

# Introduction to Turkish Literature Studies

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Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı, one of the most significant poets of the republican period in Turkey, aimed simplicity through the use of metre and rhyme as he believed that poetry should be a simple expression of feelings. He successfully represents the emotionality of childhood in his poetry using various other genres and modes such as tales and nursery rhymes. The simplicity of the tone and the style of the poems, thus, is significant.

A political activist, Aziz Nesin portrays a harsh critique of the oppression and brutalisation the common man faces, and he also highlights the bureaucracy and economic injustice he suffers from in his stories which blend the local with the universal. Nesin has received many awards in and out of Turkey and his works have been translated into over thirty languages. He stood against the military government after the 1980 coup in Turkey and the oppression of the intelligentsia. He endorsed free speech regarding Islam and combated religious fundamentalism, too.

Considered one of the most notable living novelists in Turkey, Adalet Ağaoğlu is also a revered intellectual, a playwright and a human rights activist who has been awarded numerous honors in addition to the literary awards she won in the fields of novel, short story and drama. Her well-knit prose mingles her first-hand experience of the socio-political context in Turkey with her conception of social pressure and gender prejudice. In the fictional urban setting she depicts, her characters experience the modernity struggle and oscillate between the old and the new, and their dilemma is further complicated by bewildering political, religious, economic and social transformation.

Gul Deniz Demirel's article, "Treatment of 'Death' in the Poems of Thomas Hardy and Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı" analyses how Tarancı and Hardy portray the theme of death. For both, the idea of death culminates in an anxiety regarding time as a result of the idea of transience, ageing and getting closer to the end. The idea of ageing leads to the poets' anticipating their own deaths and actually they sometimes aspire to die as they are fed up with all the grief they are afflicted with and they both consider death as a way of dissolution into nature. In this respect, they regard death as a refuge, yet they

are so entwined with life that they also fear being forgotten after death.

“Lost in the Freeplay of Signifiers: A Derridean Analysis of ‘Loving Tülsü’” written by Örmengül offers a Derridean reading of one of Nesin’s short stories, “Loving Tülsü” and intends to explore how the story typifies the freeplay of signifiers in language. The reader never finds out who Tülsü is as she resists any attachment to any fixed identity throughout the story. Tülsü, corresponding to an empty signifier, problematises the signification process itself. Tülsü, a woman who never appears in the story, thus, may be identified with all women since she cannot be defined or prescribed in linear temporality to result in a final signified.

Nurten Birlik’s article, “*Lying Down to Die: Breaking the mould*” aims to explore Aġaoġlu’s character Aysel’s purgation process within the social context and milieu which she was raised in. In the article, the strong parallelism between Aysel, the writer’s own life and the new era of the Republic is underlined. In two and a half hours in a hotel room, her past and present blend into the social context she lives in, and her effort to trace her past acts as a purgation process by way of which she discovers her suppressed bodily self. The new regime in Turkey, meanwhile, endorses women’s farewell to their traditional role as the secondary submissive sex and their gaining an important status in society. Education of children, especially that of girls from rural areas, was gaining importance in those years. However, despite the increasing awareness of women’s changing role and status in the society, the novel also highlights the failure to comprehend the equality of the sexes and the inevitable suppression of sexual identities. Among these radical changes and conflicts, Aysel attempts to establish herself challenging the traditions which are in contradiction with what she learned at school.

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