

Intertextuality and Globalization in Orhan Pamuk's *The Red-Haired Woman*

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Abstract

Objectives: This study examines Orhan Pamuk's novel *The Red-Haired Woman* and explores its thematic connections with classical literary works, specifically Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and Abolqasem Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*. Additionally, it analyzes the novel's function as a postmodern intertextual exploration of these classics and other works of literature mentioned in the novel, such as *Fathers and Sons*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Hamlet*, just to mention a few.

Methods: The analysis in this paper is grounded in the aesthetic theories of mimesis and anti-mimesis. By employing close reading and textual analysis, the paper investigates how the novel serves as a contact zone and shared property of literature. It also examines instances of imitation, replication, and reinterpretation within the novel, thereby demonstrating its contemporary and postmodern retelling of classical narratives.

Results: The study reveals that Orhan Pamuk's novel successfully reimagines and retells the classical narratives of *Oedipus Rex* and *Shahnameh* in a contemporary and postmodern context. By employing mimetic and anti-mimetic techniques, the novel transcends local and national boundaries to become more universal and global in its appeal. This reinforces the consensus among scholars that Pamuk is indeed a writer of world literature, with his novels being read and appreciated on a global scale.

Conclusion: This study demonstrates how *The Red-Haired Woman* functions as a fusion of diverse texts, contributing to the understanding of literature as a dynamic and interconnected entity. The novel's thematic connections with classical works, coupled with its postmodern exploration of intertextuality, highlight Pamuk's status as a writer of world literature.

Keywords: Anti-Mimesis; Mimesis; Orhan Pamuk; *The Red-Haired Woman*; Oscar Wilde; World Literature.

التنصص والعولمة في رواية "المرأة ذات الشعر الأحمر" لأورهان باموق

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ملخص

الأهداف: تتناول هذه الدراسة رواية "المرأة ذات الشعر الأحمر" لأورهان باموق وتستكشف ارتباطاتها الموضوعية مع الأعمال الأدبية الكلاسيكية، تحديداً "أوديب الملك" لسوفوكليس و"الشاهنامه" لأبي القاسم الفردوسي. وتسعى أيضاً إلى تحليل دور الرواية بصفقتها استكشافاً تناصياً ما بعد حداثي لهذه الكلاسيكيات وغيرها من الأعمال الأدبية المذكورة في الرواية، مثل "الأبناء والبنون"، "رحلات جلفر"، و"هاملت"، على سبيل المثال لا الحصر.

المنهجية: يعتمد التحليل في هذه الورقة على النظريات الجمالية للتقليد (المحاكاة)، ونقيض التقليد (اللامحاكاة). من خلال القراءة المتأنية والتحليل النصي، تستكشف الورقة كيف تُعدُّ الرواية منطقة تواصل وملكبة مشتركة للأدب. كما تفحص الورقة أيضاً حالات التقليد والتكرار، وإعادة التفسير داخل الرواية، مما يبرز سردها المعاصر، وما بعد الحداثي للحكايات الكلاسيكية.

النتائج: تظهر الدراسة أن رواية أورهان باموق تعيد تخيل القصص الكلاسيكية لـ "أوديب ركس" و"الشاهنامه" وسردها بسياق معاصر وما بعد حداثي. من خلال توظيف تقنيات المحاكاة والمحاكاة المضادة؛ فتتجاوز الرواية الحدود المحلية والوطنية؛ لتصبح أكثر جاذبية وانتشاراً عالمياً. وهذا يعزز التوافق بين العلماء على أن (باموق) هو حقاً كاتب للأدب العالمي، حيث تحظى رواياته بالقراءة والتقدير على نطاق عالمي.

الخلاصة: تُظهر هذه الدراسة كيفية عمل رواية "المرأة ذات الشعر الأحمر" كدمج لنصوص متنوعة، مساهمة في فهم الأدب ككيان ديناميكي ومترابط. تعرض الرواية العلاقات الموضوعية مع الأعمال الكلاسيكية، جنباً إلى جنب مع استكشافها للتفاعل النصي لما بعد حداثي، مما يسلط الضوء على وضع (باموق) بوصفه كاتباً للأدب العالمي.

الكلمات الدالة: المحاكاة، اللامحاكاة، أورهان باموق، المرأة ذات الشعر الأحمر، أوسكار وايلد، الأدب العالمي.



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I. Introduction

The general consensus on Orhan Pamuk is that all of his novels are read on a global scale and are prime examples of what world literature is. This type of literature, characterized by its universality, aligns with Goethe's vision "of a quintessentially modern mode of international exchange" (Damrosch 6). Pamuk's noble prize win and the translation of his works into 56 languages attest to this globality and worldliness. His novels also provide an example of "the shifting landscape of world literature [which] offers new opportunities for readers to encounter writers located well beyond the select few Western European countries whose works long dominated worldwide attention" (Damrosch, 2014, p. 1, p. 2). In Pamuk's work, the reader becomes aware of his international appeal due to "the many stylistic and thematic aspects of his novels, his subtle references to problems of Turkish modernity and to the Ottoman archive, his intriguing use of intertextual elements, and his characters' metatextual comments" (Türkkan and Damrosch, 2017, p. ix). These are postmodern techniques that are familiar to Western writers and are being adopted as they are and adapted, modified, by Eastern ones, such as Pamuk.

