

TRACING BORGES' SHORT STORIES WITH DETECTIVE MARTIN MYSTÈRE: DELIBERATELY CONSTRUCTED INTERTEXTUALITY*

Dedektif Martin Mystère ile Borges' nin Kısa Öykülerinin İzini Sürmek:
Tasarlanmış Metinlerarasılık

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ÖZET

Metinlerarasılık yazılı metinler, sözceler ve hatta yalnızca bir fikir arasındaki kaçınılmaz ilişki olarak kabul edildikten sonra, metin analizleri birçok araştırmacı, eleştirmen ve bilim insanının dikkatini çekmiştir. Yazılı metin örnekleri olarak çizgi romanlar, diğer edebî eserler ile aralarındaki metinlerarası ilişkilerin belirlenmesi açısından okuyucuya önemli bir zemin hazırlar. Bu ilişkileri görmeye yönelik karşılaştırmalı bir çalışma, metinlerarasılık ile çizgi roman teorisi, çizgi roman eleştirisi, çizgi roman tarihi yazımı gibi ilgili çalışma alanlarıyla akademik bir alan haline gelmiş olan çizgi roman çalışmaları arasında yeni araştırmaları teşvik edebilir. Bu çalışma, Martin Mystère isimli çizgi romanın iki sayısı (Kum Kitabı ve Alef) ve Jorge Luis Borges'nin aynı isimli iki kısa öyküsü (The Book of Sand and the Aleph) arasındaki metinlerarası ilişkileri, post-yapısalcı bakış açısıyla ve Gérard Genette'nin 'metin-ötesi' sınıflandırmasını kullanarak tartışmayı amaçlamıştır. Çalışmada Martin Mystère çizgi romanların Türkçe versiyonları, Borges'in öykülerinin ise İngilizce versiyonları, okuyucu odaklı bir perspektifle bağlantı ve etkileşimleri görmek üzere, karşılıklı olarak incelenmiştir. Bulgular, önceki ve sonraki metinler arasındaki metinlerarası ilişkilerin, okuyucunun Borges ve eserleri ile ilgili bilgilendirilmesi amacıyla çizgi roman yazarları tarafından önceden 'tasarlanmış' olduğunu göstermektedir. Çizgi roman ve kısa öyküler arasında tespit edilen metinlerarası, yanmetinsel, üstmetinsel ve anametinsel ilişkiler kendini daha çok alegori, alıntılama, anıştırma ve gönderge gibi edebî araçlar aracılığıyla göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Metinlerarasılık, metin-ötesi, çizgi roman, Martin Mystère, Borges.

ABSTRACT

Text analyses have drawn the attention of many researchers, critics and scholars after intertextuality has been defined as an inevitable relation with any written texts, utterances or even an idea. Comic books, as written examples, give the reader a ground to catch intertextual relations with literary works. The comic books are one of the most read literary texts and any study on the intertextual relation between comics and short stories may encourage the studies of intertextuality and also comics studies that has become an academic field interrelating with comics theory, comics criticism, comics historiography and so on. This study aims to identify and discuss the intertextual relations between the two issues of the comic book Martin Mystère (Kum Kitabı and Alef) and the two short stories (The Book of Sand and The Aleph) of Jorge Luis Borges within the post-structuralist approach to intertextuality and transtextuality categorization of Gérard Genette. The study examines the Turkish versions of the comic books Martin Mystère and the English versions of the Borges' short stories. The findings show that the intertextual relations between earlier and later texts are 'deliberate' as the authors of the comic book intend to inform the reader. The relations mostly manifest themselves with intertextual, paratextual, architextual and hypertextual relations appearing as quotations, allusions, allegories, and references in prefaces, in titles or in its kind.

