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A Review on *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi, İntibah and Zehra*

*Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi, İntibah ve Zehra
Üzerine Bir İnceleme*

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Abstract

This article examines the frame of rewriting practice, which I applied on novels of Namık Kemal's İntibah (Awakening), Nabizâde Nâzım's Zehra (Zehra) and an anonymous folktale Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi (The Strange Story of the One with the Dagger) together. This paper explains how ambivalent narrator positions are sustained and how the "liminality" of these works can be evaluated with the help of close reading practice on these texts. I will expose that the relationship among Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi, İntibah and Zehra is based on the concept of a "creative imitation" in accordance with the expectations of the historical addressee under the influence of social, political and historical circumstances in the Ottoman Empire. I will position "the reader" as the person who is expected to understand and expound the text according to his own background. And, I will interpret the intervening narrator as the one who meets the expectations of the historical addressee of the Ottoman society and who serves anti-adultery propaganda. I will demonstrate that in the texts in which the elements of preternaturalness and comedy are gradually disappearing and the signs of realism are increasingly strengthened, there is an ambivalent narration which is neither fully rooted in tradition nor in romanesque realism.

Keywords: Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi, İntibah, Zehra, rewriting, creative imitation.

Öz

Bu makale, Namık Kemal'in İntibah, Nabizâde Nâzım'ın Zehra ve anonim bir halk hikayesi olan Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi metinlerini yeniden yazım pratiği çerçevesinde incelemektedir. Bu eserlerde kararsız anlatıcı konumlarının nasıl sürdürüldüğünü ve bu eserlerin "eşiklik" hallerinin nasıl değerlendirilebileceğini yakın okuma tekniği ile açıklamaktadır. Bu çalışmada, Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi, İntibah ve Zehra metinleri arasındaki ilişkinin, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki sosyal, politik ve tarihsel koşulların etkisi altında, tarihsel muhatabın beklentileri doğrultusunda "yaratıcı bir taklit" kavramına dayandığını ortaya koyacağım. "Okuyucuyu," metni kendi geçmişine göre anlaması ve açıklaması beklenen kişi olarak konumlandıracağım. "Müdahil anlatıcı"nın Osmanlı toplumunun tarihsel muhatabının beklentilerini karşılayan ve zina karşıtı propagandaya hizmet eden rollerini irdeleyeceğim. Doğaüstülük ve komedi unsurlarının giderek kaybolduğu ve gerçekçiliğe ait emarelerin giderek güçlendiği metinlerde ne tamamen geleneğe ne de bütünüyle Romanesk gerçekçiliğe dayanan ikircikli bir anlatıma yer verildiğini göstereceğim.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi, İntibah, Zehra, yeniden yazım, yaratıcı taklit.

Textual Characteristics of *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi*

As an anonymous folktale belonging to oral tradition, *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi* is a liminal text which sometimes relies on traditional aspects and sometimes on the realist ones of romanesque verge. As David Selim Sayers tells us, the oldest of this tale's four different versions is the one written by Ali Ali. This work of art, printed with lithographic technique, was pressed in the printing house of *Ceride-i Havadis* (*Journal of News*) in 1268 according to the Islamic calendar, or in 1851-1852 according to the Gregorian calendar, as claimed on the 102nd page of the work. (Sayers, 2005, p. 10-11) Since this tale is thought to have served as a model for the very first novels of the Tanzimat Reform Era, a special importance is attributed hereto.

First, *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi* is a liminal text with such aspects that sometimes rely on traditional styles and sometimes on the realist ones of romanesque verge. For example, the traditional uses, which are characterized by various adjectives and analogies such as "appetizer", "sugar" and "drink," and the preternaturalness of traditional narratives and the elements of comedy are included. The character Kamer says to her foster nurse, "You see me, if the one who God will not kill is put between the two stones, and if he was thrown into forests, like me, with serpent and centipede, he would not die anyway," and she reappears in a preternatural way after her death in *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi*. The discourse of the "act of God" in the text can be considered as a determinant of the fact that we are faced with a text quite distant from realistic narratives.

