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### BLURRING THE BOUNDARIES: THE EAST-WEST PREDICAMENT IN PAMUK'S *A STRANGENESS IN MY MIND*

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#### Abstract

This research focuses on Orhan Pamuk's *A Strangeness in My Mind*. Since the Ottoman Empire, modernity that is represented by the West has become a threat and seduction. Due to the issue, this research is conducted to highlight the transformation of Istanbul, analyse Turkey's political agenda which enormously affects Istanbul and its citizens' identity formation process, and investigate the result of the East-West predicament towards the main characters. This research is a descriptive qualitative method which employs Homi Bhabha's discourse on Postcolonialism to uncover the predicament of the oscillation. The findings unveil 1) how Istanbul's cosmopolitanism and uniqueness that have disappeared bring such a grievance towards the life of the citizens; 2) the ambivalence that is caused by both Atatürk and Erdoğan's political agendas; and 3) the east-west oscillation which has led to melancholy and confusion. In addition, Mevlut's strangeness mind is a bridge that tries to connect his friends and relatives who have different political views. Importantly, he also tries to blur the boundaries and promote tolerance towards various groups, religions, cultures, and traditions.

Keywords: boundary, hybridity, modernization, oscillation




#### Introduction

This paper aims to unveil the predicament of the East and West which is presented in Pamuk's *A Strangeness in My Mind* (*ASIMM*). His love for Istanbul is beautifully captured to challenge the boundaries which always separate Eastern and Western group in Turkey. Since the Ottoman Empire, the reign of Mustafa Kemal, and the rise of the Islamic movement in present time, Turkey is always in an ambivalence and oscillation to have a fix-ideal identity. In this novel, Orhan Pamuk, who usually discusses the issue on modernity, now comes with the same theme but in a different area. Since the AKP won the election, Erdoğan's agenda to bring back the glory of the Islamic tradition is unstoppable. He starts removing Atatürk's secular law on the banned headscarf, the access to buy alcohol, and religion that is under the state control. This condition leaves confusion to many people who have lived under the founder's ideology for many decades.

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# Catharina Brameswari

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## **BLURRING THE BOUNDARIES: THE EAST-WEST PREDICAMENT IN PAMUK'S *A STRANGENESS IN MY MIND***

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### **Abstract**

This research focuses on Orhan Pamuk's *A Strangeness in My Mind*. Since the Ottoman Empire, modernity that is represented by the West has become a threat and seduction. Due to the issue, this research is conducted to highlight the transformation of İstanbul, analyse Turkey's political agenda which enormously affects İstanbul and its citizens' identity formation process, and investigate the result of the East-West predicament towards the main characters. This research is a descriptive qualitative method which employs Homi Bhabha's discourse on Postcolonialism to uncover the predicament of the oscillation. The findings unveil 1) how İstanbul's cosmopolitanism and uniqueness that have disappeared bring such a grievance towards the life of the citizens; 2) the ambivalence that is caused by both Atatürk and Erdoğan's political agendas; and 3) the east-west oscillation which has led to melancholy and confusion. In addition, Mevlut's strangeness mind is a bridge that tries to connect his friends and relatives who have different political views. Importantly, he also tries to blur the boundaries and promote tolerance towards various groups, religions, cultures, and traditions.

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### **Introduction**

This paper aims to unveil the predicament of the East and West which is presented in Pamuk's *A Strangeness in My Mind (ASIMM)*. His love for İstanbul is beautifully captured to challenge the boundaries which always separate Eastern and Western group in Turkey. Since the Ottoman Empire, the reign of Mustafa Kemal, and the rise of the Islamic movement in present time, Turkey is always in an ambivalence and oscillation to have a fix-ideal identity. In this novel, Orhan Pamuk, who usually discusses the issue on modernity, now comes with the same theme but in a different area. Since the AKP won the election, Erdoğan's agenda to bring back the glory of the Islamic tradition is unstoppable. He starts removing Atatürk's secular law on the banned headscarf, the access to buy alcohol, and religion that is under the state control. This condition leaves confusion to many people who have lived under the founder's ideology for many decades.