One of the literary techniques that Pamuk uses to achieve this internationality and engage in dialogue with world literature is intertextuality. His works "are replete with intertextual references, ranging from Islamic mysticism to the entire history of Turkish and European literature" (Hülya Adak, 2014, p. 36) and *The Red-Haired Woman* (henceforth *The Red*) is no exception. In his intertextuality, Pamuk is in dialogue with both Western and Eastern literature, bridging the spatial, temporal, and cultural distance where the novel becomes a contact zone of many literary works. Moreover, Pamuk's novels in their engagement with libraries and print-culture suggest, "the question of shared reading – as practice, as a strategy, but also as space" (Venkat Mani, 2014, p. 148). The physical aspect of his books seems to have a dual nature: "an intellectual artifact and a material one" (Venkat Mani, 2014, p. 145). This materiality helps us also to think of "literature as shared property" (Venkat Mani, 2014, p. 148).

In this light, this paper argues that Pamuk's tenth novel, *The Red*, highlights the global facets of literature as both a contact zone and shared property among various writers and literary texts, making the local global and "'national' languages and literatures more and more international in character" (Damrosch 2014: 2). We believe that Pamuk relies heavily on the concept of mimesis and anti-mimesis through intertextuality, in which "all cultural products are a tissue of narratives and images borrowed from a familiar storehouse" (Potolsky, 2006, pp. 53-54). Art through imitation and its various manifestations "absorbs and manipulates these narratives and images rather than creating anything wholly new" (Potolsky, 2006, p. 54). By doing so, it receives more currency and circulation as it acts as a contact zone bringing various works together and appealing to a wider audience.

2. The Red-Haired Woman: An Overview

Among Pamuk's literary works, *The Red* is the least studied by scholars. To the researchers' knowledge, this article is one of the first to critically and aesthetically analyze the novel, offering insights into his work and aiming to inspire other scholars to engage with this complex and artistic text in more nuanced ways. First published in Turkish in 2016 and translated into English by Ekin Oklap in 2017, *The Red* is a postmodern adaptation of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*. It is also a bildungsroman, a coming-of-age novel of a protagonist called Cem, a sixteen-year-old boy abandoned by his father and apprenticed to a Master Mahmut, a well-known well-digger in the town of Öngören (which means foreseeing in Turkish). The novel is divided into three parts. The first part, narrated supposedly by Cem, takes us back to the past, the eighties of the 20th century, where events take place in Öngören. It focuses on the one-month Cem spends as an apprentice to Master Mahmut, who becomes a father-figure to him, and they become more and more attached to each other as the narrative develops. This part also introduces to us the titular red-haired actress, Gülcihan, her Theater of Morality Tales, and Cem's crush leading to the consummation of this love at the end of the first part of the novel. This part, however, comes to a tragic close when Cem's negligence causes a fatal accident that leads to the assumed death of Master Mahmut.

In the second part of the novel, the narrative continues to follow Cem's life throughout university and adulthood. He becomes a geologist and then a businessman with his wife, Ayşe. Unable to have children, both become interested in the

Eastern and Western myths of Rostam/Sohrab and Oedipus to the degree that they name their company Sohrab, the *Shahnameh* hero who is fated to be killed by his father. In a strange twist of events, Cem finds himself back in Öngören and uncovers two significant findings. First, Master Mahmut has not died and finishes the well that he and Cem were both working on in the first part. Second, Cem's one night with Gülcihan produces a child named Enver. When father and son meet, they take an immediate disliking to each other. Cem is a representation of the Occidentalized Istanbulite, whereas Enver is fundamentalist Muslim. In a faceoff between the two, the novel comes to a tragic close: Enver murders Cem by shooting him in his eye with a gun that was originally carried by Cem to their first meeting.

The third part is narrated by Gülcihan, whose narrative sounds more of a replica of her monologues at the Theater of Morality Tales. She clearly discloses the reason behind writing the book on more than one occasion. She also fills many gaps and allows the narrative to sound coherent and chronological. It is only in the last part do the reader infer that the novel that he is reading is basically written by Enver under the supervision of his red-haired mother, Gülcihan (which means the rose of the universe in Turkish).