It has also been observed that, the names of places such as Ortaköy, Beykoz, İncirköy, Boğaziçi, Bahçekapısı, Adalar, and temporal transitions are given in a realistic way. On the other hand, the two main danger themes of the traditional narratives of Islamic civilizations can be seen: First, the potential negativities that a nonadult man may experience just after unconsciously spending his father's inheritance are included in the text as an element of danger. As a matter of fact, Süleyman Bey becomes penniless in two years by losing most of the properties he inherited from his father. Second, in parallel with the lack of a "tutelar" for a non-adult man, the "inexperienced" male character goes astray and is trapped by a "female trick." When it comes to Ottoman society, because women and men do not exist "equally" in the public sphere, it can be considered that the discourse of such a "female trick" does not point to a danger for the Ottoman society. On the other hand, Hançerli Hanım (meaning a woman with the dagger) who can easily go out and buy a weapon conflicts with the role assigned to women in a Muslim society. In this sense, as an active and challenging individual, Hançerli Hanım is a fearful, unpreferred and negated character who undermines the stereotypes and who revolts against the status quo. Within the framework of the Sunni Islamic understanding, in the case of pre-marital

relationships, the negation of the opposite sex serves to reverse a possible adultery propaganda at first hand.

In the context of the Ottoman social structure, Sunni Islamic tradition and anti-adultery discourse, the functionality of homoerotic discourse in *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi* against the adultery propaganda should also be mentioned. In the embedded story, a homoerotic love takes place between the Sultan Cemşid, his beloved Nayab and the merchant Seyf-i dil, as indicated in the following quotations: "... That is Nayab, he fell in love with a mollycoddled beloved named as Seyf-i dil." (Sayers, 2013, p. 338) When Nayab speaks to the Sultan Cemşid with his amative couplets and apothegms, Cemşid loses his command and says that "My Nayab! Oh! My life! Do you also fall for the illness of love?" (339) Moreover, Süleyman Bey also has a love affair lip to lip with a young cupbearer boy: "... After a few glasses, Suleyman Bey seated the apprentice beside him in the ginmill. For each drink, they mixed appetizers with sugar and honey¹." (310) The term "pederasty," used to express the love between an adult man and unshaved boy which shapes Ottoman poetry, is not seen at this point. Because, the love that takes place in these quotations occurs especially just among young boys. The Ottomans inherit a long tradition of the spiritualization of love. Sexual desires or attractions are the physical manifestation of the soul's yearning for a return to a divine unity from which it was separated by birth into the material world. For those Ottomans who produced and consumed high-culture literature, the love most easily recognizable as a spiritual love was that of an educated man for a younger man. (Andrews and Kalpaklı, 2005, p. 17)

In the same breath, the love that binds men together throughout *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi* is quite different than that of pederasty, the love of an adult male for a younger boy, that shapes much Ottoman poetry. This text especially includes erotic relationships and love between young men and boys. (Güven, 2009, p. 103-110) Additionally, the idea that men once fancied their own kind and then later tended towards women or else began hiding their old habits is regarded to have happened after the Tanzimat era (1839). All these characteristics underpin the ambivalent position of *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi* as a liminal work of romanesque art.

With these qualities, *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi* is separated from the tradition of Ottoman literature and it is set on the "liminality" between this tradition and the works of the Tanzimat period, when the first steps toward Europeanization were taken. Throughout the text, the coexistence of both traditional and novelistic features, and the inclusion of a number of couplets serving to consolidate the meaning of the text, reinforces "liminality" in *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi*.

¹ Here, "sugar" and "honey" refer to the delicious taste of the young man's lips as in Ottoman literary tradition.

1. *İntibah* as The Practice of A “Creative Imitation”

