



## A Lacanian Reading of Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book*

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### Abstract

From long time ago up to now, and in the trend of the human's thought development, question about identity and the essence of self has been always an attractive matter for thinking. Searching for a lost soul mate, that can be supposed as a reflection of ourselves has been a great challenge for human beings, as well. The present research focuses on a type of psychoanalytic criticism which is based on ideas developed by Jacques Lacan in regard to Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book*. Lacan as a psychologist with a post-structuralist viewpoint believes that the unconscious is structured like a language. He states that language, the signifying chain with a perpetual sliding of the signified under the signifier, never provides "ultimate meaning" or a "transcendental signified". Accordingly, this study represents a Lacanian reading of Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* with emphasis on the main roles of the "other", and language in forming of the unconscious and individual identity. Galip, the protagonist of the novel, apparently is in search of his lost wife "Rüya". But in fact, following this lack, he starts his search for knowing himself through a chain of signifiers. However, this search does not lead him to reach to a complete ultimate meaning of his "self". His bewildered subject cannot anchor at a fix point of integrated and wholeness of the "self".

**Keywords:** Jacques lacan; *The black book*; Orhan pamuk.



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### 1. Introduction

Psychoanalysis has its roots in the nineteenth century, and has interacted richly with many streams of post-structuralist thought. The relation of psychology in literature is hardly a new concern: ever since Aristotle, critics, rhetoricians, and philosophers have examined the psychological dimensions to the effect of literature, ranging from an author's motivations and intentions to the effect of texts and performances on an audience. The application of psychoanalytic principles to the study of literature, however, is a relatively recent phenomenon, initiated primarily by Freud and, in other directions, by Alfred Adler and Carl Jung. The notion of the "unconscious" can be found in many thinkers prior to Freud notably in some of Romantics such as Schlegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. Freud's fundamental contribution was to open up the entire realm of unconscious to systematic study, and to provide a language and terminology in which the operation of the unconscious could be expressed (Habib, 2005).

To view the unconscious as the ultimate source and explaining human thought and behavior represents a radical disruption of the main streams of Western thought which, since Aristotle, had held that man was essentially a rational being, capable of making free choices in the spheres of intellect and morality. To say that the unconscious governs our behavior is to problematize all of the notions on which philosophy, theology, and even literary criticism have conventionally rested: the ideal of self-knowledge, the ability to know others, the capacity you make moral judgments, the belief that we can act according to reason, that we can overcome our passions and instincts, the ideas of moral and political agency, intentionality, and the notion-held for centuries- that literary creation can be a rational process (Habib, 2005).

In a sense, Freud postulated that we bear a form of "otherness" within ourselves: we cannot claim fully to comprehend even ourselves, why we act as we do, why we make certain moral and political decisions, why we harbor given religious dispositions and intellectual orientations. Even when we think we are acting from a given motive, we may be deluding ourselves; and much of our thought and action is not freely determined by us but driven by unconscious forces which we can barely fathom (Habib, 2005).

Jacques Lacan's revisions to Freudian theory have been influential in literary theory since he presented them in France beginning in the 1960s; he has influenced Julia Kristeva, Michel Foucault, and Roland Barthes. Lacan was not so much interested in therapeutic model as a philosophical one. Freud located the unconscious in the libido, or pleasure principle, while Lacan believed we feel unconscious as an absence. Lacan replaces such Freudian stages as the child's oral stage with linguistic progressions away from the formlessness of what he called the prelinguistic Realm of the Mother and towards its eventual membership in adult society, the linguistic order of the Law of the Father. He described the Mirror- Stage of development as the moment when a child can identify himself as a separate subject. Since there is nothing to repress in the Realm of the Mother, Lacan calls it the imaginary, which remains in adults and draws them to see reality as a set of images and desires rather than a logical system. When the child learns language, it also leaves the unconscious, which now has to be repressed. From now on desires will have to be sublimated; entering the field of symbolic means attaching to the rule of language and the subjugation law. The

unconscious remains submerged and has its own language of metaphor, but it is an alien tongue for the conscious mind, what Lacan called "the discourse of the other". Lacan saw language as a unified and oppressive system that can squelch and silence the feminine primordial in every person, but literature and art and music are means of accessing that fountain of feeling and imagination (Guerin *et al.*, 2011). Lacan begins the piece by paying allegiance to the intellectual dominance of language studies: he asks (rhetorically) "how could a psychoanalyst of today not realize that his realm of truth is in fact the word?" Language, then, is central, and this is so because in investigating the unconscious the analyst is always both using and examining language - in effect, Freudian psychiatry is entirely a verbal science. And the unconscious is not a chaotic mass of disparate material, as might formerly have been thought, but an orderly network, as complex as the structure of a language: "what the psychoanalytic experience discovers in the unconscious is the whole structure of language". So the unconscious, in Lacan's famous slogan, is structured like a language (Barry, 2002).

It is important to note that Lacan following the structuralist and post-structuralist approaches focuses on the language of the text, while Freud's psychoanalysis focuses on the author and or on the characters in the literary work. Lacan believes that the Unconscious is like a continually circulating chain or multiple chains of signifiers, with no anchor, or to use Derrida's terms, no center. He argues that the process of becoming "self" is the process of trying to fix, to stabilize, and to stop the chain of signifiers so that the stable meaning - including the meaning of "I" - becomes possible. According to Lacan the signifying chain has a life of its own which cannot be securely anchored to a world of things because there is a perpetual sliding and slipperiness of the signified "under the signifier". Accordingly, he argues, meaning is sustained by anything other than reference to another meaning (Qazi, 2011).