3. The Theoretical Framework

The novel is thus a postmodern reenactment of Sophocles' *Oedipus*, in other words an imitation of an imitation. In fact, many of Pamuk's novels explore different facets of mimesis and realism such as his novel *The Museum of Innocence* (2009). Salman and AlAmmouri argue in their paper "Concretized Realism in Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*" that the objects located in the real-life museum and those described meticulously in the novel offer a nuanced way of examining the realism portrayed in the novel (126). Thus, Pamuk's interest in realism and mimesis is portrayed in many of his novels and *The Red* is just another depiction of realism's facets, focusing on mimesis and anti-mimesis.

Therefore, the very concept of mimesis is at the heart of the novel. Taken from Ancient Greek to mean 'imitation,' "the word [mimesis] has been used to describe the imitative relationship between art and life, as well as the relationship between a master and a disciple, an artwork and its audience, and the material world and rational order of ideas" (Potolsky, 2006, p. 1). It also brings to mind its counterpart: anti-mimesis, a concept first discussed by Oscar Wilde (1905) in his Socratic dialogue titled "The Decay of Lying." Wilde's text displays a firm anti-mimesis stance against imitation and mirroring in life and art, expressed by Vivian, the dandy, who affirms that: "Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates life," meaning that life tends to mirror artistic creations more than art reflects reality. This phenomenon arises not just from life's inherent tendency to imitate but from the fact that life's conscious goal is to find expression. Art provides life with beautiful forms through which it can realize this energy. This is a novel theory, but it is highly productive and offers a fresh perspective on the history of art. Vivian asserts that a "great artist invents a type," and life attempts to replicate it, much like how a publisher seeks to reproduce popular works. Artists such as Holbein and Van Dyck did not find their models in England; instead, they brought their artistic types with them, and life, with its strong imitative nature, strove to provide them with suitable models. The Greeks understood this concept and placed statues of gods like Hermes or Apollo in bridal chambers, believing that the bride, inspired by these beautiful works of art, would bear equally beautiful children (Wilde, 1905).

This paper argues that this is what Pamuk is doing in *The Red* showing how life imitates art. He does that in a subtle and artistic way throughout the novel. He uses the novel as a genre and as a form to emphasize the need to engage in dialogue with the self and others to find one's voice and place in the world. Therefore, in his novels in general, and in *The Red* in particular he shows how the novel in its universal appeal and artistic profundity becomes a contact zone, a shared experience, and eventually a model for life. The contact zone provides a space for dialogue but also allows for "cultural borrowing." According to Erdağ Göknar (2017, pp. 97-98) in his chapter "Mapping Pamuk onto the World Literature Syllabus" in *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Orhan Pamuk*, Pamuk is

writing with double awareness of both the center and periphery. This idea can be traced back to one of Pamuk's Turkish literary mentors, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar. Tanpınar describes cultural borrowing as a kind of synthesis that he termed *terkip*. Tanpınar relies on *terkip*—between East and West, French and Turkish literatures, Ottoman past and Turkish present, Islam and secularism, tradition and modernity—as a literary method, particularly in novels like *A Mind at Peace* (Eronat 42-43).

In form and content, all of Pamuk's fiction relies on this principle, which is in essence one of cultural translation. Once they learn how to recognize *terkip*, students are adept at finding examples of it in Pamuk's novels.

Göknaar (2017, p. 98) further explains that Pamuk does something more than *terkip*, the borrowing of different literary methods. By "worlding" different literature in his fiction, "Pamuk points to and challenges the exclusions of world literature. He doesn't use the aesthetic form of the European novel but rather produces aggregate, polysemous texts of political violence, history, poverty, modernity, and identity conveyed through Turkish, Ottoman, and Islamic tropes" (Göknaar, 2017, p. 98). Göknaar illustrates that he uses the concept "of a worlded[sic] literature to point to the ways Pamuk both critiques world literature from the perspective of Istanbul and at the same time participates in its transformation" (2017, p. 98). To Göknaar, the concept "worlded" reveals how we are "bound up in a complex web of associations and social practices" (2017, p. 98), a mixture of different cultural and social forces that lead to "contingent processes of existence" (Göknaar, 2017, p. 98).

Pamuk's novels also show how different worlds can be interconnected in a web of various cultural associations. In his *The Naïve and Sentimental Novelist* (2016, p. 59), Pamuk writes something similar about the power of the novel:

It was by taking novels seriously in my youth that I learned to take life seriously. Literary novels persuade us to take life seriously by showing that we in fact have the power to influence events and our personal decisions shape our lives. In closed or semi-closed societies, where individual choice is restricted, the art of the novel remains underdeveloped. But whenever the art of the novel does develop in these societies, it invites people to examine their lives, and it achieves this by presenting meticulously constructed literary narratives about individuals' personal traits, sensations, and decisions. When we leave aside traditional narratives and begin to read novels, we come to feel that our own world and our choices can be as important as historical events, international wars, and the decisions of kings, pashas, armies, governments, and gods—and than even more remarkably, our sensations and thoughts have the potential to be far more interesting than any of these.

