

THE ANXIETY OF WRITING THE FIRST NOVEL: HOUSES AS SYMBOLS IN *CEVDET BEY VE OĞULLARI* AND *BUDDENBROOKS: VERFALL EINER FAMILIE**

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ABSTRACT: *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* (Mr. Cevdet and His Sons) has a central place in Orhan Pamuk's oeuvre, particularly as it is his first published novel and shows marked similarities with Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks: Verfall einer Familie*. Pamuk has discussed his possible debt to Mann and his writerly anxiety as a young author openly in his non-fiction. This study concentrates on *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları*, the story of a Muslim merchant family between the years 1905 and 1970, and Mann's *Buddenbrooks*, a saga about a German merchant family which takes place between the years 1835 and 1877. The two novels reveal clear parallels in characterization, themes and symbols. Nevertheless, the aim of this paper is to examine one particular symbol: the houses that bring the members of both families together and which reflect their lifestyles and the changing values of several generations, as well as presenting the similarities between these two novels by regarding this symbol as the starting point.

Keywords: Anxiety of influence, literary symbols, Orhan Pamuk, Thomas Mann

İLK ROMANI YAZMA ENDİŞESİ: *CEVDET BEY VE OĞULLARI VE BUDDENBROOKLAR: BİR AİLENİN ÇÖKÜŞÜ* *ROMANLARINDAKİ EV SİMGESİ*

ÖZ: İlk yayımlanmış eseri olması nedeniyle *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* adlı romanın Orhan Pamuk'un külliyatında önemli bir yeri vardır ve bu romanın Thomas Mann'ın *Buddenbrooklar: Bir Ailenin Çöküşü* adlı eseriyle arasındaki dikkat çekici benzerlikler gösterir. Ne var ki, Pamuk'un kendisi Mann'dan olası etkilenişini ve genç bir yazar olarak yazarlara özgü endişelerini özellikle kurgu olmayan eserlerinde açık bir şekilde dile getirmektedir. Bu çalışma Pamuk'un 1905 ile 1970 yıllarını kapsayan Müslüman bir tüccar ailesinin konu edildiği *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* ile 1835 ile 1877 yılları arasında geçen, Alman bir tüccar ailesinin hikâyesini anlatan *Buddenbrooklar* romanları üzerinde durmaktadır. Her iki roman da karakterler, temalar ve edebi simgeler açısından paralellikler göstermektedir. Ancak, bu makalenin amacı aile

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fertlerini bir araya getiren ve farklı birkaç kuşağın yaşayış ve değişen değerlerini yansıtan ev simgesi incelemek ve bu simgeden yola çıkarak iki eser arasındaki benzerlikleri sunmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Etkilenme endişesi, edebi simgeler, Orhan Pamuk, Thomas Mann

1. Introduction

Orhan Pamuk as the author of his first novel, *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* evokes the typology of the young, belated poet discussed in Harold Bloom's *Anxiety of Influence* and *A Map of Misreading*. Bloom discusses the influence of earlier poets on later ones and coins the important term 'belatedness' to describe the situation of a poet who comes of age too late in the history of a literary culture to be able to write original poetry. In *Anxiety of Influence* he asserts that earlier writers like Shakespeare and Milton had already said everything that could be said in a particular genre. Citing the example of the Romantic poets, Bloom argues that it is inevitable that they should either imitate Milton or be influenced by him. Furthermore, it is impossible for any writer not to be influenced by previous writers.¹ Accordingly, belatedness creates an anxiety for the late comer who desires to be unique. Bloom claims that no writer can ever be totally free from belatedness, and therefore all writers are doomed to experience a writerly anxiety:

*"If you will not have one instructor or another, then precisely by rejecting all instructors, you will condemn yourself to the earliest Scene of Instruction that imposed itself upon you. The clearest analogue is necessarily Oedipal; reject your parents vehemently enough, and you will become a belated version of them, but compound with their reality and you may partly free yourself."*²

