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ACIMAK / MERCY (1928) RESAT NURI GUNTEKIN (1889 – 1956)

Apropos

It was published by Suhulet Library in 1928, about five years after the proclamation of the Republic. The second edition was published by Semih Lûtfi Publishing House in 1941. *Mercy*, Resat Nuri Guntekin's eighth published novel, is one of the mature works. In the novel, which met with its readers in the first years of the Republic, the author tells the story of the corruption and collapse of the old order and the strengthening rise of the new order through a symbolic narrative. As a result of the conflict between the Ottoman intellectual and the Republican intellectual, it is seen that the Republican ones begins to get to know and empathize with the Ottoman ones. The author, who reveals to the reader the crises and internal conflicts of the bourgeoisie in the light of realistic and romantic techniques, gives various messages from a critical perspective. "In the two-dimensional narrative, events are reflected separately through the eyes of Zehra and Mr. Murshid, thus adding depth to the dramatic action" (Kanter 2008, 236).

Synopsis

Zehra, who has completed nearly ten years as a teacher in an unnamed Anatolian town, is especially loved and respected by the locals. One day, she is informed by a deputy from Istanbul that her father is ill. Although she resists not seeing her father for a while, she decides to go to Istanbul when she learns that his illness is getting worse. When she goes to the house where her father, who lives in poverty, is a guest, she learns that he is already dead. Zehra, who knew her father as an alcoholic, gambler and womanizer, cannot forget the traumas she experienced in her childhood and blames him for this. Nevertheless, when she finds his diary in her father's chest and starts reading it, she realizes that she has misunderstood her father. Murshid, who had gone to Anatolia with great ideals after graduating from Faculty of Political Sciences and worked in various provinces and districts, sees that good will is abused everywhere and corruption dominates everywhere. As a result, he loses his motivation and energy to serve his country. He marries Mawaddat, whom he met in Diyarbakir. He devotes himself completely to his family. But, when his good will is completely abused by his family, he loses all hope and drops out. Finally, despite knowing that he is hated by his daughters, Murshid makes a last effort to at least save Zehra from his wife and mother-in-law and he succeeds. Murshid provides Zehra to study at a boarding school and enables her to become a good teacher. Zehra, who has misunderstood her father throughout her life, kisses her father's funeral with feelings of regret and pity.

People

<i>Mr. Murshid</i>	The norm character of the narrative also shows protagonist characteristics.
<i>Zehra</i>	She is the protagonist of the narrative.
<i>Mr. Tevfik Hayri</i>	Director of education.
<i>Mr. Sherif Halil</i>	Deputy.
<i>Mr. Tahsin</i>	Chief clerk of education.
<i>Mr. Tahir</i>	Accounting clerk.
<i>Mr. Nasuhi</i>	Manger whom Murshid met when he was a civil servant in Sivas.
<i>Mr. Fadil</i>	He is the fiscal director of the district, Mawaddat's father, Mrs. Makbule's husband.
<i>Mawaddat</i>	Murshid's wife. She is a negative character of the narrative.
<i>Mrs. Makbule</i>	Mawaddat's mother, Murshid's mother-in-law. She is a negative character.
<i>Mr. Abdussamed</i>	He is a public servant in Diyarbakir. He helps Mursit to see the truth.
<i>Ruhsar</i>	Mawaddat's sister and Murshid's sister-in-law.
<i>Fareeha</i>	Eldest daughter of Murshid-Mawaddat couple.
<i>Mr. Necip</i>	Mawaddat's neighbor with whom she has forbidden love affair.
<i>Jawdat</i>	Mutasarrif in one of the Rumeli sanjaks.

Mr. Vehbi

Friend of Murshid who lives in Eyupsultan. He is a retired battalion clerk.

The names of other important narrative figures in the récit: Governor, Judge in a criminal court etc.