What is particularly noteworthy of Pamuk's statement above is how the novel can help individual readers see aspects of their own lives and how the choices one makes alters and shapes our lives. The novel he says lets one take their own life seriously. He makes a similar comment about world literature and the potential it has in creating change in a reader's life in an interview with David Damrosch (2014, pp. 4-5) titled "Nights of Plague: A Conversation": "I understand that, I respect that, but world literature is beyond that. It is a willingness to change ourselves, with texts which are not you, which are different—a different language, different form, or a different structure."

Therefore, one can say that the contact zone provided by the novel allows for a shared experience that leads to a constructive and profound change in one's life and perspective. This shared experience is manifested in the novel through mimesis. According to Mathew Potolsky (2006, p. 50), mimesis can be defined and described in three pivotal ways: "the imitation of role models; the imagery of theatre and acting; and the problem of realism." These three ways are intersected in the novel and play a dynamic and significant role in providing us with a deep understanding of the novel and its implications. The imitation of role models involves the relationship between fathers and sons, which lies at the center of the novel with all the other associations it implies like past/present and East-West/ tradition-modern. To enact this relationship, the theater is used as a dramatic form keeping us aware of the theatricality and literariness of this work represented in the relationship between the work and its audience or in our case the novel and its readers. Moreover, it allows us to think of the theatre as "an exemplary community form"; as an "assembly or ceremony of the community [...] in which ordinary people become aware of their situation and discuss their interests" (Rancière, 2009, p. 6). All of this leads us to the question of reality, the relationship between the work, the world and their representation, reflected in the novel through intertextuality and metafictionality. The connecting thread throughout is the stories the reader hears, mainly, the two myths of Oedipus and Sohrab, which act as Janus; two faces of the same coin, and lead to a kind of realism, a kind of verisimilitude, "which defines the work as 'true to life' rather than a replica of life" (Potolsky, 2006, p. 98). This paper claims that Pamuk uses both mimesis and mainly its counterpart anti-mimesis to draw attention to the pressing and significant issues of local and global weight on one's identity and relationship to the other, for "The fictional distance inherent in mimesis allows a glimpse into the universal qualities of human life that are revealed by particular actions"

(Potolsky, 2006, p. 38). In other words, “Mimesis allows us a form of distance that enables rational reflection on even disturbing sights, and tragedy in particular produces emotional effects out of a rational reflection on the course of human life (Potolsky, 2006, p. 45). Therefore, the next part is divided into three sections: imitation of role models as manifested in the novel through the duality of past/present and East-West/ tradition-modern; theatricality, intertextuality, and metafictionality; and a conclusion.

4. Imitation of Role Models

It is universally known that we, humans, “are the most imitative of creatures, [who] learn our earliest lessons through mimesis (Potolsky, 2006, p. 37). The first thing a person imitates as role models are our fathers and mothers, hence the adage “like father like son” is an apt description in this case. For one of the prominent themes that underscores much of the events of the novel is the father-son relationship that is represented in characters such as Cem, Mahmut, Enver, and Cem’s father, Akin. It is thus a major and connecting motif in the story, a point the novel draws attention to at the very beginning of its narrative, in the first paragraph. “Perhaps you, too, will follow, lured by the enigma of fathers and sons” (Pamuk, 2017, p.1), says the narrator who is trying to create a clear bond with his readers to attract them to his world by mentioning a very universal theme. To highlight this, the novel is rife with stories about fathers and sons, but three stories are at the heart of the novel and seem to capture its essence, and they come in the form of storytelling: “Rostam and Sohrab, Oedipus and his mother, [and] Abraham and Issac” (Pamuk, 2017, p.261). They all underline the concept of imitation and suggest the past/present and East-West/ tradition-modern (contemporary) duality and dichotomy through which the novel addresses its major concerns.

4.1. Past/Present

The past and present are presented in the figure of Master Mahmut, a well digger and a father figure, who becomes a symbol of the modernization of Istanbul in particular, and Turkey in general and acts as an eyewitness to various periods in the history of Istanbul and its suburbs. The novel begins in the eighties and ends in the new millennium. However, it goes even back to the 1970s showing the influx of people coming to live in Turkey, “where there was neither water nor electricity” (Pamuk, 2017, pp. 39-40).