According to Tyson (2006) the most reliable way to interpret a literary work through a Lacanian lens is to explore the ways in which the text might be structured by some of the Lacanian concepts and see what this exploration can reveal. Such an exploration shall focus on the following: (i.) Do any characters, events, or episodes in the narrative seem to embody the "Imaginary Order", in which case they would involve some kind of private and either fantasy or delusional world? (ii.) What parts of the text seem formed by the "Symbolic Order"? That is, where do we see ideology and social norms in control of characters' behavior and narrative events? and (iii.) Does any part of the text seem to operate as a representative of the "Real", of that dimension of existence that remains so terrifyingly beyond our ability to comprehend it that our impulse is to flee it, to repress and deny it? Taking a clue from Tyson, one can think of analyzing and interpreting the major literary artifacts from "Lacanian Perspective" in order to search for newer meanings or explore modern dimensions which have so far otherwise remained unexplored or untouched in the literary artifacts (33).

Lacan describes the unconscious as a discourse: "the unconscious is the discourse of the other" Lacan 1997, 16, as cited in Evans (2006). This enigmatic formula, which has become one of Lacan's most famous dictums, can be understood in many ways. Perhaps the most important meaning is that "one should see in the unconscious the effects of speech on the subject" Lacan 1988, *Book XI* 126, as cited in Evans (2006). More precisely, the unconscious is the effects of the signifier (on the subject), in that the signifier is what is repressed and what returns in the formations of the unconscious. All the references to language, speech, discourse, and signifiers clearly locate the unconscious in the order of symbolic. The unconscious is the determination of the subject by the symbolic order (Evans, 2006).

Lacan argues that the concept of unconscious was badly misunderstood by most of Freud's followers, who reduced it to being "merely the seat of the instincts" Lacan 1997, 147, as cited in Evans (2006). Against this biologic mode of thought, Lacan argues that "the unconscious is neither primordial nor instinctual" Lacan 1997, 170, as cited in Evans (2006); "it is primarily linguistic". This is summed up in Lacan's famous formula "the unconscious is structured like a language" Lacan 1993, *Book III* 167, as cited in Evans (2006). He believed that psychoanalysis aims to understand and, if appropriate, cure disturbances caused by the pressure of the unconscious upon conscious existence as manifested by neurotic symptoms, dreams, etc. Orthodox Freudian doctrine views the unconscious as chaotic, primordial, instinctual, pre-verbal (Lodge and Wood, 2008). Lacan believes that psychoanalysis as a discipline must borrow the methods and concepts of modern linguistics; but he also aims at a critique of modern linguistics from his psychoanalytical viewpoint (Lodge and Wood, 2008). Lacan argues that the reason why the unconscious is structured like a language is that "we only grasp the unconscious finally when it is explicated, in that part of it which is articulated by passing into words" Lacan 1992, *Book VII* 32, as cited in Evans (2006).

Indeed, by reinterpreting Freudianism in terms of language, which is a social activity, Lacan permits us to explore the relations between unconscious and human society. One way of describing his work is to say that he makes us recognize that the unconscious is not some kind of seething and private region "inside" us, but an effect of our relations with one another. Thus, the unconscious is "outside" rather than "within" us - or rather it exists "between" us, as our relationships do (Eagleton, 2008). "It is elusive not much because it is buried deep within our minds, but because it is a kind of vast, tangled network which surrounds us and weaves itself through us, and which can therefore never be pinned down" (Eagleton, 2008). The best image for such network, which fluxes both beyond us and yet within us, is language itself, and indeed for Lacan the unconscious is a particular effect of language, a process of desire set in motion by difference (Eagleton, 2008).

In addition to the various linguistic metaphors which Lacan uses to describe the unconscious (discourse, language, speech), he also conceives of the unconscious in other terms. He claims that the unconscious is also a kind of "memory", a kind of symbolic history of the signifiers that have determined the subject in the course of his life; "what we teach the subject to recognize as his unconscious is his history" Lacan 1997, 52, as cited in Evans (2006). Moreover, Lacan believes that the unconscious is a kind of knowledge (symbolic knowledge, or savior) since it is an articulation of signifiers in a signifying chain. More precisely, it is an "unknown knowledge" (Evans, 2006).

Like language, this highly structured part of the human psyche can be systematically analyzed. According to Lacan, what we will learn from such an analysis is that all individuals are fragmented; no one is whole. The ideal concept of a wholly unified and psychologically complete individual is just that, an abstraction that is simply not attainable (Bressler, 2012).

The present study focuses on a type of psychoanalytic criticism which is based on ideas developed by Jacques Lacan in regard to Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book*. Accordingly, it is initially necessary to give a general view of psychoanalytic criticism. Then, as Lacan's work is a strikingly original attempt to "rewrite" Freudianism in ways relevant to all those concerned with the question of human subject, its place in society, and above all its relationship to language (Eagleton, 2008). What Lacan seeks to do in his *Écrits* is to interpret Freud in the light of structuralist and post-structuralist theories of discourse; and while this leads to a sometimes bafflingly opaque, enigmatic body of work, it is nevertheless one that must be considered to see how post-structuralism and psychoanalysis are interrelated (Eagleton, 2008). So debate on "unconscious", Lacan's viewpoint on human "psyche" and "language" are highlighted. Moreover, Lacan's psychological viewpoint on "identity" is one of the main axes of this study especially because of its remarkable traces in *The Black Book*. Finally, the human subjectivity and the concept of "self" are the issues that have been taken into account.

