

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN TURKEY

Sibel Irzik¹
Jale Parla²

RESUMO: A Literatura Comparada na Turquia.

PALAVRAS CHAVES: Literatura Comparada; Turquia

ABSTRACT: Comparative Literature in Turkey

KEY WORDS: Comparative Literature; Turkey

The beginnings of modern literary criticism in Turkey go back to the mid-nineteenth century when the Turkish literati adopted the mission of eliminating the duality in the bifurcated Ottoman language, divided between the high court rhetoric and the daily spoken Ottoman. The object was the vernacularization of literature so that the new genres and forms adopted from the West, such as the novel, the essay, and drama, as well as non-literary discourses such as treatises on subjects ranging from religion to the pros and cons of Westernization, would reach greater audiences. The dominant approach to literature was, therefore, primarily linguistic, as Nergis Ertürk has convincingly put in her *Grammatology and Literary Modernity in Turkey*, a work of invaluable scholarship that spans a century of Turkish literature and criticism. According to Ertürk, the Ottoman Empire's integration into “the geopolitical network of global capitalist modernity” in the nineteenth century was accompanied by “the emergence in Turkey of ‘phonocentrism,’ or the privileging of speech and oral language, as well as the problematics of representation that accompanied it.”³ This linguistic preoccupation with literature bore with it a particular consciousness, which can be designated as a “comparative consciousness,” that is to say, the awareness of and confrontation with the strong Arabic and Persian influence that had shaped both spoken and written Ottoman Turkish. By the second half of the nineteenth century, this “comparative consciousness” directed to foreign influence included the adoption of French matter as well as the Persian and the Arabic. Influence study, therefore, marks the beginnings of Turkish literary criticism.

Following the 1850-1920 linguistic attempts toward vernacularization, the first decade of the Turkish Republic introduced a radical project for the modernization and nationalization of the Turkish language by undertaking a series of language reforms that included the adoption of the Latin alphabet, purification of the language from Arabic and Persian vocabulary, syntactic accommodations presumably more in tune with a pristine Turkish idiom, as well as a political program that enforced the carrying out of all bureaucratic communication in accordance with the language purification project. The Republicans considered this project as a final solution to the

¹ Professor at Sabanci Universitesi

² Professor of English and Comparative Literature in the Department of Comparative Literature, Istanbul Bilgi University.

³ Nergis Ertürk, *Grammatology and Literary Modernity in Turkey* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 5.

diglossia that had infected Turkish (and Turkishness?) at the time of the empire.¹ The greater part of the Turkish literati embraced the project, with an important exception. The novelist, critic, and literary historian Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar objected to the unnaturalness of the process and continued to consider the fundamental problem of Westernization and its effect on literature as a crisis in language.²

The most heated nineteenth century controversy concerning foreign literary and cultural influence took place in the last decade of that century and was carried over to the twentieth century, lasting until the more comprehensive and erudite approach to criticism by Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar. It was Ahmet Mithat Efendi, novelist, teacher, short story writer, critic, merchant, popularizer of Western forms and genres, and modernizer, who started this controversy upon the publication of a now classical novel, *Mai ve Siyah* (*The Blue and the Black*, 1896-97), by the aesthete Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil (1866-1945). The novel is a *Künstlerroman* based on the story of a poet *manqué* whose talent (and life) is wasted because of the narrow mindedness and callousness of his middle class environment as well as his own weaknesses. The novel became an immediate success, which must have provoked Ahmet Mithat's jealousy. He wrote an article on the new "foreign" influence from France, which he called "decadence," and severely criticized decadent writing as being deleterious to the norms and values of Ottoman culture. He did not directly mention *Mai ve Siyah*, nor did he refer to the melancholic poet of that novel, Ahmet Cemil, but the target of his criticism was obvious to everybody in the literary circles. In this article, "The Decadents," Ahmet Mithat wrote: "During the last couple of years, a few young men popped up in Paris, who have designated themselves as 'decadent.' Actually a very improper designation. And yet, the impropriety of their practice surpasses the impropriety of the appellative."³ The heart of the matter in the controversy lay in the heated discussions of traditionalism and modernization that had dominated the Ottoman literary scene for the greater part of the nineteenth century. For modernizers like Ahmet Mithat (who were also the first novelists), Western literary models had to be used with caution and moderation. In the imitation of a Western genre such as the novel, for example, plots and writing techniques could be adopted, but the general practice of novel writing had to be informed by the Ottoman cultural heritage, which was deemed to be superior to Western culture.

