

# JORGE LUIS BORGES IN TURKISH: MAGICAL REALISM IN A POLITICALLY-AND- POETICALLY MOTIVATED LITERARY FIELD

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This article traces the multiple encounters of Jorge Luis Borges with Turkish readers in light of the publishing policies and social dynamics surrounding the region in the second half of the twentieth century. Although the first translation of his work into Turkish appeared as early as 1955, Borges became popular in Turkey during the 1980s, concurrently with many other Latin American authors, some of whom were participants in the magical realist literary stream. The article mainly investigates the positions of the Turkish translations of Borges and other Latin American writers within the 1980s literary repertoire that reflects the state of cultural production following the Turkish coup d'état in 1980. The revival of the fantastic genre by local writers during the same time period also illuminates the topic of Latin American magical realism in Turkish. Therefore, this article examines the activities of literary agents, namely the translators, editors, and critics, who acted as representatives of Borges and other Latin American authors in Turkey, in addition to mentioning the local representatives of magical realism. In order to present a holistic view, before embarking on this 1980s literary network, the study explores the initial translation of Borges into Turkish, published in a literary review in the 1950s, which seems to suggest an alternative context for the writer that carries traces of the golden age of the short story in Turkey. It concludes with a discussion of the state of Borges and Latin American literature in Turkish after the 1980s, with references to published translations and articles by local critics that delved into these particular subjects.

Jorge Luis Borges's initial and subsequent appearances in Turkish could be regarded as extensions of the journey of his literature in Europe. By the 1950s, French publisher Roger Caillois had introduced several of Borges's works into French. In particular, the volumes *Ficciones* (Gallimard, 1951) and *Labyrinthes* (Gallimard, 1953) initiated the journey of Borges in Europe. In 1959, his works appeared in Italian (*L'Aleph*, Feltrinelli, 1959) and German (*Labyrinthe*, Carl Hanser Verlag, 1959) (Irby and Yates); and in 1961, he received the Prix Formentor, followed by the publication of his two major English-language translations, *Ficciones* (Grove Press, 1962) and *Labyrinths* (New Directions, 1962). The 1960s witnessed Borges's first translations into many other European languages, such as Swedish (*Biblioteket I Babel*, 1963), Dutch (*De Aleph en andere verhalen*, 1964), Norwegian (*Labyrinter*, 1964), Portuguese (*História universal da infâmia*, 1964), Polish (*Fickje*, 1972), Greek (*Anthologia*, 1979), and Czech (*Brodiova zpráva*, 1979). Following the 1980s, the rest of the world encountered Borges through translations into Slovak (1980), Polish (1980), Albanian (1981), Hebrew (1982), Catalan (1983), Danish (1983), Romanian (1983), Hungarian (1984), Russian (1984), Slovenian (1984), Estonian (1987), Arabic (1987), and Bulgarian (1989).<sup>1</sup>

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The above list refers to the first translations of Borges's works that appeared in book form. In many of these regions, translations of his poems, stories, and/or essays had been published in periodicals before the appearance of these translated books.<sup>2</sup> This was also the case in Turkey. In 1955, a translation of the short story "La escritura del dios" appeared in the journal *Yenilik*, under the Turkish title "Tanrının Yazdığı Yazı" (The Writing of the God). The story was originally published in the Argentine paper *Sur*, then included in the short story collection *El Aleph* in 1949. It might be surprising to see Borges in a Turkish literary journal at a time when he was barely recognized in Europe and North America. However, the literary setting of 1950s Turkey may account for this early encounter between an Argentine writer and Turkish readers.

The 1950s cannot be examined separately from Turkey's transition to a multi-party regime, after which the country witnessed the implementation of a liberal democracy model that exhibited close ties with the USA. The economic and political developments of this era require more detailed elaboration that would exceed the scope of this article. However, the liberal environment promised by the political diversification of the 1950s can still be related to Borges's first encounter with the Turkish audience, as the political changes motivated the establishment of new publishing houses and periodicals that introduced new writers and genres in the spheres of both translated and local literature.

During the 1950s, many literary works that departed from the prevalent forms of literature in both content and style were introduced into the Turkish literary repertoire. First and foremost, this period is regarded as the golden age of the short story in Turkey. The genre owed its integration and popularity into the 1950s literary circle to such journals as *A*, *Dost*, *Mavi*, *Pazar Postası*, *Seçilmiş Hikâyeler*, *Yeni*