## 2. Psychoanalytic Criticism

Psychoanalytic criticism is a form of literary criticism which uses some of techniques of psychoanalysis in the interpretation of literature (Barry, 2002). Psychoanalysis itself is a form of therapy which aims to cure mental disorders "by investigation the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind" as the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* puts it ("Psychoanalysis"). The classic method of doing this is to get the patient to talk freely, in a such way that the repressed fears and conflicts which are causing the problems are brought into the conscious mind and openly faced, rather than remaining buried in the unconscious. This practice is based upon specific theories of how the mind, the instincts, and sexuality work. These theories were developed by the Austrian, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). There is a growing consensus today that the therapeutic value of the method is limited, and Freud's life-work is seriously flawed by methodological irregularities. All the same, Freud remains a major cultural force, and his impact on how we think about ourselves has been incalculable (Barry, 2002). The achievements of Freud would appear to be so well-known that no significant modern intellectual history could omit his radical approaches to interpreting the dream-state and prominence he gave to unconscious derives in general (Lodge and Wood, 2008). The theories and practice of Freud provide the foundation for psychoanalytic criticism. While working with patients whom he diagnosed as hysterics, Freud theorized that the root of their problems was psychological, not physical. As Freud argues, in the interaction of the conscious and unconscious, we shape both ourselves and our world (Bressler, 2012). His patients, he believed, had suppressed incestuous desires that they had unconsciously refused to confront. Suffering from his own neurotic crisis in 1887, Freud underwent self-analysis. Results from his self-analysis, together with his research and analyses of patients, led Freud to posit that fantasies and wishful thinking and not only actual experiences play a large part in the onset of neuroses (Bressler, 2012). Accordingly, during the process of psychoanalytic practice, the patient becomes able to recollect portions of his / her life which he /she has repressed: he /she is able to recount a new, more complete narrative about himself / herself, one which will interpret and make sense of disturbances from which he / she suffers. The "talking cure", as it is called, will have taken effect (Eagleton, 2008).

In the 1960s, the French Neo-Freudian psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan revised and expanded Freud's theories in light of newly developed linguistic and literary principles, thereby revitalizing psychoanalytic criticism and ensuring its continued influence on literary criticism today (Bressler, 2012). However, according to Barry by comparing the Freudian and Lacanian criticism on some literary works it will be immediately apparent that there is an immense gulf between these two approaches, even though paradoxically they both stem from the same original body of Freudian theory (2002, 118).

Jacques Marie Émile Lacan (1901-81) studied medicine in Paris and entered the Freudian psychoanalytical movement in 1936. His radical critique of orthodox psychoanalytical theory and practice led to his expulsion in 1959 from the International Psychoanalytical Association and the setting up of his own *Ecole Freudienne* in Paris in 1964. The publication of a collection of his papers and seminars, *Écrits*, in Paris in 1964 made him one of the most fashionable figures on the French intellectual scene, and one of the most influential in the international dissemination of structuralist and post-structuralist ideas about language, literature and the nature of the human subject. Lacan was a notoriously willfully difficult writer (Lodge and Wood, 2008). However, it is tried to mention the main drift of his thought.

Similar to Freud, Lacan believes that the unconscious greatly affects our conscious behavior. Unlike Freud, who pictures the unconscious as a chaotic, unstructured, bubbling cauldron of dark passions, hidden desires, and suppressed wishes, Lacan asserts that the unconscious is structured, much like the structure of language. Like language, this highly structured part of the human psyche can be systematically analyzed. What we will learn from such an analysis, claims Lacan, is that all individuals are fragmented; no one is whole. The ideal concept of a wholly unified and psychologically complete individual is just that, an abstraction that is simply not attainable (Bressler, 2012). Lacan goes on to emphasize the linguistic aspect of Freud's work: whenever the unconscious is being discussed, the amount of linguistic analysis increases, since puns, allusions, and other kinds of word play are often the mechanism which make manifest the content of the unconscious (Barry, 2002). According to Lacan, the operations of the unconscious resemble two very common processes of language: Metaphor and Metonymy, an opposition of two figures first discussed by linguist Roman Jakobson (Vice 1996, 116, cited in Qazi (2011)). Lacan

suggests that the unconscious works in the same way that language does, along the two axes of Metaphor and Metonymy which generate the signified. Metaphor works by linking two concepts to each other and Metonymy works by association or closeness rather than likeness, particularly through synecdoche, in which a part is taken to stand for the whole. In terms of how the unconscious works, its metaphoric structure involves moving from one signifier to another found with it; metonymically, it slides from one to another that is similar (Qazi, 2011).

### 3. Lacan and Unconscious

Lacan describes the unconscious as a discourse: "The unconscious is the discourse of the Other" Lacan 1997, 16, as cited in Evans (2006). This enigmatic formula, which has become one of Lacan's most famous dictums, can be understood in many ways. Perhaps the most important meaning is that "one should see in the unconscious the effects of speech on the subject" Lacan 1988, *Book XI* 126, as cited in Evans (2006). More precisely, the unconscious is the effects of the signifier (on the subject), in that the signifier is what is repressed and what returns in the formations of the unconscious. All the references to language, speech, discourse, and signifiers clearly locate the unconscious in the order of symbolic. The unconscious is the determination of the subject by the symbolic order (Evans, 2006).

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In western philosophy the conscious mind has long been regarded as the essence of selfhood. This view is encapsulated in the proclamation by the philosopher René Descartes, "I think, therefore I am". Lacan lays down a dramatic challenge to this philosophical consensus when he reverses this into "I am where I think not", that is in the unconscious, where my true selfhood lies. Lacan insists that the Freudian discovery of unconscious be followed through to its logical conclusion, which is the self's radical ex-centricity to itself. He believes the unconscious is the kernel of our being, but the unconscious is like a language, and language exists as a structure before the individual enters into it. Hence, the liberal humanist notion of unique, individual selfhood is deconstructed (Barry, 2002). Lacan states that subject is empty, fluid, and without an axis or center, and is always recreated in his encounter with the other (Habib, 2005). So, the idea of socio-linguistic effects on deconstruction of subjectivity can perhaps be traced back to Lacan who contributed a new understanding of the subject as fragmented and decentered. In fact, regarding linguistic effects, Lacan identifies language as the basis for the deconstruction of identity and subjectivity. His structuralism, posits that since language structures consciousness, the subject's understanding of itself gets dispersed over sliding chain of signifiers, never really knowing or understanding itself (Habib, 2005). "The signifying chain therefore becomes the privileged site of Lacan's situation of temporality, subjectivity, and above all desire" (Ross, 2002). Regarding sociological effect, Lacan holds "desire" responsible for molding the individual's subjectivity. He believes that one's identity is shaped by the desire to be accepted, respected, loved, heard, and recognized by other members of the society. Thus, society, rather than the self, becomes determining factor forging one's subjectivity (Evans, 2006). According to Bowie (1991), "Lacan sets out to inhabit the linguistic dimension that Cartesian *cogito* failed to acknowledge. This subject is irremediably split in and by language, but modern man still has not learned this lesson (77). Thus, Lacan announces that the unconscious is as highly structured as language itself and by analyzing this structure; no one can achieve wholeness because we are all and will always remain fragmented individuals who are seeking completeness (Bressler, 2012).

