Kamelyalı Kadın Romanının ve La Traviata Operasının Olay Örgüsü Bağlamında Kadın Karakterlerinin Yazgılarının Karşılaştırılması

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Öz

Alexander Dumas fils'in yazdığı *Kamelyalı Kadın* romanı ve Giuseppe Verdi'nin bestelediği *La Traviata* operası 150 yılı aşkındır çeşitli mecralarda var olmuştur. Eserler gerçek aşk ve ölümle karşılaşan elit bir metresin sözde zevk dolu hayatının ve trajik sonunun öyküsünü anlatmaktadır. Ölüm sebebi 19. yüzyıl edebiyatında ve operasında en sık görülen ve romantik olarak kabul edilen, özellikle günahkâr kadınların günahlarının kefareti olarak yakalandığı düşünülen verem hastalığıdır. Düşkün kadınlar, tıbbi bir cinsiyetçi söylem yaklaşımıyla bulaşıcı ve hastalıklı olarak tarif edilmişlerdir. Hastalıklı bir arzudan vazgeçirmek ve ataerkilliği korumak için, cinsel yolla bulaşan kadın hastalıkları vurgulanmıştır. Buna rağmen, toplumun Marguerite'nin ve Violetta'nın günahları hakkındaki önyargıları, kadın kahramanların yaptıkları büyük fedakarlıkla silinir: Sevilen erkeğin namusu ve şerefi için terk edilişi. Bu makalede, roman ve opera eseriyle ilgili çalışmalara yönelik niteliksel bir araştırma yoluyla, olay örgüsü, yazarla bestecinin kadın karakterlerin yazgılarıyla ve hayata veda edişleriyle ilgili yaklaşımları zamanın edebiyatı ve müziği bağlamında karşılaştırılmıştır. Sonuçlara göre, iki eser de baştan çıkaran kadını hastalıklı, kirli ve zehirli göstermenin yanı sıra, kendini feda eden ve yüce bir varlık olarak tanımlayarak, sosyal bilimlerle ve güzel sanatlar literatüründe sık sık ele alınan bir konuyu dile getirir. Yazarın ve bestecinin emsalsiz bakış açıları erkek egemen bir toplumda daha feminist bir yaklaşıma katkıda bulunur. Besteci Violetta için daha huzurlu bir veda seçerek, operadaki karakterlerin ve seyircinin romandakine kıyasla daha az acı çekmesini sağlamıştır. Besteciye kıyasla yazar kelimelerin gücünden daha özgürce faydalanabildiğinden dolayı, düşkün bir kadın olmanın ve yapılan fedakarlığın psikolojik boyutlarını derinlemesine ifade edebilmiştir. Fakat, besteci de müzikal ve teatral unsurların gücünü kullanarak seyirciyi büyüleyebilmiştir ve eserin opera dünyasının vazgeçilmezlerinden biri olmasını sağlamıştır. Yöntemi ne olursa olsun, her iki sanat eseri de seyircisini ve okurunu onurun, saflığın ve aşkın gerçek doğasıyla ilgili sorular sormaya yönlendirir. Elit metreslerin alt sınıf olduklarını düşünmeye meyilli olan yüksek sosyete, onların şefkat, anlayış ve sevgiye ihtiyaç duyduklarını gösterir. Hikâyenin başarısının altındaki sebep, düşkün bir kadının yaptığı fedakarlığı takiben yürek burkan ölümünün kullanılarak toplumun kalıplaşmış ön yargılarıyla yüzleştirilmesidir.

