

THE THEME OF MUSIC IN THE TANZIMAT NOVEL

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The Tanzimat was the cause of changes in the root concepts of the life perspective and root concepts of society in the context of an effort in Turkish society to match contemporary Western civilization.¹ In the Tanzimat there were changes in literature equal with the changes in life perspectives; in this period Turkish literature began to westernize at great speed. New literary types like the novel and drama were added to Turkish literature, as it was before the Tanzimat, in particular, works of French literature were taken as models.

In the Tanzimat period the first examples of writing in the genre of the novel were given as a means of reflecting on Western life style for the intellectual strata. In these works there was an attempt to approach a synthesis of the Turkish-Ottoman with Western culture, characters were idealized in their effort to unify Turkish values with the positive direction of the west. There was an effort in these works first of all to educate the people, to explain to them what was good in Westernization while not avoiding showing to the Ottoman-Turk, the bad examples of the Western world, too.

One of the most important elements in the changing life perspective in the Westernization of Turkish society was the fine arts, particularly regarding music.

The Turkish people began to listen to more Western music in the Tanzimat, they started to hear the Western classical music with interest as a part of Westernization, there was increase in the number of families hiring music tutors for their children. As an

1. The Tanzimat was a period of reform/reorganization in the Ottoman State, inaugurated by the Rose Garden Edict of Sultan Abdülmecit in 1839 (also known as Gülhane Decree). In literary history, the Tanzimat period refers to the emergence of a modern national literature based on Western examples.

instrument that can be used both for eastern and Western music, the piano was placed in a favorite corner in the sitting rooms of wealthy families, as something very European and in the status of most favored instrument and an elegant furniture.

The Tanzimat novelists did not have a common education since they were mostly educated by private tutors, so their views of music and particularly their ideas about Western music did not generally rely on a sound basis of knowledge. Tanzimat novelists used music with regard to educated characters so that music gave information about the cultural level and rarely about the psychological condition of the characters. Tanzimat novelists accepting Western classical music as a part of Westernization gave it an important place. The novels used both eastern and Western music as cultural elements of two civilizations entering into a harmonization, showing the attempt to construct a synthesis.

The novels that used music as a subject include Ahmet Midhat Efendi's² *Young Turk* [*Jön Türk*], Rezaizade Mahmut Ekrem's *Love of a Carriage* [*Araba Sevdası*], Mizancı Murat's *Progressive or Useless?* [*Turfanda mı Yoksa Turfa mı?*], Sami Paşazade Sezai's *Adventure* [*Sergüzeşt*], Nabizade Nazım's *Zehra* and Fatma Aliye Hanım's³ *The Lutist* [*Udlî*], they included music as an element of content and used it as a way of clarifying content. In our work the original Ottoman Turkish editions are used.⁴ For the purposes of clarification short abstracts of the novels are given followed by the detailed analyses of the role of music in these novels.

From the second half of the 19th century onwards the first personality within the changes in literature is Ahmet Midhat Efendi whose novel *Young Turk* (Midhat 1999), of 1910, tells the story of Nurullah Bey who is arrested on his birthday on suspicion of being a Young Turk⁵ on account of the intrigues of Ceylân Hanım linked with her mad love for him.

2. *Efendi* is an Ottoman title for a man of high status, and is therefore not used for purposes of bibliographical reference.

3. *Hanım* is an Ottoman title for a woman of high status, and is therefore not used for purposes of bibliographical reference.

4. As opposed to editions in which there is transliteration of Ottoman Turkish script in Arabic letters into modern Turkish Latin letters; and the translation of Ottoman Turkish into modern Turkish. The Ottoman alphabet was replaced in Turkey in the 1920s as a part of a process of language reform which minimized Arabic and Persian elements in the Turkish language, seeking alternatives derived, as far as possible, from pre-Ottoman forms of Turkish.

5. The Young Turks were Ottoman reformists who formed the Committee of Union in Progress, which came to power 1908, in an uprising against the monarchical absolutism of Sultan Abdülhamit II,

The main character of the novel is Nurullah Bey who graduated from the Law School after the Galatasaray Imperial High School. As a knowledgeable person assimilating the Western life style, he holds social values together with free ideas, supports liberty and is a moral intellectual, and so can be understood as an example of the ideals of the Tanzimat novels which give examples of ideal characters to Turkish youth.

Ceylân, a feminist of the most free thinking degree of the time, falls in love with Nurullah. Meanwhile her father Kâzım Bey, a secondary character in the novel appears as the chief of a major ministry department.

Nurullah feels that Ceylân's love is physical passion and does not give a positive response to her proposals. In just one night Ceylân succeeds in giving opium to Nurullah, and that night Nurullah makes her pregnant. In this way Ceylân hopes to make Nurullah marry her. However, Nurullah avoids playing Ceylân's game, contrary to her desires he refuses to acknowledge the child and on the advice of Salih Ziya, a friend from the Imperial High School, he decides to marry Fatma Ahdiye Hanım, a character who is shown as an example of the ideal Turkish girl; according to the ideals of the Tanzimat novelists, someone who can synthesize eastern and Western cultures, who is brought up in a perfectly educated way, is of good temperament and virtuous. Fatma Ahdiye Hanım is described as a completely opposite character of Ceylân. She does not have any of Ceylân's bad qualities. Ahmet Midhat Efendi creates two opposed characters in the novel just as he shows his readers paradigmatic characters in all his novels.