Lacan begins to reformulate his ideas in terms borrowed from Saussurean structural linguistics; Lacan's famous dictum is "the unconscious is structured like a language" shows he believes in the structure of the language. He was heavily influenced by three thinkers: Saussure, Jakobson, Claude Lévi- Strauss; and in this sense he can be seen as part of the structuralist movement. However, Lacan prefers to dissociate himself from this movement, arguing that his approach differs in important ways from the structuralist approach (Evans, 2006).

Lacan in his most detailed work on subject defines metonymy as the diachronic relation between one signifier and another in the signifying chain. Metonymy, thus concerns the ways in which signifiers can be combined / linked in a single signifying chain (horizontal relations), whereas metaphor concerns the ways in which a signifier in one signifying chain may be substituted for a signifier in another chain (vertical relations). Together, metaphor and metonymy constitute the way in which signification is produced (Evans, 2006). Tyson believes that "both metaphor and metonymy involve an absence, a kind of loss or lack. Both of them are stand-ins for something being pushed aside, so they come to speak" (2006, 10). Lacan studies unconscious in regard to the chain of signifiers:

Lacan bases his concept on Freud's account of the two main mechanisms — condensation and displacement — which are essentially linguistic phenomena, where meaning is either condensed (in metaphor) or displaced (in metonymy). Metaphor, according to Lacan, is akin to the unconscious process called condensation (both processes bring dissimilar things together) and metonymy is akin to the unconscious process of displacement (both processes substitute a person or object for another). He believes that Freud's theories and concepts such as dream analysis and most of his analysis of the unconscious symbolism depend on word play, puns, associations which are chiefly verbal. Accordingly, the contents of the unconscious are invariably acutely aware of language, particularly of the structure of language. While saying so, Lacan seems to have modified the ideas and concepts of Ferdinand de Saussure who talked about the relations between signifier and signified that form a sign. Following Saussure, Lacan insisted that the structure of language is the negative relation among signs. While focusing on relations between signifiers, he argues that the elements in the unconscious — wishes, desires, and images — form signifier and these signifiers form a signifying chain: one signifier has meaning only because it is not some other signifier. Like other Post-structural theoreticians, he stated that there are no signifieds; there is nothing that a signifier ultimately refers to. If there were, then the meaning of any particular signifier would be relatively stable: there would be, in Saussure's terms, a relation of signification between signifier and signified, and that relation would create or guarantee some kind of meaning. Lacan believes that the relations of signification don't exist rather; there are only the negative relations, relations of value, where one signifies what it is because it is not something else. Because of this lack of signified, he says, the chain of signifiers is constantly sliding and shifting and circulating. There is no anchor, nothing that ultimately gives meaning or stability to the whole system (Qazi, 2011).

Thus, according to Lacan, language, the signifying chain, has a life of its own which cannot be securely anchored to a world of things. There is a perpetual sliding of the signified under signifier. No meaning is sustained by anything other than reference to another meaning. He believes that human subject is constituted precisely by the entry into language (Lodge and Wood, 2008).

Alongside the references to language, Lacan also refers the concept of structure to mathematics, principally to set theory and "topology", which deals with the properties of figures in space which are preserved under all continuous deformations (Evans, 2006). By 1970s, topology has replaced language as the principal paradigm of structure itself. He now argues that topology is not a mere metaphor for structure; it is that structure itself (196). Lacan for illustrating various binary oppositions, such as inside/outside, love/hate, signifier/signified, truth/appearance uses the topology of the "Moebius strip" or "torus". It is a three-dimensional figure that can be formed by taking a long rectangle of paper and twisting it once before joining its ends together. The two sides of it are continuous that it is possible to cross from inside to outside, Yet, when one passes a finger round the surface of the Moebius strip it is impossible to say at which precise point one has crossed over from the inside to outside or vice versa (119). Another feature of the torus is that its center of gravity falls outside its volume, just as the center of the subject is outside himself; he is decentered, ex-center. So the topology of torus illustrates certain features of the structure of the subject. Later on, Lacan turns his attention to the more complex area of knot theory, especially Borromean knot (211). Lacan uses Borromean knot for showing the three orders, imaginary, symbolic, and real. This classification system allows important distinctions to be drawn between concepts, which according to Lacan, had previously been confused in psychoanalytic theory (135).

On the other hand, Lacan asserts that "the unconscious is the discourse of the Other" (1997, 16). The "Other" is perhaps the most complex term in Lacan's work. Lacan seems to have borrowed the term from Hegel. In 1955 Lacan draws a distinction between "the little other" and "the big Other"(the other and the Other), a distinction which remains central throughout the rest of his work (in French they are designated by "a" and "A" that refer to *autre* and *Autre*). Lacan asserts that an awareness of this distinction is fundamental to analytic practice. The little other is the other who is not really other but a reflection and projection of the ego. He is simultaneously the counterpart and the specular image. The little other is thus entirely inscribed in the imaginary order (Evans, 2006). It is worthy to mention the "object petite a"(it is always lower case and italicized to show that it denotes the little other in opposition to capital A of the big Other), which Lacan places it at the center of Borromean knot, at the place where the three orders (real, symbolic and imaginary) all intersect. Lacan claims that object petit a is the object of desire which we seek in the Other (Evans, 2006). In fact, it is not coincident with any particular object at all, but only with

the desire for desire (Ross, 2002). It is the cause of desire. Desire is not a relation to an object, but a relation to a lack. Moreover, according to Lacan desire is a metonymy, and a social product. It is always constituted in dialectical relationship with the perceived desires of other subjects (Evans, 2006). Accordingly, one of Lacan's most oft-repeated formulas is "man's desire is the desire of the other" Lacan 1988, *Book XI* 235, as cited in Evans (2006) which means both desire to be the object of another's desire, and desire for recognition by another. Lacan takes this idea from Hegel, it means that a basic desire of the man is "the desire of the other" as he wants to be "desired" or "loved", or rather, "recognized" in human value (Evans, 2006).