*Ufuklar*, *Yenilik*, *Hisar*, *Varlık*, and *Yeditepe*,<sup>3</sup> which published works by such innovative Turkish writers as Sait Faik Abasıyanık, Vüs'at O Bener, Nezihe Meriç, Nurullah Ataç, Peyami Safa, Yaşar Kemal, and Orhan Kemal, along with translations of such foreign literary figures as Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Tennessee Williams, Ray Bradbury, T.S. Eliot, Samuel Beckett, Federico García Lorca, Jorge de Lima, and many others. In addition, the policy of literary diversity that many of these private initiatives adopted, as well as the role they attributed to translation in the construction of a hybrid repertoire with an observable tendency towards Western literature, went in line with *Tercüme*, the state-sponsored journal of the Translation Bureau (1940-66), which encouraged the integration of the Western literary canon into the Turkish literary sphere by means of translation. Borges's early translation into Turkish in *Yenilik* is a product of this historical context. The translator of the story "La escritura del dios," Yalçın Tura, also translated works by André Gide and Albert Camus for Varlık Publishing, one of the pioneering private publishers in Turkey during the early-republican period.

As mentioned above, although the first Turkish translation of his works appeared in 1955, Borges became especially popular in Turkey during the 1980s, alongside many other Latin American authors, including magical realist writers. This particular corpus cannot be examined without reference to the state of cultural production in Turkey following the 1980 coup d'état, and the revival of the fantastic genre by local authors during that time. Therefore, before further introducing the corpus of Borges and Latin America related publications in Turkish, what follows is a brief outline of the political context of these publications and a discussion of the use of magical realism by Turkish authors in light of the translations of Latin American works within that genre.

The 1980 coup d'état had an observable impact on various fields of Turkish society, including literary and cultural production. As Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu states, after having put an end to political activity for three years, the military and civilian allies of the coup aimed to construct an integrated, indivisible, and non-ideological society. According to Sakallıoğlu, political pluralism had failed in Turkey owing to the heavy influence of Communist ideology, and religious tolerance would serve to restore this pluralism (262). The tolerance towards religion in the new constitution of 1982 brought nationalism, Islam, and conservatism back to the Turkish socio-political context. The growth of mass media, migration, and debates on religious identity all extended to discussions of ethnic and sexual identity (Berk 223), which set the grounds on which themes that were once considered taboo, such as ethnic minorities, Kemalism, secularism, religious sects, and gender roles, could be debated (Alankuş-Kural, Berk).

The impact of this paradigm shift on the publishing field was substantial. The translation and publication of left-wing texts gave way to the dissemination of new politics and identities via literature in general and fiction in particular, paving the way for experimentation with new genres and subjects. The first half of the 1980s

witnessed a boom in literary translations, as publishers showed interest in works from regions other than Europe and North America, thus widening the repertoire of literary translations. In line with these cultural developments, book fairs were organized, contact with foreign publishing houses was increased, new literary agencies were established, and an interest in prize-winning literature was raised (Berk 224-25). The open-access database of the *UNESCO Index Translationum*, which presents bibliographical information on books translated and published in approximately one hundred of the UNESCO Member States between 1979 and 2009 in all disciplines including literature, social and human sciences, natural and exact sciences, art, and history,<sup>4</sup> includes a total of 272 Turkish translations of works that originally appeared in Spanish. Of these 272 works, 42 were written by Gabriel García Márquez, 18 by Jorge Luis Borges, 10 by Mario Vargas Llosa, 18 by Pablo Neruda, 8 by Octavio Paz, 6 by Carlos Fuentes, and 5 by Julio Cortázar. These are not the only Latin American writers on the list, nor does this index present the most comprehensive translation data, especially in comparison to the number of works translated from French (1981), English (5652), and German (1197); however, this information does provide a hint as to the popularity of Latin American writers in Turkish translation amongst the producers of Spanish-language literature. It is interesting to observe that 177 of these 272 translations, or 65% of the total number of Turkish translations of Spanish-language works, were published between the years 1980 and 1990.

The particular interest in Latin American literature in Turkey during the 1980s can be explained by the effects of political pluralism on the Turkish publishing industry. Latin American writers may have provided Turkish readers with the thematic and stylistic variety that would redesign the Turkish literary sphere. Content-wise, Latin American literature responded to the issues of culture, identity, and democratization that were on the immediate agenda of the Turkish people. In like manner, as Özlem Berk exemplifies in her manuscript on translation and Westernization in Turkey, the Turkish translator of Octavio Paz's *El laberinto de soledad* indicated that he chose this text in order to demonstrate the similarities between Mexicans and Turks, as culturally both were conquerors and conquered at the same time; had Paz's novel not been devoted to Mexico, the translator would think that the book had been written for Turks (Berk 229). The translation was first published in 1978, with a new edition following in 1982.