Elaborative Storyline

Zehra receives news of her father's illness The Deputy Mr. Sherif Halil, who had traveled to (...) from Istanbul by a request, came to the Director of Education, an old classmate from the Faculty of Political Sciences, and informed him that teacher Zehra's father had fallen ill. But Director of Education Mr. Tevfik Hayri did not know that Zehra had a father. After graduating from Women's Teacher Training College (Darulmuallimat), Zehra chose to work in a town in Anatolia instead of staying in Istanbul and has been teaching in the same place for about five years. Because she is an idealistic and principled teacher, the school she works at is known as Zehra's School. Parents prefer to send their children to Zehra's school rather than other schools. Zehra acts against the regulations and syllabus when necessary and implements what she thinks is right at school. For this reason, she sometimes clashes with the school administration. However, Mr. Tevfik Hayri, the Director of Education, understands Zehra and even appreciates her. He sees her as his own daughter. Despite all her positive and good qualities, Zehra has a ruthless character who does not forgive any mistake or negativity. She does not tolerate students who come to class late, don't take necessary care of their attire, lie, dishonest or morally corrupt, no matter what the excuse. In fact, she believes that they should be isolated from hardworking and moral students because they are sick and can transmit their diseases to others. The situation of the boy, who was caught and interrogated by law enforcement officers for acting as a lookout for thieves in the town, but did not rat out his accomplices, becomes a matter of discussion between Director Tevfik Hayri and Zehra. Both characters view the incident from different perspectives.

Zehra decides to go to Istanbul after his father's illness worsens At the end of the conversation between the three, The Deputy Mr. Sherif Halil informs Zehra that her father is ill and that he wants to see her. Although Zehra replies that she does not have a father, she is interested in the man's condition. She is informed that the father's illness is severe and that he says he wants to see his daughter before he dies. But Zehra says that she has no father and that the person in question might be another Zehra. Director Tevfik Hayri realizes from her demeanor that Zehra is lying and hiding the fact that she has a father. The fact that she has never been to the place where she was born and raised for years and has never talked about her family raises doubts. A few days later, it is reported that the father's condition has worsened and Zehra is strictly ordered to come to Istanbul. Upon receiving the news, Zehra confesses to Director Tevfik Hayri that she has a father and decides to go to Istanbul. Director Tevfik Hayri sends Zehra into the station with a servant and puts her on the train. During the journey, Zehra falls into deep thoughts and dreams during sleep.

The traumas her experienced (Thoughts about her father) Before Zehra's mother Mrs. Mawaddat married Mr. Murshid, her sister Ruhsar married a merchant. As a result of her husband's tragic life, she lost her husband and after a while she committed suicide herself. Unlike her sister, Mrs. Mawaddat married a civil servant and could not get happiness from her husband who was fond of drinking, gambling and women. Having a good time with her friends and playing the oud in her spare time, Mrs. Mawaddat turns into a sad and angry character when she is with her husband. Likewise, Mrs. Makbule, who spends all her time praying, reading the Qur'an and knitting, is also dissatisfied with her son-in-law. Zehra, who fears her father and has seen him drunk many times, is disgusted by Murshid. She leaves their mansion in Beylerbeyi and attends the religious school for three years. However, during this time, she loses her sister to tuberculosis and after losing her mother and grandmother, she enters Women's Teacher Training College at the first opportunity she gets. Zehra breaks all ties with her father and devotes her whole life to classes. Although she came across her drunk father several times while in Istanbul, she ignored him because she was ashamed and disgusted by him. After she started teaching in an Anatolian town, she never returned to Istanbul. She devoted herself completely to her profession and rose to the position of head teacher.

Zehra arrives at her father's funeral and then finds his diary When the train arrives in Istanbul, Zehra arrives in Eyupsultan where father is and learns that he is already dead. Mr. Vehbi, who had hosted and took care of him in his house, tells Zehra that she would have seen him if she had come the day before. While Mr. Murshid was lying in his sick bed, he constantly mentioned his daughter's name and asked for her to be brought to him. However, he succumbed to disease before

his daughter arrived. Mr. Vehbi tells Zehra that she can see Mr. Murshid's funeral and fulfill her last duty. But Zehra tells Mr. Vehbi that Mr. Murshid means nothing to her and that he can be buried immediately. She also refuses to accept the chest left to her by his father and says that it should be given to the workers who will carry and bury the body. Mr. Vehbi and his wife find it difficult to understand why Zehra is so hostile to her father. Because they have witnessed how much Mr. Murshid loved Zehra. Alone in her room, Zehra begins rummaging through her father's chest and finds a diary among the useless and worthless items. Surprised that her father kept a diary, Zehra starts to read it. The diary begins with a very calligraphic and beautiful writing, but in the following chapters it increasingly scribbles.