The big other, designates radical alterity, an Other-ness which transcend the illusory otherness of the imaginary because it cannot be assimilated through identification. Lacan equate this radical alterity with language and the law, and hence this big other is inscribed in the order of the symbolic. Indeed, the big other is the symbolic insofar as it is particularized for each subject. The Other is thus both another subject, in his radical alterity and unassimilable uniqueness, and also the symbolic order which mediates the relationship with that other subject. However, the meaning of "the Other as another subject" is strictly secondary to the meaning of "the other as symbolic order". In arguing that speech originates not in the ego, nor even in the subject, but in the other, Lacan is stressing that speech and language are beyond one's conscious control; they come from another place, outside consciousness, and hence "the unconscious is the discourse of the other". In conceiving the Other as a place, Lacan alludes to Freud's concepts of psychical locality, in which the unconscious is described as "the Other scene". It is the mother who first occupies the position of the big other for the child. The castration complex is formed when the child discovers that this Other is not complete, that there is a "lack" in the "Other". In other words, there is always a signifier missing from the treasury of signifiers constituted by the Other. The mythical complete Other does not exist (Evans, 2006).

#### 4. Discussion

Pamuk in *The Black Book* turns an ordinary and usual detective story with its need to search and identify a culprit into a vaster and deeper issue of humans' problem, this question: who I am? We continuously confront with theme of identity through the lines of this novel. This theme bolds in the novel: from Galip, the protagonist who wants to be Celâl to the other characters regarding the side stories of *The Black book*. All of them obsess with "lack", a Lacanian concept which concerned with separation and absence. This lack is expressed through language since it is the language that names what is not present and substitutes a linguistic sign for it Barry (2002). On the other hand, as Lacan states it is lack that causes "desire" to arise (Evans, 2006). According to Lacan and concerning a linguistic viewpoint of him, it should be mentioned that no matter how many signifiers one adds the signifying chain, the chain is always incomplete; it always lacks the signifier that could complete it. This "missing signifier" is constitutive of the subject (Evans, 2006). As Ross states basically, the imaginary is the scene in which the ego undertakes the perpetual practice of seeking "wholeness and similarity" through identification with external objects. Each such identification is necessarily but a pale imitation of the original wholeness (2002, 10). In psychoanalytic terminology, the mirror image is also known as an "ideal ego", a perfect whole "self" that has no insufficiency. Once this ideal ego becomes internalized, we build our sense of "self", our "Identity", by misidentifying ourselves with this ideal ego. By doing this, we imagine a self that has no lack, no notion of absence or incompleteness. The fiction of the stable, whole, unified self that we see in the mirror becomes a compensation for having lost the original oneness with the mother's body (Qazi, 2011). Concerning the mirror stage, we can think of a small child contemplating itself before the mirror as a kind of "signifier"- something capable of bestowing meaning – and of the image it sees in the mirror as a kind of "signified". The image the child sees is somehow the "meaning" of itself. Here, signifier and signified are as harmoniously united as they are in Saussure's sign. Alternatively, we could read the mirror situation as a kind of metaphor, one item (the child) discovers a likeness of itself in another (the reflection) (Eagleton, 2008). This for Lacan, is an appropriate image of the imaginary as a whole, in this mode of being, objects ceaselessly reflect themselves in each other in a sealed circuit, and no real differences or diversions are yet apparent. In this world of plentitude, with no lack or exclusion of any kind: standing before the mirror, the signifier (the child) finds a "fullness", a whole and unblemished identity, in the signified of its reflection. No gap has yet opened up between signifier and signified, subject and world (Eagleton, 2008).

There are a number of hints in *The Black Book* that indicate to this kind of mirror situation: a person looks at a specular image for knowing his "self". For example: "I gazed into the mirror and read my face" (Pamuk, 2006) or in another place, while Galip reviews his memoirs of a woman who was once his classmate, tells to her "...I loved what I did not know about you as much as I loved what I did know about you. Oh, God, but how I feared it!" (Pamuk, 2006), the text continues by these words "Glancing over at the mirror and seeing an anxious glint in Türkan Şoaray's eyes, Galip fell silent (Pamuk, 2006). And also in this case about Persian poet Rumi and Shams of Tabriz "All his life, Rumi had been searching for his "other", the double who might move him and light up his heart, the mirror who might reflect his face and his very soul" (Pamuk, 2006).

In gaining access to language, the small child unconsciously learns that a sign has meaning only by means of its difference from other signs, and also that a sign presupposes the absence of the object it signifies. Our language stands in for objects: all languages is in a way metaphorical, in that it substitutes itself for some direct, wordless passion of object (Eagleton, 2008). Thus, the child's identity as a subject, it comes to perceive, is constituted by its relations of differences and similarity to the other subjects around it. For Lacan, this is the child moving from the imaginary register to the symbolic order. According to Freud (1964), the subject that emerges from passing successfully through the Oedipus complex process is a split one, radically divided between conscious life of ego and the unconscious or repressed desire. It is primary repression of desire which makes us what we are. The child has been banished from full imaginary possession into the empty world of language. Language is empty because it is just

