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# **A Comparison of Ömer Seyfettin's “Bahar ve Kelebekler” and Maupassant's “Jadis”**

**Nihayet Arslan**  
Ankara University, Turkey

Comparative study between Ömer Seyfettin's short story “Bahar ve Kelebekler” and that of Maupassant's “Jadis”

Similarities between “Bahar ve Kelebekler” of Ömer Seyfettin and “Jadis” of Maupassant are obvious. First of all, the way the plot develops and some formal traits in “Bahar ve Kelebekler” evoke “Jadis”. Second, the two stories are similar in that they both deal with generational conflicts, in the center of which is woman. However, the differences between the historical and social contexts of French and Ottoman societies, in which the stories take place, lead them to have in the end different subjects. In “Jadis”, what changed between the aristocratic woman of the French Ancien Régime in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the bourgeois woman of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century is treated, while in “Bahar ve Kelebekler”, the traditional Ottoman woman confront the woman changed under the influence of Westernization. Thus, although their themes seem to be common, the short stories diverge from each other in terms of their significance. This article will elaborate upon that latter point.

Ömer Seyfettin published his short story “Bahar ve Kelebekler” (Spring and Butterflies) in volume II of the first issue (April 11, 1911) of **Genç Kalemler** (Young Pens) magazine as an example supporting the “New Language” movement initiated as a “return to national consciousness in language and literature”<sup>1</sup>. “Bahar ve Kelebekler”, in which a new language and a new world view are presented, displays

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<sup>1</sup> *Genç Kalemler Dergisi*, eds. İsmail Parlatır- Nurullah Çetin, Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara, 1999, p. XIX.

similarities to Maupassant's short story entitled "Jadis", though this is not widely known. The fact that Ömer Seyfettin had translated "Jadis" as "Evailde" and published it in the **Hüsün ve Şiir** journal in 1325 (1909), one year before the publication of his own short story, strengthens the organic bond between these two stories. The similarity between "Bahar ve Kelebekler" and "Jadis" is apparent even through a cursory reading. It is also widely known that Ömer Seyfettin shows interest in Maupassant's work. The Turkish writer, who carted around Maupassant's complete works during his military service in Thessalonica, stated the following in a letter;

"I can state without a doubt that one would not be able to find any literary work in any language written as vividly and simply as Guy de Maupassant's literary works. All his works are excellent and well worth reading. (I am enclosing a list of his complete works and I have marked those which excel – though all of them do. One learns the truth through his words. One sees the truth and thinks about it.<sup>2</sup>"

The similarities between Maupassant's short story "Jadis" and "Bahar ve Kelebekler" -four times longer than the former- are morphological and schematic in as far as the number of characters, some general features, the plot and the narration technique are concerned. On the other hand, the similarity of such themes of the two short stories as "love, marriage and the happiness of women", gains a further semantic dimension as the stories develop and differ in terms of content. The focus of the study is this semantic disparity, rather than the similarities in the two stories. Although focusing on similarities has become a tradition in comparative literature studies, as will be dwelled upon further in the text, in comparing Maupassant's and Ömer Seyfettin's above mentioned works, we believe that the differences more than the similarities are

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<sup>2</sup> Ömer Seyfettin, *Ömer Seyfettin'in Bütün Eserleri*, 15, Bilgi Yayınevi, Ankara 1992, p. 192.

determinants in the comparison. Therefore, the similarity between “Jadis” and “Bahar ve Kelebekler”, from our point of view, gains importance in as far as it allows for the determination of the reflection in the literary work of the difference in world views of the societies which the authors belong to.

The differentiation of the morphological and schematic similarity in the contents of “Bahar ve Kelebekler” and “Jadis”:

In “Jadis”, an old grandmother, a relict of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, discusses with her young granddaughter the concepts of love and marriage in present generations whilst praising the lifestyle of her own generation. In “Bahar ve Kelebekler” a very old grandmother discusses with her great-great-granddaughter the status and family life of Turkish women of previous generations, and that of Turkish women under the influence of westernization following the Tanzimat<sup>3</sup> reforms. This similarity in the characters, subject matter and plot of the stories is also apparent in the development and general style of the stories.