Keywords: Intertextuality, transtextuality, comic book, Martin Mystère, Borges.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Çizgi romanlar en çok okunan edebî metin türlerinden biridir. Çizgi romanlar ve kısa öyküler arasındaki metinlerarası ilişkiler üzerine yapılan bir çalışma çizgi roman kuramı, çizgi roman eleştirisi, çizgi roman tarihçiliği ve buna benzer alt alanlarıyla akademik bir alan haline gelmiş olan çizgi roman çalışmaları ve metinlerarasılık arasında yapılacak olan yeni çalışmaları teşvik edebilir. Çizgi romanların pek çok kişi tarafından okunmasına ve bu anlamda önem kazanmasına rağmen, çizgi romanlar ve kısa öyküler arasında yer alan metinlerarası ilişkileri inceleyen çok az çalışma mevcuttur. Bu nedenle, *Martin Mystère*'in dünya çapında en çok okunan çizgi roman serileri arasında yer alması ve Jorge Luis Borges'nin en iyi bilinen yazarlardan biri olması göz önünde bulundurularak, bu çalışma, *Martin Mystère* isimli çizgi romanın iki sayısı (*Kum Kitabı* ve *Alef*) ve Jorge Luis Borges'nin aynı isimli iki kısa öyküsü arasındaki metinlerarası ilişkileri, post-yapısalcı bakış açısıyla ve Gérard Genette'nin metin-ötesi sınıflandırmasını kullanarak tartışmayı amaçlamıştır. İlk kez 1982 yılında İtalya'da Sergio Bonelli Editore tarafından yayınlanan çizgi roman serisi *Martin Mystère*, daha sonra pek çok farklı dile çevrilmiş ve çeşitli biçimlerde uyarlanmıştır. *Martin Mystère* yaratıcıları özellikle popüler bilim ve bilim kurgu konularına odaklanmışlar, kurguladıkları hikayeler aracılığıyla, okuyucuyu pek çok farklı konuda bilgilendirmeyi amaçlamışlardır. Herhangi bir kavram, olay veya kişiyi okuyucuya aktarmayı amaçlamış olmaları, bu çizgi romanların metinlerarası bağlamda incelenmesini kaçınılmaz hale getirmiştir. Çizgi roman *Martin Mystère* yazarları, birbirini takip eden iki sayıda Borges'nin *Kum Kitabı* ve *Alef* isimli iki kısa öyküsünü okuyuculara tanıtmaktadır ve bu nedenle Borges'nin öyküleri ve çizgi romanlarda yer alan öyküler arasındaki metinlerarası ilişkiler önceden tasarlanmış olarak kabul edilmiştir. Çalışmanın amacı ve içeriği doğrultusunda, kuramsal çerçeveye uygun olarak iki araştırma sorusu oluşturulmuştur: Gérard Genette'nin metin-ötesi sınıflandırması çerçevesinde ele alındığında, sonraki metinlerde (çizgi roman *Martin Mystère*'in iki sayısı) en çok hangi tür metinlerarası ilişki görülmektedir? ve metinlerarası yaklaşımlar çerçevesinde önceki metinler (Borges'nin *Kum Kitabı* ve *Alef* öyküleri) sonraki metinleri ne ölçüde etkilemektedir? Çalışmanın analizleri, önceki ve sonraki metinler arasındaki ilişkiler ve bağlantılar ile ilgili bilgiyi ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlayan bu araştırma soruları ışığında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışma nitel araştırma yöntemi ile tasarlanmıştır. Okuyucu odaklı yaklaşımın önemini göstermek amacıyla, veri toplamada araştırmacı gözlemi ön planda tutulmuştur, çünkü araştırmacı aynı zamanda bu çalışmanın yazarı olarak metinler arasındaki bağlantı ve etkileşimi yönetmektedir. Ayrıca, çalışma post-yapısalcı bir bakış açısıyla ele alınmış ve Gérard Genette'nin metin-ötesi sınıflandırması verileri arasındaki metinlerarası ilişkileri incelemek amacıyla yöntemsel çerçeve olarak kısmen kullanılmıştır (Genette, 1992: 81-82). Çizgi roman *Martin Mystère*'in *Kum Kitabı* ve *Alef* başlıklı iki sayısı ve Jorge Luis Borges'nin *Kum Kitabı* ve *Alef* isimli kısa öyküleri betimsel olarak incelemeye alınmıştır. Çalışma, *Martin Mystère* çizgi roman serisinin, Borges'nin öykülerinden esinlenilerek Enrico Lotti ve Andrea Passini tarafından İtalyanca olarak yazılmış ve Paolo Morales tarafından çizilmiş olan bu iki sayısının, çevirmen Ay Barka tarafından Türkçeye aktarılmış ve Aksoy yayıncılık tarafından basılmış olan versiyonları ile sınırlıdır. Birbirinin devamı niteliğinde olan bu iki sayıda geçen olay örgüsü, Borges'nin çalışmada incelenen iki öyküsünde geçen olay örgülerinden farklı bir şekilde kurgulanmıştır. Borges ve onun iki kısa öyküsünü okuyuculara tanıtmayı tasarlayan bu çizgi romanlarda aynı zamanda Borges'nin diğer öykülerine, tekniğine, biçimine ve geçmiş bilgilerine ilişkin göndermeler de yer almaktadır. Bu nedenle, Borges'nin kısa öykülerinin, çizgi romanlar içerisinde yer alan kodlarla okurlara ve yazarlara aktarıldığı söylenebilir. Yani, sonraki metinler (çizgi romanlar) Borges'nin öykülerinin dönüşümleridir çünkü aralarında kendini daha çok alegori, alıntılama, anırtırma ve gönderge gibi edebî araçlar aracılığıyla gösteren metinlerarası, yanmetinsel, üstmetinsel ve anametinsel ilişkiler görülmüştür. Çizgi roman *Martin Mystère* yazarları okuyucuyu bilgilendirmek amacıyla oldukları için, önceki metinler ve sonraki metinler arasındaki ilişkinin 'tasarlanmış' olduğu açıktır ve ayrıca metinler arasındaki bu ilişkiler kendini edebî araçlar olarak göstermektedir. Dolayısıyla, *Martin Mystère* yazarlarının olay örgüsünü ve diğer unsurları rastgele ve nedensiz kurgulamadıkları, onun yerine doğrudan Borges'nin öykülerinden yararlandıkları görülmüştür. Yani, çizgi roman yazarları önceden var olan bir metne dayanarak yazdıkları için, metinler doğrudan metinlerarasılık unsurları içermektedir. Bu çalışma, çizgi romanları ön plana çıkarmakta, meraklı okuyucuları bu tür sanatsal çalışmalarla ilgili bilgilendirmekte ve araştırmacıları çizgi roman çalışmaları ile disiplinler arası çalışmalar için teşvik etmektedir.

INTRODUCTION

The comic books are one of the most read literary texts and any study on the intertextual relation between comics and short stories may encourage the studies of intertextuality and also comics studies that has become an academic field interrelating with comics theory, comics criticism, comics historiography and so on. Although the comic books are read by many and are crucial in that sense, it is seen that they are underrepresented within Turkish literary system and within related research studies as well. There are a few studies analysing the intertextuality between the comics and short stories. Therefore, considering the *Martin Mystère* as one of the most read comic book worldwide and Jorge Luis Borges as a very well-known writer, this study aims to identify and discuss the intertextual relations between the two issues of the comic book '*Martin Mystère*' and the two short stories ('*The Book of Sand*' and '*The Aleph*') of Jorge Luis Borges within the post-structuralist approach to intertextuality and transtextuality categorization of Gérard Genette.