The narrative persistently makes a reference to the past. In the first part, it goes back to the past to trace the modernization of Istanbul in the shape of well digging, excavations and search for wells carried out by Master Mahmut: “When Cem meets Master Mahmut at the age of forty-three, he had dug more than one hundred and fifty wells over nearly twenty years” (Pamuk, 2017, p. 41). Moreover, he “inspected a five-hundred-year-old well from the Byzantine era” (Pamuk, 2017, p. 39). One could say that the first part was about old Istanbul where modernization takes place and the “early drills, still operated manually, like screwdrivers” which in the second part would “be superseded by powerful mechanized ones” (Pamuk, 2017, p. 139), where “Öngören and Istanbul were filling up with industrial plants, warehouses, and factories”, and the “little towns and villages near Istanbul were expanding as disconcertingly fast as the city itself” (Pamuk, 2017, p. 138). One also hears of Öngören’s distant past as a garrison, where an infantry was stationed during WWII to protect Turkey from German and Russian attacks; however, it is still a garrison in the beginning to the novel, which is both “the town’s greatest source of income, and its curse” (Pamuk, 2017, p. 21). The past is also significant as it reflects Cem’s yearning to return home and to the time of his first love. However, such nostalgia, in Hutcheon words (1998, 20) “is less about the past than about the present”, a present that seems to have been filled with pain and disappointment. This idea of escaping the present is explored by Zuraikat et al. (2022, p. 46) in their article “The Present-Past Interaction in Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*” where Willy Loman’s continuous escape to the past “is not always a completely viable method to escape harsh realities or undesired truths; rather, it sometimes engrains pain and ensues pessimism,” something similar to what Cem also sees in the past: “I was also gradually coming to realize that what happened at the well would always bar me from the joys of an ordinary life” (Pamuk, 2017, p124).

This past is also important structurally to the novel as it bring us to the Theater of Morality Tales, Cem’s father as a political leftist activist and rebel, the relationship between Gülcihan and Cem’s father, the affair with Cem, emulating that

of Oedipus and Jocasta, and the metaphorical death of Master Mahmut, another adaptation of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*. The digging process somehow becomes a symbol of the excavation into the past: "Her whole demeanor had struck me as her red hair gleamed uncannily in the light. For a moment, she looked at me as if she already knew me, as if to ask what I was doing there. In that moment when we caught each other's eye, it was as if we were both trying to summon, perhaps even to question, an ancient memory" (Pamuk, 2017, pp. 23-24).

Not only is Master Mahmut a symbol of the past, but he is also a father figure to Cem. "Master Mahmut took much more of an interest in my life than my father ever had: he told me stories and taught me lessons, he never forgot to ask if I was all right, if I was hungry, whether I was tired" (Pamuk, 2017, pp. 29-30). In return, Cem tells him the story of Oedipus, which is the closest story to the narrative of the novel, foreshadowing the end between Master Mahmut and Cem, providing a solid example of how "[c]hildren imitate the stories they hear, and this imitation shapes their souls (Potolsky, 2006, p. 28). In a deeper level, how life imitates art and has very serious repercussions. Oedipus' story told by Cem unsettles Master Mahmut for "[h]e was listening with his brows furrowed and a troubled look on his face, as if I were relaying bad news rather than just recounting an old fable" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 47). What is telling about this tale is the manner of its unfolding, in which Cem imitates his master by pausing at dramatic points in the story, "Master Mahmut always grew quiet at the most meaningful moment, and I would sense a vague warning in his manner: it could happen to you. I was trying to do the same now" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 48). This act of mimesis in the manner of articulation is also going to be fulfilled in real action, in their lives, as both of them face the same end as that of King Laius, Oedipus' father. Fida' I. Krunz and Shadi Neimneh write in their study "The Return of the Primal Father: A Comparative Freudian Reading of Two Novels" (2021, Vol. 21, No. 2, p.148) that "[t]he journey to the self or the past conjuring the primal father and identifying with him can be a legitimate interpretation of violence." This type of violence take place with all three characters: Cem, Master Mahmut, and Enver. It is precisely the conjuring of the past that invokes Cem to subconsciously endanger the life of Master Mahmut and invokes Enver to murder Cem in cold blood.

This aspect of imitation is illustrated in both Cem and Enver when they meet in Öngören. Both consider Master Mahmut as a father figure. To Cem, "He was like a father to me [...] I found a new father in Master Mahmut" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 215). To Enver, he "was like a father" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 216). They seem to echo each other. Cem confesses to Enver that "I used to be scared of Master Mahmut's stories [...] They always ended up coming true [...] The things he told me in his stories happened to me in real life. And I was also scared of Master Mahmut's well. I was so terrified that one day I just left him there and ran away" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 216). The same ominous threat is voiced by Gülcihan warning the neighborhood children including her son to stay away from the well because the "things you hear in old myths and folktales always end up happening in real life (Pamuk, 2017, p. 252).

Finally, the well is very symbolic in the story on more than one level. It acts as a locus of anagnorisis where Cem finds out that Enver is actually his own son. This desire is reflected in Cem's yearning to see the well. He informs his lawyer saying to him "All I wanted before I went home was to see the well I'd dug with Master Mahmut" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 214). Moreover, the well is associated with mosques and with one's past that needs to be disclosed for one to move on: "You won't find a single ancient mosque in Istanbul that doesn't have a well" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 62). This connection helps us segue to the second major concern of the novel: the relationship and dialogue between East-West/tradition-modern.