Nurullah's decision to reject Ceylân and marry someone else turns her crazy. In her fury, Ceylân secretly moves Young Turk and Young Turk related books, banned by the Palace, from her father's library Nurullah's library and denounces him. Because of this denunciation, Nurullah is arrested on his birthday and is later exiled to Akkâ. Nurullah's family is distraught. Ceylân's father Kâzım Efendi understands that the books are his own and becomes very afraid, so that he starts to work under the orders of the chief investigator, Feyzullah Bey.

inaugurating a Constitutional Monarchy. Many Young Turks had been in exile in Paris, and it was there that opponents of Abdülhamit adopted the French name of *Jeunes Turcs* to describe themselves, reflecting the Western habit of referring to the Ottoman state as Turkey. The name was transliterated into the Ottoman Turkish alphabet as the equivalent of *Jön Türk* in the modern Turkish alphabet, rather than translated into Ottoman Turkish, reflecting the weak and emergent sense of Turkish national identity within the Ottoman state at that time.

In Akkâ, Nurullah wins the affections of everyone of every kind, including the Young Turks who wish him well in his trials though he is not connected with them, and Mutasarrıf Paşa who is responsible for him. After a sequence of events, Nurullah succeeds in bringing his wife Ahdiye to be with him, and they live happily with their two children in Iskenderun; as the result of a pardon given by the Constitution Monarchy he returns to Istanbul with his family.

In spite of her efforts, Ceylân does not succeed in separating Nurullah and Ahdiye, she feels the happiness of both, becomes mad of her passion and commits suicide. With the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy⁶, the chief investigator of the despotism⁷ is overthrown by the people and later sent to prison. In this novel, as in all his novels, Ahmet Midhat Efendi ends by both rewarding the good and punishing the wicked.

In the novel, music is used as a means of showing both a part of life and the cultural level of characters including their personal qualities.

Nurullah, the representative of the ideal Ottoman-Turkish youth who has been raised with good manners along with a perfect education, and who has succeeded in synthesizing the positive aspects of the East and the West, is portrayed as a musically skilled character, who perceives music as an art, takes pleasure in both eastern and Western music, and even writes lyrics.

Ceylân's father, Kâzım Efendi, who tries to imitate European manners, does not know French and has no appreciation of music, either. However, the piano, harp, violin and European dance tutors, who are hired even before his daughter's birth to train the odalisques in his house are all French. From the time she is born, Ceylân is trained in the Western manner; a French lady is employed immediately so that Ceylân can learn French and she is provided with music lessons from the tutors and odalisques in the house.

This is important in that it draws attention to how some families from the middle and upper classes, but with a low level of culture, were filled with an excessive admiration for the West in that period.

One day Ceylân and Nurullah talk about dance. When Nurullah says that he is not thoroughly capable of it and that he cannot keep the three beat of the waltz while dancing, Ceylân invites Nurullah to dance. The young couple waltz in a very close position. This

6. 1908.

7. The absolute rule of Sultan Abdülhamit II.

type of dancing, with regard to the way it brings the man and the woman physically very close, cannot be considered suitable to Turkish society's understanding of morality in that age. Both Ceylân and Nurullah are influenced by the dance. However, Nurullah does not approve of Ceylân's easy manners.

The night when Ceylân succeeds, as the result of a trick, in being alone with Nurullah at home, Nurullah requests Ceylân to play for him. Yet, when Ceylân proposes to go into the piano room, he says he prefers traditional Turkish music and that he even wants singing accompanied by it. Upon Nurullah's wish, Ceylân brings her lute right away and starts playing one of Nurullah's lyrics. After the improvisational music, she passes on to the songs and dances as she sings.

Nurullah talks with his friend Salih Ziya about marriage. When Salih Ziya states that the girl to marry Nurullah should have at least a modest amount of education, know about music and speak French, Nurullah objects only to the necessity of speaking French and his objection stems from remembering that Ceylân acquired ideas about feminism and free marriage from French books (Midhat 1999, 146)

This passage is significant as it draws attention to the fact that knowledge of music, in that age, was among the required characteristics of a girl whom an enlightened young man was to marry.

Ceylân, who actually goes mad upon hearing of the happiness of Nurullah and Ahdiye – whom she struggled hard to keep apart – commits suicide by burning herself. The newspaper reporting the news of Ceylân's death, calling it an accident, introduces Ceylân as a girl well read in literature, French, and music and states that this is the unfortunate death of an exceptional person. (Midhat 1999, 256)

In the novel, Ceylân is characterized as the daughter of a family from the middle class, but one which could not conceive Westernization truly; as a girl who is brought up having been provided with an education by private tutors, yet who, as a result of the excessive admiration of her family for the West and her own temperament, is quite free and even bad-mannered, behaving immorally with regard to the norms and values of the society she lives in.