Just after *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi*, it would be appropriate to expound the characteristics of *İntibah* written at the Magosa Castle in Cyprus, where Namık Kemal had been in exile between 1873-1876. Because the author was exiled, his name was not given to the text, and later Namık Kemal titled his novel *Son Pişmanlık* (*The Last Regret*). The Ministry of Education, which had been supervising the publications of the period, had changed the title of the novel to *İntibah: Sergüzeşt-i Ali Bey* (*Awakening: Ali Bey's Adventure*) without consulting the author. (Sevim, 2016, p. 73-97). And, it is necessary to understand how the “liminality” of *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi* is continued in *İntibah*. Namık Kemal, in terms of his works and style, has a multifaceted world view between tradition and modernity, like other Turkish intellectuals in the post-Tanzimat years. (Uçman, 2014, p. 116) In Erol Köroğlu’s article “‘Hançerli Hanım mı, ‘Mirat-ı Aşk’ mı? Bir Hikâyenin Dönüşüm Sürecinde Etkilenen ve Etkileyen Olarak *İntibah*.” *İntibah* is mentioned as both the influencer and being influenced by *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi* in such a way that the actions and processes of generating meaning can allow for instructive readings and also more dynamic and efficient interpretations. In this article, it is mentioned about the parallelism between this text, printed with lithography techniques in 1851-52, and *İntibah*, one of the first Turkish novels. It is also noted that this parallelism was first introduced in Güzin Dino’s *Türk Romanının Doğuşu* (*The Birth of the Turkish Novel*) published in 1978. (Dino, 1978, p. 78) Accordingly, *İntibah* is not an unprofessional practice; it is rather a complex literary event produced in the direction of the author’s intentions, his understanding of the world and his ideological choices. The first Turkish novels, especially *İntibah*, are not unexciting and unsuccessful practices that produce the inferiority complex but are interesting and complex texts expected to be understood by the reader. (Köroğlu, 2012, p. 14)

In *İntibah*, as in *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi*, a family friend finds a job in a bedesten (covered bazaar) for Ali Bey who was left an orphan. A year before the publication of *İntibah*, was the year of the big famine in the Ottoman Empire. In most places, products were in bad condition, the most terrible floods were experienced for many years and epidemic diseases were also seen in some regions. The government was obligated to distribute supplies to mitigate the famine. (Kopar and Yolun, 2012, p. 345) The famine in the Ottoman Empire in 1875 triggered the theme of an “unguarded young man” -in a moral and material sense- because of “the death of the father” (Parla, 2002, p. 19) in traditional narratives. In this regard, we faced a literary text shaped by historical and social concerns.

In addition to the introduction of Mehpeyker as a “negated” prostitute as much as possible, Dilaşub is also described as a “slave” who is expected to give pleasure to her male owner. Mehpeyker, who is considered to be a prostitute as a “victim of fate,”

and Dilaşub, who is employed at home and described nearly as a sexual slave, cannot be considered as two completely different characters. The real slavery discourse in the Ottoman Empire is reproduced in a contradictory way to the historical reality, and the discourse of the slavery was affirmed positively with an insistent way of wording. Indeed, along the text, the same ambivalent narrator exhibits an attitude to discredit Mehpeyker and to “negate” her in the sight of the addressee as much as he can and also describes Mehpeyker as a “victim of fate,” claiming that the love of a prostitute is infinite. As indicated in the following quotations, “(Mehpeyker says) You made me forget femininity and decency. Didn’t you? Should I tell you again? Here I love. What can I do? I’m not going to have authority over my heart!” (...) “(The narrator says) Each time she says I love, her lips would be as beautiful as honesty, as lustful as lushly colorful.” (Kemal, 2020, p. 29) The narrator dedicates all of his epithets with regard to honesty and cleanliness to Mehpeyker. For Mehpeyker, the narrator says, “... she dressed in a white lacy dress with white buds.” (59) In this way, it should not be overlooked that the narrator, by indicating that Mehpeyker is dressed in white, may not be a rooted “symbol of evil” and should be considered as the same ambivalent narrator who badmouths Mehpeyker from time to time. Even though the narrator tries to humiliate Mehpeyker, he does not present her to the reader in the form of a symbol of evil. At this point, the narrator reinforces the perception of reality by describing Mehpeyker to the reader as a convincing and logical character. Just as Namık Kemal exalts values such as morality and honor by trivializing and undermining prostitution, he also prevents making stereotypical judgments, and strengthens the realism of the text via his ambivalent expressions which neither idealize nor disparage the characters. Since a purely wicked character like Hançerli Hanım might disrupt the romanesque realism, just after *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi*, there is a creative and transformative rewriting through a character like Mehpeyker who has an ambivalent position as expounded above.