Now decadence was seen as Western culture at its worst: degenerate, exaggerated, fantastic, and immoral. The Turkish novel as well as poetry had to be protected against such a fatal influence. The Turkish decadents, like the writer of *Mai ve Siyah*, were not only criticized for having opened the way for irresponsible adaptation of the French decadent novels, but were also accused of debasing the language by using words, phrases, and idioms borrowed from French. The controversy continued in heated discussions about bad and good influence until, in the early Republican era, the novel followed a highly nationalistic route and the rhetoric of decadence was used to describe the betrayers of the nation who sided with the Western powers of occupation and their Turkish collaborators. The novels of the canonical Turkish novelist Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu stand out in confining the linguistic markers and the imagery of decadence to the depiction of the corrupt, foreign and foreignized characters of his novels (*Ankara*, *Sodom Gomore*). The theme was taken up in a seminal article by Berna Moran, entitled "From the a la Franca Beau

1 For further discussion see Jale Parla, "The Wounded Tongue: Turkey's Language Reform and the Canonicity of the Novel," *PMLA* 123, 1 (2008): 27-40.

2 Ertürk, *Grammatology*, 6.

3 Quoted in Birol Emil, *Servet-i Fünuncular ve Dekadanlık Meselesi* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Mezuniyet Tezi, 1959), 66-67.

to the a la Franca Betrayed.”¹

Tanpınar, who considered the nineteenth century as marking Turkey’s passage from one civilization to another, read its literature as the register of the pains of that passage. His study was the first of its kind that paved the path for future comparative studies. It is to be noted, however, that the first edition of Tanpınar’s *History of Nineteenth Century Turkish Literature* (1949)² did not run a second edition until 1956, seven years after its first publication. This simply shows that Tanpınar’s comparative approach did not find an enthusiastic reception among the Turcologists. The book includes two significant chapters: “A general View of the Westernization Movement,” and “Westernization Movements of the Nineteenth Century.” Tanpınar traces socio-economic developments in the early nineteenth century Ottoman Empire and their political repercussions, and relates them to the literary practice of the Turkish modernizers of the period. He was unique in attempting to grasp the *Zeitgeist* of nineteenth century Turkish literature as it had not been done before and would not be done for several decades after the publication of the *History of Nineteenth Century Turkish Literature*. For several decades Tanpınar remained the only Turkish critic who combined intrinsic and extrinsic approaches to the text, highlighting its intertextuality at the same time.

In the opening chapters of his *History of Nineteenth Century Turkish Literature*, Tanpınar has invaluable observations on the Islamic epoch of Turkish literature, where he relates the divine ideology of the Ottoman court to Ottoman poetry. In his analysis of the influence of Arabic and Persian poetry, he talks about the belatedness of Ottoman poetry in joining these two traditions, and therefore, remaining an imitative, abstract, lifeless, and soulless tradition. He makes the same observation about having belatedly appropriated Western literary models. However, he has a remedy to offer for the latter belatedness. That remedy is the establishment of erudite and judicious literary criticism.

In an article included in his *Edebiyat Üzerine Makaleler* (Essays on Literature)³, Tanpınar endeavors to establish the basic difference between the *Weltanschauungen* of the East and the West. This difference rests on the relationship of the two cultures to “things” (eşya). Whereas the West, in its relations to its physical environment, aspires to change it by an appropriation of “things” (“eşyaya tasarruf ediş”), the East does not attempt to control and transform it. This basic difference in the relationship to things has served to engender two different economic and cultural practices in the two worlds. This and similar observations and speculations of Tanpınar, reminiscent of the essentialist formulations of Mme. de Stael and Taine in early nineteenth century comparative criticism, definitely serve to raise more questions than they answer, but they remain unique in their investigative, comparatist approach to arts in general and literature in particular.

Berna Moran’s *A Critical Glance at the Turkish Novel*⁴ introduced contextual (socio-historical, cultural, intertextual) plus textual (close reading executed by the methodologies of New Criticism and Russian Formalism) study of chosen Turkish novels (from 1870 to 1970) in a comparative perspective. The study comprised chosen novels from the 1870s to 1970s, and an Auerbachian approach that started with a particular text and expanded to the literary and cultural contexts in which the texts were shown to be situated. This venture into an area of the late Ottoman and Republican novel, jealously protected by the Turcology departments, did not meet with any

1 Berna Moran, “Alafranga Züppeden Alafranga Haine,” *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1983), 219-226.