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A Comparison of the Courtesans's Misfortune in the Novel *La Dame Aux Camelias* and the Opera *La Traviata* Through Plot Analysis

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Abstract

The novel *La Dame aux Camelias* written by Alexandre Dumas fils and the opera *La Traviata* composed by Giuseppe Verdi existed in various media for more than 150 years. They depict the so-called pleasurable life and tragic end of an elite courtesan, who faces true love and death. The reason of death is tuberculosis, a disease which was the most popular and romantic one, accepted to be suitable especially for sinful women as a redemption of their sins in the 19th century literature and opera. Fallen women are described as contagious and diseased, portraying a gendered medical discourse. In order to discourage diseased desire and protect patriarchy, sexually transgressive female pathologies are emphasized. Yet, the society's prejudices about *Marguerite* and *Violetta's* sins are erased by the great sacrifice that the heroines do: Leaving the beloved man for their sake of dignity and honor. In this paper, the novel and the opera are compared within the context of literature and opera of the time through plot analysis and the preferences of the novelist's and the composer's about the misfortune and ending of the heroines' stories, via a qualitative research of the works on both the novel and the opera. According to the results, both the book and the opera have been a well-liked topic on social sciences and fine arts literature, describing *femme fatale* as diseased, contaminated and poisonous, as well as self-sacrificing and supreme. The unique point of views of the novelist and the composer contribute to a more feminist approach in a male-dominated society. The composer provides the characters in the opera and the audience to suffer less compared to the novel, via choosing a slightly peaceful farewell for *Violetta*. The author could express the psychological dimensions of being a fallen woman and the sacrifice made more profoundly, since he could use the power of words more freely than the composer. However, the composer could mesmerize the audience via the potential of musical and theatrical elements, thus ensured the work to be one of the legends of the opera world. In any circumstances, both the art works lead the audience and the reader to ask questions about the true nature of dignity, purity and love. They expose the courtesans' need for compassion, sympathy and tenderness to a higher-class society who are prone to think that courtesans are low by class. The success behind this story is making the society face its rigid prejudices through the sacrifice and the following dramatical death of a fallen woman.

INTRODUCTION

The novel *La Dame aux Camelias* written by Alexandre Dumas fils, being one of the most effective novels in history, tells about the tragic end of a high-rank prostitute, *Marguerite*, who falls in love deeply with *Armand Duval*. The story intertwines around the idea that the nobility and the purity of this love can be proven only by the parting of Marguerite from Armand. The composer Giuseppe Verdi was inspired by this novel while composing the opera *La Traviata* and creating the heroine *Violetta* and her young lover *Alfredo*. Both pointing out to the vulnerabilities of the sinful women in love, the novel and the opera have specific similarities and differences. Before going deep into the stories of them separately, one needs to see the evil and angelic characters behind these special women.

THE COURTESANS IN THE WESTERN LITERATURE

The fiction of the 19th century French courtesans includes expensive, high class and stylish prostitutes. These women were significant figures in the literary imagination of the period. As well as providing sexual pleasure for men who could afford them, they also served to represent the fears and fantasies of both genders. The fictional courtesans created by male authors are categorized in two parts; of which the most memorable representatives are *Nana* by Emile Zola, and *Marguerite* of Alexandre Dumas fils. *Nana* represents monstrosity and narcissism; indifferent to the pains she causes. In contrast, Marguerite is the symbol of the fallen woman who is aware of her betrayal of the feminine ideal; so she sacrifices herself for the goodness of her beloved (Holmes, 2018: 450-452).

The stage version of *La Dame aux Camelias* was a great success; the role became as desirable as any of the Shakespearean heroines. The appeal of this sad story to the 19th century audience was expected; the romantic heroines of the time, whether she was *Anna Karenina*, *Madame Bovary*, *Nana* or *Camille*, were doomed and faced inevitable death at last without a happy-ever-after (Gardner, 2003).

During the time of Dumas fils, having a mistress was relatively acceptable. However, since they threatened the sanctity and the stability of the family, they were not categorized as natural or empathetic. Society both created and condemned mistresses and courtesans. They were desired as a distraction from life. The “high society” women were both jealous and curious about these sinful women and their wealth. These tendencies were clearly shown during the auction sale of Marie Duplessis’s belongings following her death; it was a “safe” way to explore the impure richness of such a dishonorable woman (Guined, 2014).