an endless process of difference and absence. Instead of being able to possess anything in its fullness, the child will now simply move from one signifier to another, along a linguistic chain which is potentially infinite. One signifier implies another, and that another, and so on: the metaphorical world of the mirror has yielded ground to the metonymic world of language. Along this metonymic chain of signifiers, meaning, or signifieds, will be produced; but no object or person can ever be fully "present" in this chain (Eagleton, 2008). This potentially endless movement from one signifier to another is what Lacan means by desire. All desire springs from a lack, which it strives continually to fill. Human language works by such lack: the absence of the real objects which signs designate the fact that words have meaning only by virtue of the absence and exclusion of others. According to Lacan, language divides up –articulate – the fullness of the imaginary: we will now never be able to find rest in the single object, the final meaning, which will make sense of all the others. To enter language is to be severed from what Lacan calls the "real", that inaccessible realm which is always beyond the reach of signification, always outside the symbolic order. As we are severed from the mother's body, after the Oedipus crisis, we will never again be able to attain this precious object, even though we will spend all of our lives hunting for it. We have to substitute objects, what Lacan calls the "object little *a*", with which we try vainly to plug the gap at very center of our being. We move among substitutes for substitutes, metaphors of metaphors, never be able to recover the pure (if fictive) self-identity and self-completion which we knew in the imaginary. There is no "transcendental meaning" or object which will ground this endless yearning (Eagleton, 2008).

Thus, the beginning of socialization for human beings happens by entering to the language system, essentially a system which is concerned with lack and separation –crucial Lacanian concepts- since language names what is not present and substitutes a linguistic sign for it. This stage is also marks the new order, with its "prohibitions" and restraints, with the figure of father, the symbolic order (Barry, 2002). Then, desire is born at the moment of the infant's accession to the symbolic order (i.e. at the same moment as the infant becomes a subject) (Ross, 2002). According to Lacan, "desire is a social product. Desire is not the private affair it appears to be but is always constituted in a dialectical relationship with the perceived desires of other subjects" (Evans, 2006) And while this aspect of desire is certainly important to keep in mind, it is not simply "the perceived desires of other subjects" which motivates desire, but the prohibition on fulfillment of desire which provides the most stimulus for its reproduction (Ross, 2002). Lacan mentions that man's desire is a metonymy; there is a ceaseless movement of desire (Ross, 2002). In sum, we desire what we are taught to desire. In other words, the Symbolic Order consists of society's ideologies: its beliefs, values, and biases; its system of government, laws, educational practices, religious tenets, and the like. And it is our responses to our society's ideologies that make us what / who we are (Qazi, 2011). By having a Lacanian look at *The Black Book*, the reader faces with this common feeling of "lack" in Galip and in some other characters. This lack causes a desire, a desire to become perfect, to achieve a wholeness. And, as it was mentioned in the previous parts, desire is a social matter concerning a Lacanian viewpoint. Thus, mostly this desire is in direction of the desire of the "Other". For example, regarding the part of the novel about a brothel in which women pretend to be famous films stars (Pamuk 142-143), in fact they want to be more perfect through accepting the ideal standards that the society opposes on them. Or, in the story of the master mannequin maker, he couldn't attract customers, because according to his son explanations, people had the dream of becoming "the others" and his father's mannequins did not look like "that others" (Pamuk, 2006). *The Black Book* encompasses the stories of the people who want to be someone else: Belkis, an old classmate of Galip obsesses with becoming Rüya, or Galip likes to become Celâl and so on. All of these cases can be an indication for "the ceaseless movement of desire" (Ross, 2002) and the lack that generated by the infant's entry into the symbolic order, the order of law and prohibition. It indicates to the object of desire that the subject compulsively strives towards it (Ross, 2002) to gain lost plenitude and wholeness which is unattainable. Pamuk says about this ideal wholeness which "We're waiting for Him" (Pamuk, 2006).

Lacan broadens the scope of unconscious by his emphasis on language. He believes that the unconscious is always at work and the being of everything. His contention that unconscious is structured like a language, represents an assertion that according to which the unconscious comes into existence only with the individual's access to or entry into language (Qazi, 2011). Lacan says about "big Other" while discussing the symbolic order. This Other refers to anything that contributes to the creation of our subjectivity, or what we commonly refer to as our "selfhood". The symbolic order dominates human culture and social order, for to remain solely in the imaginary order is to render one incapable of functioning in the society. The symbolic order, or the world known through language, ushers in the world of lack. Hence, the symbolic order, as a result of the experience of lack, marks the split into conscious and unconscious mind. It is repression that first creates the unconscious (Qazi, 2011). It is only in the absence of a desired object that language becomes necessary, and through the use of language that a self comes into existence. The form of that existence is both desiring and linguistic. The symbolic and the imaginary are overlapping, as there is no clear marker or division between the two. In fact, in some respects they always coexist because the symbolic order is the structure of language itself and we have to enter into it in order to emerge as speaking subjects, and to designate ourselves by "I." The foundation for having a self lies in the imaginary projection of the self onto the specular image; the other in the mirror and having a self is expressed in saying "I," which can only occur within the Symbolic. If the signifier is the foundation of the symbolic, the signified and signification are part of the imaginary order. In short, according to Lacan's linguistic viewpoint, language, the signifying chain, has a life of its own which cannot be securely anchored to a world of things. "There is a perpetual sliding of the signified "under the signifier". No meaning is sustained by anything other than reference to another meaning. Such dicta were to have major repercussions on the theory and practice of interpretation (Qazi, 2011).

*The Black Book* can be studied through this aspect of Lacan's thought. It seems that Pamuk obsesses with deciphering of meaning through the faces or through the letters especially regarding the meaning of "self". In this part some related examples are discussed. In one side story of the novel Pamuk tells of a night club photographer, obsessed by a young woman who searches for meaning in the sad faces. She looks profoundly at the faces in many pictures which the photographer brings to her, apparently, for finding a mysterious secret in them (Pamuk, 2006). Regarding this story, *The Black Book* was adopted for a Turkish film, (Gizli, 1991) or "The Secret Face" in 1991.