2 Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *On Dokuzuncu Asır Türk Edebiyat Tarihi* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2012).

3 Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, “Şark ile Garp Arasında Görülen Esaslı Farklar”, *Edebiyat Üstüne Makaleler* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1998).

4 Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış*, v. I-III (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1983-1994).

notable reaction from those departments, as the study was the first of its kind, and Berna Moran, educated in English literature, was nevertheless a respected scholar in Istanbul University. When other studies followed, however, by comparatists educated in other languages and literatures, murmurs of displeasure began to be heard. Such studies were deemed to be superficial and even unscholarly, as they lacked the philological annotations that Turcology departments required of scholarly practice. Someone not educated in the Turcology departments and foreign to its literary practices was bound to be approaching Turkish texts with a “foreigner’s glasses,” by which was meant a Western critical and theoretical approach, quite unfit for the philological study of Turkish literature. Annotation of influence was the *sine qua non* of any approach to a Turkish text (in which these Westernized critics were not competent, as they could not read Arabic and Persian literatures and the Ottoman script). Interpretation could only be built upon philological skills if it was not to be considered a superficial, fantasized commentary. This attitude built quite an impenetrable, and at times hostile, barrier between the Turcologists who confined comparison to influence scholarship and comparatists who were educated in comparative literature departments abroad and employed a wider approach to the texts, involving the study of themes, motifs, archetypes, etc. To give an example, a Turcologist would list the translation of Fenelon’s *Telemaque* among the first translations into Ottoman Turkish, but would not raise the question of why this text was chosen in the first place, and moreover, why *Télémaque* figured among the first works to be translated not only in the Westernizing Ottoman, but also in the Westernizing Arabic, Persian, and Russian literatures as well. (Parla and Belge attempted to explain this as the significance of the theme of fathers and sons in the early eras of Westernization in these countries.)¹ This resistance by the Turcologists to what was considered “speculative interpretation” brings us to the subject of Auerbach’s residence in Istanbul University as the chairman of the Western Languages and Literatures and the question of whether the discipline of Comparative Literature was indeed founded in Istanbul or not.

Auerbach’s comment in the epilogue to *Mimesis* about how he had to write the book without access to a fully equipped library and scholarly paraphernalia, and about how he would probably not have dared to write such a book had he not been in precisely such a situation² seems on the face of it to refer quite clearly to the difficult but at the same time liberating nature of working outside his usual academic context. In his essay on “Secular Criticism,”³ Edward Said begins *his* well-known commentary on Auerbach’s statement by initially interpreting it along those lines, as the expression of a “surprising modesty.” But Said’s text also includes an element of surprise as he moves rather quickly from Auerbach’s words about his being deprived of the latest scholarly books and practically all periodicals to the conclusion that

The book owed its existence to the very fact of Oriental, non-Occidental exile & homelessness. And if this is so, then *Mimesis* itself is not, as it has so frequently been taken to be, only a massive reaffirmation of the Western cultural tradition, but also a work whose conditions and circumstances of existence are not immediately derived from the culture it

1Jale Parla, *Babalr ve Oğullar: Tanzimat Romani'nin Epistemolojik Temelleri* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1990), 23-36; Murat Belge, *Step ve Bozkır: Rusça ve Türkçe Edebiyatta Doğu-Batı Sorunu ve Kültür* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2016), 9.

2 Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard Trask (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), 557.

3 Edward Said, “Introduction: Secular Criticism,” *The World, the Text and the Critic* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), 1-30.

describes with such extraordinary insight and brilliance but built rather on an agonizing distance from it.¹

Considering that there is no specific reference in Auerbach's statement in the epilogue or anywhere else in his book to the '*Oriental'ness* of his location in exile and that there is no evidence of the impact on his work of this particular location as a cultural context, it is clear that Said is not simply interpreting Auerbach's words, but appropriating the "conditions and circumstances of [Auerbach's temporary] existence" in Istanbul as emblematic of the type of "secular" comparative criticism that he is interested in practicing.