An idealist civil servant Murshid's acquaintance with the realities of state staff Murshid successfully graduated from Faculty of Political Sciences, received his diploma and left his bedsitter in Vezirhan, never to return. His mother, who lived in poverty and struggled with various problems to get her son educated, died before she could see him receive his diploma. With the pain of not being able to provide his mother with a comfortable and prosperous life, Murshid is appointed as an officer in attendance in Sivas, his first duty station. Settled back in a room, Murshid promises to do his duty in the best way possible and draws up a list of values and principles that he will strictly abide by. His hard work, determination and honesty attract everyone's attention. Seeing that he is a calm and docile character, his superiors begin to put all the work on his shoulders. Murshid even begins to do the work of some of his colleagues upon request. Upon the invitation of The Accounting Clerk Mr. Tahir, Chief Secretary of Education and The Pious Foundations Examiner, he becomes a guest at the tables where alcohol is served in the evenings, even though he does not want to do so. Although he had promised not to drink and to work hard, he sees that his colleagues are all alcoholics and he is forced to adapt to them will-nilly. When he realizes that his meekness and calmness are being exploited, he refuses to do the work of one of his friends, turning down his request. Later, Mr. Murshid tells his best friend about his remorse for what he has done and Mr. Tahsin, the chief clerk of education, tells him that he has started to mature. Because Mr. Murshid alone does in five hours what five officers do in five days. The civil servants who are uncomfortable with this situation start to undermine him. Mr. Tahsin tells Murshid that he is ahead of his other colleagues and that he is being exploited because of his docility and diligence. He tells Murshid that it would be better to start a job as a corrupt employee and become a proper employee than to start as an idealistic employee and become corrupt. Since the first day of his employment, Murshid has set the expectations of his superiors quite high. Having witnessed the corruption in the state staffs, Murshid starts to compromise and ignore the principles he has set day by day. His disappointment leads him to frustration and indifference.

Exile of Murshid to (R...) Upon the request of the governor, Murshid becomes a qaimaqam in (...). Although he wants to act in the interest of the people in the places where he is appointed as a qaimaqam, the notables living in the region want the budget to be spent for themselves. In his first duty station, Murshid has a fight with the Director Mr. Nasuhi, who secretly meets with an Armenian woman in his house and causes various rumors about him. The next day Murshid is exiled to (R...). Witnessing children dying from drinking contaminated water, Murshid found funds to bring clean water to the region and personally worked on the water canal works.

Murshid dismisses the Reactionary teacher However, he is sent to (M...) upon complaints of the notables who trade in the region. Here, he encounters a teacher who makes older students beat up younger ones. Murshid goes to the school and inspects the teacher and realizes from his appearance and behavior that he is a reactionary old man, a remnant of the madrasa. During the inspection, the old teacher tries to not lose his job by giving suggestions to the students. But Murshid orders his dismissal. The dismissed teacher appears before Murshid with his children and grandchildren and begs him to be reinstated. But Murshid does not pity old man and does not give up the values he believes in. However, he admits to himself that he is weak and cannot be good civil servant.

Obstruction of Murshid's development initiatives Some time after he started working in (S...) another sub-district to which he was assigned, Murshid was inspected by the civil inspectors and it was revealed that he had committed some irregularities. Some errors and omissions were detected in the survey reports, expenditures and other documents. Murshid explains the situation to the inspectors and is found right. But he is still cannot escape misfortunes.