The problems on the identity searching and identity formation process are topics which are always interesting to be discussed. In fact, the issue related to

identity formation is quite universal. Being caught between worlds, living in the ambivalence, and bargaining the oscillation are Pamuk's major subjects which represent Turkey's recent political crisis. The ethic-cleansing policies happened as the struggle to develop and construct a Turkish national identity (Jain, 2019). On the other hand, Indonesia also has a quite similar experience in building its national identity since there are various cultures, races, and ethnics. Some groups also have an agenda to simplify Indonesia's enormous cultural diversity, heterogeneity, and complexity. Moreover, both Turkey and Indonesia also face a big massacre and ethnic cleansing that happened in the past.

*A Strangeness in My Mind* underlines the binary opposition between East and West, Secularists and Islamist, Traditionist and Modernists. Through Mevlut—the main character in *A Strangeness in My Mind*—Pamuk wants to criticise the conservatives who insist that Turkey should live under another identity. Furthermore, Pamuk also tries to reflect the real-life problem which happened in Turkey. In his novel, Pamuk also illustrates and describes the feeling of melancholy that is felt by the people of İstanbul towards the old memories of the grand of the Ottoman Empire or even the worsening economic conditions and İstanbul's impoverished population. Through this novel, Pamuk wants to criticise the ruling leader of his country and the future by using the past events that are beautifully presented.

This novel is important to be analysed because we are asked to take a look at the real problem in Turkey and how the citizens try to find their happiness. Moreover, readers are also invited to observe how the authoritarian leader has brought melancholy in people's life. This historical novel was also selected because it contains a criticism towards the traditionalists and the secularists that want to create a single ideal identity for Turkey. Based on the issues mentioned above, this research puts special focus on the attempt to scrutinize the predicament of traditional and modernity which leads to the movement on finding a new ideal identity. Moreover, readers are also invited to respect and maintain the diversity of all cultures and traditions. Importantly, it is also a reminder to develop future generation's empathy to understand the suffering of others and the feeling of melancholy caused by poverty and the repressive political movement. This research is also an attempt to reveal the issue on in-betweenness, ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity that the novel intends to propose. As we can see that Mevlut actually wants to be modern though he is a religious man who is afraid of God.

Pamuk's works which mostly problematize the tension, oscillation, and predicament of the East and the West always invite many scholarly discussions. The romanticization of Turkey's tensions, reproduces these tensions of Turkey in reality become another way to highlight Turkey's dualities by highlighting Turkey's hybridity (Yalkin & Yanik, 2018). From two previous research, none of them problematized Turkey's never-ending problem in the search of what is called as official identity. As a result, this paper tries to full fill the niches that is still possible to be explored. Babayev (2015) focuses on the postmodern narrative mode of the novels which highlights the relation between the text and the readers. Moreover, another research conducted by Gülnur Demirci in "Decentred Epical Hero in Orhan Pamuk's *A Strangeness in My Mind*" highlights "the cultural memory of modern Turkey" (p. 42) by using postmodern approach to "deconstruct the modern(ist) epic heroes" (p. 32). The on-going process of finding ideal identity

is always an interesting topic to be discussed. However, the other researchers' perspectives on this novel are essential to be discussed and used as the stepping stones to start this research.

Based on the background and the issues mentioned above, this study is conducted with the goals: 1) the depiction of İstanbul and Mevlut's complex relationship with the city; 2) Turkey's political agenda which enormously affects İstanbul and its citizens' identity formation process; and 3) the result of the East-West predicament towards the main characters. Since this new perspective underlines the problem in between choosing a left-wing or a right-wing, I employ Homi Bhabha's discourse on Postcolonialism which focuses on in-betweenness, ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity.