In “Jadis”, the story begins in the living room of an ancient, Louis XV style furnished chateau where a grandmother who is lost in thought, asks her granddaughter Berthe who is sitting next to her and embroidering quietly, to read the newspaper to her. The young girl, falling in with her grandmother’s wishes, starts looking for a love story to read. But the two passionate dramas that she reads reflecting the current values about love and marriage are not well received by the grandmother. The old woman, longing for her youth, explains how values about love and marriage differed back then. The grandmother, who does not comprehend the actions of the woman who deformed her husband’s mistress’ face with nitric acid or the young girl who shot and disabled her ex-lover who abandoned her, also does not condone the fact that the courts and the public find these women innocent of wrongdoing. For her, love and marriage are two separate concepts. Marriage is an

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<sup>3</sup> Tanzimat: “reorganization” of the Ottoman Empire. Tanzimat was a period of reformation that began in 1839 and ended with the First Constitutional Era in 1876.

institution invented for the continuation of societies. As for love, it is an instinctive, irrepressible feeling. One may get married only once, but may fall in love several times. There is no single or eternal love, nor does it have anything to do with marriage as contemporary youth would like to believe.

While her grandmother's comments surprise and shock Berthe who believes that a person can only fall in love once and should marry the person he/she loves, she remains under the influence of these statements that confuse her.

"Bahar ve Kelebekler" begins in a similar fashion. On a fine spring day, a grandmother sits in the living room of a water front residence on the Bosphorus, lost in thought and sleepy, and facing her a melancholic young girl reads a book. The silence between them is broken by the grandmother asking her great-great-granddaughter what she is reading. At her grandmother's request, the young girl reading Pierre Loti's **Désenchantées** explains that the title of the book means "women deprived of pleasure and happiness..."<sup>4</sup> and that Pierre Loti is referring to Turkish women. The grandmother denies the validity of such a reference. She states that it is contemporary women who lack pleasure and happiness, and that Turkish women in earlier eras used to be very happy and pursued a peaceful and amusing life. Contemporary women have become incomprehensible creatures; they are unhappy and pessimistic. And the reasons behind this are poisonous books like the one that the young girl is reading, a European education, and European fashions<sup>5</sup>.

Despite the objections boiling inside her, the young girl listens attentively to her grandmother's recitation of women's lifestyles in earlier times – a trouble free life in line with natural flow of things, their simple amusements, and their primal happiness. She also feels heavy distress, the oppressive desperation of Turkish women at this juncture of change and reform in society. Under the influence of her grandmothers words, and also partly as a game, she tells fortunes off butterflies just as

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<sup>4</sup> "Bahar ve Kelebekler", *Aşk Dalgası*, Bilgi Yayınevi, p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> Ömer Seyfettin, op.cit., p. 66.

women previously were in the habit of doing at springtime<sup>6</sup>. But her first sighting is of a black butterfly signifying bad luck; thus her despair and pessimism about the future increases. The idea that old superstitions continue to rule their lives seems to be a sign of the dark path Turkish women are about to tread<sup>7</sup>.

The main similarity between “Jadis” and “Bahar ve Kelebekler” lies in the fact that in both works the authors deal with two different generations’ changing values, centering on women’s issues via discussions between grandmothers and granddaughters. There are also similarities in the formulation of the stories. For instance, in the initial parts of both stories descriptions of setting are depicted for the same purpose: In “Jadis”, the description of the ancient chateau starting from the outdoors, the garden, continuing indoors to a description of the paintings of lovers of the past centuries hanging on the walls of the living room helps create an atmosphere in line with the spirit of the story<sup>8</sup>.

In contradiction to this, in “Bahar ve Kelebekler”, initially the small living room of the water front residence is described, continuing with a description of the view of the garden, the fences, and water front residences across the shore on one fine spring day. In “Jadis” the description of the setting begins from the outdoors exterior to the interior of the house, while in “Bahar ve Kelebekler” the internal setting is described first, only then moving on to the outdoors as far as it is seen through the window. It is also possible to attribute a functional meaning to these descriptions in line with the content of the stories. But, the positions of the characters in the living room, the fact that they sit in silence broken by the grandmothers voicing similar requests are the apparent similarities that one would immediately discern. Both grandmothers are very old women who have witnessed the lifestyles of

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<sup>6</sup> The grandmother in the short story talks about a belief among women in the past. According to that belief, the colour of the first butterfly seen at the arrival of spring foretells either happy or unhappy events to occur in that year.