According to Bloom's theory of influence the texts that a writer produces are bound to be related to previous texts in a literary tradition. Thus, through influence, intertextuality has to exist in every text. In his non-fiction, instead of rejecting the idea of influence Pamuk asserts that he has suffered from writerly anxiety as a young author: 'Otuzlu yaşlarımın başında sürekli olarak Tolstoy'dan veya Mann'dan fazla etkilenmiş olabileceğimi düşünüp duruyordum- ilk romanlarımda bu tür kibar, aristokratik düzyazıyı hedeflemiştim.'³ ('In my early thirties, I worried that I might have been overly influenced by Tolstoy or Mann – in my first novels I aimed at that

¹ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1973.

² Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1975, p. 38.

³ Orhan Pamuk, *Manzaradan Parçalar: Hayat, Sokaklar, Edebiyat*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2010, p. 539.

kind of refined aristocratic prose').⁴ Pamuk's first novel, not yet translated into English, *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* (Mr Cevdet and his Sons, 1982), owes much to Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks: Verfall einer Familie* (1901), as Pamuk himself notes.⁵ According to his account, when he read *Buddenbrooks* at the age of twenty, he realised that he could write a similar novel, as the story reminded him of his own family history. However, after finishing his book, he laments having written an obsolete 19th-century novel.⁶

At first glance, the two novels are connected by similar narrative techniques. Time flows in a linear way: generation follows generation, and the texts are divided into chapters that usually begin and end with significant family occasions such as births, deaths, parties and weddings. They are both written in the third person singular but the narrative is closer to the character's point of view thanks to free direct speech, which allows the reader to empathise with the characters more. Of course, one can witness these techniques in many realist novels. What makes *Buddenbrooks* so relevant for *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* is articulated by Pamuk himself:

"Thomas Mann'ın Alman burjuvazisinin yükseliş, töre ve bunalımlarını anlattığı Buddenbrooks Ailesi adlı romanı yirmi yaşında okuduğumda, bu romanda anlatılan aile yemekleriyle, babaannemin evinde hep birlikte yenen bayram yemekleri arasında bir koşutluk görmem raslantı değil. Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları adlı romanımı bu heyecanla yazdım.

*I read Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, at the age of twenty; I was struck by strange similarities, and shocking differences between the family meals in the novel and the religious festival feasts at my grandmother's house. It was with these impressions in mind that I sat down to write Cevdet Bey and Sons."*⁷

What mainly establishes a mutual relationship between these two novels is the similarity between the values and lifestyles of merchant class families and the transition of these values through time. At that point, arguably, the family houses stand at the centre of both narratives and function as powerful literary symbols, showcasing these values and the transitioning lifestyles of the protagonists.

⁴ The translation is mine.

⁵ All the translations of *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* are mine.

⁶ Pamuk, *Manzaradan Parçalar*, pp. 524-5.

⁷ Orhan Pamuk, *Öteki Renkler: Seçme Yazılar ve bir Hikâye*, İletişim Yayınları, 4. Baskı, İstanbul, 2010, p. 340; *Other Colours: Writings on Life, Art, Books and Cities*, trans. Maureen Freely, Faber and Faber, New York, 2008, pp. 214-5.

2. Methodology

This study, which aims to find similar patterns in a German and a Turkish novel, belongs to the field of comparative literature. Comparative literature has developed several differing methodologies. For example, Franco Moretti employs a technique of ‘distant reading’ whereby he examines a large corpus of work by utilising computer-assisted programmes in order to understand the big trends in world literature.⁸ By contrast, in close reading, one of the most frequently used methods in this field, the scholar focuses instead on a small number of texts.

In close reading, the literary critic often reads a specific text, and zooms in on sentences or even particular words in order to establish his or her argument. This paper adopts the close reading method and focuses on two particular texts from two different cultures covering different time periods. By emphasising details such as descriptions it aims to reveal the similarities between the symbol of the house used in both novels.