### Method

This research is a descriptive qualitative method which uses documentation as the data collection technique. The researchers used two types of sources which were primary and secondary sources. The primary source of this research is *A Strangeness in My Mind* (2016), a novel by Orhan Pamuk. To support the primary datum, the researchers collected the secondary data which were taken from journals, articles, interview, and book review. The research was conducted in four steps. Firstly, the researchers found the topic and carefully chose the literary work to be discussed. In this study, the researchers analysed Pamuk's agenda in criticising the modernization project which led to the finding of Turkish "ideal identity". Secondly, after reading the novel, as the most essential step, the researchers formulated the questions and searched for the secondary sources and theory. In order to highlight the relationship between Mevlut and İstanbul, the researchers also employed Pamuk's non-fictions: *İstanbul* (2006) and *Other Colours* (2008). This book was used to support the main datum as well as discovered the city transformation which was caused by the modernization project.

Thirdly, the researchers applied Homi Bhabha's theory on Postcolonialism to investigate the east-west predicament and the consequences of both Atatürk modernization project and Erdoğan authoritarian agenda. Bhabha's theory was used to unfold the complex relationship between the main characters and İstanbul that focused on ambivalence, in-betweenness, mimicry, and hybridity. Although those four elements of the theory are essential, hybridity had more portions in this research. This was for the reason that hybridity was a weapon to challenge the boundaries, a space to blur the binary, and a way to find Turkey's new ideal identity. Furthermore, the secondary data were used to find the answers of the formulated questions. Those were employed to discover the connection between the socio-historical context and the events illustrated in the novel. Lastly, the researchers ended the analysis with the result of the analysis and a conclusion. In addition, some suggestions to the other researchers who wanted to analyse *A Strangeness in My Mind* were also offered.

## Findings and Discussion

### *Mevlut's complex relationship with İstanbul*

1 In this section, the researchers highlight Mevlut's relationship with İstanbul by describing his love towards the city. İstanbul is a memoir both of his own life and his city (Erol, 2011). İstanbul—the most populous city in Turkey—is an important city in most of Orhan Pamuk's novels because this is the city where he spends most of his life (Vadivukarasi & Geetha, 2020). Similar to Pamuk, Mevlut also loves this city and awes with its atmosphere, streets, and rich culture. Pamuk sums up that “I have described İstanbul when describing myself, and describes myself when describing İstanbul”. Originally, Pamuk's story is İstanbul because he is a product of İstanbul, therefore he claims his story is equal İstanbul's story (Erol, 2011). Mevlut is amazed with the new face of the city that is now rapidly moving forward when he move to İstanbul at twelve to help his father. Internal migration is a common thing for Turkish people. Similar to other Turkish people, Mevlut and his father want to have for a better life and bring brighter future for their family. Vadivukarasi and Geetha (2020a) underline that people came to İstanbul because they aspire to have a better life (p. 132). The other benefits are that they want to get a well-paid job, own a property, and have easy access for some facilities (Tekin, 2017, p. 625).

In this novel, Pamuk tries to describe the city by reflecting its social and physical changes as the result of the westernization project. Mevlut is such as character that always sensitive to change in the city, one of the factors is because his profession has a great influence on it (Şenyiğit & Tuğba, 2019). Mevlut has been in İstanbul for forty-three years. In the first thirty-five years of this, he felt every year he spent in the city connected him here more (Pamuk, 2016. p. 457). In Mevlut's eyes, İstanbul is a place which has a soul where he can meditate and find peace while walking down the street. When he pushes his cart at night, he likes to talk with the walls, billboard advertisement boards, posters, and the grave. Furthermore, his migration to İstanbul also results in the strangeness in his mind where he processes the predicament of the binary.