First published in Italy by Sergio Bonelli Editore in 1982, *Martin Mystère* has been translated into many other languages and has been adapted to various other media. The creators of the comic book *Martin Mystère* especially dwell on the subjects of popular science and science fiction. They intend to inform the reader about various subjects and thus they fictionalize these in their own comic book stories. It becomes inevitable to make a research on these comics because of this intended intertextual relation between the comic books and any concepts, events, subjects or people. The two issues of comic book *Martin Mystère* intentionally presents and introduces Jorge Luis Borges' two short stories *the Book of Sand* and *The Aleph* to the readers as well, and so it is accepted that the intertextual relation between the stories of Borges and the comics is deliberate. In accordance with the aim and content of the study, two research questions have been generated within the theoretical frame of the study;

What kinds of intertextual relations are mostly seen in the later texts (*the two issues of the comic book Martin Mystère*) within transtextuality categorization of Genette? To what extent does the earlier texts (*stories of the Book of Sand and the Aleph*) influence the later texts within the frame of intertextual studies?

The analysis and discussion of the study is made in the light of these research questions that seek information about the intertextual relations between later texts and earlier texts and the effects and connections of the earlier on the later.

1. Literature Review

In the second half of the twentieth century, postmodern literary theorists generally tended to place intertextual relations at the centre and broaden its perspective to social and cultural aspects. After the the definition of *dialogism* by Bakhtin (Bakhtin, 1981), especially Kristeva (1980; 1986) and the other scholars dealt with the concept of *intertextuality* with new approaches. Thus, many more studies have been generated on *intertextuality* since it was reasserted, this time, as a concept and approach within post-structuralism in the 1960s. Some of these studies focus on the references of a unique text within the social or cultural concepts, whereas the others focus on the intertextual relations or transactions between two or more texts. The academic studies in literature keep *the intertextual approaches and/or intertextual analysis* up-to-date in books and journals. Among them, it is possible to see studies on literary works comparing the two texts or discussing each text (Alfaro, 1996; Tapodi, 2014; Mirenayat, 2015). Intertextual analysis goes beyond the literary texts and it is also possible to see some studies on the intertextual relations between different genres such as media (film adaptations, series etc.), music and art as well (Lacasse, 2000; Rossman, 2008).

Intertextual studies points that each text is an intersection of distinct discourses or other texts and each literary text has a polyphonic character, and thus intertextuality is one of the main features of post-modern writing. The post-modern literary theorists, who developed this theory in which Russian formalists formed the core structure, were of some different perspectives to the approach discussing the ‘text-centered’ (Kristeva, 1986; Barthes, 1977) or ‘reader-centered’ (Riffaterre, 1978) relationship between the text and its earlier text(s). Among these approaches, Gérard Genette’s ‘*transtextuality*’ was an effort to limit the broad field of concept by reducing the intertextual relations to some different sub-categories. He defines his term *transtextuality* as ‘all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed with other texts’ (Genette, 1997:1). He suggests a classification in order to present that the texts can be interpreted and understood in a systematic way and presents five more specific sub-categories as *intertextuality*, *paratextuality*, *metatextuality*, *hypertextuality*, and *architextuality*.

Genette offers that *intertextuality* is ‘the relation of copresence between two or more texts, that is, the effective presence of one text in another which takes place by means of plagiarism, quotation or allusion’ (Genette, 1997:1-2). He divides intertextuality into three categories; implicit or explicit; covert or overt; hidden or open. Genette’s explicit intertextuality refers that later text’s author doesn’t intend to hide the reference within the text, as it happens through quotation. On the other hand, because of some literary reasons or other, the author intends to hide the reference through allusion, allegory or metaphor that leads the intertextual relation to implicitness. Genette’s *paratextuality* is ‘the relation between a text and its paratext’ (Genette, 1997:4). Titles, subtitles, epigraphs, illustrations, notes, first drafts and other kinds of signals are counted as ‘peritext’ elements which surround the text and reviews, interviews, public announcements and other authorial and editorial discourse comprise the ‘epitext’ elements in which comments on the text are included. Thus, paratextuality assists to direct and control the reception and interpretation of a text by its reader. *Metatextual relation* denotes explicit or implicit references of one text on another text. It can be of any text explaining, denying or approving of earlier text and the references found in critical texts or commentaries can be given as examples (Genette, 1997:4-5). According to Genette, *hypertextuality* involves ‘any relationship uniting a text 2 (hypertext) to an earlier text 1 (hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary’ (Genette, 1997:5). Hypertextuality examines not the presence but the impact of a text on another and thus reader awareness comes into the focal point again. Lastly, *architextuality* deals with the relation between a text and a text of its kinds. Genette calls architextuality as the relationship between a work and the genre that work belongs to.

This study analyses intertextual relations between the two issues of the comic book *Martin Mystère* and the two short stories of Jorge Luis Borges. Genette’s concept of *transtextuality* offers a very well framework to analyse the study. Borges is accepted as one of the post-modern writers even though he started writing and publishing in 1920s that is before the beginning of post-modernism. His works include most of the concepts appeared with the post-modernism such as metafiction, intertextuality, plurivocality, reader centrism, irony, parody, pastiche, metaphor and so on. One of his early examples of intertextuality, for example, is ‘*Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote*’ (Borges, 1998:47). This work represents a very good example of intertextuality with its references to Medieval romances. Like Genette (1997), he also calls the relation between earlier and later texts of Quixote as ‘palimpsest’ and states that ‘*I have reflected that it is legitimate to see the ‘final’ Quixote as a kind of palimpsest, in which the traces -faint but not undecipherable- of our friend’s ‘previous’ text must shine through*’ (Borges, 1998:51). Moreover, Borges had an influence on the ‘magical realism’ technique that became very popular among the post-modernists. It is one of the movements of postmodern literature and has its own characteristic features. It combines the use of reality and fantasy, usual and unusual, or realism and surrealism in a harmonic manner (Warnes, 2009:3). Jorge Luis Borges penned his story *the Book of Sand* in 1975 and *the Aleph* in 1949, originally in Spanish with the names *El Libro de Arena* and *El Aleph*, respectively. Most of his short stories, and these two short stories as well, are considered

and reviewed as the examples of magical realism.