The trajectory of Latin American literature in Turkish seems to present a case of similarity in the dissimilar: the new content and style of Latin American literature, and the political and social similarities between Turkey and Latin America, helped to pave the way for Turkish interest in Latin America and its literature. The same context that highlights the similar values and tools in the foreign product might also illuminate the presentation and use of magical realism in the Turkish literary repertoire. In fact, the fantastic had been embedded in several genres of traditional Turkish-Ottoman literature, such as poetry, prose fiction, or biography, until the Turkish modernization project encouraged a tendency towards more realist narra-

tives, which might be described in relation to the Westernization movement that has its roots in the late-nineteenth-century reformation period known as *Tanzimat*. As Turkish literary critic Berna Moran suggests, a century after the *Tanzimat* period, in the 1980s Turkish literature manifests a revitalization of fantastic narratives. Many Turkish writers, including Nazlı Eray, Latife Tekin, Barış Müstecaplıoğlu, and İhsan Oktay Anar, enriched post-1980s Turkish literature with their distinctive use of fantastic elements. Works by Yaşar Kemal, one of the pioneering writers of the genre in Turkey who has often been compared to Gabriel García Márquez, should also be added to this list, though Kemal's literary initiatives that embraced the fantastic along with the real date back to earlier decades. The fantastic in the context of twentieth-century Turkish literature cannot be considered as detached from the surreal that had once been a part of the Turkish literary tradition; therefore, in this context, it might be safer to consider magical realism as a tool that served the popularization of at least a part of Latin American literature in Turkey, which owes something to the frame of the (dis)similarity noted above. Although this subject invites further elaboration, it is outside the scope of this article; instead, the above outline of the complex web of politics and poetics in the 1980s Turkey, which embraces the enlivened publishing field, the increasing number of translations of world literature, the 'return' of the fantastic to the Turkish literary field in both translations and original works, and political pluralism, is meant to provide a contextual background for the image of Borges, and partly that of Latin American literature and magical realism as one of its acknowledged constituents, within the field of Turkish literature in the 1980s.

In 1982, the first book-length Turkish translation of Borges's works, *Ölüm ve Pusula* (Ada Publishing, named after the short story "La muerte y la brujula"),<sup>5</sup> was published. On the cover, the publisher introduces the stories in the collection by highlighting their innovative style and content, as well as recognizing the reputation of the translator Tomris Uyar: "Arjantinli yazar J.-L.Borges'in, Tomris Uyar'ın Türkçesinden sunduğumuz bu seçme öyküleri, gerek konusu, gerek anlatımıyla Türk okurunun bugüne değin tanımadığı bir türün örnekleri" (*Ölüm ve Pusula*).<sup>6</sup> Tomris Uyar was a prominent figure of Turkish literature, whose post-1970 works feature magical realist and postmodern elements that can be traced to the influence of twentieth-century Latin American prose fiction.<sup>7</sup> Uyar was amongst the first translators of Latin American literature in Turkey. Besides translating Pablo Neruda's works in the 1960s, she published a Turkish translation of Gabriel García Márquez's *El Otoño del Patriarca* in 1975, the same year in which its Spanish original appeared. She also translated works of other Latin American writers, including Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Julio Cortázar, Octavio Paz, Alberto Manguel, and Juan Rulfo, in the 1980s and 1990s. Here it should be noted that she did not use the Spanish originals of these works as her source texts, but instead produced indirect translations.

*Ölüm ve Pusula* was followed by several other Borges compilations, though before these came a Turkish-language anthology of Latin American short stories, published by İletişim Publications in 1983. This publishing house was established that year with

an objective to critically respond to the new form of political pluralism motivated by the state after the 1980 coup d'état<sup>8</sup> that sought a move away from the influence of Communist ideology (Cizre Sakallıoğlu 262), and to this day, İletişim Publications is still a leading publisher. The anthology *Latin Amerika Hikayeleri Antolojisi* (*Anthology of Latin American Stories*) was published as part of İletişim's world literature series, which not only indicated the publisher's interest in literature from around the world, but also exemplifies the state of the publishing field in post-1980 Turkey. *Latin Amerika Hikayeleri Antolojisi* includes six stories by Borges: "Ölüm ve Pusula" ("La muerte y la brújula"), translated by Tomris Uyar; "Yuvarlak Tapınağın Kalıntıları" ("Las ruinas circulares") translated by Fatma Akerson; "Düello" ("El duelo"), translated by Fatih Özgüven; "Tutsak" ("Historia del guerrero y de la cautiva"); "Delia Elena San Marco," translated by Yusuf Atılğan; and "Borges ve Ben" ("Borges y yo") translated by Fatma Akerson. The collection also includes stories by Carlos Fuentes, Ana María Matute, Norberto Fuentes, C. Vasconcelos Maia,

**58** José Doñoso, Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortázar, Onelio Jorge Cardoso, Mario Benedetti, J. Guimarães Rosa, Cabrera Infante, Carlos Onetti, Jorge Edwards, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Juan Rulfo.