DEPICTION OF TUBERCULOSIS IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Opposing to the religious or lofty topics of earlier eras, the Romantic period in music and art focused on the regular person. There was an attraction to emotion, nature and death. One of the most used themes to draw death was disease. Tuberculosis was a common one during the time (Goldberg, 2016). Throughout the history, no other disease had the same cultural impact of tuberculosis. 19th century was the height of the tuberculosis disease. One in four individuals died from it at its peak. In contrast to its high mortality, tuberculosis was associated with delicacy, femininity, or even intelligence. Once it was thought to strengthen sexual desire and beauty, as well as increasing creative genius. (Muto, 2011: 612). In another point of view, tuberculosis was thought to be caused by moral decay or living too fast. Now it is known that the real reason of the disease is a bacillus thriving in conditions of poverty or overcrowding. It is not a pretty illness as described in arts; in contrast, it was a dangerous one on the rise (Gardner, 2003).

The literature of the 19th century idealized the female figure as the heroic and honorable consumptive courtesan, being the goddess of sexual seduction. Yet, increasing medical discourse about the illness and its contagious spread in Europe by the mid-19th century made people question the

romanticized ideas about the courtesan and the disease. Alexandras Dumas fils wrote his novel *La Dame aux Camelias* during this cultural confusion period. The consumptive courtesan is both a carrier of this disease and an irresistibly beautiful seductress. The potential threat emphasized by drawing a courtesan in consumption shifted the cultural view from spiritual to medical discourse, changing the European culture sociologically (Muto, 2011: 612).

FEMINISM IN LITERATURE AND ALEXANDRE DUMAS FILS

Feminism refers to the political movement and social theory that came to life in order to end sexual discrimination and oppression, and to promote class equality. According to feminism conceptual basis, the current society is dominated by a patriarchal system. Feminist political action challenges sexual harassment, domestic violence, sexual violence, gender discrimination, educational rights and many more topics related to inequality between men and women. This inequality is observed in literature, as the heroines try to win their equality and freedom, dignity, social, gender and political powers via criticizing abnormal social encounters. (Dong, 2017). Each culture's feminist movements have their own unique characteristics, raising questions about women in their society. Feminism in American and English literature was proposed and expressed more completely by the French novelist Alexandre Dumas fils. He was originated from the 18th century enlightenment era. The first feminist movement was seen in his novels through the idea of women demanding equal rights with men. The literature works *Jane Eyre*, *Heroine Character*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Austin's Love and Marriage*, *The Tragic Fate of the Heroine* focus profoundly on feminism, under the influence of Dumas fils (Fan, 2017).

Alexandre Dumas fils was a French author and playwright, being the illegitimate child of a dressmaker and the novelist Alexandre Dumas. His father recognized him legally and separated the son from his mother. This situation inspired Dumas fils to write about the tragic stories of female characters, emphasizing the moral purpose of literature. In his play *The Illegitimate Son* written in 1858, he pointed out that if a man is the father of an illegitimate son, he has to legitimize the child and marry the woman. He witnessed the unhappy ruin brought on his father by illicit love affairs. His play *Le Demi-Monde* depicts the sanctity of the marriage and family, dealing with the threat to the institution of marriage posed by prostitutes. Modern readers find Dumas's drama pleonastic and wordy, in contrast to the late 19th century critics who praised his works for their moral seriousness (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). His artistic development into his early twenties rooted in the Romanticism ideas of truth in love and nature, based by Goethe's tradition. Romanticism was understood by Dumas fils and his father as a self-expression revolution instead of self-control and civilization. Dumas started to feel the influence of the Realists in the 1830s. The development of the individual consciousness, how a person was shaped and the motivations behind one's behaviors were being explored by fiction (Saunders, 1951: 18). As the Realist ideals continued to root, novelists such as Chares Dickens and George Eliot became dominant. Their works explored social ills plaguing the culture, as well as the human psyche. Dumas felt the transition period as new attitudes of realism and morality were emerging in fiction (Guined, 2014). Even the conflict between his mother and father represented this paradigm shift. Dumas's father acted according to Romanticism, while his mother symbolized the ideals of Realism (Saunders, 1951: 14).