3. *Buddenbrooks*

Buddenbrooks takes as its theme four generations of a burgher family living in North Germany. The novel focuses on the gradual decline in wealth and prestige of the German burgher classes, which for centuries had managed to ‘reconcile financial gain with a sense of religious purpose’.⁹ Adopting a ‘protestant ethos’, these commonsensical businessmen control their desire for making more profit through ‘a sense of what is fair and just’.¹⁰ The novel is set in a crucial era – the mid-nineteenth century – for this conservative class cannot keep pace with ‘accelerating historical changes’ and ultimately is ‘replaced by a more ruthless and pragmatic class of entrepreneurs’, represented in the novel by the rival Hagenstör family.¹¹

The family house of *Buddenbrooks* is significant in that it designates to the reader the gradual decline of a typical burgher family.. At the beginning of the novel the family house stands for everything that the *Buddenbrooks* possess. ‘Coextensive with the office, storerooms and warehouses’ the house is ruled over by the patriarch of the family ‘with equal authority’.¹² This is a good example of their lifestyle, in which even employees and suppliers are considered as extended family who are ‘linked to the merchant by loyalty

⁸ Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading*, Verso Publishing, London and New York, 2013.

⁹ Martin Travers, *Modern Novelists: Thomas Mann*, London: Macmillan, 1992, p. 22.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹² Hugh Ridley, *Thomas Mann: Buddenbrooks*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 16.

and tradition'.¹³ At the very beginning of the novel, the interior of the family house is described in detail:

"They were sitting in the 'landscape-room' on the first floor of the rambling old house in Meng Street [...] The room was hung with heavy resilient tapestries [...] They were woven in soft tones to harmonize with the carpet, and they depicted idyllic landscapes in the style of the eighteenth century, with merry vinedressers, busy husband-men, and gaily beribboned shepherdesses who sat beside crystal streams with spotless lambs in their laps or exchanged kisses with amorous shepherds. These scenes were usually lightened by a pale yellow sunset to match the yellow coverings on the white enamelled furniture and the yellow silk curtains at the two windows.

For the size of the room, the furniture was rather scant. A round table, its slender legs decorated with fine lines of gilding, stood, not in front of the sofa, but by the wall opposite the little harmonium, on which lay a flute-case; some stiff armchairs were ranged in a row round the walls; there was a sewing-table by the window. And a flimsy ornamental writing-desk laden with knick-knacks."¹⁴

The landscape-room is a space where the family spend most of their time and experience defining moments in their lives such as marriage and birth celebrations as well as deaths and distressing times. All the decorations, the furniture and belongings are in harmony with the values and lifestyle of the family, reflecting its rise and foreshadowing its decline.

The spacious room, gilded furniture and resilient tapestries demonstrate their prosperity, yet the amount of furniture is limited despite their purchasing power; thus, it is never an ostentatious and extravagant décor. The Buddenbrooks' way of living is modest, thrifty and temperate, in accordance with burgher-class values. When the narrator describes the harmony of the yellow coverings of the furniture and the yellow silk curtains, he/she also refers to the peaceful lifestyle of an earlier generation which is free of any major conflict. The idyllic, pastoral landscapes with cheerful wine-growers, pretty shepherdesses and spotless lambs also suggest the serenity of the family members whose lives remain simple. The presence of these eighteenth-century landscapes hints that the family is traditional,

¹³ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁴ Thomas Mann, *Buddenbrooks: The Decline of A Family*, trans. by H. T. Lowe-Porter Penguin Books, London, 1957, p. 364. The English translation of *Buddenbrooks* that I used in this chapter is by Helen Tracy Lowe-Porter, who is famous for translating Thomas Mann's works. Although she was criticized for some negative shifts in her translations, her translation of *Buddenbrooks* is significant for bringing this particular novel into the English literary canon.

maintaining the values of the previous century despite the industrial revolution and the advance of a profit-based and ruthless capitalism. These depictions of rural landscape symbolise the inability of the Buddenbrooks to accommodate themselves to the new developments and make a healthy transition to modernity, and the resulting precariousness of their current prosperity and content.