The author-narrator, while introducing Ahdiye to the reader, relates that after her father's death at an early age, she grew up with a perfect training and discipline due to her mother's great care. Ahdiye has learned to sew, to make lace and to do embroidery. The

only thing she lacks is knowledge of music, and this lack of knowledge is because Dilşinas Hanım, who was brought up to believe that music was the voice of the devil, does not give permission for Ahdiye's training in music. (Midhat 1999, 12) Nevertheless, in the wedding of Ahdiye and Nurullah, no attention is paid to Dilşinas Hanım's objections and a beautiful piano is brought from the house of a polite neighbor. (Midhat 1999, 12)

This episode is important as it indicates that in the families of the upper classes, keeping a piano in the house is considered to be a requirement of politeness.

The women of the neighborhood attending the wedding make up a group of musicians bringing their lutes, violins, mandolins and notes with them. After a while, the music starts. Each of the women in the group has taken lessons from different tutors, and thus, they cannot play harmoniously and in tune with the piano. The author-narrator, intervening, states that the women do not have the necessary music skills and knowledge for this. The piano is played one by one. Some of the women have never studied classical Turkish songs so that their fingers would not be deformed. Yet, it is also obvious that they are not well informed about European songs or about rhythmic patterns, either. They entertain themselves playing European marches, polkas, waltzes and the easiest parts of some operas and operettas. However, the music played is no different from a hubbub. Then they start to dance. They prefer European dances as the Turkish-style is out of fashion. They especially like the polka⁸ dance, but since the pieces are not played in the correct rhythm, the dancers are not that successful, either. In the late hours, the women fancy Turkish-style dancing. But the change in the rhythmic pattern of the Turkish music hinders the dancing of the women. In the end, they decide to dance as they sing and clap their hands. Some women, successfully imitate the famous actresses Peruz and Eleni, who have earned a reputation for the cabaret songs (*kanto*) they sang in that period, and the women dance to these songs. (Midhat 1999, 12-15) Poor Dilşinas Hanım does not approve of this low level of entertainment at all and is annoyed. That a dance like *kanto*, which she deems extremely vulgar and out of the limits of morality, is danced with such enthusiasm upsets her.

The next day, the women chat; they talk about music and dance. Some say they like European-style and some say they prefer Turkish-style. Yet, except from one or two, none

8. Polka: The Polka is a Bohemian folk dance and musical style.

of them knows why she prefers one to the other. (Midhat 1999, 20-21) None of these women are aware of the importance of performance in music, whether it be European or Turkish-style. The one type of music and dance, for which they are of the same opinion and which they all like is *kanto*.

The author-narrator skillfully draws attention to the levels of culture of the aforementioned characters. *Kanto*, does not have value as music or art, because according to the author-narrator, *kanto* does not contain any difficulties or require any knowledge. While explaining the place of *kanto* in music, he refers to the place of humour in literature and draws a similarity between *kanto* and humour. Works of high literature win the approval of only those who are learned in literature. Not everyone can understand these works. While many of the readers do not enjoy high literature, everyone loves works of humour. *Kanto* is like this. There is no need for musical knowledge or intuition to understand *kanto*.

This situation is noteworthy in indicating that families from the middle and upper classes – but not well-educated or trained, thus not that much cultured – show interest in Western music with a yearning for Westernization to be like the European, but that they cannot perceive this music as art, and that in relation to the culture of their family in which they grew up, they have a conception of entertainment that is of low quality.

Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem's novel, *Love of a Carriage* [*Araba Sevdası*] (Ekrem, 1997), written in 1889, attracted great attention both at the time of its publication and in following years (Kerman 1998, 25). After it was serialized in *Servet-i Fünun* in 1896, the novel was published in book form in 1898. There is a period of ten years between the publications of *Love of a Carriage* and *Tune* [*Zemzeme*] (1885). With the death of Victor Hugo in 1885, after many translations from this romantic writer and after the "romanticism versus realism" discussion of Beşir Fuat's first critical biography *Victor Hugo*, the influence of the Romantic school diminishes, while Realism and Naturalism come to the fore. *Love of a Carriage* has importance in being the first Realist novel in the history of Turkish Literature. The author aimed to display the absurdity of romantic thought by making fun of the identity of Bihruz, the main character of the novel, and he criticized the wrong kind of Westernization; the line of thought which supposed that to be Western was all about appearance.

The novel begins with the introduction of Bihruz, the son of a pasha who had also served as a vizier. The Pasha was unable to pay enough attention to his son's education as they had to travel from one city to the other during Bihruz's childhood. Bihruz, who had a spoiled nature, did not get any schooling until the age of sixteen; when they came back to Istanbul at last, he was sent to *Rüştiye*, the junior high school, by his father; and now, two years later, he gets a position as an officer in one of the central offices of the government. For his education, Arabic, Persian, and French tutors are employed in accordance with the inclinations of the age. However, Bihruz considers only three things to be important in life: to drive, to look even more European than the European-style gentlemen; to speak French to the barbers, shoemakers, tailors, and waiters in the night clubs, in that French of his, which can never reach the level that will allow him to speak with a French person or someone who has thoroughly learned the language.

One day, when Bihruz, living in a world of imagination, goes to the Çamlica Garden, which was one of the most popular picnic spots of the time, he falls in love with Periveş, whom he, also under the influence of the romances he has read, supposes to be a noble girl, yet who is actually a well-known prostitute. In his desire to marry Periveş and trying to meet her to realize his aim, Bihruz is ruined when Keşfi – Bihruz's lying friend who makes him believe in the illusion that Periveş is the daughter of a noble family – tells him that Periveş is dead, and Bihruz dedicates his life to find the tomb of his beloved, whom he still supposes to be an innocent girl.