Dumas fils was best known for his novel *La Dame aux Camelias*. This novel, as well as the operas *La Traviata* by Verdi, *La Boheme* by Puccini and *Les Contes d'Hofmann* by Offenbach are criticized by some feminists, because of depicting a victim as a fragile, young, beautiful girl. The artists drawing diseased heroines in need of protection may be recognized as an anti-female theme. In all these stories, the women characters fall in love and have to face disease because of their weaknesses (Goldberg, 2016).

THE NOVEL *LA DAME AUX CAMELIAS*

The novel *La Dame aux Camelias* written by Alexandre Dumas fils in 1848 is a prime example of how a single text can negotiate the boundaries between fiction and life. While serving the desires of the readers, it does not offend them to the point of censorship. The novelist's success did not fade with the time. In contradiction, the novel was at the focus of the public appeal for more than 150 years. It was adapted to plays, operas, ballets, films and television productions. Dumas' fiction was both scandalous and acceptable since he was one of the few novelists who dared to depict the courtesan figure not only in an empathetic view, but also in contemporary times, not removing the plot. He decided to change the end of his novel by choosing a more Romantic structure; love conquers all only to be conquered by death in turn (Guined, 2014).

The novel is a fictionalized description of Dumas' one-year affair with the real-life courtesan, Marie Duplessis, who died at the age of 23. Her funeral was attended by French aristocratic figures, who shared her body on a nightly basis (Service, 2015). Being the "lady of pleasure", Duplessis conquered Parisian society with her beauty, charm and wit (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). She was one of the modern world's first celebrities. As a piece of the throng Charles Dickens declared that the general sadness was so deep; one could have easily believed that Marie was like a national heroine. Adding of "Du" to her surname was a pathetic action in need of an aristocratic status. Her dead body was surrounded by wealth, yet in reality her belongings were sold to pay her debts (Gardner, 2003).

After his relationship with Marie, Dumas transformed himself into *Armand Duval* of the novel, while transforming Marie into *Marguerite Gautier* (Gardner, 2003). The story takes place in the mid-19th century France between a young bourgeois and a demimondaine suffering from consumption (Lintz, 2005: 287-307). The protagonist of the novel is Marguerite, or *Camille* as byname, referring to the camellias she carried as a signal of her availability. She wears a red camellia during her menstruation, showing that she is unable for making love. The camellia becomes white when she is able to make love with men (Dumas fils, 2010). Being a courtesan does not prevent her from falling in love. First intoxicated by the beautiful feelings towards the young man, she does not accept the possibility of ruining his life because of her indecent background. She goes back to her old familiar life style with the reality that she is mortally ill and will die soon (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). Instead of passing away in her beloved's arms, she dies alone after years of disease and three painful days. This romantic myth is one of the most saddening ones since *Rome and Juliette* (Gardner, 2003).

VERDI AND OPERA DURING HIS ERA

Giuseppe Verdi is the leading Italian opera composer in the 19th century. Some of his very well-known operas are *Rigoletto* (1851), *Il Trovatore* (1853), *La Traviata* (1853), *Don Carlos* (1867), *Aida* (1871), *Otello* (1887) *Falstaff* (1893) and *Requiem Mass* (1874). As a son of a small farm owner, he was given the best education that could be achieved in a tiny village, starting with his very young ages. During his youth, Milan was the operatic and intellectual center of Italy, teaching him much about politics, opera and literature. His rising career was disrupted by the tragedy of his children's and wife's deaths. This personal grief led him to suffer a severe depression and trauma, forming some of the harsh aspects of his character. His great success with *Nabucco* brought him lasting friendships with educated aristocrats. He became the new hero of Italian music at the age of 28. At some point, he worked so much that he produced nearly two operas in a year. His best known and loved operas are *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*, with their tunes, drama and characterization being described as better, more exciting and more original than any opera he had composed before. *Rigoletto* took its plot from the play *Le Roi S'amuse* written by Hugo, including the murder of a king that was politically taboo. Therefore, the opera was censored by lowering the degree of the king to a duke. *La Traviata* had to go through the same

ensorship, too. Although the first performance costumes were from the 17th century, the present-day subject was a noticeable risk during that era. Since prima donna was casted as a consumptive heroine, the first performance was a fiasco for Verdi, being a rare one. The lyrical pathos and the intimate mood of *La Traviata* made it even more contrasting stylistically. His relationship with the singer Strepponi may have affected the character of Violetta, both being radiant and sympathetic (Hussey and Kerman, 2020).