The flute and the organ in the room represent a future conflict in artistic life. These instruments stand at the back, but their existence warns the reader about forthcoming tensions that will lead to decline. The Buddenbrooks have some artistic talent, but the older generation consider music as entertainment for a special occasion. These instruments, which are almost no different to the knick-knacks in the room, will come to have a greater significance when the current order, founded on practicality and superficiality, is superseded by a more sophisticated but restless, and even melancholic, family. The sunset landscape of the tapestry is not coincidental either, for it warns the reader about the ending of these halcyon days.

On the first page of the novel, the family have just moved into their new home and the reader is presented with the scene for a perfect family portrait: a warm atmosphere with healthy and cheerful children, close friends, and a generous dining table. The text depicts an extravagant house with gilded porcelain plates, silver spoons, valuable tableaux, sofas covered with silk. The dinner party to celebrate the Buddenbrooks' arrival in their new house takes up several pages. 'Fat-armed'¹⁵, healthy servant girls serve vegetable soup, an 'enormous brick-red boiled ham', plattenpudding 'made of layers of macaroons, raspberries, lady fingers, and custard',¹⁶ as well as the best quality wine. Sitting on elaborate and comfortable chairs and enjoying the delicious feast, the guests express their admiration for the perfect family and even read poems aloud at the dinner table that have been specially written for the Buddenbrooks.

The patriarch Johann has bought this house from Ratenkamp and Company, which is owned by another distinguished merchant family. Although this old family business had no problems in the past, for the last twenty years it has been declining and finally the family have been forced to sell their home, perhaps foreshadowing the ultimate decline in the Buddenbrooks' fortunes. After father Johann dies, the colourful life seen in the house comes to an end. Johann's son Thomas and his wife Gerda move into a new place while Johann's daughter Tony moves to Munich with her

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 22.

new husband. Tony's daughter Erica is sent to a boarding school and Klothilde, a poor relative who has been living with the family for many years, moves to a pension for unmarried ladies. Consequently, while the lower floors where the offices are located continue to be hectically busy, 'the upper storeys were empty and lonely'¹⁷, a metaphor for what happens after the patriarch dies. The house, which was an organic whole that brought business and family life together, can no longer function properly when the large, extended family is replaced by a nuclear family in which individuality rather than the group becomes more prominent.

After being elected as a senator, Thomas decides to build a house that will establish his prestige in the city. The narrator states that this is not a sign of success but a result of Thomas's 'own inability to be quiet'.¹⁸ In other words, moving to a new place is not a step towards happiness; on the contrary, it signals the beginning of decline. Incapable of stability, restless people may avoid their problems by masking them with new beginnings.

Not surprisingly, the new house only makes matters worse for Thomas. He is out of sorts, but his melancholy does not stem from his failure in business. Paradoxically, he thinks that if he believes he will fail that will be the reason for his failure – it will be a self-fulfilling prophecy. He quotes a proverb to his sister Tony: 'When the house is finished, death comes. [...] the decline, the falling-off, the beginning of the end.'¹⁹ Once Thomas has propelled himself to the top of the social ladder, he has fulfilled all his goals: he has become a senator, the father of a son and heir, and the owner of the most imposing house in the town. However, at the peak of his life he loses the *raison d'être* that has hitherto kept him active. Now that he can no longer keep his melancholy inner self at bay with a sense of duty he cannot function properly as a healthy human and becomes obsessed by the idea of failure.