On the contrary to the common studies in literature that include the analyses of intertextual relations within any literary text such as poetry, prose or media, this study aims to see the intertextual relations between the literary texts and the comic books. The comic books combine text and image in the form of sequential juxtaposed panels. Saraceni (2003) explains the leading characteristics of comics: they employ both words and pictures, the texts of comics are organized into sequential units, they are graphically separated from each other and are arranged into sequences of panels (p. 16). In this sense, originally written in Italian, *Martin Mystère* is a comic book series that correspond to these characteristics and it intentionally refers to many concepts, events, people or subjects. The two issues of *Martin Mystère* and the short stories of Borges constitute the data for this study. Despite their different plotlines, the intertextual relations between the texts manifest itself through intense references at the level of description and narration accompanied by the pictures within panels.

2. Methodology

This study is designed with a qualitative method. The comic book *Martin Mystère* (the two issues titled *The Book of Sand* and *The Aleph*) and the two original short stories of Jorge Luis Borges (*The Book of Sand* and *The Aleph*) are examined to describe the intertextual relation between the texts. The comic book *Martin Mystère* mostly takes famous places, people or events as its subject and gives this subject in a new and different storyline. To inform the reader about Borges and his works, the writers prepared the two serial issues titled as '*The Book of Sand*' and '*The Aleph*' (Lotti & Passini, 1996a; 1996b). These two issues were created by the Italian writers Enrico Lotti and Andrea Passini and drawn by Paolo Morales. The storylines of these two issues are different from the short stories of Borges and the story of the first issue appears as the sequel of the second one. Jorge Luis Borges is very well known as an Argentinean short-story writer, essayist, poet, critic and translator (Wilson, 2006). Therefore, this study examines his short-stories *The Book of Sand* and *The Aleph* and it is limited to the Turkish versions of the two issues of the comic book *Martin Mystère* (titled as *Kum Kitabı* and *Alef*) and to the English versions of the Borges' two mentioned short stories. The comic books were translated by Ay Barka and published by Aksoy publications a few years after the publication of the originals.

To show the importance of the reader-oriented approach, data collection procedure of the study considers the researcher observation because the researcher, as the author of this study, directs the interactions and transactions between the comic book *Martin Mystère* and the stories of J. L. Borges. During the analysis process, the researcher as the reader of both earlier texts and later texts has employed a 'reading and remembering' process (Miola, 2004:19). Also, the study discusses the intertextual relations within the post-structuralist approach to intertextuality and transtextuality categorization of Gérard Genette (Genette, 1992:81-82). Here, it is very important to underline that, Genette's transtextuality categorization is *partially* used as a methodological framework in order to analyse the intertextual relationship between the texts. As *metatextuality* concept of Gérard Genette 'links one text with another that comments on it', metatextual analysis of the related comic books can be a subject of another study on commentary or criticism of the texts. However, the overall theoretical framework of the study comprised of a post-structuralist point of view. Lastly, in order to increase the comprehensibility of the excerpts, the study benefits from the English versions of the two stories (Borges, 1971; Borges, 1998). Also, since the comic books are in Turkish language and the English versions of the comics are not available, they have been translated into English by the researchers, where needed.

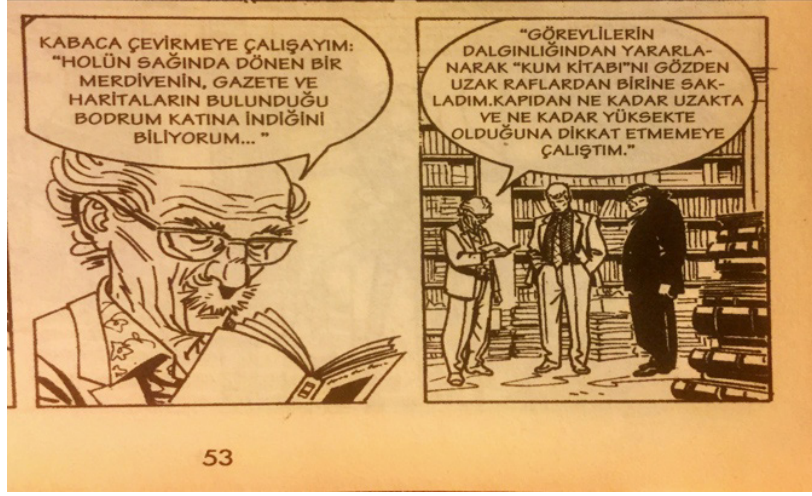
3. Analysis

The comic book series *Martin Mystère* takes its name from its protagonist who also exists in some other series of Bonelli publications. He embarks on various adventures in each issue that presents famous places, people, events or concepts. In the sequent two issues (Lotti & Passini, 1996a, 1996b) that comprise the data for this study, he traces *The Book of Sand* that belongs to Borges and is said to contain ‘all the information in the universe’. The story of the third issue starts with the killing of the people studying on a Spanish literature journal at Columbia University. One of the journal articles mentions about an ‘unpublished work’ belonging to Borges and ‘Men in Black’ kills them all when they hear about the existence of this mystery work. This unpublished work is supposed to be the *Book of Sand* and its existence should be kept as a secret because of its power. Only Professor Temesvar escapes and he asks Martin Mystère for help. They travel to Argentina to find the book and look for it together. Their adventure ends in the sequent issue (Issue 4) when they find the Aleph in the National Library of Argentina. Thus, as it is stated before, the sequential stories directly relates to the two short stories of Borges.