Verdi's connection to opera world that he was bound for a whole life span was a love-hate relationship. After his happy retirement, he was a very wealthy man who funded major charities such as one for aged musicians, still in operation in Milano. His entrance to the operatic scene coincides with the diminution phase of the Italian bel canto tradition with Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti. He transformed this tradition and dominated Italian opera only himself for 30 years. The period was constitutive of a dramatic and musical refinement and constant experimentation. He modified the rigidity of bel canto opera step by step, at first without making the audience realize. No other opera composer has assembled such a rich and vivid portrait gallery: Self-sacrificing courtesan Violetta of *La Traviata*; loving father and evil jester *Rigoletto*; self-destructive Amneris of *Aida*; or the passionate Leonora of *Il Trovatore*. His operas have a non-stop, fluent and absolute dramatic rhythm. The role of the orchestra was broadened with a newly developed musical vocabulary, in which the role of the voice was not compromised. The introduced subject matters of his were never used in opera before. Generations of listeners all over the world love Verdi melodies, that serve the drama and depict the characters' feelings with a directness and warmth (Hussey and Kerman, 2020).

THE OPERA *LA TRAVIATA*

The opera *La Traviata*, meaning "the woman gone astray" or "fallen woman" was composed by Giuseppe Verdi in three acts, based on the play *La Dame aux Camelias* which he saw in 1852's Paris. The Italian libretto belongs to Francesco Maria Piave (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020), whom Verdi forced to write a provocative and original libretto, not one that includes an ordinary subject that one can find by the hundreds (Phillips-Matz, 1993: 318). It is Verdi's only opera that is set entirely indoors (Parker, 2020). The name of the opera refers to the heroine *Violetta Valery*, who is a courtesan earning redemption through sacrifice (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). The first Violetta on the stage was 38 years old and overweight, causing the audience to mock the idea that she could possibly be an attractive courtesan and wasting away from tuberculosis. Verdi did not give up and wrote to a conductor friend that the last night's *La Traviata* was not the last one on the stage. The performance of it in 1853 at the Teatro la Fenice in Venice was an unqualified success with more suitable singers and a few small changes in the score (Schwarm and Cantoni, 2020). Being one of the most staged operas of Verdi, *La Traviata* became one of the most well-known operas of theater history (Kimbell, 2001).

The opera was sharply contrasting to the composer's earlier operas. The setting was relatively "modern" for its day, so it was difficult for the critics to agree. "Period pieces" were more acceptable by the critics of that era. Europe was dealing with moral hypocrisy already, when *La Traviata* was on the stage. The authorities in Rome wanted Verdi to censor and make some changes to the opera in order to appeal to a more conservative public. Verdi did not want to change the story of the courtesan Violetta and declared that a whore must always be a whore. This startling explanation of the composer showed his radical feelings towards his work. During that time, Verdi gave up with the historical and biblical stories and exposed his audiences to a social and moral drama. Some of the biggest dilemmas of the 19th-century world were prostitution, passion and disease. Verdi succeeded to combine all these issues of love and death at *La Traviata* (Service, 2015).

METHODS

In this paper, a qualitative comparison and contrast method was applied on the novel *La Dame aux Camelias* by Alexandras Dumas fils and the opera *La Traviata* by Giuseppe Verdi through plot analysis, as well as the preferences of the novelist and the composer about the misfortune of their heroines and how to end their stories, in relation with their personal lives and the society's apprehension and favor.

