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Some Critical Reflections on *Turkish Literature as World Literature*

Turkish Literature as World Literature
Üzerine Bazı Eleştirel Düşünceler

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Some Critical Reflections on *Turkish Literature as World Literature*

Abstract

This unconventionally long book review elaborates on the edited volume *Turkish Literature as World Literature* and how the idea of world literature is theoretically or methodologically tackled in the case of Turkish literature. This review thus meditates on the strengths and shortcomings of the volume, particularly those of David Damrosch's approach to world literature proposed by the editors in the introduction to examine the various aspects and influences of Turkish literature on a global scale. In this sense, it critically discusses the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological issues offered by the articles in the volume, with a focus on the introduction.

Keywords

World literature, Turkish literature, translatability, cosmopolitanism, comparative literature

Öz

Olağandan daha uzun olan bu kitap incelemesi, *Turkish Literature as World Literature* adlı çalışmayı ve bu çalışmada dünya edebiyatı fikrinin, Türk edebiyatı örneğinde teorik ve yöntemsel olarak nasıl ele alındığını detaylı bir şekilde incelemektedir. Bu değerlendirme, Türk edebiyatının küresel ölçekte çeşitli unsur ve etkilerinin incelemek adına bu çalışmada ve özellikle de giriş bölümünde, editörlerce önerilen David Damrosch'un dünya edebiyatı yaklaşımının güçlü ve zayıf yönleri üzerinde durmaktadır. Bu minvalde, bu yazı, giriş bölümü de dahil, çalışmada yer alan makalelerin sunduğu kuramsal, kavramsal ve yöntemsel yaklaşımları eleştirel bir şekilde tartışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Dünya edebiyatı, Türk edebiyatı, çevrilebilirlik, kozmopolitlik, karşılaştırmalı edebiyat

Giriş

Since the 2000s, the field of world literature has expanded to include a set of various theoretical and methodological approaches that address the globalization of literature. The increasing interest in the idea of world literature has turned the subject itself into a popular subfield of literary studies that is located somewhere among comparative literature, the sociology of literature, and translation studies. Innumerable publications related to the idea of world literature as a mode reading a particular author's reception or a translated literary work in another culture have formed the main subjects and aspects of this subfield, such as circulation, reception, (un)translatability, the notion of "worldliness," and power relations substantially determined by sociocultural values, past legacies, and changing trends in the global publishing industry. *Turkish Literature as World Literature*, edited by Burcu Alkan and Çimen Günay-Erkol, is the first of its kind when it comes to Turkish literature. The volume consists of twelve articles and a relatively short introduction, largely examining several internationally-recognized authors (e.g., Halide Edib, Nâzım Hikmet, Orhan Pamuk) and their works in the context of world literature, either as a mode of reading or comparatively.

This important volume was indeed published at the time of ongoing debates on alternative Turkish literary historiography, the problematics of literary criticism, and the (de)canonization in the Turkish literary field. However, it seems to me that it has not received the attention it deserves, or at least, enough attention that could have led to more fruitful academic and intellectual debates on the conception of literature. If one leaves aside Azade Seyhan's study,[1] *Turkish Literature as World Literature* is the primary work that uses "world literature" as a conceptual tool, a theoretical framework, and more particularly, a mode of reading while analyzing Turkish literature and its position on a global scale based on various cases. This volume also conveys the challenges of its initialness, especially as an edited book published in English that tackles complex, controversial subjects and a historically wider era of Turkish literature.

In the introduction, "What is in a proposition?" editors Alkan and Günay-Erkol critically discuss several theories and methodological approaches to world literature and position Turkish literature in this discussion. They examine the conditions and expectations of the global publishing market, the varying receptions of some translated texts from Turkish in different cultures, and several sociocultural or even ideological factors that form uneven power relations in terms of their translations and circulations. Alkan and Günay-Erkol explicitly underline that the preposition "as" in *Turkish Literature as World Literature* "refer[s] to a qualification toward not Turkish literature

[1] Azade Seyhan, *Tales of Crossed Destinies: The Modern Turkish Novel in a Comparative Context* (New York: The Modern Language Association, 2008).

but what world literature is in its relation to national literary traditions."[2] This aim is understandably realistic and strategically pragmatic due to the variety of subjects and limited space of the book. The volume then primarily tackles several authors and aspects of modern Turkish literature in the late-nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, including the case of the translation of Yunus Emre into German in recent decades. In other words, the articles in this volume examine a very limited number of internationally-known authors and some of their works rather than frame a wider historical period, which would indeed be an impossible task for a single volume.