<sup>7</sup> Ömer Seyfettin, op.cit, p. 74-78.

<sup>8</sup> G. de Maupassant, “Jadis”, *Œuvre Complètes*, V.1, Pléiade, p. 181.

several generations<sup>9</sup>. The descriptions of these two ladies also evoke a feeling of similarity: Maupassant describes the grandmother in the following words:

“a very old woman laying so still that she seems to be dead; she lets her bony hands resembling that of a mummy’s hang down off the arms of a grand armchair where she sits more or less as if she was lying on it .”<sup>10</sup>

Sitting on a grand armchair with her back to the window, the grandmother in “Bahar ve Kelebekler” is also described in a similar position:

“This old grandmother was ninety seven years old to the day. From time to time she cast her eyes, moving away from the semi-darkness of corners as if she were waking up, over to the young girl sitting with her- her great-great-granddaughter -reading a book. All of a sudden she opened her wrinkled mouth revealing three teeth. She yawned. She raised her pale hand as hardened as a mummy’s to her head.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> In “Jadis”, the grandmother’s age is not revealed. Yet it is mentioned that she lived in the age of Voltaire and Rousseau. The story takes place in the late 19th century. In contrast with “Jadis”, the external time in “Bahar ve Kelebekler” is more clearly indicated: It is one year after the declaration of the Second Constitutional Monarchy, the spring of 1909. The young girl in the story of Ömer Seyfettin is the great-great-granddaughter of the ninety-seven-year-old grandmother. The first version of “Jadis” was published in 1880 and the time told in the story corresponds to those years, as inferred from the actual events of the time that were referred to in the story. This makes us think that Ömer Seyfettin, by setting the story such that the grandmother in “Bahar ve Kelebekler” lived in the same age as the grandmother in “Jadis”, tried to create a basis for the comparison of French (Western) and Ottoman societies in the relevant context.

<sup>10</sup> G. de Maupassant, “Jadis”, *Œuvre Complètes*, V.1, Pléiade, p. 181.

<sup>11</sup> “Bahar ve Kelebekler”, *Aşk Dalgası*, Bilgi Yayınevi, p. 63

Several things render the stories similar: Although they have led very different life styles, the grandmothers long for the days of their youth, defend the values of the past; the granddaughters, for different reasons relevant in their own society, react to these old-fashioned lifestyles and values; and all of these reactions are reflected in the dialogues which result in the disappointment of both young girls.

The similarities in the formulation, subject matter, and atmosphere of the stories display thematic disparity due to differences in the cultural and historical background of the societies in which the stories are set. The fact that the historical contexts of time and setting in both stories differs, diversifies the essence of these stories. This is the focal point of the study.

The period depicted in “Jadis” is the 1880’s. The grandmother was born at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In contrast to the new generation embracing “love and marriage” as inseparable and sacred, in her time love and marriage were considered to be distinctly separate notions:

“The grandmother raised her trembling hands towards the sky as if she was begging God to revive her love affairs of long ago. She cried out with rage:  
- You lot, you have turned out to be a very bad generation indeed; a very banal generation. Since the revolution the world is unrecognizable. You describe all acts and actions with big words and you delegate boring duties to each and every aspect of life. You believe in equality and eternal passion. People write poems to tell you that men die for love. In my day and age, poems were written to teach men to love all women! My dear... if we liked a gentleman, we would send him a note. And when a new desire captured our heart, if unable to handle two at the same time, we would immediately release the previous lover.

The old woman was smiling sarcastically. Her gray eyes shone teasingly; her delight along with the skepticism of those who feel superior was reflected



in her expression, as she believed that her ideas weren't typical and that she was not cast from the same mold as others.

The young girl who turned pale stuttered:

- Then, women were not virtuous.<sup>12</sup>

The grandmother, brought up among 18<sup>th</sup> century aristocracy, tells her granddaughter that this had nothing to do with virtue, in her time, a woman who did not have a lover would have been ridiculed, and such a woman would have no option other than to take the veil<sup>13</sup>.