After a series of events, when Bihruz encounters Periveş during an excursion, he is made – as a result of Keşfi's lies – to believe that this girl is the sister of his deceased beloved. As Bihruz offers his condolences to Periveş, she tells him that she has never had a sister, and the novel ends with Periveş's leaving in fits of laughter after advising Bihruz not to send his loved ones to the grave at such an early age.

It is known that the author was the son of a family interested in poetry and art (Tanpınar 2001, 476). It can also be discerned from the novel that the author was taught in the history of music. There is a limited, yet conscious use of music in the novel; that is, to criticize the Turkish society's desire for Westernization in that period.

The novel begins with a description of the Çamlica Garden, which was organized and opened in the early spring of 1870. Especially on Friday evenings, almost all the chic people of Istanbul rush here, walk around the garden, and sit on the chairs and look

around as they listen to *La Belle Hélène*, the operetta which was the most favored in Istanbul at the time, and thus the most frequently played by the orchestra in the garden. (Ekrem 1997, 213) In this picnic spot most favored by the admirers of the European-style, surely, Western music is to be played. Nonetheless, it is evident that neither the players nor the listeners have knowledge about this operetta. The main character of the novel, the “European” Bihruz, is also among this crowd. *La Belle Hélène* is a piece which satirizes its own age. To the same end, that is, since Rezaizade Mahmut Ekrem also wanted to criticize his age, he uses *La Belle Hélène* as a leitmotif in the novel. Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, in his analysis of *Love of a Carriage*, states with regard to *La Belle Hélène*: “This operetta reveals both the meaning of the novel and the condition of the world it deals with.” (Tanpınar 2001, 494)

Bihruz has an interesting dream under the influence of this operetta he has listened to in the Çamlıca Garden. In his dream, “one of his dark horses flies like an eagle, the tortoises dance, and a lap dog barks, pleasantly singing *La Belle Hélène*.” (Ekrem 1997, 252)

Bihruz goes down to his library in order to write a letter to express his love to Periveş. Since he is going to write a letter to his beloved, he is full of joy, and wanders around singing *La Belle Hélène*. He continues singing it while he thinks about the poem he is going to attach to the letter (Ekrem 1997, 263). One day before he is to give the letter he has written to Periveş, looking at the sealed letter with love, he again sings some parts of *La Belle Hélène* (Ekrem 1997, 280).

Especially when he is in a good mood, Bihruz hums parts of *La Belle Hélène*. The time when he dreams of marrying Periveş, after talking his mother into selling some of their property and so paying his debts with the money he gets, are some of those moments (Ekrem 1997, 285)

During a conversation on love, Monsieur Pierre surprises Bihruz by comparing love to a snare drum. That is to say, love, according to Monsieur Pierre, is a violent emotion. For Bihruz, however, love can only be a lyre, mandolin, lute, or a dulcimer, or may be a violin. It cannot be compared to a *zurna* or a drum because these disrupt the harmony of love (Ekrem 1997, 305).

In his letter, Bihruz tells Periveş about his desire to meet her. One Friday, on which he imagines there will be a meeting, Bihruz waits in the Çamlıca Garden for hours. He

thinks that the orchestra – which he previously liked much because of the good mood he was in on that day – “consists of a terrible violin, a simple lute, a cold clarinet, and a flaccid tambourine,” and that it “plays for free, but for ninety-nine per cent of the public” and finds it of quite a low quality. (Ekrem 1997, 295).

The novel, *Progressive or Useless?* [*Turfanda mı Yoksa Turfa mı?*] (Murat 1980), published in 1891, was written by Mehmet Murat, who is known as Mizancı Murat in the history of Turkish Literature from the newspaper he started publishing in 1896 with the title *Mizan*. The novel narrates the events taking place around the main male character named Mansur, a young, hard-working doctor who is full of hope for the future of his country, and who represents the author himself.

In his novel, Mizancı Murat created types that could be exemplary with respect to the present-day and future of a nation, and in accordance with the notion of social literature. These types are active, dynamic, “mission” hero(in)es, who have a strong social consciousness, a strong sense of responsibility, and personality (Murat 1980, editor’s preface, XXIII). *Progressive or Useless?* is a social criticism with a thesis, written in order to excite social consciousness (Murat 1980, editor’s preface, XXIII).

In the novel, Mansur, his wife Zehra, and their friends who share the same ideals are identified as *Progressive* for the reason that they represent enlightened types that will increase in number in the future, that is after the foundation of the Republic. People, identified as *Progressive* in the novel, succeed in realizing their aims, for which they have been struggling. Mansur is portrayed as a definite nationalist and a man of enlightenment. He is a determined idealist, who is preoccupied with the progress of his nation, and has devoted himself in Europe to the service of his country. When he distances himself from the circle in Istanbul, where people have found his behavior and ideas *useless*, and withdraws to an Anatolian village, Mansur proves that he is a man of the future. The work that Mansur does there and his relationship with the villagers are realities that became true in Turkey only after the Republic.⁹ In a way, this is a type of a small-scale

9. The Republic of Turkey was proclaimed in 1923, following on from the 1919 uprising of the forces of the National Assembly against the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres and the Sultan’s government that had signed it. The first President, who had been the 1919 commander of National Assembly forces, Mustafa Kemal (Kemal Atatürk from 1934) was a participant in the 1908 uprising, and though he later resigned from the Committee of Union and Progress, his governments continued and radicalized the modernizing ideas of the Young Turk/CUP movement. The reforms of the early Republican years included the projects of education for the rural population and efforts to integrate it into a system of popular sovereignty and equal citizenship.

development plan, thought of for modern Turkey at that early period. (Murat 1980, editor's preface, XXIV-XXVII).