Both Pamuk and Mevlut describe İstanbul as a unique city whose cosmopolitanism has disappeared. Jain (2019) mentions that İstanbul lost its diminishing and dusty glory through the relics of the past trying to reach the threshold of power, wealth and self-confidence hat it has borrowed from the West. In *İstanbul*, Pamuk (2006) describes how the founding of the Republic and the rise of Turkification have turned the city into black and white (pp. 238-39). Turkey's new identity is shifted into one monotonous identity which was a beautiful mosaic back before the nationalist dominates the government. Through Mevlut's eyes—a boza seller who has good behaviour, optimism, and goodwill (Pamuk, 2016, pp. 3 & 33)—İstanbul is depicted as a modern city that is surrounded by European images. He describes İstanbul as a modern city, whose “city lights sparkling from afar” (Pamuk, 2016, p. 76). Another example is the alteration of the architecture and function of certain buildings like an Armenian theatre company that now has turned into Elyazar Cinema which screens adult films (p. 117). The modernization of this city make it “lost its natural beauty due to environmental problems...[caused by]...factories, skyscrapers, and tall buildings” (Karadağ, 2020, p. 56). The process of modernization defined “western” as an ideal identity. “West” is perceived as the



marker of universal history and the “East” as its inferior follower (Akcan, 2006, p.42).

Istanbul is a city where the secularists, the conservatives, and even those who embrace both parties live. Mevlut describes this city as a place where conflict and reconciliation may happen at the same time. In line with Hezam (2020), he portrays the city “as more than a setting in the novel for it is presented as a character or a force with which the protagonist is in love and conflict at the same time” (p. 92). In addition, Vadivukarasi and Geetha (2020b) mention that “İstanbul is a bridge between the East and West” (p. 5455). Ferhat, Mevlut’s friend, also describes three types of buildings in this city:

*“1) those full of devout families where people say their daily prayers and leave their shoes outside, 2) rich and Westernized homes where you can go in with your shoes on, [and] 3) new high-rise blocks where you can find a mix of both sorts (Pamuk, 2016, p. 25).”*

In the novel, Mevlut helps readers to describe the way people from different groups interact each other and the city’s enormous transformation. Furthermore, Mevlut may also feel the sadness of the city when İstanbul’s transformation brings such a grievance towards the life of the citizens. Pamuk in Istanbul stands as a local, European, and Westernizer, and these constantly varying viewpoints to mixes melancholy and joy, he calls it “delicious melancholy” (Helvacioğlu, 2013, p. 164).

### ***The effects of Turkey’s political agenda***

Both Atatürk and Erdoğan’s political agendas have enormously affected Turkey in its journey on the finding of a new ideal identity. Istanbul has a contradict history which spans across two empire and a republic which signifies that there are two Istanbul (Jain, 2019). The researchers claim that one culture which defeats another will only leave the citizens in confusion, ambivalence, and melancholy. It is in line with Brameswari (2015) who states that embracing only one culture may put Turkey in danger (p. 157). The rise of the Islamic movement and AKP’s domination in the government have caused a clash among the groups in Turkey. In addition, communists and secularists group which try to get the place on stage do not want to sit still and watch but try to make some movements and actions to get more followers. Through the eyes of a boza seller, readers may witness some political movements and coups, like the tension between the Turks and the Kurds (Pamuk, 2016, p. 158). Furthermore, Pamuk also displays the abrupt changes from decades of modern appropriation to the movement to bring Islamic tradition back to Turkey. The desire to westernize and modernize has change the republican mindset to reduce religion to a strange and sometimes amusing set of rules on which lower classes depended. Therefore, it creates “spiritual void” among the westward-looking population (Helvacioğlu, 2013, p. 166). This event is brilliantly captured and written in a simple narration.

The researchers claim that these radical changes have led Mevlut in his strangeness mind which actually is the third space created by the author. Mevlut uses what so it called the “in-between” space (Ashcroft et al., 2007, p. 109) to survive from the communists, the conservatives, the secularists, the left-wings, or the right-wings. He writes his hybrid identity to fight for the suppression from both sides and to bridge the East and West. Pamuk has said that the finest view of Istanbul is not from the shore of Europe nor the shore of Asia, however from a

bridge between cultures that unites them (Yalkin & Yanik, 2018). His strangeness mind is also a place to make peace with the weird situation around him when he was tricked by Süleyman. The incident happens after Mevlut falls in love with a beautiful girl at Korkut's wedding (Pamuk, 2016, p. 12). He starts writing love letters to that girl which are delivered by Süleyman. After his military service, the girl agrees to elope with Mevlut and gets married. However, Mevlut's love letters are intentionally sent to the wrong girl, Rayiha. Through this mistake, Mevlut realizes that finding a true and genuine love is more important than fulfilling his passion to marry Samiha. He accepts this as an unexpected gift which later determines the rest of his days (p. 3).