4.2. East-West/Tradition-Modernization

Structuring the narrative around traditional stories from the East and West concerning father-son relationship such as Laius and Oedipus and Rostam and Sohrab and choosing the well as the meeting point transforms the novel into a contact zone and shared property where the past meets the present and tradition addresses the modern. Both the story of Rostam and Sohrab where Rostam, the father, slays his son, Sohrab and that of Oedipus have a lot of parallels: "Oedipus murdered his father, while Sohrab was murdered by his father. One is a story of patricide, the other a story of filicide" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 150). The question that is being asked in relation to the end of Rostam and Sohrab has to do with the punishment that Rostam should have received for killing his son as there was no punishment: "Wasn't anyone going to make the Eastern father pay?" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 152). Another instance that brings the East and West together has to do with Oedipus: why

isn't there a single picture depicting Oedipus' as he is killing his father? Both questions provide opportunities to compare between the East and the West, an important motif in the novel. They are both answered or better say enacted in the novel as Enver takes matters in his own hands and provides an end weaving the narrative of both the East and the West into one narrative, showing how life imitates art, how Öngören, like Thebes, becomes cursed "like a place in one of those fairy tales they used to tell us as children" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 173).

These stories from the East and West which focus on the father/son relationship allow the narrative also to discuss the relationship between tradition and modern. Cem's interest in these stories takes him to libraries, which are places like memory that "[store] the knowledge of the past" (Ungureanu, 2017, p. 166). This relationship between tradition and modern is displayed in the novel in two clear instances. The first takes place in a real library in a scene between Cem and Mrs. Fikriye, the chief librarian of the Topkapi Palace Manuscript, who asks a very legitimate question that seems to be at the heart of the novel: "Why is their story [Rostam and Sohrab] so special to you?" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 159). The discussion between the two gives us a clue since the discussion moves from the personal to the communal, from tradition to modern life: "I suppose this is no longer a world in which to read and savor old epics of warring heroes", adding that "Istanbul has changed so much" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 160), implying the modernization of it and the change in people's taste and perspective. However, she assures him that despite the fact that people in Turkey might have forgotten Ferdowsi, they still remember his tales in *Shahnameh* that they adapt them in their stories, plays, films, etc. implying that such stories are being recycled and appreciated, something quite similar to what the novel is doing. It draws our attention to the bigger picture in the novel: the question of origin. For example, Mrs. Fikriye tells Cem that the people of Turan and Rumelia, who appear in the *Shahnameh*, "are actually Turks" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 161), which makes the work Turkish as much as Persian, and the interest in such book is symbolic to the interest in one's literary heritage and roots. This is also shown in the comparison with Iranians which is meant to show the difference in attitude towards the past and tradition: "Most Ottoman intellectuals would have had a passing acquaintance with the *Shahnameh* or at least known some of its stories" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 145). Cem somehow goes through the same experience of Ferdowsi who also loses a child and that is why his passages about the father's loss of a son are imbued with depth and honesty (Pamuk, 2017, p. 146). This emulation is a symbolic way of admitting and accepting one's own cultural heritage. Moreover, it shows how one literary work begets another literary one, and how they all share some common origin or belief advocating the worlding this novel. The worlding is emphasized further in the way the threads of the novel follow the same plot as that of Oedipus and intersect with it: "I'd read *Oedipus the King* and relied on its truths. At least that's what I wanted to think. From Master Mahmut I'd learned to believe in the force of old stories. And like Oedipus, I couldn't resist investigating my ancient crime" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 187).

The second instance that reflects the relationship between tradition and modern is depicted clearly in the discussion that takes place between the father and son. It is a very stressful moment but highlights the dichotomy succinctly and eloquently. Enver sees Cem as a Westernized Turk, bringing to our attention another dichotomy in the novel, religion and secularism, or tradition and modernity:

Our wealthy Westernized classes are so obsessed with individualism, they've forgotten how to be themselves, let alone how to be individuals [. . .] These Westernized Turks are too conceited to believe in God. Their individuality is all they care about. Most choose not to believe in God just to prove they're not like everyone else, though they won't even acknowledge that's the reason why. (Pamuk, 2017, p. 235)

On a symbolic level, this confrontation between the father and the son reflects a major concern of the novel, which brings us back to mimesis and the imitation of role models. Despite the tension and the tragic end of such confrontation, it shows how tradition acts as "a powerful means of asserting the unity of contemporary culture with the past", and eventually provides "cultural stability" (Potolsky, 2006, p. 52). This also allows us to discuss the second pivotal point in mimesis, theater and theatricality. Like the novel which acts as a contact zone allowing the confrontation between the individual, the reader, and community, the theatre takes this to a more advanced level of confrontation "where the audience confronts itself as a collective." The "theatre is an exemplary community form. It involves an idea of community as self-presence, in contrast to the distance of representation (Rancière, 2009, pp. 5-6). This theatricality in the novel is both intertextual and

metatheatrical and fictional, reminding its readers of its means of construction and eventually intended meaning.