At the same time, on the subject of rewriting of tradition, epigraphs in the form of couplets are placed at the beginning of the chapters. Not mentioning the names of the poets can be considered as an appropriate attitude towards the tradition and gives the impression that a writer who dominates the old literature is turning toward a new style. While the use of this tradition in *İntibah* is not a usual or traditional convention, it once again underlines the presence of the text on the romanesque liminality. Although a narration in which the love of Mehpeyker and Ali Bey is compatible with the traditional relationship between the lover and the beloved in some respects, yet it is completely separated from it at certain points. The beloved here is worldly with detailed descriptions, and the love here is a mutual love, albeit hopeless. Because Mehpeyker swept Ali Bey off his feet and persecuted him, she is identified with trickery and pruriency. In this regard, there are some analogies between the dangerous and cruel beloved in the tradition and Mehpeyker. Furthermore, in comparison to *Hançerli*

Hikâye-i Garîbesi, a clear chronotope within a certain causality is remarkable in terms of the realism of *İntibah*.

In contrast to all these realistic discourses in the text, the realism of the text has been interrupted by an intervening narrator in accordance with the moral impositions of the Sunni Islamic society and the narrator shapes the text in this direction. *İntibah* has been written in accordance with the moral impositions of the Sunni Islamic society and has been shaped according to the cultural level of the addressee of the period. Daniela Rogobete says that, what is important in text theory is that the text is no longer a self-contained entity nor a closed system in which all its elements operate according to certain rules. The text should now be considered under the influence of the strong effects of social, political, historical, traditional situations and in the transformational sensibility of the text. (Rogobete, 2003, p. 14) In terms of meeting the expectations of the historical addressees, Rogobete claims, “the author” and “the reader” should play a joint role in the creation of the text. In this regard, as the author is more or less consciously the person who produces the cultural background of his text, the reader is positioned as the person who is expected to understand and expound the text according to his own cultural background. This aspect is interpreted as an intertextual “cross-fertilization.” The analysis of the text in order to understand the “textual difference” that does or does not exist in the analyzed text requires one to identify this text by taking into account all elements that form it as well as looking at its relationship to other texts. At the same time, the varied interpretations produced according to the interest, the knowledge and the orientation of the reader each time they read the text should not be ignored.

Even if the narrator tries to deeply analyze the personalities and psychologies in *İntibah*, it cannot be classified as a purely realistic novel. Because the historical addressee of the period is used as the intervening narrator, the voices and interventions of the narrator are seen throughout the text. This situation impedes the perception of reality of the text and the reader is forced to be guided in a single direction determined by the addressee. Just after Mehperker’s words: “Sir, women know both their owner and ruler. We don’t dare to have fun with our masters. Our job is only to tickle them pink. I know, sir, the gentlemen come here to spend time. Just as they have fun with everything, they have also a little fun with women who met them by chance.” (Kemal, 2020, p. 26-27) The narrator doubtlessly argues that Mehperker’s speech is composed of tricks and she can be a master of imitation thanks to her style of speaking. However, in the scene of Ali Bey and his mother’s reconciliation, the narrator states that Dilaşub felt faint because of her happiness and excitement, and he underlines his assurances that Dilaşub cannot make any pretence in this respect. The narrator takes the novel away from realism and tries to ideologize the text in the direction of making Sunni Islamic morality at the expense of the facts and its own will.