Having gone through many difficulties, Mansur, who is called a *Progressive*, is about to reach success. However, he finds out that he is going to die, as his disease has got progressively worse. The novel ends with Mansur's letter telling his wife to be patient and advising her to bring up their son as a person useful for the state and the caliphate, and then after a while with the arrival of the news of his death.

In the novel, music is used as an element that helps to highlight the characters' levels of culture and personality characteristics.

The main characters of the novel, Mansur and Zehra are cultured people, who speak French, perceive music as an art, and who possess very strong national values although they have been educated in the Western manner. In other words, they are characters that Tanzimat novelists idealize and want to present as models for the Turkish people. Staying as a guest in his uncle Sheikh Salih's house, the moment when Mansur sets foot in the balcony to get some air, he hears Zehra playing a romance on her piano and singing in French, the lyrics of this romance. Mansur feels that the arrow of Cupid, that is Eros, is thrust into his heart. Music becomes the means giving birth to a love between these two young people who are very much alike by nature.

That Zehra understands art, that she can play the piano, and she can sing the romance she plays in French are important in terms of the age. The author, by these means, draws attention to the culture and elegance of his female character. Just like Zehra, Mansur, who – influenced by Zehra's culture and taste of music – falls in love with her, is depicted also as a cultured man who perceives music as art.

In relation to music, the other three characters we shall deal with are Sabiha Hanım, Sheikh Salih's daughter from his first wife; Emine Hanım, previously a prostitute and the wife of Sheikh Salih's second wife's brother; and Kâzım Efendi, who wants to marry Sabiha Hanım. These three characters, who can be described as immoral and inferior, take our attention, in contrast to Mansur and Zehra, with their conception of entertainment, which is far removed from aesthetics, and with the low quality of their taste of music; the latter being the reflection of the former. Sabiha Hanım, Emine Hanım and Kâzım Efendi deem playing the tambourine, and dancing to it, to be an entertainment and enjoy it. As a result of a series of events including the death of Sabiha Hanım, Emine Hanım goes back

to the brothel which she left before and with Kâzım Efendi coming to visit her in the brothel, feeling no despair for Sabiha Hanım's death, they continue having pleasure parties, entertaining themselves with the tambourine and zither. Sabiha Hanım, Emine Hanım, and Kâzım Efendi come on stage as inferior people, who are far from perceiving music as art.

The two most important instruments of eastern music, the tambourine and zither, have become the means of the lowest conception of entertainment in the hands of these inferior people.

In *Adventure* [*Sergüzeşt*] (Sezai 1924), the most successful and artistic novel of the Tanzimat period, Sami Paşazade Sezai deals with the issue of slavery. Approaching the issue with a Western viewpoint, he both brings this inhuman practice to the foreground and gives information as to the way of life in that time. The subject matter of the novel is the tragically ending love between Dilber and Celâl Bey, the son of a pasha and an artist educated in Paris.

When she comes to Istanbul at the age of eight or nine, Dilber is a weak and sick girl. She is first sold to the house of Mustafa Efendi, the former head of the state tax and finance office in Harput. Here, she is treated very badly for years. When Mustafa Efendi is called back to the office, Dilber is sold to a slave trader so as to obtain money to cover the expenses of the family for the journey, and then sold again – this time to the mansion of a pasha. In the mansion, her duty is to clean and tidy the lady's and her daughter's rooms, and to take care of a canary which is under her responsibility. After a while, Dilber and Celâl Bey, the son of the family who has been to Paris for his education in painting, fall in love with each other. Asaf Pasha and his wife become aware of their son's feelings for Dilber, yet they want their son, for whose education and manners they have cared for so eagerly, to marry a girl of his own social status. On a day when Celâl Bey goes to visit his uncle, Dilber is secretly sold to a slave trader. Celâl Bey is caught by a terrible fever, and is about to die. On account of this, Dilber is sought for everywhere, yet cannot be found. She is sold to a rich man's palace in Egypt.

Dilber, faithfully bound to Celâl Bey, does not want to submit to the desires of her Egyptian owner who wants to take her to his *harem*, and thus decides to run away with the help of Cevher, the Agha of the *harem*, who is in love with her and respects her love for Celâl Bey. However, while trying to save Dilber, Cevher falls down from the stairs

and as he is about to die, he holds upto Dilber the ticket for the steamer that will take her back to Istanbul.

The novel ends tragically as Dilber, who cannot find in her the strength to go back to Istanbul all alone, jumps into the cold waters of the Nile, or as the author puts it to her “freedom”, having realized that she would never escape from slavery as long as she lives. (Sezai 1924, 125)

Sami Paşazade Sezai, who is known to be well educated, makes use of music in his novel so that he could more clearly depict the social status of the characters and society’s expectations from these characters.