Accordingly, most of the articles in the volume focus either historically or analytically on the translation, circulation, and reception of very few internationally-recognized Turkish authors or their works in different countries, periods, and contexts. The well-defined intention of the editors in the introduction is explained to challenge "conventional ways of thinking" and the idea of the influence of Western traditions on Turkish literature, and they thus attempt to reverse this one-dimensional perspective and investigate "the impact of Turkish literature on other literatures and cultures on both the 'eastern' and the 'western' side of the threshold."[3] This proposal clearly problematizes and necessarily reformulates the idea of influence in the center-periphery model and this mode of analyzing Turkish literature. That is to say, the volume's general approach relies on the use of world literature theory not to understand Turkish literature as a national literature itself, with its own internal dynamics, or "a history of Turkish literature in the world scene."[4] Instead, it intends, as the editors point out, "to look closely at writers who had a global impact"[5] and discusses their works within this context of world literature.

Although this challenging proposal is an explicit choice and aim of the editors and seems to critically re-think the so-called center-periphery model and the Western dominance in world literature studies, it is also inherently problematic or paradoxical. The volume, as discussed by the editors in the introduction, examines, even arguably affirms, the idea of world literature from a certain approach, namely the approach of David Damrosch. In their brief review, depending on Damrosch's theory of world literature, Alkan and Günay-Erkol touch upon several leading scholars and their varying theoretical and methodological approaches to world literature, though not quite fairly and convincingly. In their reference to Damrosch's distinction between a hypercanon, a countercanon, and a shadow canon, the main point of their discussion is to answer the question, "How is Turkish literature situated in the *countercanon* of world literature and its

[2] For the sake of the conciseness of the review, I do not give a full reference of each article within the volume. Burcu Alkan and Çimen Günay-Erkol, eds., *Turkish Literature as World Literature* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 1.
[3] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 2.
[4] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 8.
[5] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 8

translation-publication access point?"[6] This inquiry considers the reality of global capitalism, standardization, translation, and the power relations between literatures on a global scale, along with some historical insights.

Within this aim, the editors uncritically foreground Damrosch's approach to world literature, particularly his "elliptical" model that considers "writing that gains in translation"[7] and its various implications, though a few articles in the volume implicitly or explicitly challenge this approach itself (for instance, Peter Cherry's contribution). Damrosch's definition of world literature simply relies on two major aspects. The first one refers to a large corpus of texts that cross national and linguistic borders. The second one is based on a mode of reading these works, particularly a literary work, an author, or literature in general that is translated, transnational, or beyond the context of national literature. The crucial choice of the editors then unavoidably determines the way in which world literature is conceptualized and discussed in this volume. Indeed, Damrosch's approach to world literature is problematic due to its ignorance of the sociocultural, economic, and ideological power structures in terms of translation and circulation beyond national and linguistic borders. Thus, this problematic line of thought is carried into the conceptual and theoretical frame of the volume.

The translation, circulation, and reception of a literary work in a particular time and space can depend on many different factors and conditions. My main critical point here is that a trajectory from periphery literature to the so-called center –or the other way around– though uneven, is reciprocal, multi-dimensional, and dynamic (in that it can vary over time). This reciprocal relation is valid for any other uneven power relation, involving necessarily the impact of global market values and emerging literary trends. Moreover, the critical goal of showing the "reverse" impact, from either a periphery to a center or a periphery to another (semi-)periphery, by examining some cases of Turkish literature on a transnational or global scale, inherently relies on the need to prove for the West (and its academic readership) that Turkish literature in translation and circulation is influential and a part of world literature. The crucial question is what we gain particularly from Damrosch's approach that is already taken for granted when it comes to the question posed by the editors, except for testing Damrosch's theory and its (in)validity. Each article in the volume indeed provides carefully-examined, balanced, and sophisticated answers to the question posed by the editors, some of which also offer new perspectives for future studies in this field.