This is an entirely legitimate appropriation, realized from within the Anglo-American discipline of comparative literature, inflected with Said's own crucial intervention in it, and informed by a historical understanding of the causes and meaning of Auerbach's exile during the Second World War. And precisely because of this specific contextuality, it is the appropriation of Auerbach as the European scholar in Oriental exile, as the figure of the exilic, homeless critic, and not an investigation of Auerbach's interaction or his lack of interaction with the specific academic and intellectual environment in which he was assigned an important role, if only briefly. Amir Mufti makes this clear in his article "Auerbach in Istanbul."² In response to Abdul Jan's Mohamed's criticism that Said accords much importance to Istanbul as Auerbach's place of exile despite the lack of evidence for any role it played in his work, Mufti states that seeking evidence for any cultural "influence" of Turkey, the Middle East, or Islam on the content of Auerbach's work is rather beside the point. He contends that "the relevance of this location, or, more precisely, this dislocation, lies in the light it throws on the relationship between the critical consciousness and its object of study —Western Literature."³ Mufti is right about Said's strategic use of Auerbach's non-Occidental exile, but his point also raises questions that are relevant to the recent attempts by scholars of comparative literature to reconsider the genealogy of the discipline with attention to Istanbul as its presumed birthplace. What does it mean for the significance of a location to be articulable primarily as a dislocation? What does it mean for Istanbul's presumed place in the emergence of comparative literature to coincide with its presumed identity as "historically the site of Europe's other, the terrible Turk," a discursive construction, that is, of the kind that comparative literature seeks to undo?

In a recent book titled *East-West Mimesis*⁴ Kader Konuk takes a different path and endeavors to identify forms of convergence or resonance between Auerbach's work and his temporary cultural surroundings. Her stated aim is to "stimulate the interdisciplinary, transnational debate about exile and secularism within the humanities" by "investigating secular scholarship as the outgrowth of an exchange between German émigrés and Turkish reformers."⁵ Against the tendency in contemporary criticism to identify exile with "critical detachment and superior insight," to "reduc[e] it to a mere metaphor for uprootedness,"⁶ she seeks to place this particular historical case of exile in the context of Turkey's Westernization reforms. Such a contextualization is for her a necessary step toward "a more nuanced, historically specific study of East West relationships,

1 Said, "Secular Criticism," 8.

2 Amir R. Mufti, "Auerbach in Istanbul: Edward Said, Secular Criticism, and the Question of Minority Culture," *Critical Inquiry*, 25, 1 (1998), 95-125.

3 Mufti, "Auerbach in Istanbul," 102.

4 Kader Konuk, *East West Mimesis: Auerbach in Turkey* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2010).

5 Konuk, *East West Mimesis*, 13.

6 Konuk, *East West Mimesis*, 12.

one that highlights Ottomans and Turks as agents, not victims of Westernization.”¹ Her study is indeed a careful examination of this Westernizing agency as it manifested itself in the Turkish educational reform of 1933, which brought German émigré scholars to Turkish universities, and in the more general attempts during the following few years toward Westernization through literature and the humanities, including, most strikingly, the establishment of the State Translation Bureau and the translation and publication of Western classics at a massive scale.

However, Konuk's welcome move of shifting attention to the Turkish context also reveals several ways in which the relation between the exiled German intellectuals and the Turkish academic and cultural scene was a 'non-encounter.' One instructive example is the fact that from the point of view of the Turkish reformers, the so called 'guest' scholars were not Jews, not outcasts from a Europe engaged in self-destruction, but simply Europeans who were there to instruct the Turkish intellectuals in becoming European. As Auerbach himself was aware and stated in one of his letters, their Jewishness mattered only as a safeguard against their being engaged in espionage or political propaganda on behalf of European states. To what extent, if any, Auerbach and the other refugees from the Nazis' discrimination and violence were aware of the Armenian genocide and the policies of ethnic cleansing implemented against Greek and Jewish minorities in the immediate history of their host country is not clear. But the Turkish indifference to the Jewish scholars' predicaments and to the meaning of their presence in Istanbul became blatantly evident in the ironic fact that several Nazi scholars also found refuge in Turkish universities when they, in turn, were displaced as a result of post-war de-Nazification processes in Germany. The Turkish authorities do not seem to have noticed any contradiction between the employment of Nazi scholars and the presumably humanist goals of the Turkish university reform. The new arrivals were also Europeans, after all.