RESULTS

History shows that both Dumas fils and Verdi suffered sadness and traumas in their family life. The reality of the human feelings and disappointments brought them to focus on the elements that make life; Realism was dominating them in a Romantic period. Therefore, they chose a Romantic subject of a love story intermingled with death and put humanistic characteristics into it by the horrific signs and constituents of a disease. The reason for choosing naïve, weak and sad heroines in need of protection and love may be because of the reason that the female characters in their own life suffered a lot, too. These heroines may symbolize their mothers and wives in their subconscious, thus contributing to a feminist point of view by sharing these women's demands with a man-dominated society.

Generally, the novel and the opera have a parallel interpretation. The courtesan's life of pleasure and sin, falling in love, escape to the country with the man, the social outrage of the man's father, the courtesan's sacrifice of true love and new life because of the father, and her death from tuberculosis (Service, 2015), which was the most popular romantic disease for women in the 19th century opera.

Marguerite/Violetta's hope for unconditional love is one of the main topics, building an attachment between the reader/audience and the story. It is also a similarity between the novel and the opera; the observer of the story begins to hope and get excited with the heroine simultaneously. When she learns about Armand/Alfredo's visits during her illness, she realizes that she may have the chance to be loved truly. His magnanimity and compassion for her is emphasized via this fact: He does not expect anything from her and has no beneficial motives, since he did not give his name while asking about her health. This very situation convinces the courtesan that he may love her unconditionally. The reader/audience is provoked to ask the question if courtesans, who are accepted to be undignified by the society, deserve true love or not.

The novel starts with the regret and tears of Armand, looking for the novel *Manon Lescaut* which belonged to Marguerite before her death. This specific book serves as a foreshadowing of Marguerite's life, since both novels handle a love story and class conflict between an upper-class or dignified man and a lower-class woman. The search for the book makes the reader curious about the story behind Marguerite, and the drama begins. Armand's expression of sorrow makes the novel more intriguing; He confesses that first he thought Marguerite should redeem herself; however, now he thinks that he himself does not deserve to be forgiven. He would exchange ten years of his life with crying for one hour down at her feet (Dumas, 2010: 29). Therefore, the reader understands that this is certainly not a happy ending story, and becomes more curious about the great sorrow and saddening death of Marguerite. It is an appealing and clever way of opening the story and grasping the attention of the reader. Verdi tries to do the same thing with the prelude of the opera, when the music is very slow and sad, as if calling for a moment of longing and repentance. The repetition of the same melody in the prelude and the third act takes the audience back to the first scene of the opera strikingly, reminding that this is a sad story of a dying woman from the beginning of it (Çakmak, 2011: 95).

Nevertheless, Verdi left out a great part of the novel for the sake of every character in the opera: That is the death story of Marguerite, who suffers a lonely death while waiting for Armand in vain

during her last hours of life. Instead of Armand, the obligees come to bleed her white. She writes letters to Armand before her death, calling in vain his name and expecting to see him one more time. In contrast with the beautiful melodies of the arias, Marguerite dies with screams and in such a great pain that no other religious victim could have felt (Dumas, 2010: 231). This sorrowful end of the novel makes the reader pity her more and value her love, since it ripened in the bosom of death (Çakmak, 2011: 95). Deploring Marguerite's pathetic death, the composer chose to reunite everybody at the last scene. He sympathized with the mourning and repentant characters of the novel; as a matter of fact, Violetta dies in her beloved's arms with a more peaceful mood. Her heart-breaking aria "Addio del passato", saying goodbye to the happy dreams of the past in the final act is her last speech. She receives a letter from the father Giorgio, explaining her that Alfredo learned about the real motive behind her departure, and is going back to her. However, she knows that their union is impossible because of her illness. The aria is very naïve, dignified, simple and does not include vocal acrobatics. At her weakest physical moment, the audience faces her real moral power and true love (Service, 2015). Verdi demonstrates Violetta's passing to the other side with the passage from D flat major to A major as if A major appeals to the ears as peace descending from the sky, erasing all the problems dealt during the story of the opera (Çakmak, 2011: 107). It may be concluded that compared to the opera the novel awakes more pitiful feelings for all the characters especially for Marguerite.