Regarding Dilaşub, it is open to discussion whether someone whose sensations are badly affected by Ali Bey is still trying to profit from her owner. And when Dilaşub is forced to act as a prostitute, the fact that no one tends to have sex with her can be considered reasonable for the historical addressee of which period or to what extent? Dilaşub is idealized as if she was not from this world by contradicting with the perception of reality. It can be recognized by every careful reader that this stems from the narrator's one-sided wording. Ali Bey develops an intimacy with Dilaşub as a result of the sadness, grudge and shock he experienced as a result of the "unchastity" of Mehpeyker. In this sense, the ideal image of the beloved for Dilaşub can be invalidated. Does Dilaşub steal Ali Bey's mind and heart since she is almost "a heaven-sent houri"? Or does Ali Bey establish intimacy with Dilaşub to reduce the effects of suffering caused by Mehpeyker and to try to overcome the crisis he has already experienced? The second reason seems more advisable, when both the plot and the narrator's ambivalent position towards Mehpeyker are taken into consideration. Let us assume that if Ali Bey, who forgets that Mehpeyker has a separate life from him, had continued his love and admiration for her, Ali Bey could be imagined in such a way that he could recognize the presence of Dilaşub as a woman, even if they lived in the same house? And how could the plot and the characterization of Ali Bey allow that? What kind of awakening is Ali Bey experiencing? Or to what extent is Ali Bey's magnificent and sudden alteration convincing? Within this scope, the thought that Ali Bey directs his actions in a dimension of his grudge against Mehpeyker seems to be more justified according to the context of *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garibesi*. Although *İntibah* seems to be a literary text which is attempting to be positioned with blinders in the framework of Sunni Islamic morality, in particular, there is an ambivalent narrator in respect to interchangeable characterizations that undermine the perception of reality and idealization.

By saying, "We have described above Ali Bey's morality, decency and the anxiety that he feels. Now, put yourself in his place." (21) The narrator directly addresses the addressee and thus discloses the fictionality of the text. After that, the narrator tells, "And for the first time, stay awake from anxiety. Man looks at the duvet, coverlet of his bed, and he can't see a difference from shroud and soil. He wants to commit suicide, yet he cannot let himself do it. He decides desperately to wait for the end of this state of mind, doesn't he? Ali Bey's state was the same." (21) This positions the narrator in the form of an authoritarian and intervening voice who will only allow us to examine Ali Bey's mental state only in the narrator's own way.

As a result, the passivity expected from the woman is propagandized against the man's activism. Therefore, while referring to the understanding of Sunni Islamic morality of historical reading, a text removed from the realistic line is also experienced. At this point, the "liminality" of both the narrator and the character drawn by him can

be examined. Ali Bey, who is purified as much as possible against Mehpeyker by the narrator and is also described as fallen into the trap of Mehpeyker, says, “Do you think they still believe your lies? By thinking that I have come to ignore your simulations not to spoil my fun so far, you really think I’m an idiot, don’t you?” (80) How can Ali Bey, who fornicates with Mehpeyker outside of marriage, be really more moral than her? Since his childhood, Ali Bey has been regarded as “sallow,” “irritable,” and “afflicted” with overdependence and addiction. When he was a child, just as he was addicted to his lessons by forgetting himself, he also seemed to be addicted to Mehpeyker now. This underlines Ali Bey’s primitiveness and his seeking for another guardian as an unguarded male character. However, this situation also undermines the absolutely deceitful and seductive position of Mehpeyker. Ali Bey is also considered to be fond of any person who can affect him with her feminine qualities, causing him to forget himself. The narrator punishes Ali Bey and drives him to an end where his last regret does not work. It is obvious in the text that the problematic and ambivalent aspects of a strict Sunni morality cannot be said to be solely directed towards women.

2. *Zehra* Once After *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi* and *İntibah*

After the death of Nabizâde Nâzım, the author of *Zehra*, the novel was serialized by his friend Mahmut Sadık in the journal *Servet-i Fünun* (*Wealth of Knowledge*). (Öztürker-Özdemir, 2015, p. 129-139) Finally, it is necessary to show parallelism with *İntibah* with regard to the common aspects such as its romanesque liminality, binary oppositions, backsliding in love because of inexperience, being accepted to the home as a handmaiden by a mother, an intervening and premonitory narrator, chronotope, descriptions of a detailed setting, and addressing historical addressees. In this regard, immediately after the rewriting practice between *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi* and *İntibah*, *Zehra* is another “creative imitation.” In *Zehra*, the characters are realistically examined from all aspects and are analyzed psychologically for the first time in Ottoman literature. From this point of view, the characteristics of *Zehra* separate it from previous novels.