The characters that have a relation with music in the novel are Dilber, her fellow odalisques, and the daughters of both Asaf Pasha and his brother.

The odalisques, the symbols of the issue of slavery that has great significance for the period, are usually beautiful girls abducted and brought from the Caucasus. Torn away from their families never to turn back and brought to the Ottoman Empire, these poor girls have to suffer in the hands of foreigners for years; sometimes, being brought up near a kind family with the help of luck and faith, they get married and live a modest, yet good-enough life; and sometimes, again after being raised, they become the wife of a State’s officer or the emperor’s favorite and have a dazzling life.

In the novel, Dilber and other odalisques to-be, brought from several places and gathered in the house of the slave trader to be sold, have to attend the music room prepared in this house. In the room, there are musical instruments such as lute and violin. The girls must be completely capable of playing one instrument. The trader, by no means, likes the girls sitting in a corner, alone with their sorrows and memories, and he encourages them to play music telling them that distress and fear will destroy their beauty. While Dilber is sold to Asaf Pasha’s mansion, the trader says the girl has become ugly due to the treatment she suffered, yet she knows how to read and write, and adding especially that she can play the lute, he succeeds in selling her. Her knowledge of music makes her sale easier.

The other characters that have a relation to music are the daughters of Asaf Pasha and those of Asaf Pasha’s brother. Asaf Pasha is a lover of art. He has had his son educated abroad to become a painter and has provided his daughter with quite a good education, especially for a girl in that period. Tesliye Hanım has a French tutor. She plays

pieces with the piano for her family when they gather in the evenings. There is no *information* given as to the names of these pieces or the musical talent of Tesliye Hanım. Nevertheless, it is indicated that the whole family likes these hours on the piano a lot. The daughters of Asaf Pasha's brother are educated in the Western manner just like Tesliye and play the piano perfectly. The night when Celâl Bey goes to his uncle, whom he thinks is more open-minded than his father, to ask for his help in marrying Dilber, one of his uncle's daughters plays *Faust*, before the two are left alone. That the author had chosen *Faust*, an opera whose subject matter is a love that ends tragically, in just the same way as Celâl Bey and Dilber, is also striking.

The upper social class gives more importance to Western tastes. The way Asaf Pasha and his brother raise their children, teaching them good manners in the Western style so that they become cultured people who perceive painting and music as art, is both related with the inclinations of the age and their characteristics as drawn by the author.

Nabizade Nazım is considered to be the bridging figure between Tanzimat and Servet-i Fünun Literatures¹⁰. However, as he wrote during the period when the most successful examples of the Servet-i Fünun Literature were written and because he died prematurely, he did not achieve the recognized position he deserved. After his *Karabibik*, which is significant in that it is the first realist novel taking place in Anatolia, he wrote *Zehra* (Nazım 1960). The novel is about a pathologically jealous woman and her revenge, who plans to dramatically end the lives of both herself and those she has close relationships with. It is the story of how people's characters might change almost unbelievably.

Zehra is the daughter of a middle class merchant Şevket Efendi. Hoping his daughter's jealousy will decrease and disappear if she is happily married, Şevket Efendi marries her off to the young and handsome Suphi, who is a *Rüştiye* (*high school*) graduate.

Zehra and Suphi spend the first two years of their marriage happily as a harmonious and loving couple. However, this happiness comes to an end when Suphi's mother Münire Hanım brings to the villa Sırrı Cemal, the beautiful odalisque she has bought, to serve her son and daughter-in-law. Since everyone knows about her jealousy,

10. The Servet-i Fünun period in literature, which continued the way to the emergence of a modern national literature using Western examples, refers to the years from 1896 to 1901.

Zehra cannot talk to anyone about her annoyance. Sırrı Cemal is pictured as an easygoing and goodhearted character in the early stages of the novel. She sympathizes with her mistress and begs her to be sent away, but Zehra cannot do this because of her pride. Suphi does not know what to do. On the one hand he does not want his wife to be sad, but on the other he is very nice to Sırrı Cemal because he thinks she has fallen victim to Zehra's jealousy. In time, changes in both Sırrı Cemal's and Suphi's characters are observed. Suphi has embarked on an affair with Sırrı Cemal and she is soon pregnant. Sırrı Cemal does not want to be a servant anymore: what she has in mind is to become the mistress of the house. Suphi rents another house to live in with Sırrı Cemal and leaves the villa. Münire Hanım falls ill thinking she has caused all this distress. Zehra is left all by herself after her husband deserts her and her father dies. Her only aim in life now is revenge on her husband. She reads Alexander Dumas' *Monte Cristo* many times and devises a plan. She is sure her husband will leave Sırrı Cemal for another woman just as he has left her for Sırrı Cemal. She makes a deal with a prostitute called Urani to seduce her husband. Her plan is successful and Suphi leaves Sırrı Cemal and starts to live with Urani. Sırrı Cemal loses her unborn baby because of the sorrow and then commits suicide. Zehra is pleased and thinks Suphi will desert Urani and come back to her begging for forgiveness. However, Suphi is passionately in love with Urani and is always by her side. He stops going to the shop and does not take care of business. Abusing this situation, his assistant robs him. Suphi goes bankrupt after a while. Urani is bored with Suphi as he cannot meet her needs anymore. She throws him out. Suphi joins the firefighters but almost dies in a fire, and after recovering he becomes an alcoholic. He has changed into a totally different person. After some time he is fired from the firehouse union because of his indecent behaviour. He is still after Urani. One day while he is walking around Urani's house hoping to meet her, he sees her with her new lover and kills both of them. He is not convicted due to lack of evidence, but he is sent to Trablusgarp because he is considered dangerous. Meanwhile, Zehra has married Suphi's assistant after a series of new plans, but this unhappy marriage does not last long and she ends it after giving birth to a sick child who could live only for a short time. She seems to have forgotten about Suphi now. The novel ends with Zehra's death. She feels guilty and becomes ill after seeing Suphi's mother Münire Hanım, who she once kicked out of her house after Suphi's desertion, dies begging in the street.