Verdi underscored the drama of the opera through the usage of repetitive phrases such as "Ah fors'è lui" which is a love theme throughout the work. Also, coloratura ornamentation emphasizing Violetta's agitation, high violins underscoring Violetta's character since the beginning of the overture and musical continuity between the recitatives and arias are the instrumentative touches of Verdi (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). Moreover, Verdi went further in his music compared to Dumas in his story; the daring and direct attitude of the composer's music made *La Traviata* dangerous for the supposed moral righteousness of the press. His usage of contemporary music of his time, such as waltzes and polkas that encourage moral corruption, symbolized the libidinous pleasures. The most famous of these musical pieces is the drinking song called "Libiamo", emphasizing enjoying life and getting drunk, in the first act of *La Traviata* (Service, 2015). Therefore, the opera provoked more actions against the appealing story of Violetta, while making the story an unforgettable and indispensable one for the theaters all over the world.

As a matter of fact, the novel's weapon is its words; the ideas behind these words provoke the reader to think about the issue more extensively and comprehensively. The novel includes Marguerite's philosophical approaches to prostitution, guiding the reader to deep thoughts about morality. She tells her maid Nanine that prostitutes are being feared like a wild animal; they wear down their heart, body and beauty slowly. Around the prostitutes, there are people who want to take more than what they give, and then one day they die like dogs at a corner, having destroyed both themselves and the others (Dumas, 2010: 93). These words and dramatic expression are like foreshadowing to her own death at the end of the story; as if she knows her own future from the very beginning. Just like Marguerite, Armand also has intriguing and thought-provoking ideas about the relationship between love and prostitution. He explains the pure love's effect on a prostitute: When God grants love to a high prostitute, first it seems like a forgiveness, but then it turns out to be a penalty for her. There is no purification without suffering. When a woman whose past is taunted suddenly finds herself in a deep, irresistible love, and confirms this love to her beloved, the lover gains a great control on her. He becomes so powerful to be able to say "You don't sacrifice more to this love than you do in exchange for payment". Then the poor women don't know how to react to these words (Dumas, 2010: 101). Therefore, Armand is extremely aware of Marguerite's inner world; how she suffers being a prostitute and in love with a noble man. But it doesn't help him to discover why she left her.

The novel includes some very noble ideas of the narrator towards Marguerite; such as that this woman was a virgin whom nothing can turn into a prostitute, and besides was a prostitute whom even a very trivial emotional intimacy can turn into the most passionate and innocent virgin. Moreover, Marguerite has pride and independence; if these two feelings were hurt, they would have acted like shame (Dumas, 2010: 71). These grand expressions make the reader believe that Marguerite really has a precious heart and may be more decent and valuable than most of the incorrupt girls at her time. Thus, this novel collapses the idea that the prostitutes cannot be noble at heart and they do not grasp the idea of love. Marguerite dies in dignity for saving the future of Armand and his innocent sister's marriage. She hopes till the very moment of her lonely death that one day the sister will pray for a name of Marguerite without even knowing the reason why. One more time, the reader is forced to think about the real meaning of nobility; when a courtesan leaves her lover behind to protect his dignity, she becomes noble or not. As a matter of fact, one of the important conversations between Marguerite and Armand in the novel but not used in the opera is about the world of prostitutes and the men: She loved Armand because he really cared about her when she was sick; men would be loved more if they knew what they would gain with one single tear drop. She complains about men who see prostitutes as an object, not as a human (Dumas, 2010: 130-131).

Another difference between the novel and the opera is the effect of *Prudence*, another courtesan, on the love story of Marguerite and Armand, and her efforts to relate everything to the cruel world of finance. She symbolizes the selfish world of the prostitutes: Now old and not as appealing as she used to be, she is more focused on the monetary side of the world. She warns Marguerite about how to get more money from men; also informs Armand about the luxury and the egoistic psychology of prostitutes, interfering with his dreams about Marguerite. She advises Armand to endure the fact that Marguerite must have more than one lover in order to finance herself. She confronts Armand with the truth that many men go bankrupt while dealing with a prostitute as beautiful and costly as Marguerite (Dumas, 2010: 108). Furthermore, the reader is informed in the novel about how Armand thinks to give his money from his mother to Marguerite. The opera slightly tells how Violetta sells her horses and is in debt. The novel is more realistic compared to the opera in the sense of finance and the real world; someone has to make the lovers face with the reality of money, and that every good thing has a price.