5. Theatricality, Intertextuality, and Metafictionality

At the heart of the novel is the theatrical performance of the morality theatre, depicted as a *mélange*, a combination of so many scenes from different texts, and another example of the contact zone of intertextuality. The theatre as mentioned earlier in this study focuses on the relationship between the work and its audience, which brings us closer to the question of mimesis and anti-mimesis, the imitative relationship between art and life. If it is true what Pamuk earlier says about the power of novels in persuading us to take life seriously and thus allowing us to influence events and shape our own lives, then the theatre is so apt as it is seen as a metaphor for life, “the theatrum mundi or theatre of the world [which] imagines life as a play, with the world as a stage, each person an actor, and God the all-seeing audience” (Potolsky, 2006, p. 76). If by comparison, one could say that “society is like a theatre [...] then change in theatre might produce change in the social world as well” (Potolsky, 2006, p. 85) and by extension a change in the novel “might produce change in the social world”. This takes us back to Wilde’s pervasive claim that life imitates art and to “bodily theatrical impersonation in which actors serve as paradigmatic examples of the power of artistic types to give form to human lives” and to “to mold human forms” (Lawtoo, 2018, pp. 317-18). To further illustrate this idea in relation to Wilde’s anti-mimetic stance, Nidesh Lawtoo (2018, p. 318) even uses *Oedipus the King* as an example to illustrate how the human can espouse literary figures and “unconsciously adopt[s] the form of a classical and aesthetically paradigmatic fictions in real life.” This paper argues that this is what happens in real life within the fictional world of the novel: “That was why Master Mahmut wound up stuck at the bottom of a well: it was all owing to a story, a myth” (Pamuk, 2017, p. 129).

This anti-mimetic stance is further emphasized in the novel, especially at the moment of anagnorisis. Once Ayşe finds out that Cem has left for Öngören, she calls him on his cellphone to warn him that the man who claims to be his tour guide and who goes by the name of Serhat is his son and that the stories that they have been reading for years now particularly *Oedipus* come true. Ayşe tells Cem on the phone frantically: “If it’s true, everything we’ve believed about *Oedipus* and his father, and about Rustom and Sohrab... then if that young man is your son, he is going to kill you! He is a textbook case of the rebellious Western individualist...” (Pamuk, 2017, pp. 226-7). Ayşe has already predicted the tragic ending that takes place and all because she has seen the parallels between Cem, *Oedipus*, and Rustom. This is because she has spent years reading about the tragedies of *Oedipus* and Rustom and Sohrab and is quite aware of the relationship between fathers and sons. By the end of chapter 43, Enver has, as predicted by Ayşe, murdered his father, not by gouging out his eyes (even though he wishes he could do so), but by firing Cem’s gun into one them. Thus, Cem and Ayşe’s prediction that there might be trouble is fulfilled. Both are fearful that Enver attempts to kill his father reenacting Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King* and Cem reenacts the myth of Rustom and Sohrab if necessary. That is why he takes his handgun with him in the first place.

Cem and Ayşe are not the only ones who believe that life does imitate art. Gülcihan as well in her final section and her first encounter with Ayşe tells her something very important about life and art. She describes to Ayşe how both Master Mahmut and Cem were deeply moved by the tragedy of Rostam and Sohrab, and how now, after thirty years, she sheds tears by the well, still bound by the same inevitable connections between myth and life, adding, “Life follows myth!” (Pamuk, 2017, p. 267)

Gülcihan draws Ayşe to the parallels between how Cem unintentionally kills Master Mahmut and thirty years later Enver has murdered Cem. The way that two fatal incidents with years between them are eerily reminiscent of the Persian tale of Rustom and Sohrab. Gülcihan’s relationship with Enver is likewise mimetic of *Oedipus* and his mother Jocasta to the extent that she may even be reliving the Greek tragedy with Enver. In the days after death, Enver spends his time in prison awaiting his trial. It is during this time that Gülcihan visits Enver regularly and their relationship becomes more intimate and special. Gülcihan appears to be reliving the Greek tragedy to its final straw as she refers to Enver’s kisses as those of a lover and their gazing into each other’s eyes silently is deeply intimate and romantically infused: “I would just hold his hand, and caress his arms, his shoulders, his back, his neck. He, in turn, would cradle his sixty-year-old mother’s hands and his and kiss them as fervidly as a lover. (Pamuk, 2017, p. 272)

The theatrical aspect of the novel, especially in the Theatre of Morality Tales, a hodgepodge of tales, sheds light on the intertextuality of the novel. The novel is very densely intertextual. It is rife with allusion and intertextuality. There are many references to major literary as well as artistic works, especially the titular red-haired woman who plays a major role in the novel, the connecting force and energy. Referencing of stories starts from the very beginning of the novel particularly in chapter one of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*. Then in chapter 2 there are references to Jules Verne's novel. There are references to *Gulliver's Travels* in the sixth chapter. Freud's book on dreams where Cem reads about Oedipus and on which he bases the story he tells to Master Mahmut. There are also references of Hamlet and of Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* and *The Idiot*. According to Potolsky (2006, pp. 53-54), the tradition of "imitation" anticipates what literary theorists have called intertextuality, "the notion that all cultural products are a tissue of narratives and images borrowed from a familiar storehouse." Recycling and retelling of stories is an act of mimesis. Despite the many allusions, however, the two stories that seem to have the lion's share are those of Oedipus and Rostam and Sohrab.