Music in the novel is used as an element to illustrate the characters' cultural levels and the period's understanding of entertainment.

During his daughter's wedding preparations Şevket Efendi, as he knows Suphi's taste for music and especially the zither, hires private tutors for Zehra to teach her how to play the zither and the piano, which was probably the period's most popular instrument.

The lute and zither are the two indispensable instruments of eastern music. The interest in piano could be explained by both the desire for Westernization during the Tanzimat and the suitability of the instrument for use in both eastern and Western music.

The mention of Suphi's fondness for music is significant for the novel. Although there is no detailed account of this fondness, the reference to it gives the reader an idea of Suphi's cultural background and his character before he is subject to change.

As for Zehra's taking private music lessons, it shows the necessity for a well raised girl at the right age for marriage to know about music and to be able to play at least one musical instrument. It is mentioned in the novel that during the first years of Zehra's marriage she takes classes from a music teacher who comes to their house twice a week and she spends her free time sewing, embroidering, and playing music. The family members have developed a habit of getting together every night after dinner, reading books and newspapers and also playing music and singing.

Zehra and Suphi, in the first years of their marriage, take boat trips on the Bosphorus on starry nights. The Bosphorus is colored with the boats going harmoniously in the same direction on moonlit nights and these trips are filled with the sounds of the violin, improvised solos and overtures coming from the rowboats. It is impossible to think of social relations and entertainment of Turkish society without music.

Another character in the novel that could be evaluated through her relationship with music is Urani. Urani is a character depicted as a highly expensive prostitute. Urani and Suphi often go to places where they can have fun, watch plays, and listen to music. However, Urani has no taste for music. Music and the plays she watches do not mean anything to her. The only thing she desires is to have fun and lead a luxurious life and music is nothing but an instrument that serves this goal.

The last writer to be mentioned in this study is the first Turkish woman novelist, Fatma Aliye Hanım. Fatma Aliye Hanım, born of Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, had many tutors starting in her early childhood and was not only well-educated but also brought up with

good manners. Her older brother Ali Sedat Bey had given her Ahmet Midhat Efendi's *Letaif-i Rivayat* to read. Upon reading the novel Fatma Aliye Hanım admired him and a short while later she started to correspond with him. Influenced by the letters Fatma Aliye Hanım sent him, Ahmet Midhat Efendi wrote *Fatma Aliye Hanım the Life of an Ottoman Writer* [*Fatma Aliye Hanım yahut bir Muharrire-i Osmaniyye*], the first monograph to recount the life of a woman writer in Ottoman society (Aşa 1996, 4). As soon as she started her writing career, Fatma Aliye Hanım was found successful by the period's literary authority Ahmet Midhat Efendi, who proclaimed her to be his adopted daughter and patronized her.

Despite their differences from various perspectives, the characters in Fatma Aliye Hanım's novels generally belong to the upper social class and are well educated. Music in her novels plays an important role as a significant part of social life and as an indication of the cultural backgrounds of the characters in the novel. However, her novel *The Lutist* [*Udî*] (Aliye 1899), which was first published in 1899, differs from her other works. This novel tells the story of Bedia Hanım, who attaches the utmost importance to music in her life and takes shelter in music against grievances and who also earns a living out of music by giving lute lessons. In *The Lutist*, considered to hold a unique position amongst all the Tanzimat novels, the writer, by making the music teacher Muslim woman the central heroine of the novel, shows that Muslim women could do more respectable jobs than cleaning, serving and washing the laundry.

This novel appealed to a wide reader group. *The Lutist*, which tells the story of its heroine Bedia through her art, love, joy, and sorrow, was widely read during the last years of the Ottoman society, especially by women who could not hold their tears (Banarlı 1971, 993). Reşat Nuri Güntekin, in a memoir, said the following of *The Lutist* "On winter nights in Çanakkale, literate women would get together and read novels. They once read Fatma Aliye Hanım's novel *The Lutist*. Although I have not seen the novel ever since then, I still remember it with pleasure to the smallest detail. This work has had a great impact on me." (Güntekin 1922, 6)

Short after its publication, the novel was translated into French and was published in *Servet Mecmuası*¹¹.

11. *Servet*, 559-195/682-317 (22 December 1899- 27 April 1900).