The 'non-encounter' that is more relevant to comparative literature and the frames and politics of comparison is that Turkish literature did not become an object of comparative criticism during this period, either for the eminent émigré philologists or for the Turkish critics they trained. The European scholars of literature left Turkey in the years following the war, without leaving many visible traces of a critical legacy, and Turkish literature did not become accessible to the type of close and contextual reading exemplified so brilliantly in Auerbach's work until several decades later, mostly beginning in the late 70's. For all her commitment to the idea of a humanist reform as an exchange between the German scholars and the Turkish reformers, Konuk also admits that “the idea of Europe that [Auerbach] developed in *Mimesis* came at the cost of denying the very cultural site in which he found himself while in exile,”² and argues that “Turkey works *ex negativo* in the author's circumscription of the Judeo-Christian world: it is via this lacuna that the Judeo-Christian world first emerges as a bounded one.”³ Once again, it is through silent exclusion and as an unread, unexamined lacuna that Turkish culture becomes indirectly involved in comparison.

It is not possible to attribute this fact solely to the inability or unwillingness of most of the foreign scholars to learn Turkish. The absence of critical contact through comparative literary and cultural analysis is evident in fact, even in the case of Leo Spitzer, who spent three years in Istanbul University before Auerbach's arrival, did learn Turkish, and wrote an essay comparing certain grammatical and lexical features of the Turkish language to those of several Romance languages.

1 Konuk, *East West Mimesis*, 7.

2 Konuk, *East West Mimesis*, 21.

3 Konuk, *East West Mimesis*, 16.

Emily Apter has recently seized this fact as an alternative emblematic moment in the exilic foundations of comparative literature and appropriated the figure of Spitzer writing about his own encounter with Turkish to propose comparison as an ethical engagement with cultural otherness predicated on a policy of non-translation.¹ But Apter's appropriation of Spitzer's linguistic encounter with Turkish as a model for comparison is realized at the cost of glossing over not only the deeper failure of encounter that can be seen in Spitzer's ready use of Orientalist generalizations, but also, once again, in the absence of actual Turkish literary and cultural texts in the picture. Throughout the essay Spitzer associates Turkish with emotionality, spontaneity, and repetitiveness, concluding that “the Turkish way of thinking . . . is able to see parallel events and life patterns without submitting them to reason and abstraction,” and it “can re-create the vitality and freshness of life in all its spontaneity.”² What is more remarkable than the particular characteristics he attributes to the Turkish mind is the seamless transition from linguistic observations to a definition of the “Turkish way of thinking,” without any engagement with the cultural artifacts that this alleged way of thinking has produced.

There was perhaps a historical inevitability in these repeated returns of silence and absence. As several critics have pointed out, comparability or comparativity “is not the product of a distinct, voluntary act of comparison realized by a knowing subject, but a condition, or mode of being.”³ Texts and literatures become comparable in specific ways at particular historical junctures, through particular cultural and theoretical frames. What prevented the establishment of a comparative critical legacy in Turkey through a dialogue between European and indigenous critical perspectives was the combined effect of the foreign philologists' Eurocentrism and the silences and denials imposed by Turkish nationalism during those founding years. Auerbach described this nationalism in a letter to Benjamin as a “fanatically antitraditional” one which consisted of “the rejection of all existing Mohammedan cultural heritage, the assumption of a mythical relation to a primal Turkish identity, [and] technological modernization in the European sense,” and saw it as the destruction of “the historical national character.”⁴

What needs to be added to this description is that this fanatical rejection of the past also included a denial of the traumatic nature of the encounter with Europe as a model. It proceeded on the assumption that a synthesis could be achieved according to the well-known formula of pragmatically appropriating some of the achievements of Western civilization while preserving an authentic inner identity untouched. The very ability to do this, the Turkish nation's inherent self-transforming capability to realize its true nature by shedding the shackles of tradition and inserting itself into an alternative, European history was in fact deemed to testify to the strength of this authentic inner identity. There was in this a willful repression of a cultural experience that is actually the result of a world-historical situation extending far beyond Turkey. As Harry Harootunian puts it: “The people of the world outside of Euro-America have been forced to live lives comparatively by virtue of experiencing some form of colonization or subjection enforced by the specter of imperialism.”⁵ Nergis Ertürk describes elegantly the Turkish manifestation of this world-historical reality by pointing out that “what we call national language and literature was

1 Emily Apter, “Global *Translatio*: The 'Invention' of Comparative Literature, Istanbul, 1933,” *The Translation Zone* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 41-64.

