tasked with the responsibility to write their city, their own “fiction create[d] out of a need to belong” in order “to give [themselves] a city in which to live” (Morphet, quoted in Nuttall, 2011:331) despite the fact that they live in “a city that resists the imagination...in a fiction that unravels even as they grasp it” (p. 54).

It is perhaps the archetypal, or rather the ideal, citizen of Johannesburg that is addressed in an unusual and poignant second person narrative that describes a solitary trip to a burnt patch of veld somewhere on the edge of the city. Or perhaps it is the speaker seeking reassurance as he asks, “[a]re you still with me?”, describing his own solitary perambulations and enquiring about the rituals of other citizens of Johannesburg, looking for his own kind. The archetypal citizen approaches the veld by car, as any middle-class South African would, not on foot or using public transport, and is told to “[e]ngage the Gorilla”, always wary of crime. He or she is at home in, and appreciative of, harsh and ravaged surroundings such as “air [that] smells burnt at the edges”, a sky “the colour of a week-old bruise”, “a vlei full of poisoned water and a suburb cowering beneath power lines”, and has a keen awareness of the unexpected value and beauty of the thrown-away

and cast-aside debris of everyday life such as “a greasy bottle with a Smirnoff label, half a brick with a scab of cement and an iron rod twisting out of it...[and] three porcelain insulators thrown down from the pylons”, and imbues them with an artist’s sentiment: “as beautifully wrought as vases...a signature, smudged lines, pencil stubs” (p. 170). He or she is ruefully familiar with the presence of the corporate world, never absent in a city, such as “*that* billboard advertising Caesar’s [my emphasis]”, and can skilfully contract or expand the material world around him/her in order to comprehend it, rendering a mine on the horizon “a model made of matchsticks, [or] an engine of war” (p. 170). The archetypal citizen is a product of his or her hasty metropolis and has to be reminded to venture “slowly, [because] there’s no rush” and is concerned with the preservation of history and memory in such a transient city, seeing the “remembered flames” in “the scorched earth” of the “dog-eared field” (p. 170) that has been rifled through and absentmindedly marked by many other restless citizens like him/herself. He or she finds him/herself at the fulcrum of one status quo yielding to another, the “collapsing from one attitude to another” and is able to evolve and adapt appropriately, “dragging [his or her] ghosts through the dirty air, [the] train of cast-off selves” in a constant process of “discovering [his/herself] at the centre, in the present” (p. 170), in relation to the environment he or she occupies, spatially and temporally.

The willing social adaptation to a changing environment parallels the architectural approach that manifests as re-appropriation of space. It empowers inhabitants who choose this response in ways that the other two social responses, emigration (which parallels demolition) and fortification (which parallels preservation), dealt with in this dissertation cannot. Perhaps most significantly, social adaptation allows inhabitants to actively preserve their material legacy and the accompanying stability of self-identity through maintaining their citizenship, both spatially (which is not possible for those who emigrate) and temporally (which inhabitants who attempt to reconstruct a by-gone status quo through the fortification of their environment cannot effectively do). Both the options to spatially re-appropriate the material environment and to socially adapt to the new status quo are means to empowerment available on the individual level. These modes of empowerment are far more unrelated to race and class than most means to power in Vladislavić’s Johannesburg, unrelated to ethnicity and belief system than most means to power in

Dalrymple's Delhi, and far more unrelated to one's extent of modernization and emulation of European mores than most means to power in Pamuk's Istanbul. This is illustrated, for example, by the incredibly diverse array of spatial alterations, from the informal to the professional, achieved by the characters in Vladislavić's chronicle which lend a form of subversive agency to the advantaged and the disadvantaged alike.

The active engagement with their material environment allows "people [to] use cities by constructing who they are, producing a narrative of identity" and essentially "mak[ing] a sentence or a story of particular places in the city" (Nuttall, 2008: 198). The forms of power and agency realised by Michel de Certeau's flaneur as he embarks on his "long poem of walking" through the city are parallel to those forms of power gained by characters engaged in active spatial re-appropriation in Vladislavić's *Portrait*. De Certeau's flaneur is a solitary figure, subversively "re-creating" the city around him through the potentially transformative act of walking the city streets and the accompanying acts of organisation, improvisation and interpretation. Characters engaged in spatial re-appropriation in *Portrait* do much the same to subvert and resist the segregated and rationalised city-space and the delineating power of their city state. As *Portrait*'s flaneur, Vlad's decision to encounter his particularly frenzied and disordered city on foot further attests to a willingness to abandon the middle-class privilege of traversing the city by car in favour of "self-consciously inhabit[ing] the space of the other" in what might amount to "a reconciliatory gesture" (Poyner, 2011:321). As a pedestrian, Vlad can more actively engage in the shaping and mapping out of his environment and effectively enters into a dialogue with the city as an individual.

Interestingly, it is not just Vlad who engages with the city through re-appropriation as a dialogic act of re-mapping that encourages self-definition and self-exploration as much as it alters the city and his relationship with it. Certain narrative devices employed in *Portrait* require the reader to assume an equally active role in negotiating the text as "Vladislavić opens dominant ways of seeing Johannesburg (his own included) to reinterpretation and re-articulation" (Graham, 2008: 334). Vlad is described as "a kind of bricoleur, subversively cobbling random items together in fantastical ways..., redraw[ing] boundaries by depicting Johannesburg in a fragmented and unconventional way" that suggests that there are many ways of encountering the city (Goodman, 2009: 226). The reader, similarly, must participate

in his or her own construction of the possible city manifested through his or her particular reading approach. The reader of Vladislavić's urban chronicle "is expected to act with a sense of agency in negotiating paths through the terrain" in a book which "encourages movement and exploration without being prescriptive" (Butler, 1999: 202). The aptly non-linear narrative of the chronicle, which emulates the fragmented and incoherent city it describes, is augmented by a substantial list of itineraries that bear some resemblance to itineraries found in travel guides that can direct the reader through a sequence of discrete but intermingled recollections and encounters according to themes such as 'Walls', 'Walking' or 'Engaging the Gorilla'. Apart from offering alternative (and at times rather contradictory) means to approach the text (and, by extension, the city) that mimic its mutability,

the organization and form of the fragments opens up the possibility of improvisation: chance, unscripted encounters with random fragments, or perhaps with a character, place, sign or figure one has come across on previous textual walks. Readers might choose to stop and dwell a while, skip a street or ignore a scene, retrace their steps or change direction (Graham, 2008: 337).