Yet the aim to reverse the direction of the influence in the case of Turkish literature by challenging the Anglo-American approach to world literature turns into an affirmation of this approach from the perspective of the (semi-)periphery-center model, and by even relying on it, even though the goal is quite the opposite. Like some shortcomings and problematic aspects of different theoretical and methodological approaches, Moretti's distant reading –but only this

[6] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 3. For further discussion, see David Damrosch, "World Literature in a Postcanonical, Hypercanonical Age," in *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, ed. Haun Saussy (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 43-53.
[7] David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 281.

aspect rather than some of his other proposals and thoughts– and its understanding of the center-periphery model are justifiably criticized by the editors due to his "perspective of center."[8] But when it comes to Damrosch's definition of world literature, there is no particular criticism and in-depth questioning despite the self-awareness of the editors regarding "the core issues of equity and equality in literature and literary scholarship."[9]

Another point in the introduction pertains to how one "traces a variety of works, writers, and trends in Turkish literature that had a global impact"[10] and how one can measure these aspects, based on their translation, circulation, and reception. Is the circulation and reception of literary work itself enough for such an impact? What are the intra- and extra-literary conditions in some particular cases then? These questions and the problematic aspects of Damrosch's humanistically overarching and pedagogical understanding of word literature are beyond the aim and scope of this volume. However, they are so central to the issues of world literature and thus require more careful elaborations and critical approaches beyond his elliptical model both in this volume and future studies. The twelve articles in the volume variously examine these matters in their specificity, and some, challenging this model, even add new perspectives. The introduction, on the other hand, does not offer a novel theoretical frame or a methodological tool, except for a focus on the impact of Turkish literature on other literatures and utilizing some existing (controversial) lines of thought and concepts, based solely on Damrosch's theory, in the case of Turkish literature in translation and circulation.

The dilemma of this volume is that it "is largely comprised of works that have been translated into major European languages,"[11] though the editors underline their awareness of this fact. With this limitation, the diversity of the so-called "global" writers and translated literary works analyzed in the volume are strikingly uneven and questionable. Taking this a step further, one can also problematize the phrase of the global author by asking whether it is possible, for instance, to consider Mahmut Makal's English translation, *A Village in Anatolia*,[12] as a part of world literature, and if so, to what extent it can be positioned in the way the editors propose? Moreover, why do the English translations of Bilge Karasu remain unnoticed while those of Orhan Pamuk's become a part of the world literature canon? A central discussion of world literature should trouble the idea of a global writer and examine its various implications. And in particular it should scrutinize why some texts or authors gain international and literary recognition while others do not –and cannot– in the case of Turkish literature. Focusing on writers who had an impact on other literary cultures, or globally, is one way to discuss some of these aspects, but it reveals only the humanistic, one-dimensional, and thus considerably uncritical features of world literature –"the winners"– in this

[8] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 4.
[9] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 4
[10] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 9.
[11] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 9.
[12] Mahmut Makal, *A Village in Anatolia*, trans. Sir Wyndham Deedes ed. Paul Stirling (London: Valentine, Mitchell & Co, 1954).

respect rather than the extra- and intra-literary factors as a whole. Certainly, a volume cannot cover all these matters and problems of world literature. Nevertheless, this volume is a remarkable initiative in that it provides some valuable insights into world literature theories in relation to Turkish literature and paves the way for a discussion of hitherto unexamined subjects.

The first part of the volume includes three articles. These articles function as "a basis for readers unfamiliar with the history of late Ottoman-early Republican literature."[13] It is then obvious that the volume targets a readership that is unable to read Turkish or that has no knowledge of Turkish literature. The first article, written by Fatih Altuğ, depicts the main tensions between cosmopolitanism and nationalism in modern Turkish literature, discussing the "three distinct literatures, each of which used a different script and none of which interacted much with the others."[14] Altuğ underlines that Turkish literature produced in Arabic, Greek, and Armenian scripts have no apparent interaction with one another in the Ottoman literary field, with some exceptions. The lack of translation between them is explicit, and symptomatically "each language formed its modern literature through translations from French."[15]