In Maupassant's story, the values of love and marriage in French society in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, then still governed by aristocrats' values, is compared, with women's status in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when gradually bourgeois values start to dominate.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century, as the grandmother in "Jadis" states, is "*Le Grand Siècle gallant*" (the great love era) for the aristocratic milieu. The grandmother represents the *Ancien Régime* culture lasting until the 1789 revolution. Obligations undertaken to ensure the continuation of bloodlines and the ownership of property through generations form the aristocratic family structure and constitute the basis of the cynical and epicurean philosophy adopted by the aristocracy of which the grandmother is a member. It is the family wealth derived from the land ownership that ensures the continuation of aristocracy. Marriages are made to ensure that property remains undivided, wealth does not change hands. Individual decisions, the feelings of those to be married or their choices are not important in these marriages.

With the establishment of a feudal system in the Middle Ages, the measures taken to ensure the continuation of bloodlines and the passing on of wealth were the most important factors determining family structure and arranged marriages<sup>14</sup>. The role of women lied in enabling the inheritance of wealth, and therefore, young people did not have a say

<sup>12</sup> G. de Maupassant, "Jadis", *Œuvre Complètes*, V.1, Pléiade, p. 184,185.

<sup>13</sup> G. de Maupassant, op.cit, p.184.

<sup>14</sup> See George Duby, *Şövalye, Kadın, Rahip: Feodal Fransa'da Evlilik*, translated by Mehmet Ali Kılıçbay, Ayrıntı Yayınları, İstanbul, 1991.

in arranged marriages. The Church, wishing to dominate and clashing with the aristocracy from time to time, was also using the institution of marriage, actually supporting the aristocracy in preaching obedience to young people. “*Palace Love Affairs- Love among the aristocracy*”<sup>15</sup>, extra-conjugal platonic love affairs, were encouraged to ensure moderation and assist in managing feelings to soften the harshness of arranged, loveless marriages<sup>16</sup>. The institutionalized almost definite rules and platonic character of “*Palace Love Affairs*” were aimed at ensuring a women’s loyalty, and the legitimacy of heirs<sup>17</sup>. The values about marriage, family and love among 18<sup>th</sup> century aristocracy referred to in Maupassant’s story were formulated for such an objective.

By the 1880s, in Berthe’s time, both the aristocracy and its values had collapsed. Ruled by the bourgeoisie, this new age and its values seem ugly and incomprehensible to the grandmother of aristocratic background. A clear scorn of the bourgeoisie and its values is depicted in the last section of the first version of “*Jadis*” published in **Le Galois** in 1880 through the grandmother’s statements, but omitted by Maupassant in the 1883 version examined in this study:

“and today your society, your society of rude villagers, bourgeoisie, and upstart servants will applaud me, will deem me innocent, is that so? This is disgusting. You don’t understand love, and I am

<sup>15</sup> See Jacques Lafitte-Houssat, *Troubadours et Cours d’Amours*, PUF, Paris, 1966.

<sup>16</sup> The influence of the rules of *Palace Love Affairs* can be felt in the words of the grandmother in “*Jadis*”. For example, the rules that “being married with someone is not a valid excuse for not loving someone else”, “the new love chases out the old (l’amour nouveau chasse l’ancien”, and so on. Jacques Lafitte-Houssat, *Troubadours et Cours d’Amours*, PUF, Paris 1966, p. 49. “The notion of romantic love which began in the 12<sup>th</sup> century troubadour literature as a completely extra-conjugal ideology, spread about in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries due to the increase in printing and literacy and had been the source of inspiration to poetry, drama and novel until it found a place for itself in the real life in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.” G. Duby-M.Perrot, *Kadınların Tarihi*, V. 1, translated by Ahmet Fethi, Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005. p. 74.

<sup>17</sup> G. Duby-M.Perrot, *Kadınların Tarihi*, V. 1, translated by Ahmet Fethi, Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005, p. 85. See Jacques Solé, *L’Amour en Occident: à l’époque moderne*, Albin Michel, Paris, 1976.

happy that I will die rather than see a society in which women do not know how to love; a society without love and affection. You take everything so seriously. The revenge of shameless women who killed their lovers makes the twelve bourgeois congregating to dwell into the hearts of criminals cry? What happened to your common sense? Have you lost your mind?<sup>18</sup>,”

It was apparent that the bourgeois economy structuring society was also going to make its laws. The Code Napoléon brought change to family structure and women's status in France. According to this law, which turned the whole of the aristocratic tradition upside down, the first male child of the family was no longer the sole heir; equal rights were granted to all children, even to illegitimate offspring<sup>19</sup>. This situation leading to the division of the wealth of the aristocracy necessitated measures to legitimize all children. Consequently, the loyalty of women became a primary concern. On the other hand, the evolution of bourgeoisie led to the acceptance of man, the provider, as the head of the family and the consequently to woman's absolute dependency. As in the bourgeois lifestyle men worked all day long, women were in charge of household duties. Neither men nor women had any free time. The values of the productive, thrifty bourgeois family in which there is a division of labour were adopted.