In our view, Mevlut's acceptance can be seen from his action when he does not openly mix the tradition and modernity. Inside Mevlut's strangeness mind—which is the symbol for Bhabha's liminal space—he struggles to negotiate the binary between East-West, tradition-modernity, and secular-conservative. Bhabha (1994) emphasizes that this tension and oscillation can be resolved in this space as a way to combine, or mix the two strange things altogether. In this case, Mevlut does not mix those cultures altogether but he tries to embrace them and live between the strangeness. He chooses to be the Bosphorus Bridge, which connects and mediates the Eastern and Western sides of İstanbul by making friends with Ferhat, maintaining good relationship with his secular cousins, and learning Islamic teaching. In line with Fischer (2015), "Mevlut uses his imagination to revise the past and make peace with the present, between rural past and urban present, and between isolated self and outside world". The quotation shows that living with those cultures is not a sin and Turkish people can embrace Western values without leaving their Ottoman traditions.

In addition, Turkey's political agenda also brings some transformations in Mevlut's life as a street vendor. The researchers discover that this 600-page-novel presents not only the tradition and culture of the city but also the food, the atmosphere, the drinks, the beliefs, and the political groups. Those aspects are the symbols and the binary of tradition and modernity, for instance boza. Boza is a clear symbol of predicament of tradition and modernity for people begin to leave it when *raki* and the imported liquors are legal in the Republic. It is mostly consumed by the religious people while beer and wine are drunk by the modern people. In line with Bhabha (1994, p. 85), the researchers find that boza is actually the strategy to fight against Atatürk's power and agenda to modernize Turkey. Mevlut actually knows well that there is a low amount alcohol in boza and it "is invented so that Muslims could drink alcohol under the reign of Ottoman era" (Pamuk, 2016, p. 340).

Furthermore, the researchers argue that boza is presented as a tool to criticise the modernists, the conservatives, and the new confusing era under the AKP. Even if Mevlut claims himself as a capitalist—was one of the socialists' supporters—he is also a religious person who believes in God and mostly in boza. More importantly, he will not let anyone who tries to mock boza. When he has an argument with Süleyman, he insists that boza is holy and contains no alcohol. He mentions that,

*"just because something isn't strictly Islamic doesn't mean it can't be holy. Old things we've inherited from our ancestors can be holy, too" (Pamuk, 2016, p. 341).*

From this quotation, it can be seen that boza is actually the symbol of binary, complexity, and predicament in this novel. It is a drink which contains low alcohol level but is still consumed by the Islamist. Boza is a symbol of Ottoman old tradition which its popularity will soon vanish for during the reign of Atatürk—when *raki* and wine are legal—there is no room for boza. It is a symbol of the vanishing past and the street vendors or soon to be a lost heritage because Boza was forbidden during the Ottoman rule. By the time, the Republic of Turkey in 1923, closed down the Boza street vendors that still carried forward the old tradition of Boza selling, in order to let people free to consume *raki* (Jain, 2019). Additionally, when the new elected party starts to ban alcoholic beverages, Mevlut hopes that people can appreciate the existence of boza more. For Mevlut, boza is a remembrance of the good old days when “families spend gazing out the window at the boza seller on the pavement to wait for him to arrive and listening to the feeling in his voice” (p. 215).