Zehra is a novel that relates the jealousy and passions to the life of the period, family structure, entertainment life and the value judgments of society. The narrator characterizes people according to the conditions of their environment and parental discipline, analyse them psychologically and depicts the places realistically. (Özgen, 2010, p. 62) The narrator, who reads novels and newspapers to *Zehra*, Sırrıcemal and Suphi and makes them drink coffee with milk, appeals much more modernist items in contrast with the narrator in both *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi* and *İntibah*. *Zehra*’s practice of playing a Western-style instrument, a piano, is among the examples of Westernization that started with the Tanzimat period. (Eraslan, 2018, p. 73) The

character Zehra is not only elegant and as beautiful as a rose tree, but she is also “wild.” She is beautiful but grumpy. This kind of wording without idealization systematically reinforces the realism of the text. Zehra’s jealousy is not only a reaction shown to situations and events but also a particular characteristic that exists from her birth, even inherited from her mother. (63) On the other hand, it is stated that Sırrıcmal, the odalisque, might be superior to Zehra in terms of not only beauty and education, but also in morality. One of the most distinctive features of the novels of the Tanzimat period is the contending female characters. (Eraslan and Sarı, 2018, p. 79) In these novels, Turkish women do not have any relations with men before marriage, while the women who experience extramarital relationships are odalisques and non-Muslim women. (73) And, in *Zehra*, supposedly “well-behaved” and “sensitive” Sırrıcmal commits adultery with Suphi, who is already married to Zehra, and Sırrıcmal rejoices at the death of Zehra’s father at such a time. Sırrıcmal is also constantly anxious about being left by Suphi who already left pregnant Zehra. In this way, the narrator implicates the end of the novel as well. Sırrıcmal, whose fears come true, commits suicide just after Suphi fell in love with a prostitute named Ürani hired by Zehra.

The intervening narrator, who frequently underlines that Sırrıcmal was more “well-behaved” and “sensitive” than Zehra, slowly drifts Sırrıcmal toward a previously stated death. The novel presents anti-adultery propaganda by means of the adumbration. Thereby, Zehra and Sırrıcmal, described as binary oppositions at the beginning of the novel, become nearly identical to each other in terms of their love and jealousy towards Suphi. They cause the end of their lives in parallel with the similarity between Dilaşub and Mehpeyker in *İntibah*. Binary oppositions and the ambiguities of the boundaries in *Zehra* are more changeable and transitive in a more systematic and consistent way in comparison with those of in *İntibah*. And, this aspect underlies the realism of *Zehra*. The narrator connects Zehra’s and Sırrıcmal’s revenge plans to their lust for Suphi and he makes them more and more worthless, just “Suphi’s toys.” Therefore, Ürani is not a symbol of “woman trick” a traditional theme as in *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garibesî*; but she is the only one who can take advantage of a negated character like Suphi. Ürani is not denigrated in the eyes of the reader. Because, she is a prostitute who has been hired to avenge upon Suphi for the benefit of Zehra who is constantly described as “poor” by the narrator and to separate Suphi from the Sırrıcmal, and to run out of Suphi’s whole patrimonial wealth as well. While the narrator has already included Ürani in the text exactly in this way, the same narrator is also not able to desist from emphasizing Ürani’s immorality by saying, “That heart, that love, chop it up and throw it to the dogs.” (Nâzım, 2019, p. 68) In this way, he is trying to prevent possible adultery propaganda. In accordance with the expectations of the historical addressee, Ürani will be killed. Ürani has taken pleasure in brothels since her childhood and has been portrayed as doing this with pleasure, unlike a “victim of fate” like Mehpeyker in *İntibah*.