Researcher Louis Forestier indicates that Maupassant's "Jadis" emanated from actual events in the 1880s when love and passionate dramas were experienced, love crimes featured in newspapers and the 18<sup>th</sup> century was once again fashionable; Maupassant also wished to develop a philosophy of love and marriage; and that these played a role in the writing of this story. Maupassant believed that love was expected to be something more than the pleasure of the flesh or the accidental fulfillment of expectations concocted by the human mind. He thought

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<sup>18</sup> G. de Maupassant, "Jadis", *Œuvre Complètes*, V.1, Pléiade, p. 1337.

<sup>19</sup> Jean-Louis Halpérin, "Le Droit privé de la Révolution: héritage législatif et héritage idéologique", *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, no: 328, p. 3.

that marriages should be more sensible, devoid of abuse and entered into consciously<sup>20</sup>.

As for “Bahar ve Kelebekler”, the present time of the story is very distinct. It is one year after the declaration of the Second Constitutional Monarchy (II.Meşrutiyet), the month of April. The earlier era referred to by the grandmother was eighty years ago. While spring and April breezes cause even a ninety seven years old grandmother to daydream evoking her youth, her seventeen years old melancholic and dull granddaughter is reading her book not caring about the outside world, or the coming of spring. The Pierre Loti novel that she is reading dwells upon the impact of a secular occidental education administered by foreign governesses on women in Ottoman families living in a traditional, closed society and the clash that this creates. Though very well educated, these young ladies surrounded by tens of maids remain totally dysfunctional with nothing to do but to pretty themselves up for their husbands as they are firmly shut off from the outside world, not asked to make an intellectual or productive effort; and the subsequent depression presented constitutes the main theme of the story<sup>21</sup>.

The grandmother in “Bahar ve Kelebekler” describes the calm and quite life of women of her generation upset by European education and fashions which are reasons for the unhappiness of contemporary women:

“... Now their world had turned into a real prison. She suddenly remembered life as it was eighty years ago; at a time when women had a separate track of life now long forgotten. Their separate female universe was very large. Thousands of women would meet, talk, and amuse each other. They had their own entertainment, their own pleasures. There was no fashion. ( ... ) Cafés, night clubs, beer

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<sup>20</sup> G. de Maupassant, “Jadis”, *Œuvre Complètes*, V.1, Pléiade, p. 1336.

<sup>21</sup> Pierre Loti, *Désenchantées*, roman des harems Turcs contemporains, Calmann-Lévy, Paris 1906; Pierre Loti, *Beşgin Kadınlar*, translated by Nahit Sırrı Örik, İnkılâp Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1947.

houses, clubs, theatres, music-halls, and brothels, all those awful haunts separating Turkish men from their wives and making Turkish women the forgotten safe keepers of lonely homes had not existed. Women lived happily with their husbands. They got together on large sofas in big houses painted ochre red, in their gardens with pools and gazebos, in orchards, at the sea side, in huge, rare sea front houses. They had fun and they were happy. The games, customs and the pleasures of the past, all very nice, were forgotten today. Today they only read French, changed clothes all the time, were gripped by fashion frenzy and a coldness, an empty arrogance, meaninglessness and thus made inappropriate claims at superiority... Imitation of European ways have made their way into us just like a plague, this has wiped the smile off our faces, ripped off our clothes, done away with our shoes, and has even taken away our henna beautifying our fingers, making them shine like delicate corals. In changing our appearance it has also changed our souls; everything is a lie, everything is fake, everything is imitation...<sup>22</sup>”

The young girl ponders about the following while listening to her grandmother:

“Indeed, eighty years ago women would have been happy. The more they read about the new generation, the more they understood, the more they got closer to men and thus they moved away from their