This collection brings together Latin American writers from different periods and regions to present a relatively hybrid packaging of Latin American literature. The book's anonymous preface introduces the source literature as a rich space for discussion of such local topics as the problems of the Indigenous and Black population in several regions of Latin America, and Mexican Revolution; stylistically, these works demonstrate the "enchanted realism" (*tılsımlı gerçekçilik*) derived from the millennia-old beliefs of the Indigenous peoples, traces of French existentialism, and the styles of such writers as Faulkner and Joyce (*Latin Amerika Hikayeleri Antolojisi*, "Önsöz" [Preface], n.p.).<sup>9</sup> Here what stands out the most in the last years is their "ability to indicate the bare facts of their countries in the most apparent way possible" (Preface, n.p.). The anthology's cover image depicts three presumably Latin American male figures wearing local hats and holding rifles ("Latin Amerika Hikayeleri Antolojisi"), and the preface similarly identifies violence as a common theme in Latin American fiction and a leitmotif for the region's longing for freedom:

Bu kitaptaki öykülerin yazarları, çok kişiyi rahatsız eden bir şiddete yapıtlarında ağırlık verirler. Bunda da, özgürlüklerine milyonlarca insanın kanı pahasına kavuşmalarının ya da hala kavuşmaya çalışıyor olmalarının payı büyüktür. Doğanın şiddeti yanında insanın şiddeti, ister istemez bu edebiyata damgasını basacak, bu şiddet öykülerden ve romanlardan eksik olmayacaktır. (Preface, n.p.)<sup>10</sup>

In contrast to Jorge Luis Borges's global reputation of the time as a universal and apolitical bibliophile,<sup>11</sup> this preface seems to locate his peculiar literary style in a politically motivated and context-bound setting that presents the entirety of Latin American literature as a reflection of the region's past and present struggles with violence and longing for freedom. The preface further characterizes him as an observer of the unfavourable aspects of Argentine society:

Cermen mitolojilerini çözümllediği gibi, Buenos Aires kenar mahallelerinin insanını da dile getirir. Polis romanını gerçek bir edebiyat türü gibi şiirli dille işlerken, Arjantin toplumunun çarpıklıklarını dile getirir. (Preface, n.p.)<sup>12</sup>

However, compared to his portrait in the preface, the chapter in the anthology dealing with Borges does not seem to employ this political framing as much, focusing more on his literary logic and style on an individual basis (*Latin Amerika Hikayeleri Antolojisi* 9). It has always been highly controversial to posit him within well-defined regional, historical, or genre-based categories such as Latin American, European, realist, surrealist, political, apolitical, modern, or postmodern, and it is possible to think of him as all, or none, of these. Therefore, we might conclude that the Borges chapter of the anthology balances out the politically sensitive image that the preface constructs of the *porteño*. The same balance can be seen in the selection of stories, which reflect different levels of intensity in their author's reactions to his political climate. The collection includes stories that exemplify Borgean individualism, such as "Delia Elena San Marco" or "Borges y yo" from *El hacedor* of the 1960s, and those from his early career that are open to political interpretations, such as "La muerte y la brújula" and "Las ruinas circulares."

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Following the publication of the aforementioned anthology, Fatih Özgüven's Turkish translation of *El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan* as *Yolları Çatallanan Bahçe*, appeared in 1985, published by Can Publishing, established in 1981, as a major representative of world literature in Turkey. Its examples of Latin American literature in Turkish translation include works by Gabriel García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, Jorge Amado, Juan Rulfo, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Alejo Carpentier, and Julio Cortázar, along with many other authors from the region including Isabel Allende, Roberto Bolaño, and César Aira. Following the publication of *El jardín*, in the 1990s Can published three additional volumes by Jorge Luis Borges, all translated by editor-in-chief Celal Üster: *Yedi Gece* (*Siete Noches*, 1993), *Bir Ada Bir Kıta* (*Introducción a la literatura norteamericana; Introducción a la literatura inglesa*, 1995), and *Borges ve Ben* (*Borges y yo*, 1995).<sup>13</sup> The publication rights of Borges's collected works are currently held by İletişim Publishing, the publisher of the aforementioned 1983 anthology of Latin American literature.

Periodicals have also been widely used as platforms for Turkish critics studying Borges's works. In 1985, the year that Can Publishing published the Turkish translation of *El jardín*, the journal *Uçurum Kitabı* (no. 2) presented the first Turkish-language special issue on Borges. The Latin American literary boom reached Turkey in the 1980s as part of the country's increasing interest in world literature, and the special issue positions Borges as a unique figure not only in Latin American literature but in world literature as a whole. In the following decades, other active and popular literary journals would produce similar publications: in 1999, *Milliyet Sanat* (no. 466) brought out a special issue on Borges's centennial, followed by special issues of *Kitaplık* (no. 127) in 2009 and *Notos* in 2015. The latter appeared in the wake of three special issues on Latin American literature in 2011, Julio Cortázar in 2014, and

Gabriel García Márquez in 2015.