While the characteristics of adaptability, tolerance, agency and interaction presented by Vlad, and encouraged in the reader through Vladislavić's formal technique, serve to empower those who seek to maintain their citizenship and home in the contested city, *Portrait*'s last vignette also lays bare some of the limitations of this particular response to change. We have, through the duration of the chronicle, gotten to know Vlad as someone with "the ability to observe and comment on the process of re-inscription of space", who possesses "intense mobility...both physical and in terms of point of view [which] suggests that he does have access to a certain kind of agency" (Goodman, 2009: 229). And so it is unsurprising that he consciously chooses not to "park underground and slip up the back stairs" of the library along with the other "white suburbanites" (p. 155), feeling that he "should resist this scurrying about underground, this mole-like secretiveness" because he wants to "approach the library along a city street like an ordinary citizen, passing from the company of people into the company of books" and will not "go sneaking up the back stairs like a thief" (p. 179). As has been discussed at length, such decisions about actively occupying the public sphere of his city empower Vlad by allowing him a sense of agency and mobility essential to the maintenance of an active citizenship. Here he encounters the library "like an ordinary citizen", instead of passively reverting to a specific predetermined

code of behaviour based on a tainted history of race and class, in this case, by covertly sneaking into a public building from secure parking in a manner that reveals a sense of paranoia characteristic of the white middle class. It is therefore deeply symbolic when, during the visit to the library depicted in the last vignette, his determined approach to the building is blocked by a security guard strike which interrupts his intended excursion and swiftly sidelines him.

Vlad is caught off guard by the sudden tension brought about by the angry strikers and has to enquire about the cause of the strike from one of the men involved who Vlad imagines thinking “[c]ut-off whitey” at his own lack of awareness of such working-class concerns; it is with an uncharacteristically defensive note that he hurriedly assures himself and the reader, “[a]ctually, I’ve read about the strike, and I know the library gardens have long been a rallying point for popular causes” (p. 179). He notices “[s]trangers [that] keep catching [his] eye, casing his white features...wondering what the hell [he is] doing there” and compensates rather naively by attempting to analyse this decidedly African crowd with “categories devised by Canetti” (p. 180). For the first time, Vlad is very much out of place in his city and unable to reconcile himself with the atmosphere and intention of the space he finds himself in. He is even temporarily entirely deprived of his agency as he is caught up in the angry crowd that “bursts apart like shrapnel at the heart of a blast” and surge[s] at him and carr[ies] [him] back towards President Street”, first rejecting him and then trapping him, “pinned between two men...with the mesh of a gate pressing between his back” (p. 181).

Finally ejected by the raging chaos, Vlad concludes that “[he does] know, with every bone and muscle, that [he is] in the wrong place, [he] shouldn’t be within a day’s hike of this madness” and that he “cannot stay here”; attempting to evade the riot, he tries to hide behind a row of parked cars, “feeling absurdly like a child playing a game” and, later, “more and more like a play actor” when he notices “half a dozen people step[ping] gingerly into the open” around him (p. 182). He uses the loaded term “innocent bystanders” to describe these people and wryly goes on to add that they are “[his] kind of people” (p. 182); Vlad has swiftly been reduced to a spectator and an “innocent bystander” and has to anxiously hammer on the library door to be allowed into its sanctuary and escape the public turmoil in a manner he presumably prided himself on not doing thus far in his recollections. Once

inside, he hides out along with the rest of the “innocent bystanders” in a library that now resembles a marketplace for all the excitement. Here, he plans to find a window with a view of the gardens “[to] see whether it’s safe to leave”; he has to accept that it might be necessary to exit through the back door he so resolutely refused but decides to placate his nerves by stating, rather unconvincingly, that there is no real rush and that he “can read until it quiets down” (p. 183). Despite the best intentions and an admirable display of tolerance, active engagement and willingness to adapt to the social and material transformation of his city, Vlad cannot hold onto his position perpetually and will eventually also experience some instances of marginalisation in the process of continual compromise that the transforming city and its specific socio-political history requires.

As *Portrait* suggests, Johannesburg requires an active engagement from its citizens who need to construct their city "out of heterogeneous fragments...drawn from its splintered histories" (Mbembe, 2008: 59). For this reason, Johannesburg could be conceptualised as an existential city where meaning has been fragmented and has to be individually reassembled. In other words, although Vladislavić's Johannesburg demands new forms of personal assemblage to be constructed by all its citizens, it also offers ample material and opportunity to do so. In Vladislavić's portrait of the city, new forms of personal assemblage and spatial appropriation are rendered in existential terms as a means of establishing identity and purpose; these modes of inhabiting a changing environment are shown to be much more effective than either of the other previously discussed alternatives. Re-appropriation allows for a fluidity and adaptability both in terms of physical space and subjective identity, and thereby allows the concrete existence of contemporary Johannesburg to repurpose and adapt the essences of its parts, rather than trying to turn back the clock by restoring these objects to their original predetermined essences. This fluidity and adaptability can be seen, for example, when the essential function of a water mains recess housing a water meter is subverted and turned instead into a deeply personal and meaningful repository of assorted items.