Stories also bring to mind the very act of writing itself, which is in itself an act of mimesis. Cem believes that if he were a writer, he would imitate Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*: "create something comparable to this eternal, all encompassing masterpiece, which seemed to capture every detail of any subject, a book at once thrilling and distressing in its unerring depiction of humanity, one that overwhelmed me with surprise and wonder at every turn" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 146)

Gülcihan tells her son that he must write the story of his father: "I asked Enver to write down the complete account of how he'd come to kill his father by mistake" so that the judge acquits him as it was an act of self-defense (Pamuk, 2017, p. 263). She goes even to provide us with the details of the plot: "But to present the story in its full context, he must start from the very beginning, with the summer his father went to dig that well". This makes the novel metanovel and mimetic as it imitates events that take place in the reality of that world. Gülcihan adds an important remark when she says "that has made it necessary for me to help him discover everything that happened before and since. The fruit of all those efforts is the text you are now holding" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 263). She even goes on to claim that this work is like an acquittal for Enver and also a detective story: "The whole thing – and not just the next few pages – can be regarded as the investigative report of a murder, with every piece of evidence subject to and withstanding legal scrutiny. Just as Sophocles's Oedipus the King" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 263)

Gülcihan becomes an aesthetic agent, or the aesthetic angel of her own son, one of Mnemosyne's daughters, one of the muses that allows the writer's creativity to erupt. Somehow in giving her this privilege, Pamuk is twisting both the East and West narratives and gives voice to the silenced or overlooked voice of the mothers of the slain sons.

I managed to slip my darling son the notebook he'd kept in Öngören, his pens, and a few of his favorite poetry anthologies. I realized that writing might be an effective therapy for his suffering and rage. That's how I came to suggest that he start an account of his life, perhaps even working the entire story, now nearing its end, into the form of a novel. I made sure to check on his progress during those social visits (Pamuk, 2017, p. 271).

It is obvious that Gülcihan is behind the writing of the novel. She pushes her son by providing him with all the tales that the reader hears in the first two parts. She is even the one who reminds him that these stories he heard from Master Mahmut in the past. She tells him about his father's visit to Tehran and her life in the theatre, telling him that "Those shows I did were all for the sake of that final monologue" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 727)

The novel ends with Enver's acceptance to become his own writer: "He told me he would finally start working on the novel in which he would explain 'everything.' There were, he said, as many thoughts in his head right now as there were stars in the sky beyond the window of his cell at night" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 272). He later on mentions the scarcity of references in the prison, but there are some and they are the same books that are mentioned in the first two parts: Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth* and Edgar Allan Poe's *Dreams and Life*. He decides to read the books his father read in his youth, hoping that by doing that "he would be able to put himself in his father's place" (Pamuk, 2017, p. 273). The mother even suggests the cover of the story: the taped-up picture of the red-haired woman by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The novel even ends with her voice and final pieces of advice that sounds like Aristotle's *Poetics*:

Of course you know best how your novel should start, but I think it ought to be sincere and mythical at the same time,

like the monologues I used to deliver at the end of our performances. It should be as credible as a true story, and as familiar as a myth. That way, everyone, not just the judge, will understand what you are trying to say. Remember: your father had always wanted to be a writer, too.” (Pamuk, 2017, p. 273)

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper asserts that Pamuk's novel, *The Red-Haired Woman*, illustrates the universality of literature by exploring the aesthetic concepts of mimesis and anti-mimesis. The argument posits that the novel exemplifies literature as a contact zone for diverse literary traditions spanning both historical and contemporary periods. The novel demonstrates how literature can function as a communal asset, reshaping and recounting historical narratives in diverse ways. By employing the aesthetic principles of mimesis and anti-mimesis, this paper argues that the novel functions as an intertextual work, mimicking both past texts and real-life experiences. In conclusion, compelling indications suggest that the novel alludes to the complementary concept of life imitating art, the counterpart of mimesis. This is exemplified through the characters Ayşe and Gülcihan, who showcase their ability to anticipate and prefigure forthcoming events within the narrative. The portrayal of mimetic intertextuality manifests in various forms, including the emulation of role models, the dynamics between fathers and sons, the blending of past with present, and the integration of Eastern and Western influences. These elements collectively reinforce the novel's intricate interplay between art and life, providing a rich tapestry of intertextual references and thematic depth.

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