Based on Genette’s *intertextuality* category, implicit-explicit, covert-overt and hidden-open relationships are observed between the texts. Genette’s explicit intertextuality refers that later text’s author doesn’t intend to hide the reference within the text. So, the presence of other text can be observed both with direct quotations and also with built-in quotations in the conversations within the panels. Brackets and italics are the typological signs of the quotations. The brackets used in the comics show the existence of quotation as a typological element. In this case, the quotations found in the two issues of comic book *Martin Mystère* can be counted as an intertextual relation. In the comics, these quotations are mostly employed through the character Professor Temesvar. He tells about Borges and his stories many times while they are tracing the book of sand in the national library. In fact, it seems that this character is intentionally created to inform the reader about J. L. Borges and his works. In the first issue (the comic book *The Book of Sand*) the character Temesvar who is a professor at the Institute of Spanish Languages, holds the Spanish version of the *Book of Sand* and tries to translate a part of it roughly for Martin Mystère and his assistant Java in order to find some clue about the place of the book. Thus, he starts with saying ‘*I’ll try to translate roughly: I knew that to the right of the lobby a curving staircase descended into the shadows of the basement...* ’¹ (Lotti & Passini, 1996a, p. 53) and his translation turns into a quotation from *The Book of Sand* story of Borges and is directly quoted in the comic book through the translation of Professor Temesvar (Lotti & Passini, 1996a, p. 53). *This direct quotation can be seen in the two panels showing Martin Mystère, his friend Java and Professor Temesvar;*

1 Unless otherwise specified, the excerpts of the comic books have been translated from Turkish to English by the researchers.

Figure 1. The panels representing the direct quotation of Borges' story



Lotti & Passini, 1996a, pp. 53.

The quoted sentences seen in Borges' short story is as follows;

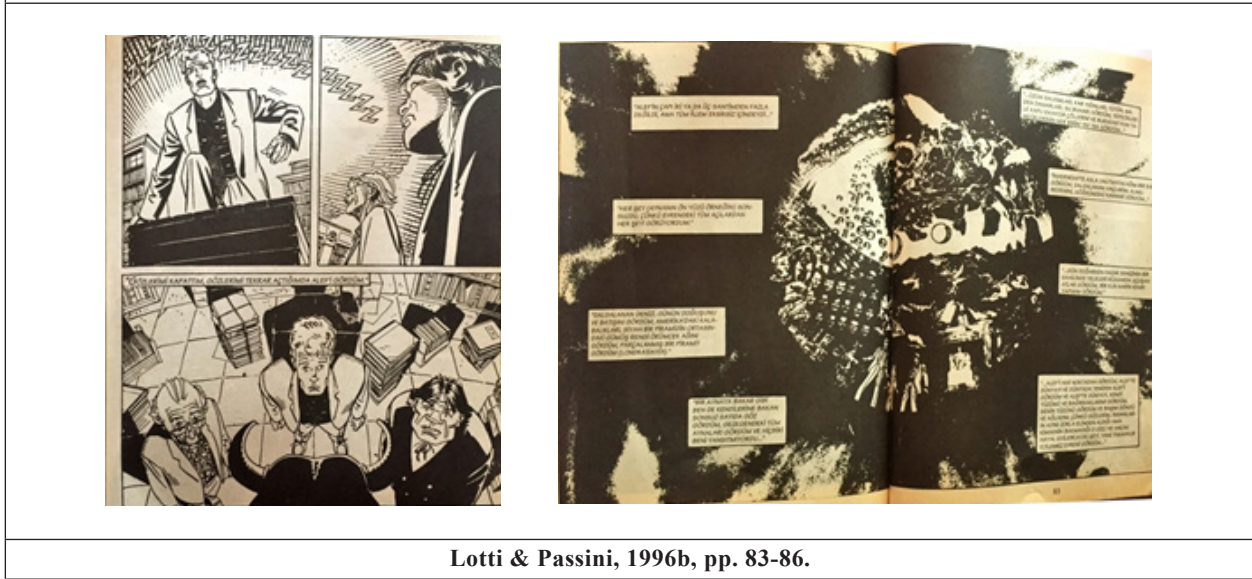
'I knew that to the right of the lobby a curving staircase descended into the shadows of the basement, where the maps and periodicals are kept. I took advantage of the librarians' distraction to hide the Book of Sand on one of the library's damp shelves; I tried not to notice how high up, or how far from the door.' (Borges, 1998, p. 235).

In the same setting at the National Library of Argentina, Temesvar refers to the Book by saying 'As Borges says, the book was 'like a Bible'... It was a clothbound book, printed in Bombay, in India and on the spine was printed Holy Writ.' (Lotti & Passini, 1996a, p. 54). His reference is a shortened form of a quotation from the original story of The Book of Sand;

'It was a clothbound octavo volume that had clearly passed through many hands. I examined it; the unusual heft of it surprised me. On the spine was printed Holy Writ, and then Bombay.' (Borges, 1998, p. 234).

In the second issue (Lotti & Passini, 1996b), Professor Temesvar and Martin Mystère eventually find the Aleph in the eyes of an ox head hanging on the library shelves. At this stage of the story, the authors of the comic book creates 'a pause/frozen effect' in the adventure and the sequent two pages provide direct quotes from the story in the panels (Saraceni, 2003, p.7);

Figure 2. The panels representing the pause effect ('still/frozen moment') and quotations from the short story the Aleph.