Fundamentally, this article takes the terms cosmopolitanism and nationalism for granted and offers no concrete definitions of them. It discusses the entanglement of both understandings or emergence in its remarkable overview of crucial names like Fuad Köprülü, Ahmet Mithat, Mehmet Rauf, Halid Ziya, and Fatma Aliye. However, throughout the article, the normative dichotomy between nationalism as pejorative and cosmopolitanism as affirmative is maintained, and the tone of wishful thinking in this sense dominates the texture of the article and the way it presents the brief history of Turkish literature in the late Ottoman era and the early period of Turkish nationalism. These two terms are already slippery, and they do not provide anything but abstract and biased generalizations. Moreover, the conceptions of cosmopolitanism, Turkishness, the local, and national literature differ according to authors and literary figures as their meanings and functions have changed in different contexts and eras. How can the late Ottoman era of Turkish literature be considered cosmopolitan? Does cosmopolitanism imply ethnic diversity, linguistic variety, the co-existence of different scripts, or the networks of the different writers and the literati in the Ottoman literary field? Or, more precisely, is cosmopolitanism the right term in this context, or even in literary studies per se?[16]

Yet Altuğ's article provides an excellent overview of the main figures of Turkish literature in relation to the notion of world literature in their thoughts, pointing out the importance of "the female Ottoman writers of the 1890s," who "attracted more acclaim in world literature than their

[13] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 9.
[14] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 19.
[15] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 20.
[16] For a remarkable discussion of the term cosmopolitanism and its (mis-)uses in Ottoman case and studies, see Edhem Eldem, "Istanbul as a Cosmopolitan City," in *A Companion to Diaspora and Transnationalism*, ed. Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), 212-230.

male counterparts."[17] It also shows that it would be useful to scrutinize the views of Fuad Köprülü and Mehmet Rauf in the context of world literature and a comparative perspective for future studies.

Etienne E. Charrière's article focuses mainly on the intricate relationship between languages and scripts, taking the case of the Orthodox-Turkish-speaking community Karamanlides. The article discusses the "traffic in scripts," meaning "script shifts, script crises, and script debates," by utilizing Damrosch's concept of "scriptworld."[18] The discussion centers on the complex interplay between the ethno-religious communities and language, particularly *karamanlidika.* In this article, Charrière first problematizes the "national" canon, placing emphasis on "the non-inclusion of Armenian- and Greek-scripted novels in the canon of nineteenth-century Ottoman prose fiction."[19] With this concern, the article examines three different cases. The first case is the two versions in Greek-scripted Ottoman-Turkish of works by the novelist Ahmet Mithat. The second one is the translation and transformation process of *Temaşa-i Dünya ve Cefakar ü Cefakeş* (Theatrum Mundi and Tyrants and the Tyrannised) (1871-72), written by Evangelinos Misailidis. This Greek-scripted Turkish novel is the outcome of various adaptions of other texts written in different languages (Spanish, French, and Greek) at different times.

The final case is more recent and involves a fruitful discussion of Mehmet Yaşın's experimental novel, *Sınırdışı Saatler* (Deportation Hours), published in 2003. This novel consists of notes "on the history of karamanlidika literature, reproductions of the cover pages of karamanlidika books, as well as, most importantly, passages entirely composed in Turkish but using the Greek alphabet."[20] Yaşın's position in Turkish literature is unique and challenging in its own regard, and, as Charrière puts it succinctly, the novel lets the readers think "into the politics of borders, both scriptural and geographic."[21] As this article shows, it is necessary to investigate Turkish literature in Cyprus in detail and beyond the idea or context of a "national literature." More generally, these historical and comparative investigations should encompass Turkish literature in the periphery of Turkey due to the past legacies and cultural similarities or interactions, such as Turkish literature in communist Bulgaria and the images of Turks and Turkishness in Romanian literature.

Joseph Twist's article examines the translations of Yunus Emre by poet and translator Zafer Şenocak into German, first published in 1986 and republished in 2005. This article uses the notion of Damrosch's simple rule of the circulation of a text beyond its original culture either in translation or in its original language. Twist discusses Şenocak's intention to prove to the German audience how "an engagement with Turkey's mystical heritage can bring about a shift toward a

[17] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 24.
[18] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 37.
[19] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 43.
[20] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 47.
[21] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 49

more reflective process of enlightenment, which can also revitalize Islamic thought and culture."[22] In this way, Twist argues that Şenocak problematizes the established values and "the binaries of faith and reason, Islam and enlightenment, and German and Turkish culture, demonstrating the transformative potential of Turkish literature as world literature for our understanding of modernity and enlightenment"[23] through these translations. Yet Şenocak's well-intentioned aim can be considered self-Orientalist as it seeks to prove, through literature (particularly these translations into German) that Turkish culture itself can be "humanist." This view is similar to that in the introduction of this volume and its positioning of world literature, though the context, style, and period in this case are different.