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre (1943: 71-82) draws a distinction between an authentic existential mode of being, which is *active*, and what he calls living in 'bad faith', which is *passive*. The former involves a radical embracing of your own freedom and its heavy

responsibility, and a recognition of its limitations in the face of what Sartre calls 'facticity', the actual and inevitable limitations imposed by material reality. The latter involves a banishing of actual reality in favour of a more comfortable (but false) perspective. In short, an active, existentially authentic response allows the concrete existence of spaces and people to determine their function and meaning, whereas a passive response in bad faith attempts to draw purpose and meaning from dated and rigidly defined essences, often in direct contradiction with the realities of concrete existence, and with detrimental effects.

The city that emerges from Vladislavić's chronicle is characterised by possibility and ingenuity. More so than either Pamuk's Istanbul or Dalrymple's Delhi, Vladislavić's Johannesburg has little tolerance for individual attempts to either reject a troubled history or artificially preserve it. Attempts to cover up material infrastructure from a former era are often revealed to be temporary; the same could be said about a number of characters' attempts to emigrate, which tend to lead to an awkwardly dislocated and psychologically insecure existence that many are unable to sustain. Conversely, the ample instances of fortified enclaves that temporarily enable the continuation of a lifestyle and mode of occupancy that are at odds with the emergent city are shown to occur at the cost of an extremely limited and carceral existence. Yet, much like Pamuk's *Istanbul, Portrait* also negotiates between the collective drive to adapt and evolve, and the deeply personal yearning for times past that certain objects and spaces evoke. It is ultimately through their ability to re-appropriate and adapt – new skills that the transforming city requires – that many of Vladislavić's characters manage to reconcile their awareness of the past with an equally important desire to shape the new city that emerges after apartheid. As Vlad's city opens up to accommodate new inhabitants and new modes of occupancy, adaptation and re-appropriation empower both the established and the new inhabitants to actively occupy the city together, without wholly rejecting a controversial past.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Pamuk's *Istanbul*, Dalrymple's *City of Djinns* and Vladislavić's *Portrait*, respectively, tell the stories of different cities undergoing rapid social and spatial transformation. In this dissertation, I have drawn on Scott's three categories of architectural change (demolition, preservation and re-appropriation) as a basis for exploring the range of architectural and social-cultural responses to social and political change that are imagined in these texts. A close reading of my chosen texts has revealed the importance of Scott's architectural schema as a framework for understanding the way in which social change is inscribed in these texts as well as the ways in which these changes in the built environment are manifested or echoed in psycho-social terms as erasure, amnesia, mourning and creative adaptability or innovation.

I turned first to the notion of demolition and its corresponding psycho-social manifestation as erasure. In the texts under discussion, cities in transition were shown to reject the past through dramatic material annihilation. In *Istanbul*, the human or social expression of material demolition is evident in characters who acquiesce to the discourses of cultural erasure as part of the larger social and political project of Turkification; in *City of Djinns*, which records the aftermath of Partition, processes of erasure and destruction are evident in the separation of previously integrated communities along religious lines and, in *Portrait*, the dynamic of removal is evident in the stories of characters abandoning their neighbourhood, city or country. What was also explored in these texts were processes of artificial preservation. In architectural terms, this is evident in the preservation of historically valued buildings, while in social terms this is revealed through the collective melancholic yearning for the past (as experienced by the characters in Pamuk's memoir), the accidental survival of ancient spaces and practices (as described in Dalrymple's travelogue), and the construction of fortified enclaves designed to hold transformation at bay (as presented in Vladislavić's chronicle). Instead of succumbing to either of these (often very destructive) extremes, some of these imagined cities articulate a third possibility, namely, the attempt to sustain a workable compromise that neither wholly rejects the past

nor enshrines it. In this regard, both Dalrymple's and Vladislavić's texts explore many examples of architectural and material re-appropriation, acts of creative adaptation which are echoed in the sympathetic attention given to modes of resilience and adaptability suggested in the stories of those characters who are able to reconstruct the transforming city for themselves. Interestingly, this last – and essential – response is almost entirely absent in the city inscribed in Pamuk's text, a city which is consequently characterised as experiencing a decades-long insidious paralysis that inhibits authentic social and spatial development.

While all three responses to the changing city suggested by these texts present their own limitations, the active engagement in the shaping of one's city that re-appropriation presents, along with the sustaining of a genuine citizenship through the willingness and resilience to adapt socially, lends a sense of power and agency denied those who attempt to reject the past through demolition, or artificially sustain it through material and cultural preservation. The re-appropriation of existing spaces and objects can lead to a much needed fluidity and adaptability in a city continuously changing, and so is the only response dealt with in this study which enables both people and places to adapt to the manifest existence of the current city, in a way that is active and engaged.

As suggested above, the texts under discussion address or inscribe the idea of demolition and its psycho-social ramifications in a variety of ways: while demolition can usher in a new era and destroy the material support structure of rejected former regimes, it also severs instructive communication between the past and the present. As also argued above, demolition and abandonment in the urban environment are shown to be symptomatic of an environment marked by transience where limited access to ownership and belonging can serve to enforce a perpetual state of transition. In this regard, the necessity of material history, spaces of belonging and the ownership of objects in the construction of characters' sense of place and identity becomes increasingly apparent, as is evident in the devastation experienced by those characters that are denied this. Consequently, what is also suggested is that frequent instances of material loss – due to cultural reforms, forced migration, theft or destruction – can threaten the characters' connection with their city and, at times, their very sense of self and belonging. While forms of spatial and social erasure, such as

demolition or fabrication in the mode of postmodernist pastiche, are present in each of these texts, these destructive approaches also tend to be presented as ineffective attempts to dislocate the present from a resented past. Instances of failed or imperfect erasure are encountered by the three narrators and the characters they describe. Through these recollections and encounters, the city is revealed as a palimpsest where the past, present and possible future exist simultaneously.