2 Leo Spitzer, “Learning Turkish,” *PMLA* 126, 3 (2010): 777.

3 Nataile Melas, “Merely Comparative,” *PMLA* 128, 3 (2013): 654.

4 Konuk, *East-West Mimesis*, 69.

5 Harry Harootunian, “Some Thoughts on Comparability and the Space-Time Problem.” *boundary 2* 32, 2 (2005): 26.

a problem of comparison in (and for) Istanbul long before Spitzer and Auerbach arrived there.”¹ Only several decades after Spitzer's and Auerbach's departures, when Turkish critics were ready to make this inherent problem of comparison their own and began to think it through the literary texts did these texts become accessible to modes of analysis similar to those Auerbach had employed in his foundational study. The literary expressions of the anxiety of living comparatively, the narcissistic wounds and traumas of Westernization became what Auerbach called an *Ansatzpunkt*, a point of departure for comparative literary analysis in Turkey.

The treatment of the overly Westernized and self-alienated snob as a key figure in Turkish literature exemplifies this point of departure. The snob as an object of satire is a mode of imaginary distancing and control. As long as he can remain distinct from the non-alienated, authentically Turkish and properly Westernized characters, and more importantly, as long as he can be prevented from seeping into and contaminating the sensibilities, the generic, formal and linguistic characteristics of the texts he inhabits, the trauma can be denied or contained. The beginnings of a comparative literature responsive to the Turkish context and capable of generating cultural self-reflection emerged when critics started to think from within modern Turkish literary texts to diagnose and theorize the impossibility of such a containment and the consequent destabilization of the demarcations between the inside and outside, the authentic and the mimetic.

Berna Moran's stylistic analyses of the Westernized snob, Jale Parla's notion of fatherlessness as a cultural and textual predicament in the first Turkish novels², Nurdan Gürbilek's return to the snob or the dandy as a haunting figure of lack and belatedness³, Orhan Koçak's psychoanalytic re-articulation of traumatic loss of cultural identity in terms of the missed ideal⁴, Nergis Ertürk's analysis of Turkish modernity and modernism as a linguistic and grammatological⁵ crisis are a few examples of the uses of the inherent comparativity of cultural existence as a point of departure for comparative literature. In the course of such analyses, European and Turkish texts became available to 'contrapuntal' readings alongside each other, as *Madame Bovary*, *Don Quixote*, and Dostoyevski's underground man, for instance, appeared in the readings of Turkish texts, no longer as evidence of plagiarism, traces of influence, or even as thematic correspondences, but as symptoms of structural forms of inauthenticity and belatedness which their presumed originals were also caught up in. These critical readings also had a decisive impact on the formation of the canon of modern Turkish literature. This is not to say that Westernization is the only and permanent problematic of comparative literature in Turkey and in countries with similar histories, but only to suggest that we need to develop comparison as a method of cultural self-reflection. It has to develop, not simply through an extension of geographic reach or an expansion of the range of studied texts, but by revealing, critically responding to, and theorizing existing modes of comparativity within as well as across national literatures. The problems that present themselves in the Turkish context today, for instance, have to do with several forms of repressed relations of comparativeness with the Ottoman heritage and with culturally and linguistically marginalized collectivities. Although, as everyone seems to agree, the kind of erudition and linguistic range that Spitzer and Auerbach had in their command is not feasible for today's comparatists, one good way

1 Nergis Ertürk, “Modernity and Its Fallen Languages: Tanpınar's 'Hasret,' Benjamin's Melancholy,” *PMLA* 123, 1 (2008): 42.

2 Jale Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1990).

3 Nurdan Gürbilek, “Dandies and Originals: Authenticity, Belatedness, and the Turkish Novel,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, 2-3 (2003): 599-628.

4 Orhan Koçak, “Kaptırılmış ideal: *Mai ve Siyah* Üzerine Psikanalitik bir Deneme,” *Toplum ve Bilim* 70 (1996): 94-152.

5 Ertürk, *Grammatology*.

in which to be faithful to their legacy would still be to acquire the necessary knowledge and linguistic skills to be able to use the texts relevant to these issues as new departure points. Otherwise, it would be all too easy but quite pointless to capitalize on Turkey's linguistic and cultural difference from the center as some kind of natural entitlement to a comparativeness to be politely accommodated in the canons and classrooms of world literature.

Recebido: 11/01/2017

Aprovado: 15/04/2017