Part II is comprised of five articles. The first, by Peter Cherry, comparatively examines Turkish and British Women's travel writing, particularly that of Zeyneb Hanım and Grace Ellison in relation to the Ottoman Turkish Orient. The comparative depictions of a Harem and the British House of Commons from two women's perspectives show the cultural practices of gender segregation and how both Western and Orientalist images were produced in such texts. Moreover, as Cheery notes, rather profoundly, "the two writers frequently 'perform' Turkishness either in dress, in writing, or in adopting hoax identities."[24] In this discussion, the article emphasizes the importance of travel writing in world literature and shows "how travel writing reinforces global hierarchies rather than posing a way for reading transnational exchanges apolitically."[25] Contrary to Damrosch's humanist understanding, which overlooks the ideological aspects and power structures in different scenarios, this case, remarkably analyzed by Cherry, displays how "readers actually want stereotyped ideas of cultures reaffirm rather than rewritten."[26] All in all, more studies on travel writing with different approaches may expand the theoretical scope of world literature and its limits, dealing with hitherto unexamined aspects of Orientalism, readers' expectations, and stereotypes, and imagology.

The second article of Part II, by Anirudha Dhanawade and Şima İmşir, mainly investigates the reception of Halide Edib based on three distinct texts —the Lahori translation of her novel *Ateşten Gömlek* (Shirt of Flame) (1922), her lectures of 1935 in India, and her 1937 book *Inside India*. This discussion contextualizes these texts in relation to Halide Edib as both the literary figure and nationalist hero and how both these texts and Halide Edib herself are perceived in the context of India. The translation of Halide Edib's novel –as *The Daughter of Smyrna* (a shorter version of the title)– has crucial differences from the original because its translator re-constructed the content of the Turkish War of Resistance and adapted it for the case of Indian nationalism at that time. This article shows not only the transformation of Halide Edib's novel in a different language and context, but also her great impact as a significant figure of Turkish nationalism in

[22] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 56.
[23] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 69.
[24] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 78.
[25] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 76.
[26] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 79.

India. It therefore becomes a good example and a basis for future studies that require a stronger focus on Halide Edib's exile in France and England as well as the Arabic, German, and Swedish translations of her works.

The three chapters of this part also tackle the translation and reception of Nâzım Hikmet in different countries and how his poetry went on to influence other poets, particularly in Greek and Arabic cultures and literatures. Mediha Göbenli's article gives an international portrait of Nâzım Hikmet and overviews the translations of his works, particularly his poems and their reception in France, the U.S., and East and West Germany. This article provides a useful overview of Hikmet's reception, including the main events in his literary life, and it also shows how his reception, especially in the comparative case of East and West Germany, changed with the collapse of the Soviet Union. There is, however, a serious mistake in the article that needs correction in the next edition. In the article, it states, "In 1950, Nâzım Hikmet shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Robeson and Neruda."[27] Nâzım Hikmet never received the Nobel Peace Prize; he was awarded the Soviet Union's International Peace Prize in 1950. The correct information is even given in the following article!

The next article, by Kenan Behzat Sharpe, discusses the details of the reception of Hikmet's poems in Greece, particularly their influence on the Greek poet Yannis Ritsos and on Greek music and culture, including his changing reception. Following Pascale Casanova's understanding of the "Greenwich meridian" of literature, the article points out that "Ritsos's Greek translations of Nâzım came through French."[28] Sharpe emphasizes the importance of Moscow as an alternative center, or "Greenwich meridian", setting literary standards and values during the Cold War. Similarly, the last article of this part, by Mehmet Hakkı Suçin, focuses on the influence of Nâzım Hikmet on Arab Poetry, giving several concrete examples of texts and references to Tawfiq Zayyad, Mahmoud Darwish, Samih al-Qasim, and Mum'in Bseiso. This article, in this respect, is significant, as "Nâzım Hikmet's influence on Arab poetry is limited mainly to pieces in newspaper columns and academic studies on the subject are scarce."[29] These three articles, examining the influence and reception of Nâzım Hikmet in various literary cultures, demonstrate the necessity and importance of similar studies in other contexts, such as the reception of Nazım Hikmet in communist Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, or in the Turkic countries.