In Pamuk's *Istanbul*, for example, Orhan, the narrator, and various other characters struggle to come to terms with what they perceive as the unshakable anti-climax of "the little, imitative" republic that followed the magnificent Ottoman Empire (Pamuk, 2006: 213). The text's depiction of urban life in the former capital of the new republic places emphasis on the damaging effects of Kemal's fervid drive to Westernise Turkey through the discourse of Turkification. The memoir suggests that attempts to wrench Turkish identity and culture from a declining empire created new opportunities for the construction of social and spatial meaning within the ancient capital. What is also evident, however, is that the uncompromising speed with which this transformation was implemented proved traumatic for the city and many of its inhabitants. Ironically, instead of propelling Istanbul forward on the path to modernity, Pamuk's memoir suggests that the reactionary response that came about as a result of this uncompromising drive gave rise to a melancholy and ultimately past-orientated city.

In Dalrymple's *City of Djinns*, the focus falls on the partition of the Indian sub-continent. This traumatic historical event is presented as an instance of socio-cultural erasure which destroyed community structures and their cultural infrastructure (those connections, practices and habits that facilitated the formation of heterogeneous communities) in the Indian capital. As heterogeneous communities were pulled apart in a mass repudiation of the symbiotic intermingling of cultural and belief systems, the ensuing riots and forced migrations resulted in material destruction that mirrored this social and cultural devastation. *City of Djinns* therefore questions the consequences that occur as an inevitable result of prioritising difference in order to separate diverse populations within a shared space.

Vladislavić's chronicle describes the transformation experienced in Johannesburg after the abolition of apartheid as the racial city opened up to accommodate new inhabitants and new ideas about the right to the city. Although the text often focuses on the influence of these new inhabitants in shaping the city, the established inhabitants are often shown to withdraw from the city, and are revealed as unwilling to construct new identities and new modes of influence in the rapidly changing city. Consequently, the issue of emigration is a pervasive theme in *Portrait*, with multiple characters leaving their homes as the chronicle progresses. However, the eventual return of some characters to their old lives and neighbourhoods and the disorientating and unsettling effects experienced by others after leaving home suggest that emigrating in search of a better life does not necessarily empower these characters, and in no way guarantees the improvements it initially promised. For characters who cannot or will not emigrate, another particularly popular mode of socio-cultural erasure offers a viable alternative. Simulation and allusion in the built environment through the construction of instances of postmodern pastiche, such as the pseudo-Italian Montecasino and the "pasteboard wharves" at the Randburg Waterfront (Vladislavić, 2007: 90), can function as modes of erasure and "symbols of forgetting" (Putter 2012: 64) which aid in rejecting the chaotic city. While these synthetic spaces generally pose the same threat to collective memory as demolition does and also provide visitors with the opportunity to disregard their temporal and spatial reality, *Portrait* frequently portrays artifice as an inevitable consequence of the city in transformation.

As noted above, a second category of response explored in these texts is preservation. An exploration of the idea of architectural preservation in these texts suggests this response's potential for creating an atmosphere that distracts from, or even allows for, the rejection of the present status quo. For example, as Dalrymple's depiction of Karachi reveals, a material environment that is temporally at odds with the macrocosm within which it functions can lead to the temporal dislocation of its inhabitants from the city. In some cases, as is evident in all three texts, the alternative reality presented by material infrastructure that aims to conjure up the past as a false comfort in the name of preservation is seen as preferable to the turbid and unstable reality one must otherwise face in times of change. Preservation can therefore mimic demolition in its potential to be destructive as it is as much an act of rejection as demolition is. As these texts suggest, however, preservation entails a temporal

rather than a spatial rejection, one which aids in the destruction of the material identity of the present. As a result, acts of preservation in these three texts effectively destabilise the different layers of historical and architectural strata that construct the palimpsestically inscribed cities for the sake of conjuration and suppression. Such preservation of the by-gone eras that shaped these imagined cities through the construction of nostalgic architecture can also aid in assembling material support structures for the continuation of otherwise rejected ideological premises which many characters attempt to subvert. It can also lead to the repression of alternative spatialities and the formation of increasingly incongruent and disconnected cities which struggle to accommodate a shared sense of community.

In *Istanbul*, the idea of preservation is explored in the characters' resistance to Turkification, a collective melancholy termed *hüzün* by Pamuk, which unites the city's inhabitants who are presented as otherwise feeling out of place in the transforming city. As this collective melancholy nourishes Istanbul's "inward-looking soul" (Pamuk, 2006: 38), the urge to retreat into homes furnished like museums while pining for the glory of a long-gone empire is romanticised, and fewer and fewer characters actively engage in the shaping of their urban environment, favouring the past over the present. However, this collective melancholic paralysis and introspection can be read as the beginnings of a unified resistance against the meta-narrative of Turkification while also suggesting the establishing of an urban identity that is culturally and temporally inclusive and accessible for those who were left behind in the city's aspiration for western modernity.

Intentional preservation is surprisingly absent in the ancient city that Dalrymple inscribes which, instead, is focussed on regeneration after the confusing disarray after Partition. Those spaces and customs that do manage to survive appear to do so accidentally or as a direct consequence of their hidden and over-looked status. However, even in the rapidly and willingly transforming city Dalrymple depicts, instances of intentional temporal dislocation crop up when some characters that are unable or unwilling to adapt to the changing environment instead choose passive isolation and so intentionally marginalise themselves. It is important to note, however, that of the three imagined cities discussed in this dissertation, Dalrymple's Delhi is by far the most tolerant of the peaceful co-existence

of the preserved customs and infrastructure of different eras side-by-side and is presented as “a portrait of a city disjointed in time, a city whose different ages lay suspended side by side as in aspic, a city of djinns” (Dalrymple, 2005: 9).