There are some parts in the novel regarding Hurufis, a populist Sufi order founded by Fadlallah Astarabadi in fourteenth-century Iran. The order claimed that salvation was attainable through secret knowledge of the numerical values of the alphabet. It spread into Anatolia and Bulgaria among Muslims and Christians. Some of its ideas were perpetuated by the Bektashi order ("Hurufis" def.). In a part of the novel, Galip finds through the Celâl's treasury of arcane publications a weird little book by one F. M. Üçüncü with this title: *The Mystery of the Letters and the Loss of Mystery* regarding Fazlallah and central concern of all Hurufis: the relationship between letters and faces (Pamuk, 2006). According to Gün (1992) explanation Fazlallah of Astarabad (b. 1339) was the founder of the sect, which drew meaning and conclusions from a combination of the letters of the Arabic alphabet. In *The Black Book* we learn that, according to Fazlallah, sound was the demarcation line between Being and Nothingness, since everything that crossed over from nothingness into the world of materiality produced a sound. The advanced level of sound was, of course, the "word", the exalted thing called "speech", the magic known as "words", which were made up of "Letters". The origin of Being, its Meaning, and the material Aspect of God were distinguishable in Letters that were clearly written in the faces of men. We all had native-born characteristics of two brow lines, four eyelash lines, and one hairline seven strokes in all. At puberty this figure increased to fourteen, with the late-blooming nose dividing our faces, and with its poetic doubling (reflection) we reached the number twenty-eight, the number of letters in the Arabic alphabet, which brought the holy Koran into existence. Fazlallah, who was Persian himself, in an effort to bring the count up to thirty-two, the number of letters in the Persian alphabet, perused the line under the chin and found two, which he then doubled, reaching thirty-two. Accused of heresy, he was tried and executed. The belief passed from Iran to Turkey, thanks to Nesimi, a poet and one of Fazlallah's successors, who put all his writings in a green trunk and went around Anatolia, finding followers for his sect. Nesimi himself was later captured in Aleppo, tried endlessly, and flayed; his body was subsequently exhibited in the city, then cut into seven pieces and buried in seven cities where he had adherents. Hurufism spread quickly among Anatolian Bektashis, who talked about *kanz-i mahfi*, the secret treasury of the universe, which is God's True Quality. The problem was to decipher the clues in the world in order to achieve the treasury. They set themselves up to decipher this mystery in everything, every place, every person (61-62).

Concerning Lacan's attitudes towards language, it can be assumed that Pamuk uses the Hurufi ideas about alphabet letters to provide a ground to show the main role of language for our better understanding of the world and ourselves. It seems that Galip wants to go to the depth of his unconscious through these words:

... as Galip read of white mosques and whiter minarets rising over that sea, each one a shimmering mirage but also everlasting, he realized that the teachings of the Hurufis, secret since the seventeenth century, had embraced all of Istanbul.... He could see his own face in the picture that stared back at him, and on that face the letters that revealed to him the mystery of life; on warm moonlit summer nights, when those same travelers dipped buckets into wells, they pulled out not just ice-cold water but pailful of mysterious signs and stars; and they would stay up all night long, reciting verses that illuminated the meaning of signs and the signs of meaning – and as he read all this, Galip became more and more certain of two things: the golden age of Hurufism had taken place in Istanbul, and his own golden age with Rüya was gone, never to return (Pamuk, 2006).

In another place Galip says "I gazed into the mirror and read my face. My face was the Rosetta Stone I had deciphered in my dream. My face was the tombstone from which the turban had fallen. My face was a mirror made of skin in which the reader beheld himself (Pamuk, 2006). Galip says that his face looks like the Rosetta Stone. This stone found in 1799, near Rosetta, bring parallel inscriptions in Greek, Egyptian hieroglyphic, and demotic characters, making possible the deciphering of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics (Rosetta Stone.). Here, again, the emphasis is on reading of a man's real feelings and thoughts or in more precise words, a man's unconscious through the words and language. In fact, Galip sees himself in an oceanic world full of clues through letters or in a Lacanian viewpoint, a world of language. Apparently, the more he tries to decipher these clues, the more he immerses into this oceanic world without anchoring in a fixed point, without reaching to an ultimate meaning of himself, and this manifests Lacan's post-structuralist viewpoint of meaning and the nature of language especially regarding instability of subject.

In a superficial level, *The Black Book* is the story of its protagonist Galip, who is in search of his lost wife. But by digging into the deeper layers of the novel, the profound aspects of the novel emerge to us. By interpreting the text through a Lacanian lens, Galip's unconscious presents itself through the lines of the novel. Galip starts his search for finding "Rüya" or in fact as corresponding to the meaning of this name, "Rüya", for fulfilling his "drem": knowing himself. Concerning that Rüya is interested in detective novels, in a part of the novel Galip addresses Rüya in his mind and says:

For I was the sad resourceful hero of the book you are reading, I was the traveler who, with his guide, went slipping around the marble stones, giant columns, and black rocks among the fretful souls banished to the underground, who climbed the staircase to the skies to visit the seven starry heavens, who gazed at his love at the far end of the bridge leading over the chasm and cried, "I am



You!" I was the hard-boiled detective who, led on by his kindly author, found traces of poison in the ashtray and knew what they signified... (Pamuk, 2006).