Unlike *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi*, in *Zehra* and *İntibah*, the reader is expected to get closer to the depths of Ali Bey's and Suphi's psychology, and the depictions are given in the way they see them. Their emotions are conveyed directly to the reader. According to the narrator, a drunkard's addiction to drink is just like Suphi's love for Ürani. (86) While the narrator wants us to think that Suphi's love for Ürani is completely beyond her control, just like drunkenness, he also adumbrates Suphi's admiration for Ürani. The narrator also does not allow Suphi to express his love for Ürani to Salih; he lets Suphi say that Ürani is only a one-night stand. In this way, the narrator seems to want to confirm once again the "fallenness" of Ürani and also to have the addressee approve it. By the reason of Suphi's contradictory and unidentified feelings that remind him of his "poor" mother, Zehra, and Sırrıcemal, the narrator intervenes by indicating, "If [Suphi] weren't so weak, he would have thoroughly understood that his feelings for Ürani were nothing more than a sexual pleasure." (105) Likewise, in *İntibah*, the narrator is not also able to desist from asking, "But what can [Ali Bey] do? Poor... How he can explain the reality to a chaste woman by suddenly leaving the shame he was accustomed to since the day he was born?" (20) Within the framework of the moral understanding of a Muslim society, the narrators in *Zehra* and *İntibah* present the events to the reader with a moral intervention and the divinity to satisfy the expectations of historical addressees. By taking the focus on Ali and Suphi, and then by immediately giving their sentimentality and bringing the reader face to face with reality, the narrators try to prevent any adultery propaganda. Because the historical addressee is used to the intervening narrator, the narrators constantly intervene and they seem to prevent conflict with the moral understanding of the addressee.

It should not be forgotten that Suphi's leaving Zehra for Sırrıcemal is not only due to the treatment of Zehra to Sırrıcemal, but also -just like Ali Bey's- is due to Suphi's bodily pleasures. It should be noted that Suphi's admiration for Ürani is not solely due to her fascinating and addictive "tricks." Just as Ali Bey's enthusiasm for Mehpeyker is related to his physical pleasures to a large extent, and Suphi's admiration for Ürani is parallel to his weaknesses. In a similar manner to the narrator's attitude in *İntibah*, the narrator's farfetched and manipulative linguistic performance for Ürani interrupts the realism and truthfulness of *Zehra*. Even if Suphi has a fit of jealousy, spends a lot of money, and leads his life towards an inevitable end for Ürani, he sees that Ürani's little bit of love is worthier than all kinds of sacrifices and sufferings. In this way, Suphi falls to the position of Zehra and Sırrıcemal. Because these two women also bore all kinds of tediousness, even for the little signs of Suphi's love. As a male character, Suphi is largely motivated by sexual drives and he sacrifices all the women in his life, even his mother. Although the narrator's interpretation indicated, "[Suphi] was used to carrying on with the most disgusting women nowadays, instead of being on intimate terms with the icon of beauty and honor like Zehra and Sırrıcemal." (119),

because the one who organizes this trick is already Zehra, and the one who commits adultery with Suphi when he is married to Zehra is already Sırrıccemal, it is controversial if these two women can be considered as “symbols of honor” and, if so, to what extent.

Until the very last minute, Suphi is in love with Ürani, who enjoys prostitution and gets a new lover when Suphi runs out all his financial resources. In *İntibah*, after realizing that Mehpeyker is an “unchaste” woman, Ali Bey breaks up with her. However, this is not the case for Suphi. Just as it is underlined repeatedly that Zehra attempts to take revenge against Suphi and Sırrıccemal because of her love for Suphi, Suphi kills Ürani and her new lover because of his adoration for Ürani as well. Even if the narrator labels Ürani to his heart’s content, the fact that Ürani is the only one who can vanquish Suphi, negates the idea that she is seen as a despicable prostitute. The adultery propoganda avoided within the framework of the understanding of Sunni Islamic society through the agency of a “negated” female character Mehpeyker in *İntibah*, handled in a more realistic and more consistent way in *Zehra*. Despite the narrator’s numerous interventions which have “negated” Ürani and have considered adulterous Sırrıccemal as “exaltedly well-behaved and sensitive,” Ürani has been characterized as a beloved to whom Suphi is addicted to by the same intervening and ambivalent narrator.

3. Conclusion

As seen, there is a textual movement among *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garibesî*, *İntibah* and *Zehra* that does not simply copy the previous text. Oğuzhan Karaburgu suggests that Abdülhak Hamit Tarhan wrote *İçli Kız* under the influence entirely of Namık Kemal’s *Zavallı Çocuk* and Rezaizade Mahmut Ekrem’s *Vuslat*, and that Abdülhak Hamit Tarhan tried to create a work that would earn his appreciation in order to substitute himself for his master. (Karaburgu, 2013, p. 1749) However, *İntibah* and *Zehra* were not written in such a successor-predecessor relationship, but under the strengthened influence of social, political and historical circumstances and traditions. These texts should be evaluated as a political movement trying to bring together the traditional narrative, the Western novel and Sunni morality together.