The images above include the other quotations and the following excerpts are the English versions of these sentences from Borges' story, the Aleph.

'I shut my eyes-I opened them. Then, I saw the Aleph.' (Borges, 1971, p. 12)

'The Aleph's diameter was probably little more than an inch, but all space was there, actual and undiminished. Each thing (a mirror's face, let us say) was infinite things, since I distinctly saw it from every angle of the universe. I saw the teeming sea; I saw daybreak and nightfall; I saw the multitudes of America; I saw a silvery cobweb in the center of a black pyramid; I saw a splintered labyrinth (it was London); I saw, close up, unending eyes watching themselves in me as in a mirror; I saw all the mirrors on earth and none of them reflected me [...] I saw bunches of grapes, snow, tobacco, lodes of metal, steam; I saw convex equatorial deserts and each one of their grains of sand; I saw a woman in Inverness whom I shall never forget; I saw her tangled hair, her tall figure, I saw the cancer in her breast [...] I saw horses with flowing manes on a shore of the Caspian Sea at dawn; I saw the delicate bone structure of a hand [...] I saw the Aleph from every point and angle, and in the Aleph I saw the earth and in the earth the Aleph and in the Aleph the earth; I saw my own face and my own bowels; I saw your face; and I felt dizzy and wept, for my eyes had seen that secret and conjectured object whose name is common to all men but which no man has looked upon — the unimaginable universe. I felt infinite wonder, infinite pity (Borges, 1971, pp.13-14).

This part of the story, the moment when the narrator sees Aleph, is introduced to the reader through these quotations. Also, it is obvious that this part constitutes the very exciting climax of Borges' *The Aleph* story and the case is the same for the story of the comic books, too. Both of the climaxes reach to the resolution of the stories after the narration of these quotations. Moreover, in fact these quoted sentences are the most apparent tools for the 'infinity' theme that Borges wants to give through his stories and this shows why these quotes are given in the comic *Martin Mystère*.

Covert or overt intertextuality tries to hide its intertextuality reference and this secrecy is not only because of literary necessities, but also it has extra literary reasons. Plagiarism is considered as one of the most important covert intertextuality. As it has been mentioned before, the comic book *Martin Mystère* intentionally refers to *The Book of Sand* and *The Aleph* stories of Borges to inform the reader. So, it is observed that there aren't any covert intertextual relations between

the comic book and the stories because the writers of *Martin Mystère* mention the reference of Borges in the preface of the two issues.

To Genette, sometimes the second text's author is not going to hide the intertextual relation and because of that he/she uses the signs that we can recognize this relation and even its reference. The most important kinds of these intertextual forms are allusions, allegories and metaphors. As a literary device, allegory uses a character, place or event to represent the real world issues and occurrences.

Figure 3. The panels representing ox-heads as allegories.



Lotti & Passini, 1996a, p.53-58.

Considering the comic book *Martin Mystère*, it is observed that there are many ox head imitations in various panels. In the story, Martin Mystère and his friends find Aleph in the eyes of one of these ox heads. This allegory of the ox head directly shows the open intertextual relation to the story of *the Aleph* because Aleph is the first letter of many alphabet including Phoenician, Hebrew and Arabic which symbolizes *the infinity*. The Phoenician letter is derived from an Egyptian hieroglyph depicting an ox's head. In the original short story, the narrator (Borges himself) explains that the letter Aleph stands for the 'En Soph, the pure and boundless godhead' for the Kabbalah;

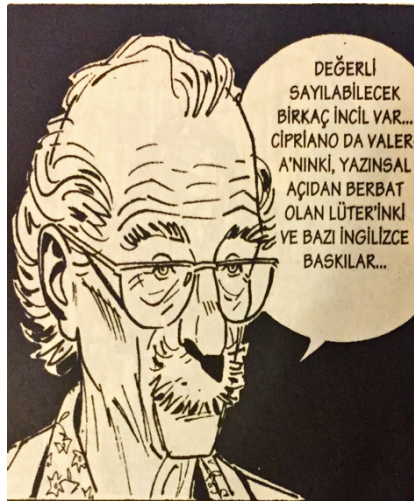
'...For the Kabbalah, that letter stands for the En Soph, the pure and boundless godhead; it's also said that it takes the shape of a man pointing to both heaven and earth, in order to show the lower world is the map and mirror of the higher...' (Borges, 1971, p. 16).

The figure of mirror is another allegoric object of the story. Within the story of the comic book, Martin Mystère sees Borges in his dream. His dream begins with a book that directs him to a magical mirror through which Mystère gets to a labyrinth shaped library (Lotti & Passini, 1996b, pp. 43-48). Mirror appears a few times in the story of *the Aleph* and many other stories of Borges. In *the Aleph*, when the narrator tells what he sees in Aleph he says that 'Each thing (a mirror's face, let us say) was infinite things, since I could distinctly saw it from every angle of the universe' (Borges, 1971, p. 13). He adds 'I saw in a closet in Alkmaar a terrestrial globe between two mirrors that multiplied it endlessly' (Borges, 1971, p. 14). Moreover, this stage of the story also refers to the narrator of the *Book of Sand* (the man who buys the book of sand from the book seller) again because he becomes obsessed with the book, he can't sleep at night with the fear of losing it and he describes it as a 'monstrous' and 'nightmare thing' (Borges, 1998, p. 235). Just

like the narrator, Martin Mystère is affected by the mystery he traces for days and nights.