In that respect, regarding his statement to Tony about the house: 'the outward and visible material signs and symbols of happiness and success only show themselves when the process of decline has already set in', the new house should be interpreted as a sign of decay rather than evidence of future family prosperity.²⁰

Thereafter, the decline becomes explicit. First, Johann's house is sold to the *nouveau riche* Hagenströms family. This act might signal a shift in financial power in Germany from the old burgher class to a new class which

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 234.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 324.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 332.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 332-3.

adopts a more ruthless capitalism, based solely on profit. Then the sudden death of Thomas results in his house being sold off at a loss. Thus, his wife Gerda's moving from a glorious residence to 'a pleasant little villa'²¹ represents the downfall of the family.

In the light of the information given above, it is possible to associate the interiors and the exteriors of the houses with the personalities of the novel, as well as their worldviews. In *Buddenbrooks*, Johann Buddenbrook's house is in harmony with his character. He is a powerful patriarch who is responsible for a large household of children, grandchildren and employees. He is highly ambitious, and aims not to just maintain his wealth but to increase it, whilst avoiding unnecessary extravagance. His large house accommodates not just his extended family but servants' quarters. The compound includes not just the family house but also the offices and warehouses from which his affluence derives.

However, even though the house is grand, furnished with solid and expensive furniture, it is neither ostentatious nor full of unnecessarily showy objects. His grandson Tom is at least as successful as him and is not only a businessman but a well-known public figure. Unlike Johann, Tom is fond of luxury and in accordance with his popularity builds himself a house which is known as one of the grandest residences in the whole city. However, towards the end of his life he suffers from a personality conflict in which he tries to figure out whether he is 'a man of action, a business man or [is] a finicking dreamer?'²² That conflict affects his financial situation and when he dies his artistic and unmaterialistic son Hanno ends up in a small villa, a house which is more suitable to his introspective character.

4. *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları*

Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları is about the decline of a wealthy Istanbulite merchant family over three generations. The son of a woodsman, Cevdet Işıkcı's whole purpose in life is to enhance his business as the first Muslim merchant in Istanbul and establish an 'alafranga' (European-style) family.²³ He chooses his wife accordingly, thus bringing to mind Johann who marries his wife for economic reasons. Like him, he has no interest in becoming involved with either politics or religion. In order to expand his business and to rise above his lower- middle class background, Cevdet bey marries Nigân, the daughter of a pasha – a senior civil servant – who has begun to lose his

²¹ Ibid., p. 539.

²² Ibid., p. 363.

²³ Orhan Pamuk, *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları*, İletişim Yayınları, 16. Baskı., İstanbul, 2003, p. 110.

wealth but remains powerful in society because of his nobility.

Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları does not open with a perfect family scene. Yet, the very first pages introduce the idea of a dynasty being founded. It begins in Cevdet's modest bachelor house, where plans are afoot to buy a new one and move up the social ladder. Cevdet does not buy his house from a bankrupt family but from a Jewish woman who is selling her mansion following her husband's death. His purchase signals the rise of less educated, city-dwelling Turks who are beginning to enter the merchant class that was previously mostly confined to minorities, such as Jews or Armenians. This trend, in which Muslims like Cevdet also began to trade, peaked in the last phase of the Ottoman Empire.

Much later, the banqueting scenes with Cevdet's daughter-in-law and grandchildren suggest that he has managed to establish the family he was hoping for. However, Cevdet was planning a French bourgeois-style, 'modern' family, so it is ironic that the family is seen celebrating Muslim festivals such as Eid. He rightly complains after observing the decoration of the dining room: 'Alafranga bir aile kurayım dedim, ama sonunda hepsi alaturka oldu!' ('I aimed to have a European-style family but in the end, they all become alaturca; the Turkish style').²⁴

Yet the splendour of these feasts can be compared with the Buddenbrooks banquets when the father Johann was still alive. There is much description of objects, such as the gilded plates with rose-figured porcelain cups, embroidered tablecloth for special occasions and the many courses, which include towers of casseroled meat on top of rice decorated with peas, green beans with olive oil and orange-flavoured *kadayıf*. Details such as the headwaiter serving the courses on tiptoe are reminiscent of the feasts in the Buddenbrooks's mansion, suggesting an affluent, contented family.