### ***The results of the east-west predicament***

Europe always becomes Turkey’s image in constructing its national identity. In most aspects, Europe is always depicted as superior and ace in knowledge and science (Vadivukarasi & Geetha, 2020). It means that Europe is much more progressive in many aspects. However, the agenda to “separate the religion to the state and strictly prohibit its practices in private sphere” (Özel, 2007, p. 20) is actually an irony because people are forced to mimic their “colonizer” and accept that as their true identity. The image of Europe is adopted by the elites to “civilize” Turkey through mimicking their culture. Some believe that in turkey, the westernization process acts to globalization promote by the state as an attempt to gain entry into the European Union (Jain, 2019).

The rich people in Turkey will follow Western lifestyle while the poor people will stay to embrace the Islamic tradition, support the Islamist party, and perform its religious practices (Pamuk, 2016, pp. 28-29). The East-West predicament is used by Pamuk as his main discussion in his works. In *A Strangeness in My Mind*, Pamuk illustrates how this predicament has brought such a great impact and may totally change the life of the Turks. The oscillation to embrace Ottoman identity or modern-secular identity has led to melancholy and confusion, which is experienced by the characters in the novel. Mevlut’s remembrance of the past and intermingling of fantasy and memory of nostalgia about the old city and finds out that the past can never seems like real thing (Kumari, 2022). In this case, identity is fluid and never steady. In consequence, the identity searching becomes a mystery and its process happens in the third space. In other side, Pamuk suggests that melancholy caused by poverty, defeat and the feeling of loss, that a principal emotion of Istanbul that unites its residents (Akcan, 2006).

Through Mevlut’s strangeness mind, we can also see how he tries to embrace all groups and try to “bridge” his relatives and friends who have different political views. He makes friend with Ferhat who is leftist, maintains a good relationship with his cousins who are seculars, and even performs religious practices. On the other hand, Karadağ (2020) also finds that the East-West encounter, the city transformation, the city life, and the industrialization have created environmental changes and pollution (p. 55). Through Mevlut who is a hard-working, innocent, and humble person (p. 3), Pamuk has talked a lot about the clash and the oscillation

1 to be a militant secularist or an Islamist. Additionally, Mevlut even witnesses various events that have changed İstanbul for four decades. In the novel, Pamuk also symbolizes Mevlut as the Bosphorus Bridge which is nestled between the hills on the Asian and European sides of İstanbul (p. 62). Mevlut's choice to embrace both traditions is a tool "to overcome the failure of the colonizer to create the stable and fixed identity" (Loomba, 2005, p. 92).

It has been mentioned in the previous section that Mevlut's strangeness mind is the in-between space that is used to bargain, argue, and find a safe place from the radical groups around him. In this space, Mevlut may have the negotiation peacefully without any claims which can distract them from this process. Bhabha (1994) mentions that this third space is an ambivalent space where there is no fix meaning for cultural identity. The researchers see that uncertainty and strangeness that Mevlut often feels is a way to ease the confusion caused by the political changes in Turkey. The radical changes in Turkey's national identity have led to the predicament and the oscillation of the old and new identity. Gökner (2004) mentions that "Turkey's self-colonialism desires uniformity and rejects multiculturalism, multi-ethnicity, multi-lingualism, and cosmopolitanism" (p. 55) [which lead to the authoritarian and dictatorship for both Atatürk and Erdoğan]. Thus, the researchers argue that the agenda to bring the Islamic values back to Turkey has led to what is called as self-colonialism that later brings sorrow (*hüzün*).