Allusions, as intertextual devices, can be observed in the comic book *Martin Mystère*. For example, while they are looking for the book of sand in the national library, Temesvar informs the others about what he finds and says ‘*There are several Bibles that can be considered valuable... Cipriano de Valera’s, Luther’s which is, in literary terms, the worst of the lot and some English prints.*’ (Lotti & Passini, 1996a, p. 61). This speech alludes to what the narrator says to the book seller who comes to sell Bibles in *the Book of Sand* story. In the story, the narrator informs the book seller that he already has numerous Bibles and explains ‘*In this house, ... there are several English Bibles, including the first one, Wyclif’s. I also have Cipriano de Valera’s, Luther’s (which is, in literary terms, the worst of the lot), and a Latin copy of the Vulgate.*’ (Borges, 1998, p. 234).

Figure 4. The panel showing the alluded sentence of Temesvar.



Lotti & Passini, 1996a, p.61.

Also, when the book seller presents him a ‘sacred book’, the narrator begins to examine the book. He realizes some unique illustrations and strange numberings. He cannot find the beginning and end of the book. Then, he discovers that the book is infinite. In the comic book, Martin Mystère reviews all he knows about the story and he explains that ‘*According to the story, the number of pages in the book is infinite. It is impossible to find the head or the end by turning the pages, because new ones are constantly coming out. Borges also says the pages are numbered randomly. This is obviously a metaphor...*’ (Lotti & Passini, 1996a, p.58-59). Here in the same explanation, Martin Mystère interprets this information as ‘a metaphor’ and this also alludes to the literary style of Borges and informs the reader about his style of using metaphor as a literary device. Also, Martin Mystère remarks that ‘*Borges liked to combine the fictitious and real...*’ (Lotti & Passini, 1996a, p.58). It is obvious that the authors of the comic book *Martin Mystère* intentionally refers to the literary style of Borges again in order to give information to the reader.

Moreover, here in the panels below, the authors refer to the Borges’ usage of ox-head as a sign of Aleph and also his blindness.

Figure 5. The panels remarking the blindness of Borges through narration.



Lotti & Passini, 1996a, p.53.

Looking at the ox-head on shelves Professor Temesvar says ‘Ugh! That’s incredibly unappealing! Only a blind manager can tolerate such ugliness!’ (Lotti & Passini, 1996a, p.53). These words alludes that Borges was the head of National Library of Argentina and he was also blind when he retired. In the Book of Sand, the narrator states that before his retirement he had worked in the National Library, which contained nine hundred thousand books (Borges, 1998, p. 235). In fact, this is the case in Jorge Luis Borges’ real life. It can also be counted as a foreshadowing device that refers to the upcoming outcome to the story, in which Martin Mystère and his friends find the book in the room of the library head who is half-blind.

According to Genette, *paratextuality* is the relations between the body of the text and its accessory components (Alfaro, 1996, p.281). Titles, subtitles, epigraphs, illustrations, notes, first drafts and other kinds of signals are counted as ‘peritext’ elements which surround the text and reviews, interviews, public announcements and other authorial and editorial discourse comprise the ‘epitext’ elements in which comments on the text are included. As the epitext is outside the text in question, the epitexts are excluded from this study and the study focuses only on the printed versions of the comic book *Martin Mystère*.

Figure 6. The front covers of the comic books.

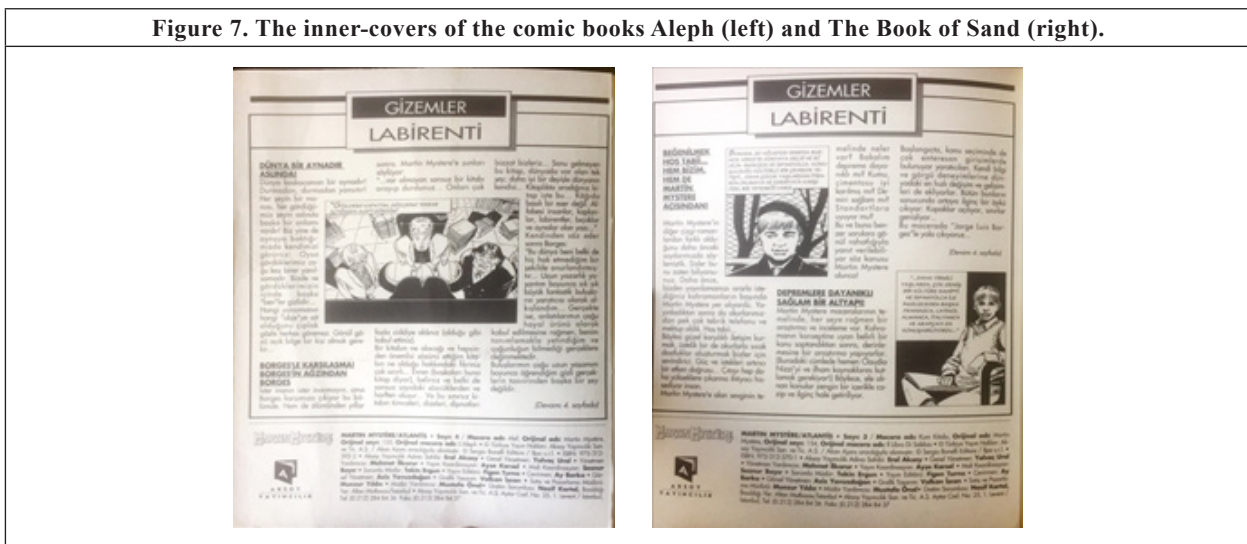


Lotti & Passini, 1996a, 1996b.