Murshid gives up on society and he devotes himself to his family Four years and seventy-five days had passed and Murshid started to work as the director of correspondence in Diyarbakir. He was

exhausted from suppressing the rebellions and uprisings by some Kurds. Murshid, who had formed a close friendship with Mr. Fadil, took him home the day he fell ill. He saw Mawaddat at the funeral of Mr. Fadil, who died a while later. Impressed by Mawaddat's sadness, struggles and cries, Murshid is convinced that he can find the love he is looking for in her. After Fadil's death, the family falls into a very difficult financial situation. On a day when Mrs. Makbule and Mawaffat are preparing to leave the city, Murshid asks Mrs. Makbule for Mawaddat's hand in marriage. Mrs. Makbule gives his daughter in marriage without a second thought. Having failed to serve the public, Murshid will now devote himself to his family.

Murshid's struggle for the happiness of his family Although Mawaddat's older sister Ruhsar is married a merchant, there are some rumors that the marriage is not going well. After Murshid marries Mawaddat, he becomes a son-in-law. He sees Mrs. Makbule, who constantly prays and sews, as his own mother. Mrs. Makbule indirectly requests her daughter's wishes from Murshid through possible rumors in the neighborhood. She makes Murshid buy an expensive ring for her daughter, has the curtains of the house renewed, hires a cook because she and her daughter cannot cook, and buys her daughter a velvet dress that the wife of Public Works Engineer wore at the governor's wedding. Even though these expenses are incidental, they put Murshid in a difficult financial situation. But Murshid gladly makes sacrifices for his family. After Mrs. Makbule tells him that the Head of Penal Department's wife is talking behind Mawaddat's back, Murshid meets with him and an argument breaks up between the two. The next morning, Murshid goes to the governor's office and is asked to apologize to the Head of Penal Department. Since he has to provide for his family, Murshid leaves without objecting for fear of losing his job.

Murshid's corruption for the happiness of his family Not wanting to put his family in a difficult situation by losing his job, Murshid controls his anger and tries not to run into the governor and the Head of Penal Department. His friend, a taxman, is accused of misconduct. The taxman's wife asks Mrs. Makbule to talk to Murshid and pleads for his forgiveness. Murshid does not want to help an officer who has abused his authority. But he cannot resist the insistence of his beloved mother-in-law and meets with the inspector who inspects his civil servant friend. With his insistent and threatening statements, he intimidates the inspector and ensures that the taxman does not receive a heavy penalty. Murshid, who makes all kinds of material and moral sacrifices for Mawaddat to be happy, employs several people at home. But despite all her comfort, Mawaddat suffers from nervous breakdowns. Mrs. Makbule tells Murshid that Mawaddat wants to go to Istanbul and that she misses Ruhsar. She adds that she also misses Istanbul, even though she has never been there before. Murshid then begins to beg and flatter his superiors in order to be transferred to Istanbul. With the success of his efforts, Murshid finds a job as a customs inspector in Istanbul.

Murshid begins to face the truth about his wife and mother-in-law Before leaving the city, Murshid meets Mr. Abdussamed and hears some facts from his mouth. Mr. Abdussamed tells Murshid that Mr. Fadil died because of the dishonesty and intrigues of Mrs. Makbule and Mawaddat, that they are unscrupulous monsters and that they made every man they get their hands on do whatever they wanted with all kinds of tricks. Mr. Abdussamed tells Murshid that he married a very wrong woman and that he is sure that things will get much worse in Istanbul. Because Diyarbakir is a small place. But Istanbul is a place where money flows like water and they can never be satisfied. One of the valets in the house is the mother-in-law's lover. For the first time, Murshid begins to accept the truth he was afraid to admit to himself. Mr. Abdussamed lends money to Murshid and sends him off with some advice.