The reactionary construction of fortified enclosures, that suggest that the city's heritage of segregation is not so easily discarded, emerges as a central preoccupation in *Portrait*. This particular socio-spatial response, which is often encountered in Vladislavić's Johannesburg during the disconcerting era of the city's transformation, manifests as a social parallel to material preservation because it inevitably sustains an extinct status quo and allows for the fabrication of a by-gone era by keeping socio-political and material change at bay. Several of the city's inhabitants that Vlad encounters attempt to adopt Bremner's (1998: 60) “laager mentality” and ignore the chaotic transformation, isolating themselves and their possessions in secure enclaves that preserve a false sense of safety and exclusivity, rather than engaging in the struggle for territory and agency that the emerging city calls for. Vladislavić's urban chronicle reveals a city preoccupied with questions of belonging, ownership and security. What the narrative suggests is that the general obsession with fortification and security that many characters express appears to have a severely limiting influence on their lifestyles and mobility. Frequent references to alarms, keys and other security devices such as the Gorilla steering lock collectively depict a carceral existence that most characters bear with a note of bitter resolve in the acceptance of the unfortunate reality that comes with preserving one's own safety and possessions. Yet what is also intimated is that fortification and voluntary segregation cannot succeed in keeping alive the old manner of existence that so many inhabitants of Vlad's Johannesburg yearn for. The necessary mechanisms used to preserve a sense of freedom and well-being result in the militarisation of suburban space and attest to a transformation that cannot be ignored continually, and which can only be held at bay at the cost of isolating and all but incarcerating oneself.

A contrasting idea to the extremes presented above is the notion of re-appropriation. Dalrymple's and Vladislavić's texts in particular suggest that spatial re-appropriation and social adaptation make available new sources of agency and power on an individual level which can only become accessible through active engagement with one's material

environment and the shaping of one's city. Therefore, re-appropriation of space, and the possible social resilience and adaptation it facilitates, is shown to empower characters more than either demolition or preservation. Within these texts, re-appropriation allows for an involved material and spatial transformation that is not obtained at the cost of a rash eradication of material urban history. Lefebvre's (1996) views on the re-appropriation of space are apposite here. According to him, processes of re-appropriation are undeniably necessary in the social transformation of a city because a revolution that does not produce a new space merely changes ideological superstructures in a virtually intangible way, and fails to revolutionise the ordinary lives of ordinary people. Spatial re-appropriation is, therefore, not merely preferable to other architectural responses such as demolition and preservation, but becomes an essential aspect in the physical manifestation of a socio-political ideal that might otherwise have very little significant impact.

In Pamuk's *Istanbul*, instances of spatial and social re-appropriation are conspicuously absent. Instead of embracing this mode of responding to the city's transformation which ultimately constitutes a workable compromise between the two extremes offered by demolition and preservation, the city inscribed in the text appears to be paralysed by the opposing forces of Turkification and *hüzün*. In Dalrymple's *Delhi* and Vladislavić's *Johannesburg*, by contrast, forms of material appropriation and modes of social adaptation and resilience are presented as valuable ways with which to cope with transformation, and as providing a means to adapt to a new status quo. In the absence of such coping strategy, Pamuk's *Istanbul* is presented as a space of stagnation, with characters either still mourning for a past long gone or attempting to emulate western modernity, which emerges as an unobtainable goal. Similarly, while on an individual level the typical domestic environment contains ample instances of material preservation, and while the combined force of largescale demolition and unchecked fires wipes out entire neighbourhoods in the text, almost no mention is made of instances of material or architectural re-appropriation. In this sense, the narrated city is one in which the past fails to be successfully translated into the present.

City of Djinns, on the other hand, abounds with instances of spatial and social re-appropriation. This mode of response is so prolific in the Indian capital that Muslim Delhi-

wallahs who fled the city during the riots following Partition encounter a completely new city, one that has transformed rapidly without them, when they return but half a year later. The post-Partition city Dalrymple inscribes does not appear concerned with the past, mourning it or preserving it, except for very isolated incidents such as the Karachi exiles and others who have been left behind by one of the city's numerous transformations. Instead, the newly-occupied city, now more a 'Punjabi metropolis' than the abode of the Moghul Delhi-wallah, does not waste a moment before regenerating completely and with astounding resilience: former refugees who have been forced out of their home towns and villages take to the city with remarkable ease, nonchalantly re-appropriating abandoned houses, forming new heterogeneous communities despite the intentions of Partition, and seamlessly adapting from rural to urban occupations, all the while constructing the riot-ravaged city anew.

Much as in Dalrymple's text, material re-appropriation plays a significant role in Vladislavić's chronicle. In the state of profound uncertainty and instability depicted in *Portrait*, the issue of citizenship and inhabitancy in relation to characters' spatial interaction with the city becomes substantial. Inhabitants' sense of belonging, the chronicle suggests, depends significantly on their ability to create meaning and legacy out of incongruous fragments, memories and citations. Citizenship in Johannesburg therefore requires active engagement from its inhabitants and a vivid comprehension of the nature of the changing city. In this regard, the chronicle offers a reading of the transforming city that stresses the importance of social adaptation, a response to difficult change that allows inhabitants to actively preserve their material legacy and the accompanying stability of self-identity by maintaining their citizenship, both spatially and temporally. This, the chronicle emphasises, is not possible for those who emigrate or attempt to reconstruct a by-gone status quo through the fortification of their environment.