The titles of the comic books are direct references to the stories of Borges. It is seen that the title (adventure name) of the third issue is ‘Kum Kitabı’ (the Book of Sand) and of the fourth issue is ‘Alef’ (the Aleph) showing the direct reference to Borges’ stories. Also, the cover designs of the two issues include references to the stories; the Book of Sand cover of the comic book has an illustration of the National Library of Buenos Aires where the Book of Sand is kept by the narrator in the story and Borges works at. Again on the same cover, ‘the broken labyrinth’ illustration in front of the library refers to the sentence which Borges says when he sees Aleph: ‘I saw multitudes of the Americas...I saw a broken labyrinth (it was London)’(Borges, 1971, pp.13). Moreover, it is observed that on the cover of ‘the Aleph’, the characters Martin Mystère and his assistant Java look back at a hexagonal shape with an eye image in it and they seem to be astonished. This illustration refers to the Aleph, ‘the iridescent sphere’, in the story in which the narrator sees the infinite world and Borges as the author portrays as a magical realism figure to imply ‘infinity’.

Considering the inner-covers as peritext elements, it is observed that both of the comic books include prefaces in the inner-covers that inform the reader about Borges and his stories. The inner-covers of *Martin Mystère*’s both issues include informative writings by the editor and all these are supported with the panels and figures as well. They function as guides for readers and inform them about the purpose and content of the issue.

Figure 7. The inner-covers of the comic books Aleph (left) and The Book of Sand (right).



As can be seen in Figure 7, the bottom part of the inner-covers gives some information about publication such as issue number, adventure name, original name and number, copyright info, editor name, translator name and so on. The inner cover of *the Book of Sand* issue includes a large and direct quotation from the story of the comic book itself. The editor states that the story of that issue originates from *the Book of Sand* story of Jorge Luis Borges. Moreover, in the inner-cover of the *Aleph* issue, the editor explains what Borges meant by ‘Alef’ with quotes from the story.

In the comic book *the Book of Sand*, it is possible to see some subtitles. ‘Akıl Almaz Nesnelere (Incredible Objects)’ and ‘Kitaplıktaki Sırlar (The Secrets in the Library)’ can be counted as the peritexts, as well. In the comic book *Aleph*, there are two subtitles as ‘Labirentte (In the Labyrinth)’ and ‘Evrenin Büyük Kitabı (The Great Book of the Universe)’. All these subtitles are references to the themes and various stories of Borges including the stories in question. In the ‘Akıl Almaz Nesnelere (Incredible Objects)’ part, the character Temesvar tells about Borges and his incredible objects that he creates in his works like *the Book of Sand*, *the Library of Babel*, *Disk of Odin* and *the Aleph* (Borges, 1998).

As it is stated before, architextuality deals with the relation between a text and a text of its kinds. Genette calls architextuality as the relationship between a work and the genre that work belongs to. The architextual nature of texts also includes thematic and figurative expectations about texts. Genette states that a very important factor of this type is ‘the reader’s expectations, and thus their reception of the work’ (Genette, 1997, p.5). So, this comic book also presents the characteristics of its kind with its components such as panels, balloons, gutters, and captions (Saraceni, 2003, pp. 7-10).

Lastly, the two issues of *Martin Mystère* have different story and plot from the real stories of Borges. It combines the two stories of Borges and presents them in two new stories of two serial issues. The stories of Borges show the influence of magical realism and the plot of the comic book also shows a kind of magical realism created in different setting and with different characters. So, the magical realism mode of narration seen mostly in literary works shows itself in a comic book as well.

CONCLUSION

This study sought answers to two different research questions generated with an intertextual point of view to the texts. It aimed to identify and to discuss the intertextual relations between the two issues of the comic book ‘*Martin Mystère*’ and the two short stories (*The Book of Sand* and *The Aleph*) of Jorge Luis Borges within the post-structuralist approach to intertextuality and transtextuality categorization of Gérard Genette. The writers of the comic book *Martin Mystère* seem to be like ‘revisers’ (Miola, 2004) who present a new scenario and completely different set of problems and considerations in the two sequent issues. The findings of this study are given as the combination of both text analysis and researcher observation and in this sense, the study benefits from the reader-oriented approach. In general, the relationship between comics and stories is inevitable. In the comic books, which aim the reader to become familiar with Borges and his works, it is also possible to see some of the relations of Borges’ other stories, his technique, style and background information. Therefore, it can be said that the codes of Borges’ short stories are imparted to the reader and writer of the comic books. The later texts (the comic books) are the transformation of the stories of Borges because they have intertextual, paratextual, architextual and hypertextual relations appearing as quotations, allusions, allegories, and references in prefaces, in titles or in its kind. The authors of *Martin Mystère* do not create their comic irrelevantly, the stories are not arbitrary; but rather they compile them from the two stories of Borges. So, the text includes direct intertextuality as the authors just read and remember. This shows that the two comic books were generated in relation to the stories of *The Book of Sand* and *The Aleph*. The overall impression about the style is that both of the stories presented in the comic books include the themes and symbols (labyrinth, mirror, ox and etc.) of Borges’ stories proving that the authors of the comic books refer also to the style of Borges.

As a result, the authors of the comic books, as stated earlier, do such a work after reading Borges, and therefore they do not write anything new but re-construct the existing, they remember what they read, and write a comic book accordingly. That is to say, this leads to restate ‘the death of the author’ as Barthes (1977) said before. They also write their stories using the knowledge and experience they have gained from their cultural and social environment to create the stories of their comic books. Moreover, this study is limited to two issues of the comic book series *Martin Mystère* although the series have many more issues that wait to be read and discovered by the readers and that refer to various literary works. The study brings the comic books to the fore, informs the enthusiastic readers about these artistic works and encourages the researchers for further interdisciplinary studies with the comics studies as well.

The contribution of the authors: Corresponding author: %50 Other author: %50
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