Sorrow (*hüzün*) is the feeling of melancholy and refers to the pain and sadness over the loss of the grand Ottoman empire and some social problems such as urbanization, radicalization, and poverty. Pamuk uses melancholy with the Turkish word *hüzün*, in association of melancholy with the feeling of loss (Akcan, 2006). In this novel, Pamuk also pictures how the crisis in Turkey has developed "a strangeness in Mevlut's mind" which happens since the story begins. This feeling is also shared by the citizens of İstanbul who witness when "the army has destroyed the buildings that seem dirty, untidy, and old dating back to the Ottoman era" (Pamuk, 2016, p. 102). From this perspective, *hüzün* is intrinsically tied to the gradual decline of the Ottoman Empire as an object of love, resulting the historical losses that resulted from the westernization and modernization efforts of the twentieth century (Helvacioğlu, 2013, p. 166). Moreover, just like the other citizens, he will keep that strangeness and choose to employ it to overcome sorrow (*hüzün*). By contemplating the historical context, it shows melancholy as a historical condition of modernity and melancholy as a cultural condition (Helvacioğlu, 2013, p. 165). Mevlut also eagers to solve this predicament and brings up the old good time of the past era when he can bring "the ancestor's favourite drink" (p. 342) in the present time Turkey. The researchers claims that boza is Pamuk's strategy to deal with the predicament. He describes how Mevlut is as happy as "most people [in İstanbul] are happy just to listen to the boza seller's call" (p. 32). Furthermore, Mevlut also brings the nostalgia of street vendors and as the "songbirds of the street who are the life and soul of İstanbul" (p. 33).

Mevlut is depicted as a melancholic person that insists to keep selling boza for the rest of his life (Pamuk, 2016, p. 743). Mevlut's profession is a symbol of a glorious yet decaying tradition of İstanbul. Mevlut's strangeness mind, when he feels melancholic, selling Boza makes him feel better, because for doing that he walks in the streets of the city for hours. He can keep on hallucinating heritage of the city as a dating all the way back to Ottoman times (Kumari, 2022). The East-

West encounter does not only create predicament, the feeling of melancholy, but also nostalgia of the lost old Ottoman tradition. This feeling is shown by Mevlut and shared with the boza seller he meets in the last few pages of the novel. Mevlut feels sad because the old face of İstanbul will soon disappear. However, he also feels grateful that it will be more beautiful and modern in the future (p. 401). Though some old İstanbul places are not completely destroyed by the urban transformation, Mevlut still misses the old İstanbul where he has spent his happy times with his late wife. In the last part of the novel, Pamuk narrates a melancholic event in Mevlut's life. In his dream, Mevlut meets his wife in an old wooden mansion. This event symbolises how Mevlut actually longs for the old happy times with Rayiha in the old İstanbul. It shows "the old Ottoman legacy [that] has cultivated Mevlut's fantasy world" (Chengiz, 2021, p. 208) and a scenery of the old İstanbul. Furthermore, it illustrates how Mevlut has connected his soul with İstanbul when his friends and relatives boast their financial achievement.

### Conclusion

This research is conducted to find the answer on the problem of the oscillation between East and West. This dichotomy has been a threat and also seduction whether to preserve the Islamic tradition or to live with the European culture. This oscillation is stunningly captured by Orhan Pamuk in *A Strangeness in My Mind*. This novel is Pamuk's media to respect multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism around the various political groups in Turkey. Moreover, it is also a way to challenge the border, which tries to create and maintain the binary opposition. Through Mevlut's experience in İstanbul, Pamuk highlights the clash of Atatürk modernization project and Erdoğan authoritarian agenda. Atatürk's and Erdoğan's political agenda have enormously affected the entire İstanbul and its citizens. This movement had led to confusion and the movement of finding and forcing the new ideal identity.

Before and after the grand of the Ottoman Empire, for Mevlut creates such a cultural and political changes in İstanbul—this city is a place full of memories, hope, and melancholy. The feeling of melancholy caused by the nostalgia of the Ottoman empire, which in the time of prosperity. His complex and special bound with this city result to what is called as *hüzün*. *Hüzün* is the answer that can save him from the confusion, ache, and melancholy as well as the oscillation between two worlds. Through Mevlut, Pamuk tries to create a bridge for Turkey's divided soul. Mevlut, Pamuk, and *A Strangeness in My Mind* invite the readers to appreciate and respect multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism around us since this problem is universal. This novel is also a reminder that forced identity will only lead to confusion, ambivalence, and irony. In addition, Indonesia as a complex country faced the same problem on the identity searching. Therefore, the issues mentioned in the novel related to Indonesian issues in the past, and it can be employed to increase Indonesian people's awareness to keep, maintain, and increase the tolerance towards various religion, culture, tradition, and parties.

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