Murshid's going under by Mawaddat and Makbule Ten years have passed since they settled in Istanbul and Murshid has been imprisoned. Due to the greed and intrigues of his wife and mother-in-law, Murshid could not hang on to any job for long. Because of this, he degenerated day by day, started to do illegal work and became an alcoholic. Unemployed for a long time, Murshid becomes the clerk of Mr. Necip, with whom he lives in the same neighborhood. Initially astonished that he is given a job, Murshid accepts it in order to cover his family's expenses and make a living. He tries to endear himself to his daughters, who treat him coldly, by distancing himself from alcohol and bad habits. He worries that his children will be corrupted by his wife and mother-in-law and that his daughters will become like them. But the mother and daughter tell all sorts of lies and play tricks to keep their daughters away from their father. The girls are disgusted and ashamed of their father. But Murshid takes care of his daughters as much as he can and tries to raise them and protect them from bad influences.

Murshid's cuckoldom by his wife When Murshid sees Fareeha, dressed up in a colorful burqa and with make-up, talking to a young man on the ferry, he realizes that she is under the influence of his wife and mother-in-law and intervenes. Murshid sends away Fareeha home. One day at home, he finds Mr. Necip's love letters to Mawaddat. The couple has been in secret love for years. Mrs. Makbule, a so-called religious person, accepted the situation and remained silent when Mawaddat mentioned that she would commit suicide. Murshid, who handled the situation very calmly, goes to Mr. Necip the next morning and throws the letters in his face and slaps him. Then Murshid returns home with the divorce papers and learns that Mawaddat has run away to her relative and Mrs. Makbule is pretending to sleep. Murshid foresees that in case of divorce, the incident will be known by everyone and he does not want his daughters to live with such shame. Therefore, he gives up the divorce but decides not to see Mawaddat again.

Death of Murshid's eldest daughter Fareeha Murshid, who is forced to smuggle marijuana, tobacco and alcohol, learns that Fareeha has fallen ill. Fareeha, who had got tuberculosis, dies a few weeks after contracting the disease. Murshid can do nothing but grieve as he watches his daughter wither away in front of his eyes. Because everyone blames him for Fareeha's current situation. Therefore, Murshid cannot even see Fareeha on her deathbed and even she is buried. He can only go to her daughter's grave after the crowd has dispersed. Murshid tells that Fareeha has been saved and is now free.

Murshid Rescuing Zehra One day, during a ferry ride, he meets Jawdat, one of his old classmates. He tells his friend, who is the tenant one of the Romelia sanjaks, about what he has experienced. Jawdat wants to help Murshid. Murshid asks Jawdat to make sure that Zehra is admitted to a good boarding school. Despite all his efforts, Jawdat can only send Zehra to the religious school. Finally, Murshid finds peace with the peace of mind of having saved his only remaining daughter. He saved Zehra from Mawaddat and Makbule. Visiting the school years later, Murshid spied on Zehra from afar and witnessed her turning into a young girl day by day. At the end of the diary, Zehra sobs and stands up trembling and goes to her father's body. She cries and kisses his feet and asks for his forgiveness. Zehra has now learned to pity.

Themes

Social class In the novel *Mercy* written by Resat Nuri Guntekin, important information is given about the internal and external dynamics of the middle class in the last period of the Ottoman Empire and the first years of the Republican period. The internal conflicts and tragedies experienced by the middle class, especially by civil servants and merchants, are revealed to the reader in the light of the author's realistic techniques. The characters belonging to the middle class in Guntekin's literary work consist of idealistic characters who serve the society and selfish and malicious ones. They appear to be in a constant conflict and affect each other in a dialectical way. Among the characters belonging to the upper class of society, there are generally immoral relationship based on self-interest.

Injustice Mr. Murshid, the protagonist of the novel *Mercy*, starts his professional life with a very idealistic mindset and progressivist principles. However, the civil servants working in the state institutions abuse their duties, fail to fulfill their duties, take the easy way out and become corrupt, causing Mr. Murshid to move away from the values and principles he believes in and fall into despair. The goodwill of Mr. Murshid, who takes actions and initiatives for the benefit of the people, is constantly abused and when he stands up against injustice, he is exiled to other districts. Mr. Murshid, who is also got hard done in his private life by his wife and mother-in-law, continues to defend the values he believes in despite all the negativity. As a result, he is completely devastated. However, he achieves success with his daughter Zehra, whom he saves by making her go to boarding school.