A further area of interest which builds on the foregoing discussion is the idea of responses to the past. As demonstrated above, the imagined cities of Pamuk, Dalrymple and Vladislavić's texts are characterised by very different responses to their respective pasts; in similar fashion, the relationship to, and the incorporation of, each city's heritage takes a

range of different forms. While Orhan and the Istanbullus experience a profound sense of loss in relation to the city's pre-republican past, Dalrymple's Delhi is populated with characters who express a general sense of indifference to Delhi's pre-Partition past. In Vladislavić's Johannesburg, many of the characters' responses to the city's apartheid past appear to be coloured with shame, complicating this relationship. These responses also affect inhabitants' actions in relation to the shaping of their urban environment. Pamuk's Istanbullus, for example, are paralysed by their loss, mourning for a former Istanbul instead of actively engaging in the one they have inherited. In Dalrymple's Dehli, by contrast, the indifference to the past and matters of heritage apparently felt by many of the characters enables them to nonchalantly destroy some of the ancient city's material infrastructure in their eagerness to usher in a new version of the cyclically regenerating city. Finally, the characters in Vladislavić's *Portrait with Keys* appear to negotiate a workable compromise between the two extremes presented in Pamuk and Dalrymple's texts by taking responsibility for the construction of a socio-spatial environment they are not ashamed of and so adapting and reworking the urban fabric, all the while compromising and re-negotiating their positions in it.

What is powerfully suggested in all three of the imagined cities is that the construction of the past can either hinder or catalyse transformation. Orhan spends large parts of *Istanbul* wallowing in memories of the glorious past and the knowledge of all that was lost. In striking contrast, this failure to withdraw from the lost ideal is almost entirely absent in *City of Djinns*. In Vladislavić's Johannesburg, the relationship with the recent past is further complicated by the fact that even the acknowledgement of the apartheid era as an ideal to be reminisced over by some characters is rendered as taboo to an even greater extent than yearning for the Ottoman past was under Kemal's regime. Orhan's extensive reference to other writers and travellers who have explored Istanbul's ruins reflects this city's keen awareness of its past; in contrast, on more than one occasion, Dalrymple describes Delhiites who are astoundingly unaware of the presence of architectural remnants related to significant events in the city's history within their immediate surroundings, simply because the past holds little appeal for them. Although they inscribe very different responses to the imagined city's past, both Pamuk and Dalrymple's texts are concerned with institutionalised attempts at historical erasure – in *Istanbul*, through Kemal's Turkification and in *City of*

Djinns, through a collective amnesia surrounding Partition. The motivation offered by the texts for such a culturally destructive practice is similar in each case. Too overt an acknowledgement of the past would threaten the city (and the state's) future and development, either because the past is too alluring (for Pamuk's Istanbul) or because it is too controversial (for Dalrymple's Delhiites). As a number of theorists discussed in this dissertation (including Shaw, Zekai and Koolhaas) attest, however, a keen and interactive awareness of one's material and cultural heritage is one of the features of modernity, not an enemy thereof as the nationalist meta-narratives dealt with in these texts tend to suggest. Such awareness is clearly discernible in Vladislavić's depiction of post-apartheid Johannesburg where the acknowledgement of the injustices of the past function as a point of departure that consistently informs the city's transformation as it moves past a regime of racial segregation without denying the lingering effects of this past in the everyday lives of Johannesburg's inhabitants.

These distinct approaches to the past influence the inhabitants of each imagined city's response to remnants of a previous era that manifest as part of the urban environment's material infrastructure. In *Istanbul*, the material remnants of the past are determinedly ignored because of a collective injured pride felt by those who have been temporally excluded from the city's former grandeur, and so the city that Pamuk inscribes is characterised by decay and unhindered ruin. Both post-Partition Delhi and post-apartheid Johannesburg are faced with an urban structure that has been informed by regimes now rejected, although Dalrymple and Vladislavić present very different responses to such change. The city that emerges from Dalrymple's text eagerly discards the remnants of the colonial city and its catastrophic demise, remaining true to the reincarnatory nature Dalrymple ascribes to the ancient capital. Vladislavić's Johannesburg, on the other hand, is preoccupied with re-appropriating the racial city's infrastructure, suggesting a much more reconciliatory approach to the past, a willingness to adapt the existing city instead of rejecting it completely, as well as a collective shouldering of the responsibility to remember.

In all three renditions of the city in flux, the survival of cultural and material infrastructure is often depicted as precariously dependant on the way in which each city negotiates the heritage of a controversial past. Orhan, for example, feels Istanbul's "magnificent heritage was enigmatic beyond comprehension" (Pamuk, 2006: 51); in Delhi, Dalrymple discovers

that, with very few exceptions, it is only that which has been forgotten that succeeds in being accidentally preserved by virtue of its elusiveness; and Vlad engages in the collective endeavour of translating Johannesburg's past into its present by laboriously reconstructing a city which accommodates instead of segregates. Such responses to material heritage, the texts make clear, ultimately influence the city's growth as a whole: Pamuk presents Istanbul as a city that grows additively, never fully discarding the current strata of material infrastructure before constructing the next; *City of Djinns*, on the other hand, inscribes a city that functions cyclically, almost entirely demolishing itself before arising anew on the same site; in Vladislavić's Johannesburg, inhabitants of the transforming city recycle its material infrastructure, altering that which no longer serves current needs to suit new sensibilities and modes of occupation.

The notion of access adds further complexity to this argument. In all three texts, the city's access to its past is depicted as a factor which can greatly influence its identity as well as inhabitants' relationship with the city space itself. Pamuk's *hüzün*, for example, constructs an urban environment in which the city itself becomes the medium through which the past is accessed, while in *City of Djinns* that access is no longer available due to the sudden socio-spatial dislocation of Partition. Considering the relative passivity attributed to Pamuk's characters, compared to Dalrymple's Delhiites who actively shape their urban environment, such ready access to the past appears to impede social and spatial development, especially when, as in Pamuk's memoir, the memory-narrative in question constructs a version of the past so full of noble triumph and glory that it renders the contemporary city occupied by the characters dull and disappointing in comparison. Surely, it is also much more difficult for the Istanbullus to let go of a history that still manifests materially all around them, whereas the Punjabi immigrants Dalrymple describes have lost their past selves to such an extent through their migration to the city that a past-orientated disposition is no longer available. Vladislavić's Johannesburg, on the other hand, a city space which is negotiating a very recent transformation, is also revealed to be influenced by past injustices and as being keenly aware of the legacy of its former regime; yet it is not paralysed by this as Pamuk's Istanbul is. In these environments, attempts to entirely cover up a shameful past are easily thwarted by the palimpsestic city in which older strata return to the surface eventually as both the emphasis on imperfect erasure in *Portrait*, and Dalrymple's excavation of memory

and micro-narratives, reveal. Similarly, the attempted erasure of a past that was deemed a liability, and the dissolution of people's ties to this heritage, proves futile in *Istanbul* where the resistance of collective melancholy secures the city's relationship with its heritage.