During the 1980s, encyclopedias became popular in the Turkish publishing field, both locally-produced and foreign volumes in translation. In 1983, the encyclopedia *Türk ve Dünya Ünlüleri Ansiklopedisi: Kişiler, Dönemler, Akımlar, Yapıtlar* (*Encyclopedia of Turkish and World Celebrities: Individuals, Periods, Movements, and Works*), produced by Anadolu Publishing, introduced Jorge Luis Borges as follows:

Arjantinli yazar. Yarattığı türlerarası edebiyat tarzıyla gerçek dünyayı, örtülü, uzak, ama eleştirel bir bakışla yorumlayan, okurlarını seçkin aydınlar arasında arayan bir sanatçıdır [...] Bilinçli olarak yarattığı bu kapalıktan çıkış, ancak onun diğer edebi metinlere yaptığı dolaylı göndermeleri izleyebilen “kültürlü” okurların başarabileceği bir durumdur. Bu yüzden yarattığı türlerarası tarz, tüm yeniliğine ve zenginliğine karşın yaygınlaşmamış, sadece yazara özgü bir yenilik denemesi olarak kalmıştır. (Parla 1019-20)<sup>14</sup>

In the same year that this encyclopedia presented Borges as an oblique and distant  
 60 writer whose experimental initiatives could not reach a wide audience and remained as Borgean literary idiosyncrasies, İletişim Publishing’s 1983 anthology of Latin American literature foregrounded his political facets and depicted him as a voice for the suburbs of Buenos Aires. The latter publication does not propose any indicative of Borges’s accessibility and comprehensibility on the part of his readers either; however, unlike his portrayal in the encyclopedia entry, Borges’s presentation in the anthology does not exclude him from the group of writers that take part in the anthology, nor does it propose him as an individual figure of literature on his own. Hence, as the translation scholar André Lefevere has suggested, the different Turkish representations of Jorge Luis Borges appearing in the same year exemplify how rewrites, whether translations, encyclopedia entries, or literary criticism, can simultaneously build varying images of their sources. In fact, the five story compilations—*Ölüm ve Pusula* (*Death and Compass*); *Yolları Çatallanan Bahçe* (*The Garden of Forking Paths*); *Alçaklığın Evrensel Tarihi* (*Universal History of Infamy*); *Borges ve Ben* (*Borges and I*); and *Kum Kitabı* (*The Book of Sand*); one essay collection—*Tılsımlar* (*Talisman*); and one volume of literary criticism—*İngiliz Edebiyatına Giriş* (*Introduction to English Literature*)—published in Turkish in the 1980s each construct different images of the author and his work, with a variety of voices present in this corpus.

In addition to the early translation of Borges in the 1950s, other Turkish translations of the 1960s and 1970s present an observable collection of Latin American literature, encompassing political manuscripts and other non-fiction alongside prose fiction and poetry. Fidel Castro and Ernesto (Che) Guevara were both widely published in Turkey during the 1960s, and Gabriel García Márquez, Miguel Ángel Asturias, and Pablo Neruda were also translated—and, in the case of Neruda, widely read—during the 1960s and 1970s. Starting from the 1980s, however, Turkish translations of fictional accounts and poetry from Latin America diversified, with works by Julio Cortázar, Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa, Alejo Carpentier, Manuel Puig, Isabel Allende, Eduardo Galeano, Felisberto Hernández, Álvaro Mutis, Ernesto

Sábato, Gabriel Mistral, and Octavio Paz appearing in succession.<sup>15</sup> This corpus presents a hybrid selection of texts that do not exclusively embrace magical realist works; the literature from the region seems to be presented with reference to a number of literary positions. With their selection, the Turkish publishers seem to have chosen to highlight the country's steps towards cultural plurality in the 1980s.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the Borges collection in Turkish translation was diversified in time with the production of critical examination of Borges's works and life, including studies by Richard Burgin, Norman Thomas Di Giovanni, Emir Rodríguez Monegal, and Richard Kearney. Amongst these, biographies and memoirs seem to be the most popular. Between 1997 and 2013, five biographies were translated into Turkish: *Kitabın Aynasındaki Adam (The Man in the Mirror of the Book)* by James Woodall, translated by Armağan Anar (İletişim, 1997); *Borges'in Evinde (With Borges)* by Alberto Manguel, translated by Cem Akaş (YKY, 2002); *Senyor Borges: 30 Yıllık Emektarının Gözünden JLB (Señor Borges: JLB in the Eyes of His 30-Year Housemaid)* by Epifania Uveda de Robiedo and Alejo Vaccaro, translated by Aylin Demirhan (Can, 2008); *Ustanın Dersi: Borges ve Yapıtları Üstüne (The Lesson of the Master: On Borges and His Work)* by Norman Thomas Di Giovanni, translated by Hayriye Ulaş (ODTÜ Yayınevi, 2008); and *Jorge Luis Borges* by Jason Wilson, translated by Tonguç Çulhaöz (YKY, 2011).