After Cevdet's death, the family continues to celebrate these Muslim festivals, yet the unity of the family seems to deteriorate in the absence of its dynastic head. The healthy appetites and cheerfulness are already lost and traditions such as going to the festival prayer in the morning are neglected by Cevdet's sons. The change is similar to that which is experienced after Johann's death. The transition to a different life proceeds with Cevdet's son Refik, who moves from Nişantaşı to Cihangir. For instance, when his wife Perihan asks whether she could take the cupboard that stands in front of their bedroom with her, Refik expresses surprise:

²⁴ Ibid., p. 110.

Eşyaların çoğu eskiden kimsenin değil, evindi. Birisi, ya da herkes kullanırdı. Şimdi eşyalar bizimkiler ve onlarınkiler diye ayrılıyor. Mesela o dolap!... Biz evlenirken alınmadı, ama yıllardır biz kullanıyoruz. Yemek takımımız da yok. Annem eşyaların böyle bölündüğünü işittikçe küplere biniyor, bizden tiksiniyormuş gibi yüzünü buruşturuyor.

In the past, most of the furniture belonged to the household, not to anybody in particular. Somebody or everybody used it. The stuff is divided as ours and theirs now. For instance, that cupboard! It was not bought when we got married, but we have been using it for years. We don't have a dinner-set, either. When my mother hears that the furniture is divided in that way, she flares up, and pulls a face as if she were revolted by us.²⁵

Leaving the house after the death of the patriarch, as the couples Gerda and Thomas or Refik and Perihan do, is a sign of the breaking down of the large family unit in the absence of its founder and provider. In the first half of the twentieth century, Turkey was adapting to the modern world and the extended family yielded to smaller, nuclear family units. From the start, Cevdet aspires to have a European-style nuclear family, but his dreams come true only because neither his parents nor his older brother are alive. Otherwise, it would be very likely that he would be put under pressure by an older family member such as Nigân, who strongly disapproves of Refik and Perihan's decision. What is experienced here is not a simple moving out. It represents a massive change in lifestyle in urban Turkish society, the focus shifting from the community to the individual.

In the traditional system, individuals did not have their own property within the household, and all belongings were owned by the institution of the family. The values of the past clash with the values of the present and someone like Nigân, who has been brought up with Ottoman culture, are suspicious of the new development.

In the last part of the novel, Cevdet's mansion is demolished and the Işıklı Apartment block is built in its place. The extended family is still living in the same building, yet in different flats. Destroying the grand old buildings for the sake of a more utilitarian one reflects the reality of Turkish urban transformation in the second half of the twentieth century. As in *Buddenbrooks*, in which the family transformation is a social phenomenon – the effects of industrial revolution, the evolution of capitalism, the financial loss of the burgher class in Germany – *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* portrays a gradual change in lifestyle, from traditional privilege to a less secure individualism.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 519.

In the 1970s, although no other families are mentioned, the Işıkcı family is an example of individualisation and practicality. Cevdet's business selling lighting products has turned into a lightbulb factory. As in *Buddenbrooks*, while the family firm was only buying and selling products in the past, they have started to produce these goods. Although the Işıkcı family firm does not fail like the Buddenbrooks', the political situation, with frequent strikes, economic instability and the fear of a coup, creates an atmosphere of insecurity:

"Bu grevden sonra Nigân Hanım fabrikayı hep bir felaket duygusuyla hatırlar olmuştur. Bunun gazetelerde yazan 'kötü gidiş' ile bir ilişkisi olduğuna inanıyor, yalnız siyasi değil, artık duyduğu, işittiği her kötü haberle birlikte aklına işlerin yolunda olmadığı geliyordu."