Mission Zehra and Murshid, the two protagonists of the narrative, are well educated and want to devote themselves to society because they feel indebted to it. Having very idealistic characters, they take actions in line with the interests of the society. Murshid, who works as a civil servant and rises to the position of district governor, makes a list of principles he will follow and never give up. He works harder than any other civil servant, stays away from harmful habits and thinks of others, not himself. Likewise, Zehra becomes a highly idealistic, hardworking, principled, sensitive and disciplined teacher. They do their best for the progress and positive development of society and likewise for the development of individuals. But these ideals lead the two to their own destruction.

Love The biggest reason why Murshid, one of the protagonists of the novel *Mercy*, does not give up on the values and principles he believes in despite all the negativities and evils, is his love for humanity and justice. In the later parts of the novel, he does his best to save his daughters, who have not yet been soiled and preserve their purity, and to ensure that they raise a sensitive consciousness. He gives up his own future for the happiness and welfare of his daughters and makes great sacrifices for them. His love for humanity, society and his family gives him the strength to endure despite every adversity. At the end of the literary work, it is seen that Murshid, who has made a great sacrifice to save his daughter Zehra, constantly thinks about her for the rest of his life and only wants to see her when he falls ill.

Suffering Mr. Murshid, who begins to work enthusiastically and tirelessly to serve his loved ones and the society after graduating from the Faculty of Political Sciences with great hopes and expectations, starts to lose his hope day by day due to the injustices, unfairness, abuses and all other negativities he is exposed to. Seeing that all the sacrifices he has made for people, society and his family, and the good intentions he has shown them are abused, leads him to his own destruction. Similarly, Zehra was raised on lies by her mother and grandmother. Because of this, she completely misunderstood her father and therefore stayed away from him. She grew up estranged from her father and has no pity for him because she hates him for the negative qualities she attributes to him. But when she learns that her father is not the man she thought he was, she experiences great regret and learns what it means to feel pity.

Greed Throughout the narrative, Mr. Murshid, who works as a district governor in various districts, struggles against the rentier and exploiter notables. Apart from these, most of the civil servants in the state institutions he works in are greedy and self-interested. But what really destroys Mr. Mursit is the greed of his mother-in-law Mrs. Makbule and his wife Mawaddat. They try to get everything they want from Murshid through all kinds of deceit, lies and cunning. The greed of his wife and mother-in-law is the most important reason for Murshid's tragedy.

Character Analysis

Mr. Murshid (Open/Social/Rational/Emotional)

Mr. Murshid, one of the protagonists of the narrative, is Zehra's father, Mawaddat's husband and Mrs. Makbule's son-in-law. Mr. Murshid, who grew up as an orphan and was raised in poverty by his mother, graduates from Faculty of Political Sciences and is entitled to receive a diploma. He is appointed to Sivas, his first duty station, as an officer in attendance. Here he attracts everyone's attention with his hard work, goodwill and morality. But these positive personal qualities of his were abused by degenerate people. He is constantly exiled for his efforts to serve the interests of the people. Finally, realizing that he could not serve the public and that the current dynamics did not allow him to do so, Mr. Murshid devoted himself to his family. However, his wife Mrs. Mawaddat and his mother-in-law Mrs. Makbule also exploit him financially and spiritually. He loses his eldest daughter. He spends his last a chink of light on Zehra. Finally, Mr. Murshid is rewarded for his efforts and sacrifices for Zehra.

Unfortunate "It was clear that these were the work of a shaky drunkard. But as the pages were turned from the end to the beginning, the writing became relatively improving. Especially the title page was astonishing. An elegant and ornate inscription inside a watercolor painting of a flower: "My Diary" (Güntekin 1995, 44).

Positive "I don't interfere with anyone's opinion. But I, for my part, am very satisfied. I'm young, hardworking and in good health. I don't have stars in my eyes. My nature is very docile, meticulous, I am not angry and not greedy" (Güntekin 1995, 45).