In addition, between 1999 and 2004, Dost Publishing produced a special series of fantastic literature that was originally collected by Borges and the young Italian publisher Franco Maria Ricci, originally titled "Library of Babel" and featuring forewords by Borges. The collection included authors from different regions and periods, such as Franz Kafka, Oscar Wilde, Henry James, Cao Xueqin, Voltaire, William Beckford, Nathaniel Hawthorne, H.G. Wells, Saki, Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe, Rudyard Kipling, Jack London, Lord Dunsany, Richard F. Burton, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, Jacques Cazotte, Robert Louis Stevenson, Leon Bloy, Leopoldo Lugones, and Antoine Galland. Borges's forewords were translated into Turkish by Mukadder Yayıncıoğlu.<sup>16</sup> The series seems to have become popular with Turkish readers, with one of the most widely known and used collaborative online dictionaries in the country, *Ekşi Sözlük*, featuring several entries about this collection.<sup>17</sup> Since 2016, Kırmızı Kedi Publishing has been presenting the series.

A last point on the reception of Borges and many other Latin American writers in Turkish translation is the phenomenon of indirect translation, which uses intermediary texts as sources. The initial translators of Jorge Luis Borges in Turkey, Celal Üster, Tomris Uyar, and Fatih Özgüven, helped to introduce him to the Turkish reading public; however, none of these translators directly used Borges's Spanish originals.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, beginning in the late 1990s, İletişim Publishing commissioned Peral Bayaz Charum, Ayşe Nihal Akbulut, Yıldız Ersoy Canpolat, and Saliha Nilüfer to translate and retranslate Borges's works from the Spanish originals. That said, although the mainstream opinion of translations tends to favour direct translations from the original scripts, Üster's, Uyar's, and Özgüven's editions have not yet been

commissioned to be retranslated, which can partly be explained by their symbolic capital and the recognition of their translational efforts and other activities in the Turkish literary field. In addition, Celal Üster continued to translate Borges in the 1990s and 2000s; he was even commissioned to retranslate *Alçaklığın Evrensel Tarihi* (*Historia universal de la infamia*, İletişim Publishing, 1999)<sup>19</sup> and *Düşsel Varlıklar Kitabı* (*El libro de los seres imaginarios*, İletişim Publishing, 2015),<sup>20</sup> as well as translating *Atlas* (İletişim Publishing, 2002). This state of affairs seems to reveal that the translators' reputations rest on their responses to the norms of directionality and (in)directness in their translations. Today, Turkish translations of Spanish language literature seem to acknowledge direct translation as a recognized norm; however, the first translators to present Borges in Turkish still participate with their indirect translations.

62 Despite a seeming lack of consensus on which literary movement Borges belongs to, Turkish critics have tended to examine him and his work in relation to metafiction, labyrinths, and obfuscations. For instance, Berna Moran compares Borges's fiction to that of Gabriel García Márquez and Italo Calvino, and states that in the 1980s all three inspired Turkish writers to create a new form of novel (57). Moran is not the only critic in Turkey who has discussed Borges, who never published a novel, within the context of this particular genre, and this tendency among Turkish critics partly mirrors Borges's more observable influence on Turkish novelists than on short-story writers or poets. Turkish criticism of Borges generally contextualizes him with little or no reference to how his work inspired local writers in other genres. According to Moran, the protagonist of Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* (1990) mirrors Borges's approach to authorship and originality when he says "It's all about rewriting the old, very old, very old stories" (101; my translation). Moran also explores postmodern writers' peculiar interest in detective fiction, and mentions Borges among other writers such as Alain Robbe-Grillet, Italo Calvino, Muriel Spark, and Umberto Eco. Pınar Kür's *Bir Cinayet Romanı* (*A Book of Murder*, 1989) is cited as an example of how this stream of literature reflected on Turkish novels (Moran 108).

According to Ahmet Oktay, the idiosyncratic coexistence of the real and unreal in Borges's works, by means of his use of metafiction, inspired Turkish postmodern writers (77). With reference to *Adalet Ağaoğlu's Yaz Sonu* (*The End of Summer*), Leyla Erbil's *Gecede* (*In the Night*), Oğuz Atay's *Tutunamayanlar* (*The Disconnected*), and Orhan Pamuk's *Kara Kitap* (*Black Book*), Oktay identifies metafiction as an important factor in Borges's influence on Turkish novels. Oktay also mentions a Turkish novel published in the early 1930s, Mithat Cemal's *Üç İstanbul* (*Three Istanbul*), within the same context, which seems to imply the use of Borges's literary vision as a critical tool to illuminate new approaches to Turkish literature.