Galip assumes himself as a skillful detective like those heroes of Rüyâ's stories who wants to solve a great mystery. His investigation for solving this great mystery starts by searching for Rüyâ. In accordance with a Lacanian reading and regarding this point that Galip's searching for Rüyâ is the first stage of his investigation for knowing himself, it can be assumed that Rüyâ is a symbolic hint of the imaginary order of his unconscious. As it was mentioned in the previous parts of this study, the imaginary order is an order in which the "ideal ego" is formed. We do not know much about Rüyâ; we merely see her effects on Galip actions. Likewise, the content of unconscious is, by definition, unknowable, but everything we do affected by it: we can guess about it by observing its effects (Barry, 2002). For Galip, Rüyâ, his lost soul mate, can be a representation of his ideal ego, which he wants to see himself through her. Moreover, the lost Ruya can be a symbol for lack. According to Lacan, it is a lack which causes desire to arise (Evans, 2006). Lack comes to designate the lack of a signifier in the Other (98). No matter how many signifiers one adds to the signifying chain, the chain is always incomplete; it always lacks the signifier that could complete it. This missing signifier is constitutive of the subject (Evans, 2006). Through Galip's searching for Rüyâ, the reader faces with the other stories and events one by one. The text is full of various collection of fragments and elements from the past to the present, from the West to the East. This variety can be an indication for a world full of signifiers, or a hint to a signifying chain, a ceaseless movement of desire (Ross, 2002) that we never find out precisely what is signified within in. The search of Galip continues through a world full of signifier. He goes from one signifier to another to find the ultimate signified of his "self". Then, he sees himself in the role of Celâl. According to Gün (1992) regarding *The Black Book*, as Pamuk has named Galip after the Ottoman poet who wrote the long mystical poem in which Love searches for Beauty (Pamuk, 2006), and Celâl Salik's appellation obviously alludes to the great Sufi mystic teacher Mevlana, Celâl-ed-din Rumi (Gün, 1992). Accordingly, as the Great Mavlana, wanted "not to be like Shams, but to be Shams" (Ibid) or, "the forty-five-year-old Rumi longed on that rainy day to find just such a "soul mate"; what he longed for was to look into a man's face and see a replica of his own" (Pamuk, 2006). Pamuk lifts from Sheikh Galip "Mystery is to be Oneself and to be Another" (Gün, 1992). Thus, Celâl can be an emblem of the symbolic order of Galip's unconscious, the realm of law that regulate desire (Evans, 2006). For Galip, Celâl can be a representation of his ego ideal, the image of the ego, derived from the others, which the ego strives to achieve or live up to Qazi (2011). The ego ideal is the guide governing the subject's position in the symbolic order (Evans, 2006). Thus, Galip not only moves into Celâl's apartment but wears his clothes and writes his columns for the newspaper, using Celâl's name. Galip wants to be like Celâl through the world of letters and "language". Galip says "I am now certain that Celâl and I think alike, I must study more faces!" (Pamuk, 2006). By reading Celâl's columns over and over, Galip would gain access to Celâl's memory (Pamuk, 2006). Thus, Galip wants to gain access to Celâl's unconscious, as the unconscious is a kind of memory, in the sense of a symbolic history of the signifiers that have determined the subject in the course of his life (Lacan 1997, 52, as cited in Evans (2006).

The symbolic and the imaginary are overlapping, as there is no clear marker or division between the two (Qazi, 2011). A hint of this issue in *The Black Book* is presented concerning Galip's striving for knowing himself through the mirror and the world of letters and sign:

...drenched in terror, hardly able to breathe, longing to put a great distance between himself and the dark mirror, with cold beads of sweat forming on his forehead. For a moment he imagined going back to that mirror, tearing this papery mask from his face like a scab from a wound, and being no more able to read the signs and letters on the new face that emerged behind the mask than the ones he'd found on billboards, plastic bags, and the city's tangled streets (Pamuk, 2006)

According to Lacan the identification of "self" is always in terms of Other (Qazi, 2011). Accordingly, Pamuk states "All his life, Rumi had been searching for his "other", the double who might move him and light up his heart, the mirror who might reflect his face and his very soul" (2006, 255). On the other hand, there are several characters in the novel that want to be someone else, Belkis wants to be Rüyâ, Galip wants to be Celâl, and "Celâl spoke of Rumi as if he were the man himself; somewhere between the lines, he...exchanged his identity for Rumi's" (Pamuk, 2006), even it was mentioned that Mevlana wanted to be Shams. All in all, this can be an indication for man's desire to achieve fullness and completeness. But attaining a wholeness of self is impossible. This is something related to the real order of Lacan's thought. The death of Celâl and Rüyâ can be an indication to this fact that the search of Galip for knowing himself is incomplete. As according to Lacan's post-structuralist viewpoint, the structure of unconscious is like a language and meaning is constantly shifting despite the fact that language always carries meaning; it is incapable of fixating it. The ego is just the narcissistic process whereby we bolster up a fictive sense of unitary selfhood by finding something in the world with which we can identify "self". We continuously search for the lost-impossible real but the search ends in failure because our attempts to gain the ultimate meaning of our "self" is impossible (Qazi, 2011). Thus, Lacan speaks of unconscious as a sliding of signified beneath the signifier, as a constant fading and evaporation of meaning, like a text which will certainly never yield up its final secrets to interpretation (Eagleton, 2008). Therefore, a final Lacanian remark needs to be made concerning the investigation of Galip for knowing himself. The unconscious is as highly structured as language itself. No one can achieve wholeness because we are all and will always remain fragmented individuals who are seeking completeness (Bressler, 2012).

## 5. Conclusion

In sum, Lacan suggests that the unconscious works in the same way that language does, along the two axes of metaphor and metonymy which generate the signified (Qazi, 2011). Thus, Lacan says, the chain of signifiers is constantly sliding and shifting and circulating. There is no anchor, nothing that ultimately gives meaning or stability

to the whole system (Qazi, 2011). Regarding *The Black Book*, this ceaseless movement of signifiers in signifying chain shows itself through the vast variety of fragments, a symbol for indication that no object can ever fulfill desire which is assumed ultimate motivational force in subjectivity (Ross, 2002). On the other hand, searching Galip does not anchor to any ultimate meaning. In fact, in a superficial level, both Rüya and Celâl die. Their dead of signify incapability of Galip to reaching to them can be a hint of real order, a realm of impossibility and a realm outside language. Galip, only moves from one signifier to another without achieving a wholeness of "self" or ability to anchor at any stability.

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