The last part of the volume consists of two chapters on Orhan Pamuk, a chapter on Elif Şafak, and a chapter on the politics of the literary prize in Turkey. Başak Çandar compares Orhan Pamuk and Juan Goytisolo as two global writers. The article begins with Goytisolo's perception of Pamuk, who is "undoing nationalist myths."[30] Both writers possess many common features, such as an

[27] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 115. See also Talat Sait Halman, "Nazım Hikmet: Lyricist as Iconoclast," *Book Abroad* 43, no. 1 (Winter 1969), 62. The Nobel Peace Prize in 1950 was awarded to Ralph Bunche.
[28] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 133.
[29] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 149.
[30] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 173.

attempt to go beyond the nationalist context, a representative of the (semi-)periphery, and postmodernist themes and tropes. However, despite these commonalities, the circulation and reception of Goytisolo and Pamuk on a global plane are strikingly distinct. Çandar argues that both authors gained global and well-deserved recognition for how they have perceived changes in the country and/or in the literature they represent. Unlike Goytisolo, Pamuk and his authorship are always related to Turkey and its historical and popularized position of "in-betweenness." The cliché of the bridge "between East and West" is inseparable from the reception, success, and canonization of Pamuk as an author from Turkey.

The following article, by Irmak Ertuna Dawison, deals with the pedagogical aspect of world literature in the case of Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* and how this novel is read by foreign students. In Dawisons's classroom experience, the objects and collections depicted in the novel's plot provide fruitful discussion among those unfamiliar with Turkish culture and the sociocultural context of these materials. This discussion is linked with the intersection between local Turkish culture and global human values, then generates a kind of cosmopolitan understanding among the students. World literature is inherently supposed to be multi-cultural, diverse, cosmopolitan, and thus humanist to a large extent. Its core idea and pedagogy are based on these features and values. The real-life experience depicted in this article re-affirms the validity of such values in the case of *The Museum of Innocence*. However, unlike the experience analyzed in this article, similar experiences may not always be received in the same positive way due to different variabilities and expectations, as already challenged by Cherry's article.

Simla Doğangün's article discusses Elif Şafak and her novels, examining the notions of hybridity and cosmopolitanism and how she contextually and discursively uses them. The article tackles how Şafak "positions love as instrumental in enabling characters to move beyond their given identities and localities,"[31] while dealing with Sufist elements of Islam and the idea of (non-)belonging in *The Forty Rules of Love*. Gündoğan's general way of reading Şafak's novels is, although an in-depth close reading, it seems to me, the way Şafak herself wants her readers to read her novels. However, the article also underlines that, despite cosmopolitanism being an antidote to globalization, "the subversive potential of Şafak's fiction is limited to an attempt to appeal to the first-world reader."[32]

The last article of the volume, by Kaitlin Staudt, focuses on the political and literary implications of literary prizes in Turkey, especially based on the ruling political party, the AKP, which aims to set a traditional cultural and literary field as an alternative to a secular one. In this respect, it examines features of the Necip Fazıl Literary Prize as a part of this ongoing initiative. In contrast to the liberal cosmopolitan advocacy of literatures and many well-recognized Turkish authors in this respect, Staudt argues, "the power of [President] Erdogan's language lies in the fact that her connection to Turkishness is imagined as a Turkishness that is highly personal, but also

[31] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 208
[32] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 217.

translatable."[33] The Necip Fazıl Literary Prize serves this aim as an alternative prestigious literary prize. The article shows us "how global ethno-nationalist authoritarianisms espouse alternative forms of circulation"[34] simultaneously and as an alternative to the liberal, cosmopolitan vein of Turkish literature on a global scale.

With all the shortcomings, strengths, and perspectives it provides, this important volume serves as an example of how Turkish literature can be studied in different ways, historically, theoretically, and methodologically. Particularly in an environment where repetitive and sometimes trendy concepts are taken from literary studies dominated by the Anglo-American tradition and the English language, we need a more inclusive understanding of literature, novel approaches and methodologies, but perhaps at the same time we need to avoid falling into the trap of ready-made opinions and seemingly sophisticated concepts that are indeed unfunctional or too abstract. World literature can be seen as either a mode of reading and a new horizon to better understand not only the translation, circulation, reception, and impact of an author and literary work or group in another culture, but also comprehend the complex relations or transitions between different national literatures and also unravel the uneven power structures in either literature in general or a particular author and literary work, relating them to the intra- and extra-literary aspects.

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[33] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 230.
[34] Alkan and Günay-Erkol, *Turkish Literature*, 235.