The main character of the novel, Bedia, is the youngest child of the Istanbulian Nazmi Bey. Nazmi Bey, who has a post in Damascus, is a well-educated, good-mannered man with a fine taste for art. Nazmi Bey has a great fondness for music. He wants his older daughter and son to learn about music, but despite their like for it they are not talented enough to become experts at it. Nazmi Bey's younger daughter, on the other hand, develops a great interest in music at an early age and under her father's supervision she takes private music lessons. In time, she becomes a great music master but as a result of some unfortunate incidents she loses her father and divorces her husband. Bedia advances her talents in music with the help and support of her beloved older brother. Upon his death, in order to earn a living and look after her brother's fifteen-year-old widowed daughter Mihriban and their servant Rüstem, she starts giving private music lessons with encouragement from Fatma Aliye Hanım, who is now one of the characters in the novel in her identity as a writer.

Bedia manages to buy a house for herself with the money she has saved up teaching music and while she is about to buy a shop, with whose rent she could live on, she falls ill. In moments of crisis she has dreams in which she writes brand new, unidentified musical pieces. Her tutor, from whom she has never ceased to take private lessons, plays the lute for her in her sick bed to relieve her. Music is the only source of relief for Bedia. The novel ends with Bedia's death.

Since the novel is about the story of a Muslim woman who earns a living giving lute lessons, eastern music is taken up in great detail.

When Bedia is only eight years old, she has a specially made zither so that it will fit her lap and a skilful musician is appointed to teach her. She begins to practice the overtures she has learned from her teacher with her father and uncle, and sing the music she has composed. Bedia later learns to play the violin and finally the lute. The novel also includes encyclopedic information on these musical instruments.

Bedia is known and respected as a great master in music and as an artist. However, a short time after she is married, her beloved father whom she values above anyone else passes away. She is not happy with her husband, who she had willingly married. Her husband is a different person and they do not share the same interests. Her husband Mail is utterly bored with Bedia's understanding of high music, which is very important for her. He, in the novelist's words, enjoys "frivolous tunes" (Aliye 1899, 91).

Bedia finds out after a while that her husband is having an affair with another woman. This woman, named Helula, is a cheap belly dancer who dances to her mother's *saz* at weddings and other parties. Bedia does not know what to do. She finds consolation in her lute on the nights her husband does not come home. Unlike Bedia, Helula represents the indecent type of woman. She has many wealthy lovers, but she is interested in Bedia's husband, the respectable great master of music and an artist. Helula seems to be proud of her success in keeping Bedia's husband away from her. She goes and talks to Bedia when she sees her at a wedding party and confesses her affair with her husband. Bedia's husband cannot afford to buy her beautiful and expensive gifts. However, Helula tells Bedia that she loves her husband and expects her to be understanding as she is an artist as well. Bedia is furious. She tells Helula that she is not an artist and that what she does is indecent and vulgar, and can be nothing more than cheap entertainment. When Helula says that it is not possible for a woman to make money without tainting her honour Bedia, disgusted by her words and attitude, objects to this. Helula does not appear to be influenced by this conversation. As soon as she returns to the wedding lounge she starts her belly dancing.

The characters in this novel with superior human qualities are depicted as well educated, artistic and with a fine taste in music as art. The inferior and indecent characters, on the other hand, enjoy and perform cheap and lower quality music.

Upon the death of her brother, who provided her with love and support after she divorced her husband, in order to earn money, Bedia decides to give private music lessons with encouragement from Fatma Aliye Hanım, who is now one of the characters in the novel with her identity as a writer. Thus, she will earn money by "selling the musical notes do re mi fa within the circle of honor" (Aliye 1899, 216), that is without tainting her honor.

In conclusion, we have to mention that we have read and studied not only a single novel by each of the six Tanzimat period writers analyzed in this paper but all of the novels in which music was used as an essential part of their work, so we can make an overall evaluation of how and to what purpose music was used in the Tanzimat novel.

The well-read and well-educated middle and upper class characters, who could be considered westernized for that period and who have an ideal understanding of music and see it as a form of art, are depicted by the writers, in order to idealize them, as

citizens with superior human qualities who could set good examples for the society. Again middle and upper class characters for whom every effort was made to obtain a good education but who failed to do so also attract attention in the novels as characters who do not appreciate music as art, but are involved in musical activities since they view listening to music as a requirement for being European. Middle and upper class characters, for whom every effort was made to obtain a good education but who are represented by their not so decent qualities and poor taste as a result of the cultural background of the family they were raised in and their own natures, have no musical taste or aesthetics at all. The odalisques who were educated according to the social status of the family they were raised in are sometimes represented, depending on their own natures, as talented characters with superior human qualities who appreciate music as art and sometimes as frivolous women who see music as a cheap form of entertainment far from any aesthetic concern. Another character common to the Tanzimat novel, the prostitute, rarely has any talent for music. Prostitutes in the novels are generally depicted as women who regard music as a part of indecent and vulgar entertainment, with no interest in the aesthetics of music whatsoever. *The Lutist*, the novel holding a unique and special place in the Tanzimat novel has a heroine Bedia, however, who is pictured, in the beginning of the novel, as a well educated young woman from a middle class family who changes into a powerful teacher after losing all financial security and uses her musical knowledge to earn a living without tainting her honour. It is obvious that the writer, in this novel, is consciously trying to create a profession for the Muslim woman.

Thus, music has an indispensable part in the Tanzimat novels as a powerful means for indicating both the ideals and the the problems of Westernization in the late Ottoman period.

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