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<sup>22</sup> “Bahar ve Kelebekler”, *Aşk Dalgası*, Bilgi Yayınevi, p. 67, 68. For family and the place of woman in the Ottoman society see Meral Altındal, *Osmanlı'da Kadın*, Altın Kitaplar Yayınevi, İstanbul, 1994; İlber Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Aile*, Pan Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2000.

womanhood and femininity; a rebellion and a revolution spread like a fire in their souls; their femininity, the source of pleasure, now seemed to be a chain of fire. Their houses as quiet as private temples and just as obscure were considered prisons, thick veils with black chador were considered oppressive, pale, savage, cruel and slave befitting covers. But, were they wrong? Since abstention from “progress” was not possible and progress included change, a contrast with the old, in this case, Turkish women could not remain primitive and basic, dating back centuries. She was going to stop being a puppet, a doll, innocent and feminine, and become a real woman, not superior but equal to man; she was going to be human, truly human. She no longer heard her grandmother’s voice rambling on as if she was reciting a “sacred history” of tales in weird fantasies.<sup>23</sup>”

In the last era of Ottoman society, “women’s” status is one of the most fundamental dimensions of the social crisis, which is the impact of westernization. Ömer Seyfettin has often told stories of families and women. At his early twenties he had written sensitive, modern texts dealing with women’s problems. Ömer Seyfettin’s ideas in these texts overlap with the ideas of the young girl in “Bahar ve Kelebekler”<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> “Bahar ve Kelebekler”, *Aşk Dalgası*, Bilgi Yayınevi, p. 72.

<sup>24</sup> His three articles written at the same time period as “Bahar ve Kelebekler”: “Kadınlar ve Maarif (Women and Education)”, *Hüsün ve Şiir* 1909, Nr.3; “Maarif ve Kadınlar (Education and Women)”, *Hüsün ve Şiir* 1909, Nr.5; “Müstakbel Validelere (to future mothers)”, *The Journal of Kadın*, p.29, May 18, 1909. Ömer Seyfettin asks the Turkish women to think, to develop their thinking power or at least to help those who are willing to think if they themselves are not able to do so: “*You, future mothers, you will be the ones who will attempt to produce ideas, you will give up frivolous and meaningless desires that you keep having with a pathological insistence and you will read, understand, examine and you will work with us.*” (p. 15). He also indicates that he sees the women to whom he addressed above not only as mothers but as individuals in the society who

Ömer Seyfettin alludes to Pierre Loti's novel **Désenchantées**<sup>25</sup> dealing with the same subject matter as "Bahar ve Kelebekler" by establishing intertextual links. Consideration of this link in the reading of the story enlarges its semantic dimension. In continuing the traditional upper class family structure, the women of 'Mansions' receiving a western education after the Tanzimat reforms have realized that they are falling behind the times and have started questioning their social status. The facts mentioned by Loti in his novel depicting in Romanesque style the depressions of this class of women are also to be noted in Ömer Seyfettin's "Bahar ve Kelebekler". This story is fairly longer than "Jadis" as it deals with women's problems brought about by westernization in the last Ottoman era. But nevertheless the story is similar in that, Ömer Seyfettin, using the same technique as Maupassant, establishes a dialectic structure by bringing the grandmother and the

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possess the same rights and responsibilities as men and criticizes the traditional look at women: "*We have let you become too ignorant. We called you baby machines.*"

It is significant that Ömer Seyfettin, in the first short story he wrote in Genc Kalemler at a time when he was trying to establish a new worldview under the cause of "New Language" which he started with his companions, dealt with the issue of woman. The traditional Ottoman family structure based on the Islamic law (fiqh) had preserved its integrity until the Tanzimat years. The changes brought about by the westernization movement influenced all of the social structure, as well as the family. The issue of women's rights came to the agenda together with the issue of women's education. The woman question emerged in the Ottoman society during the Tanzimat years. Particularly Ahmet Midhat Efendi, Şemsettin Sami and almost all Tanzimat writers have dealt with this issue. Fatma Aliye Hanım, the first intellectual woman who was a product of "Konak education" (i.e. private education at home by tutors) and supported by Ahmet Midhat, is one of the prominent names. Following Tanzimat, there had been more interest in the woman question and journals prepared for and by women were published. Woman in the question of Westernization alone is a very large field of research, and the stories of Ömer Seyfettin who very seriously deals with the woman question as indicated above, is of particular value for research. Therefore, without going beyond the limits of this study, we have touched upon the woman question to the extent it was dealt with in "Bahar ve Kelebekler".