Out of the three primary texts, Pamuk's narrative is the only one that constructs its pre-'zero hour' history as an ideal or a love-object to be mourned for. As a result, the city that emerges from his memoir is by far the most resistant to change and the most preoccupied with the trauma of transition. Yet all three texts describe the casualties of their respective transformations, such as Vladislavić's tomasons – bizarre objects, divorced from their original purpose by the rapidly changing city – and Dalrymple's (2005: 8) "human ruins" who, like some of the city's Moghul community, become increasingly marginalised in a city they fought to occupy but which they can no longer relate to. Across the three texts, characters who are unwilling or incapable of adapting are eventually rejected or side-lined by cities intolerant of stagnation, such as Branko (in *Portrait*) and Orhan. These characters desire stability and continuity, something the transforming city cannot provide, and so either abandon the inner city, like Branko, or remain outsiders within their own city, like Orhan.

For such characters, only two options are presented: either they reject the socio-cultural environment that shaped them completely and leave the city, or they remain physically rooted but temporally dislocated from the transforming city by isolating themselves in anachronistic enclaves. Each of the three texts draws attention to such enclaves; in these anachronistic spaces, characters hold those transformative processes that influence the rest of the city at bay and choose to remain confined to an environment that imitates social and spatial realities that no longer occur naturally. Characters such as Branko and Dalrymple's Karachi 'exiles' retreat from the centre, favouring the city's margins where sustaining their former lifestyle is easier. Preserving such by-gone lifestyles necessitates the preservation (or even the reconstruction) of the material infrastructure that facilitates it. As the texts suggest, these attempts at artificial preservation can impact negatively on urban social development. In *Portrait*, for example, Vlad describes whole neighbourhoods that have removed themselves from the public realm by implementing systems of access control requiring the presentation of identification documents, a situation that bears some resemblance to access control and segregation in the apartheid city. Yet the city that

emerges from Vladislavić's text is clearly resistant to such practices. This inherent resistance is made evident by the extent of the marginalisation of such spaces and the sheer number of physical barriers needed to keep the transforming city and its proponents out. In Dalrymple's *Delhi*, by contrast, such decisive barriers are unnecessary: instead of emphasising the tension between communities who cling to the past and those who embrace transformation as Vladislavić does, Dalrymple describes an urban environment relatively unperturbed by such tensions and where even the distant past and present coincide peacefully.

Questions of social exclusion and marginality are central to the narration of social change in all three texts. Being excluded (whether willingly or not) from the city as it transforms has unfortunate repercussions for a number of characters. In *City of Djinns*, the depiction of the Karachi 'exiles' reveals the artificiality and lack of critical awareness that develop when a community as a whole decides to cease interacting with the turbulent socio-cultural environment that shaped it in favour of the insidious comfort of a controlled and artificial environment. Vlad's elderly neighbour, Eddie, quickly becomes distressed and confused when, upon his children's insistence, he is uprooted from his home and the neighbourhood he has known throughout his life, where his own personal history is apparent in the house where his children grew up. This confusing dislocation that has such an unsettling effect on Eddie is presented on a much larger scale in *Istanbul*. In the republican city of Pamuk's memoir, characters are often presented as being excluded from their own Ottoman heritage by the institutional rejection thereof by Kemal's regime, making Orhan perceive the once-great city as "emptied out" and "in black and white" (Pamuk, 2006: 227). The exclusion of inhabitants from the transforming urban environment is therefore shown to be detrimental to the city's natural development as well as to those inhabitants themselves whose agency and identity suffer in the absence of the sounding board of the spaces that they know.

If the experience of social exclusion and dislocation forms an important focus in all three texts, so too does the impact of broader national narratives. *Istanbul*, *City of Djinns* and *Portrait* also present communities coming to terms with the legacies of destructive meta-narratives that either preceded or accompanied their respective transformations. While *Istanbul* and *City of Djinns* deal with the fallout from mass exclusion from the city due to the construction of culturally monolithic nationalist identities and ideas regarding citizenship,

Portrait considers the possibilities that open up when such categories are discarded. Along with the founding of the Republic of Turkey and the Partition of India came a rejection of heritages of cultural heterogeneity; consequently, Pamuk and Dalrymple at times explore the attempted erasure of certain communities. In contrast, *Portrait* considers the coming together thereafter as well as the subsequent attempts to re-establish unity out of what had been set apart. In this light, Vladislavić's text can be read as a catalogue of the various ways in which inclusion can occur after a regime of segregation. In fact, together the three imagined cities very effectively give credence to Harvey's (quoted in Graham, 2008: 333) theory that cities that fail to accommodate difference risk extinction through ossification (one of the defining features of Pamuk's *Istanbul*) or conflict (as the great deal of socio-political violence in *City of Djinns* attests).