*After this strike, Nigân started to think of the factory with feelings of impending doom. She believed that her feelings were connected with the 'deterioration' mentioned in the newspapers, and not only the political ones, but also all the bad news that she kept hearing, suggesting that things aren't alright any longer."*²⁶

The subjects discussed at the dinner table in Osman's flat confirm Nigân's feelings – which remind us of Thomas's sense of doom. The conversation about corruption in society, the inability of the state to rule the country properly, and its ramifications for daily life, is worrisome, particularly for the younger generation such as Cevdet's grandson Cezmi. At the conversation at the dinner table in Cezmi's flat, we can see that all the characters are frustrated by this deterioration; even the cheating shop owners who add water to petrol or sell rotten fruits to their customers although they know them personally.

Similar to *Buddenbrooks*, one can argue that the characters and the houses they live in are in harmony. As stated above, the founder of the family Cevdet bey, who has a humble background is determined to advance his social status. Though, having a traditional upbringing, he aspires to have a Western life-style. Therefore, he buys his solid stone house with a well-maintained garden in Nişantaşı, the district where the Istanbulite elites live, in order to be accepted by upper classes. The servants in the house, expensive furniture such as art nouveau bedroom furniture, the interior accessories such as gilded plates, the silver cutlery, embroidered table cloth, and finest porcelain tea cups demonstrate Cevdet's ambition and success. Moreover, the piano in the house is a sign of European life-style he was planning to have although he does not know how to play it as he did not

²⁶ Ibid., p. 549.

have a Western education. His son Refik, on the other hand, is quite different from him, being more intellectual and modern and not as superficial as his father. Therefore, one can interpret his move from the grand house in Nişantaşı to a more modest flat in Cihangir as his statement of individuality and his unmaterialistic nature. Likewise, Refik's son Ahmet, who can be associated with Hanno, is an artist and he lives alone in a two-bedroom flat which is left by his father and he has no aspiration to make more money than he requires for his basic needs. Consequently, interpreting the meaning of the houses metaphorically definitely helps the reader to have a better insight into the protagonists.

5. Conclusion

In both novels, one reads about the steady weakening of the mercantile class which is identified with wealth and success. The depictions of the family houses illustrate this major theme and display the transformation from affluence to ordinariness or even catastrophe. Therefore, by describing both the exteriors and interiors of these houses the authors give the reader an insight into these worlds.

As already stated, according to Bloom the anxiety of influence is something that almost no author can avoid. In many ways it is reminiscent of the Oedipal complex, in which the individual desires to reject his or her father - or parents - in order to gain independence, yet is always doomed to exhibit his or her parents' influence. In this way almost all authors produce texts that are related to previous texts.²⁷ Therefore, the writerly anxiety that Pamuk claims to experience, especially at the beginning of his career, is quite unexceptional. Influence or inspiration does not necessarily mean that an author's work is 'unoriginal' or simply an 'imitation' of the previously written work.

Although one of his departure points might have been Mann's *Buddenbrooks*, Pamuk manages to write a family novel of three generations that is very culture-bound, with its convincing Turkish local characters, and settings of Istanbul and Anatolia, and cultural elements such as eating *Kadayıf* dessert during the Eid festival. Consequently, pointing out the parallels between these two works does not mean that *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* is somehow foreign and unfamiliar in the Turkish context. On the contrary, Pamuk has created a convincing local atmosphere. *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları*, both as a literary product and as a step in the writing process, demonstrates how an ambitious but anxious young author began his career.

²⁷ Bloom, *A Map of Misreading*, p. 38.

The novel was a good starting point for Pamuk as he received recognition in Turkey without challenging the norms of the established literary circles. Despite experiencing the anxiety and guilt Bloom theorises about, Pamuk also gained confidence from publishing a novel at a relatively young age, and it is evident that his aim after *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* was to make a name for himself globally.

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