

Looking Back: *Turkish Literature as World Literature*,
eds. Burcu Alkan and Çimen Günay-Erkol. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021. pp. 264
ISBN 9781501358012

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ABSTRACT

Recently, interesting and insightful books have been published both in the Anglo-American world and beyond that address this question and provide answers to the current state of the discipline. Burcu Alkan and Çimen Günay-Erkol have published a volume that provides an overview of the history of “Turkish Literature as World Literature.” The edited volume aims not only to draw attention to the development of Turkish literature in the global world, but also to provide some useful insights into the significance of Turkish literature in the global literary context.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 19 Oct 2024

Accepted 18 Dec 2024

KEYWORDS

Turkish literature, world
literature, comparative
literature

Looking Back: “Turkish Literature as World Literature”

The concept of “world literature” has become one of the key terms in literary studies, expanding the boundaries of comparative literature. The scope of the two disciplines - world literature and comparative literature - has not been clearly defined in the Anglo-American world. Goethe includes “world literature” in the field of comparative literature. Mathew Arnold includes “world literature” in comparative literature. The confusion becomes even more problematic when both terms are discussed in the context of world literature. In particular, much space is given to this conflict in Bernheimer’s study of multiculturalism and in Saussy’s “Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization.” Such research and studies develop useful arguments but complicate the connection between national and international boundaries in cultural and literary studies, leading to less global and more local debates in scholarship. Recently, interesting and insightful books have been published both in the Anglo-American world and beyond that address this question and provide answers to the current state of the discipline. Burcu Alkan and Çimen Günay-Erkol have published a volume that provides an overview of the history of “Turkish Literature as World Literature.” The edited volume aims not only to draw attention to the development of Turkish literature in the global world, but also to provide some useful insights into the significance of Turkish literature in the global literary context.

The book begins with the question “What is Turkish literature as world literature?” and discusses how Turkish literary traditions have actively contributed to world literature by overcoming long-

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CUJHSS (e-ISSN 3062-0112) Published by Çankaya University. © 2024 The Author(s).

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held Eurocentric assumptions and hierarchical frameworks. The argument is deepened by examples of how Turkish literature has been and continues to be influenced by transnational relations, while critiquing the center-periphery dynamics that is common in the study of world literature. This volume attempts to clarify the confusion of the discipline by building a bridge between scholarship in the field of cultural history, translation studies and comparative literature. The second chapter of the study examines the historical and cultural factors that have influenced the emergence of modern Turkish literature. Fatih Altuğ's chapter on "Cosmopolitanism" and "Nationalism" examines how Ottoman cosmopolitanism and multilingualism shaped early Turkish literary modernity. Altuğ argues that the literary field of 19th century Istanbul, where Armenian, Greek and Turkish literary traditions coexisted, serves as a microcosm for the complex dynamics of world literature. Similarly, Etienne E. Charrière examines the Ottoman script revolution of 1928 and shows how the changes in language and script policy affected the accessibility and global reception of Turkish literature. This discussion emphasizes how translation and transcription have traditionally facilitated the integration of Turkish literature into global literary discourse.

The authors of "Transnational Connections" explore the possible connections between Turkish and non-Turkish literature from different linguistic and national backgrounds. Taking into account the mutual influence of different literary and cultural traditions, "Transnational Connections" also examines how Turkish literature interacts with global literary movements and influences other traditions. Turkish writers and poets are also influenced and sometimes inspired by those in other countries. Such leading cross-cultural influences, adaptations or reinterpretations of ideas can be seen in Adıvar and Nazım. Şima İmşir and Anirudha Dhanawade analyze Halide Edip Adıvar's connections with Indian nationalist thought and highlight the importance of Turkish literature in creating cross-cultural discussions beyond the West. Three studies on Nâzım Hikmet examine his reception in many global contexts, including Greece and the Arab world. These contributions highlight the poet's transnational legacy as a symbol of socialist solidarity and cultural struggle, cementing his place as a cornerstone of Turkish literature's global reach. The study also examines the influence of contemporary Turkish writers on global literary marketing. Referring to Pamuk's works and point of view, Başak Çandar criticizes contemporary Turkish literature for relying too much on national identity when defining world literature. Simla Doğangün similarly examines the popularity of global literary markets in Şafak's work to discuss how her works market cultural hybridity to foreign readers.

Literature often transcends its origins and influences authors and readers around the world. Comparative literature studies how literary works are translated, altered or reinterpreted in other cultures, leading to new readings and interpretations of familiar writings. The emphasis on foreign literature in comparative literature helps to broaden the literary canon, which has generally focused on Western works. It challenges Eurocentric perspectives and recognizes the diversity of global literary traditions by including voices from Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and indigenous cultures. Edited by Burcu Alkan and Çimen Günay-Erkols, the volume skillfully integrates diverse and competing perspectives on international and comparative literature in the Turkish literary milieu and offers readers a broader, more inclusive view of the human experience by acknowledging different voices and opinions from different cultural, historical and social contexts, overcoming the limitations of focusing on only one national or language tradition. The anthology addresses common themes in Turkish and world literature, focusing on global issues such as identity, migration, colonialism, gender and the human condition. This work focuses on comparative literature to examine how many cultural contexts and communities have influenced Turkish literary traditions. Readers also discover how the study of international literature can provide a broader, more inclusive perspective on human experience by recognizing multiple voices and opinions from different cultural, historical, and social situations. Comparative literature makes it possible to examine these issues in a variety of cultural contexts and to highlight the

different ways in which different communities grapple with and represent these challenges. Overall, world literature in comparative studies helps to undermine the concept of "literary isolation" and provides a broader, more dynamic and holistic perspective of literary history and human civilization.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s)