This article explained how *İntibah* and *Zehra* exist under the influence of the changes in political power, and how they also exist as how they exerted influence on these changes. The novels were expounded under the influence of the changes in political power and in the cultural level of the reader at the time of their publication. It is obvious that the possible “alterations” can also contain essential elements with regard to the period, the addressee who appropriates the text of the period, and cultural level of this addressee. In this regard, it is important to advocate a tendency towards analyzing the text one by one with regard to political and social concerns and

to examine the text in this direction. Howard Mancing says, the emergence of the novel in France and England in the eighteenth century should be explained not only by the developments in the power relations in the society, but also by conflicts and interactions with other literary genres that preceded it. (Mancing, 2005) Therefore, when looking at the texts, it is necessary to see the differences caused by the changes in the tactics or strategies of the power, in literary discourse. Since the reader is positioned as the person who is expected to understand and expound the text according to his own cultural background, these texts were shaped in accordance with the expectations of the addressee of the period.

Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi has been reconsidered from a more realistic line because preternaturalness leaves its place to earthly realities. In chronological order, though the homoerotic discourse against the adultery propaganda in *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi* leaves its place to the heterosexuality with western understanding in *İntibah* and *Zehra*. Nevertheless, in the period when *İntibah* and *Zehra* were written, an intimate relationship between a single man and woman could be considered as a kind of an adultery propaganda. For this reason, Mehpeyker and Sırrıcemal/Ûrani (who can be evaluated as the rewritten versions of Hançerli Hanım) and their effects on Dilaşub and Zehra (who can be also considered as the rewritten versions of Kamer in *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi*) generate the basis of the rewriting practice in these three works. However, the ambiguity of the boundaries, binary oppositions and the ambivalence between changeability/unchangeability of binary opposites reinforces the realism of *İntibah* and *Zehra* compared to *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi*. *İntibah* and *Zehra* are liminal texts that constantly violates boundaries, undermines stereotypes and established systems.

In *İntibah* and *Zehra*, the intervening narrators, within the framework of Sunni Islamic and moral understanding, negate “unchaste” women in aforementioned love affairs to meet the expectations of the historical addressee of the Ottoman society and to respond to their way of life in the periods the texts were published. In this way, they try to serve anti-adultery propaganda. This aspect can be also based on Daniela Rogobete’s views on the concept of “the reader” in the text analysis. In the texts in which we notice that the elements of preternaturalness and comedy are gradually disappearing, we can speak of an impure but “traditional” and “ambivalent” realism. Eventually, in *İntibah* and *Zehra*, where the signs of realism are increasingly strengthened, there is an ambivalent narration which is neither fully rooted in tradition nor in romanesque realism. The texts disrupt the romanesque realism, which they generate from time to time, because of their liminal statuses. The relationship among *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi*, *İntibah* and *Zehra* is based on the concept of a “creative imitation” because they were under the influence of the changes in the historical and cultural literacy and attempted to influence this change in the period.

İntibah and *Zehra*, in precisely this way, correspond to the practice of a “creative imitations” of *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi*, in accordance with the expectations of its historical context and addressee. *İntibah* and *Zehra* do not stand on an exactly realistic way, but show an ambivalent attitude in terms of both the narrator and the characters. In *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi*, Kamer is an angelical victim against Hançerli Hanım as a demonic killer. Although the narrators in *İntibah* and *Zehra* present the characters to the reader with their ambivalent positions, they interpret them by intervening and continuously base their sentimentalities on a causality. In particular, while praising Dilaşub and Zehra in language that can be considered “farfetched,” the narrators use the same farfetched language to blame Mehpeyker and Ürani. The intervention of the narrators not only interrupts the realism of the text, but also constitutes a determining criterion of the practice of intertextuality. Feelings are also involved, but there is a plot which can be examined within cause and effect relationships in comparison to preternatural events in *Hançerli Hikâye-i Garîbesi*. From this point of view, *İntibah* and *Zehra* can be evaluated as a text of a “liminality.”

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