Idealist "In small towns with no sightseeing and no debauchery, it is better to work. I am a young man who has so far found pleasure in working. I will undoubtedly do the same from now on. I'll be an active, honest civil servant. If I progress, great, if not, my current salary will support me anyway..." (Güntekin 1995, 47).

Principled "1 – I'll always follow my conscience. 2 – I'll never disobey the law. 3 – I'll get along well with my colleagues. 4 – I'll not lie. 5 – I'll not take bribes" (Güntekin 1995, 49).

Happy "Today I received my diploma. What happiness! I'm becoming one of the important people of my country. I'll soon be appointed to a good civil servant position. I've taken a solemn pledge for this. Farewell to poverty, hardship, sleepless nights... I'll never even pass by this poor bedsitter in Vezirhan again" (Güntekin 1995, 52).

Deceived "You were disgraced all over Diyarbakir... And only in this issue? She got you into debt. She tried to compete with the richest and most local servant families in Diyarbakir. She made you spend five times your earnings. Then she used you as a tool for his endless gossip and filth. You fought with everyone because of them" (Güntekin 1995, 100).

Pessimistic "If you're not broke and unemployed, no matter what I say, you can't understand what I'm waiting for? You can't possibly imagine what it is like for a man with no money, no job, to go home empty-handed in the evening. There is no job for me. I look at my life history, it is full of evils from top to bottom. Lack of harmony, disobedience to the law, contumacy to superiors, instability, nonemployment, then dishonesty, theft, drunkenness" (Güntekin 1995, 109).

Altruist "My child is at school tonight... When I thought that she was now lying in a clean bed among innocent children and compassionate teachers, I was as happy and proud as if I had sat on the throne of a monarch wearing a crown on my head" (Güntekin 1995, 126).

Zehra (Open/Social/Conscientious/Rational)

Zehra, one of the main characters of the narrative, is the daughter of the couple Murshid-Mawaddat and the granddaughter of Makbule. Zehra, who has been raised on lies fabricated by her mother and grandmother, has always hated her father and blamed him for all the disasters that befell them, was sent to the religious school at a young age. After studying there for about two or three years, he goes to Women's Teacher Training College. Meanwhile, she loses her mother and grandmother. After getting into Women's Teacher Training College, she does not meet her father again and ignores him. Appointed as a teacher in a town in Anatolia, the protagonist rises to the position of head teacher. The school where she works becomes famous as "Zehra's School". Zehra is a highly principled, idealistic, conscious, sensitive, responsible and determined character who shows no mercy to students who lie, cheat and disobey the rules. She is determined to fight against everyone for her beliefs and values. At the end of the narrative, she experiences great sadness and regret when she learns that she was deceived by her mother and grandmother and that she had completely misunderstood her father. She realizes that she is actually like his father in every respect. She forgives her father and learns what pity is.

Diligent "Four years ago, a little girl came here as a teeny-weeny graduate from the Women's Teacher Training College... She suffered a lot at first... But she was not disheartened... She made the town her homeland and the school her family home... She worked with such determination and diligence that they could not prevent her from being promoted and advanced. Before she was twenty-five years old, they made her head teacher and handed her over a huge girl's school..." (Güntekin 1995, 9).

Excited "(Zehra felt like going crazy while reading these lines of her father. 'Almost my ideas', she said, touching the paper with her fingers to make sure that she was not in a dream. Then something else came to her mind: 'I wonder if I am this man's daughter with my soul and ideas as well as with my body?' she thought and stopped reading for a while" (Güntekin 1995, 81).

Reputable "She is now twenty-nine or thirty years old, the most beloved, trusted and respected person in the town. She still retains her old influence over his old students, most of whom are now big housewives... They listen to her like a big sister or a mother, they let her solve all their problems" (Güntekin 1995, 9).

Trusting "Am I not going to take you to the schools in a little while? First, we'll start with Zehra's school. This school is the best institution you'll see in your election circle. People have forgotten the real name of the school. They know it as "Sister Zehra's School" (Güntekin 1995, 5).

Responsible "Don't bother sir! It's known that Zehra is the most well-known person in the province" he said" (Güntekin 1995, 5).