A very naïve approach to love and keeping it to oneself can be found in the novel, when Armand tells about love being related to nature: He says that he can hide away Marguerite in the countryside from Paris' men who might have been a lover to her or will be in the future. He is so jealous of her that he feels safe only in nature, far away from familiar faces who might judge their love (Dumas, 2010: 141). The novel is so sincere and dramatic that the reader cannot hold oneself but feel deep sorrow for the couple's love.

The casting in the opera is very crucial especially for the case of Violetta. The audience should be convinced that the courtesan they are watching is both seductive and naïve at the same time. It is a very difficult job to be able to stage the ravishing and playful beauty and the dignified, noble and sacrificing woman who is going to die at the end. Anna Netrebko is a very popular example for the marvellous modern Violetta in "Brindisi" with Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Carlo Rizzi (Verdi, 2005), compared to a more delicate and less seductive version of it as Renee Fleming. Fleming gives life to a very innocent and pure Violetta throughout the opera, while Netrebko's style is more in between the virgin and the prostitute. The staging in *La Traviata* of Netrebko is very wild and exciting; although the decoration seems very simple, it reflects the modern world of today with its minimalistic figures. The stage director may have intended to make the stage look simpler in order to emphasize Violetta's complicated dilemma about love. Netrebko's performance of her last aria *Addio del passato* is also wild even in her white gown, with some of her hair in front of her face. In general, the

ideal courtesan image of Marguerite can manage to be attractive and to earn her life using her body, although she is always sick and tired. Also she never enjoys fake love-making with other men due to her sincerity. She carries a great heart of dignity, in comparison with wild Violetta of *Netrebko*. Throughout the novel, the reader can easily sympathize with her because of her honesty and humaneness.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Dumas fils, being separated from his mother at an early age, and Verdi, losing his children and wife at early ages, shared saddening stories of human life, suffer and death in their own lives. Thus, both depicted weak, diseased female characters in need of protection. The Romantic elements such as love and passion turn to a more realistic point of view with the devastating truth of a non-healing disease, tuberculosis. Furthermore, the novelist's and the composer's urge to disturb the common sense of their social environment in the sense of introducing a unique and painful story about a tragical life caused them to come up with this unforgettable theme.

Both the novel *La Dame aux Camelias* by Alexandre Dumas fils and the opera *La Traviata* by Giuseppe Verdi demonstrate the reality of a courtesan's difficult and despicable life full of prejudices and injustice. The sad story of Violetta thus that of Marguerite has been continuing to be staged all over the world for 150 years. The reason for that can be evaluated as a very good interpretation of a fallen woman, who is at the focus of both men and women of her time, depicted in need of protection and love. The society both condemns the lifestyle of these women, as well as being curious and jealous of the joy and prosperity. The society's perception of indecent and impure woman is criticized by these works. The weapon of the novel is the power of words, while it is mainly the power of music for the opera. Both use their own methods to point out to the pathetic and sorrowful love story of a courtesan. In contradiction to the more peaceful death of Violetta in her beloved's arms, Marguerite dies in great pain and longing for Armand's pure love, making the story more dramatic and sadder to read. The change in the final scene of the opera can be interpreted as a positive adaptation of the novel for the society's demand and contentment. The society wants to see a slightly peaceful end for Violetta; thus, Giorgio asks for forgiveness, Alfredo hugs her and she dies with a happy tone in the music. Overall, both art products reflect the elite prostitutes' hunger for love and affection while dealing with the class conflict. The works were meant to ask the reader and the audience's point of views about whether the courtesans as the fallen women deserve to be happy, to be loved and to have a more decent and happy life. Both provoke questions about the real meanings of nobility, dignity and purity, contributing to a feminist point of view by depicting women's demands and wishes for a more qualified life and existence.

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