Yet these texts also consider possible modes of resistance to these nationalist meta-narratives that function to limit socio-cultural development and heterogeneity. Each text explores a particular resistance to those meta-narratives that divided, excluded and limited occupancy and identity: Pamuk's *Istanbullus* collectively lay claim to *hüzün*, Dalrymple's characters reconstruct heterogeneous communities without much mention of lingering resentment, and Vladislavić's characters negotiate new modes of shared occupancy. *Istanbul*, specifically, constructs *hüzün* as a counter-narrative that opposes Kemal's Turkification and allows for the creation of a new identity that is aligned with the *Istanbullus'* experience of their urban environment. Dalrymple's text also works to directly resist the institutionalised collective amnesia that aims to silence the memory of Partition by unearthing individual micronarratives that together give a multi-faceted perspective on this transformation that shaped modern Delhi.

A further similarity in the narration of social change can be seen in the preoccupation with the question of agency. All three texts give attention to the relationship between characters' engagement in the shaping of the city space and their agency within the city space. Pamuk's *Istanbullus*, for example, stand mute by as their city is shaped by meta-narratives that many do not relate to; as the memoir suggests, these city inhabitants are subsequently reduced to mere spectators of the spectacle of the city's transformation. The Delhiites in *City of Djinns*, by contrast, determinedly shape their socio-political environment, by force if necessary. Furthermore, the city inscribed in *Portrait* is altered largely by formerly

marginalised communities, many of whom continue to be marginalised in the present, and whose unofficial and surreptitious re-appropriations change the city more tentatively than the processes depicted in Dalrymple's text. As a result, it is the new Delhiites who appear to make the transition from refugees to active and established citizens most rapidly, staking claim to their urban environment and their position of agency and authority in it. This same process is much more gradual and sporadic in *Portrait* because the spatial and material transformation is not as hasty, while also operating on the individual level rather than *City of Djinns*'s communal destruction and reincarnation. The agency of those characters who have actively engaged in the shaping of their material environment is also reflected in their ability to rewrite and amend historical meta-narratives (such as the Delhiites addition to the Delhi Mutiny Memorial suggests) as well as established social and cultural practices (such as Mrs Puri's personal rewriting of Diwali). Such practices enable certain communities to incorporate even those aspects of their heritage that are difficult to come to terms with into narratives of their own writing, which allows Dalrymple's characters, for example, to take up arms, so to speak, in the 'war' over India's history.

As city inhabitants in each text attempt to move toward a state of increased involvement, awareness, agency and possibility in their respective cities in change, characters that aim to circumvent limiting meta-narratives and avoid a state of passive occupation are faced with the challenge of learning new sets of skills in order to negotiate their position within the transforming city. Although the transitional city provides opportunity and possibility through change, the characters in *Istanbul*, *City of Djinns* and *Portrait* are consequently burdened with the responsibility of constructing the city for themselves as former modes of occupation will no longer suffice. A reading of the various cities and contexts inscribed in these texts suggests that spatial and material re-appropriation offers the most advantageous means by which to achieve this Lefebvrian task, without risking a destructive dislocation from one's socio-cultural, and personal, heritage. Much as they are tasked with constructing the city for themselves, the characters in these cities are also faced with the responsibility of forging new identities in relation to the new, possible city that is emerging. *Istanbul*, for example, can be read as Orhan's attempt to construct a coherent and genuine identity as he grapples with issues of belonging, through the appropriation of the city's

melancholy, which enables him to ideologically reclaim the city from the limiting meta-narrative of Turkification.

In conclusion, this dissertation has examined the textual inscription of social change in three contemporary works of memoir, travelogue and ‘urban chronicle’, respectively, giving particular attention to the spatial, cultural and material textures of the imagined cities of Istanbul, Delhi and Johannesburg. By bringing these three texts (and these three contexts) into dialogue, a wide-ranging and nuanced analysis of the application of Scott’s theory on transformation in the built environment in relation to a number of vastly different imagined urban realities has been achieved. In a close reading of my selected texts, I have demonstrated the ways in which the narrative depiction of socio-cultural developments and shifts can be seen to mirror changes in the city’s material infrastructure. In this sense, what has emerged is a keen awareness of the interconnectivity of these two spheres.

Although the three texts bear little similarity other than focussing on the transformation of an imagined city as the result of a real historical event, and although the cities that emerge from these texts are very different, taken together, a number of suggestions regarding the nature of socio-spatial transformation are clearly distinguishable. Undoubtedly, the most pervasive conclusion that can be drawn from these texts collectively is the value of material, spatial and architectural re-appropriation and its ability to instigate and catalyse similarly resourceful responses in the social spheres depicted. Whether absent (as in *Istanbul*), or extensively utilised (as in *City of Djinns* and *Portrait*), this response enables those characters who choose to find new opportunities to engage in the shaping of their material environment, to construct the city for themselves, both physically and ideologically, and to forge new imaginative identities in response to their changing environment. In addition, each text suggests that, despite all that is unavoidably lost in the process, as well as the uncertainty and the suffering of the trauma of change, much is gained in the social and spatial transformation experienced by the imagined cities. In *Istanbul*, *hüzün* is presented as a unifying, shared experience which is true to its socio-cultural environment and which enables the construction of imaginative identities capable of resisting Kemal’s monolithic Turkification. Dalrymple, in *City of Djinns*, depicts a resilience that arises as a direct result of the hardships that Partition brought and which is instrumental in the city’s regeneration and in preventing it from falling into despair. And, in *Portrait*, the necessary adaptation and

compromise that comes with the opening up of the city space after the abolition of apartheid enables the inhabitants Vladislavić portrays to lay claim to a new agency in the shaping of their urban environment. In addition, these new modes of agency and empowerment, the texts imply, are much more readily available to inhabitants who choose an active occupation of the city space. *Istanbul's hüzün*, *City of Djinns*'s resilience and *Portrait*'s adaptability are therefore capable of usurping those meta-narratives that used to shape both city and identity because these newfound philosophies are accessible regardless of ethnicity, belief system or race, characteristics that otherwise dictated power and agency within each of these cities.

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