<sup>25</sup> Pierre Loti, *Désenchantées*, roman des harems Turcs contemporains, Calmann-Lévy, Paris 1906; Pierre Loti, *Bezgin Kadınlar*, translated by Nahit Sırrı Örik, İnkılap Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1947.

granddaughter face to face. By doing so, he ensures the subject matter in “Bahar ve Kelebekler” remains within the limits of a short story.

The following could be stated in conclusion: In the comparison between Maupassant’s “Jadis” and Ömer Seyfettin’s “Bahar ve Kelebekler”, it has been observed that the morphological and schematic similarity between the two stories may be noted at an initial level of analysis, and the core which shapes the two writers’ stories, essentially stems from their own cultural, social, economic and historical backgrounds. The French writer Maupassant’s short story was a product of his own society. As for Ömer Seyfettin, he lent voice to the pains of change in his own society. However, an important consideration lies in the answer to the question why an innovative writer like Ömer Seyfettin felt the necessity to imitate, even at a morphological level, a Western writer’s story. Ömer Seyfettin in his article “*The New Language*”, published in the same issue of **Genç Kalemler** as “Bahar ve Kelebekler”, accused Servet-i Fünun writers<sup>26</sup> of imitating Western writers and criticized them severely. For example, in pointing out that Tevfik Fikret had taken the name of his book **Rûbab-ı Şikeste** from Emile Bergerat’s **Lyre Brisée** (Broken Lyre), he stated that:

“...one feels both sorry and depressed that Fikret, whom we apparently exaggerated in our minds until recently, was not able to find a name for his famous book in that he resorted to plagiarizing that short phrase.”<sup>27</sup>

And this, inevitably leads one to question the reason why Ömer Seyfettin, who does not tolerate even the semblance of plagiarism, would write a story undeniably similar to “Jadis” in terms of subject matter,

<sup>26</sup> The *Edebiyyât-ı Cedîde*, or “New Literature”, movement began with the founding in 1891 of the magazine *Servet-i Fünûn*, which was largely devoted to progress—both intellectual and scientific—along the Western model. Accordingly, the magazine’s literary ventures, under the direction of the poet Tevfik Fikret (1867–1915), were geared towards creating a Western-style “high art” in Turkey.

<sup>27</sup> *Genç Kalemler Dergisi*, eds. İsmail Parlatır- Nurullah Çetin, Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 1999, p. 76.



form and formulation; and why he voices this unforgiving reaction about imitations in the same volume as he publishes the story. The explanation could be that he believes his story is something beyond an ordinary imitation or inspiration. It is also obvious that “Bahar ve Kelebekler” is not a parody of “Jadis”. Therefore, Ömer Seyfettin has deliberately chosen Maupassant’s story as a kind of template, and formed from it a story reflecting his own society. Thus, it would not be wrong to propose that the purpose of this act based on a clear intertextual link is to compare social change in two civilizations’ in terms of women’s issues. There is no reason for Ömer Seyfettin to imitate when he clearly despises plagiarism. His effort to place the grandmother in “Bahar ve Kelebekler” in the same time frame with the grandmother in “Jadis” could also be rooted in his desire to contrast the conceptions surrounding women and marriage in the two societies’ at a certain time. Though it may be that in this comparison Ömer Seyfettin wished to pay tribute to the values of his own society in terms of marriage, morality, etc., his desire to demonstrate and emphasize that the two nations were and are very different historically and culturally are of central importance to the study. He may have wished to make the readers question this. Ömer Seyfettin felt the necessity to depict the depression of the new generation’s emanating from westernization and thus wrote a longer story in “Bahar ve Kelebekler”. It is significant that he alludes to Western writers considered to be the source of change in Ottoman society, in particular to Pierre Loti’s **Désenchantées** which is directly related to the content of his story. In a final note of the analysis, one should evaluate the relationship between Ömer Seyfettin’s “Bahar ve Kelebekler” and Maupassant “Jadis” as an intertextual relationship, and should primarily take into consideration the distinctive and innovative aspects of “Bahar ve Kelebekler”.