Several volumes of literary criticism by Semih Gümüş also acknowledge Jorge Luis Borges as an inspiring model for modern writers. Gümüş's books *Yazının Sarkacı Roman* (*Novel: The Pendulum of Script*, Doğan Kitap, 2006), *Eleştirinin Sis Çanı* (*The Fog-Bell of Criticism*, Can, 2008), and *Öykünün Kedi Gözü* (*The Cat's-Eye of the*

*Story*, Can, 2010), as well as his many other articles published in periodicals, discuss Borges's position in Turkish and world literature, and place Gümüş himself among the critics who helped to establish that position. In *Yazının Sarkacı Roman*, Gümüş presents Borges as an early representative of magical realism in world literature, alongside Jorge Amado, Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortázar, Carlos Fuentes, and Juan Rulfo. According to Gümüş, Latife Tekin and Yaşar Kemal are the representatives of this literary movement in Turkey (264). Kemal, one of the major proponents of the fantastic in modern Turkish literature, has been compared to García Márquez and magical realism by other critics as well, and in this context Borges is situated not so much as a direct influence but as an early inspiration that paved the way for this Latin American stream of writing, which eventually reflected on Turkish critics' examinations of fantastic literature in their own literary field. Later on, Gümüş joins his Turkish counterparts in investigating Borges as a postmodern writer in his own context. With reference to the last sentence of Ahmet Karcılılar's *Yağmur Hüzünü* (*The Sorrow of Rain*), "After a while, you'll see that the book proceeds with(in) you" (247; my translation), Gümüş examines Borges's ideas on reception and the role that he attributes to the reader within the process of meaning construction.

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In his essay collection *Borges'in Kaplanları* (*Borges's Tigers*, 1997), Demir Özlü discusses a selection of literary movements including the Beat generation and structuralism, and authors including Dostoevsky and Borges, in terms of the social and cultural debates surrounding the Turkish literary sphere, with reference to many local writers. With his use of the tiger metaphor, Özlü seems to highlight Borges's symbolic recognition and peculiar presence amongst the other topics and writers featured in the collection. The essay on Borges outlines his commonly-used metaphors of tiger, labyrinth, and mirror (67-71), which extend to other essays in the collection and reinforce Özlü's readings of many other works of world literature. Of all the critical works discussed above, Demir Özlü's contextualization of Borges in this volume might be the one that produces the most complex web with no limitations of region, movement, or period. This may also be considered as an impartial reflection of Borges's literary vision that embraces similar comprehensive grounds.

In his 2009 manuscript 602. *Gece* (*The 602nd Night*), Turkish novelist and critic Murat Gülsoy explores literary modernism in Turkey in light of Borges's approach to *One Thousand and One Nights*. The book is titled after the 602nd night of Scheherazade's captivity, when she tells the Sultan the story of the story being told and hence escapes execution. Just as Borges did several decades prior, Gülsoy finds this emancipating, because it provides critics and readers with a way out of the traditional debates on how to represent reality. Gülsoy explores works by the twentieth-century Turkish writers Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, Oğuz Atay, and Orhan Pamuk within this Borgean scope, and refers to Borges, his metaphors and characters, in many of his own essay collections and novels.<sup>21</sup>

Since the appearance of the initial translations of his work, Borges has been incorporated in literary debates in Turkey, and in their survey of the modernization of

the Turkish novel, a number of Turkish critics have examined how this renovation has incorporated metafiction, twentieth-century thoughts on reader reception, and the uncanny, with inspiration gained from Borges's ideas and metaphors. It is interesting to observe the persistent link that these individuals draw between Turkish novels and the Argentine writer who had mainly produced short stories and poems. Borges's influence on Turkish short-story writers and poets has not yet been studied as widely. Additionally, in addition to the Turkish translations of foreign scholars' critical works and biographies, Borges's works and literary visions have appeared in many other local publications and anthologies that have not been mentioned in this article, with, no doubt, more to follow in the near future.<sup>22</sup> In line with the versatile representations of Borges that have been produced since the mid-twentieth century in the Western literary sphere, Turkish writers and critics have added to this plurality of images, so far depicting him within diverging contexts, related to pre- or post-magical realist Latin American literature, postmodern world literature, the modern Turkish novel, or contemporary literary criticism in Turkey, perpetuating the rewrites' power in presenting varying versions of their sources, both simultaneously and diachronically.