Neat "I wish you could hear that voice when she is talking about something serious and giving orders... You see how carefully she inspects the children... She would get angry at the mothers of the children who came to school badly-dressed in the morning, and sometimes she would even invite them to the school and scold them..." (Güntekin 1995, 12).

Vindictive "No, no," she said. I don't accept any relationship between me and this person... You can give Mr. Murshid's fancy goods to the beggars who will come to the cemetery tomorrow. I'll of course pay his debts if he has any" (Güntekin 1995, 42).

Regretful "She putted down her face and kissed his father's feet in a state of religious trance with tears streaming down her face: - Father... My poor father... Forgive me..." (Güntekin 1995, 127).

Mawaddat (Close/Asocial/Unconscientious/Emotional)

Mrs. Mawaddat, in collaboration with her mother Mrs. Makbule, succeeded in portraying Mr. Murshid as a bad father both to their children and to the outside world. The tears shed by Mrs. Mawaddat and Mrs. Makbule have a great impact on the image of a bad father in Zehra's child mind. The sins of these two women, who deceived Mr. Murshid in Diyarbakir by appearing to be oppressed, will come to light in the following chapters of the Memoirs. Certain characteristics of the mother and daughter, which are not discussed in depth throughout the novel, are conveyed in different dimensions through Zehra's and Mr. Murshid's perspectives. Murshid realizes the masks worn by these ostentatious and weak-moral women only with the suggestion of Mr. Abdussamed before leaving Diyarbakir. Zehra, on the other hand, faces the bitter truth years later after reading her father's memoirs" (Kanter 2008, 254). Mrs. Mawaddat, one of the negative characters of the narrative, plays a leading role in the financial and moral collapse of Murshid. She wants her husband to earn more money and to make them live in luxury. She expects him to do whatever is necessary for this. She makes her children and everyone around her hostile to Murshid. Despite all his efforts and sacrifices, she deceives him. She is never satisfied with what he does and what he offers and constantly belittles him.

Manipulator "Now she realized that his mother was very sensitive and a bit short-tempered. She was quick to cheer up and quick to be depressed. If she had fallen to a man who would understand her and appreciate her, she would have been a very good housemother and spread happiness around her. Unfortunately, God had destined her for a vagabond, a womanizer, a drunkard, a rude man. Her husband spent all his earnings in places of debauchery, returning home at midnight" (Güntekin 1995, 36).

Cheerful "Her neighbors loved this cheerful, kind and humoristic young woman very much. They pitied and consoled her like a sister in times of calamity. There was especially one Mrs. Mesadet who became a second sister to Mawaddat" (Güntekin 1995, 31).

Beloved "My wife is as pure and innocent as an angel, despite all the suffering she has endured, my mother-in-law has remained pure and innocent like an angel... In a few years, maybe one or two little children join us..." (Güntekin 1995, 77).

Unhappy "She was tearing her disheveled auburn hair out and making her face bleed with his fingernails. The pain had dehumanized her, made her look like a baby monster that tears itself apart out of fear when trapped" (Güntekin 1995, 79).

Jealous "For instance, she sees that her other friends live better, dress better. That's why she gets angry with me, sulks, even fights a little" (Güntekin 1995, 87).

Materialistic "My son, the public works engineer had a velvet dress made for his wife for the governor's wedding... The woman said 'Let's see what the wife of the director of correspondence will wear to the wedding... Mawaddat heard about it... She was upset; can we use an illness or something like that as an excuse to keep her away from this wedding?" (Güntekin 1995, 89).

Tactless "As for Mawaddat, she arches her eyebrows: "Mom, you know he is a soft man. He is his friend, but let's see if he will listen to him." She doubted my strength. To be honest, his doubt provoked me more than the old woman's tears" (Güntekin 1995, 91).

Selfish “What did you get by becoming a honest man? As if you had stolen like everyone else, we would also have had a lot of money. We wouldn't have suffered like this. Couldn't you at least open your eyes a little more? Look at the old provincial treasurer... He became undersecretary of something in Istanbul” (Guntekin 1995, 93).

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