## NOTES

1. For a detailed survey of Jorge Luis Borges in other languages, see Becco; Cesco; Di Giovanni; Yates and Irby.
2. A sample list of the English translations of Borges's stories and poems published in anthologies and periodicals can be found in Yates and Irby (218-19).
3. For more detailed information on Turkish short stories of the 1950s, see Özata-Dirlikyapan.
4. The definition is borrowed from the project's website, [www.unesco.org/xtrans/](http://www.unesco.org/xtrans/) (accessed 31 Dec. 2020).
5. Emece Editores had published a volume with the title *La muerte y la brujula* as well, which is a mere coincidence. The Turkish collection includes different stories.
6. This collection of stories by the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges that we present with the Turkish of Tomris Uyar puts forth the examples of a genre whose topic and narrative have not yet been introduced to the Turkish reader (my translation).
7. For more information on Tomris Uyar, see Akbaş.
8. A full explanation of the publishing house's objectives can be seen on their website, [www.iletisim.com.tr/neden-iletisim-var](http://www.iletisim.com.tr/neden-iletisim-var).
9. "Söz konusu yazarların, konularını yaşadıkları ülkelerin özelliklerinden almaları onların bir başka ilginç yanı. Örneğin, bazı Perulu yazarlar Kızılderili halkın sorunlarına eğilirken, bazıları Antil Adaları'nın Zenci halkının sorunlarını işlerler. Meksika Devrimi'nin öyküsünü anlatanların yanı sıra, yerli halkın binlerce yıllık inancından kaynaklanan 'tulsımlı gerçekçi' ler görülür. Kimi Fransız varoluşçularından esinlenirken, kimi Faulkner ya da Joyce gibi ünlü yazarların tekniğini başarıyla kendi romanına uyarlar. Ama son yılların en büyük olgusu, bu yazarların ülke gerçeklerini olanca çıplaklığıyla dile getirmeleridir." ("Another interesting aspect of the writers in question is that they

- take their plots from the features of the countries that they live in. For instance, while some Peruvian writers dwell on the problems of the Indian population, some focus on the problems of the Black population of the Antilles. In addition to those that tell the story of the Mexican Revolution, the 'enchanted realists' that have their roots in the thousand-year beliefs of the indigenous people are observed. Some are inspired from French existentialists; some successfully adapt the techniques of such famous writers as Faulkner or Joyce to their novels. But lately, the biggest matter is that these writers are able to utter the bare facts of their countries in the most apparent way possible"; my translation.)
10. "The authors of the stories in this book rely on a kind of violence that might disturb many. The main reason for this thematic choice is that these authors gained or are still fighting for their freedom at the expense of the blood of millions of people. Besides the violence of nature, human violence shall inevitably mark this literature while the stories and the novels always bear this mark within" (my translation).
  11. Starting in the 1990s, a group of Argentine critics deconstructed this universal apolitical image of Jorge Luis Borges, and instead presented him as an Argentine with all his local and political individualities. For further discussion on the topic, see Sarlo and Casalas O'Ryan.
  12. "[Borges] analyzes both Germanic mythologies and voices those that inhabit the suburbs of Buenos Aires. While introducing detective fiction as a noticeable literary genre, thanks to his embellished poetic language, he reveals the distorted facets of Argentine society" (my translation).
  13. This volume was initially published by Afa Publishing in 1989.
  14. "Argentine author. An artist who has a peculiar inter-genre literary style. He examines the real world with a covert, distant, but critical perspective. His intended readers are distinguished intellectuals [...] Only the "cultivated" reader who is able to trace the indirect references to other literary texts can cope with Borges' intentional obliqueness. That's why, despite its innovative and rich nature, his inter-genre style could not be very influential; rather, it remained as an experimental initiative peculiar to him" (my translation).
  15. I acknowledge that Latin American literature in Turkey has far deeper roots than what I discuss here. My summary merely intends to overview the grounds of Latin American literature in Turkey and explore the initial steps of the stream of Borges criticism in the country.
  16. Kamuran Şipal, Fatih Özgüven, and Fahri Öz have also contributed to the collection as translators.
  17. See [eksisozluk.com/babil-kitapligi--72947](https://eksisozluk.com/babil-kitapligi--72947) (accessed 14 Feb. 2022).
  18. The first direct translation of Jorge Luis Borges into Turkish was Celal Üster's translation of his autobiography, originally written in English. In his preface, the translator points out that the work was translated from its original language, making it the first direct translation of Borges into Turkish (Üster 12). The first direct translation of Borges from the original Spanish was Arzu Etensel İldem's *Don Isidro Parodi'ye Altı Billece (Six Problems for Don Isidro Parodi)*, 1993). Borges had co-authored this book with Adolfo Bioy-Casares.
  19. The first translation of this work by Zeynep Çağlayan was published in 1990 by Telos Publishing.
  20. The first translation of this work by Bora Komçez was published in 1992 by Mitos Publishing.
  21. See *Binbir Gece Mektupları; Baba, Oğul ve Kutsal Roman; Yalnızlar İçin Çok Özel Bir Hizmet*.
  22. See, for instance, Behramoğlu and İnce; Canpolat; Mungan, *Yabancı Hayvanlar* and *Ressamın İkinci Sözleşmesi*; Teker Garcia; Üyepazarcı.

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